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# Across the River: ferries as a vehicle for exploring riverborderscapes

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UNIVERSITY OF  
PLYMOUTH

# **Across the River: ferries as a vehicle for exploring riverborderscapes**

by

**Eva Grace Lamb McGrath**

A thesis submitted to the University of Plymouth in partial  
fulfilment for the degree of

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

School of Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences

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## Acknowledgements

Sometimes it begins with a theme, at other times with a form

(Seamus Heaney)

Rivers have been both a theme and form in my work to date. I was introduced to rivers, and the crossing of riverborders by Professor Paul Gilroy, in my second year of English Literature at King's College London. I wrote about nineteenth century (steam) ferry routes and watery passages for my BA dissertation with Professor Clare Pettitt. The shift from literary rivers to literal rivers began with Claudio Magris' (1989) *The Danube*, during my MA in Comparative Literature. For all those who encouraged me in the days I walked across Waterloo Bridge and wrote watery essays, I thank you. And Professor Pat Palmer, thank you for warning me never to get too carried away with the tide.

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## Author's Declaration

At no time during the registration for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy has the author been registered for any other University award without prior agreement of the Doctoral College Quality Sub-Committee. Work submitted for this research degree at the University of Plymouth has not formed part of any other degree either at the University of Plymouth or at another establishment.

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A programme of advanced study was undertaken, which included taught modules (completed - not for credit) in GEES522 Research in Human Geography: Philosophies and Design, GEES523 Quantitative Research in Human Geography and GEES519 formerly GEES503 Environmental Knowledge: from field to stakeholder between September 2017 and January 2018.

Relevant seminars and conferences were regularly attended, and those where the author shared research findings are listed below. A research paper was also published, and two research events on themes relevant to the thesis: rivers and borders, rivers and identity were co-organised.

### Publications

McGrath E., Harmer, N., and Yarwood, R., (2020) 'Ferries as travelling landscapes: tourists and watery mobilities' in eds. Kaaristo, M., and Rhodes, S., 'Travelling and travelled landscapes: imaginations, politics and mobilities of tourism', *International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research*, Vol 14, No.3 pp.321-334  
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### Presented PhD Research at Academic Conferences

**Speaking rivers: the lyrical, literary and literal narratives of rivers in South West England** in the 'Social Lives of Rivers and Canals' panel, International Society for Ethnology and Folklore, Santiago de Compostela, Spain. April 2019.

**"Shall we cross the river?" Exploring narratives of tourists taking to the water in the South West** in the 'Travelling Landscapes' panel, Royal Geographical Society Conference, Cardiff University, September 2018.

**Across the River: the role of river ferries in fluctuating, connecting, and leaving waiting bankside communities**, Mobilities and Migration Conference, University of Plymouth, July 2018

**Fluid River Borders: ferry crossing narratives and the experience of being between** in the 'Spaces Between' panel, Liquidscapes: tales and tellings of watery worlds and fluid states, Dartington, June 2018

**Traces across the Water: ferries, horses, borders and watercourses of the Tamar River 1700 – 2017**, Cornerstone Heritage Symposium, Saltram House. December 2017

### List of Conferences Attended

Stories that Matter: Exploring (Re)presentation of Hydrosocial Research, Workshop, The Allerweltshaus, Cologne, organised by Sandro Simon, Franz Krause and the DELTA team, September 2019

Excursion, A staged exercise in non-representational ethnography, Paignton Beach, organised by Kate Paxman, July 2019

Neptune's Children: Early Modern Waterways, University of Oxford, organised by Lorna Hutson and Katherine Ibbett, May 2019

4<sup>th</sup> Denis Cosgrove Lecture: Shakesperean Landscapes with Professor Stuart Elden, British Academy, London, organised by The Centre for Geohumanities, May 2019

Water Journeys: a conversation on the subject of hydrofeminism, Canal boat along the Somerset and Bridgewater Canal, organised by Laura Denning, May 2019

Melville's Crossings: The 11<sup>th</sup> International Melville Society Conference, King's College London, organised by Janet Floyd, Wyn Kelley, Edward Sugden, June 2017

Land/Water Symposium, University of Plymouth, organised by Land/Water, June 2017

Performance, Experience, Presence Conference: On the Moors, Dartmoor National Park, Devon, organised by Beth Richards, Chris Green, Katheryn Owens, June 2017

Mobilities, Literature, Culture Conference, Lancaster University, organised by Charlotte Matheison, Lynne Pearce, Bruce Bennett, April 2017

Water, Leeds Trinity University, The Northern Nineteenth-Century Network, April 2017

### Co-organised Academic Events

**Rivers as Borders?** Co-organised panel with Rebekka Kanesu, Trier University, Germany. Double panel session planned for the Royal Geographical Society (with Institute of British Geographers) Conference, London, September 2021.

This panel invites scholars to consider the role of rivers as borders.

Rivers connect; rivers divide. Over 260 rivers worldwide form or cross international borders (Wolf, 1998) whilst other rivers can form psychological, experiential or imagined boundaries between people and places. Rivers, in their three-dimensional (Steinberg & Peters, 2015) tidal material movement can offer an opportunity for researchers to reflect upon processes of border-making/un-making and the negotiations and shifting articulations of political, social and cultural meanings attached to borders which are often theorised as 'porous' (Lim, 2017), 'fluid' (Yildiz, 2016) spaces of interchange and exchange.

When a river becomes a border, it can offer a liquid legal boundary, but its very liquidity challenges the notion of such territorial demarcation. Rivers can be liminal, murky, blurred and shifting terrains. A river can be conceptualised as resource and infrastructured for certain purposes like shipping or production of hydropower. Nevertheless, it always escapes full control since it follows its own laws of hydro-morphology and develops its own agency. The river as border can be a conflicted space of violent, political dispute. It can enable but also restrict movement. At the same time, it is often a place for leisure time and a focal point of human-environmental relations where people become part of the hydro-social cycle (Linton & Budds, 2014). A river as border not only concerns human interests, but also functions as fluid ecosystems where aquatic life can thrive. That is why

concerns over river borders point to access rights, control, cultural and socio-political demarcation lines as well as to aspects of conservation, pollution and biodiversity.

Movements along and across the stream often characterise life, work and everyday practices at the river border. Bridges and ferries connect different riparian communities and can become liminal spaces of interchange that shape narratives, imaginations and discourses of the river as border. Therefore, the riverine pathways, daily liquid routines, and work on and with the water continuously form and (re-)create the river as potential and actual border.

**Flows of Entanglement: how rivers shape identities**, Co-organised conference with Sally Sutton and Zoe Latham within the Association for the Study of Literature and the Environment (ASLE) Biennial Conference, University of Plymouth, September 2019.

This panel invites scholars from a diverse range of disciplines to consider the entangled and fluid ways in which rivers shape identities.

The language of rivers has seeped into our vocabulary, inspiring expressions and conceptions of everyday life. Fluidscapes oscillate between land and water shaping political, cultural, social and environmental discourses. We live on and by rivers, we have songs dedicated to rivers. We seek to cross rivers on ferries or bridges, by swimming or wading. Rivers break the banks into which they are confined, carrying within them traces of our imagination and memories. It is no wonder that time has etymological connections with tide as poets, artists, novelists and academics consider the ebbs and the flows of histories: reflecting and responding to the river itself, the lives it sustains, its cultural narratives and wider ecosystems. Rivers are places of connection but also of distinction.

Through this two day session, we are hoping to promote an interactive, informal and multi-perspective discussion that explores the meanings and representations of rivers, documenting how we live on, by, or with rivers. Taking the interface between water and land, we recognise that rivers are also murky spaces, dynamically shaping and reflecting the world in which we live. They are complex flows of entangled forms, species intentions and systems.

'Flows of Entanglement' will begin with a water workshop on the River Tamar: responding to the sight, sound, smell, lines and imagination of the river as we move along its course. It will then be followed by an introduction by Dr Tricia Cusack (author of 'Riverscapes and National Identities', editor of 'Art and Identity at the Water's Edge') followed by paper presentations. Conversations will continue on Friday morning with sessions on 'Literary Rivers', 'Fluvial Systems' and 'Everyday Identities', followed by a roundtable discussion with artists and practitioners; scholars and river enthusiasts on diverse methodologies used to explore river contexts.

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**Signed:**



**Date:**

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## Abstract

### **Across the River: ferries as a vehicle for exploring riverborderscapes**

Eva Grace Lamb McGrath

This thesis uses the concept of the riverborderscape to provide new understandings of watery geographies, borders and landscape. This is a spatial and conceptual term used to explore the space of the river through a holistic approach, focusing upon the materialities, experiences and narratives that shape, emerge within and construct this space. These ideas are applied in relation to three rivers that form an everyday border between places at different scales in the South West of England: the River Tamar (regional), River Torridge (district) and Helford River (parish). Research is situated on and across the river, through the routes of estuarine passenger ferries, as they transport passengers from one side of the river to the other. In so doing, attention is given to the riverborder itself, and the spaces on either side. The thesis is based upon a mixed methodology, primarily ethnographic fieldwork, reflection cards with a mixed qualitative and quantitative survey, encouraging passengers to draw and write what they saw and experienced on the river, interviews and participant observation informed poetry. Research findings detail the importance of analysing rivers as three-dimensional, through height and depth, as well as spatial area and in relation to tides, navigational routes, and other watery materialities. The riverborder is framed through tension: both an exciting and potentially dangerous space, and the river crossing emerges as a third space, between land, where passengers express creative imagination and transitional thoughts, whilst, in the temporary time between lands, adhere to strict parameters and regulations on-board. The river as border emerges through narratives, jokes and stories, distinguishing one side of the river from the other. The ferry is analysed through the politics of mobility and its structural 'link' is shown to be multi-layered. Altogether, the riverborderscape approach considers the spatial area on and across rivers and puts forward a framework to analyse everyday border spaces through attention to materialities, experiences and narratives.

## Contents

Copyright Statement.....	1
Acknowledgements .....	2
Author's Declaration.....	5
Publications .....	5
Presented PhD Research at Academic Conferences.....	5
Co-organised Academic Events.....	6
Abstract .....	8
List of Figures, Tables and Plates.....	14
<b>Epigraph.....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>1. Introduction.....</b>	<b>21</b>
1.1 Research Context.....	21
1.2 Research Aim and Questions .....	22
1.3 Case Study Locations .....	24
1.4 Thesis Structure.....	26
<b>2. Literature Review .....</b>	<b>28</b>
2.1 Introduction.....	28
2.2 Watery Turn.....	28
2.3 Rivers.....	31
2.4 Borders .....	35
2.5 Between.....	41
2.5.1 Ferries.....	47
2.6 Landscapes.....	50
2.6.1 Materialities .....	53
2.6.2 Experiences .....	54
2.6.3 Narratives .....	56
2.6.4 -Scape .....	58
2.7 Riverborderscape.....	62
2.8 Research Aim and Research Questions.....	65
<b>3. Research Design and Methods.....</b>	<b>71</b>
3.1 Introduction.....	71
3.2 Mobile Methods .....	72
3.3 Case Study Approach.....	75
3.4 Archives.....	76
3.5 Participant Observation .....	77

3.5.1 Gaining Access.....	78
3.5.2 Participation .....	82
3.5.3 Synthesising.....	89
3.6 Reflection Cards.....	94
3.6.1. Availability sampling .....	98
3.7 Interviews.....	101
3.8 Coding and Data Analysis .....	110
3.8.1 Organising the Data .....	110
3.8.2 Creating Codes.....	111
3.9 Ethics .....	112
3.9.1 Informed Consent .....	112
3.9.2 Confidentiality .....	114
3.9.3 Personality and Positionality.....	115
3.9.4 Weather.....	120
3.10 Summary .....	121
<b>4. Introducing the Case Study Sites.....</b>	<b>123</b>
4.1 Introduction.....	123
4.1.2 Cornwall and Devon.....	124
4.1.2.1 Cornwall.....	126
4.1.2.2 Devon .....	128
4.2 Cremyll Ferry .....	130
4.2.1 Overview.....	130
4.2.2 River Tamar .....	131
4.2.3 Ferry .....	133
4.2.3.1 Historic.....	133
4.2.3.2 Contemporary .....	136
4.2.4 Admirals Hard.....	139
4.2.5 Admirals Slip.....	141
4.2.6 Cremyll Quay.....	142
4.2.7 Cremyll.....	143
4.2.8 Tamar Summary .....	146
4.3 Appledore - Instow Ferry.....	146
4.3.1 Overview.....	146
4.3.2 River Torridge.....	148
4.3.3 Appledore – Instow Ferry.....	149

4.3.3.1 Historic.....	149
4.3.3.2 Contemporary .....	152
4.3.4 Appledore .....	155
4.3.5 Appledore Slip.....	156
4.3.6 Instow Quay.....	157
4.3.7 Instow .....	158
4.3.8 Torridge Summary.....	160
4.4 Helford River Boats.....	161
4.4.1 Overview.....	161
4.4.2 Helford River .....	162
4.4.3 Ferry .....	165
4.4.3.1 Historic.....	165
4.4.3.2 Contemporary .....	167
4.4.4 Helford Passage.....	169
4.4.5 Helford Passage Pontoon.....	171
4.4.6 Helford Point.....	172
4.4.7 Helford .....	173
4.4.8 Helford Summary.....	175
4.5 Contextualising the Case Study Sites.....	175
<b>5. Materialities.....</b>	<b>177</b>
5.1 Introduction.....	177
5.2 Across the River: Imagined Ferry Routes.....	178
5.3 Across the River: A Skipper's Perspective.....	181
5.3.1 Tide .....	181
5.3.2 Tidal depth .....	187
5.3.3 Bankside Structures .....	191
5.3.4 Wind .....	196
5.3.5 Route.....	198
5.3.6 Transit Lines.....	201
5.3.7 A Skipper's Perspective: Summary .....	204
5.4 Muddying the Borderlines .....	206
5.4.1 Edge.....	208
5.4.2 Crossing .....	210
5.4.3 Terrain as an allusion .....	212
5.5 Turning the Tide towards Ownership .....	215

5.5.1 Vertical: Floating/Fixed .....	215
5.5.2 Punctuated Space: Mooring.....	221
5.6 Summary.....	227
<b>6. Experiences .....</b>	<b>229</b>
6.1 Introduction.....	229
6.2 Bank .....	230
6.2.1 here – there .....	231
6.3 River.....	234
6.3.1 Perspective.....	235
6.3.2 Proximity .....	236
6.3.3 Danger.....	239
6.3.4 River as Hybrid Space .....	245
6.4 Ferry.....	245
6.4.1 Social Experience .....	245
6.4.2 Directed Experience.....	249
6.5 Crossing .....	258
6.5.1 Transitional Events .....	259
6.5.2 Myth .....	262
6.5.3 Spiritual.....	264
6.5.4 Memory.....	267
6.5.5 Military.....	269
6.5.6 Creativity.....	270
6.5.7 A reflection on the self? .....	275
6.6 Bank.....	277
6.6.1 Approaching Land.....	277
6.7 Tying Together .....	282
<b>7. Narratives.....</b>	<b>285</b>
7.1 Introduction.....	285
7.2 River as barrier.....	287
7.2.1 This side, That Side .....	289
7.2.2 an 'Almost Island' .....	296
7.2.3 Metaphors: dark side – light side .....	297
7.2.4 Signs: emphasising separateness .....	301
7.2.5 Laughter: the riverborder .....	305
7.2.6 Summary: River as Barrier .....	308

7.3 Link.....	309
7.4 Ferry as Barrier.....	310
7.4.1 Fare .....	311
7.4.2 Socio-economic .....	313
7.4.3 Friction and Flow: Tide .....	321
7.5 Summary.....	325
<b>8. Riverborderscape .....</b>	<b>329</b>
8.1 Introduction.....	329
8.2 Thinking about the river through borders.....	331
8.3 Riverborderscapes.....	337
8.4 Borders as a conceptual barrier for thinking about the river .....	342
8.5 The limit of the ferry.....	345
8.6 Summary: Rivers and Identities.....	348
<b>9. Conclusion .....</b>	<b>351</b>
9.1 Introduction.....	351
9.2 Methods and Research Questions.....	352
9.2.1 RQ1: What are the materialities that influence the river ferry crossing? .....	356
9.2.2 RQ2: What are the thoughts, imaginations and experiences of ferry passengers as they cross from one side of the river to the other?.....	358
9.2.3 RQ3: In what ways does the river ferry crossing connect and divide people and places?.....	360
9.2.4 RQ4: Is the riverborderscape a productive concept to understand river crossings and adjacent bankside spaces?.....	361
9.3 Future Directions .....	362
9.4 Final Remarks.....	366
<b>Bibliography .....</b>	<b>368</b>
Appendix A: Research Information Sheet .....	417
Appendix B: Consent Form .....	419
Appendix C: Instructions (creative) .....	420
Appendix D: Interview Guide Ferry Passenger .....	421
Appendix E: Interview Guide Ferry Personnel.....	422
Appendix F: Risk Assessment.....	423

# List of Figures, Tables and Plates

## Chapter 1. Introduction

Figure 1. 1 Case Site Locations, Cremyll Ferry (River Tamar), Appledore – Instow Ferry (River Torridge) and Helford River Boats (Helford River), based in South West England. A map detail of the river crossings and bankside locations is set within the left hand panel.....	25
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## Chapter 2. Literature Review

Figure 2. 1 Model of the Riverborderscape, influenced by Cresswell's (2010) three-fold model of holistic mobility .....	64
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## Chapter 3. Research Design and Methods

Figure 3. 1 Fieldwork Questions, March 2018 .....	79
Figure 3. 2 Airbnb review, May 2018 .....	87
Figure 3. 3 Reflection Card front .....	95
Figure 3. 4 Reflection Card back.....	95
Figure 3. 5 Informed consent wording on the reflection cards (left), Post-box for reflection cards, placed on the ferry (right).....	113
Plate 3. 1 Learning to Sail: Roseland Peninsula, September 2018 (left), Taw - Torridge Estuary, July 2019 (right) .....	84
Plate 3. 2 Aboard Misty Blue, October 2019.....	84
Plate 3. 3 Mobile Methods (left to right): walking the Helford River with Zeus February 2020, cycling the Tarka Trail October 2018, visiting Mount Edgcumbe House and Gardens, March 2018.....	85
Plate 3. 4 'Private' signage Tamar, Torridge Helford river paths (left to right): Richmond Walk February 2018, Instow Beach March 2018, Trebah Gardens, March 2018.....	86
Plate 3. 5 Car as a safe space, October 2019 (left), Sat Nav directing a route around the river, between Helford Passage and Helford, March 2018 (right) .....	86
Plate 3. 6 Camping, Helford River, June 2018 .....	89
Plate 3. 7 Writing field notes, Westward Ho! Beach, July 2018 .....	90
Plate 3. 8 Examples of notes created on phone, Appledore - Instow Ferry, 2018. Names have been blanked out, so as to protect anonymity (section 3.9.2) .....	90
Plate 3. 9 Writing notes by the Helford River, September 2018 .....	91
Plate 3. 10 Written notes from Helford River Notebook, 2018 .....	91
Plate 3. 11 Extract from Field Poems, June 2018.....	92
Plate 3. 12 Transcribing interviews, June 2018 .....	93
Plate 3. 13 Writing Chapter 5 by the River Torridge July 2019 (left), Writing Chapter 1 by the Tamar Bridge, August 2020 (right).....	93
Plate 3. 14 Visualisation of Reflection Card approach .....	99

Plate 3. 15 Re-performing standing on Cremyll Slip, March 2020 .....	99
Plate 3. 16 Walking Interview (left to right): Instow Dunes, River Torridge, Appledore – Instow Ferry, August 2018 .....	108
Plate 3. 17 Through Ruth's Eyes (left to right): Appledore Church, Lizzie M Ferry, crab collector, August 2018.....	109
Plate 3. 18 Rain, Cremyll Ferry, March 2020.....	121
Table 3. 1 Types of Reflection Card: Drawing, Writing, Mixture, Blank .....	101
Table 3. 2 Total number of interviews with different riverborder stakeholders 2018-2019 .....	103
Table 3. 3 Types of interviews 2018-2019. Names are pseudonyms.....	107
Table 3. 4 Riverborderscape: emerging themes in relation to NVIVO coding .....	111

## Chapter 4. Introducing the Case Study Sites

Figure 4. 1 Map depicting the lower section of the River Tamar, with Tamar Bridge and Torpoint (chain) Ferry. The Cremyll Passenger Ferry, marked by a blue icon, was the primary focus of the project.....	131
Figure 4. 2 Detail of the Cremyll Ferry between Cremyll and Admirals Hard .....	132
Figure 4. 3 Crimell Passage (in Gould, 1643), supplied by The British Library .....	133
Figure 4. 4 Cremyll Rights Correspondence, 4th April 1945, supplied by The Box Plymouth.....	135
Figure 4. 5 Visualisations of Cremyll Ferry crossing intentions, based on reflection card survey data from 88 passengers, 2018.....	138
Figure 4. 6 Stonehouse, Source: (Public Health, 2014) Plymouth City Council .....	139
Figure 4. 7 Admirals Hard Slip satellite view, Source: Google Maps 2020 .....	141
Figure 4. 8 Cremyll Slip satellite view, Source: Google Maps 2020.....	142
Figure 4. 9 Maker-with-Rame Parish Cornwall, Source: ( <i>Maker-with-Rame Parish</i> , 2011) Office for National Statistics .....	144
Figure 4. 10 Edgcumbe Country Park and Grounds, Source: ( <i>Plymouth's Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan</i> , 2010), Supplied by Plymouth City Council and Ordnance Survey .....	144
Figure 4. 11 Map depicting the lower section of the River Torridge. Other road crossings at Old Bideford Bridge, and Torridge Bridge (A39). The Appledore - Instow Ferry was the primary focus of the project.....	147
Figure 4. 12 Detail of Appledore - Instow Ferry crossing between Appledore and Instow with Appledore Slip and Instow Quay marked.....	149
Figure 4. 13 Appledore - Instow Ferry crossing intention, based on reflection card survey data from 124 passengers, 2018 .....	154
Figure 4. 14 Appledore Slip satellite view, Source: Google Maps 2020 .....	156
Figure 4. 15 Instow Quay satellite view, Source: Google Maps 2020 .....	157
Figure 4. 16 Thalweg line between Appledore and Instow. Red area reflects Instow Ward within North Devon District Council, Source: ( <i>Instow Neighbourhood Plan</i> , 2016).....	160

Figure 4. 17 Map depicting the Helford River. The ferry between Helford Passage and Helford was the primary focus of the project and is the only structural water crossing of the river. A road alternative is via Gweek. ....	162
Figure 4. 18 Detail of ferry crossing between Helford and Helford Passage, with Helford River Boat pontoon and Helford Point marked .....	165
Figure 4. 19 Helford Ferry crossing intention, based on reflection card survey data from 135 ferry passengers, 2018.....	169
Figure 4. 20 Helford River Boats pontoon satellite view, Source: Google Maps 2021 .....	171
Figure 4. 21 Helford Point satellite view, Source: Google Maps 2021 .....	172
Plate 4. 1 Cremyll Ferry with inside and outside seating where the control room is located above, November 2018.....	137
Plate 4. 2 Princess Yachts Limited, March 2018 (left), Brittany Ferries 'Port of Plymouth', March 2020 (right).....	140
Plate 4. 3 Towards the ferry (left to right): Durnford Street, 'Mount Edgcumbe via Cremyll Ferry -', Admirals Hard waiting area, November 2018.....	140
Plate 4. 4 Strand Street, adjacent to the Cremyll Ferry crossing, November 2018 ....	141
Plate 4. 5 Passengers arriving at Admirals Hard 1964, supplied by The Box Plymouth (left), Edgcumbe Belle at Admirals Hard, November 2018 (right) .....	142
Plate 4. 6 Passengers arriving at Cremyll Quay 1970, supplied by The Box Plymouth (left), Edgcumbe Belle at Cremyll Quay, July 2018 (right).....	143
Plate 4. 7 Cremyll Beach, 1900 in (Kittridge, 2003).....	145
Plate 4. 8 Historic Ferryman (left to right): Bill Bailey and 'Daddy' Johns of the Johns Family, supplied by David Carter. For an interview with Michael Johns talking about his family's history as ferryman, see 'Tales from the Appledore and Instow Ferry' (2019), North Devon Moving Image, creative director Amanda McCormack. Source: <a href="http://www.northdevonmovingimage.org.uk/tales-from-the-appledore--instow-ferry.html">http://www.northdevonmovingimage.org.uk/tales-from-the-appledore--instow-ferry.html</a> .....	150
Plate 4. 9 'Sheila M' (left), 'Lizzie M' (right), October 2019.....	153
Plate 4. 10 Change over time: Appledore Quay 19th century, supplied by David Carter (left), Appledore Quay, July 2018 (right) .....	155
Plate 4. 11 Appledore Slip, March 2018.....	157
Plate 4. 12 'Permitted Vessels Only', Instow Quay March 2018 (left), Waiting area for the ferry, July 2019 (right). ....	158
Plate 4. 13 Instow Sands, July 2019 .....	159
Plate 4. 14 Kurt Jackson (2019) Mixing word and water with Daphne du Maurier (1941) Frenchman's Creek, supplied by The Jackson Foundation.....	163
Plate 4. 15 HRB ferry crossing the Helford, June 2018.....	168
Plate 4. 16 Change over Time: Helford Passage 1920s, supplied by Museum of Cornish Life Helston (left) Helford Passage March 2018 (right) .....	170
Plate 4. 17 Helford Passage floating pontoon, June 2019.....	172
Plate 4. 18 Pointing towards the ferry, April 2018 (left), Helford Point waiting area, September 2018 (right) .....	173
Plate 4. 19 Helford (left to right), Shipwrights Arms, Holy Mackerel Café, Helford Village Stores, June 2018.....	174

## Chapter 5. Materialities

Figure 5. 1 Linear Line, Reflection Card Helford 109 .....	179
Figure 5. 2 Helford - Helford Passage, Source: Ordnance Survey Maps <a href="https://osmaps.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/50.10057,-5.13060,16">https://osmaps.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/50.10057,-5.13060,16</a> , supplied by Ordnance Survey .....	180
Figure 5. 3 Tidal Times week beginning Monday 19 <sup>th</sup> August 2019: Devonport (Tamar), Bideford (Torridge), Truro (Helford), Source: <a href="http://www.tide-forecast.com">www.tide-forecast.com</a> .....	184
Figure 5. 4 An illustration by skipper Hudson. The route of the Appledore – Instow ferry in relation to moored boats, incoming tide, outgoing tide, eddy currents, swing surface and bankside edges, October 2019.....	200
Figure 5. 5 An illustration by skipper Hudson. The route of the Appledore – Instow ferry in relation to transit lines, imaginary forms of connection across the river between two fixed points on the bankside, October 2019 .....	202
Figure 5. 6 Reflection Card Torridge 74.....	206
Figure 5. 7 Reflection Card Torridge 15.....	212
Figure 5. 8 A graph describing tidal movement which visualises interviewee Isaac's observation that assets are divided according to what is 'above high water', 'below high water' and 'fundus'. Source: (Ulam, 2017) .....	219
Figure 5. 9 Satellite Snapshots: Cremyll – Admirals Hard 2007 (up) Cremyll – Admirals Hard 2018 (down), Source: Google Earth (2021).....	223
Figure 5. 10 Satellite Snapshots: Appledore - Instow 2001 (up) Appledore - Instow 2019 (down), Source: Google Earth (2021) .....	224
Figure 5. 11 Satellite Snapshots: Helford - Helford Passage 2001 (up) Helford - Helford Passage 2017 (down), Source: Google Earth (2021) .....	225
 Plate 5. 1 Helford River Boats on-location tide timetable, 9th September 2018 (left) social media post relating to the state of the tide, Source: Facebook, 'Helford River Boats Ltd', 9th September 2018 (right) .....	185
Plate 5. 2 Instow Quay low Tide, July 2019 (left) Instow Quay turning tide, April 2018 (right).....	187
Plate 5. 3 Instow steps low tide, October 2019 (left) Instow steps high tide, October 2019 (right).....	188
Plate 5. 4 Depth Sounder, located in the control room of Appledore – Instow Ferry, to the left of the steering wheel, October 2019 .....	190
Plate 5. 5 Helford turning tide, 5th June 2018 12.30pm, (left) 2.54pm (right).....	192
Plate 5. 6 Tide influencing landing positions of the Cremyll Ferry 6 <sup>th</sup> March 2021, high tide, 11.10am (left) low tide, 5.40pm (right) .....	192
Plate 5. 7 Appledore Slip, rising tide, October 2019.....	194
Plate 5. 8 Sheila M crossing from Appledore to Instow, October 2019 .....	199
Plate 5. 9 Muddying the Borderline: Appledore Slip low tide July 2018 (left), Appledore Slip high tide, October 2018 (right) .....	208
Plate 5. 10 Cement filled tyre connected to buoy, July 2019 .....	226

## Chapter 6. Experiences

Figure 6. 1 Reflection Card Helford 53.....	232
Figure 6. 2 Reflection Card Torridge 120.....	233
Figure 6. 3 A bankside perspective from the river (left to right): Reflection Card Tamar 30, Tamar 79, Tamar 45.....	235
Figure 6. 4 Imagined Sharks (left to right): Reflection Card Torridge 97, Helford 65, Tamar 61, Torridge 53.....	239
Figure 6. 5 Reflection Card Torridge 53.....	240
Figure 6. 6 Reflection Card Torridge 110.....	240
Figure 6. 7 Ferry Disaster: Reflection Card Torridge 63 (left), Reflection Card Helford 60 (right).....	241
Figure 6. 8 River Monsters (left to right): Reflection Card Torridge 59, Tamar 44, Torridge 85, Torridge 44, Tamar 74, Helford 84.....	245
Figure 6. 9 Social Ferry: Reflection Card Torridge 12 (left), Reflection Card Torridge 25.....	247
Figure 6. 10 Reflection Card Helford 20.....	248
Figure 6. 11 Reflection Card Helford 108.....	249
Figure 6. 12 Reflection Card Torridge 58.....	249
Figure 6. 13 The Skipper: Reflection Card Torridge 58 (up), Reflection Card Torridge 75 (down).....	249
Figure 6. 14 Reflection Card Tamar 46.....	253
Figure 6. 15 Reflection Card Helford 113.....	254
Figure 6. 16 Reflection Card Helford 55.....	258
Figure 6. 17 Reflection Card Tamar 75.....	264
Figure 6. 18 Reflection Card Helford 137.....	265
Figure 6. 19 Reflection Card Tamar 76.....	266
Figure 6. 20 Reflection Card Helford 136.....	268
Figure 6. 21 Reflection Card Torridge 29.....	268
Figure 6. 22 Military Imagination: Reflection Card Helford 100 (left), Reflection Card Torridge 5 (right).....	269
Figure 6. 23 Reflection Card Helford 6.....	271
Figure 6. 24 Reflection Card Helford 121.....	272
Figure 6. 25 Reflection Card Helford 83.....	272
Figure 6. 26 Reflection Card Torridge 32.....	273
Figure 6. 27 Approaching Land (left to right): Reflection Card Tamar 85, Torridge 105, Helford 8.....	278
Figure 6. 28 Reflection Card Tamar 45.....	282
 Plate 6. 1 Proximity to the River, Appledore – Instow Ferry, October 2019.....	237
Plate 6. 2 'Please Keep Feet Off Seats', Cremyll Ferry, November 2018.....	254
Plate 6. 3 Sunset on the River: photo taken by Cremyll Ferry passenger Rita, November 2018.....	277

## Chapter 7. Narratives

Figure 7. 1 Reflection Card Tamar 72 summarising the associations and spatial differences on either side of the River Tamar .....	291
Figure 7. 2 Reflection Card Tamar 36 .....	304
Figure 7. 3 Reflection Card Helford 132 .....	315
Figure 7. 4 Reflection Card Torridge 20.....	325

Plate 7. 1 A photograph of Mawnan Smith Development Plan: Boundary Area and Landscape Character Assessment. Note that the limit of the plan is the perimeter of the northern side of the river, September 2018.....	294
Plate 7. 2 Regional discourse on either side of the River Tamar: 'Welcome to Cornwall', located by Cremyll Slip (left), 'First Pub in Devon: Last Pub in Devon' located by Admirals Hard, February 2018 (right).....	302
Plate 7. 3 'Time and Tide Tarry for None', Cremyll Clock, September 2019 .....	321

## Chapter 8. Riverborderscape

Figure 8. 1 The Helford River, a photo-book. Shared with permission. ....	349
Table 8. 1 Riverborders Beyond: Ferries, bank – river - bank, broader border watercourses.....	340

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High tide. The ferry inches towards the slip.

We board, clambering up metal stairs, feet wide-paced  
and hands on rail, to even the uneven sway.

We take a seat, low above water and the ferry reverses,  
spurring the river to splutter and sprinkle foam  
forging intricate, outward ripples.

Over the white noise the ferry crew speaks:

“Pay on the other side, no rush”

My eyes flitter around the boat, to the bankside buildings,  
the expanse of water and landscape stretching out on the far side  
the horizon-line distorted as river reaches up to sky.

High-masted boats sit on the water, tied to surface buoys –  
chained to riverbed.

A steely grey cormorant skirts by, in low flight,  
and the ferry picks up speed.

How wide is this river, how deep can it be?

What route does this ferry follow?

How many have crossed these waters and drifted into  
thought and imagination, time and memory?

Conversations rise as I see the other side.

The ferry slows.

The quay is angled down towards the approach,

Metal hooks anchored to the side above protective tyres

A rope is slung, a temporary affixation

Easing us to land.

Cremyll Ferry Crossing, March 2021

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Research Context

Geographers have become increasingly interested in watery spaces, such as the sea (Peters, 2015; Steinberg & Peters, 2015) canals (Kaaristo & Rhoden, 2017), rivers (Krause, 2010) and, more recently, estuaries (Neimanis, 2017) and sandscapes (Kothari & Arnall, 2020). These environments are characterised by tides (Jones, 2011) and the betweenness of land and water (Roberts, 2018). Rather than being a 'backdrop' (Langewiesche, 2004) to human action, researchers have shown that analysing water and watery spaces can provide insight into issues of materiality and movement (Peters, Steinberg & Stratford, 2018a), narrative and identity (Strang, 2004) and people's diverse experiences of living by, moving across, or under water (Hastrup & Hastrup, 2015).

At the same time, other scholars have taken an interest in borders and the experiences of crossing borders. For instance, refugees attempting to cross the sea in ill-equipped boats has been brought to national attention (Mannik, 2016) and exemplifies the relationship between water and national borders (Wolf, 1998). Borders occupy a physical and material presence in the landscape (van Houtum & Kramsch, 2017) and so the height, depth and width of borders warrant attention (Elden, 2013). Doing so widens our understanding of border spaces by drawing attention to the spaces that frame the border, as well as the 'inbetween' spaces of border landscapes.

Landscape itself is central to the study of geography. Early advocates argued that landscape should document the physical environment, terrain and territory (Sauer,

1969), as well as its representation (Cosgrove, 2012). The cultural turn has drawn attention to the individual and how landscape is experienced through the body (Ingold, 2000; Pink, 2015; Tilley & Cameron–Daum, 2017). The narratives that people use to describe such experiences has gathered interest (Wylie, 2005) and how, for example, landscape might recall memories or insights into biography (Jones & Garde-Hansen, 2012). Researchers have shown that the weather can shape experiences (Simpson, 2019) and how people move through a landscape has been studied (Gammon & Elkington, 2016), including the vehicles that people may travel in.

This thesis makes an original contribution to knowledge by drawing together these scholarly conversations in watery geographies, border studies and landscape through the concept of the ‘riverborderscape’. This term is formed through the terms ‘river’, ‘border’ ‘-scape’. The idea is illustrated in, and used to analyse the routes of estuarine passenger ferries, as they transport passengers from one side of the river to the other. In so doing, research is situated on and across the river. The river is interpreted as a spatial area: bank – river – bank and the research approach uses the crossing of a river to investigate everyday borders between places. It also uses the river to bring borders as in-between places into discussion in three key areas: materialities, experiences, narrative.

## 1.2 Research Aim and Questions

The overall research aim is to evaluate the idea of the riverborderscape through an exploration of ferry crossings in the South West of England. Four research questions emerge in relation to this aim, and shape the structure and content of

the analytical chapters in this thesis (Chapters 4 – 8). Each question addresses an element of the riverborderscape, namely: river (materialities), border (narratives), ‘-scape’ (experiences) and the riverborderscape spatial approach (bank – river – bank). Taken together, the following questions serve to address the overall research aim:

RQ1: What are the materialities that influence the river ferry crossings?

RQ2: What are the thoughts, imaginations and experiences of ferry passengers as they cross from one side of the river to the other?

RQ3: In what ways does the river ferry crossing connect and divide people and places?

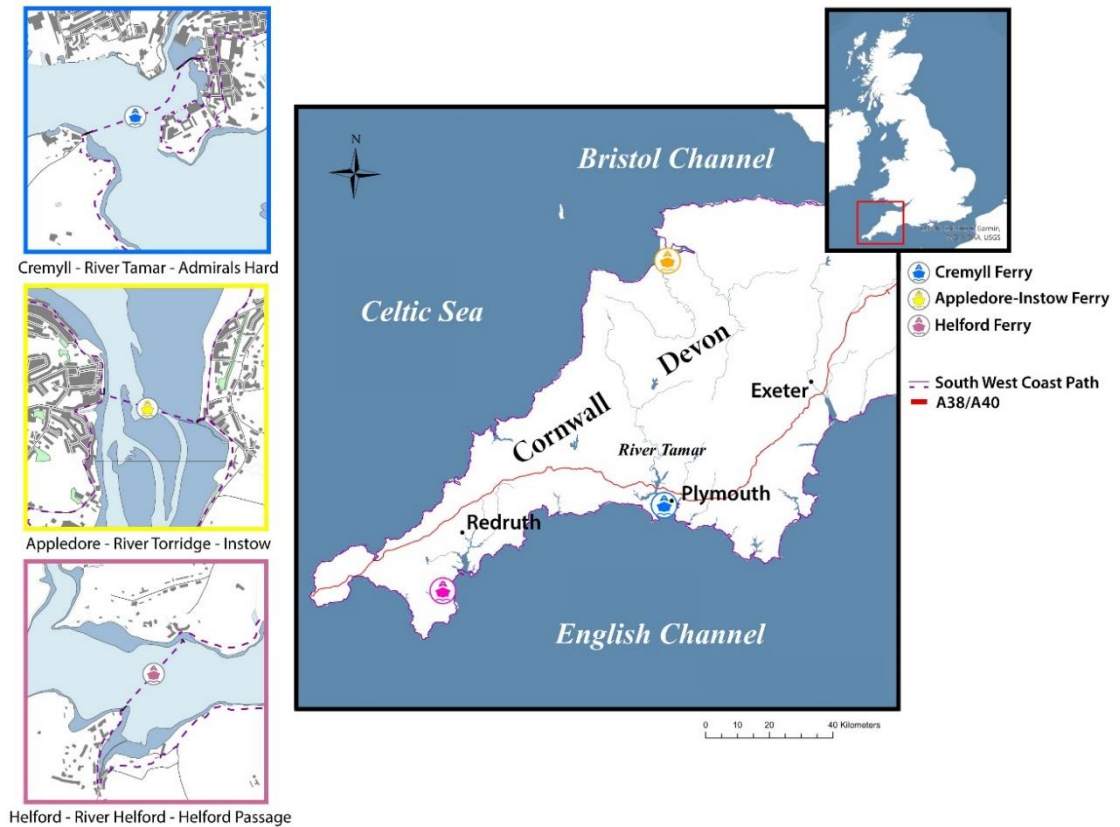
RQ4: Is the riverborderscape a productive concept to understand river crossings and adjacent bankside spaces?

The research questions emerge from gaps in the literature identified in Chapter 2. Briefly, RQ1 looks at the river itself, and watery materialities refers to elements such as tide, current, subsurface and sediment that may characterise the river crossing. Interpreted in relation to a river, the materialities of borders are discussed, in particular through the lens of three-dimensionality and the navigational routes of ferries. RQ2 focuses upon the experiences of crossing a river, and the spatial movement: bank – river – bank. This question considers how crossing a river can provide insight into the betweenness of borders, in particular river borders. RQ3 brings together the words, phrases, jokes and stories in relation to the river as an everyday border between places and considers who uses the ferry, and the impact of when the ferry does not operate. Finally, RQ4 ties together these themes to consider broader questions about rivers, borders and landscapes.

This thesis is based upon ethnographic fieldwork situated on ferries in the South West of England and a number of methods were used, including participant observation, interviews, and the development of reflection cards to encourage individuals to document their experiences of crossing a river, through a mixed qualitative and quantitative design. Whilst previous research has drawn attention to historical accounts of ferries (Tucker, 2008), or ferries that connect islands to the mainland (Vannini, 2012), the social and cultural geographies of ferries that cross rivers between places are, to date, largely unexplored.

### 1.3 Case Study Locations

The South West region was chosen as the location of research, and specifically the counties of Devon and Cornwall. This area can be described as a distinctly fluvial region: with streams, rivers, estuaries and 630 miles of coastline (Wylie, 2005). Despite road and rail bridges, one of the ways in which these watercourses are crossed is through passenger ferries. The ferries can vary in size, structure, route, and regularity and are often subject to change 'due to weather conditions, tides and times of the day' ('Estuaries and Ferries ', 2019). Three ferries, the Cremyll Ferry, Appledore – Instow Ferry and Helford River Boats, cross rivers that form an everyday border between places: between counties, district authorities and villages respectively and were analysed as case-studies for research.



**Figure 1. 1 Case Site Locations, Cremyll Ferry (River Tamar), Appledore – Instow Ferry (River Torridge) and Helford River Boats (Helford River), based in South West England. A map detail of the river crossings and bankside locations is set within the left hand panel.**

The Cremyll Ferry runs between Devon and Cornwall, where the River Tamar forms the ancient jurisdictional border between the counties. Torridge District Council is responsible for the town of Appledore and North Devon Council is responsible for the town of Instow, each town separated by the River Torridge. The Helford River forms the border of the Lizard Peninsula, with Mannacan parish council responsible for one the south of the river and Mawnan Smith parish council for the north side. The River Torridge also flows through Devon, Helford River is located in Cornwall, and the River Tamar runs between Devon and Cornwall. These three ferries cross riverborders of different scales: regional, district and parish and were selected as appropriate sites in which to conduct research. The Appledore – Instow Ferry and

Helford River Boats are 12-seater passenger ferries that operate seasonally between April and October, whilst the Cremyll Ferry runs an all-year round service, and seats 128 passengers. Despite these structural differences in capacity, each ferry takes around ten minutes to cross a tidal river, and so the length of time that individuals spend on the river was taken as an equalising factor. Situating research on and across the river, through the vessel of the ferry was a strategy to consider the navigational routes across a river (Peters, 2019), the experiences of passengers whilst crossing a river (Roberts, 2018) and analyse everyday border narratives in relation to and from the river (Newman, 2006). The sites also provided an appropriate setting for exploring the idea of the riverborderscape, to gain insights into people's experiences within and across these spaces.

## 1.4 Thesis Structure

The key themes of this thesis are explored in more detail in the following chapter, Chapter 2. That chapter reviews the academic literature relevant to the study and is structured through sections on watery geographies, rivers, borders, betweenness, and landscape; thereafter further discussing how the riverborderscape emerges as a conceptual and analytical framework.

Chapter 3 presents the research design and methods used, and the development of a research method designed to take place on-the-move. It outlines methods used for data collection, namely participant observation, mixed quantitative and qualitative reflection cards, field poetry and qualitative interviews. Data analysis is discussed and ethical issues are considered. Chapter 4 provides an overview of the regions of Cornwall and Devon, and focuses upon the history of each ferry

crossing. Archival insights are given, alongside statistical survey data from those that participated in the research to contextualise the riverborderscape: bank – river – bank.

Chapters 5 – 7 focus upon a different element of the riverborderscape, namely ‘materialities’ (RQ1), ‘experiences’ (RQ2) and ‘narratives’ (RQ3) respectively. The materiality of the riverborder (RQ1) in Chapter 5 is centred on the tidal rivers across which the ferries operate. This is a chapter which is shaped by the skipper’s account of navigating a ferry from one side of the river to the other. Such movement then introduces questions relating to border edges, as well as routes and ownership lines. Chapter 6 (RQ2), turns our attention to the experiences of passengers crossing from one side of the river to the other, and is informed and formed by the creative responses of over 300 passengers, who were invited to draw and write what they saw and experienced on the river. This chapter reflects upon the transitional space of the river - between here and there - and the imaginative realms of meaning. Chapter 7 (RQ3) examines the narratives of the river as everyday border, through stories, jokes and discusses the ferry in relation to the politics of mobility. This chapter complicates the ease of crossing over, through analysing language, humour and comparative phraseology to consider perceptions about place. Chapter 8 (RQ4) evaluates the riverborderscape as a conceptual framework and the benefits and limitations of using rivers to analyse borders and border theories to deepen and widen scholarship on rivers. To conclude, in Chapter 9, the key findings are summarised, in relation to the research questions and in dialogue with the academic literature of watery geographies, borders and landscape. I also suggest directions for future research.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the riverborderscape as a spatial approach and analytical framework. It details how the concept of the riverborderscape emerges from four strands of scholarship within the discipline of human geography and the wider social sciences. The first is the recent turn to watery geographies, where the element of water is fore-grounded, as opposed to land. The second is a renewed attention to the materiality and spatiality of borders. The third is theorisations of in-between spaces and the creative potential of crossing over between two fixed points. Fourth, landscape studies are a key influence, particularly in relation to a study of a physical terrain (materiality), embodied mobility through a dynamic and multi-sensory '-scape' (experience) and attention to the stories narrated in daily life (narrative). The riverborderscape emerges from bringing these literatures together, to make a case for researching navigable rivers that form an everyday border between places, through the routes of a passenger ferry.

Accordingly, this review structurally follows the literature in relation to: 1) the watery turn in geography; 2) rivers; 3) borders; 4) in-between spaces; 5) landscapes; before 6) outlining the riverborderscape approach and putting forward research questions that emerge from identified gaps in the literature.

### 2.2 Watery Turn

There has been a renewed interest in the study of water within the discipline of human geography and the wider social sciences (Bowles, Kaaristo & Caf, 2019; Krause & Strang, 2016; Peters & Anderson, 2016; Strang, 2004). This has been

described as the watery turn (Visentin, 2017) and has largely been influenced by Steinberg and Peters (2015) who advocated that scholars:

turn to the ocean itself: to its three-dimensional and turbulent materiality, and to encounters with that materiality, in order to explore how thinking *with* the sea can assist in reconceptualising our geographical understandings (p.248)

Their argument is that the discipline of geography had previously been 'land-locked' (Langewiesche, 2004, p.1) and the maritime world 'marginalised' (Mack, 2013, p.24) despite water being a central element of place, people and planet. Shifting attention to water, they argue, could destabilise the idea of land and terrain as 'fixed' and 'static', because water moves, in various speeds and in various ways (Jha, 2015). The question of territory, for example, is more complex in relation to the ocean, they argue, as the ocean is a 'three-dimensional' space, governed by extra-planetary forces of gravity and tides, which shift regularly and rhythmically in accordance with moon-pattern cycles (Jones, 2011). Water has an agency (Bear & Bull, 2011), and Steinberg and Peters (2015) advocate that greater attention should be given to the unique characteristics of water, what they termed the 'materiality' of water, and to those that interact with, in and across water.

At the same time as calling for a deeper understanding of the materiality and movement of water, Steinberg and Peters (2015) suggest that research should include those who 'actually *engage* the ocean, like sailors, and perhaps even more profoundly, surfers and swimmers, who become one with the waves as the waves become one with them' (p.250). This coincides with the work of other scholars who sought to understand the social, cultural and place-based meanings attached to

water, including what water means to people in their daily lives, and the relationships people have with water (Chen, MacLeod & Neimanis, 2013). A key argument in this approach is that situating research on water provides a *different* perspective of land and terrain (Krause, 2010) and that water is a useful focus for thinking about 'relationships between things and persons and between material properties and meanings' (Strang, 2014, p.133).

To summarise, the watery turn in human geography is an interest in research situated on and across water (Bear & Eden, 2011; Bear, 2015; Couper, 2018). What emerges in these studies is an interest in the unique materiality and agency of water (flow, current, tide, motion), the embodied experiences of individuals who encounter water such as swimmers, surfers, fishers, sailors (Couper, 2018) as well as the stories and narratives which emerge, showcasing the importance and value of water for everyday life (Strang, 2004).

To date, there has been an abundance of research on the sea (Anim-Addo, Hasty & Peters, 2015; Peters & Brown, 2017), in particular the geographies of ships (Gilroy, 1993; Hasty & Peters, 2012), which includes on-board communities, as well as navigational decisions (Steinberg, 2013). A separate sphere of influence has been in relation to inland canals, including the geographies of canals in a city (Roberts, 2019), the embodied experiences of those who live on canal boats for tourists (Fallon, 2012) or permanent dwellers (Bowles, 2014). The sea is different in character from linear urban water ways, and the material properties of the water shape the activities and interactions which can take place there (Bowles, Kaaristo & Caf, 2019). Whilst the field of anthropology has sought to understand human

relationships with rivers (Harris, 2015; Krause, 2017a), it is only more recently that rivers are being brought to the forefront of attention in human geography.

## 2.3 Rivers

Rivers can contribute significantly to the 'special character of places and this can be at a highly localised level' (Rogers, 2013, p.90). People have always settled by rivers (Haslam, 2008) and many cities of the world are built nearby water (Stenius *et al.*, 2014), largely due to rivers being a key strategic site for trade and transport (Tvedt & Coopey, 2010). Due to the proximity between people and rivers, researchers have shown how important they are as spaces of rest, relaxation and adventure (Prideaux & Cooper, 2009). Storey (2012), highlights how many national anthems feature a river, wherein the river not only signifies a territorial claim to land, but also shows the emotional, imaginative and affective connections between people and rivers. Cusack (2010), through an analysis of visual images, shows how rivers become a symbol for national identities. These accounts draw attention to how rivers in a landscape may have both a physical presence, as well as emotional and symbolic layers of meaning, for those who live in or travel through places. Other research shows the impact and legacy of flooding, where rising water levels can cause damage to people's homes and livelihoods (McEwen *et al.*, 2012).

Rivers are formed at different scales. A river may be a significant barrier to movement, as the watery material characteristics such as current, width, depth and flow can mean making a pathway from one side to the other challenging and, depending on the state of the water, potentially dangerous. As rivers traverse

through places, there has to be consideration of how the river is forded, bridged or crossed, so that places and the landscape on either side can be accessed.

Rivers are also distinctive features within a landscape, and, as a result have been used to mark borders between places. Many 'long-standing administrative boundaries follow rivers, demarcating counties, parishes and individual properties' (Pooley, 2005, p.152). Rivers running through cities might separate different zones, such as east from west or north from south and can, therefore, carry political, social and symbolic value. Roberts (2010), for instance, describes how the 'River Mersey forms a natural boundary to the west and south' (p.88) in the city of Liverpool, only accentuated by the 'symbolic importance of the Mersey ferry crossing in myths, narratives, and place-making in Liverpool' (p.89).

The significance of rivers as borders between places is accentuated as, historically, rivers were argued to be 'natural boundaries' (Blomley, 2008), 'written and drawn in nature' (Hele, 2008) because of both their clear 'visibility' (Johnson, 1917, p.209) in contrast to land, as well as the navigational challenges of crossing from one side to the other. Rivers were akin to mountains as a basis for boundary definition (Alesina, Easterly & Matuszeski, 2006). Despite scholars problematising the fixity and legacy of the oft colonial practice of dividing territories by virtue of the course of rivers (Agnew, 2008), identifying that there is 'nothing at all "natural" – physically or socially – to borders' (Fall, 2010, p.144), rivers remain one of the most common geographical features used to demarcate political borders (Nail, 2016; Paasi, 2011; Storey, 2012), at different scales.

Scholarly attention has been given to the over 260 rivers worldwide that form or cross international borders (Norman, Cohen & Bakker, 2013; Thomas, 2017; Wolf, 1998). Research has been situated on rivers which form international borders between places, such as the cross-border region work of Durrschmidt et al., (2002) who investigate the daily identities and experiences of those living in the twin-border cities Guben (Germany) and Gubin (Poland) which are separated by a car and pedestrian bridge across the Neisse River. Coplan (2001) similarly situates her research in a cross-border river region along the Caledon River between South Africa and Lesotho. She notes that '10,000 – 12,000 people cross the Maseru Bridge' (p.106) every day, passing through border infrastructures such as checkpoints, surveillance and police officers to monitor, control and regulate such movement (cf. Elden & Crampton, 2016). Grieves (2017) situated his research around the Detroit River, between Detroit (USA) and Windsor (Canada). He analysed radio broadcasts 'from both sides of the border' (p.142) to consider how media stories told to residents living on either side of the river influence wider perceptions of place and identity. Whilst the river frames the regional focus of this research, the authors provide no further mention of the effect of the river in separating two nationalities, living on either bankside.

Where a navigable rivers forms a border between two states, the dividing line follows the 'thalweg of the stream' (Hyde, 1912; McCaffrey, 2019) the thalweg being the deepest navigable point of the river. This legal concept of the thalweg attunes our attention to the river in-between, and also the sediment and river channel below the surface. The thalweg line is visible in some maps as a dotted line along the middle of a river, to illustrate where the two sides of the river meet,

marking the divide. The thalweg line suggests that the space between the river banks should also be given consideration.

Returning to the local-scale is one way in which to explore the role of rivers flowing through landscape and places, and the complex ways in which rivers might act as 'symbolic barriers' (Roth, 1997, p.23), or as points of connection. Rivers emerge as paradoxical spaces: they can both connect and divide; they both move and are fixed as 'permanent blue lines on our maps, constant waypoints and lasting landmarks' (McMillin, 2011, p.xii). These dynamics are made more complex when we consider the river itself, formed through the materiality of tides. Jones (2011, p.2) identifies that although,

tides have received attention from the natural sciences and from society in terms of those who live and work with them, they have received far less attention in the social sciences and within that, human geography approaches to place and landscape.

He interprets tides through rhythm, temporality and as a marginal space, where the mixing between salt and fresh water in inter-tidal areas such as estuaries are critical areas for interactions between human and non-human life. Tides cause strong currents and water levels to rise and fall daily, and are a mixing between salt water, fresh water and land.

This thesis builds on the recent interest in watery geographies outlined above. It contributes to a particular focus on rivers, a form of watery space that have received less attention from geographers, and turns attention towards contexts where rivers form everyday borders. It has been highlighted that rivers can both connect and divide places, creating an in-between space that has not yet been

given much consideration. I have identified that, to do so, attention should focus on a river's materiality.

Through this thesis, I take on Jones' (2011) call to look at the movement of rivers through tides, and use tides to approach 'place and landscape', as well as to understand the river itself, and other materialities that may characterise the river. This section has demonstrated that rivers are important features within a landscape and are given a range of meanings, personally, socially and culturally. But it has also shown that greater attention needs to be given to the river's presence within the landscape, and in particular its movement, in relation to tides. Whilst not all parts of a river are tidal, and not all rivers are tidal, this is an important but neglected feature of most rivers. The materiality of rivers, including flow and current, is important to consider, as differences between low tide and high tide affect how the river might be encountered. Taken together, the investigation here is on the 'river' which is the first part of the riverborderscape. The next section develops themes discussed in relation to geographical contexts where rivers form everyday borders between places, or indeed borders at different scales. The next section therefore contextualises the 'border', and considers how materiality might affect borders.

## 2.4 Borders

Within geography, the study of borders has largely been the preserve of political geography, approached broadly as a means for organising and differentiating political space (Wastl-Walter, 2012) through which 'territories and peoples are respectively included or excluded within a hierarchical network of groups,

affiliations and identities' (Newman, 2003, p.50). Much attention has been given to borders associated with the rise of modern states (Mountz, 2009) and it is well observed that there are 'almost 70 border walls around the world, up from 15 in 1989' (Vallet, 2014, p.3). These walls are just the 'visible physical manifestations of what is a much wider set of state practices to control movement' (Jones *et al.*, 2017, p.1).

However, there is also a recognition that borders are not just fixed lines on a map, 'sovereign territories separated by lines and marked by different colours' (Mezzadra & Neilson, 2013, p.3). This is particularly evident when borders are seen from the ground level, as rivers move, sands shift, tides rise and fall, coastlines erode, islands emerge, ice melts, soil is redistributed and trees grow (cf. Nail, 2016, p.6). These questions of definition become more complex when attention is given to the 'material and physical dimensionality of borders' (van Houtum & Kramsch, 2017, p.2) meaning their presence within the landscape. There are various types of physical borders, such as walls, fences, ditches, dykes and rivers which all have a physical presence within the landscape and accordingly have different impacts and effects on people's lives.

Blomley (2008) shows how a shift in the course of the Missouri River in the United States of America moved a large area of demarcated land from its western to its eastern bank. Dragićević (2013) describes how Serbian farmers lost their arable land on the river bank of the Danube River as a result of erosion, whilst Croatian farmers on the opposite bankside gained land on this fluid 'border line' (Das *et al.*, 2014, p.12). Elden (2017) cites a case where land and inlets adjacent to the Meuse

River had to be officially swapped between Belgium and Holland, because the sediment build up (as a result of dredging) cut off access to an island, and the lack of surveillance led to illicit activity in the borderland.

Recognising the physical aspect of borders, and that they may move or shift helps us to consider the spaces on either side of the border line, and the ways in which they are impacted by the material component, whether built or natural, which is demarcated as the border. There has been growing attention to whether a border should be interpreted as a line, distinguishing distinct spaces, or as a 'zone' and area of interaction. Some theorists prefer the terms 'borderland' (Amilhat-Szary, 2015 ; Anzaldúa, 1999b; Bello, 2016; Clad, 2011; Gellner, 2013; Haller, 2000) or 'borderzone' (Hudson *et al.*, 2011; Shneiderman, 2013) to consider the interrelationship between the border and what is on either side. This approach challenges the simple divide between here and there (Newman, 2006), and shows how borders can be complex spaces of mixing between people, languages, cultures and resources (cf. Anderson, 2002; Church & Reid, 1999; Jakubowski *et al.*, 2019; Kennedy & Roudometof, 2002; Methi *et al.*, 2019; Vila, 2000). Anzaldúa (1999) describes how the borderland can be a space of hybridity, where the rigidity of the border is challenged through the everyday practices of those who live there and those who can and cannot cross from one border space to the other.

As well as the area on either side of the border, what might be termed the width, other scholars, such as Elden (2013) have asked, 'how does thinking about volume – height and depth instead of surfaces, three dimensions instead of areas – change how we think about the politics of space? (p.35). This follows Weizman (2002) who

criticised geopolitics for being a 'flat discourse which largely ignores the vertical dimension and tends to look across rather than cut through the landscape' (quoted in Graham, 2016, p.1). In the border landscape of Israel and Palestine, he used a vertical lens to explore 'infrastructural partitions amongst complex volumetric borders' (Weizman, 2004), including over ground bridges, tunnels, air space and sewerage systems and in so doing, demonstrates the ways in which materialities at the border become contested and resisted. Squire (2016) used such a framework to examine underwater volumes, through submarines. This approach to border spaces is similar to that of Steinberg and Peters (2015) who call for a three-dimensional perspective of the oceans. Certainly, as demonstrated in the examples of Blomley (2008) and Dragićević (2013), water environments, and the presence or absence of water based on tide cycles, more strikingly show us the importance of analysing these spaces and giving attention to the material aspects of both water and borders.

This is most apparent within landscapes where land and water mix, overlap and connect, such as chars, estuaries and mudflats, 'locations at the edges or interfaces between spaces' (Peters, Steinberg & Stratford, 2018b, p.3). Lahiri-Dutt and Samanta (2013) argue that the location of chars, 'on the border of land and water makes them 'hybrid environments', neither fully land or fully water' (p.8) as a char denotes a piece of land that rises from the bed of a river, changing in shape and size in accordance with the tidal influence of the river. Their research follows undocumented people living on chars within these turbulent lands, demonstrating not only that the char environments are distinct from the mainland, but also highlighting the livelihoods and socio-economic fragility associated with these

spaces. Sarma (2013) similarly conducts research in these char-spaces, as a way of reflecting upon the alleged stability of borders as, until recently, chars around Bangladesh and India were borderlands, falling inside and outside of the two states due to the history of colonial division. Sengupta (2018) shows how moving between the chars was often a crossing of political borders that, although illegal, was necessary as a result of monsoons causing the disappearance and reappearance of char islands. This draws attention to the flux and changeability of water-land environments, in terms of height and depth, area and width, as scholars interested in the materiality of borders and terrain have identified.

In combination with a recognition of the materiality of borders, analysing borders from a social geographies and everyday perspective has become influential. According to Anzaldúa (1999b), 'life is entangled with border crossings' (p.100). By this she means that borders can be drawn around individuals and communities in the physical landscape (walls, rivers, sea), through political demarcations (nationality) and the personal, such as within the body (expectations of gender, identity, sexuality, race, class, language). Through her work, she acknowledges, defies and crosses over these borders, to arrive at something new (cf. Anzaldúa, 1999a). There has been a growing awareness of the daily interaction between people and borders. More recently, Diener and Hagen (2012) observe that most people 'cross hundreds of geographic boundaries on a daily basis' (p.1), most of the time without even realising it. Their interpretation is much broader than that of formal political borders, is set within the context of everyday life within 'various spaces, whether familial, social or economic' (p.2) and includes examples such as

private property, fences and workplaces. This approach considers everyday structures and the more subtle entanglements between people, place and borders.

To further examine borders, there has been a renewed emphasis on everyday practices and discourses that create and subvert the notion of identity and differences in spaces, to challenge the static and state-led view of the border (Van Houtum, 2005). Newman and Paasi (1998) have argued that attention should be given to the everyday lives and narratives of those who live on the border. It is through narratives that 'people make sense of and communicate their ideas and experiences of borders' (Prokkola, 2009, p.21), and so through careful attention to language, an insight is gleaned into how people interact with borders and shows how borders can mean different things to different people. It is only by drawing attention to the individual and collective stories, they argue, that it is possible to see the 'different types of barrier or interaction functions of the border' (Newman, 2006, p.154). Everyday narratives therefore provide an insight into border experiences.

This section has problematised any fixed binary of land and water, and this is accentuated when, inspired by the watery turn in geography, we consider environments such as mudflats (Whitt, 2018) and chars (Lahiri-Dutt & Samanta, 2013; Sarma, 2013). In the context of river borders, these understandings further undermine any idea of the border as a simple dividing line. Taken together, this brings to the fore debates around the materiality of borders, and whether the border is seen as a line, as an area, or as a zone. Therefore, not only the border itself, but the spaces on either side of the border are to be considered. Elden's

(2013) research and consideration of the material turn (Anderson & Wylie, 2009; Graham, 2016) showed how borders should be viewed as three-dimensional, through the lens of height and depth. Altogether, borders were to be seen as mobile, fluid and shifting influences in relation to people's experience of crossing over and negotiating these spaces.

I have also argued that there has been a growing awareness of social and cultural borders, at a local scale and as experienced in people's everyday lives. While people cross geographical borders all the time (Diener and Hagen 2012), I have identified a gap in the scholarship in relation to understanding the process of that crossing. For instance, I cited literature that took as a case site rivers which form borders between places (Durr Schmidt, 2002) and yet the transition of individuals moving from one side of the river to the other, was not, in that particular context, pursued further. If a river is a border, what are the narratives and experiences of individuals as they are moving from one side to the other? Following McConnell's (2017)'s question, 'what happens *at* the boundary, the threshold? (p.140). Here, there is a greater need to understand perspectives on and at the border, and build on the work of scholars who have focused on the 'in-between' and liminal, which helps bring the border into focus.

## 2.5 Between

The border, Nail (2016) argues, is a site *par excellence* to explore the space between. He gives an analogy that when a piece of paper is cut, two separate sheets emerge. And yet, where the scissors intersect with the paper, a gap

emerges. It is this middle section, at the site of the border which he is most interested in. Nail (2016, p.3) explains,

The border of a state has two sides. On one side the border touches (and is thus part of) one state, and on the other side the border touches (and is thus part of) the other. But the border is not only its sides that touch the two states; it is also a third thing: the thing in between the two sides that touch the states. This is the fuzzy zone like phenomenon of inclusive distinction that many theorists have identified as neither/nor, or both/and.

Although the outer limits of the border are recognised, Nail helps us to focus upon the space created in the 'central zone', the point at which the two sides meet, the space between the edges. This point is reiterated by Yildiz (2016), who argues that the 'borders phenomenon's task [is] of creating and constructing 'in-betweenness' (p.5).

The writer Robert MacFarlane expresses a similar point, in a more lyrical, poetic and everyday way. He sees borders as an embedded part of the landscape; evident, for instance, in the differentiation between varied terrains. Set within a chapter where he describes walking a route across an estuary only accessible at low tide, Macfarlane (2012, p.78) writes,

We lack – we need – a term for those places where one experiences a "transition" from a known landscape [...] to somewhere we feel and think significantly differently. I have for some time been imagining such transitions as "border crossings". These borders do not correspond to national boundaries, and papers and documents are unrequired at them. Their traverse is generally unbiddable, and no reliable map exists of their routes and outlines.

The idea of movement between terrains as 'border crossings' has synergy with Nail's description of the 'fuzzy zone' between the two sides. MacFarlane goes further than Nail to suggest that there should be a focus on the 'routes' between these different types of landscapes, and a greater understanding of what occurs in such a place of transition.

This intricate relationship between borders and liminality is expressed by Andrew and Roberts (2012, p.1) who note,

The liminal already in some ways connotes the *spatial*: a boundary, a border, a transitional landscape. The liminal also exhibits *temporal* qualities; marking a beginning, as well as an end, but also duration in the unfolding of a spatio-temporal process.

According to Turner (1974) liminality is the 'literal crossing of a threshold which separates two distinct areas, one associated with the subject's pre-ritual or pre-liminal status, and the other with [their] post-ritual or post-liminal status' (p.58). A threshold could be a structure such as a door or bridge (Simmel, 1994) or a wider spatial terrain such as desert or sea (Mannik, 2016). Liminal places might be characterised by danger, and uncertainty, in the movement from a known to an unknown place (Rink, 2020), or indeed excitement and imagination. Newman (2003) suggests how the 'narrative of border crossing is one which is accompanied by curiosity tinged with fear and uncertainty' (p.21). For example, Andrews and Roberts (2012) describe 'the vast expanse of sandflats and mudflats at Morecambe Bay [...] an area notorious for its fast moving tides and treacherous quicksand' (p.6), as a liminal landscape, which is threatening and dangerous by virtue of the swift changes that occur within that landscape. They also identify and depict the sea,

which 'represents both a natural barrier and a potential threat; a reminder that landscapes, symbolic or otherwise, undergo a process of constant change' (p.6) as an example of a liminal landscape, as well as a ship, 'held in suspension' (p.11) between the land and the river. These three spaces, of the sea, estuary and ships are taken forward in this section, for further examination.

Historically and spatially, the sea, as well as other water bodies has long been associated with liminality and border crossings. In Ancient Greek thought, 'the sea is associated with a vast array of hazards, though it was often a profitable and necessary passage between lands' (Beaulieu, 2015, p.15). Mack (2013) shows how in West African societies, the sea was a realm where the spirits of ancestors lived and so crossing this threshold was done with great trepidation. In other traditions, immersion in the sea was used to represent 'life-changing transitions such as marriage and the passage into adulthood' (Beaulieu, 2008, p.1) or to symbolise a spiritual connection (Bradley, 2012). Steinberg (2015, p.3) demonstrates that the sea creates tension,

a space of both sanctuary and danger; an alien environment but also a habitat; a surface for crossings, but also a site of distinct points; liquid water and ice; imagined and real.

Placing together a string of paradoxes reflects how he sees the sea as a space of in-between; in tension between these various categories.

The crossing of rivers has also been an important part of mythical and imaginative literature on liminality. Rivers have presented a 'potent metaphor for the passage of time, for life, for renewal in a way that solid landscape cannot do so easily'

(Cusack, 2010, p.2). Crossing a river can be associated with obstacles and hazards, and is accordingly given a symbolic dimension, to imagine or represent what might be on the other side (Busch, 2007). McMillin (2011, p.127-128) observes the significance of river crossings in literature,

Crossing the river turns direction on its side; it is a transverse movement, only remotely connected to the waterways' beginning or conclusion. One crosses to get to the other side (and perhaps back again), the river's current both pushing and pulling one's attention to the present, at the junction of the past and the future. In this temporal regard crossing resembles being by the river, but crossing implies a more physically active mode of experiencing the stream than by-the-river meditation; and though the act of crossing can produce a meditative response, writers tend to use crossing not as an end in itself but as a means of creating possibilities. [...] A river to be crossed operates more as an obstacle or marker, distinguishing one side from the other and sometimes deterring ready movement between the two. [...] Crossing over borders between states, whether political states or states of mind, can lead one into entirely new circumstances, and writings that deal with crossing rivers often have a transformative quality, even though the physical distance traversed may be minimal and the physical nature of there not much different from here.

The connection between rivers and between spaces is discussed in this passage. Crossing a river has a temporal dimension, an explicit connection to Turner's (1974) definition of liminal spaces as individuals find themselves between two adjacent banks, representing the 'past'; where one has just been, and the 'future'; where one is going. The material and physical 'current' of the river is identified as a key part of the embodied experience, 'pushing and pulling', in a three-dimensional and active way. McMillin suggests that rivers enable us to reflect upon border spaces, whether large scale or individual 'states of mind', and that a focus on the crossing of rivers provide an insight into the process of betweenness. Some writers, he

argues, integrate river crossings into their texts to 'create possibilities', or provide a 'transformative' quality. Here, the distance from one bank to the other does not matter, so much as how the physical act of crossing between land and water can shape individual perspectives and provide insight into the betweenness of spaces. Whilst McMillin (2011) elegantly shows how crossing rivers has been narrated within literature such as novels and poems, there is also a need to explore the social and cultural geographies of the everyday crossing of rivers.

Another scholar interested in betweenness is anthropologist, Andrew Irving. He located his border crossing research (2015) on four bridges across the East River, New York, USA to understand thoughts and experiences of in-between spaces, and focus upon the thoughts of those walking from one side to the other. Seeing the bridge as a structure in which 'a person is no longer attached to the land, or the city' (p.145) he showed the bridge to be a complex site of sensing and imagining, and positions the bridge as a structural site through which themes relating to borders, crossings and personal experiences could be foregrounded. He discusses how respondents reported vertigo, looking down on the river from such a great height, and noted the sound of traffic, on the bridge. Whilst his study shows the potential for analysing structural spaces such as bridges to understand liminality, a bridge is necessarily upwardly distanced from water, and so does not provide an intimate perspective of the river.

Within geography, the work of Cresswell is helpful in highlighting the importance of focus on the time and space of movement between spaces (Cresswell, 2010). He argues that such movement depends on a variety of factors, including speed,

route, scale, rhythm and friction, an approach which has been influential (Cook, 2013). Others have similarly suggested the benefit of research situated in the points 'between A and B' (Bassi, 2017; Gilroy, 1993; Irving, 2015; Teunissen, 2018), with Peters and Turner (2015, p.3) arguing the rationale that,

through paying attention to what happens *during* movement and the "constituent parts" that make up movement, we can better understand what it means to move (or not) and the experiences and politics of motion.

They then go on to suggest (p.29),

The ship is an ideal space from which to investigate this because the ship moves (A to B on the sea); yet it is also a platform on which further movements (or lack thereof) take place.

Likewise, I suggest that ferries, routinely crossing rivers and transporting passengers from one side to the other, are an ideal vessel to situate an exploration of rivers as borders.

### 2.5.1 Ferries

River ferries have existed since humans 'first wished to cross regularly from one bank to another' (Martin, 1980, p.viii), with perhaps the best known ferry operator being recorded in Greek mythology: Charon, who transported the souls of the dead across the river Styx, taking them from the land of the living into the underworld (Sullivan, 1950). The river is portrayed as a physical barrier between this life (of the living) and the next (of the dead), and the ferry the only possible passage between the two.

Despite such a rich mythology, the social and cultural research on the role of everyday ferry operators, and their navigational routes and calculated decisions

whilst steering a ferry from one side of a river to the other is in its infancy. Peters (2019), in the context of cross-channel shipping has recently suggested that 'more attention must be paid to routeing – to the invisible lanes etched across the oceans, seas – and indeed into inland water courses that ships forge, form and follow' (p.3). In this, she recognises that water is not a surface space, but a vertical space, with different water depths that depend upon the movement of sediment within the channel. Therefore, routes must be seen in '3D' (p.4), an analogous call to the way in which borders must be seen as three-dimensional (Bridge, 2013; Steinberg & Peters, 2014; Steinberg & Peters, 2015). Working with this approach, I suggest that contemporary ferry routes across rivers can similarly be seen through the lens of routes and border studies, which helps us consider rivers as three-dimensional, complex and shifting terrains. Through rivers, and the routes that ferry operators traverse, it is clear that the 'border is not a metaphor, the border is literally and actually in motion' (Nail, 2016, p.3), and the river is a site of betweenness, liminality and border crossing. A focus upon the routes of the ferry help us frame the river through what takes place 'between A and B' (Cresswell, 2010, p.20).

The geographer Philip Vannini (2012) has shown the significance of ferries as a mode of transport. His studies in Canada focus on the perspectives of those who live on islands where the only access link to the mainland is through a ferry (Vannini, 2011). For example, he shows how the ferry is integrated into the daily routines of islanders, with activities synchronised around the ferry timetable (cf. Hodson & Vannini, 2007). He also draws attention to the spaces on-board ferries, such as waiting areas, play-areas and the deck to consider the different forms of

entertainment and social interactions which take place whilst on the move. His research into interactions on-board ties into work by Roberts (2018) who suggest that those who travel together, in particular during the liminal period, may experience a 'strong social bond and sense of camaraderie as "fellow travellers" in the ritual in which they are taking part' (p.36). Vannini's approach shows the importance of taking into account the diverse experiences of passengers who travel on a ferry.

An historical account of ferries crossing rivers in the UK has been documented by Kittridge (2003) and Tucker (2008). Tucker's research identifies sites along rivers in Gloucestershire and on the River Thames (Tucker, 2012), where, before bridges, there used to be a ferry crossing at every mile. She is interested in gathering evidence in the material landscape, such as slips, quays, stones, as well as in written accounts, such as pamphlets and title deeds to provide an historic account. She highlights the infrastructure on either bankside such as footpaths, pubs and hotels, which were utilised by people waiting for the ferry service. Kittridge (1984, 2003) is more interested in the material structure of the ferry, such as whether rowing boat or steam powered vessels. His collection of archival photographs gives an insight into the historical vibrancy of water crossings for recreational and routine uses. Although many ferry crossings have been superseded by bridges, (Jones & Fairclough, 2016) some remain. Artist Laura Denning (2017) has filmed her own experiences of crossing a river on a contemporary ferry, running between Teignmouth and Shaldon (Devon) to convey a sense of timelessness on the water.

Whilst there is benefit in tracing the historical routes and role of ferries, I am interested in using the vessel of passenger ferries, designed to travel back and forth across a cross-section of a river, to situate an exploration into betweenness, rivers and everyday borders. Through their transverse movement between land and water, ferries provide an intimate encounter with the river, which is intensified by their small size and necessitates careful navigational decisions and demarcated routes. Presently, there is very limited scholarly research on the social and cultural geographies of contemporary passenger ferries.

The above has argued for the importance of attention to: a) the river and materialities of the river; b) river as border; c) in-between spaces; and d) the ferry as a vessel in which to experience and situate those spaces. The next section will introduce the importance of the '-scape' to show how the tradition of landscape geographies help us to conceptualise these issues further. Thereafter, in the following section, I explore how ideas of landscape may further enrich the concept of the riverborderscape, through passenger ferries.

## 2.6 Landscapes

Is landscape a scene we are looking *at*, or a world we are living *in*? Is landscape all around us or just in front of us? Do we observe or inhabit landscape?

(Wylie, 2007, p.4)

Landscape has been an integral facet to the discipline of geography, and yet Tilley and Cameron-Duam (2017) argue that is a subject of study that 'belongs to

nobody' (p.1), as it has been interpreted so diversely through so many fields of scholarship.

Landscape was first used as a broad term to describe the artistic representation of inland scenery, such as woodlands, or the countryside, including the array of light and dark on the canvas, as well as the detail within, such as flowers and trees (Albala, 2011). Observation was certainly one of the first ways in which landscape was interpreted within the discipline of geography. Sauer (1969) argued that 'geography is knowledge gained by observation' (p.400) and so advocated for a close attention to the changes within the landscape, such as the shifts of seasons. This detached perspective, with landscape being 'out there' (Wylie, 2007, p.1) made it possible for early geographers to document, detail, observe and notice the changes through factual and supposedly objective mechanisms.

Cosgrove and Daniels (1988) contributed to a shift in the understanding of landscape, by arguing that the concept of landscape was a way of seeing the world. The principal metaphor they equated to landscape was that of a text, which could be read. To recognise landscape as a text expanded its meaning, and enabled a consideration of landscape representation in art, maps, texts and other imagery. Quite often, these 'maps of meaning' (Jackson, 2012, p.ii) were entangled within authority and power relations. This approach was criticised by feminist geographers, such as Rose (2013), who argued that such an objective way of seeing was enrolled within a masculine gaze. She contested the fixity of landscape, as such an approach presumed and argued that neither land nor the meanings attributed are stable. Rather than the geographer being a detached figure, observing and

demarcating observations in the landscape - thus rendering them as invisible - she suggested that the personality and positionality of the researcher should be brought to the fore. Their identity, she argued, was essential to the way in which they were seeing and experiencing the world, and thus should be reflected upon more critically.

This gave rise to a movement broadly known as 'landscape phenomenology' (Tilley, 1997, p.5), which relates to the individual and the subjective experience of landscape, through the body. This reverses the idea that landscape is 'out there' or that there is a binary relationship between humans and landscape. Rather, this is an understanding that landscape is lived, and lived in, and 'through living in it, the landscape becomes part of us' (Ingold, 1993, p.155). This approach argues that a place owes its character to the experiences it affords to those who spend time there – to the sights, sounds and smells that constitute its specific ambience, and hence, the dynamic between landscape and people is relational.

Although recognising that landscape has been interpreted diversely, I draw on three main elements in the following section, to further interrogate this chapter's argument to foreground and define rivers, borders and crossing water. The first element is the materialist approach to landscape, where attention is given to the physical elements of a landscape, including ground and terrain. The second, linked to this, is an attention to the experiences of individuals within a landscape, including senses, emotions and movement. The third element is how landscape is narrated and imagined by those who move through it. After a discussion of these entangled elements of landscape, I then consider how spaces other than 'land'

have been brought to attention by scholars through the suffix '-scape', before justifying my case for the riverborderscape.

### 2.6.1 Materialities

A materialist approach to landscape is a shift away from that which is represented in art, drawing or text to the 'grounded messiness of everyday life and the minutiae of material practices that constitute it' (Tilley & Cameron-Daum, 2017, p.5). It recognises that landscapes are not just a backdrop to human action, but people make them and are made by them (Bender & Winer, 2020). The material turn in landscape is analogous to the material turn in borders, as discussed a little earlier in this chapter, and for the purposes of this thesis, are seen together. It leads us to consider the terrain, including its angle, height, slope, gradient as well as what material the ground is composed of, such as sand, water, mud. It is also sensitive to the wider context such as weather, temperature, wind direction and atmosphere, and its impact.

Olwig (1996), an early advocate of materiality, argued that quite simply the 'land' in landscape should be given attention, arguing that the term denotes a physical area, such as a territory, province, district or region. In short, this shifts attention to the 'land', which might include the types of terrain, the extent of the area, the boundaries and whom it might belong to. Such an understanding introduces questions in relation to legality and land ownership (Linklater, 2014; Shrubsole, 2019), and the way in which ownership has changed and transformed the landscape. Tilley and Cameron-Daum (2017) go further, arguing that the materialist turn in studies of landscape requires the researcher to be in the

environment they are researching, to 'experience the landscape through the sensual and sensing body, observing and interacting with others' (p.5).

### 2.6.2 Experiences

A focus on the materiality of the landscape has become closely entangled with embodied experiences, such as walking (Jones *et al.*, 2008), looking (Crouch, 2001), driving (Bissell, 2018; Edensor & Holloway, 2008), cycling (Spinney, 2011), climbing (Rickly, 2016) and gardening (Crouch, 2003). Inspired by the watery turn, and expanded to water contexts, this has also included swimming (Bates & Moles, 2020a), kayaking (Sanford, 2007) and sailing (Couper, 2018). Philosopher Merleau-Ponty argues that the body should be the 'very basis of experience' (in Crossley, 1995, p.44) and is, therefore, a key way through which landscapes are encountered. Simpson (2019, p.1067), for instance, shows how the atmosphere, such as air quality, temperature, and wind direction impacts upon the routes of a cyclist through a landscape, demonstrating the,

pervasive connectedness between person and environment in terms of the agential action of wind on body or even through the environment entering into, and potentially settling in, the body of cyclists.

Others (Edensor, 2016) have demonstrated how landscape is tactile, shaping capacities to move, the experiences of being on the move and the 'changing landscape shaped by the atmosphere' (Choy, 2012, p.139). Wylie (2005), documents a single day walking on the South West Coast Path, and his paper discusses various aspects of his walking experience, arguing that the self emerges through being in the landscape. Writing whilst walking, he reflects upon feelings

of solitude, pain, and the relationship between land and water from the perspective of the coast path. Others have noted the relationship between memory and the landscape (Jones & Garde-Hansen, 2012; Schama, 1996) in relation to change (Skaloš & Kašparová, 2012), or personal biography (Pearson, 2006).

Jackson (1997) argued that landscape should be thought of in terms of driving through it, and being in it (cf. Wylie, 2002). There has been a greater recognition of the various vehicles which travel through landscape, and the way in which the landscape is encountered at speed, and in relation to the materiality of various structures, which relates also to the mobilities turn in human geography (Chapter 3). Travelling up (Beedie, 2003), along (Larsen, 2001), down (Garofano & Govoni, 2012) and through different landscapes using various means of transport is one way to explore the relationship between landscape, self and the experiences and encounters within landscape. Bissell and Overend (2015), for instance, discuss the fluid relationship between time and space on the move. Their paper, about train journeys is partially located on a train, and shows how thought is 'directly related to the places and landscapes that we move through and past' (734). They recognise the irony of such a fast processing of information, both kinaesthetic and visual, whilst they themselves are seated for the majority of the journey.

This leads into a third key factor within landscape studies. Landscape does not only involve an attention to the materiality of terrain, and the sensory and bodily experiences of those within and moving across landscape, but academics are also interested in the language used to describe such encounters.

### 2.6.3 Narratives

Árnason, Ellison and Vergunst (2012) explain how landscapes are imagined, experienced and then recollected through language: in the stories people tell of their journeys through them. Attention should therefore be given to the associative words and thoughts attributed to different kinds of landscapes, recognising that language reflects the range of responses and cultural interpretations, based upon personality and positionality (Corner, 1992).

Narrative in human geography corresponds to the words used by people in places to describe their subjective experiences of the world. As people spend time in landscape, it is recognised that people might have a strong attachment to that place (Tuan, 1977). A particular landscape may be central to the development of personal identity and a sense of self, as people define themselves in part according to the landscapes in which they have spent time. Paying attention to the language that people use to describe their relationship to a landscape is therefore important in understanding the significance of that landscape (Cumming & Norwood, 2012). For example, Jarratt and Sharpley (2017) demonstrate how interviewees referred to Morecombe Bay through descriptive language such as 'picturesque', 'beautiful', 'sublime' (p.359). Weeden (2011) reflects upon those who claim to have found a sense of inner peace when close to the water. Others use narrative to describe their place-based attachments to landscapes, and its significance in their daily lives (Prokkola, 2009; Willett, 2010).

Ideas about shared understandings of a given landscape can also be shaped by the media, including images, literature, art, poetry and representations through

online forums. Narratives about rivers and waterways are revealed not only through language, but also through drawing and other more creative modes of representation. Mackintosh (2005), for instance, became interested in how children thought about rivers, and so asked them to draw a river, from beginning to end (cf. Wilson & Goodwin, 1981). Tapsell (1997) asked children to draw their ideal river, and the majority of drawings included features such as ducks, trees, flowers, and birds. These studies are interested in the various features of a river that children pick out, and also reveal the imaginative potential of rivers, as children were shown to imagine features such as whales, that were not within the actual landscape.

Narratives can show what landscapes mean to people, and narratives are diverse, incorporating both the oral and the written. Narrative also connects scholarly approaches towards water spaces and border studies. Strang (2004), for instance, argues that it is through narratives that people describe the value of water. Prokkola (2009) argues that it is through narratives that 'people make sense of and communicate their ideas and experiences of borders' (p.21). Both recognise that narratives can reveal differing priorities, attitudes and viewpoints and that narratives might differ from personal experiences (cf. Paasi, 2017; Scalise, 2015). There is also a scholarly thread that further connects the literature in relation to water and borders. Borders have been recognised as both 'bridges, gateways and meeting points or barriers, obstacles and points of separation' (Diener & Hagen, 2012, p.2). Rivers too have been defined as having 'two faces: they have been bridges and routes of traffic and interaction, and they have been barriers and boundaries' (Roth, 1997, p.20). The similarities in description requires further

investigation, and suggests that rivers, and the crossing of rivers is a site in which to investigate borders. This section has demonstrated the utility of the suffix ‘-scape’ in creating a theoretical approach which diversely pays attention to the material, experiences and narratives within a particular landscape. In the following section, I consider how the suffix ‘-scape’ has been extended to include other spaces.

#### 2.6.4 -Scape

The influence of the landscape approach is evidenced by the wide spectrum of studies which, inspired by the ‘land’ in landscapes, have played with the term to create their own neologisms for other spaces. Examples include ‘cityscape’ to signify an urban landscape (Rosen & Charney, 2016) ‘mindscape’ (Slusser & Rabkin, 1989) to refer to the internal realm of the mind and imagination, as well as ‘soundscape’, first coined by Southworth (1970) to pay attention to the acoustic, non-visual senses and perceptions of sound within an environment.

Specifically, as opposed to land, researchers inspired by landscape thinking have diversely and generously used the term ‘-scape’ to define an aquatic prism which exclusively focuses upon water-relations. Examples include ‘seascape’ (Brown & Humberstone, 2015; Cusack, 2015; McNiven, 2004; Musard *et al.*, 2014; Wirsing *et al.*, 2008) ‘riverscape’ (Carbonneau *et al.*, 2012; Cusack, 2010; Haslam, 2008; Stanford, 2007), ‘waterscape’ (Budds, 2008; Herzog, 1985; Rogers, 2013; Vannini & Taggart, 2016), ‘fluidscape’ (Strang, 2006), ‘liquidscape’ (Povall, 2019), as well as related terms such as ‘hydro –landscape’ (Vallerani, 2018).

Brown and Humberstone's (2015) 'Seascapes' is focused on narratives and embodied experiences with the sea, and accordingly draws attention to touch, smell, sight and sound in understanding 'what it is to 'be' engaged with the sea' (p.7). There is an interest in the apparatus used to navigate and facilitate human movement through the sea.

Kothari and Arnall (2020) attune our attention to 'sand flows in, around and beyond a small island in the Maldives' (p.305) through the term 'sandscape'. The term enables them to consider the particularity of granular terrain, which shifts 'through the action of tides, dredging, wind, rain, mining and raking' (p.305). Applying a temporalities approach, traditionally used in relation to landscape, through the study of sand, they demonstrate how place is made and remade, in accordance with the scale of sand that emerges and re-emerges. Not only do they recognise and distinguish that sand is a fundamental part of the landscape, but also explore how sand is 'felt, sensed, apprehended emotionally' (Brace & Geoghegan, 2011, p.52) within a social and cultural sense for islanders. They suggest that sand, moving through the landscape challenges the traditional notions of land and terrain as fixed.

Cusack (2010) is perhaps most careful in her use of the term 'riverscape'. She defines the term as analogous to landscape, in that the term provide the flexibility to refer to both the 'river itself' and the diverse representations of the river, such as through painting, literature and myth (p.11). As an art historian, her interpretation of rivers is framed through the visual sphere. Indeed, she limits the definition of riverscape to a 'part of the river which is "seen"' (p.11). In so doing,

her interpretation of '-scape' follows Appadurai (1990), whereby the suffix refers to a 'perspectival construct' (p.296). This enables Cusack to focus upon the different perspectives of rivers, as they were read and interpreted by political actors for the purposes of mythmaking and nation-building. This term, she argues, provides flexibility and through this approach, Cusack compares the representation of rivers across different national contexts (England, France, Russia, Ireland), as well as in a range of literary genres and artistic forms (oil, engraving, cartography, watercolour). However, to define the riverscape only as 'identifiable images' (p.191) somewhat limits their potential.

An overview of the aquatic '-scape' literature demonstrates the various methods and interpretations of water spaces, and the various ways in which '-scape' has been applied. It has shown how water can be represented through literary mediums, such as novels, prose, poems, and visual mediums such as art. There is a move towards exploring the human experiences of water, and how humans feel and act through various water-related activities such as swimming, surfing, sailing; as well as the emotional responses to water at different states and in different forms. These approaches reveal the importance of the sensory, including sound, smell and feeling (Pink, 2015). In all of this, it is important to recognise the material qualities of water, including water speed, direction, current and movement. This academic shift to look at water spaces parallels a recent shift within border studies which aims to examine the physical and material dimensions of borders. In placing borders within the context of the broader landscape through which they are situated, it soon becomes clear that rivers move, sands shift, tides rise (cf. Nail, 2016, p.6). Therefore, the former notion of borders composed of stable, static, lines,

(Diener & Hagen, 2010; Newman, 2001) is undermined, in the dynamism and movement of border landscapes (Krause, 2016).

To summarise, landscape is a broad and complex field of study that has been applied diversely by scholars in a range of disciplines, to consider different environments. In this section, I have given a brief overview of the debates out of which the concept of landscape has emerged within human geography and shown three key ways in which the studies of landscape have influenced the research of everyday places. The first, is an awareness of the materiality of landscape, which, I argue is similar to the materiality of borders, where the physicality of the landscape, such as terrain, movement, gradient, and height is considered as a crucial element in shaping understandings of place and understanding of the materiality of water. Secondly, I have drawn attention to the cultural turn in geography, where attention to the sensory body moving through a landscape is a primary site of investigation. Thirdly, I have shown how important narratives are for understanding what a landscape means; how it might be imagined, contested and lived in by a variety of different individuals (cf. Wylie 2006). Activities, such as drawing a landscape can reveal what a landscape might mean to those who are travelling through it. I have shown how scholars have become more interested in the vehicles through which landscape is accessed and travelled through. The following section discusses how the ideas outlined above regarding the river, border and –scape may be brought together to create a spatial and conceptual framework for a nuanced analysis of the spaces of the river ferry crossing.

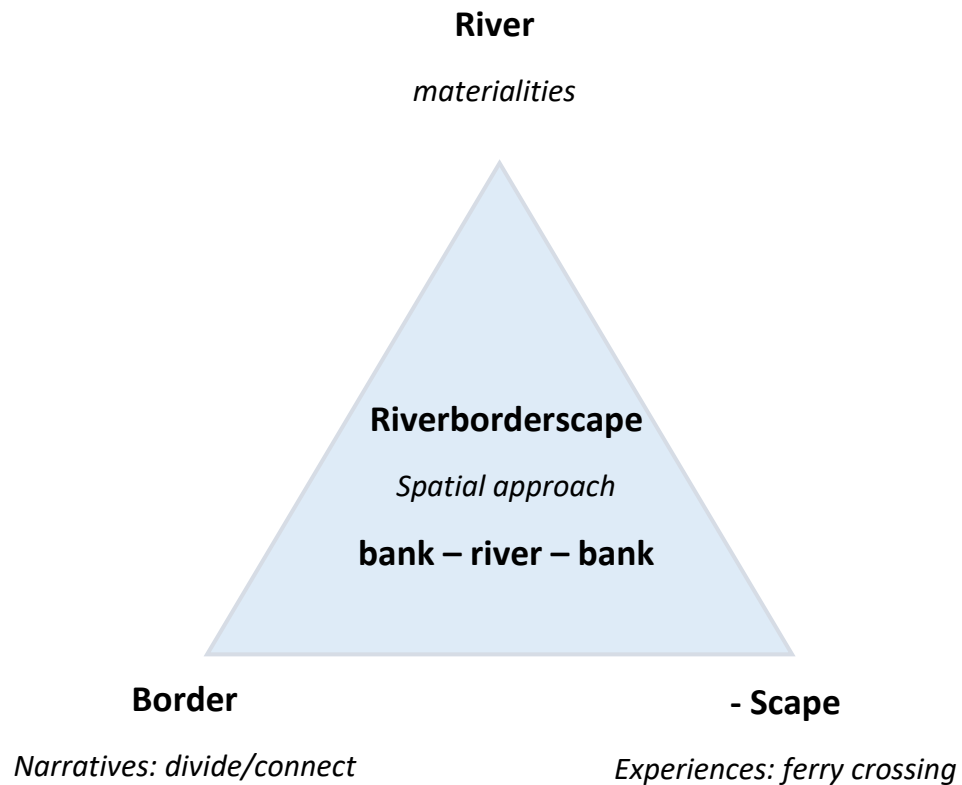
## 2.7 Riverborderscape

The riverborderscape is a conceptual device that draws together ideas relating to rivers, borders and landscape and is the original contribution to knowledge in this thesis.

The riverborderscape is a spatial approach. It interprets a river as forming three adjoining spaces between land and water, what I term bank – river – bank. This is a very specific cross-section of a river, and takes into consideration bankside spaces directly opposite either side of a river's width. In so doing, it is interested in the intersection between land and water, but importantly foregrounds the river, and the space across the river from one bankside to the other. The specificities of the riverborderscape as a spatial area emerge from the research gaps identified in this literature review. In relation to three strands of literature, namely watery geographies, border studies and landscape, a commonality emerged that attention should be given to what occurs in the fixed points 'between A and B' (Cresswell 2010, p.20). There is also an awareness that 'very little attention has been paid to the elementary and physical geographies of passage' (Adey 2012, p.45). Recognising that there are many ways to cross a river, passenger ferries were chosen as a vessel to situate research, and to examine the spatial area of the riverborderscape. Passenger ferries are designed to move passengers from one bankside to another bankside, across a navigable point in the river. They are, therefore, a vessel on which to situate an investigation into bank – river – bank relations.

The riverborderscape is also a conceptual framework that draws together literature on watery geographies, border studies and landscape in relation to three key areas: materialities, people's experiences and the narratives used to describe and situate such realities. The riverborderscape embeds all three approaches, in relation to the 'river', 'border' and '-scape'. Rivers are examined through the materialities of water and navigational routes. Tides, for instance, attune our attention to movement through the fluctuating volumes of water, not only in terms of the levels of the river (depth) but also in terms of the width of the river, as the varying states of the tide may influence the area between land and water. This leads to a consideration of the border. The border is examined in relation to and through a river. This review has highlighted the similarities between borders and rivers, with both described as paradoxical spaces that can both connect and divide. Attention needs to be given, therefore, to the narratives used in relation to the river as border, which include the opposite bankside spaces and narratives which emerge as individuals are crossing the border, and therefore between. The designation '-scape' brings together experiences on and across a ferry. Taking inspiration from the diversity of landscape, this includes the sensory experiences of travelling on water, the social space on-board the ferry, the routines and rituals which may characterise the crossing and the more emotional or symbolic meanings which the ferry crossing might bring to the fore. In reality, each component is entangled.

The riverborderscape as a fusion of the spatial and analytical framework is visualised in Figure 2.1:



**Figure 2. 1 Model of the Riverborderscape, influenced by Cresswell's (2010) three-fold model of holistic mobility**

The interior of the triangle illustrates how the space of the riverborderscape, bank – river – bank combines the three elements: materialities, experiences and narratives. This spatial approach is adopted to consider land and water in equal parts, and to consider the influence of being between. As described, a ferry crossing is one way to situate such research, but the riverborderscape as a spatial approach could also extend beyond passenger ferries to include bridges, swimmers, other boats, and waterways across other geographical contexts and at different scales.

The exterior of the triangle breaks down the riverborderscape into a focus on materialities of a river, experiences on a ferry and narratives of crossing a border.

The interconnectedness of the lines demonstrates that each informs the other. For instance, the height of the tide may affect when the ferry is operating, and therefore could influence narratives of the river being a border between places, if no service is able to operate from one side to the other, or if waiting times are extended. The materiality of the water and the wider elemental system such as wind may affect the embodied experiences of passengers on-board, for instance where the crossing from one side of the river to the other is accordingly characterised through choppiness. The experiences of the ferry crossing will be different in relation to a person's role. An on-board crew member, responsible for directing the ferry on a route across the river, will have a different perspective from an individual using the ferry for the first time. Therefore, the 'river', 'border' '-scape' is not separate, rather each element of the analytical framework informs each of the other.

## 2.8 Research Aim and Research Questions

The overall research aim is to evaluate the idea of the riverborderscape through an exploration of ferry crossings in the South West of England. Four research questions emerge in relation to this aim, and shape the structure and content of the analytical chapters in this thesis (Chapters 4 – 8). Each question addresses an element of the riverborderscape, as previously discussed and visualised in Figure 2.1: river (materialities), border (narratives), '-scape' (experiences) and the riverborderscape spatial approach (bank – river – bank). Taken together, the following questions serve to address the overall research aim:

- 1) What are the materialities that influence the river ferry crossings?

- 2) What are the thoughts, imaginations and experiences of ferry passengers as they cross from one side of the river to the other?
- 3) In what ways does the river ferry crossing connect and divide people and places?
- 4) Is the riverborderscape a productive concept to understand river crossings and adjacent bankside spaces?

Research Question One focuses upon materialities, a theme which has emerged in relation to the related literatures of watery geographies, border studies and landscape. A key research gap has been that rivers, although researched, are not fully understood, in relation to the crossing over from one bankside to the other bankside. Tides are one way of focusing upon the river and analysing the materiality of the river, as tides move water cyclically and rhythmically through repeated patterns of low water and high water (Jones, 2011). Tides physicalise Elden's (2013) call to understand the height and depth of borders and their shifting movement complicates clear lines dividing land and water (Peters, Steinberg & Stratford, 2018a). A watery geographies perspective attunes our attention to other temporary materialities on the water, including buoys, other boats, animals and swimmers whilst a landscape perspective demonstrates the importance of structures on land designed for the ferry service, such as quays, slips, pontoons. This research question is considered in Chapter 4, which provides an historic and contemporary overview of the sites wherein the case study river ferries operate, in relation to the constituent spaces of the bank – river – bank. Chapter 5 then adopts a river perspective through the expertise of ferry operators, and the routes they create to navigate a ferry from one bankside to the other. Their accounts reveal the material complexity of crossing rivers, including tide, wind speed, weather, depth of water, and other material obstacles to avoid or dodge, as well as provide

insight into the legal lines of ownership. Taken together, a material perspective of the river ferry crossings responds to Peters' (2019) call to 'pay attention to routeing - to the invisible lanes etched across the oceans, seas – and indeed into inland water courses that ships forge, form and follow' (p.21) and, in so doing, aims to contribute to more fully understanding rivers as three-dimensional and complex spaces which are worthy of enquiry.

Research Question Two is centred upon the embodied experiences of people crossing a river on a ferry. The river here is interpreted as a site to investigate our 'main experience of borders [which is] by confronting or crossing them' (Szary, 2015, p.13), and so attention is given to the points 'between A and B' (Cresswell 2010), that is the time spent on the river, as passengers move between the banksides. This shift, from land to land, across water, is framed through the liminality literature, and the transverse movement across a river is considered as a way of exploring the transitional potential of everyday border crossings. Ingold (1993) stated that, 'in journeying from A to place B, it makes no sense to ask, along the way, whether one is "still" in A or has "crossed over" to B' (p.156), and yet this research question aims to consider that very question. To fully explore the range of meanings on the water, the '-scape' literature is utilised, as that includes attention to the senses, emotions, memory, form of transport, routines, rituals and on-board conversations in relation to the river, ferry and adjoining landscapes. This requires an immersive methodology, where thoughts, imaginations and experiences are gathered as ferry passengers are on the move, and is further discussed in the following chapter. Chapter 6 is structured through the ferry passenger responses that reveal the thoughts, imaginations and experiences of

ferry passengers crossing between and across the spatial area of bank – river – bank. This thesis' contributions to landscape studies emerges from two innovative methodologies designed to immersively understand the experiences of crossing a river: which first included a mixed qualitative and quantitative participatory activity to complete on the river, and secondly, my embodied approach of reflective and poetic field notes.

Research Question Three considers the narratives in relation to the river as border, through the structural passage and route of the ferry service. This review has highlighted the similarities in scholarly language between rivers and borders, in the sense that both are recognised as having the potential to both connect and divide (Roth 1997, Krause 2016). According to Hinchliffe, 'borders are always contact points; they join words together and act as conduit as well as barriers' (p.535). The ferry service is a way of considering the border as 'contact point', in relation to the mobile connections it provides for passengers to travel from one side of the river to the other, and so is analysed in relation to the politics of mobility. In contrast to a 'fixed link' (Baldacchino, 2007a) such as a bridge, the temporality of the ferry service, depending upon material factors such as the state of the tide, weather patterns, and seasonality of service may accentuate the river as border, in relation to everyday life and narratives. The riverborderscape approach here provides a lens for comparisons of either bankside spaces, in relation to the river between. In reflecting upon this question, the physical presence of rivers in a landscape is called into question, and the challenge and effort required to overcome the obstacle of the physical watercourse made apparent. This research question is examined in Chapter 7, and narratives are

diversely interpreted as interview transcripts, written discourses and public signage placed in the landscape on either side of the river. In so doing, the accounts of a range of people are taken into consideration, including those living, working and travelling across the river.

Research Question Four takes a wider perspective, to assess the riverborderscape as spatial approach (bank – river – bank) and analytical framework (materialities, experiences, narratives). It reflects upon the utility of an approach that has aimed to foreground the river as a way of contributing to border studies and watery geographies in relation to understanding border crossing experiences and the betweenness of border spaces. The specific framing of the riverborderscape follows Rumford (2014a) who states that: 'rather than "looking both ways" across a border, we need to aspire to look from the border' (p.50). Situating research on the river, through the routes of ferries, navigating from one bankside to another bankside serves to understand perspectives 'from the border'. Chapter 8 addresses this research question through an evaluative discussion drawing upon various ideas that emerge through interviews and encounters in relation to the riverborder as a mixing place, and considers the significance of analysing places beyond the case study sites through the riverborderscape approach, to include rivers across various scales: local, regional and national. It also reflects upon the lens of approaching rivers through the materiality of borders. Chapter 9 summarises and evaluates the contributions of the riverborderscape approach in relation to its 'materialities', 'experiences' and 'narratives' and shows how this thesis contributes to wider debates and dialogues within watery geographies, border studies and landscape studies.

The following chapter (Chapter 3) outlines the methodological considerations and development required to adopt the riverborderscape approach following ferry routes in the South West of England.

### 3. Research Design and Methods

#### 3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter introduced the riverborderscape, a concept which emerged in relation to existing literature on rivers, borders and landscape and which is the defining characteristic of this thesis. I identified that passenger ferries, routinely crossing rivers, were one way to examine the riverborderscape as a spatial area (bank – river – bank) and to bring together a three-fold framework, to focus on materialities, experiences and narratives. Highlighting the importance of situating research on and across rivers, I suggested that an immersive methodology would be required to bring together the theoretical lenses of watery geographies, borders and betweenness. This chapter details such methods.

Following Emmel and Clarke (2009), the methods broadly fell into two groups: methods to understand research context (archives) and methods to understand the lived experience of crossing a river on a ferry (participant observation, reflection cards, interviews). In relation to the research questions, insight and knowledge of the materiality of the river (RQ1) was gathered through reviewing maps of the rivers (archives), in combination with interviews with ferry operators and participant observation on-site. To answer research Question Two, I developed a creative behavioural survey, or 'reflection cards', designed to be completed on the water where passengers were asked to write down a short narrative or pictorial response to the river and ferry, whilst crossing from one bankside to the other. This methodology was ideated to gather and understand the range of experiences in relation to crossing a river and served to document the personal and collective

experiences of everyday border crossings. I also developed a writing practice of field poetry, which reflected my embodied experiences crossing the river and which was infused by research insights. Interview transcripts were analysed in relation to the river as border (RQ3), and further evidence revealed through participant observation and by reviewing archival documents.

As the previous chapter demonstrated, it is 'at the level of narrative, anecdote and communication that borders come to life' (Newman, 2006, p.152) and it is through narrative that our connection to water is communicated (Hastrup & Hastrup, 2015; Krause & Strang, 2016; Peters & Anderson, 2016). The previous chapter showed how attention should be given to those who spend time on water and so this chapter begins with an overview of the cultural turn in human geography. A specific focus is given to research methods designed to take place 'on the move' (Sheller & Urry, 2006). Following on, I justify a case study approach to answer the research questions focused upon three passenger ferries that cross everyday borders in South West England. I then detail the dissemination of a mixed-methods research design and finally discuss the ethical challenges I encountered during the research process.

### 3.2 Mobile Methods

The cultural turn marks a reorientation of human geography's traditional concerns towards an interest in 'identity, lifestyle, representation' (Valentine, 2001, p.167) and the 'meaning of social activities' (Gregory *et al.*, 2011, p.253). Put simply, this is a people-centred approach, which recognises that individuals who live in places are best able to describe their world (Emmel & Clark, 2009, p.3).

Within a watery context, Steinberg and Peters (2015) argue attention needs to be given to the voices, lives and experiences of those who 'actually *engage* the ocean, like sailors (p.252). This has more recently been echoed by Bowles, Kaaristo and Caf (2019), where they suggest that 'sea-farers, boat-dwellers and fishermen' are best able to describe the subtleties and techniques of how they navigate through the 'fickle and active substance' (p.8) of water. Inspired by this approach, I would add that the narratives of ferry operators, responsible for transporting passengers and navigating routes across tidal rivers should be brought to the fore. Passenger ferries are an intersection between experienced, knowledgeable skippers and deck-hands alongside a wide-spectrum of members of the public who, for various purposes, different intentions and frequencies use a ferry as a public transport service, to cross from one side of the river to the other. Situating research within the space of a ferry enables a rich variety of understandings of rivers, experiences and encounters to be brought together. It also reflects the spatial perspective of the riverborderscape: bank – river – bank and requires a methodology centred on the space 'between a and b' (Gilroy, 1993; Peters & Turner, 2015). Here, inspiration can be gleaned from the mobilities paradigm.

The mobilities paradigm provides a range of embodied practices and methods that can be utilised through conducting research on the move. In their influential paper, Sheller and Urry (2006) argued that people are on the move and materials are on the move, and hence, researchers should examine the significance of movement by utilising research methods which capture the narratives and experiences of individuals as they are in motion. In short, they emphasised movement and hybridity rather than fixity in place. Merriman (2014) complicates their approach,

by urging researchers to notice immobile experiences, such as 'stillness, waiting, slowness and boredom' (p.177). This paradigm has shaped research with, on and in a variety of different mobile vehicles including trains (Crang & Zhang, 2012) planes (Adey, 2010), cars (Waite, Harada & Duffy, 2017), caravans (Leivestad, 2015), coaches, (Edensor & Holloway, 2008) and canal boats (Kaaristo & Rhoden, 2017) as well as cycling (Spinney, 2011) and walking (Edensor, 2010). Vannini structured *Ferry Tales* (2012) through this paradigm, including chapters on waiting (1, 7), rhythm (2), routes (3), speed (4), friction (5), ritual (6).

Researchers who adopt the mobilities paradigm often use a wide variety of methods, including creative methods, to capture the 'fleeting' thoughts and 'unconscious' actions of those who routinely move from a to b through a material vessel (Spinney, 2015, p.232). Researchers 'seek to use movement as part of the research approach itself' and kinaesthetic methods include walking interviews (Holton & Riley, 2014), flying interviews (Vannini, 2017) and running interviews (Cook, Shaw & Simpson, 2016), whereby the researcher joins the interviewee in their everyday movements and activities. Often, video/photograph/GoPro technology (Bates & Moles, 2020b; Holton, 2019) is used in conjunction with these active methods, in order to capture the multi-sensory sounds, sights, and experience of landscapes.

In short, the mobilities paradigm relies upon qualitative methods to explore the unfolding subtleties of meanings and emotions whilst travelling through landscapes (Eric & DeLyser, 2016). In the following sections, I demonstrate how I build upon the mobilities paradigm to shape a mixed-methods research approach

which is centred on the vessel of a ferry, moving from one side of the river to the other. To begin, I introduce the chosen research context and approach.

### 3.3 Case Study Approach

To conduct an in-depth study into ferries and the experiences of people who cross rivers on ferries, a case study approach was required. A case study provides a 'spotlight on a particular instance' (Denscombe, 2007, p.36), in reference to a 'particular group of participants' (King & Horrocks, 2010, p.26). The case study approach provides an opportunity for an in-depth insight into a particular geographical, social and cultural context.

A three site case study approach was chosen, to avoid the trap of direct comparison/contrast (as in two case sites) and to mitigate a narrow focus (as in one case site) (cf. Clifford, French & Valentine, 2010). It is recommended that case study sites are chosen in terms of the 'practical problems or theoretical issues that the researcher wants to investigate' (Denscombe, 2007, p.39), and so I selected case sites in accordance to both practical and theoretical dimensions. The research focused on passenger ferry routes that crossed a river that formed a type of border. Practically, it needed to be accessible and safe for independent research. With a background in English Literature, I had never delivered qualitative research before and so a local location was decided, allowing close support from the academic community in Plymouth. Furthermore, the benefit of exploring the complexities of borders and border identities through the geographical focus of a region has been demonstrated by Paasi (2003) and more recently by Trillo-Santamaría (2014). It is through small-scale regional studies that 'patterns [and] interconnections' can

most fruitfully be made to understand 'social, economic and political' dimensions (Deacon, 2007, p.7), which are further explored in Chapter 4. I now go on to discuss the methods required to research these selected case study sites.

### 3.4 Archives

One method I chose to contextualise the river ferry crossings was archival analysis. Archives relate to any source of information that detail historical or contemporary detail about the case study area, and can include 'letters, diaries, household accounts, address books and personal memos [...] oral recordings of life histories, photographs and family portraits, and personal possessions and belongings' (Cloke *et al.*, 2004, p.67). Archival documents were selected where they provided historical context regarding the ferry crossing and the communities on either bankside. Diverse media were examined, including cartographical and hydrographic maps to situate the materiality of the ferry sites (RQ1), letters and literary accounts including poetry and novels to give an insight into the experiences of the ferry crossings (RQ2) and newspaper articles, photographs and documentary footage to reflect the multiple narratives in relation to the river as border, including how that might have shifted over time (RQ3).

I sourced initial historical material from the British Library, using key word searches to review the database. Contemporary archives were derived from online websites, including each ferry company's website (Chapter 4), as well as the Duchy of Cornwall and the Crown websites (Chapter 5). I examined local council documents where the ferry was listed as an asset, as well as technical documents, such as Inland Waters Small Passenger Boat Codes. Each location had a local archive, and

I benefited from more specifically related resources and source material from Plymouth and West Devon Record Office, North Devon Maritime Museum, Museum of Cornish Life and the National Maritime Museum, Cornwall. I found that the regional libraries, Torpoint Library, Appledore Library and Helston Library also had specialised books relating to the river and ferry crossings (Chapter 4).

Whilst archives provide a range of resources to understand the historical contexts of each site, I was particularly interested in the contemporary narratives and experiences of ferry passengers crossing rivers. The next section details how I embedded myself in the case study sites, through the process of participant observation.

### 3.5 Participant Observation

Participant observation is an 'immersive' (Hay, 2015, p.8) method, through which a researcher participates in the 'everyday rhythms and routines' (Cook, 2005, p.167) of a particular community. It includes building rapport and relationships with those already involved within such a community, identifying those willing to share and recording all encounters through a writing practice and the gathering of other material evidence. Given that the primary aim of the research project is to evaluate the idea of the riverborderscape through an exploration of ferry crossings in the South West of England, it became clear that an in-depth study through participant observation would be necessary.

Cook (2005) describes how participant observation is a three-stage process, which includes 'firstly gaining access to a particular community, second participation amongst such a community and third making sense of such observations' (p.168).

This is a useful structure to adopt in the following section (section 3.5.1), where I narrate how I gained access to and conducted research with three ferry companies in the South West of England. Although I present a linear narrative here, in reality there was a high degree of overlap between each stage. This was partly because it was a local study, where the ferries were as close as one mile from home (Cremyll Ferry), with Appledore – Instow 60 miles north (Devon) and Helford River Boats 70 miles south (Cornwall), meaning I could immerse myself on-site for a few days at a time, and then return home to reflect, transcribe, make follow-up notes and forward plan. This was in contrast to longer term anthropological studies with river communities such as those demonstrated by Krause (2010) and Harris (1998). Although the first ferry season, April – October 2018, was the most immersive and intensive period of participant observation, where I primarily focused upon the reflection card methodology (section 3.6), I continued to return to the ferry sites up until March 2020. Returning to the sites inevitably involved bumping into research participants and continuing to consider the dynamics of the riverborderscape through observation, participation in the ferry crossing, and continued informal conversations.

### 3.5.1 Gaining Access

After extensive planning and preparation to identify river ferries in the South West, I scoped out potential research sites through a recce in March 2018. This involved travelling to various river ferry sites (Admirals Hard – Cremyll, Dittisham – Greenway, Fowey – Polruan, Appledore – Instow, Falmouth – St Mawes, Helford – Helford Passage, Padstow – Rock) to observe the scale, geography and topography

of the river ferry crossing and its surrounding bankside communities, as well as to consider the practicalities of solo-research in terms of safety and accessibility. A third factor was an academic consideration, namely the types of river borders the ferry routes crossed, which meant that although some ferries were interesting subjects of study in their own right, they were not suitable within the context of this thesis. The ultimate aim of the recce was to have a meaningful conversation with a ferry operator/decision-maker (gate-keeper), who would grant me access to conduct creative research on their ferry, with their ferry passengers, during the season.

I created a series of fieldwork tasks to undertake at each location which helped me discern and determine the suitability of each site (Figure 3.1). Typically, I explored the area by walking around the river. Where possible, I would observe, travel on the ferry, take photographs and initiate casual conversation with those I met there.

- Identify the frequency of the ferry crossing
- What's the space like within the ferry? And the capacity? Is it benches or mostly standing room?
- How long does the ferry journey take?
- Is the river tidal, and if so does that affect the ferry crossing?
- Try and ask what factors have to be negotiated for the ferry operators
- Is the ferry timetable visible on the quay, in a public place?
- What is around that timetable – is there anything that attracts local tourists/visitors to those areas?
- Is there advertising for the ferry on both sides of the water?
- Is there a specialised ferry cabin/box/ticket office on the quay or a member of the crew encouraging people onto the river?
- Think about the spaces on either side of the river. Are there any noticeable differences/similarities?
- Is the river an everyday border between places?.
- Is the river seen as a barrier to cross over, or does it connect places?
- Is the ferry the 'event'?

**Figure 3. 1 Fieldwork Questions, March 2018**

Re-reading the field notes I made during this initial period of participant observation, some of the themes that have become central to this study can be traced including: the changing tide which influences the route of the ferry (recce notes 20<sup>th</sup> March 2018) – Chapter 5 (RQ1), reflections upon my own personal and embodied experience of crossing a river on a ferry (recce notes, 9<sup>th</sup> March 2018) - Chapter 6 (RQ2) and whether the ferry was a 'divider or link between places' (recce notes, 7<sup>th</sup> March 2018) – Chapter 7 (RQ3). These experiences also helped me to consider the practicalities of the research parameters, and I was able to discern how possible it would be to undertake a creative methodology. My field diary also details lessons I learnt during this process, including the need to prepare for all weather conditions and to 'chat to people, be friendly, be opportunistic' (recce notes, 5<sup>th</sup> March 2018).

In terms of approaching the ferry companies, there was not one singular method or approach I adopted. Through a connection with my supervisory team, I had a gatekeeper for the Appledore – Instow Ferry, who gave me the contact details of a ferry volunteer, Vince<sup>1</sup> (Torridge notes, 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2018) who, after hearing about my research project was immediately enthused, introduced me to other ferry personnel and invited me to the 'Blessing of the Ferry' event, scheduled for the following week (Torridge notes 8<sup>th</sup> April 2018). Thereafter, I was invited to shadow him on one of his ferry shifts (Torridge notes 15<sup>th</sup> April 2018).

When boarding the Cremyll Ferry, I described my research project to the deck-hand, as I was paying for my fare (Tamar notes, 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2018). He offered me the

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<sup>1</sup> All names are pseudonyms, (see ethics 3.9.2).

name and location of his manager who worked in an office adjacent to Cremyll Quay. An hour later, I had had a positive research conversation with the Cremyll Ferry managers and had been given the contact details for the Plymouth Boat Trips owner, to clear the research project.

With no previous physical or social connection to the Helford River, I met the ferry operators in a local pub, The Ferryboat Inn (Helford notes, 8<sup>th</sup> March 2018). Earlier that day, I had told a bartender that I was doing a project about ferries and, after stating that the Helford river ferry was one of the oldest crossings in England, advised that I return at 5pm to meet the contemporary ferry operators.

A pattern emerged in how I would work to build rapport with the ferry operators. The conversation would begin with a series of small talk exchanges relating to, for example the weather, or the ferry (being repaired, moved to the water) which established trust and set the groundwork for my specific request about accessibility for a research project (cf. Fine, 2014). I would be asked direct questions, relating to my research topic, research purpose and research vision. Thereafter, they would offer historical information, for example videos of a ferry operator's daily routine in an online archive (Cremyll Ferry) or stories of how horses used to swim across the river, behind the ferry (Helford). After listening to these stories, I would reiterate how I was interested in the question of the river as a border between places, and the role of the ferry in connecting routes and shaping the areas on either bankside. This discussion provided me with considerable affirmation and case-specific insight. I was then able to ask whether it might be possible to partner with the ferry company in the forthcoming season, in research

that would involve asking their customers to complete a creative task on the ferry (section 3.6).

This face-to-face interaction was followed-up by a series of email exchanges, where I reiterated the proposed research rationale and approach. The major methodological adjustment I made during this follow-up negotiation was that my research should be positioned on land, as opposed to on the ferry. This was so that a) I did not take up a profitable seat and b) so that those who wanted to opt-out of the research could do so. These considerations aside, all three ferry companies were happy for me to go ahead with the research project with their customers and staff.

### 3.5.2 Participation

It has been recognised that the process of participating in a community is messy, relational and takes time (Bennett, 2002; Cook, 2005; Jorgensen, 2015). The reflection card method was a useful strategy in which to initiate contact with a diverse group of individuals who crossed the river and is further detailed in section 3.6. With such an immersive method requiring extended periods of time on and by the river, I soon became recognised and known by those residents and ferry operators who saw me frequently (section 3.9.3).

I was invited to participate in a variety of social events over time. These included events arranged via the ferry operators, such as a task which involved me counting how many dogs boarded the ferry during a day (Tamar notes, 10<sup>th</sup> June 2018), events arranged via interviewees such as the Blessing of the Ferry (Torridge notes, 15<sup>th</sup> April 2018), Beach Cleans (Helford notes, 20<sup>th</sup> September 2018) and events

which I initiated myself, such as joining a Walk and Talk Group around the Taw-Torridge Estuary (Torrige notes, 24<sup>th</sup> July 2018) a Helford River Cruise (Helford notes, 28<sup>th</sup> June 2018), and regatta (Helford notes, 25<sup>th</sup> August 2018). Through participating in these events, I was able to build upon the relationships that I established with individuals on all three case sites, as well as consider and reflect on how the river and the ferry crossing influenced local identities. These events were also opportunities for me to meet new people. In this way, it was possible to consider those who did not travel on the ferry, and that broadened the contextualisation of the research focus.

#### 3.5.2.1 Sailing

Research participants Reuben (Helford notes, 15<sup>th</sup> September 2018) and Isaac (Torrige notes, 24<sup>th</sup> July 2019) invited me to join them sailing, which provided me with a first-hand encounter of navigating a water-borne vessel through tidal waterways (cf. Peters, 2017a). Being on the water, it became clear that the ferry is just one of several ways to cross the river, and I factored in the routes of other vessels and activities. The time on the water with research participants also gave me an opportunity to ask more specific questions, for example relating to radio communication and tides (Chapter 5). I also observed how the river was an important part of identities (Chapter 7).



**Plate 3. 1 Learning to Sail: Roseland Peninsula, September 2018 (left), Taw - Torridge Estuary, July 2019 (right)**

I was invited to join as a passenger on-board a recreational trip from Instow Quay to New Bridge, Bideford with a small group of ferry personnel who now own the boat Misty Blue, which served as a ferry between 2010 and 2018 (Torridge notes, 27<sup>th</sup> October 2019). This invitation contributed to making me feel validated and valued as a researcher within the community.

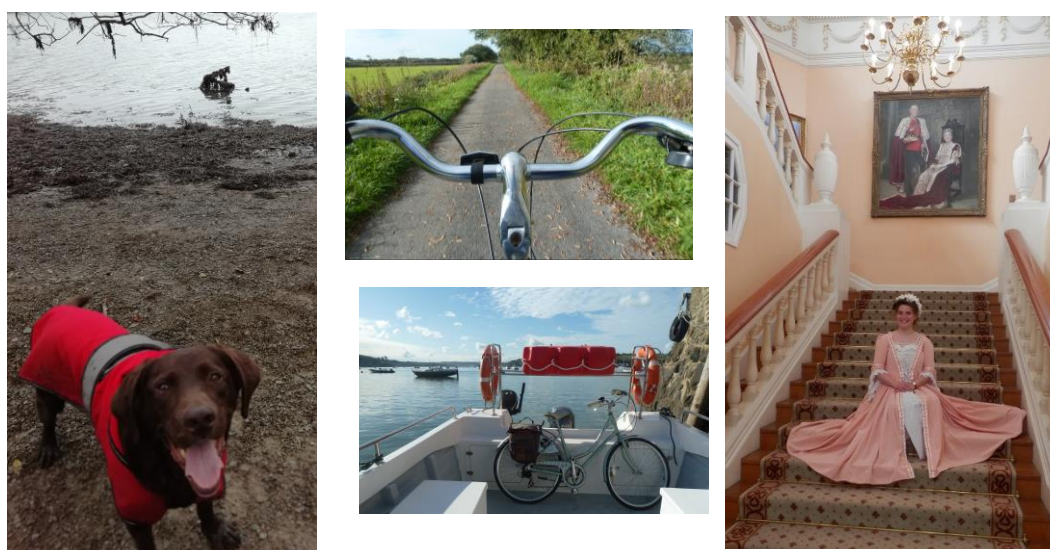


**Plate 3. 2 Aboard Misty Blue, October 2019**

### 3.4.2.2 Walking

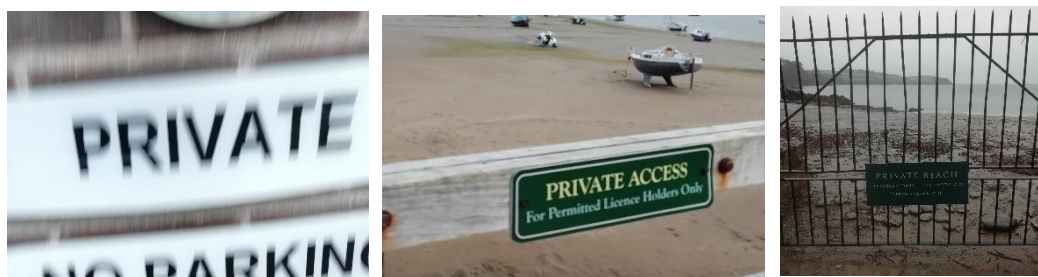
In addition, I spent time walking and cycling around the rivers. I hired a bike and cycled part of the Tarka Trail (Torridge notes, 27<sup>th</sup> October 2019), walked around Frenchman's Creek (Torridge notes, 17<sup>th</sup> October 2019) and visited Mount Edgcumbe House and Gardens (Tamar notes, March 2018), as these were all

frequent and popular activities that I had noticed on-site (Chapter 4). I identified that South West Coast Path walkers and cyclists were key recreational users ('Estuaries and Ferries ', 2019) and their modalities and pathways offer a different perspective of the river and the ferry crossing (cf. Ingold, 2016; Spinney, 2015; Wylie, 2005). Where possible, I brought my dog, Zeus with me, whose presence helped blur the categories between me being a researcher and a member of the public.



**Plate 3. 3 Mobile Methods (left to right): walking the Helford River with Zeus February 2020, cycling the Tarka Trail October 2018, visiting Mount Edgcumbe House and Gardens, March 2018**

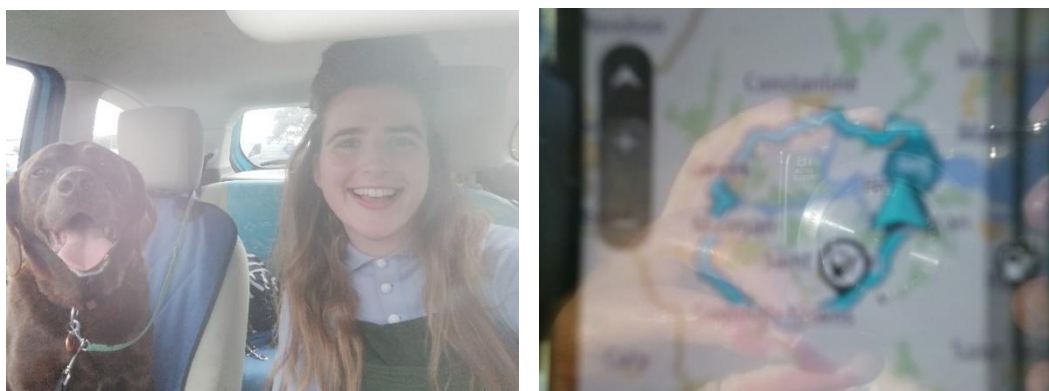
Walking these routes, I experienced multiple barriers to accessing a route directly adjacent to the river. I encountered everyday borders through physical structures such as fences, barbed wire and signs marking private ownership (Diener & Hagen, 2012; Shrubsole, 2019), which raised issues relating to land and water ownership (Chapter 5).



**Plate 3. 4 'Private' signage Tamar, Torridge Helford river paths (left to right):  
Richmond Walk February 2018, Instow Beach March 2018, Trebah Gardens,  
March 2018**

### 3.5.2.3 Driving

The main mobile strategy I used to access the Appledore – Instow and Helford research sites was driving. Both sites are situated in rural locations, with limited public transport services (Chapter 4). I discovered multiple benefits to driving, which included a) the car as a safe space for processing ideas, preparing for interviews and writing up notes from interviews and b) the car as an independent transport option to explore the communities and structures on either side of the river (Plate 3.5). In the case of the Helford River, the two bankside places, Helford and Helford Passage, are a 45-minute drive away, on single track rural roads (section 4.4.3.2). Living a mile away from the Cremyll Ferry, I was able to walk to the research site.



**Plate 3. 5 Car as a safe space, October 2019 (left), Sat Nav directing a route  
around the river, between Helford Passage and Helford, March 2018 (right)**

#### 3.5.2.4 Airbnb: connecting me within and around the river

To conduct in-depth research over an extended period of time, I required accommodation for fieldwork by the Torridge and Helford rivers. When conducting research with the Cremyll Ferry, I could remain in my resident address (Plymouth), and did not have to forward-plan in the same way.

I found that hotels were expensive in the area, due to the desirability of North Devon and mid-Cornwall as holiday destinations, and finding single-person occupancy was difficult. Therefore, my main means of finding accommodation was through Airbnb, where listed benefits include 'social interaction, home benefits, novelty, sharing economy ethos and local authenticity' (Guttentag *et al.*, 2018, p.343). Airbnb also became a surprisingly useful strategy to meet several residents who lived around the river, and to gain in-depth insight into the river, ferry and identities in the locality.

I stayed with six different Airbnb host families in locations around the Appledore – Instow Ferry. These locations included Great Torrington, Bideford, Westleigh, Yelland, Barnstaple, and Braunton. I informed the hosts in advance that I was working on a research project, so that I was transparent about my researcher role and identity (cf. Bulpitt & Martin, 2010).

May 2018

Eva stayed with me for 3 days whilst doing some research in Appledore and Instow. All went well and some engaging and interesting conversation.

**Figure 3. 2 Airbnb review, May 2018**

Hosts were able to share additional information about the river, ferry and local area. One told me about a documentary involving fishers, boaters and river

workers within and around North Devon (Stewart-Smith, 2015). One couple's son was the St Mawes Ferry skipper, and they shared insights about working life, routine and river navigation. Another family let me borrow their book about Instow (Blackwell, 1948) and shared personal memories about using the ferry on a daily basis, to get to work.

In contrast, on the Helford River, I stayed with one family over a period of time (June 2018 – February 2020). Jen was a gig rower, and Reuben owned a sailing boat, who had documented life on the Helford River through a photo-book (Figure 8.1). All of their children had grown up within and around the Helford River. One of their children was a similar age to me, and had just enrolled on to a PhD at Cardiff University, looking at the politics of water through anglers and canal boat users. Over time, she became a friend, and introduced me to some of her friends who had grown up around the river, by inviting me to a dinner party she was hosting (Helford notes, 9<sup>th</sup> September 2018). I began by camping in their garden (Plate 3.6), but over time was invited to stay indoors. We shared dinners together, I assisted with chores and the researcher – participant relationship blurred to encompass acts of genuine care (cf. Yost & Chmielewski, 2013). Following Gutentag (2018), I valued the interaction with one well-connected family to the river and wider social community over a period of time, and their hospitality, conversations and connections shaped my experience of the Helford.



**Plate 3. 6 Camping, Helford River, June 2018**

### 3.5.3 Synthesising

I developed a daily practice of writing field notes (Sanjek, 2019). I recorded what I had done during the day, the activities I observed and recalled narratives and conversations. I reflected upon my emotions, and used the writing form to plan ahead. These field notes would range in length, but on average were between 1,000 – 2,000 words. I would type these notes over a 45-minute period in a word-processor on my laptop. I preferred a secluded location to do this activity, and so would mostly write in the car, by a beach, or at the accommodation I was staying. I purposefully did not go back and re-read the notes until later on in the process, so they were an indicative and ‘in the moment’ record of events (Emerson, Fretz & Shaw, 2011, p.21).



**Plate 3. 7 Writing field notes, Westward Ho! Beach, July 2018**

During a research day, I used the 'note' app on my phone to record snippets of conversation, so that I did not forget the detail by the end of the day. Recording notes on my phone, I discovered, was not as conspicuous as writing extensive notes in a notebook, as mobile phones are now an engrained feature of society (cf. Ling, 2012). The typos and spelling mistakes indicate the haste and reflect the immediacy of these encounters.

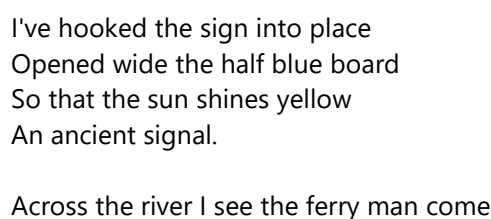
← Notes	← Notes	← Notes
<p><b>River Ferry Encounters</b> 27 May 2018, 21:48</p> <p>one of the founding members of the ferry service. To resurrect the ferry between Appledore and Instow. She has lived in Instow. Said that the ferry was run by John's of Instow, then fell into disrepair. lent them the boat. Got funding. Had meetings with people living on both sides of the water to see if they would be up for the ferry. Very popular.</p> <p>Wife is on the second boat. Has a dog. He was talking to locals. Living there for 30 years and they haven't used the ferry. The nature of the tide times is that attracts mainly tourists. Talking to somebody who was put on the ferry as a 13 year old when the ferry was for 40 people. Going to the dockyard and the fishers. Now that wouldn't be the case.</p> <p>I'm well received. People willing to talk and chat.</p> <p>Volunteers need to be the way I can access</p>	<p><b>River Ferry Encounters</b> 21 Jul 2018, 13:01</p> <p>Conversation with man who moors boat on the side.</p> <p>Appledore given a royal charter by Queen Elizabeth which meant that individuals didn't have to pay for mooring. Freedom of movement and don't have to pay for passage. Whereas on the Instow side Torridge district council charges a hefty fine</p> <p>- differences in terms of financial politics</p> <p>The river gentrification which pushes young skippers out. Can't affoe to live in the areas closest to the water. Also means that you can't be trained up. People buying Shwir second homes on the river are generally Older. And 5hey are not going to be invested in what is going on on the river.</p> <p>He is very much involved with the life boat.</p> <p>Two guys who walked down the beach. Not aware of the tide times and they were swant in</p>	<p><b>River Ferry Encounters</b> 15 Nov 2018, 14:03</p> <p>volunteer.</p> <p>Sees applesore an island. Because it is surrounded on water from the three sides. Appledore is the destination - you can't drive through Appledore to get anywhere.</p> <p>On the other hand, Instow is the mainland. It has a main road going through. Much more bustle.</p> <p>The first time that he encountered Appledore was to say: "what's that place over there"? In this he was trying to suggest that travelling to appledore was much more of an event</p> <p>--this is interesting as it is counter to the way in which other people have described the "community spirit" and the more "connectedness" of Appledore as a place.</p> <p>The history is in the haebour</p> <p>Harbour as the most historical place anywhere you go in the world - yachting around Greece.</p> <p>There is something about the embeddedness of</p>

**Plate 3. 8 Examples of notes created on phone, Appledore - Instow Ferry, 2018.**

**Names have been blanked out, so as to protect anonymity (section 3.9.2)**



and encounters. Cresswell (2015) argues that poetry offers a deep sense of place that traditional narrative forms can't capture and my field poems demonstrate the reciprocal relationship between researcher and research elements. I used poetry to lyrically tie together what I was noticing, alongside the voices encountered on the river, and the influence of sound, texture, kinaesthetic senses and the weather. This form deepens the practice of traditional field notes, as the poetry reflects how rivers can inform and shape identities and be constitutive of a sense of place. In total, I wrote 15 field poems, and integrate some into the analysis chapters of this thesis.

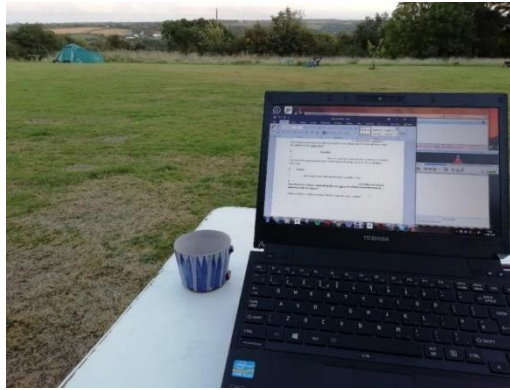


I've hooked the sign into place  
Opened wide the half blue board  
So that the sun shines yellow  
An ancient signal.

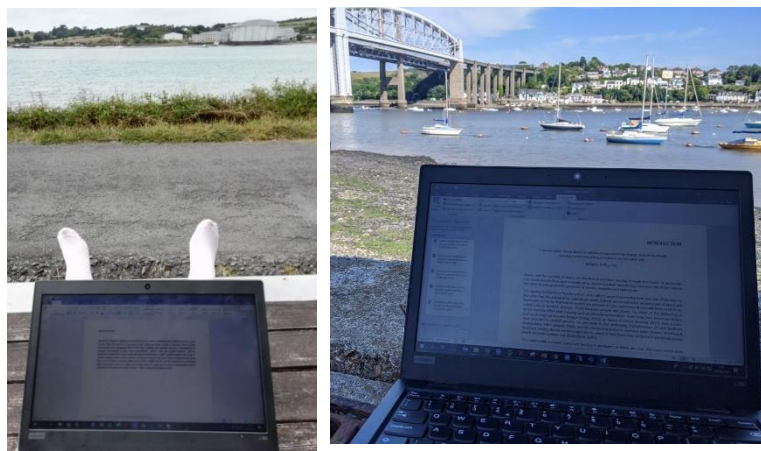
Across the river I see the ferry man come

**Plate 3. 11 Extract from Field Poems, June 2018**

I transcribed interviews during the time of fieldwork, which meant that I was immersed in the data process, both personally (through diverse writing practices) and through transcribing the narratives of interviewees, which is further documented in section 3.8. Combining the process of transcribing data with the process of collecting data enabled me to immersively identify and develop themes.



**Plate 3. 12 Transcribing interviews, June 2018**




**Plate 3. 13 Writing Chapter 5 by the River Torridge July 2019 (left), Writing Chapter 1 by the Tamar Bridge, August 2020 (right)**


To summarise, I found that the process of participant observation was not linear. Relationships developed over time and in the latter stages of fieldwork, I was both writing and returning to the rivers. Return trips (2019/2020) helped clarify writing, and to address any gaps that I had missed. Some of the data collection, for example videos and in-depth interviews with ferry operators about their routes (Chapter 5) were only possible at the latter stages of the research process, as it required the development of trust and rapport.

### 3.6 Reflection Cards

Reflection cards were ideated to contribute to answering RQ2, 'What are the thoughts, imaginations and experiences of ferry passengers as they cross from one side of the river to the other?' They were intended to be completed by passengers as they were crossing over the river, on a ferry and can be described as a creative behavioural perception survey to collect qualitative and quantitative data. One side showed a blank space with the instructions 'as you cross the river, use the space below to draw or write what you see and feel: be as creative as you like!' (Figure 3.3). On the reverse side, there was a short survey with six questions relating to destination (1), frequency of crossing (2), distance from crossing (3/4), purpose of journey (5), whether any differences were identified between the two sides of the river and why (6) with two final demographic questions relating to occupation and age (Figure 3.4). Respondents over the age of 18 were invited to leave their contact details, which 83 individuals (24%) chose to do, for follow-up interviews. In terms of informed consent, those that returned the reflection card were advised that in so doing, they were contributing to the research project (section 3.9.1). In total, 347 reflection cards were gathered from the three sites.



**ACROSS THE RIVER**  
is a geography  
research  
project exploring  
the role of ferries  
in connecting  
and shaping  
bankside  
communities in  
the South West




**UNIVERSITY OF  
PLYMOUTH**

As you cross the river, use the space below to **draw or write**  
what you see and feel

BE AS CREATIVE AS YOU LIKE!

PLEASE TURN OVER

**Figure 3. 3 Reflection Card front**



If you would like to contribute to this research project, please fill in this card and post in the box on the ferry before you get to the other side.


In returning this card, you consent for the information you provide to be included in this research project. All information will be strictly anonymous. This research complies by the University of Plymouth's ethical guidelines.

If you are over 18, enjoyed thinking about the river and the ferry, and would like to discuss further, please provide your contact details and the PhD researcher, Eva McGrath, will be in touch.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_


**UNIVERSITY OF  
PLYMOUTH**  
[www.plymouth.ac.uk/staff/eva-mcgrath](http://www.plymouth.ac.uk/staff/eva-mcgrath)

1. Where are you travelling to? Date \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Mount Edgcumbe      ☐ Admirals Hard  
☐ single                      ☐ return

2. How often do you use the ferry?

☐ daily      ☐ weekly      ☐ occasionally      ☐ first time

3. How far away from the river crossing do you live?

☐ less than 5 miles      ☐ more than 5 miles

4. What is the name of the town or area in which you live?

\_\_\_\_\_

5. What are you intending to do once you get to the other side?

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Do you identify differences between the two sides of the river?

☐ yes      ☐ no      *please expand*

\_\_\_\_\_

7. What is your occupation?

\_\_\_\_\_

8. What is your age?

☐ 0-11    ☐ 12-17    ☐ 18-29    ☐ 30-45    ☐ 46-60    ☐ 61-74    ☐ 75+

**Figure 3. 4 Reflection Card back**

The research task to 'draw' or 'write', the so called 'draw and write technique' was first devised by educationist Noreen Wetton, to 'enable children to give their views' (MacGregor, Currie & Wetton, 1998, p.307) on topics such as health education, school ethos, the school environment and community services. The technique has thereafter been widely used to evaluate children's views (Backett-Milburn & McKie, 1999; Bradding & Horstman, 1999; Hartel, 2014; Horstman *et al.*, 2008; Pridmore & Bendelow, 1995; Sewell, 2011) and has been described as a 'versatile tool' (McWhirter, 2014, p.250). The technique is traditionally a highly structured method to be used to 'gather data in the classroom' (Kara, 2015, p.89) and is preceded by a series of educationalist interventions prior to the task, such as assemblies and workshops. This suggests that the responses, although broad ranging, are influenced by oral instructions and the school curriculum leading up to the point of interaction.

I extended and developed this method in three ways: with the first being intended audience, the second being location and the third the value of spontaneity. Rather than a method exclusively for children, I used availability sampling (3.6.1) to cast the net wider, to include both adults and children. The vast majority of respondents who revealed their age (n=261) were adults (220 - 84%). A further 29 individuals were between the ages of 0-11 (11%) and 12 between the ages of 12 – 17 (5%) who were invited to participate through the encouragement of their parents. The wide variety of age groups suggests that the instruction to 'draw and write what you see and feel' (Figure 3.3) was an inclusive participatory activity and an open enough form through which people could feel welcome to respond and engage in their own way.

Secondly, the location is a development of the method. As opposed to a classroom environment, the card was given to participants on the banks of a river, as they were waiting to cross over on a ferry. Therefore, responses were shaped by the specific location and participants were encouraged to actively reflect upon the riverborderscape, that is, the specific watery environment of crossing a river on a ferry. Brice (2018) advocates how observational drawing as a researcher is a 'method for attunement to spatial, temporal, material and cultural relations that play out in the 'storying' of a landscape' (p.2). Observational drawing through the 'draw and write' technique was a method for participants to look closely at the landscape, internalise and interpret it to create something new, expressed through the lines of a pen. In turn, the strokes of the pen were shaped by the movement of the ferry travelling through the river, sometimes creating self-consciously 'wobbly' (Helford 127) marks of motion. In contrast to participatory research methods which are mediated through technological interventions such as the camera (Evers, 2015), video (Bates, 2015) or GPS map (Norwood & Cumming, 2012), participants were encouraged to interpret the landscape through their imagination, and creativity, which accordingly shaped the responses to be personal and unique to the individual. Such a method is a move away from an interpretation that landscape is distant, and towards landscape as experienced through 'direct personal participation' (Merleau-Ponty, 2013; Wylie, 2007, p.166).

The value of spontaneity seems to be underestimated within human geography. Other disciplines recognise that 'approximately one-third to one-half of thought is spontaneous, and people derive significant meaning from the occurrence of their spontaneous thoughts' (Fox & Christoff, 2018, p.36). The reflection card

method was deliberately chosen and developed as an innovative methodology to bring to the forefront spontaneous thoughts in motion. The decision to ask people to respond creatively during the ferry crossing was inspired by the 'creative potential' of transitional spaces (Roberts, 2018, p.37), and set out to examine the spatial area of the riverborderscape: bank – river – bank. Participants were asked to complete their reflection card on the river. Therefore, each contribution provided a dynamic insight into the act of travelling across a river on a ferry including imaginations, narratives, routines and sensory experiences which inform and shape the riverborderscape (Chapter 6).

### 3.6.1. Availability sampling

Participants were sampled using availability sampling, wherein 'anybody who agrees to be interviewed becomes part of the sample' (Cloke *et al.*, 2004, p.145). This is an approach which has been used by mobile researchers working with commuters on different forms of transport, such as trains (Bissell, 2018).

I positioned myself on the slip so that as prospective ferry passengers were walking down to the ferry/waiting for the ferry, I could approach them and initiate a conversation. This fitted availability sampling as I only spoke to those already waiting for a ferry, and only handed a reflection card to those who showed an interest in being part of the project. I have estimated that the 347 completed reflection cards represent about a fifth of those I interacted with on the slip (Helford notes, 14<sup>th</sup> September 2018).

The slip signifies a space of waiting (Andersen & Tørset, 2018; Corbridge, 2009), and individuals could be waiting for the ferry for up to twenty minutes. On the slip,

prospective ferry passengers were a “captive audience”, and many welcomed an opportunity to talk and hear more about the research project (Tamar notes, 15<sup>th</sup> April 2018). Typically, I would introduce myself as a social researcher, doing a project on the role of ferries, in an exchange that would start by me saying:

Hello! My name’s Eva and I’m doing a social research project on the role of ferries in connecting and shaping bankside communities in the South West. I was wondering if you would like to participate? It will involve, [*show reflection card*] as you are travelling on the ferry to do a drawing, or writing about what you see and experience. On the other side [*flip reflection card*] there are a few further questions and your answers will help contribute to my project. You will see a box on the ferry, so just post it in there before you get to the other side. If you are really interested, leave your contact details, and we can be in touch. You can be as creative as you like!

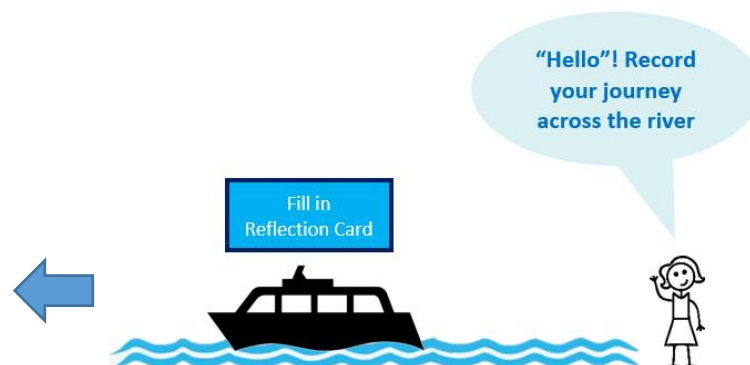


Plate 3. 14 Visualisation of Reflection Card approach



Plate 3. 15 Re-performing standing on Cremyll Slip, March 2020

My approach was purposefully friendly and informal, so that I could build rapport in a style that was not overly academic. Individuals showed interest by asking questions about the project or to clarify the task. Many offered additional information relating to, for example other ferries they were familiar with, or rivers that formed borders between other places (Table 8.1). A typical exchange took approximately a minute, but could last longer, in accordance to the ferry's timetable and varying degrees of enthusiasm from the audience. On average, I collected 15 reflection cards a day.

I asked all participants to fill in their reflection card whilst travelling on the ferry, so that their responses were shaped by the experience of crossing over the river. There were two exceptions, one couple asked if they could fill in the reflection card as they were having their meal, so that they could consider it in more detail (Helford 135) and one mother asked if she could post it to my address, so that it could be an extended holiday activity for her young children (Torridge 121). Participants were asked to leave their completed cards in a box on-board the ferry (Figure 3.5), although I did experiment with placing it on the opposite bankside (Torridge notes, 29<sup>th</sup> May 2018).

Of the reflection card responses, 35% were drawings, 35% a narrative (description, memory, short story), 19% a mixture of drawing and writing (labelling, commentary) and 11% were blank, as set out in Table 3.1. There were no instances of the quantitative survey cards being left blank.

	Total Reflection Cards	Reflection Card Interviews	Drawing	Writing	Mixture	Blank
<b>Tamar</b>	88	5	14	26	35	13
<b>Torridge</b>	124	7	66	35	7	16
<b>Helford</b>	135	1	43	61	23	8
<b>Total</b>			<b>123</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>37</b>
Percentage			35%	35%	19%	11%

**Table 3. 1 Types of Reflection Card: Drawing, Writing, Mixture, Blank**

That 89% of individuals responded in some way to the qualitative side of the reflection card demonstrates that the vast majority of participants were willing to participate creatively. Moreover, the instruction to produce a response on the water, before 'you get to the other side' (Figure 3.4) provided a manageable time-frame which might have contributed to the high percentage of completed cards. It was also an inclusive method, meaning that a diverse range of ages could participate in the activity, with the youngest being 5 years old (Helford 99) and the eldest over 75 (Tamar 56). One interviewee observed that families helped each other with the reflection card and parents encouraged their children to 'do the drawing' (Interview Ruth, ferry passenger, Torridge).

### 3.7 Interviews

A central assertion of this research is that it is through language that people communicate their ideas and experiences of borders (Prokkola, 2009) and narrate their encounters with water (cf. Jarratt & Sharpley, 2017; Strang, 2004). Therefore, interviews were chosen as a key method through which in-depth information pertaining to participants experiences and viewpoints could be expressed. Interviews are one of the most common methods of collecting empirical data in

qualitative research, valued as it pays attention to 'people's own words', and in so doing, reveals how 'language tells us a great deal about [people's] experiences and attitudes' (Hay, 2015, p.17).

In total, I interviewed 43 individuals, in 30 separate interviews (Table 3.3) in 2018 and 2019. Interviews typically lasted between thirty minutes and an hour and were transcribed shortly after. Three times the number of interviews were conducted on the Helford River (27), in comparison to 7 on the River Tamar and 9 on the River Torridge. This was mainly due to the fact that the majority of people agreeing to interview on the Helford River wanted to be interviewed as a couple. One interview, arranged with a single river resident (Amos) unexpectedly involved three others (Delilah, Mark, Harriett) as, at the time we had scheduled for an interview, he was also hosting friends, and they were keen to join in, to contribute their own thoughts and insights about the river. Therefore, on the Helford River there were 17 separate interviews, with a further 10 participants.

It is good practice to obtain a range of research participants to 'represent a diversity of voices and opinions' (Valentine, 2005, p.111). Building on the availability sampling quota of reflection cards (section 3.6.1), I used purposeful sampling (Cloe *et al.*, 2004) to extend my interview strategy based on an individual's role within the riverborderscape. These roles can be simplified by the following categories: a) ferry passenger; b) ferry personnel; c) resident; d) river decision-maker; e) bankside decision-maker. A ferry passenger is an individual who travels on a ferry, of which it might be their first time of crossing, or be a routine crossing. Ferry personnel refers to an individual who is responsible for the running

of the ferry, and may be either a skipper (Helford), deck-hand (Cremyll) or a volunteer (Torridge). A resident is a person who lives adjacent to the banks of the river. Where possible, I wanted to gather perspectives of residents living on either side of the river. A river decision-maker refers to an individual who makes decisions about policies or changes relating to the river, and may also be involved in charities such as Helford Marine Conservation Group, or Torridge Estuary Forum which encompass the river as a whole (from source to estuary), where the ferry crossing is just one facet amongst many other river-related activities. A bankside decision-maker refers to a politician or manager who makes decisions, or who is responsible for an infrastructure such as a café, situated on the banks of the river. In the analytical chapters of this thesis, interviewee quotes are assigned through parenthesis indicating name, role, location: as in; (Ruth, ferry passenger, Torridge).

	a) ferry passenger	b) ferry personnel	c) resident	d) river decision-maker	e) bankside decision-maker	Total people interviewed
<b>Tamar</b>	5	0	1	1	0	7
<b>Torridge</b>	2	2	2	1	2	9
<b>Helford</b>	10	2	11	3	1	27
Total: 43 interviews						

**Table 3. 2 Total number of interviews with different riverborder stakeholders**

**2018-2019**

Fourteen (33%) interviewees were encountered through the reflection card methodology (availability sampling). Spending time by the river ensured I had existing rapport with ten others (23%), such as those who worked on the ferry, or

were regular commuters, and informal conversations over time were thereafter formalised through an interview. Nine individuals (21%) were recommended through snowballing, which was helpful to build rapport with residents (cf. Babbie, 2007). I adopted several strategies to reach out to the ten other participants (23%) who were influential river/bankside decision-makers, such as by knocking on doors, making contact through addresses listed on public websites and telephoning numbers placed on billboards adjacent to the river. Interviewees often wore multiple hats and were therefore able to provide knowledge about different aspects of the riverborderscape.

In preparation for the interviews, I selected five key themes which reflected the research aim and research questions and which I used as a guide for semi-structured interviews. These related to: the river, the river as border, the ferry and the ferry crossing, followed by a 'free flow' section (Appendix D, Appendix E). Interviews were characterised by 'dialogue' (Valentine, 2005, p.111) and I engaged in active listening, using both verbal and non-verbal cues, and asked questions, to encourage the interviewee to continue with the topic (Falconi & Graber, 2019). For those who had completed a reflection card, I used the opening question: 'Could you tell me about your reflection card?' to structure the interview, and selected features within the reflection card such as words or drawings to inquire about their ferry crossing experience (RQ2), and wider understanding of the river (RQ3).

Recently the physical location in which a research encounter is conducted has been recognised as a factor in shaping what is said (or not said) during an interview (Casey, 2001; Evans & Jones, 2011; Holton & Riley, 2014). Interviews were

conducted in a variety of different locations, depending on the preference of the interviewee. I conducted three main types of interviews, 'Traditional interviews' (83%), 'Active interviews' (5%), 'Creative interviews' (12%), shown in Table 3.3. Traditional interviews refer to a fixed place location, such as a café (10 interviews), home (10 interviews) or outside bench (7 interviews), which may include the reflection card discussion. Active interviews, inspired by the 'mobilities turn' (cf. Sheller & Urry, 2006) refer to interviews located on the mobile vessel of the ferry. Creative interviews comprised of walking interviews (Clark & Emmel, 2010; Jones *et al.*, 2008), video/photography interviews, and an interview conducted during sailing. Table 3.3 gives an indication of the types of interview, location and type of stakeholder in each case site:

Type of interview	Traditional	With Reflection Card	Active Interview: Ferry Crossing	Creative Interview
<b>Tamar</b>  (7)	<b>Ralph</b> fisher <i>café</i>  <b>Nicholas</b> tidal specialist <i>café</i>	<b>Simon</b> daily ferry passenger <i>café</i>  <b>Aeron</b> first time ferry passenger <i>café</i>  <b>Rita</b> first time ferry passenger <i>skype</i>  <b>Edith</b> first time ferry passenger <i>skype</i>	<b>Otto</b> daily ferry passenger <i>interview on-board the ferry, from Cremyll to Admirals Hard with reflection card</i>	
<b>Torridge</b> (9)	<b>Penny</b> resident <i>café</i> <b>Vince</b> ferry volunteer <i>café</i> <b>Oliver</b> ferry volunteer <i>café</i> <b>Isaac</b> skipper and river decision-maker <i>sailing club</i>  <b>Howard</b> bankside decision-maker <i>café</i>	<b>Hudson</b> skipper <i>café</i>  <b>Willamina</b> occasional ferry passenger <i>skype</i>	<b>Ed</b> (ferry volunteer) <i>walking interview starting in Instow, including on-board ferry and ending on a bench in Appledore, with reflection card</i>  <b>Ruth</b> (first time ferry passenger) <i>invited to take photographs of Appledore and Instow including the ferry crossing, with follow-up interview on bench shaped by documented photographs and reflection card</i>	

<b>Helford</b> <b>(27)</b>	<b>Finn</b> skipper <i>bench</i> <b>Tom</b> ex -ferry operator <i>home</i> <b>George</b> ex- Oyster Farmer <i>home</i>  <b>Hamish</b> first time ferry passenger <i>bench</i> <b>Olivia</b> first time ferry passenger <i>bench</i> <b>Harry</b> first time ferry passenger <i>bench</i> <b>Jill</b> first time ferry passenger <i>bench</i> <b>Winnie</b> first time ferry passenger <i>bench</i> <b>Alex</b> first time ferry passenger <i>bench</i> <b>Harriett</b> holiday-maker <i>home</i> <b>Mark</b> holiday-maker <i>home</i> <b>Sam</b> first time ferry passenger <i>field</i> <b>Izzie</b> first time ferry passenger <i>field</i>  <b>John</b> resident <i>home</i> <b>Betsy</b> resident <i>home</i> <b>Quentin</b> resident <i>home</i> <b>Arthur</b> resident <i>bench</i> <b>Amos</b> resident <i>home</i> <b>Delilah</b> resident <i>home</i>  <b>Sid</b> river decision-maker <i>home</i> <b>Iris</b> resident <i>home</i> <b>Charlotte</b> river decision-maker <i>cafe</i>	<b>Brenda</b> occasional ferry passenger <i>bench with reflection card</i>		<b>Rachel</b> bankside decision-maker <i>walking interview to Durgan</i>  <b>Reuben</b> resident sailing <i>interview whilst crossing Rosehead Peninsula</i>  <b>Ruby</b> resident walking <i>interview from Helford Passage to Durgan</i>  <b>Sarah</b> occasional ferry passenger <i>invited to take videos whilst on-board the Helford Ferry with follow up-interview in café shaped by footage</i>
Total (43)	<b>29</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>

**Table 3. 3 Types of interviews 2018-2019. Names are pseudonyms.**

I had prepared to conduct more interviews on the ferry with participants, as the ferry crossing was central to the spatial analysis of the riverborderscape. However, that was not as straight forward as I had imagined and, in the end, only two interviews (4%) were situated on the river. This was partly due to the characteristics of the ferry itself. Firstly, in a short ten-minute journey, there are a number of tasks

customers undertake, such as boarding the boat, paying for their fare, and acknowledging or greeting other passengers, all of which, I found, punctuated and reduced the time and space for an interview. Secondly, as the ferry is an enclosed structure, conversations could be easily over-heard. I was aware that some interviewees became self-conscious of others listening to our conversation, and that seemed to inhibit what they expressed. I too, was conscious of my recording device and my role asking questions, within such a public and shared space. For the two participants who chose an active interview which included crossing the river on the ferry, the conversation continued on the other side, on a bench (Ed, ferry personnel, Torridge) and in the street (Otto, ferry passenger, Tamar). These smaller-scale passenger ferries contrast with the larger ferries studied by Vannini (2012) which, due to their scale, have areas of privacy, as passengers are able to move around on-board (cf. Levy & Hollan, 1998) or, indeed sit and talk in their car.



**Plate 3. 16 Walking Interview (left to right): Instow Dunes, River Torridge, Appledore – Instow Ferry, August 2018**

I gave a camera to one participant (Ruth, ferry passenger, Torridge), asking her to take photographs of significant places on either bankside, the river and the ferry and the subsequent interview was structured by the 53 photographs she took, the two videos and one reflection card (cf. Stara, 2017). Another participant took a

series of videos on her phone whilst crossing the river on the ferry, with an accompanying commentary. The subsequent interview was structured through reference to the videos (Sarah, ferry passenger, Helford). Two participants took me on their favourite walking routes around the river (Rachel, bankside-manager, Helford), (Ruby, resident, Helford), and one participant was interviewed whilst sailing (Reuben, resident, Helford).



**Plate 3. 17 Through Ruth's Eyes (left to right): Appledore Church, Lizzie M Ferry, crab collector, August 2018**

Three interviews were arranged via skype at a time to suit the participant, because of time constraints on the day (Rita, ferry passenger, Tamar), (Edith, ferry passenger, Tamar), (Willamina, resident, Torridge). In these cases, I used their reflection card to structure the interview, and that helped interviewees recall a sense of the immediacy of the river crossing experience.

This section has given an overview of the formal participation in the research process, through interviews. Whilst the majority of interviews were traditional in style, ten were structured through the reflection card responses, and a further six were more creative, such as walking interviews, two of which included crossing the river on the ferry. One participant took photographs and another made videos, to document their experiences of crossing a river on a ferry. In summary, the limits

on more creative participation related to the amount of time participants were willing to commit to the research project, and also the complexity of interviewing in public locations. I now go on to discuss the post-interview process of transcribing, coding and analysing.

## 3.8 Coding and Data Analysis

### 3.8.1 Organising the Data

I typed up all field notes and labelled them in date order, alongside visual media I captured during participant observation. I fully transcribed all interviews onto a word processor verbatim (including um's, pauses, repetitions) and assigned pseudonyms (section 3.9.2). At the top of each interview, I included an information box detailing date, location, weather, interview context and type of stakeholder (e.g. ferry operator).

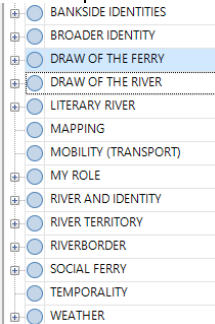
I scanned all 347 reflection cards so that I had a colour pdf copy, in addition to the physical copy and assigned a number to each card (e.g. Tamar 1, Torridge 2, Helford 3). Each set of reflection cards was scanned in accordance with the date in which it was collected, representing the 'reflection card' days of fieldwork, 23 days in total. I used an excel database to type up content from each reflection card, with columns relating to each survey question. I described the drawings in italicised text, (e.g. *Royal William Yard, boat, river, Tamar* 28) which helped me to identify common visuals of the riverborderscape and then typed narrative through standard text (e.g. 'This trip brings back many memories – I used the ferry to go to work in Plymouth for over 40 years on and off', Tamar 19). This typographic distinction was particularly useful when an individual combined drawing with

narrative (e.g. *lighthouse, ferry, river, bicycle, kernow flag* ‘work take me home’, Tamar 37), as in Figure 7.2. Such a labour intensive approach meant that I was immersed in the data, which later became helpful for connecting themes (cf. Fraser, 2004, p.187).

### 3.8.2 Creating Codes

The process of systematically analysing data gathered from the field is known as coding (Watson & Till, 2010). I uploaded the word-processed archives, field notes, interview transcripts, reflection cards and visual media onto NVivo in January 2019 and organised the datasets both chronologically and thematically. The analytical process began with the identification of different topics that regularly appeared in the data, which I categorised through topic nodes and sub-nodes. I then worked up from topics to themes, keeping in mind the research questions and conceptual framework of the study. At this point, I identified links between the topics and themes, and saw patterns in terms of how each theme contributed to the analytical framework of the riverborderscape: ‘materialities’, ‘experiences’ and ‘narratives’ (Table 3.4) Each theme listed had multiple sub- themes and evidence examples from across the datasets.

Materialities	Experiences	Narratives	Positionality
mapping	social ferry	literary river	my role
river territory	mobility	bankside identities	
routes	temporality	broader identities	
	draw of the ferry	river identity	
	draw of the river	river as border	
	weather		



**Table 3. 4 Riverborderscape: emerging themes in relation to NVIVO coding**

The content of each chapter was, therefore, shaped by the themes that could be linked together from the data-set in this way. The process of coding and recoding (Roulston, 2014) took a few months, and was combined with re-reading academic literature, immersing myself in the fieldwork data and thinking through the overarching research concept: the riverborderscape.

### 3.9 Ethics

The entire research design followed ethical guidance set out by the University of Plymouth's (2015) Research Ethics Policy, so that any potential harm for the research participants could be mitigated. Ethical clearance was granted in April 2018, prior to formally starting fieldwork which included a risk assessment (Appendix F). These ethical principles included informed consent, openness and honesty, the right to withdraw, protection from harm, debriefing and confidentiality. In this next section, I detail three key ethical considerations that I encountered during fieldwork: informed consent, confidentiality and positionality.

#### 3.9.1 Informed Consent

Informed consent is a fundamental ethical requirement of participant research (Miller *et al.*, 2012). It means ensuring that individuals encountered during the research process are aware that they are contributing to a research project, and they understand that excerpts from their contribution may be used for further academic purposes. It also requires that they are aware of the right to withdraw at any point.

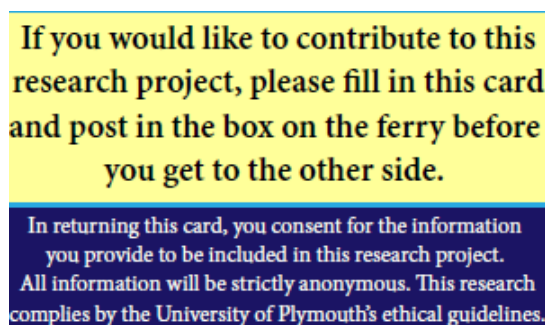
To ensure informed consent for ferry passengers, I verbally introduced myself as a researcher, and briefly explained my research purpose. I talked through both sides

of the reflection card, and explained that in completing the task, they would be contributing to the research project (section 3.6.1) On each side of the reflection card, the University of Plymouth logo was visible, with a further hyperlink to my online research profile, to ensure that I was transparent about my connection to an academic institution (Figure 3.4).

Each reflection card had a clearly marked informed consent section, which stated (Figure 3.4, 3.5):

In returning this card, you consent for the information you provide to be included in this research project. All information will be strictly anonymous. This research complies by the University of Plymouth's ethical guidelines.

Individuals were not obliged to leave contact details. Indeed, the majority of individuals, 76%, did not leave their contact details on the reflection card, which infers that although they were happy to complete an in the moment response on the river ferry, they did not want to be contacted thereafter. In terms of informed consent, the message within the reflection card was repeated on the physical structure of the reflection card box, giving an opportunity for any unsure individuals to opt out.



**Figure 3. 5 Informed consent wording on the reflection cards (left), Post-box for reflection cards, placed on the ferry (right)**

Interviews were arranged in a variety of different ways. Ferry passengers who had left their email address on the reflection card were contacted, to enquire whether they would be interested in participating further through an in-depth interview. In the follow up email, I described my research project in clear, non-technical language and also attached a participant information sheet and consent form (Appendix A and B), so that potential interviewees were aware of the research parameters, their rights and role in advance. I brought a printed copy of the participant information sheet and consent form to each interview and asked individuals to sign the consent form before the start of the interview, which reiterated that they could withdraw from the study at any stage. I included my personal contact details, as well as the appropriate contact at the Faculty of Science and Technology Human Ethics Committee, University of Plymouth, in the case of a complaint. All interviewees had an opportunity to ask questions and I verbally signalled turning the recorder on and off, and placed the recorder in a visible place (cf. Fluehr-Lobban, 2013). To signal the end of the interview, I turned the recorder off. At this point, some interviewees continued talking, for example about issues relating to more overtly political matters. All participants were given the opportunity to have a copy of their interview and review the transcript of their interview. One interviewee made minor changes.

### 3.9.2 Confidentiality

Confidentiality was ensured by using pseudonyms for all of the participants so as to anonymise the data. However, there may be covert or overt 'clues as to the identity of informants' held within the original interview transcript (Hopf, 2002,

p.338). Documents that held the key to any information, such as the full names of participants were secured by way of a password encoded lock on my computer.

After some deliberation about possible negative consequences, it was decided to name the ferry companies. Anonymity was impractical as the rivers, ferries and bankside communities were so reflective of each geographical location. However, these initial considerations were made very real during an interview with the owners of a particular ferry route. As standard procedure, I talked through the information sheet and consent form before recording the interview. They interrupted this process, to ask how I would mitigate any unintended consequences of my research and whether participating in the research project might ultimately have a detrimental impact upon them, or the future operation of the ferry. I assured them that they would be able to read through their interview transcript and make any changes, adjustments or deletions as they saw appropriate, and when they confirmed that they were happy with that affirmation, continued with the interview. As it happened, they were satisfied with the content within the transcript of the interview and gave permission for their contribution to be used within the research project. However, these considerations highlighted the very real and potential impacts of research, in this case concerning commercial risk, and brought to light my wider responsibilities as researcher.

### 3.9.3 Personality and Positionality

It has been recognised that personality informs research encounters, including the design, delivery, documentation and dissemination of research (Peters, 2017b). The ethics of social research encounters goes beyond institutional guidelines and

approvals and must address broader questions (cf. de Laine, 2000). It is clear that both my personality (extroverted) and positionality (mid-20s, female, white, educated) shaped my research encounters.

I was significantly younger than all the ferry operators, volunteers and personnel, and participants would often say that I reminded them of their child or grandchild which, in some way, built connection and helped participants share information. However, in some cases, my age was an initial barrier. In one case, I had arranged to meet ferry personnel. Outside the building, a gentleman with a 'white beard' asked how old I was and thereafter concluded, 'You must be lost and in the wrong place', as he was not convinced that a person of my age could be seriously interested in the ferry (Torridge notes, 23<sup>rd</sup> March, 2018).

Although a minority experience, I also had to deal with rejection. When I asked one ferry passenger whether he would be willing to share his experiences through a reflection card, he replied (Tamar notes, 20<sup>th</sup> November 2018):

You want me to do all of this?  
I'd rather not.

However, despite resisting a formal record of his ferry crossing experience, he continued to share insights reflecting his accumulated experience of crossing the river for fifty years on the Cremyll Ferry. In many varied encounters with prospective participants, I soon built up confidence and learnt not to take rejection personally.

It is clear that my personality informed the design and delivery of the creative element of the research methods, particularly the reflection cards. I was chatty,

friendly, open and enthusiastic and listened attentively to the stories and experiences of those I met on the bankside who were about to cross the river on the ferry. With a background in English Literature and an interest in creative expression, I encouraged individuals to be creative, and even set little 'creative competitions' between couples and family members (Torridge notes, 27<sup>th</sup> May 2018). When people asked what they could possibly write or draw on their reflection cards, I suggested they could share memories, or drawings of what they see. One individual apologises on his reflection card (Helford 110),

Eva I am sorry I am not creative. But I love this passenger ferry as it adds so much depth to my holiday. Living in an urban place this is a unique treat for me. Long may it continue ☺

Others used the reflection card to express their good thoughts for my research, 'Good luck with your project!' (Torridge 111), 'hope your PhD goes well' (Helford 45). When I asked an interviewee what sort of activities she observed on the ferry she replied, 'they were drawing your forms and the parents were eagle eyed in encouraging the children to do them as creatively as possible (laughter)' (Interview Ruth, ferry passenger, Torridge). Another reflection card began: 'Ferry me off far away, where I am going is easy to say, I was going to write more, but was interrupted to pay!' (Helford 113). On the one hand, the reflection card could be interpreted as a disruption in the day-to-day experiences of those crossing rivers on a ferry. However, enough reflection cards were given out and completed to demonstrate that the reflection cards reflected the culture of passenger ferries, including what is seen, thought, felt and experienced (Chapter 6). Importantly, these responses evidence how researchers are entangled within the design and

delivery of the project. If another researcher were to emulate the reflection card approach, they would be sure to gather a very different response, depending on their personality and ability to connect with the individuals they encountered. Each day, there was an element of surprise and I reflect in my notes, 'I feel like a fisher: I never quite know what I'm going to catch' (Tamar notes, 26<sup>th</sup> October 2019). My field poem 'I have a waiting body' (Tamar notes, November 2018) encapsulates the entanglement between my emotions, the process of recognising subtleties over time and how I was received,

I have a waiting body  
that feels the cold.  
In tune to the hum of  
the ferry boat:  
a learnt mode  
for the urban bones.

Many of my hours are spent waiting -  
anticipating the next conversation,  
pausing to reflect...

So much of this I just soak  
in an unthinking thinking haze  
watching and waiting  
for the ferry to come round the bend.

Looking beyond the slip to the street,  
I recognise the body movements of those  
wanting to cross the river.  
Perhaps it is their pace -  
leaned in towards the water  
their body a canvas on which I can read.

Despite this knowledge  
I ask them:  
"Are you for the ferry?"  
I know the answer. Mostly.

But that lift of my tone invites an open space of response which they  
fill in with all that I do not know

this stranger who has floated in front of me.

Those willing  
open up, a little bit,  
about their intention of the day  
whether for a walk or for work,  
retracing a route familiar  
or stumbling into new territory,  
never having crossed this river before.

Some minds think of ferry crossings beyond,  
some minds meander into the musings of memory.  
Some forget the excitement in the regularity of this regular commute.  
Some kindly reject, a polite scoff:  
“I'd rather not”.

Snippets of time  
like the river and tide.  
Who knows who I will encounter,  
what story they will share?

As I wait for the regular rhythm of the ferry  
who knows what I will find t/here.

I was often referred to as ‘the ferry lady’ (Tamar notes 26<sup>th</sup> October 2018, Helford notes 21<sup>st</sup> September 2018, Torridge notes, 24<sup>th</sup> July 2018). Others asked whether I was an ‘artist’ (Helford notes, 30<sup>th</sup> October 2019) or a ‘writer’ (Helford notes, 25<sup>th</sup> August 2018). Some thought that I worked on behalf of the ferry (Tamar notes, 14<sup>th</sup> May 2018), given the project’s close association with the ferry companies, and I had to instate my independent role as a researcher.

The nature of this public research strategy meant that I was often visible when walking around the case sites. Sometimes, individuals I had met and encouraged

to complete a reflection card recognised me when I was on a break, or when I was processing information in a café (Helford notes, 7<sup>th</sup> September 2018). When crossing the Cremyll Ferry for recreational purposes, I was recognised by skippers and deck-hands (Tamar notes, 13<sup>th</sup> March 2020). I even bumped into research participants in public contexts (Tamar notes, 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2019), blurring the boundary between research encounters and everyday life. That I was by myself also made me stand out, as the majority of individuals I encountered were travelling as a couple, or were part of a group (Helford notes, 19<sup>th</sup> September 2018). This was mitigated when I was accompanied by my dog. However, it meant that I retreated to quiet places such as my car to write notes, or process information.

### 3.9.4 Weather

It is important here to mention the impact of the weather on research encounters and river ferry experiences. The weather, or the 'elements' (Simpson, 2019, p.1063) and the changing states of weather patterns are recognised as shaping everyday human experiences in kinaesthetic, visual or affective ways. This is certainly the case for river ferry experiences. In extreme weather conditions, such as storms, the ferry is disrupted (Chapter 7). Rain also affects the experiences of crossing a river on a ferry, particularly in the open structure of the smaller boats, and can be diversely expressed, such as through humour, or despair (Chapter 6). For practical purposes, the majority of my reflection card method took place during fair weather, and the sunshine was often labelled as a contributing factor to wellbeing (Tamar 22, Torridge 111, Helford 4). The connection between weather, mood and related behaviour is established (Tsutsui, 2013), and I recognised an emerging

pattern that when the weather was good, individuals I met on the bankside were more willing to participate creatively, and share insights through conversation. In summary, I made sure to be by the river in different weathers, and at different states of the tide, to note the effect of seasonal and weather-related differences.



**Plate 3. 18 Rain, Cremyll Ferry, March 2020**

### 3.10 Summary

This chapter has brought together the main methodological approach of the thesis and has justified a mixed-methods research design that aims to evaluate the idea of the riverborderscape through an exploration of ferry crossings in the South West of England. Following Emmel and Clarke (2009), the methods broadly fall into two categories: methods used to understand research context (archives); and methods to understand lived experiences and narratives (participant observation, reflection

cards and interviews). In this chapter, I introduced a novel method of the reflection card, combining both qualitative creative approaches and quantitative survey information, to capture experiences of crossing a river. I also discussed how my field poems enhanced participant observation and reflected my embodied experiences of the riverborderscape, whilst integrating the information I received at the time of collection. I detailed strategies I employed to carefully handle data gathered during the project and reflected upon ethical issues, which included a consideration of positionality.

The next chapter goes on to provide a more detailed insight into the three case study sites, the Cremyll Ferry, Appledore – Instow Ferry and Helford River Boats that were the focus of ethnographic research.

## 4. Introducing the Case Study Sites

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the rivers Tamar, Torridge and Helford and contextualises the case study sites through the spatial frame of the riverborderscape. This means that each location is detailed in relation to: a) the river; b) the ferry, which includes i. an historical section relating to ownership, route and archival accounts of the crossing and ii. an overview of the contemporary service which informs ethnographic analysis in the following chapters; c) the landscape of a bankside space on one side of the ferry crossing; and d) the landscape of a bankside space on the other side of the ferry crossing. These sections are bookended with a short overview and brief summary. A sense of place emerges from bringing together a wide variety of archival sources, which include maps, census datum, policy documents and photographs, as well as literary accounts and artwork. Quantitative data findings from 347 passengers' reflection cards collected at each site (Figure 3.4) inform insights into the contemporary ferry service, which include data relating to passengers' proximity to the ferry crossing and key reported activities undertaken on either side of the river. In so doing, this chapter introduces themes that are then developed in subsequent chapters which include: the navigational routes of a ferry across a river (Chapter 5); the diverse experiences of crossing a river (Chapter 6); and an insight into the bankside spaces on either side of the river, including local governing structures and alternative routes of crossing the river, for when the ferry does not operate (Chapter 7).

To begin, I provide a short overview of the South West region, and in particular the counties of Devon and Cornwall, where this research is located. Regions have a 'special place' in geographic study (Peters, 2018, p.504). A region has been used to refer to all spatial scales, ranging from the very local to the international (Paasi, Harrison & Jones, 2018). A region can refer to both the functional 'blocks of territory carved out of a state for the purposes of administration', as well as cultural insights, 'based on the sense of identity and interactions of their inhabitants within a particular region' (Deacon, 2018, p.9). The Cremyll Ferry, operating between the bankside spaces of Admirals Hard and Cremyll crosses the River Tamar, a river that forms the ancient jurisdictional border between the counties Devon and Cornwall. The River Torridge is located in North Devon and the Helford River in Cornwall, and so, recognising that regions have a 'wide register of meanings' (Agnew, 2018, p.23), the three site case study approach provides a particular insight into the historical, cultural and political contexts of Cornwall and Devon and is further explored in this chapter.

#### 4.1.2 Cornwall and Devon

There was the speedy Tamar, which divides  
 The Cornish and Devonish confines;  
 Through both whose borders swiftly downe it glides,  
 And meeting Plim, to Plimmouth thence declines

Edmund Spenser, *The Fairie Queene*, Book IV, canto xi, stanza xxxi in  
 (ed.Hamilton, 2014, p.498)

Poet Edmund Spenser, writing in 1590 poetically characterises the Tamar, dividing and confining Cornwall to the east and Devon to the west of its river banks. The

swift, gliding river forms the 'border' between these two counties flowing down towards Plymouth, a city located at the mouth of the Tamar.

According to English historical documents, this riverborder had been 'fixed' in the year 936 A.D by King Æthelstan (Whitelock, 1996, p.304). Rutherford (1990) recognises that issues of identity 'lie across some crucial borders' (p.19) and certainly the River Tamar has become entangled within administrative, territorial and cultural bordering processes (Vernon, 2014). Laviolette (2011) emphasises how, were the River Tamar to extend a further four miles north, towards the Bristol Channel, the peninsula of Cornwall would be an island, separated from mainland Britain by virtue of the watercourse (cf. Hayward & Fleury, 2020). The river has been widely recognised as a contributing factor to a sense of Cornish distinctiveness and cultural identity (Cunliffe & Hey, 1990; Drake, 2019; Willett, 2013) and the Mayor of Truro recently described the Tamar as the 'oldest cultural boundary in Europe' (Biscoe, 2020, p.25).

Devon and Cornwall are bordered and divided, almost their entire length, by the River Tamar. The A38 is the major road linking Cornwall and Devon, and the dual carriageway crosses the Tamar Bridge between Saltash in Cornwall and the city of Plymouth in Devon. The bridge superseded the Saltash Ferry, a ferry documented as early as the 13<sup>th</sup> century but which could not sustain increasing demand by car travel in the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Tait, 2013). The Tamar Bridge was first opened in 1962 and the crossings are run as a single, unified operation by the Tamar Bridge and Torpoint Ferry Joint Committee, which also 'comprises of elected members of Plymouth City Council and Cornwall County Councils' ('The Tamar Bridge and

Torpoint Ferry,' 2017, p.2). The bridge is tolled for eastbound traffic, and has the capacity for around '1,800 vehicles per hour per lane' (Brett, 2013, p.10). Around 14% of the jobs in Plymouth are held by residents of Cornwall, and many Plymouth residents travel to work in Cornwall' (Brett, 2013, p.5), showing that the bridge is an infrastructure for cross-border mobility. The bridge is an important access point for visitors travelling from further afield, such as for holidays in Cornwall.

The South West Coast Path, a National Trail and registered charity (est. 1974) is 'England's longest waymarked footpath' ('About the South West Coast Path,' 2020), between Minehead on the edge of Exmoor to the shores of Poole Harbour. This path straddles the land-water edge, through the counties of Devon and Cornwall, attracting day-trip walkers as well as long-distance walkers. The Coast Path is a significant part of the region's economy, 'generating £307 million a year and supporting 7,500 jobs' (Ramblers, 2020). The path crosses '13 ferries, 230 bridges, 880 gates' ('South West Coast Path,' 2020), and intersects with the three river ferries that are central to this study. Before those ferries are detailed, I first introduce the counties of Cornwall and Devon.

#### 4.1.2.1 Cornwall

The resident population of Cornwall is 532,273, according to the 2011 census, with a landmass of roughly 1,600 square miles (cornwall.gov.uk, 2013, p.1) with over two hundred and forty miles of coastline.

In March 2015, Cornish was officially recognised as a national minority by the Council of Europe, on the basis that in the 2011 census '14 percent of Cornwall's overall population identified as being Cornish' ('Cornish National Minority,' 2019).

Historically, the county distinguished itself from mainland Britain, by virtue of a cultural and linguistic set of practices and behaviours, including its own language, flag (the Kernow Flag, or Saint Piran's Flag) accent and dialect (Tewdwr-Jones & Allmendinger, 2006). The River Tamar, separating Cornwall from Devon, contributes to the counties' distinctiveness (Laviolette, 2011), as it is surrounded on three sides by water (to the north and west by the Celtic Sea, to the south by the English Channel, and to the east by Devon River Tamar). Etymologically, the Cornish language has close linguistic ties to French, perhaps facilitated by the historical maritime connections between the coastal areas of Cornwall and Brittany. Within literature (du Maurier, 1992), folk music (Yarwood & Charlton, 2009) and local histories (Payton, 2017), the connection between the coast, the landscape and estuarine places of Cornwall all contribute to a distinct sense of place. But quite what it means to 'be Cornish' is contested (Kent, 2000, p.20). Willett (2013) demonstrates that 'Cornish ethnicity is not founded in genealogy or kinship/racial ties, but that territorial and cultural bonds are an important part of an individuals' identification' (p.209).

The industry, economy and socio-cultural context of Cornwall has changed over time. Mining was an important geographical and cultural unifying factor in the formation of a distinct regional identity as small towns and the landscape were transformed, in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries (Payton, 2017). However, the mining industry declined in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and Willett (2010) describes the uncertainty and identity crisis that followed the loss of what had been an economically dominant activity. There was a subsequent shift towards an economy built on tourism, taking advantage of Cornwall's environmental assets such as its dramatic,

rocky coastline, rivers, mild microclimate and picturesque villages. Deacon (2007) describes how much of the tourism sector is built upon nostalgia, as visitors are attracted to the history and legacy of the tin and copper mining boom (Buckley, 2019), as well as its maritime history (Payton *et al.*, 2015), including beaches, coves, old fishing villages and headlands (Staff & Moseley, 2019).

Cornwall is a popular holiday destination and in the summer months, the population temporarily increases by, on average, 200,000 visitors every day (Vergnault, 2018). South West Research Company (2010, p.31) showed how the average length of stay was 6.63 nights, with the majority of residents (94%) visiting from a residential address within the UK. The accommodation industry, including cottages and self-catering apartments are a significant business sector, often located in picturesque locations, with premium rates for coastal views (Hui, Zhong & Yu, 2012; Latinopoulos, 2018). The success of the tourism industry in Cornwall is evident by virtue of the rise of second home ownership, which comprises 25% of the properties in some parishes (Paris, 2010). This has placed increased pressure on the housing market, and led to 'high levels of outward migration, a dispersed population and high unemployment' (Willett, 2013, p.204), leading to some tensions between what are known as incomers and the locals. It is recognised that the population of Cornwall is gradually increasing (*Population*, 2017).

#### 4.1.2.2 Devon

The county of Devon is in the South West of England with a landmass of 2,500 square miles (*Devon and Districts*, 2011), and a population estimate of 1.2 million ('Devon population statistics,' 2011). It is bounded by Cornwall to the west,

Somerset to the north-east and Dorset to the east. There is a wide variety of scenery within Devon, including two national parks, as well as the rivers Dart, Tamar, Exe, Otter and Torridge. Farming and agriculture contributes to 30% of the region's economy (Augustyn, 2019) and fishing remains a significant industry, especially in Plymouth and Torbay, with Plymouth contributing to around 13% of England's total fish count each year (Telford, 2020).

Similarly to Cornwall, the arrival of the railway boosted the tourism sector within Devon, which is based around the coast and natural environment attractions ('Tamar Valley AONB,' 2019). According to Morgan and Pritchard (1999, p.52),

the sea has been instrumental in shaping Devon's tourism industry as the county's relative remoteness, combined with a lengthy coastline and numerous harbours, gives Devon a strong maritime orientation and the current recreational links with the sea continue an ancient tradition.

The growth of second home ownership is becoming increasingly significant in the county, particularly around coastal locations (cf. Hall & Müller, 2018).

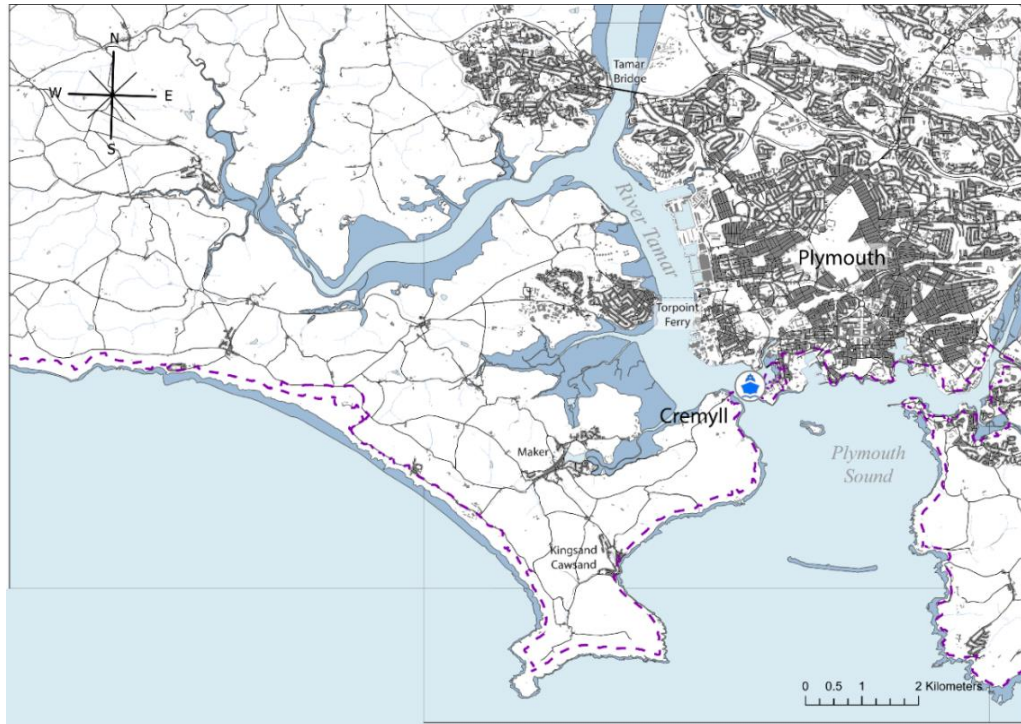
Now that I have given a broad introduction to the counties of Devon and Cornwall, I take each case study site in turn and introduce the rivers and ferries in relation to the spatial area of the riverborderscape, in the following sections of this chapter. I begin with the Cremyll Ferry, between Devon and Cornwall, then discuss the Appledore-Instow Ferry, crossing the River Torridge in North Devon and finally Helford River Boats, which runs between Helford and Helford Passage in Cornwall. As discussed in section 3.3, although this research project is not a comparative

study, this structure serves to provide a historic and contemporary sense of place, for subsequent chapters to build upon.

## **4.2 Cremyll Ferry**

### **4.2.1 Overview**

The Cremyll Ferry runs between Admirals Hard Slip in Plymouth and Cremyll Quay in Cornwall. Admirals Hard is in Stonehouse, one of twenty wards in the city of Plymouth, with a population of 10,476 (Public Health, 2014, p.1). Historically, East Stonehouse was one of the three towns that 'merged to become the Borough of Plymouth in 1914' (Essex & Yarwood, 2017, p.123), and is located two miles from Plymouth city centre. Cremyll is situated on the South East Coast of Cornwall, referred to as the Rame Peninsula. Mount Edgcumbe House, a Tudor style 865-acre estate and gardens is an attraction, for visitors. The residential areas of Millbrook, Kingsand, Cawsand, Maker and St John, are within commuting distance to the Cremyll Ferry. A passenger ferry between these two places was first recorded at the time of the Norman Conquest, 'but it has been suggested that a ferry crossing existed in the first century' (Sharman, 2003, p.5).



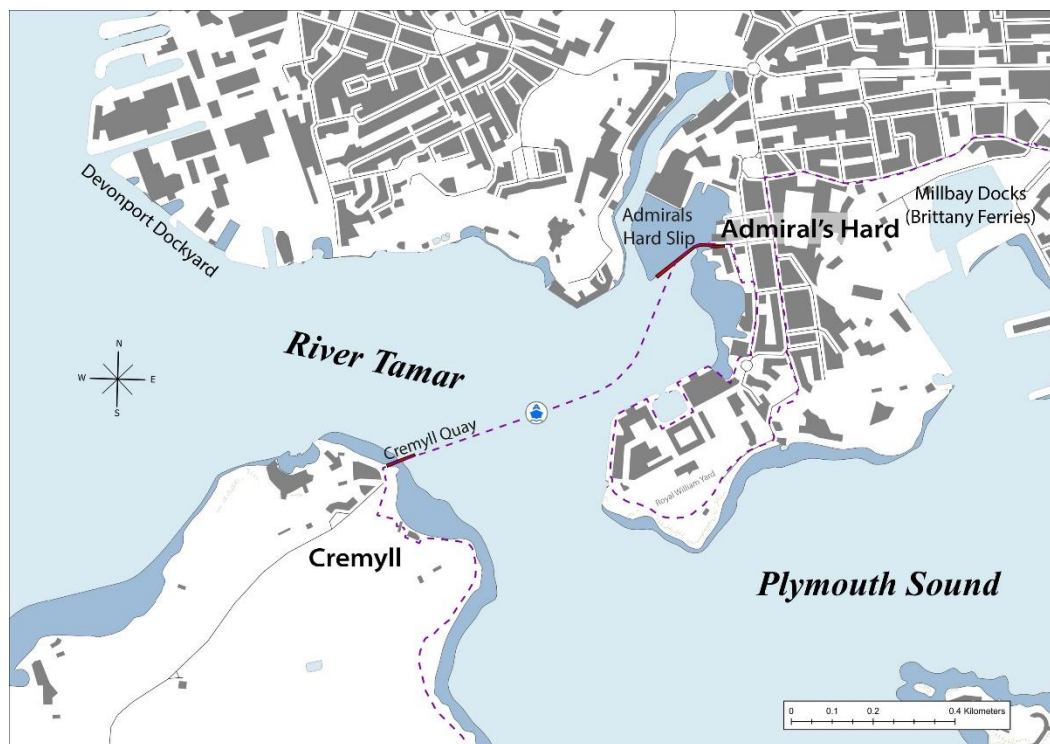
**Figure 4. 1 Map depicting the lower section of the River Tamar, with Tamar Bridge and Torpoint (chain) Ferry. The Cremyll Passenger Ferry, marked by a blue icon, was the primary focus of the project**

#### 4.2.2 River Tamar

The length of the River Tamar is 61 miles ('The River Tamar,' 2020). The river and surrounding area is designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) which is protected and enhanced for nature, people, business and culture. The river 'flows in a southerly direction along a more or less winding course' (Percival, 1929, p.81) and the characteristics of the river shift, depending upon the geographical location. For example, the upper region of the river is characterised by narrow mud-banks and salt-marsh areas, whilst 'along the shores of the Hamoaze, below Saltash, the depth of water may be 20 feet to 30 feet' (Percival, 1929, p.82). There are twelve road bridges currently in use across the river (Borthwick *et al.*, 2018) at various points along its length: one rail bridge (Royal Albert Bridge, 1859), one

chain ferry (Torpoint Ferry 1791) and one passenger ferry (Cremyll Ferry), see Figure 4.1.

The section of the river I focus upon follows the route of the Cremyll Ferry, between Admirals Hard and Cremyll (Figure 4.2). This is the southerly most navigable point of the river and is located just before the river enters Plymouth Sound. The distance between the two banksides is about 1,000 metres. There are various depths in this section of the river, the shallowest being one metre and the deepest pool 36 metres, which the ferry operator has to navigate across (Chapter 5). The largest naval base in Western Europe, Devonport Dockyard is just up the river on the right-hand bankside, and naval ships including frigates and amphibious ships pass by the Cremyll Ferry. The tides are complex in this short stretch of water, and there can be up to seven different types of tide in this area (Parker & Moore, 2016).



**Figure 4. 2 Detail of the Cremyll Ferry between Cremyll and Admirals Hard**

## 4.2.3 Ferry

### 4.2.3.1 Historic

The right to operate a ferry across 'Crimble Passage' (Paterson & Freeling, 1808, p.77) began as an extension of land ownership and was passed between influential land-owners, including Robert Count of Mortain (1070s), Stephen Durnford (1386), Reginald de Valletort, (1204) Ralph de Stonehouse, the Blake family, the Bigbury family and the Mount Edgcumbe family (Sharman, 2003, p.12). The Mount Edgcumbe family purchased the full ferry rights in 1511, which they held for 400 years. Records show that ferry operators, such as Henry Blake paid an annual rent of £6.10.0d to run the ferry, demonstrating how the day-to-day operation was leased out and managed by individuals during this time (Downing, 2008).

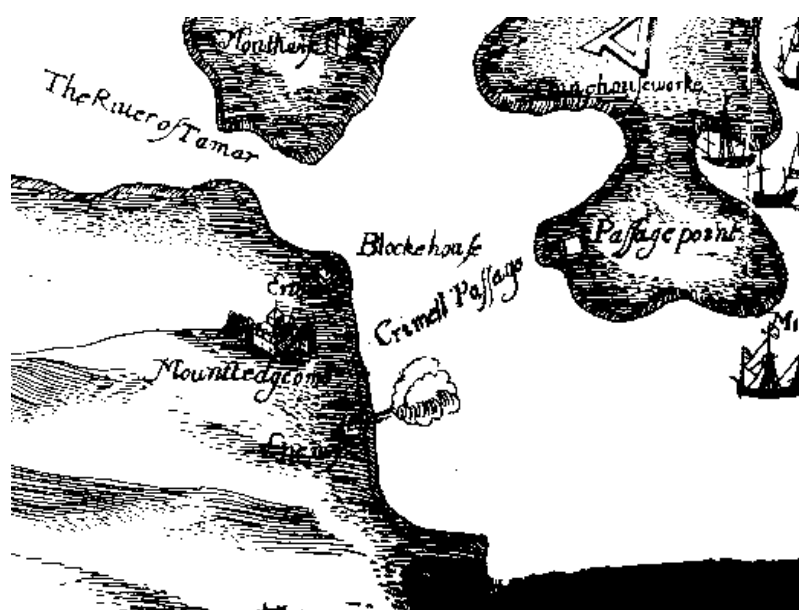


Figure 4. 3 Crimell Passage (in Gould, 1643), supplied by The British Library

This was an important crossing point, for people, trade and goods. Most of Cornwall's mail was 'carried on horse back from Plymouth across the Cremyll Ferry through to Penzance' (Downing, 2008, p.21). Seventeenth century travel writer

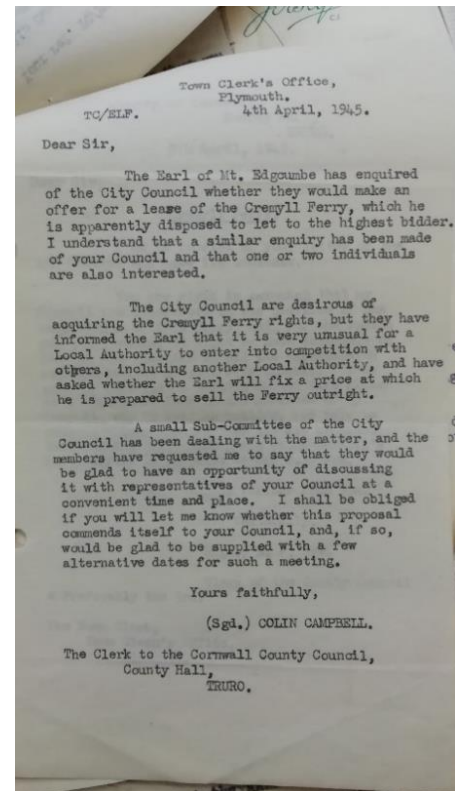
Celia Fiennes describes how 'this is the constant way all people goe, and saved severall miles rideings' (Fiennes, 1982, p.61), demonstrating how the ferry is positioned at a strategic section of the river, which many used as a shortcut to cross over from one bankside to the other.

At the same time, Fiennes describes the danger of this river crossing, recording how, 'I was at least an hour going over' the mile stretch of water 'but those ferry boats are so wet and then the sea and wind are always cold to be upon, that I never fail to catch cold in a ferry boat' (Fiennes, 1982, p.62). This is reiterated by a resident of East Stonehouse in 1724 (Martin, 1980, p.12), as he describes how the

dense fog over the estuary [...] known locally as the river gale, coinciding with a strong ebb tide often put the ferry off course and caused difficulty in locating the landing place.

These historic accounts give an indication of the challenge of navigating a tidal river, and the expertise, knowledge and judgement required by those responsible for the ferry. Until the nineteenth century, rowing and sailing boats were primarily used to cross the river, with horse powered boats utilised until the 1930s (Downing, 2008).

Passenger demand for the Cremyll Ferry declined when the Torpoint chain ferry was built, five miles up the river in 1791 (Sharman, 2003). Competing ferry operators offered routes between the village of Millbrook directly to the Dockyard, from the 1880's until 1945 (Downing, 2008). The Millbrook Steamboat Company managed the Cremyll Ferry from 1943. In a letter dated 4<sup>th</sup> April 1945, the Earl of Mount Edgcumbe enquired whether it would be feasible for Cornwall County Council to 'make an offer for a lease of the Cremyll Ferry' (Figure 4.4). As stated in the letter, this was an unusual request for a 'Local Authority' to purchase the rights to the crossing, but might have been ideated to correspond to the intended shift of Mount Edgcumbe House and Gardens from private to public ownership.



**Figure 4. 4 Cremyll Rights  
Correspondence, 4th April 1945,  
supplied by The Box Plymouth**

It was in 1990 when the 'ancient right to run a ferry between Admirals Hard at Stonehouse (PL1 3RJ) and Cremyll in Cornwall (PL10 1HX) was jointly purchased by Plymouth City Council and Cornwall County Councils' ('Ferries,' 2019). This coincided with the transference of Mount Edgcumbe Country Park from private to public ownership (Downing, 2008). In 2017, Plymouth City Council advertised a ten year contract for the Cremyll Ferry foot passenger service, which included the 'lease of slipway and buildings at Cremyll Quay, Mount Edgcumbe and slipway at Admirals Hard, Plymouth' (Porter, 2017, p.3). The service was bought by Plymouth

Boat Trips, a 'family run business, operating cruises, private charters, ferries and fishing trips from Plymouth in Devon' (Squire, 2020).

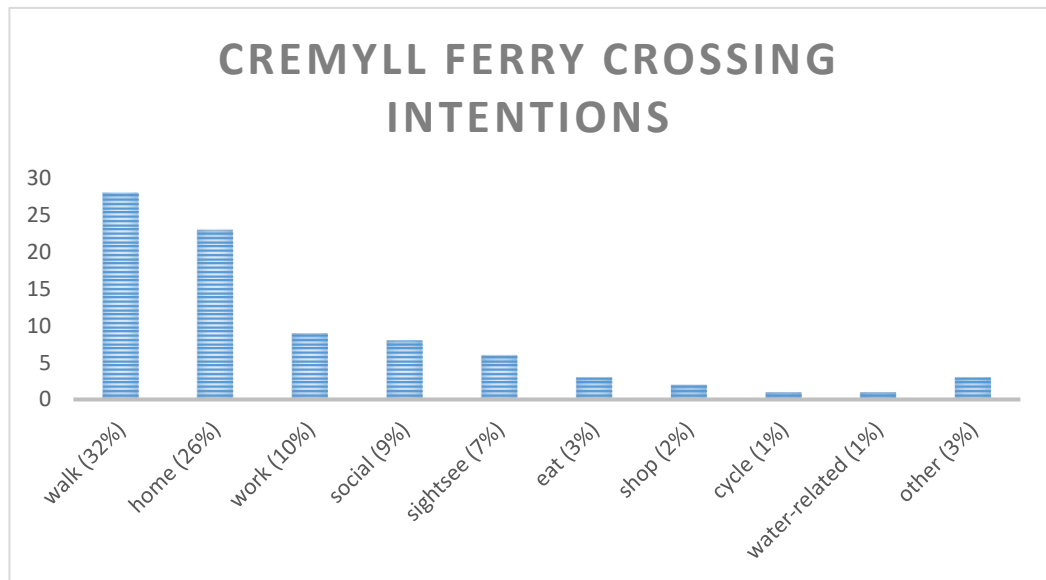
#### 4.2.3.2 Contemporary

Between 2014 and 2017, Cremyll Ferry transported over 180,000 passengers per annum, which averages at just under 500 passengers per day (Porter, 2017). The ferry operates year round, seven days a week, with a winter timetable from 1<sup>st</sup> October to 31<sup>st</sup> March and a summer timetable from 1<sup>st</sup> April to 30<sup>th</sup> September. The first ferry is the 06.45 from Cremyll Cornwall Monday to Friday, with the last ferry being 18.00 in the winter months and 21.00 in the summer months. On bank holidays, the ferry runs on a Sunday timetable, which is a reduced hour service ('Cremyll Ferry,' 2019). The ferry, 'Edgcumbe Belle', renamed 'Cremyll Ferry' in 2020 is an engine-powered wooden boat, which takes up to 128 passengers (Plate 4.1). There is a middle interior section which is covered, whilst the front and back sections of the ferry are open-air, with arch-bench seating. The skipper is located in the control room, above the passenger seating area and equipment includes GPS navigation, a compass, maps of the tidal area, a depth sounder and live-video footage of the exterior of the boat, used for reversing. Two personnel are employed to manage the boat. A deck-hand is responsible for assisting customers on-board/off-board safely, issuing fares, as well as general on-board maintenance. The skipper steers the ferry from the control room. The price of the ferry fare is £2.00, with child single tickets and bikes £1. Dogs sail free.



**Plate 4. 1 Cremyll Ferry with inside and outside seating where the control room is located above, November 2018**

The ferry route is part of the South West Coast Path ('Estuaries and Ferries ', 2019) and attracts walkers, as well as Plymouth residents who want to enjoy the public park of Mount Edgcumbe Country Park, which is open all year and free of charge ('Mount Edgcumbe House and Country Park,' 2019). Individuals who live in Cremyll and the surrounding villages but work in Plymouth were shown to regularly use the ferry, as a commuter service. According to quantitative data collected through the reflection card method (2018), 22% were using the ferry for the first time, 30% used the ferry 'occasionally', 19% were 'daily users, using the ferry for the purpose of commuting to work whilst 11% used the ferry 'weekly' (a further 18% of passengers left that question blank). Figure 4.3 represents the purposes of 88 surveyed passengers and reflects the diversity of use, both for recreation and commuting.



**Figure 4. 5 Visualisations of Cremyll Ferry crossing intentions, based on reflection card survey data from 88 passengers, 2018**

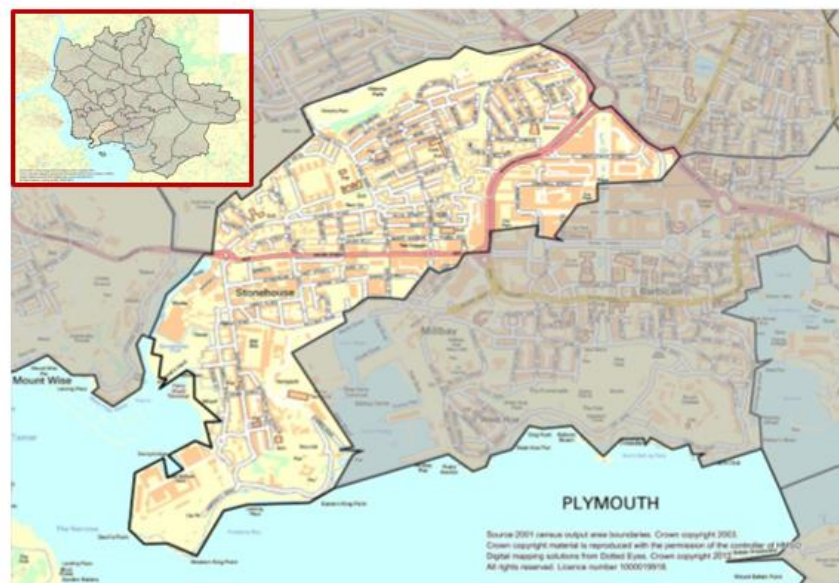
That 26% of passengers I met on Admirals Hard were returning 'home' indicates that residents lived in adjacent villages around Cremyll, and were commuting into Plymouth for school (19% identified as 'students') or returning home after work (10%). The majority of those who used the Cremyll Ferry were deemed to be local, with 56% living less than five miles from the ferry crossing.

To summarise, the Cremyll Ferry's route between the edge of a city (Plymouth) and a rural area has retained demand for the service, across time. Referring to Figure 4.1, the alternative to the ferry crossing is a 10.6 mile drive round to the Torpoint chain ferry crossing, or a 25.7 mile detour across Tamar Bridge. A fee of £2.00 is similarly required at each of these alternative main car crossing points, Torpoint Ferry and Tamar Bridge. Each respective journey would take 45 minutes, depending on traffic. In contrast, the Cremyll Ferry foot passenger service takes around ten minutes. Having explained this detour and alternative routes around the river, in line with the spatial frame of the riverborderscape, the following

section introduces the bankside spaces of Admirals Hard and Cremyll, on either side of the River Tamar, where the Cremyll Ferry arrives/departs.

#### 4.2.4 Admirals Hard

Admirals Hard is an area located south of Union Street within the ward of Stonehouse (Plate 4. 6). This is the second most deprived area in Plymouth, with high rates of crime and barriers to housing and services (Public Health, 2014, p.5).



**Figure 4. 6 Stonehouse, Source: (Public Health, 2014) Plymouth City Council**

From its medieval origins, the area developed in the eighteenth century to become a fashionable residential area for military officers associated with the Royal Marine Barracks established in the area in 1783, the Royal William Victualling Yard, completed in 1835 and the Royal Naval Hospital (Brayshay, Gaskell Brown & Barber, 1999). Great Western Docks at Millbay opened in 1857 as a commercial port and passenger terminal. In 1973 Brittany Ferries set up a cross-channel ferry service for passengers and freight services between Plymouth - Roscoff (Northern France), Plymouth - St Malo (Northern France) and Plymouth – Santander (Spain).

Princess Yachts Limited, a key marine sector in the area, is located next to Admirals Slip.



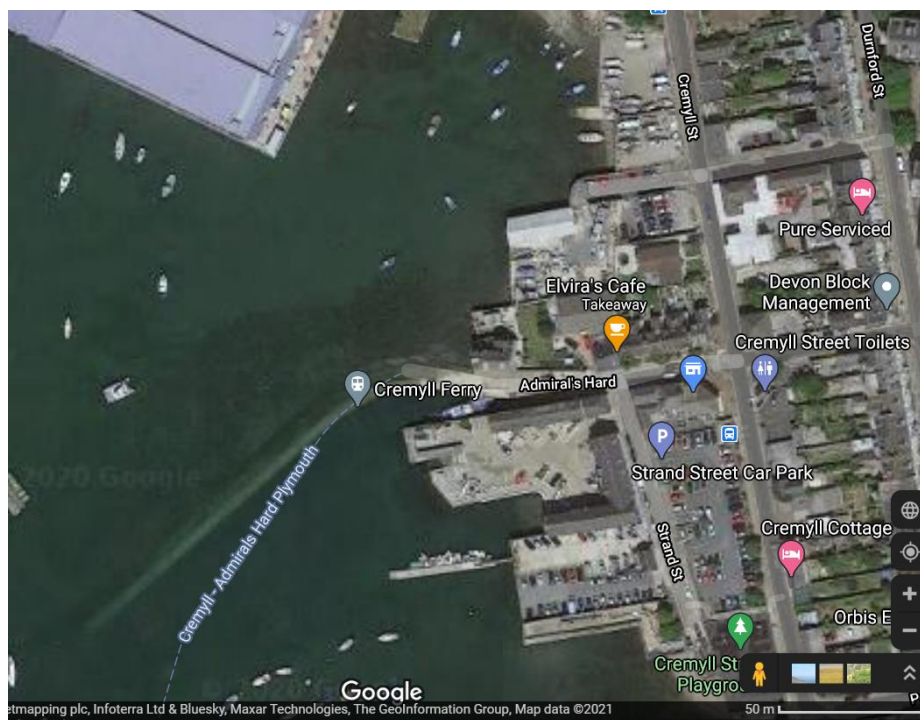
**Plate 4. 2 Princess Yachts Limited, March 2018 (left), Brittany Ferries 'Port of Plymouth', March 2020 (right)**

The Ministry of Defence decommissioned key sites in this area in the 1990's, including the Royal William Yard, which has contributed to a partial waterfront regeneration including 'residential apartments, restaurants, office space and art galleries' (Essex & Yarwood, 2017, p.124). The area also has two churches, a primary school, three pubs, a tennis club and a residential care home. The central street is Durnford Street, which is a mixed housing area between private residential, social housing and holiday apartments. It is from this street that Admirals Hard leads to Admirals Slip, where the ferry operates.



**Plate 4. 3 Towards the ferry (left to right): Durnford Street, 'Mount Edgcumbe via Cremyll Ferry →', Admirals Hard waiting area, November 2018**

#### 4.2.5 Admirals Slip



**Figure 4. 7 Admirals Hard Slip satellite view, Source: Google Maps 2020**

A convenience store, named Ferry Stores, is on the corner of Admirals Hard, as well as a bus stop, café and pub. A bus travels between Cremyll Ferry departure point and the city centre, located two miles away. A car park on Strand Street provides free parking, with the capacity for 100 cars. Admirals Slip is a structure which extends 1,500 metres from the edge of Strand Street, and is the landing place for the Cremyll Ferry. 'Strand' means 'the land bordering a sea, lake or river' (OED, 2019) and so the street-name indicates a transition from land, to the river's edge and beyond.



**Plate 4. 4 Strand Street, adjacent to the Cremyll Ferry crossing, November 2018**

The paved slip was built in 1825 by the Royal Navy (Downing, 2008). At low tide, passengers disembark from the furthest point on the slip, whilst at high tide, the volume of water enables the ferry to steer further inland (Plate 5.6). Tyres attached to metal hooks buffer the sides, to ease the ferry as it lines up to the slip.



**Plate 4. 5 Passengers arriving at Admirals Hard 1964, supplied by The Box Plymouth (left), Edgumbe Belle at Admirals Hard, November 2018 (right)**

#### 4.2.6 Cremyll Quay



**Figure 4. 8 Cremyll Slip satellite view, Source: Google Maps 2020**

Cremyll Quay is on the opposite shore, and extends fifty metres to the riverbed at a sloped thirty degree angle. At very low tide, or when the wind speed is high, the ferry lands to the right of the structure, on the beach. Ashore, there are historical toll booths and a square waiting area. There is a bus stop, for buses to Plymouth city centre via Millbrook, Kingsand, Cawsand, Whitsand, Antony, Torpoint, Stoke and Plymouth Railway Station (an hour and a half circular route).

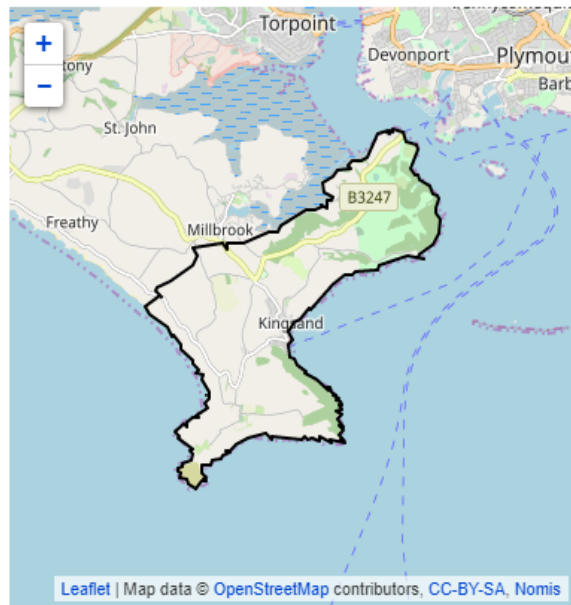


**Plate 4. 6 Passengers arriving at Cremyll Quay 1970, supplied by The Box Plymouth (left), Edgcumbe Belle at Cremyll Quay, July 2018 (right)**

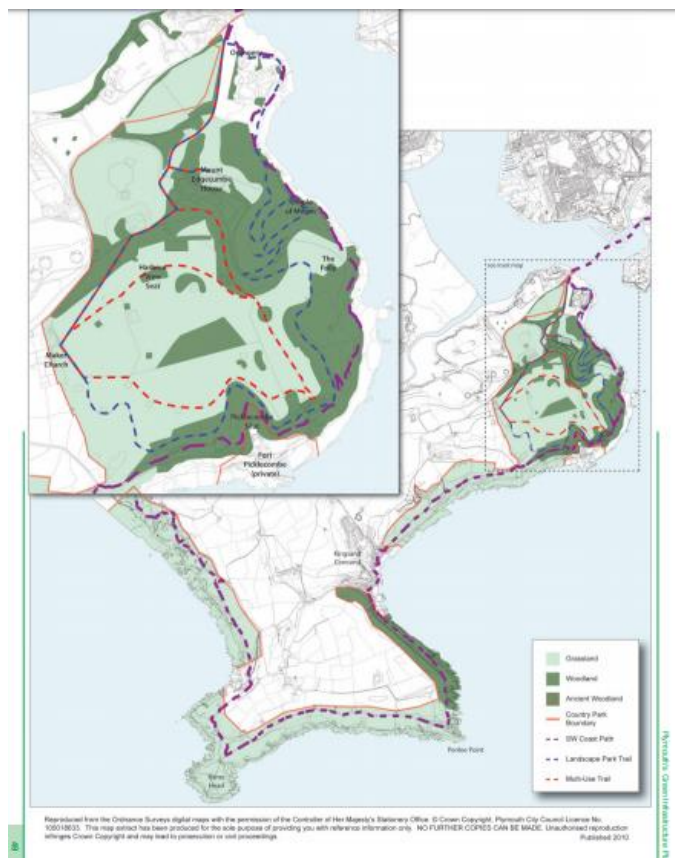
#### 4.2.7 Cremyll

Cremyll is situated on the South East Coast, and lies within the Maker-with Rame Parish, Cornwall. There are 977 residents living in this area (*Maker-with-Rame Parish*, 2011) (Figure 4.9). The nearest village is Millbrook, with 2,278 residents (*Millbrook Parish*, 2011). A 2005 report showed 4% of households in Millbrook used the Cremyll Ferry 'daily' (Woodley, 2005, p.8). 20% of ferry passengers who completed a reflection card named their home as 'Millbrook', whilst 4% said they lived in Kingsand/Cawsand, 2% in 'Whitsand' and 1% in the neighbouring 'St John'. Therefore, although the immediate vicinity of Cremyll is a publicly accessible country park, and the South West Coast path skirts around the coast, there are

villages further afield which remain connected to Cremyll, as a result of the ferry crossing.



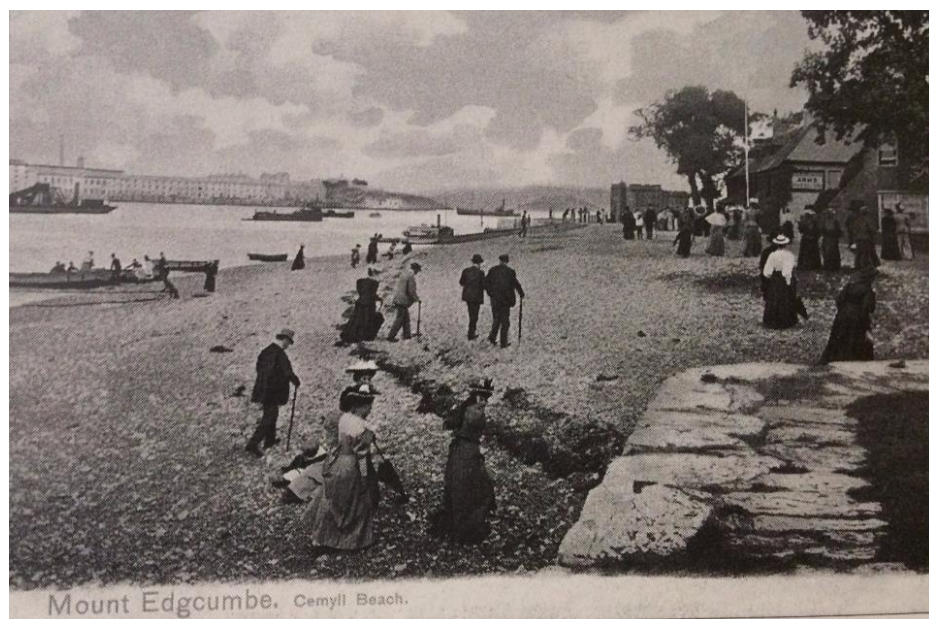
**Figure 4. 9 Maker-with-Rame Parish Cornwall, Source: (*Maker-with-Rame Parish*, 2011) Office for National Statistics**



**Figure 4. 10 Edgcumbe Country Park and Grounds, Source: (*Plymouth's Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan*, 2010), Supplied by Plymouth City Council and Ordnance Survey**

Historically, Cremyll was a well located lime quarry, with the close proximity to the river a strategic position for exports (Brown, 2008). Boat building was also established at this site in 1774, and is continued by Mashfords Brothers (est. 1930's) who build yachts, pleasure boats and is commissioned to do repairs for the Cremyll Ferry.

The grounds around Edgcumbe were popular in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, even when Edgcumbe House was in private ownership (section 4.2.3.1). In 1885, the Earl of Edgcumbe resisted the development of a steam ferry service, for fear that a more efficient service would 'bring many more visitors to his park' (Sharman 2003, p.7). A Victorian Folly was built on the hill, offering a view across Plymouth Sound, towards the city of Plymouth, and there is an eighteenth century landscaped park, deer park, beaches and wooded hillsides, as well as an Orangery café. Public events take place at Mount Edgcumbe, including Christmas Fairs, Easter Egg Hunts, history trails, food events and light shows.



**Plate 4. 7 Cremyll Beach, 1900 in (Kittridge, 2003)**

### 4.2.8 Tamar Summary

The Cremyll Ferry is the last passenger-only ferry that operates across the Tamar as an all-year round service, and accordingly attracts both regular commuters and recreational day-visitors. The grounds of Mount Edgcumbe and the South West Coast Path are popular attractions for those seeking to travel to the bankside spaces of Cremyll, whilst the Royal William Yard with access to the city centre of Plymouth offers facilities more widely associated with the urban (section 7.2) The ferry route's ownership is unique, as the rights to the crossing are jointly owned by the local authorities of Cornwall County Council and Plymouth City Council, whilst Plymouth Boat Trips is responsible for its day-to-day operation. Bankside signs on either side of the river signal 'Devon' and 'Cornwall', the significance of which are further discussed in Chapter 7.

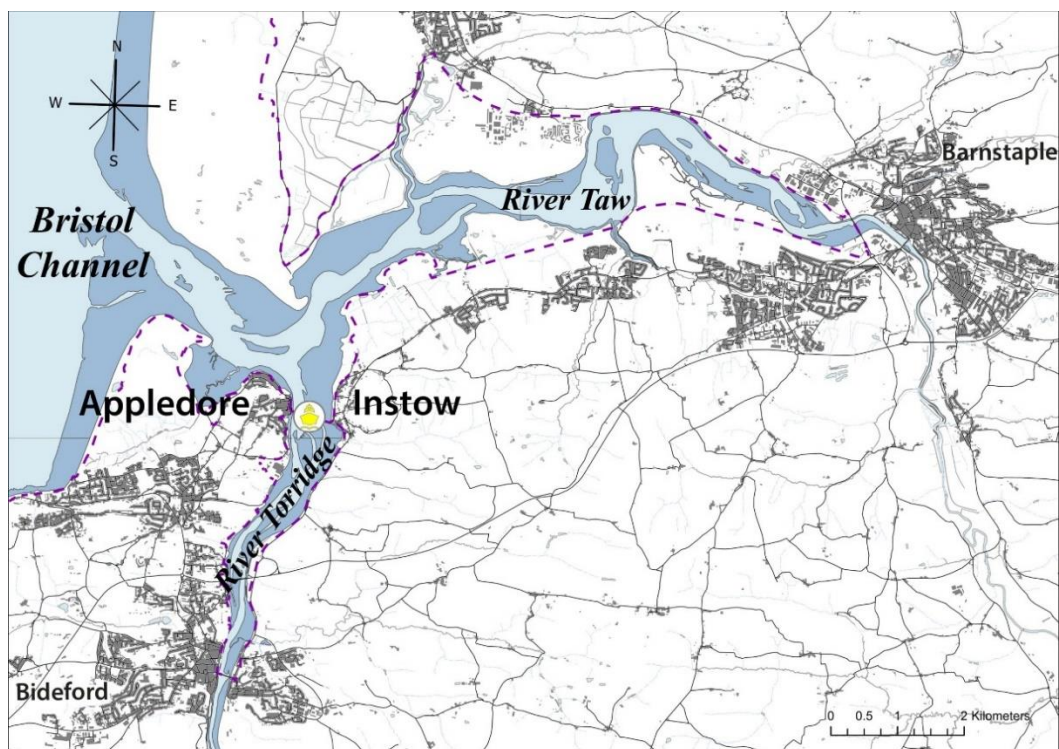
Now that I have introduced the Cremyll Ferry through the spatial frame of the riverborderscape, I turn to the Appledore-Instow Ferry, located in North Devon and use a similar structure to introduce the river, the ferry and adjacent bankside spaces.

## 4.3 Appledore - Instow Ferry

### 4.3.1 Overview

The Appledore - Instow Ferry runs between Appledore Slip and Instow Quay. Appledore is a village situated at the mouth of the River Torridge, six miles west of Barnstaple and three miles north of Bideford in Devon (Figure 4.11). Torridge District Council is responsible for Appledore and 2,817 residents live there, over an area of 445 hectares (*Appledore Ward*, 2011). Instow is a smaller village on the

opposite side of the river, with a residency of 1,501 over an area of 2,995 hectares (*Instow Ward*, 2011), which North Devon Council is responsible for. The two villages are at once separated by, and connected to, the River Torridge through its ferry service. Bridging the Torridge at its mouth is impractical given that it is over a mile across and has an up to ten metre tidal range caused by fluctuations in the Bristol Channel ('Bristol Channel Tides,' 2019). At any one tide, roughly 53 million cubic metres of water can move in and out of the Taw Torridge estuary mouth, at a speed of 5 knots (Gent, 2017). At low tide, sand bars and mud flats are visible, whereas at high tide, larger vessels can navigate through the water. The ferry must re-negotiate this changing channel at every crossing.



**Figure 4. 11 Map depicting the lower section of the River Torridge. Other road crossings at Old Bideford Bridge, and Torridge Bridge (A39). The Appledore - Instow Ferry was the primary focus of the project**

### 4.3.2 River Torridge

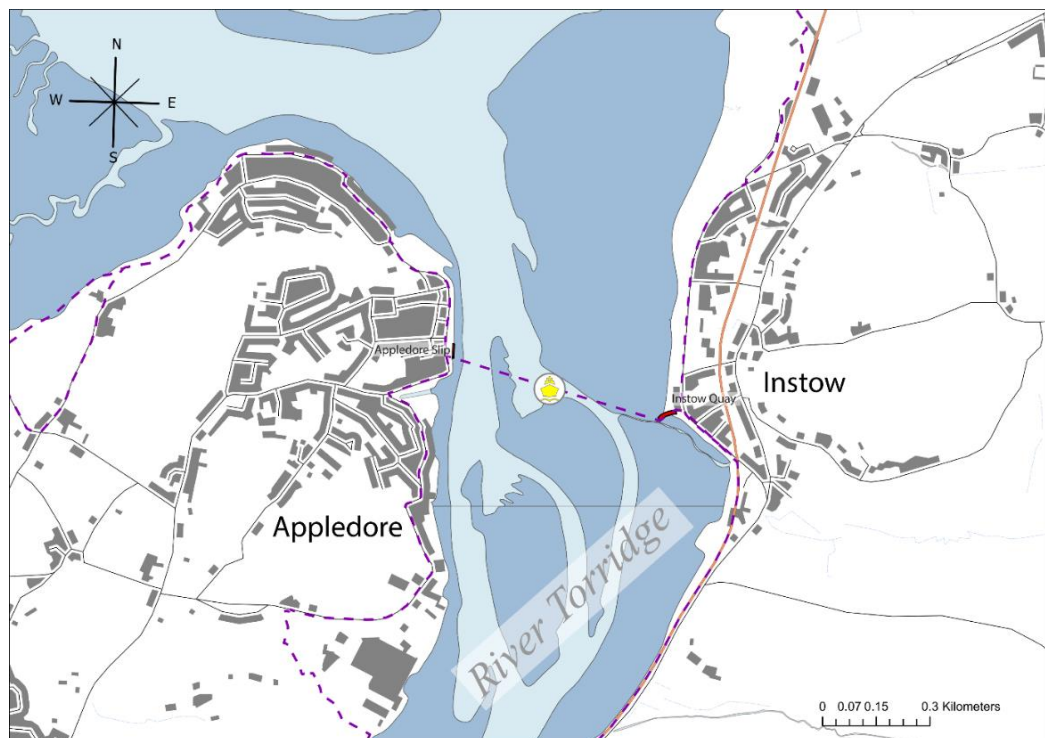
The River Torridge is 48 miles long, beginning in the north-western corner of Devon before joining the Taw estuary and flowing into the Bristol Channel ('Devon's rivers: the Torridge,' 2014). The river's catchment area is predominantly rural, a place for flora, fauna and natural species, perhaps described most famously in Henry Williamson's (1927) *Tarka the Otter* (in Williamson, 2014, p.1),

Twilight over meadow and water, the eve-star shining above the hill,  
and Old Nog the heron crying kra-a-ark as his slow wings carry him  
down to the estuary. A whiteness drifting above the reeds of the  
riverside, for the owl had flown from under the middle arch of the  
stone bridge that once had carried the canal across the river.

The Taw-Torridge Estuary Committee is actively involved in the area and seeks to influence the ways in which the estuary is used to 'promote best practice', covering activities such as fishing, industry, mooring, shipping, yachting, crabbing, pollution, and use of the river (*Torridge Estuary Strategy*, 2014). Strategic focus is on nature improvement and public access in the areas.

The section of the river I focus upon follows the route of the Appledore – Instow Ferry, between Appledore and Instow (Figure 4.12). This is located at a navigable stretch of the river, just before the River Torridge meets the River Taw to form the Taw-Torridge estuary, and flows into the Bristol Channel. The distance between the two banksides is around 700 metres. This stretch of the river is heavily influenced by the tides, and there is an up to ten metre difference between high and low tide. As represented in Figure 4.12, sandbanks form channels and gulleys

in the central point of the crossing, the shape of which have changed over time (Carter, 2000) and have to be negotiated by the ferry operator (Chapter 5).



**Figure 4. 12 Detail of Appledore - Instow Ferry crossing between Appledore and Instow with Appledore Slip and Instow Quay marked.**

### 4.3.3 Appledore – Instow Ferry

#### 4.3.3.1 Historic

The first ferry was recorded in this location in 1639 ('Appledore Quay and Ferries,' 2016). There have never been any official rights of ferry, and so the service has always been open to 'any local waterman willing to pay rent for landing passengers at Instow quay' (Langley & Small, 1984, p.38). Typically, ferry operators were a family network, including 'The Pidlors of Instow', 'the Powe family' the 'Vaggers the 'Fishwicks' and 'Baileys' (Langley & Small, 1984, p.32-33). Latterly, four generations of ferry operators were derived from the Johns Family, a ferry crossing lineage beginning in 1870 (William Johns) until 2007 (Norman Johns). Norman's father was

Frederick Johns (1950's) and grandfather Dickie Johns (1920's), who was nicknamed 'Low Water Dick' as he always had a boat available, even at low tide (Johns, 2011).



**Plate 4. 8 Historic Ferrymen (left to right): Bill Bailey and 'Daddy' Johns of the Johns Family, supplied by David Carter. For an interview with Michael Johns talking about his family's history as ferrymen, see 'Tales from the Appledore and Instow Ferry' (2019), North Devon Moving Image, creative director Amanda McCormack. Source: <http://www.northdevonmovingimage.org.uk/tales-from-the-appledore--instow-ferry.html>**

The commercialisation of the ferry service between Appledore and Instow corresponded with the development of Instow Railway Station which opened in 1848, with passenger connections ending in October 1963 (Holland, 2013). A steam ferry was considered in 1876, to 'better connect' Instow and Appledore and it was argued that such an initiative would 'greatly benefit the parishioners of Appledore and Northam' (*Appledore, Steam Tramway to Westward Ho*, 1876, p.2). However, this was not pursued and the main type of ferries were rowing boats and, latterly, sail boats.

Nineteenth century writer Jerome K Jerome (1983) recalls arriving by train into Instow as a child, for their 'long-talked-of visit to Appledore' (p.23). They were greeted by the 'old ferryman' and 'my mother shook hands with him, and all the

way across they talked of strange names and places [...] it was the first time I had been in a boat, and I was afraid; but I tried to hide it' (p.23). He recalls encountering a dog on-board the ferry (p.24),

I thought he was going to kill me and shut my eyes tight, but he only gave me a lick all over the face, that knocked off my cap. The old ferryman swore at him, and he disappeared with a splash into the water.

Stories like this recall how the experience of the ferry crossing contributed to the journey and excitement of travelling to a bankside place, and provides an insight into the thoughts and experiences of passengers whilst in motion (Chapter 6).

The ferry was licensed to transport packages and post between Appledore and Instow between 1849 and 1939 ('Appledore Quay and Ferries,' 2016). The ferry was also an important service in transporting workers up river towards the various shipyards, as well as to Yelland Power station when it opened in the 1950's (Johns, 2011), demonstrating the ferry's multiple and varied uses, with routes to various bankside places up and down the river, based upon demand. The potential danger of this river crossing is demonstrated by a 1910 account of the ferry Dodo capsizing during a fierce south-westerly gale' ('Ferry Tragedy at Appledore,' 1910, p.2). The ferry operator Thomas Fishwick drowned, alongside two of his regular passengers, who lived in the nearby towns of Fremington and Barnstaple and who worked at Appledore Docks. This sobering account reflects the strength of the tidal river, and the potential vulnerability of those crossing from one bankside to the other.

#### 4.3.3.2 Contemporary

The private commercial ferry service ended in 2007, and the boats were sold. Two years later, a series of public meetings were organised in Appledore and Instow, to consider re-starting the ferry (Mendosa, 2013). Initial funding was sourced through various grants, including the local council, Village SOS Big Lottery, 106 Funding from Devon Wind Power, who own Fullabrook Wind Farm and EU funding ('Funded Projects,' 2018) Local businesses in Appledore and Instow were also invited to sponsor the ferry and in 2011, the Appledore – Instow Ferry, a non-profit, volunteer-led ferry service was launched.

The ferry operates seasonally (April – October) and can only operate during high tide (four hours), meaning that the service is determined by the broader system of river movement, tidal cycles and seasonal dynamics. In volatile weather conditions, such as during storms or on a very wet day, the ferry is cancelled. Notwithstanding, on 29<sup>th</sup> May 2019, the ferry transported its 150,000<sup>th</sup> passenger. Thus, on average, Appledore - Instow Ferry transports around 16,000 passengers a year, 2,500 per month, or 83 per day. These numbers fluctuate in accordance with the weather, tidal conditions and a calendar of events such as school holidays, and wider community days such as local regattas. The contemporary ferry operation is reliant upon at least three volunteers: one to help passengers board at Appledore Slip, one to help those boarding at Instow Quay and one to work on-board. Only the skippers are paid. The price of the ferry fare is £2.00 for an adult single, with children £1, bicycles £1.50 and dogs cross for free.

There are currently two boats in operation, 'Sheila M' (2019) and 'Lizzie M' (2013), both engine powered, and licensed to carry up to 12 passengers. Vessels are

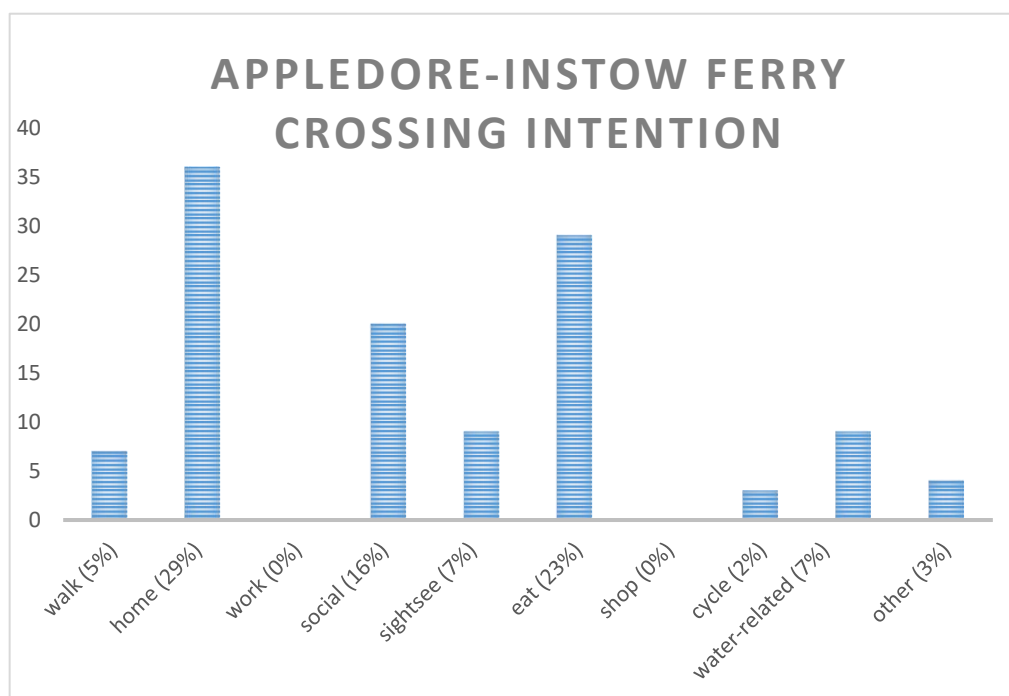
inspected annually by Torridge District Council, on behalf of the Maritime and Coastguard Agency to ensure seaworthiness and that they carry stipulated safety equipment ('Boats,' 2019). Onboard technology includes a GPS system, navigational depth sounds, and VHF radios. In conjunction with a direct route from Appledore Slip to Instow Quay, a 'taxi service' is also offered through the radio system (Channel M2), to serve customers from independent boats moored in the middle of the river who want to get to either side, at the price of £1.50 for an adult.



**Plate 4. 9 'Sheila M' (left), 'Lizzie M' (right), October 2019**

The ferry route is part of the South West Coast Path which attracts walkers as well as cyclists who use the Tarka Trail, a 180 mile route which passes along the Instow side of the estuary. Of those who completed a reflection card survey (n=124), seventy three (59%), marked that they were using the ferry for the first time. Forty-four individuals (35%) stated that they were 'occasional' users of the ferry, and stated that they lived within a five mile radius of Appledore and Instow so were deemed to be 'local' visitors. A proportion, seven in total, (6%) crossed from Appledore to Instow 'weekly'. Based on this figure, as well as data on whether it was their first time crossing, which town or area they lived in, and the purpose of their journey, it was estimated that the majority (70%) of passengers were tourists.

Figure 4.13 visualises the quantitative survey data, based on 124 ferry passengers. That the majority indicate that they are returning home reflects the time of day I met them. A proportion, 9% (11) specified that they were returning to their 'holiday cottage'. Socialising at the pub was popular (9%), while eight individuals shared that they were intending to eat an 'ice cream', and nine had 'fish and chips' in mind: quintessential activities within waterside areas (Panayi, 2014). It was noted that whereas tourists stated they wanted to 'sightsee', locals (living within a five mile radius) who were perhaps more aware of the area and what it had to offer, recorded more specific activities relating to the river, such as crabbing, tombstoning, paddling and surfing.



**Figure 4. 13 Appledore - Instow Ferry crossing intention, based on reflection card survey data from 124 passengers, 2018**

Referring back to Figure 4.11, alternative routes of crossing the River Torridge are via New Bridge, a 5.1 mile detour, taking 15 minutes via car. A bus runs every thirty minutes, via Bideford, which takes around 30 minutes. The passenger ferry is a

more direct route between the villages of Appledore and Instow, and takes around ten minutes. The following section introduces the bankside places of Appledore and Instow.

#### 4.3.4 Appledore

The first historical record of Appledore is in 1335. The name is derived from 'Aber-Taw-Ford', meaning 'river-crossing' at the mouth of the Taw (Carter, 2009, p.8). The village has a strong tradition of fishing, ship-building and sea-faring. Charles Kingsley (1888) describes Appledore as a 'little white fishing village' (p.1) in his novel *Westward Ho!*. In the 1580's, there were 15 vessels and 115 mariners registered in the area (Display, North Devon Maritime Museum, July 2018). Appledore Quay was built in the 1840's, widened in the 1930's and further widened in the 1990's, to provide a flood defence and a public promenade (Display, North Devon Maritime Museum, July 2018). At its peak, there were seven ship-building sites and a dry dock in the area. The majority of those closed in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, with Appledore Shipbuilders Ltd the latest closure in March 2019. A lifeboat service for the area was introduced in 1825 and the RNLI retains an active working slipway, downriver from the crossing.

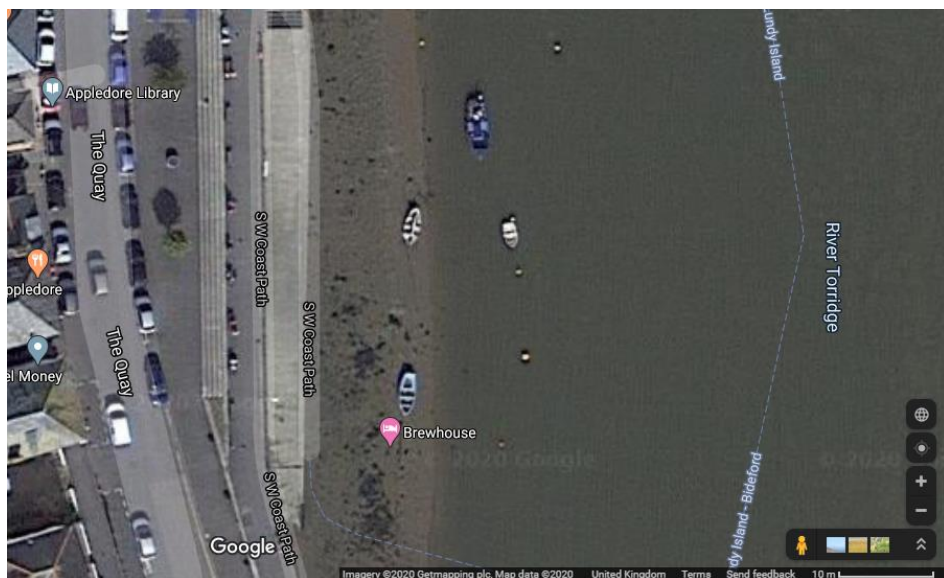


**Plate 4. 10 Change over time: Appledore**

**Quay 19th century, supplied by David Carter (left), Appledore Quay, July 2018  
(right)**

Over time, the character of Appledore has shifted from a working relation with the sea to a recreational one. Appledore has become a desirable place to live and there is demand to build more housing (*Torrige Ward Profile: Appledore, 2018*). The average house price doubled between 2006 and 2017. 30% of Appledore's population are 65 or older, and the median age in Appledore is 53 (*Torrige Ward Profile: Appledore, 2018*). The village has a number of amenities including a library, book shop, pubs, cafes, gift shops, art galleries, a church, primary school and football club. North Devon Maritime Museum details the history of shipbuilding and seafaring in the village.

#### 4.3.5 Appledore Slip



**Figure 4. 14 Appledore Slip satellite view, Source: Google Maps 2020**

Appledore Slip is 100-metres long, a two metres wide concrete structure, running at a thirty degree angle down to the river's edge and parallel to Appledore Promenade (Plate 4.10). A landing fee is not required, which means that the slip is well utilised by a diverse range of river users, including the ferry, giggers, crabbers,

swimmers and rowing boats (Torridge notes, 15<sup>th</sup> April 2018). There is a very narrow channel around the slip, and so, depending upon the tide, the ferry has to manoeuvre into the slip at a different angle, taking into account water levels, channel depth, and broader activity on the slip (Chapter 5).



**Plate 4. 11 Appledore Slip, March 2018**

#### 4.3.6 Instow Quay



**Figure 4. 15 Instow Quay satellite view, Source: Google Maps 2020**

On the other side of the river, Instow Quay is a stone promenade, built fifty metres out from Marine Parade and is owned by Christie Estates. This means that only permitted license holders are allowed to moor or launch from the slip (Plate 4.12) and accordingly Appledore – Instow Ferry pay an annual fee to launch the ferry from the quay. Despite these restrictions, Instow Quay is a spacious location for ferry passengers to wait, board and disembark. There are thirty steps that lead down to the river bed, which are variously visible, depending upon the height of tide (Plate 5.3)



**Plate 4. 12 'Permitted Vessels Only', Instow Quay March 2018 (left), Waiting area for the ferry, July 2019 (right).**

#### 4.3.7 Instow

Instow is a slightly smaller village than Appledore, with a population of 1,500, over an area of 2,995 hectares ('Instow,' 2011). Key buildings include North Devon Yacht Club, a primary school, two churches, five pubs, cricket club and training base for the Royal Marines. At the foreshore of Instow is a beach, known as Instow Sands approximately '1.1 kilometres wide', depending on the tide, and backed by 'sand dunes and Instow town' (Agency, 2013, p.1). Appledore can be seen on the opposite shore.



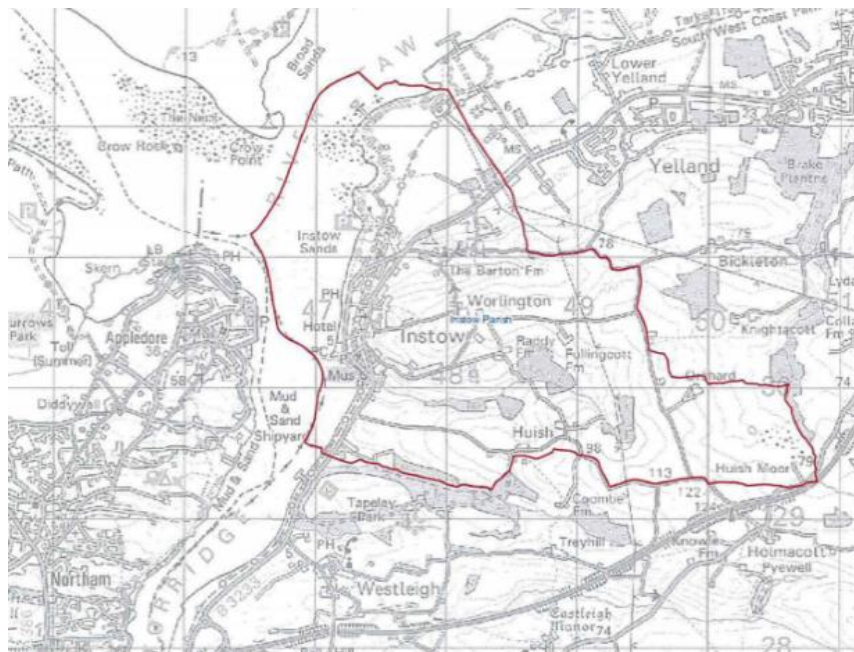
**Plate 4. 13 Instow Sands, July 2019**

Instow became a popular holiday destination in the Victorian era by merit of Instow Sands (Plate 4.13). The area was accessed by the Instow railway, which opened in 1855 as part of the Bideford Extension Railway Taw Vale Line that served tourism by stopping at coastal places along the North Devon peninsula. However, as a consequence of the Beeching Cuts (1963), Instow Station was first phased out and then closed (cf. Rhoden, Ineson & Ralston, 2009). The route of the railway tracks now forms the Tarka Trail, a popular cycling and walking path, which runs alongside the River Torridge.

There are several accommodation sites within Instow, ranging from large bed and breakfasts to smaller cottages. The average age of residents in Instow is 52 years, and 24% of the resident population are retired (*Instow Ward*, 2011).

In relation to local politics, Instow is part of Instow Ward, which North Devon Council, a local government district based in Barnstaple is responsible for. As represented in Figure 4.16, the boundary line of the Instow Ward follows the

thalweg line of the River Torridge, that is the deepest navigable point. This reveals the river to be a significant physical feature in everyday boundary making, and shows how different political jurisdictions are responsible for the bankside places on either side of the river. Indeed, on the other side of the river, Appledore is under the responsibility of Torridge District Council, a local government district based in Bideford. These dynamics are further discussed in Chapter 7.



**Figure 4. 16 Thalweg line between Appledore and Instow. Red area reflects Instow Ward within North Devon District Council, Source: (*Instow Neighbourhood Plan, 2016*)**

#### 4.3.8 Torridge Summary

Appledore and Instow are villages separated physically by the river. The River Torridge forms the boundary line for local governance, with Torridge District Council being responsible for Appledore, and North Devon Council responsible for Instow. The two villages have a distinctive sense of place, with Instow attracting visitors to the beach at Instow Sands, whilst Appledore has a reputation for crabbing, and has more cultural amenities, such as a museum and art galleries. The

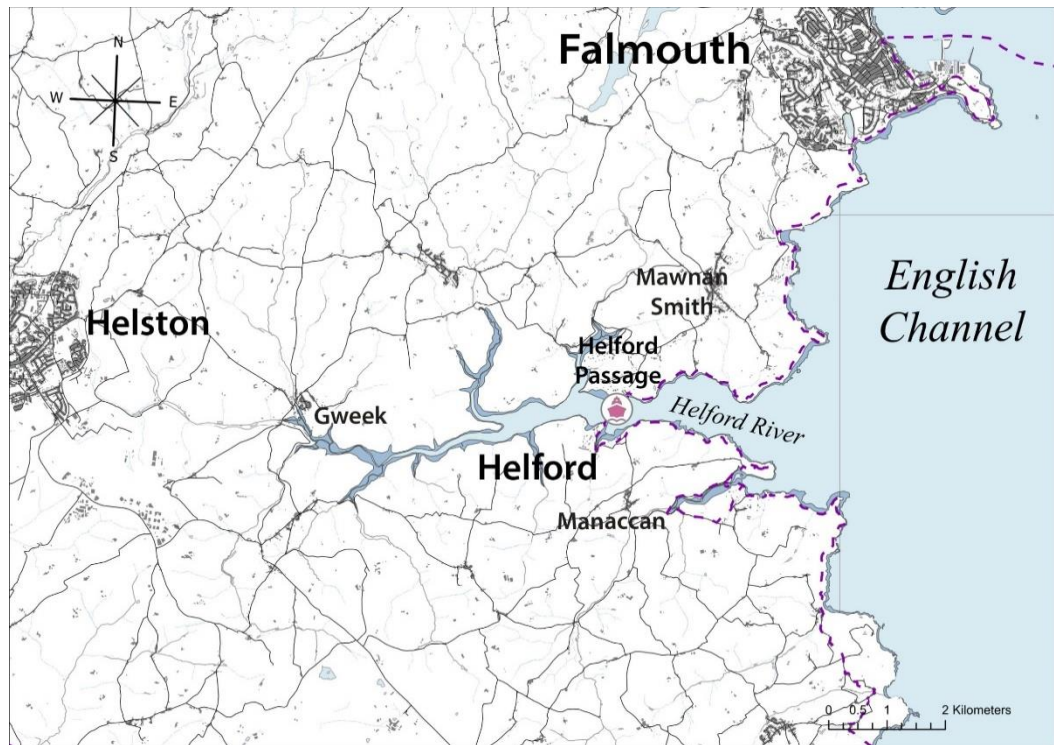
Appledore – Instow Ferry crosses between the two communities, although the ferry service only operates between April and October.

Now that I have introduced the Appledore-Instow Ferry through the spatial frame of the riverborderscape, I turn to the Helford Ferry, located in Cornwall and use a similar structure to introduce the river, the ferry and adjacent bankside spaces. Thereafter, I summarise key points developed in this chapter.

## 4.4 Helford River Boats

### 4.4.1 Overview

Helford River Boats is a ferry between the northern shore of Helford Passage and the southern shore of Helford, across the Helford River. Helford Passage is a rural hamlet on the northern shore, with 197 residents recorded as living in the area (*Helford Passage Built-up area sub division*, 2011). It is situated seven miles southwest from Falmouth and lies within the parish council of Mawnan Smith, a village located a mile and a half away, with a population of 865 (*Mawnan Smith Built-up area*, 2011). Helford is situated on the opposite southern shore, with 60 dwellings in the immediate vicinity, many of which have been turned into holiday homes (*Helford* 2020). Within the parish of Manaccan, of which Helford is a part, there are 379 residents (*Manaccan Parish*, 2011). Helford is situated within the Lizard Peninsula, and the River Helford forms the 'northern border' of that designated area ('Helford,' 2019). The South West Coast Path is a significant route between the two bankside places. A ferry was first recorded between Helford and Helford Passage in the eleventh century, in the *Chronicles of King Canute* (Hooke, 1994).



**Figure 4. 17 Map depicting the Helford River. The ferry between Helford Passage and Helford was the primary focus of the project and is the only structural water crossing of the river. A road alternative is via Gweek.**

#### 4.4.2 Helford River

The Helford is the most southerly river in Britain and is just over six miles long (Cross, 2005). Geologically, this is a drowned valley, or ria, formed by the flooding of a river valley in the last ice age (Covey & Hocking, 1987). The Helford River comprises of both intertidal and inshore water, as well as navigable waters and is in close proximity to Falmouth Harbour.

The river has been made known through the lyrical narratives of Daphne du Maurier, who spent much of her life living and writing in Cornwall (Hawthorne, 2014). Her novel *Frenchman's Creek* (du Maurier, 1992) is located on the Helford River, and the 'few houses scattered here and there above Helford Passage' (p.1)

are described in the opening paragraphs. The river is characterised as a timeless, secluded place which (pp.7-8),

belonged to the birds – curlew and red-shank, guillemot and puffin; little wading birds betwixt and between the mud and ebb tide [...] the winding river remained unvisited, the woods and hills untrodden, and all the drowsy beauty of midsummer that gives Helford a strange enchantment, was never seen and never known.

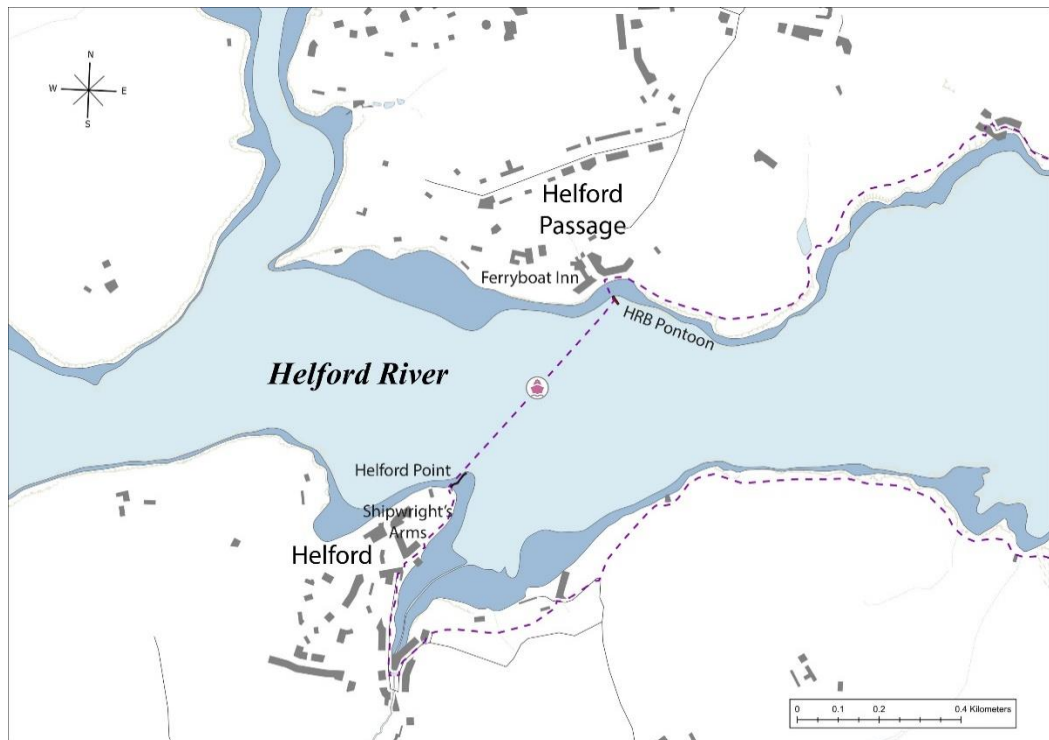
The literary imagination of du Maurier contributes to the wider sense of place of the Helford (Cresswell, 2015). The artist Kurt Jackson (2019), used the river as the subject of a series of paintings, 'at the water's edge, waiting for the water's approach' (p.1). The interplay between literary narrative and place constructed through the form of painting is demonstrated in Plate 4.14, as the Helford River is painted by Jackson overlaying the text of du Maurier's (1941) novel *Frenchman's Creek*.



**Plate 4. 14 Kurt Jackson (2019) Mixing word and water with Daphne du Maurier (1941) *Frenchman's Creek*, supplied by The Jackson Foundation**

The Helford Voluntary Marine Conservation Group is an active stakeholder within the area, formed to 'safeguard the marine life of the river, to increase its biological diversity and raise awareness of its marine interest and importance' ('HVMCA,' 2019). It negotiates management of the waters with the Duchy of Cornwall. The Duchy owns the majority of the estuary and coastal foreshore around the Helford, with ownership 'extending from a line across the mouth of the estuary to the highest point upstream to which the tide flows, extending up to the mean high water mark' (Duchy, 2019). The exception is the ferry crossing between Helford and Helford Passage, which is in private ownership (section 5.5).

The section of the river I focus on follows the route of the Helford River Boats ferry between Helford and Helford Passage (Figure 4.18). This is located at a navigable stretch at the mid-section of the river, which eventually flows into the English Channel (Figure 4.17). The distance between the two banksides is around 650 metres. The deepest section of the river is in the middle channel, with a couple of tidal pools 15 metres deep, whilst the rest of the river depth averages between three and five metres, depending on the tide. As represented by the shaded area in Figure 4.18, the edges around the bankside are intertidal, with beaches emerging and re-emerging in accordance with the tide.



**Figure 4. 18 Detail of ferry crossing between Helford and Helford Passage, with Helford River Boat pontton and Helford Point marked**

### 4.4.3 Ferry

#### 4.4.3.1 Historic

The ferry that carries passengers on foot between Helford Passage and the southern shore has been running since the Middle Ages ('Ferry,' 2018). The name 'Helford' means 'estuary crossing-place', derived from the Cornish 'heyl + OE *ford*' (Mills, 2011, p.233). One of the earliest known records of the ferry crossing dates to 1316, when 'Ralph de Tregod made a grant to Walter, Bishop of Exeter, of a house at Helford Passage together with adjoining land at Trebah and the port of the ferry' (Boulton, 2019, p.145) which first links the rights of the ferry crossing to private land-ownership. The Bishop of Exeter, following the Norman Conquest owned the right to run a ferry across the river, as 'small religious communities were based around the estuary' (Reynolds, 2000, p.1). Up until 1910, the ferry vessel was

a rowing boat, and horses swam along behind on a long rope to carry agricultural goods to market (Reynolds, 2000).

Lane (1890), exploring the Helford River through 'watery wanderings' (p.2) on a kayak, describes a hut which was built on Helford Point, forming a 'shelter for passengers waiting to be ferried over' (p.81). Inside this 'black wooden hut' (p.80),

is a flagstaff, and a box inside the hut contains a flag which must be hoisted when the ferryman is wanted and replaced in the box when he is seen to shove off from "Passage".

In describing this act of summoning the ferry, Lane gives an insight into how the ferry was used, historically. It also reveals how the ferry was based on the Passage side of the river, perhaps due to its location closer to the larger town of Falmouth.

This hut was built by 'Miss Fox of nearby Penjerrick', so that intending passengers could wait in one sheltered location (Newton, 1979, p.15). For the historic ferrymen had a reputation for being late, as a result of spending time in the pub. Newton (1979, p.77) records a Budock farmer, writing in 1801:

You drunken boatmen are the worst I know,  
I'm here detained, so sore against my will,  
While these sad fellows sit and drink their fill.  
Oh Jove! To my request let this be given,  
That these same boatmen ne'er see hell nor heaven,  
But with old Charon ever tug the oar,  
And neither taste nor swallow one drop more

This passage gives an insight into the irregular timings of the historic ferry crossing, which could be delayed by the behaviour of the ferry operators, or wider circumstances. The reference to the mythological figure of Charon, the 'boatman tugging between hell and heaven' gives insight into the river crossing's potential

to encourage people to think about spaces in-between, and is further explored in section 6.5.

#### 4.4.3.2 Contemporary

The rights to the ferry crossing were sold to a private estate, the Tyacks of Merthen, 'who leased the right to run a ferry until 1935, when the ferry became linked with the Ferry Boat Inn', a pub on Helford Passage bankside (Reynolds, 2000, p.12). In the 1980's, the landlords bought the rights to the ferry crossing, along with the Ferry Boat Inn, Bar Beach, Passage Cove and several holiday cottages.

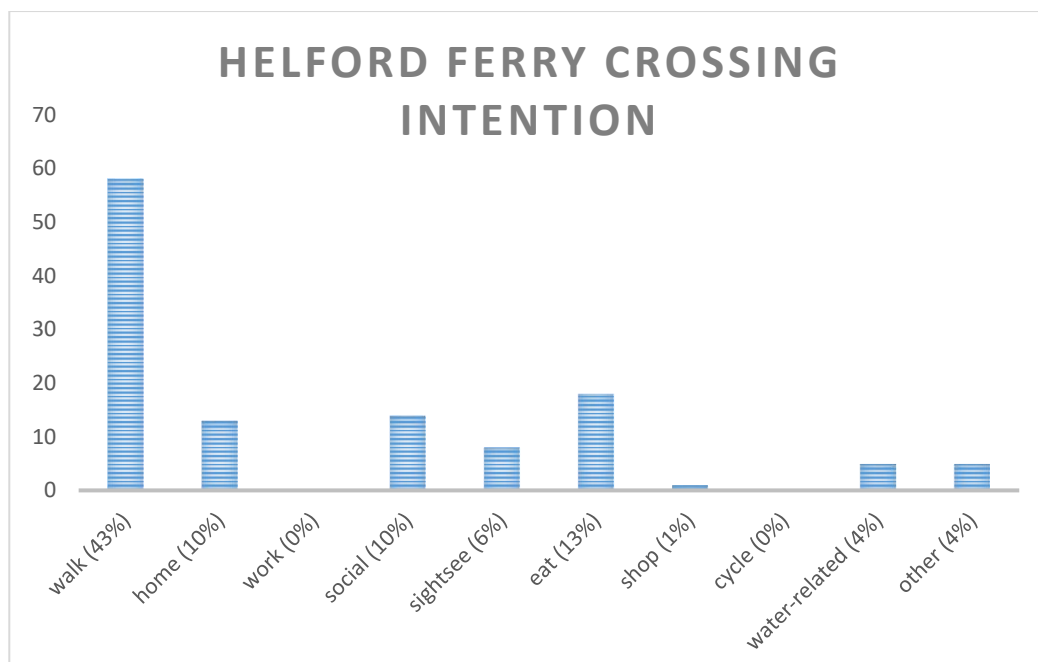
Helford River Boats was established in 2005, and the present director took over in 2012, renewing their contract in 2018. Helford River Boats is a small private business defined as offering 'sea and coastal passenger water transport' (*Helford River Boats Limited* 2019, p.3). Within the current business model, the ferry crossing is just one possible water-activity on the Helford, and is licensed to operate seasonally between April and October. Staff are responsible for managing all water-related activities, including kayaking, rowing boats, self-drive hire boats, skippered river trips and a water-taxi service for moored boats (HRB, 2019). The ferry crossing between Helford Passage and Helford Point is, however a daily priority, and the ferry is licensed to hold twelve passengers. The majority of seating is exposed, with wooden benches lining the arc of the ferry, on either side (Plate 4.15). The current boat has a diesel engine, with a tiller located at the back of the boat, to steer across the river. On-board, there is a radio for communication between the banksides and to which moored boats can connect, for a taxi service. There is one paid skipper, responsible for steering the ferry, on-board interactions,

including collecting fares, conversing with customers and safely dis/embarking. The price of the fare is £5 single and £7 return. Babies, pushchairs and dogs travel for free.



**Plate 4. 15 HRB ferry crossing the Helford, June 2018**

Based on quantitative survey data, 90% (122 individuals) were visitors to the area. Figure 4.19 visualises the ferry crossing intentions. The vast majority of people (43%) cited 'walking' as the main reason for crossing the Helford River on the ferry. Of those, 22 stated that they were walking the South West Coast Path, either the entire length (Helford 77) or parts of the route (Helford 52). 17 individuals shared that they were intending to walk to one of the gardens on the northern shore of the river, either Glendurgan or Trebah. The second most popular activity was eating, in either the Ferry Boat Inn or Shipwrights Arms.



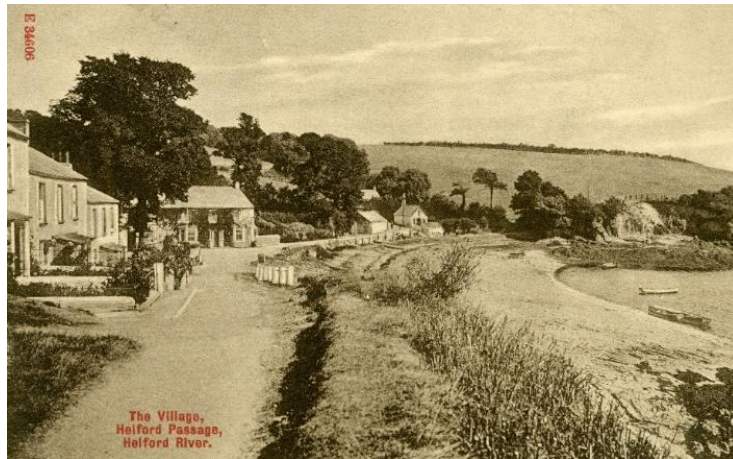
**Figure 4. 19 Helford Ferry crossing intention, based on reflection card survey data from 135 ferry passengers, 2018**

In summary, the Helford River ferry crossing is a popular activity for visitors to the area, attributed to the rural river location and the South West Coast Path. The ferry is the only structural crossing point across the river, and the alternative is a detour around the river, via Gweek an 11.6 mile diversion, taking around 40 minutes. There are no bus routes between Helford and Helford Passage and so, without a car, individuals would be reliant upon a taxi for that journey, from services based in one of the larger towns, Constantine, Falmouth or Helston.

#### 4.4.4 Helford Passage

Helford Passage is a small hamlet on the northern banks of the Helford River, with the central recreational centre being a 300 year old pub, the Ferry Boat Inn. A decking area overlooks the main beach, Helford Passage Beach, where Helford River Boats is stationed with a small trading hut, moored water equipment and pontoon. The majority of dwelling places around Helford Passage Beach are

seasonal holiday cottages. The South West Coast Path leads walkers east, towards Trebah Gardens and the National Trust property Glendurgan, both nineteenth century Cornish valley gardens.



**Plate 4. 16 Change over Time:  
Helford Passage 1920s,  
supplied by Museum of Cornish  
Life Helston (left) Helford  
Passage March 2018 (right)**



The main street is Bar Road, a street overlooking Passage Cove. Sir Tim Rice lives on that street, and owns a house 'that overlooks the Helford River (Boulton, 2019, p.xi), as does Roger Taylor, the former drummer for the rock-band Queen (Gerard, 2009). The local council responsible for the area of Cornwall Council a unitary authority and the local parish council is Mawnan parish council. Electorally, Helford Passage is part of the Constantine, Mawnan and Budock ward, and is part of the wider parliamentary constituency of Camborne and Redruth.

#### 4.4.5 Helford Passage Pontoon



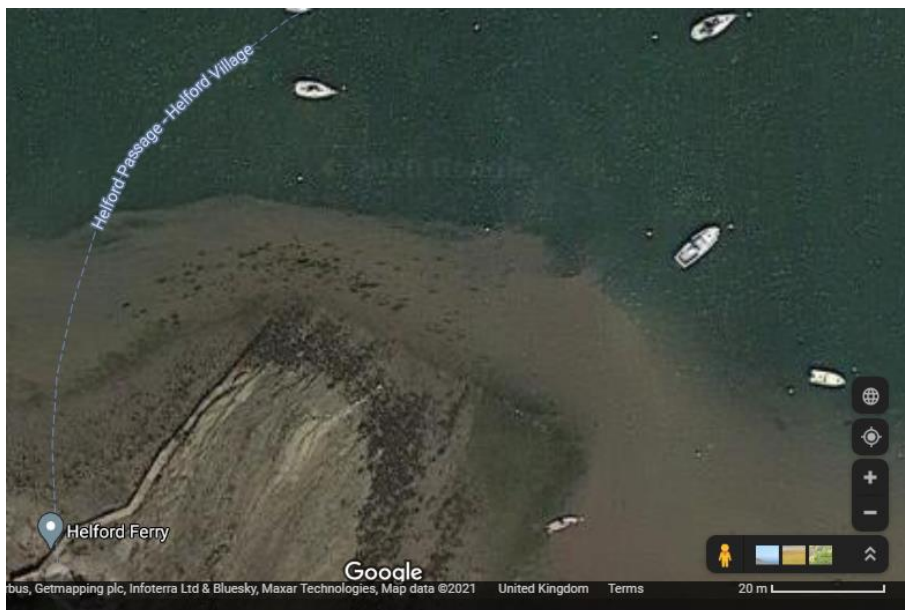
**Figure 4. 20 Helford River Boats pontoon satellite view, Source: Google Maps 2021**

The disembarking point of the Helford Ferry is a ten-metre floating pontoon, with an additional bridge on wheels, which is secured via a chain to the bankside. This pontoon is the private property of Helford River Boats, and other vessels seeking to utilise the pontoon have to pay an appropriate fee, depending on the size of their vessel ('Slip Fees,' 2020). A daily task is setting up the metal bridge to the pontoon, and ensuring it is safely affixed, even when it moves with the tide.



**Plate 4. 17 Helford Passage floating pontoon, June 2019**

#### 4.4.6 Helford Point



**Figure 4. 21 Helford Point satellite view, Source: Google Maps 2021**

Helford Point is a stone jetty on the opposite shore. The slip protrudes fifty metres, alongside a rocky beach and the distance that ferry passengers have to walk out along the slip to reach the ferry depends upon the tide (Plate 5.5). The South West Coast Path that leads to Helford Point is signposted as a 'public footpath' (Plate 4.18), leading to Helford Point and the ferry. At the waiting area, there is a circular

board which ferry passengers are instructed to open, to signal the ferry, which is based on the Helford Passage side.



**Plate 4. 18 Pointing towards the ferry, April 2018 (left), Helford Point waiting area, September 2018 (right)**

#### 4.4.7 Helford

The village of Helford is situated on the southern shore. It forms the north-eastern border of the Lizard Peninsula in Cornwall, South West England. As a settlement, it 'is first recorded in 1230' (Reynolds, 2000, p.1) and a tidal creek runs through the village, separating the eastern and western sides. The western side of the village is more fully built up than the eastern side, with around 60 dwellings. Of the dwellings in Helford, twenty two are managed and let out as self-catering holiday homes.

The Shipwrights Arms, an 18<sup>th</sup> century pub is a central social space, hosting an annual regatta as well as music events and food throughout the year. There is a village store and a converted chapel, now café. The Helford River Sailing Club, founded in 1948 is active, offering sailing facilities and tuition as well as moorings for temporary rental, on the river ('Helford River Sailing Club,' 2020).



**Plate 4. 19 Helford (left to right), Shipwrights Arms, Holy Mackerel Café, Helford Village Stores, June 2018**

Helford lies within the parish of Manaccan, and the broader region of the Helston and Lizard Community Network Area. Overall, this is an area defined as the top 20 percent of deprived areas in England, with identified social barriers in respect of housing, education, and income disparity (*Helston & The Lizard*, 2017, p.5). Over '16,954' residents moved outside of the area between 2014 and 2015, whilst 21,459 moved into the area during the same period of time (*Helston & The Lizard*, 2017, p.5).

Historically, the village was connected to the fishing industry and it was only in the twentieth century that some of the fishermen's cottages, coastguard houses and fish cellars were converted to modern housing (Reynolds, 2000). Helford continues to be a popular place to fish from and fishers use the rocky beach by Helford Point to load and unload their fish. In 2009 there was a controversial appeal from residents living in the village of Helford against the Helford and District Fishermen's Society. The residents took issue with a planning decision to construct a new jetty along the foreshore of the Helford to be utilised by the Fishermen's Society, to ease transportation, arguing that a new jetty would result in a material change in the character of Helford Village (Gerard, 2009).

#### 4.4.8 Helford Summary

The Helford is a river that has been written about (du Maurier, 1992) painted (Jackson, 2019) and has captured the imagination of individuals. Artist Tom Cross (2005) writes, 'to travel on the river by boat provides another dimension, in this place where solids and fluids meet' (p.7). Certainly the ferry between Helford and Helford Passage is one way of crossing the river, and it is the only remaining structural water service, significantly reducing the distance between the two banksides, in the summer months.

#### 4.5 Contextualising the Case Study Sites

This chapter has provided an historical, cultural and geographical overview of three ferries that cross rivers in the South West of England. Each case study site has been introduced according to the spatial area of the riverborderscape, giving a sense of the river, the historic and contemporary ferry, and the bankside spaces on either side of the ferry's arrival/departure points on land. Ethnographic analysis in subsequent chapters is located between these spaces.

This thesis is not a comparative study between the different ferries, but combines ethnographic insights from each site to examine the act of crossing a river. Nevertheless, this chapter has highlighted the differences between the business models of the ferries, such as Helford River Boats offering a multi-modal water service, of which the ferry crossing is one part, and the Appledore – Instow Ferries, which is based on a volunteer-centred, non-profit ethos, both of which run seasonally between April and October. The larger, 128 passenger capacity of the Cremyll Ferry operates all-year round. Each ferry crossing also reflects the

geographical place where they are positioned. The Cremyll Ferry runs between an urban city and rural area, the Appledore – Instow Ferry is situated between two similar sized villages and the Helford Ferry is within a rural location. These factors influence the frequency of the service, the price of the fare and shape the possible activities undertaken on either bankside.

Subsequent chapters will develop themes introduced in this chapter, including the ferry's navigational routes from one bankside to the other (Chapter 5), the experiences on-board (Chapter 6) and the river and ferry forming an everyday border between places (Chapter 7). To begin, the following chapter focuses upon the river ferry crossing, from the perspective of the skipper.

## 5. Materialities

### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses upon the 'river' in the riverborderscape. The chapter emerges from identified theoretical connections between scholarship on the materiality of water, which pays attention to how water moves, including flow, current, speed (Rhoden & Kaaristo, 2020; Steinberg & Peters, 2015) and scholarship interested in the 'material and physical dimensionality of borders' (van Houtum & Kramsch, 2017, p.2) meaning their presence within the landscape. These two understandings are brought together through the materiality of a ferry, and the routes required to navigate from one side of the river to the other. The spatiality of the riverborderscape: bank – river – bank frames this chapter.

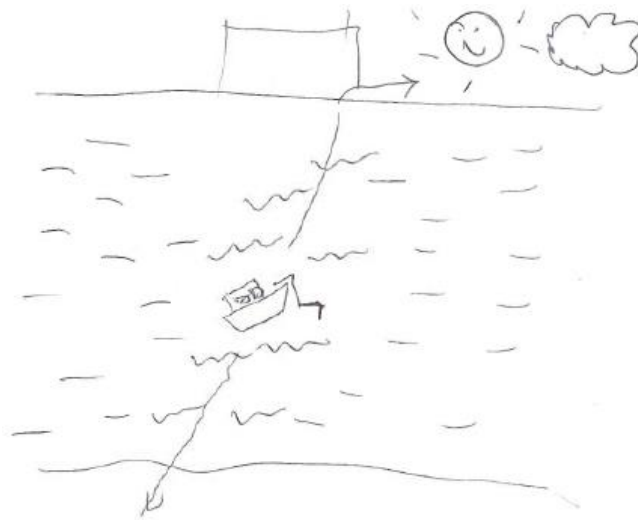
Whilst Jones (2011) has acknowledged that 'tides are a key means by which the forceful materiality of water is animated' (p.1), I suggest that following the routes of a ferry, crossing a river, intersects with a broader and more complicated set of watery materialities, such as tide, wind, current and sub-surface, as well as other vessels that might punctuate the space in-between. This chapter contributes to answering RQ1, 'What are the materialities that influence the river ferry crossing?' Paying attention to these watery materialities then brings our attention to borders and the physicality of landscape, as, from the perspective of the river, terrain is not stable. The volume of water, at various states of the tide, might expand or contract land/water dynamics and, therefore, the various activities that can take place there. In so doing, this chapter applies Elden's theorisation of border spaces as three-dimensional and places it within the context of everyday borders. Examining the

river in-between, and the routes that cross rivers, opens up complexities of how rivers intersect and overlap with broader issues of terrain, territory and ownership. First, the chapter begins with a skipper's expert accounts of the tidal river, in relation to the daily task of navigating and forging routes from one side of the river to the other, to understand 'what happens *at* the boundary, the threshold' (McConnell, 2017, p.140). This follows Peters (2019) who suggests that more attention should be given to the 'routing – to the invisible lanes etched across the oceans, seas – and indeed inland water courses, that ships forge, form and follow' (p.3). The chapter then shifts perspective to consider how the various states of the tide (high tide, low tide) muddy the borderlines of land and water. Finally, an understanding of the river as three-dimensional lead us to questions of ownership, and the extent to which property is interrelated with height and depth, as well as surface area. Whilst we cross geographical borders all the time (Diener and Hagen 2012), I have identified a gap in the scholarship in relation to understanding the process of that crossing (section 2.5). Through focusing upon the materialities of the riverborderscape, this chapter aims to show how rivers are complex and three-dimensional spaces that require knowledge and expertise to navigate. It also reveals the impact of not understanding a river's movement in relation to the potential threat of collisions. In so doing, the chapter brings to light the potential danger of border spaces.

## 5.2 Across the River: Imagined Ferry Routes

The route the ferry takes across a river is imagined in reflection card, Helford 109. Beginning on the southern shore, a crossing line marks the route to the northern

shore, where the sun beckons on the other side. Despite movement inferred through the waves of the river, this is quite literally a 'straight forward' journey across the surface of the water, moving between two land terrains on either side.



**Figure 5. 1 Linear Line, Reflection Card Helford 109**

This drawing reflects the convention of demarcating ferry routes on cartographical maps, whether printed (such as Ordnance Survey) or online (such as Google Maps, Bing Maps). In these publically accessible resources, widely used for walking and navigation, a ferry route across a river is depicted by a grey shaded dotted line between two fixed points on either side, such as the slipway, quay or moorings (Figure 5.2). Whereas Helford 109 draws a small passenger ferry in-between, at a similar mid-point, the label 'Ferry (Passenger)' is positioned in the middle of the river, inferring the purpose of the crossing line.



**Figure 5. 2 Helford - Helford Passage, Source: Ordnance Survey Maps**  
<https://osmaps.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/50.10057,-5.13060,16>, supplied by  
**Ordnance Survey**

Steinberg (2013) notes how, in maps, the ocean is illustrated as 'blue, flat and unchanging: stable in both space and time (p.159). The same observation can be extended to rivers. In this widely used map, the river is shaded in a block of light blue colour, its uniformity of colour suggesting a stability of terrain. What is more, in charting such a straightforward, linear line across the river, there is the assumption that the route from a – b, one bankside to another, is devoid of hazards, turning points or other obstacles which might be on or under the water. Reviewing each map side by side, the walker of Helford 109 appears to be influenced by the cartographical imagination of maps (Bulson, 2009; Jackson, 2012; Migdal, 2004; Rossiter, 2019; Tally, 2016) wherein routes are seen as linear and suit the purposes of the user. The main difference between reflection card Helford 109 and Figure 5.2 lies in the more detailed and personal perspective of Helford 109, where the ferry crossing is drawn on ground level as opposed to an aerial view.

Whereas the map labels a 'ferry (passenger)', Helford 109 has drawn a cartoon ferry, reflecting their in-place experience on the material vessel (Chapter 6).

The three-dimensionality of routes are well mapped for pilots in the air (Budd, 2008) and across the sea (Bassi, 2017; Peters, 2019) however, routes across a cross-section of a river have not yet been explored by researchers. As in Helford 109, understandings of routeing only 'skim the surface' (Peters, 2019, p.17). I therefore asked a skipper on the Appledore – Instow ferry, a ferry that crosses a river with the second highest tidal range in the UK (section 4.3), to 'draw the route the ferry takes' (Torridge notes, 21<sup>st</sup> October 2019). The five themes of this next section: tide, route, materiality, wind and transit lines emerged from the complex terrain and navigational considerations that emerged from these drawings, and were supplemented by interviews with skippers, participant observation, field notes and field images. In so doing, I acknowledge the importance of paying attention to those who actually engage in watery spaces (Bowles, Kaaristo & Caf, 2019), and who have an intimate knowledge of the river. Whilst this chapter predominantly focuses upon materialities, it is also informed by the experiences and narratives of those who routinely cross over this space. Referring to Figure 2.1, the three analytical elements of the riverborderscape: materialities, experiences and narratives are entangled.

### 5.3 Across the River: A Skipper's Perspective.

#### 5.3.1 Tide

The primary 'effort' of a skipper is to get passengers from one side of the river to the other (Interview, Finn, skipper, Helford; conversation with Drake, skipper

Cremyll Ferry, notes June 2018; Interview Hudson, skipper Appledore – Instow ferry). And yet, that task is dependent upon the tide. The tide is the term used to describe the alternate rising and falling of the water level surface that occurs twice a day, and is as the result of the different gravitational forces of planetary bodies, such as the sun and moon (Jones, 2011).

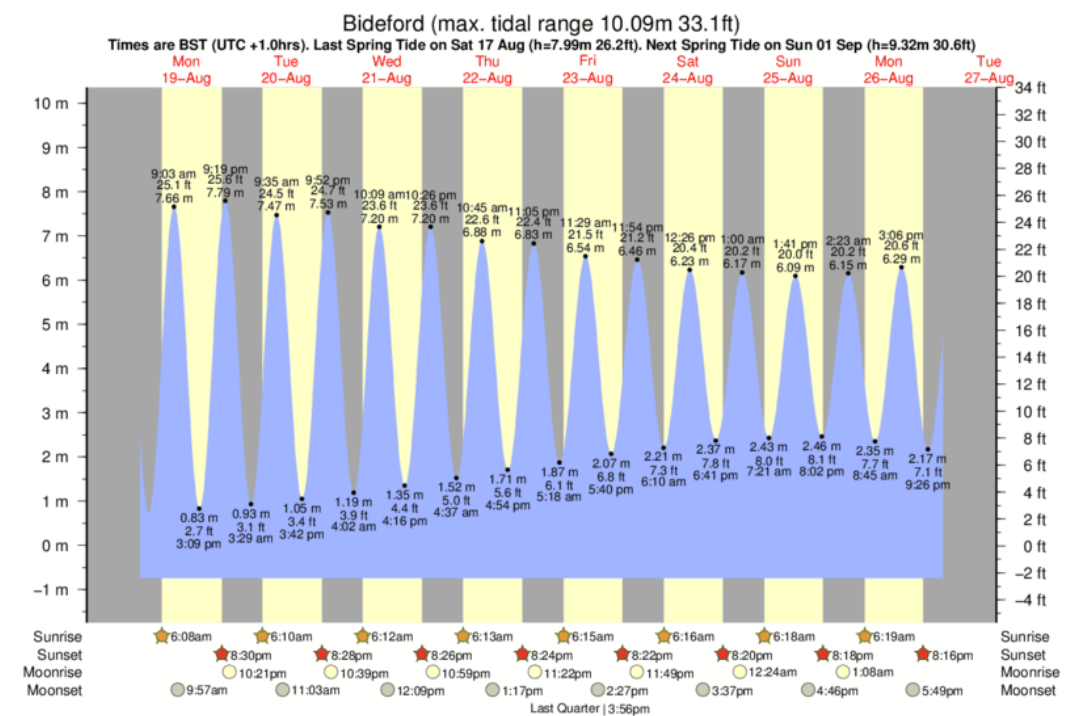
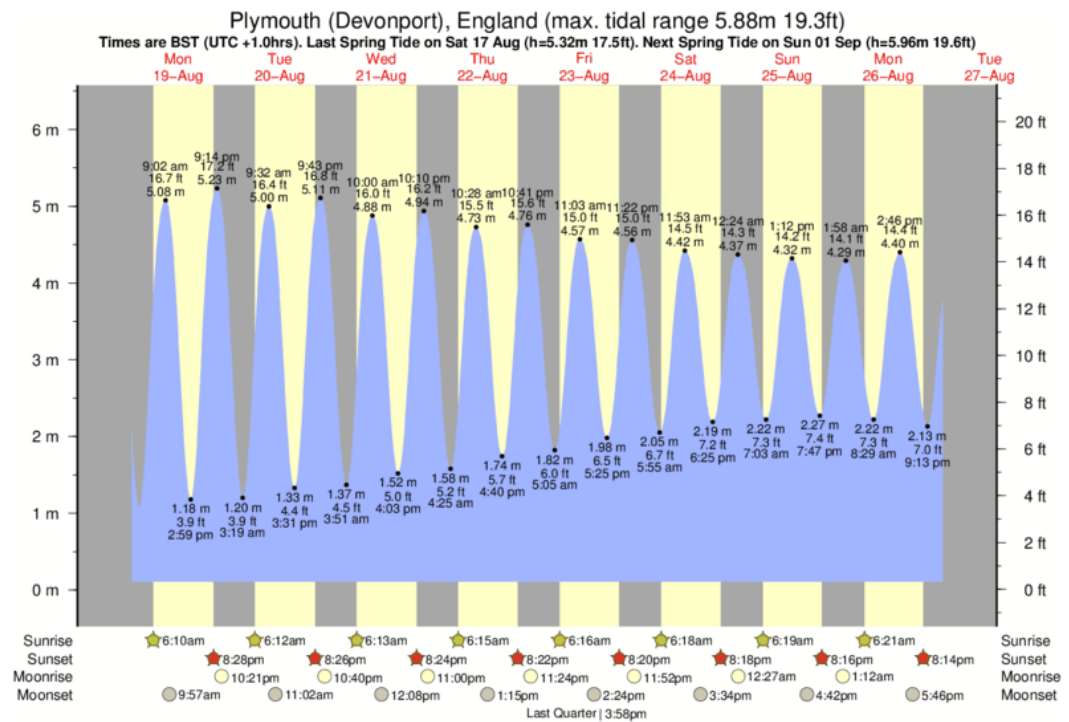
Tides, for the most part, run in a continuous and predictable cycle of 'low water; the flood (tide rising); high water, the ebb (tide falling) and low water' (Jones & Barker, 2011, p.2) and can be roughly estimated according to the rule of twelfths,

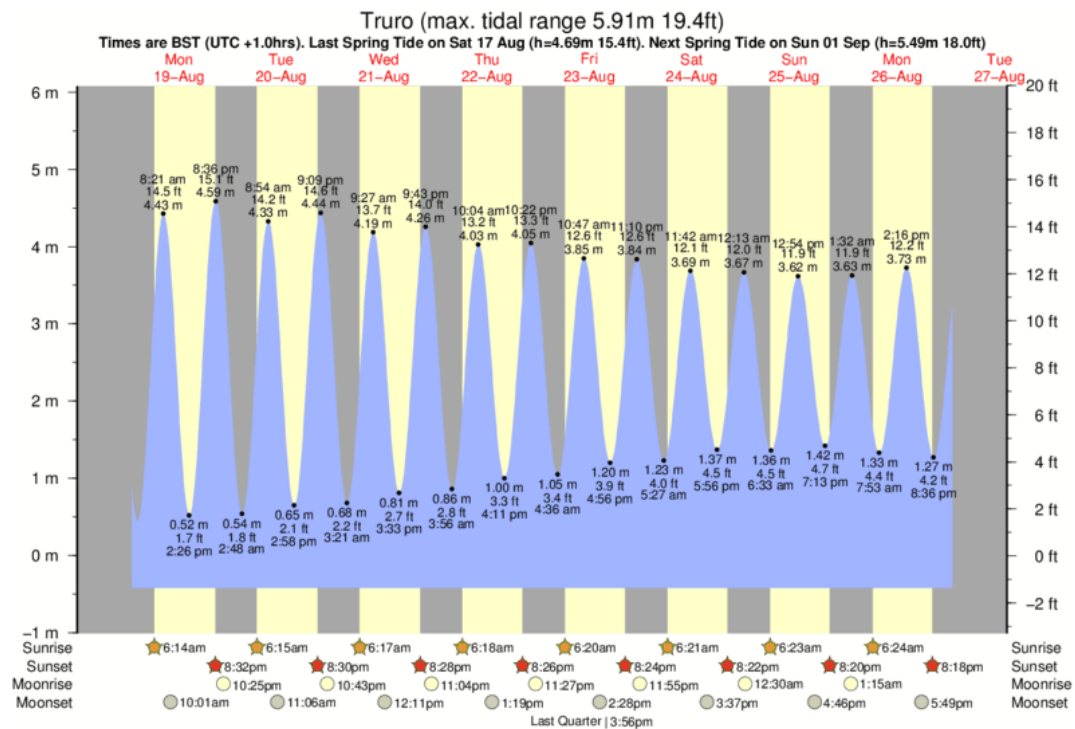
You need to understand that it goes down 1/12ths, 2/12ths, 3/12<sup>th</sup>, 2/12ths, 1/12<sup>th</sup> in each period so [...] if you measure the distance between high water and low water then you will lose that amount in increments.

(Interview John, resident, Helford)

These incremental increases are shown in Figure 5.3 sourced from a tidal forecasting site for an average week of August 2019. They represent the tidal cycles on the River Tamar (Devonport), River Torridge (Bideford) and Helford River (Truro). On the north coast, tidal height can reach up to 10 metres, whilst on the south coast of the Tamar and Helford, the average tidal height is 6 metres (Figure 5.3). These charts are, of course, only an initial indication of tidal movement. The more complex and specific hydrodynamics, that is, the force of water and other dynamics (speed, sediment, pressure) within the estuary, cannot be represented through a two-dimensional map and, arguably, is a complexity beyond the aims of this study. However, what these tidal charts do is contextualise the broader movement of water within the Tamar, Torridge and Helford rivers, and shows how the riverborderscape framework: of bankside to bankside ferry crossings are only

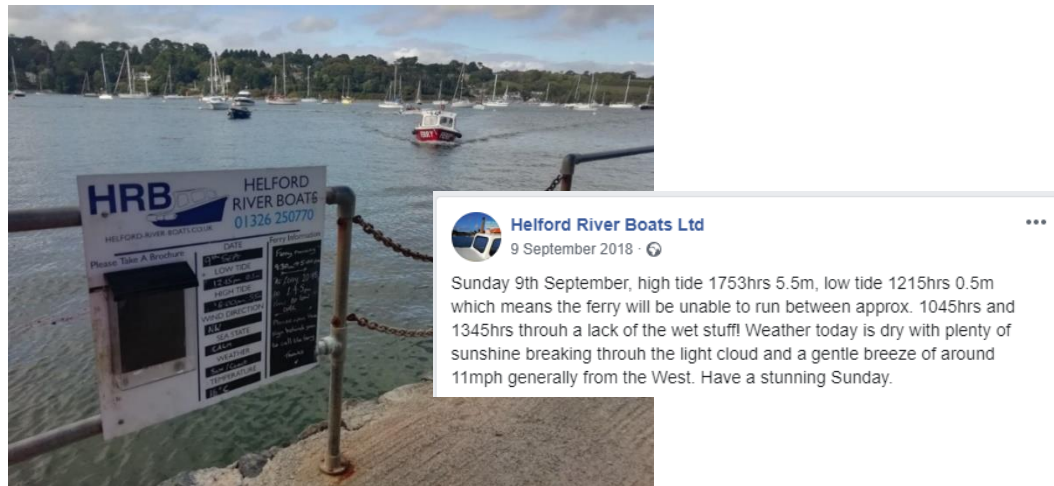
engaged with the material tide at a very specific point within the broader river system (section 8.4).





**Figure 5. 3 Tidal Times week beginning Monday 19<sup>th</sup> August 2019: Devonport (Tamar), Bideford (Torridge), Truro (Helford), Source: [www.tide-forecast.com](http://www.tide-forecast.com)**

As these charts show, tides are 'routine and rhythmical' (Jones, 2011, p.10), demonstrated through the diverse ways in which they can be predicted and calculated through systems such as 'admiral tide tables and tidal curves' (Interview Hamish, skipper, Torridge). Skippers can consult these resources in advance, to analyse how the tide might intersect with the ferry crossing, and plan the timetable accordingly. Each of the ferry companies then take responsibility for sharing the tide times with members of the public, through online websites (Appldore – Instow), on-location displays (Cremyll Ferry) and, as in the case of the Helford Ferry, through social media posts.



**Plate 5. 1 Helford River Boats on-location tide timetable, 9th September 2018 (left) social media post relating to the state of the tide, Source: Facebook, 'Helford River Boats Ltd', 9th September 2018 (right)**

As this demonstrates, the river can be both 'read' and calculated in advance through mapping technologies, as well as more physically 'read' for those who spend time by the river. Those that frequently travel on the ferry reported how they were aware of the tides. Simon, a daily ferry passenger on the Cremyll Ferry reflected,

You have to be aware of the space of the river because of the tides and completely subconsciously, you've got no interest in it whatsoever but you know, over the months, over the years, you're looking at the water, you're looking at the tides, you know if it's coming in or coming out, and you know that actually, the ferry's going to take a different route - it's going to start meandering around. You start thinking "he's not approaching it right for this tide!" And that's actually quite subconscious, but it's right at the front of your mind.

(Interview Simon, ferry passenger, Tamar)

Knowledge of the tides is accumulated over a period of time, through the act of watching and noticing. This act is described by another as 'reading the water' (Interview Charlotte, river decision-maker, Helford), to gather information on the direction of the tide, the level of the water and any subsequent actions that need

to be taken. This echoes the term 'reading the river' that Eden and Bear (2011) deploy in the context of freshwater angling. In that context, they notice how fishers use the term spatially, to recognise the speed of the water to predict the movements of fish, highlighting the relational engagement of humans and environment. Returning to the quote above, in this context, reading the tide has a direct impact on the 'route' of the ferry as it requires that the skipper needs to change direction. Although it is in the skipper's interest to take the line of least resistance, and the most direct 'line' from one side of the river to the other, the tidal movements, and the shifting height and strength of the tide can often complicate and change those lines (Tamar notes, 10<sup>th</sup> November 2018). The tidal river is therefore not only a 'fluid text' (Sanford, 2007), with visual and kinaesthetic clues, but an active, moving watercourse, that requires expertise and judgement from the skipper to navigate. Skipper Finn similarly used the language of 'watching the tide', but in relation to the decisions he had to make about the length of time the ferry can operate,

If the tide drops below a metre, we generally have to stop, depending on how low the lower metre depends upon how long we're off the water for [so] we're constantly watching the tide

(Interview Finn, skipper, Helford)

The language used here in relation to watching the tide is 'drops', a description which relates to height and depth. I observed in my field notes that 'the river isn't a flat area – you have various levels' (Helford notes, 17<sup>th</sup> October 2018). Whilst in this section, I have considered the importance of watching and calculating the tides, the following section considers how tides, and the changes between low tide and high tide, draw our attention to the river as a three-dimensional terrain, which

needs to be interpreted through the lens of volume (Adey, 2013; Elden, 2013; Elden, 2019).

### 5.3.2 Tidal depth

It is imperative for the skippers to understand the sub-surface, that is, the vertical dimension underneath the surface of the water, as they calculate the route that the ferry takes across the river. The changing space and terrain of the river is most evident through the tidal cycle: whereby, at low tide, a terrain of gulleys, channels, guts, and rocks emerge (cf. Dyer, 1997); whereas, at high tide, the river appears as a continuous stretch of water. Plate 5.2 and 5.3 document these tidal shifts in relation to the River Torridge. Each image is taken in roughly the same geographical area, by Instow Quay, but at low tide (left) and high tide (right).



**Plate 5. 2 Instow Quay low Tide, July 2019 (left) Instow Quay turning tide, April 2018 (right)**



**Plate 5. 3 Instow steps low tide, October 2019 (left) Instow steps high tide, October 2019 (right)**

The tidal 'drop' (Interview Finn) is evident in comparing the position of the material vessel of the ferry, in the right hand images of Plates 5.2 and 5.3. The river's height in relation to Instow steps demonstrates the varying levels of the river, as the right hand image of Plate 5.3 is taken at the highest threshold of the tide, whilst the left hand image is taken at the turn of the tide, towards low tide. The seaweed that covers the surface of the riverbed floats on the surface of the river in the left hand image of Plate 5.2 demonstrates the interaction between the water and other materialities that characterise the terrain of the river-bed, such as mud, seaweed and sediment. Whilst the river at high tide may appear to be a smooth surface for the ferry to travel across, the drop of the tide reveals that the ferry operators constantly have to consider height and depth.

At ground level, the riverbed may shift, in accordance with broader hydrological cycles such as the amount of 'rainfall' (Interview Hudson, skipper, Torridge), as well as seasonal shifts and movement of sand and sediment throughout the year (Nieuwenhuis, 2018). Therefore, this subsurface terrain is constantly monitored by

the skippers, who 'on a regular basis' (Interview Hudson, skipper, Torridge) observe the terrain of the river at low tide, including the gulleys, inlets and sediment on the riverbed. Understanding the shifting riverbed, and the various channels and gulleys that form and forge to characterise the terrain of the riverbed is important, as it shows how the subsurface is a further consideration for the skippers in calculating their route across the water. Hudson recalls how one time the skippers had to 'end up with spades digging it out', as the build-up of sediment on the bank 'makes the approach exceedingly difficult' (Interview Hudson, skipper, Torridge).

Recently Peters (2019), using the example of the collision of a container vessel, the *MV Jupiter* into a shallow sandbank, argued that there is a need to see routes in '3D – as predicated on understandings of variable depth and sub-surface hazards' (p.3). The ferry operators similarly have to see the river crossing in 3D, in relation to the variable depth as a result of the tide, and sub-surface hazards. The depth of the river furthermore has to be considered in relation to the draught of the ferry's hull, to avoid contact with the riverbed. This is further explained,

The boat requires 0.4 metres, so what we find is that at low tides like today for instance, even at the highest of tides, we're both reversing out, quite a way into deep water before we turn. And at Appledore, there is a huge rock here. If you ever go to Appledore at low tide, have a look at it. It is horrendous. So at low tide we've got to be very careful. You can't sort of drive out as you normally do, you've got to curve like this because that is in the way. High tide though, you can just reverse right off into the quay, and go straight.

(Interview Hudson, skipper, Torridge)

The three-dimensionality of terrain is introduced here, through the recognition of the various heights of the tide. Hudson describes that the rationale behind reversing the ferry out of the Instow Quay is to ensure that they are in 'deep water',

with enough volume of the river to turn-around in. Reversing the ferry with these factors in mind was a similar practice for skipper Drake, responsible for navigating the Cremyll Ferry. His practice was to reverse the ferry towards the deepest point in the river, when there is enough water below, between surface and riverbed depth (notes from conversation with Drake, Cremyll Ferry). The shallowest point lies in the intertidal areas closest to the bankside, areas that the ferry route avoids (Tamar notes, May 2018). The route of the ferry is here shown to be reliant upon understanding the 'very volume of space' (Peters, 2019, p.10) and knowledge of the volume, that is the relation between riverbed (where there are hazards such as rocks) and the river surface are evidenced to change the route. Hudson describes changing direction, 'to curve' at the lowest tide, to avoid obstacles which might not be so obvious when the river is at its highest tide.

Understanding this shifting tidal terrain is learnt through time, as skippers build an awareness of the hazardous zones and changing areas within the river, as part of their training. To aid them on a daily basis, depth sounders are a technological piece of navigational equipment, used to inform the skipper in



**Plate 5. 4 Depth Sounder, located in the control room of Appledore – Instow Ferry, to the left of the steering wheel, October 2019**

the control room of the depth beneath the bow of the boat. Couper (2018), in her account of sailing argued that 'on a boat, the third dimension becomes much more important, yet is largely hidden from view' (p.291). She shares how her depth sounder, which calculates the volume of water below the boat, is a fundamental

piece of equipment to ensure she does not hit any obstacles below the surface of the River Tamar. This technology codes the shifting depth of the terrain of the river, indicating routes that may be possible, and places that may be accessible, dependent upon the tide.

This section has drawn out how crossing a river is not linear (section 5.2), and has demonstrated how skippers are trained to be aware of the river's height and depth, and how the state of the tide affects both the route, and tasks such as reversing and changing direction, to avoid obstacles on the riverbed. This section has built upon Elden's (2013) understanding that borders should be interpreted through height and depth, and Peters' observation that water-routes need to be understood through a three-dimensional lens. The following section will continue this argument in relation to the materialities on the bank, such as slips, quays and pontoons.

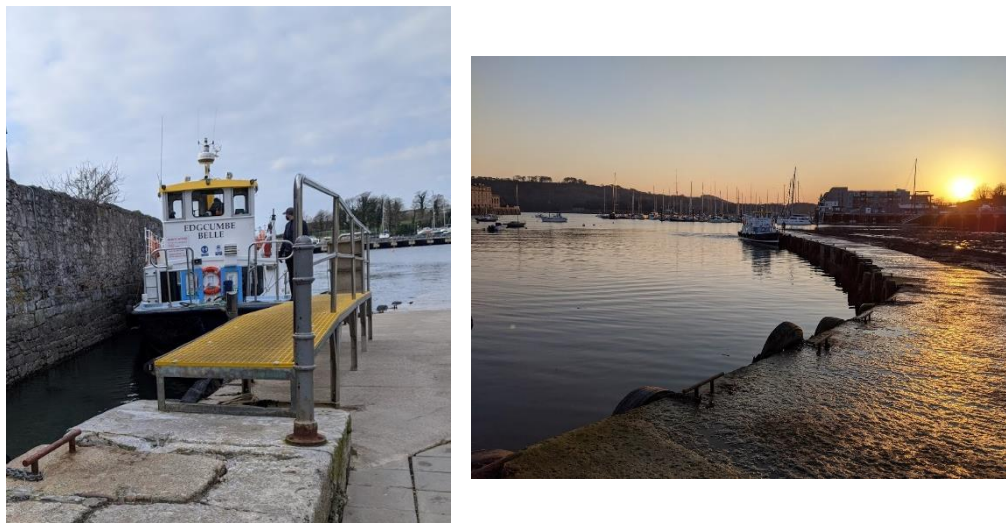
### 5.3.3 Bankside Structures

The varying heights of the tide influence the landing positions of the ferry on the bankside. In all three ferry sites, the permanent structures on either bankside, the slips and quays, were designed, historically, to anticipate a fluctuating tidal range. The skippers, aware of each slip/quay's area, including length, width and height at low tide, skirt around the edges (Tamar notes, 27<sup>th</sup> October 2018, Helford notes, 14<sup>th</sup> September 2018, Torridge notes, 27<sup>th</sup> October 2019). This means at every crossing, and in accordance with the shifting tide, the ferry lands at the bankside edge at subtly different points. This is important to note, as it changes the shape of the ferry's crossing, as skippers have to renegotiate the angle of the slip in

accordance with the tide, and it also affects the passengers' experience of embarking/disembarking onto the ferry (Chapter 6).



**Plate 5. 5 Helford turning tide, 5th June 2018 12.30pm, (left) 2.54pm (right)**



**Plate 5. 6 Tide influencing landing positions of the Cremyll Ferry 6<sup>th</sup> March 2021, high tide, 11.10am (left) low tide, 5.40pm (right)**

There is a repeated discourse of angles and gradient that emerges, in relation to how the skipper has to manoeuvre the ferry into the bankside edge of the slip. Hudson describes how the 'angle of the slip' changes: 'we start off quite low and as high water approaches, we are moving further and further back up the slip.'

(Interview Hudson, skipper, Torridge). Skipper Finn also describes how the beach is

reasonably steep but as we start getting towards the low tide, it flattens out so we haven't got as much water at the far end of the pontoon as have when it's fully up the beach and the beach is quite steep.

(Interview Finn, skipper, Helford)

These tidal movements and the impact on the space of the slip is a semantics of volume, each skipper using the word 'flattens out' when there is less water, whilst the deeper water enables a greater flexibility of movement and manoeuvrability to the edge.

Hudson, in reflecting upon the various landing points on the slip uses the analogy of an aircraft,

It's a bit like landing an aircraft in a way. You really focus on all the angles and the positing of the wind and wind gusts, because the last thing you want to do is bang the ferry into the wall

(Interview Hudson, skipper, Torridge)

To connect the ferry landing on the slip to an aeroplane landing lane is to introduce the volumetric parallels between aerodynamics and hydrodynamics: the former dealing with the motion of air; and the latter, with the motion of water. According to Winner (2019), 'both fall under the field of fluid dynamics because air and water are both fluids, but the difference is in density as water is much more dense than air' (p.24). Whilst the physical complexity of the motion of fluid mechanics is beyond the scope of this study (cf. Morrison, 2013), what I would like to draw out is the way in which such an analogy allows us to see more clearly the characteristics of the materiality of the river. The three-dimensional space of the tidal river, which,

likened to the vertical volume of air which a pilot crosses, is subject to similar forces, pressures and drag as air. To see water through the concept of volume attests to the need to understand the river space as three-dimensional (cf. Squire, 2017).

As in landing an aircraft, the greatest concern for a skipper is to ensure that the speed of the ferry, edging into the slip is slow and steady enough to ensure overall safety. As the slip is a hard edge, collision with it could cause damage to the boat as well as the wider reputation of the safety of the ferry service. Accordingly, the edge was often estimated and calculated through a discourse on gradient, a 'steep' terrain, revealing how angles and resistance predictions are as important factors in the physical manoeuvring of the ferry across the water as well as estimated in to the space available on the slip. A further factor is the presence of other people, activities and boats on the slip, particularly when, at a turning tide, the space of the slip is reducing. Skipper Hudson narrates this consideration:



**Plate 5. 7 Appledore Slip,  
rising tide, October 2019**

One issue is crabbers, who at low water stretch out and take up all available space, and then slowly but surely as the water comes in, they are moved further and further back up the slip, with less and less room and also there's a couple of moored boats here, which always give us problems. At the moment, there's two like this, and as the tide comes up, the amount of room that we've actually got to come in in front of them reduces, so as the highest tide we deal with, that 8 and a half metres, we are literally coming in right in front of these boats and we have haul out their mooring lines in order that we don't knock them with the propeller

Here, it is clear that the rising tide reduces the physical landing space available on the slip. Such a negotiation is unlike the landing of an aircraft, where there is always a wide space for the landing on the runway (Daidzic & Shrestha, 2008). In contrast, Appledore Slip is often busy with other individuals and activities, such as the crabbers and smaller vessels, all of whom are sharing the space but have to give priority to the ferry as it is coming in (Torridge notes, 15<sup>th</sup> April 2018). The on-shore volunteer plays an important role in informing crabbers to move further up the slip, and at the busiest times, there is a small sign located half-way down the slip, to mark the parameters of the space that the ferry requires.

This section demonstrates how the bankside spaces reduce and expand in area in accordance with the tide. Although the ferry landing may be compared to an aeroplane landing in terms of its aerodynamic – hydrodynamic motion, to land the ferry safely is a more challenging act, as the bankside spaces are also public areas, with pedestrians, and water related activities such as crabbing (Appledore Slip), or children jumping into the water (Helford Passage, Instow Quay) and digging for bait (Admirals Hard). The position of the ferry on the slip impacts the passengers, as they might have to walk further down the slip, or board at a higher point on steps, making the access point from edge to board different on each crossing. The bankside access points to the ferry are critical materialities to the bank – river – bank crossing, as the edge allows access to the vessel of the ferry. Whilst the previous section demonstrated the tide's impact on the river in-between, this section has demonstrated the importance of paying attention to the bankside edges, in relation to the route of the ferry and watery materialities.

### 5.3.4 Wind

Despite the dramatic differences on the River Torridge between high tide and low tide, in the main, the tide can be mapped and predicted. The tide is the 'principal most consistent course that ferry operators deal with' (notes from conversation with skipper Drake, Cremyll Ferry),

You know the direction of tide because it's either going [gesture left to right] that way, or [gesture right to left] that way [it] doesn't fluctuate greatly. It will come in, it will build up after three hours, then fall off.

(Interview Hudson, skipper, Torridge)

However, an element that is harder to predict is the wind. Simpson (2019) shows how atmospheric conditions become bound up with, and so impact upon, both the 'experience of being on the move and the perception of the environments moved through' (p.1054). Ingold has also suggested that we should think not 'about land and weather, but *in* them' (Ingold, 2007, p.29). This is most apparent in relation to the ferry crossing, where wind on the river can arrive from different directions; it 'could be coming from the west, east, north or south' (Interview Hudson, skipper, Torridge), at varying speeds and with various forces. Therefore, although the tidal movement is predicted regularly up and down, the wind covers a broader area and moves through the tide, with energy and force.

In some cases, wind can assist the movement of the ferry across the river (Tamar notes, 20<sup>th</sup> November 2018), as in the roaming effect where,

We'll go into the waves on the way out, and we'll ride down the waves in on the way back, or vice versa depending on what the thing is in order to give the passengers a safer ride.

(Interview Hudson, skipper, Torridge)

In this case, the skipper maximises the drift and direction of the wind, and its motion on the water, as a result of the standing waves producing active forces which oppose each other. However, at other times, a decision may be made to suspend the ferry service for a time, as the strength of the wind can overpower the intended direction of the ferry, from one bankside to the other. One afternoon on the Helford River, I was told,

“There’s no ferry operating today”

“High winds”, she said  
through the door of the kiosk.  
A couple of attempts were taken this morning  
across the river  
but the ferry struggled to return  
back to the mooring –

a drift off course.

She is waiting for the radio call  
a signal to give the go ahead

to and fro.

(Field Poem, June 2018)

This field poem encapsulates how the wind prevented both my intended movement across the riverborderscape bank – river – bank, and temporarily suspended the route of the ferry ‘to and fro’. Windy conditions can also impact not only the route of the ferry from one bankside to the other, but the experiences of those on-board. In relation to the Cremyll Ferry, the impact of the wind on the experiences of crossing was narrated,

There are days where you’ve got a very nasty tide, it’s lashing down with rain, and it’s really choppy and windy. The ferry company are

brilliant about trying to run as long as they can in adverse conditions. It is unusual they cancel services and no more than one or two days a year. You're getting exceedingly thrown about, the boat is keeling over both left and right, waves are splashing right over the front of you and you're very glad to get to the other side.

(Interview Simon, ferry passenger, Tamar)

In this account, the force of the wind is stronger than the materiality of the ferry, and affects the crossing in visceral and kinaesthetic ways. The wind's influence on the river, leading to rogue waves and drenched passengers accentuates the differences between land and water, and, on such days, arriving on the 'other side' may be seen as a relief (section 6.6.1). On the river, the wind, combined with the movement of the water can lead to an energy force not just double but squared, meaning that a wind gust of force 5 or 7 can result in a wind speed of '35mph, 40mph wind which is quite strong' (Interview Hudson, skipper, Torridge). Although Simpson (2019) has noted the impact of wind on cyclists and cycle pathways, this section demonstrates the importance of paying attention to wind in and across rivers, as the wind can blow the ferry off-course, disrupt the service, as well as aid the crossing from one side of the river to the other.

### 5.3.5 Route

Recognising the river as tidal, characterised by movement of water with wind fluctuations that can change the speed and force of the waves, shows how the river is not an empty space (following Steinberg, 2013). There may also be 'other bodies on the water' (Interview Simon, ferry passenger, Tamar) which cross the water in different directions, at different speeds and at different scales, aside from the ferry's cross-sectional route (bank – river – bank). The different boats I observed moving through and across the river were frigates, rowing boats, fishing boats,

yachts, super-yachts and paddleboards. After Bassi (2017), I call these 'mobile markers', as their position on the water affects the route of the ferry crossing. The following section therefore pays attention to other such materialities within the river crossing space.

The focus of this section is on the moored, or 'fixed' recreational and working boats which punctuate the space across the river. Although in Plate 5.8, these boats appear to be stationary, they are affixed to the buoys floating on the surface which, in turn, are anchored to the river bed. As Hudson explains (Figure 5.4), these moored boats in the middle of the river turn direction as a result of the wind and tide.

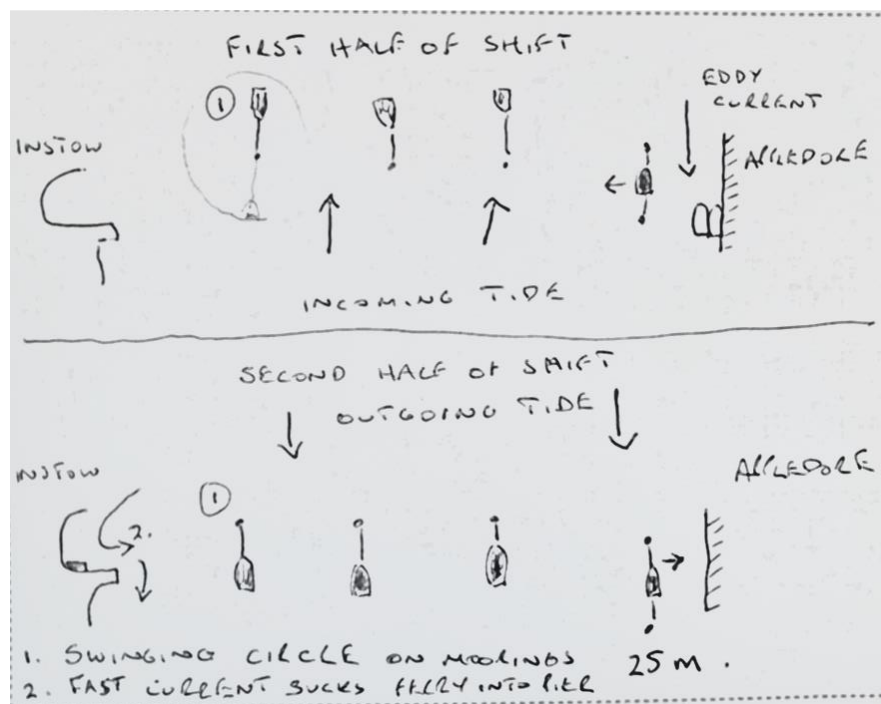


**Plate 5. 8 Sheila M crossing from Appledore to Instow, October 2019**

The movement of these fixed markers, as a result of the tide, complicates Bassi's (2017) distinction between 'mobile markers' (ships), of aqueous territory and fixed

markers, used on land-based territory (p.79). The affixed boats, tied to the buoys moored in the middle of the river are influenced by the rising and falling tide, as well as the circling wind, a navigational obstacle course which skippers Hudson and Finn are only too familiar with.

Connected to the movements of the tide, Hudson draws a diagram (Figure 5.4) reflecting the route considerations at a high tide and the contrary realities in the second half of the shift, with the outgoing tide. I pay attention here to the moored boats in the middle of the river, which he draws with three separate materialities: a fixed vessel, rope and floating buoy:



**Figure 5. 4 An illustration by skipper Hudson. The route of the Appledore – Instow ferry in relation to moored boats, incoming tide, outgoing tide, eddy currents, swing surface and bankside edges, October 2019**

What is significant here is that the direction of the moored boats in the middle of the river change, up to 180 degrees, as a result of the tide. This means that at varying states of the tide, there is a constantly shifting 'hazardous area' (Interview

Hudson, skipper, Torridge) with varying exposure of rope at varying angles, which connects the boat to the stable surface of the riverbed to the movement of the tide. And then, 'as the tide comes in, so the boat lifts up, so the angle changes' (Interview Hudson, skipper, Torridge). This reflects skipper Finn's experience on the Helford,

As the tide gets lower, it gets to a point where I have to go around the inner moorings, I head out to the larger yacht, head up through the channel and then cut across at the far end. This is in contrast to the route at high tide where I can cut between the inner moorings and the beach.

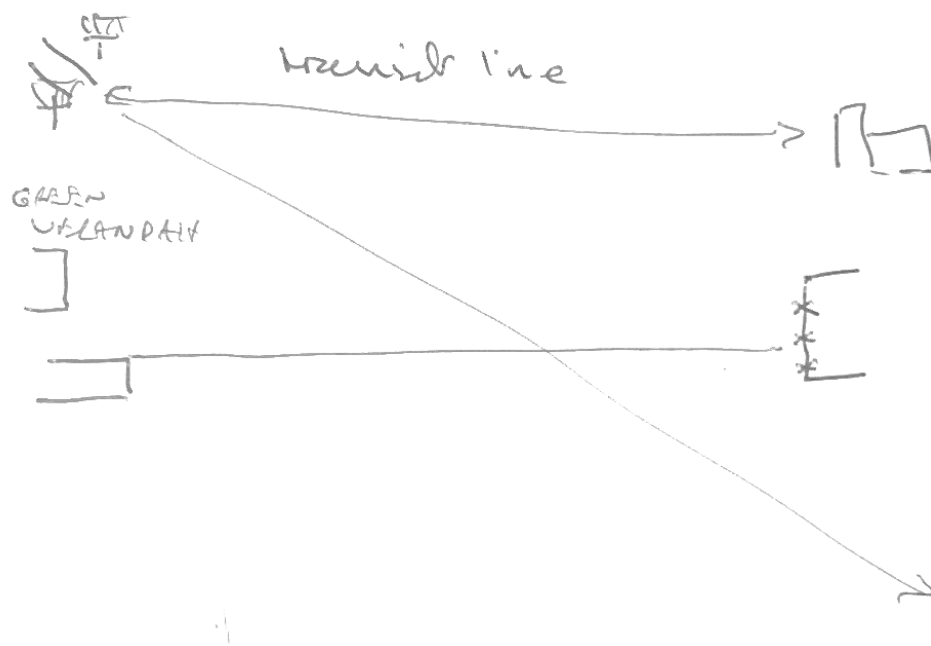
(Interview Finn, skipper, Helford)

Two developments on the riverborderscape can be made in relation to this drawing, alongside Finn's narrative of the ferry's route around the moorings at various states of the tide. Firstly, the navigational routes in relation to the material vessels moored on the river are framed spatially through the riverborderscape in Plate 5.12, as Instow Quay is on the left, Appledore Slip on the right, and river considerations in-between. Secondly, this again shows the importance of seeing the river as an elemental three-dimensional border space, as the ropes, between the moored boats on the river's surface and riverbed, move direction in relation to the watery materialities such as tide, wind, speed, and currents.

### 5.3.6 Transit Lines

A transit line was introduced as a strategy used by skippers to safely navigate from one bankside to the other. In the context of ferry crossings, this is defined as a line between two fixed, identifiable points, on either bankside. Hudson uses a 'green veranda' on the Instow side of the river and a house with a conservatory and 'three

drain pipes on it', up-river from Richmond Dock on the other side, as detailed in Figure 5.5. Other skippers have to work out their own transit lines, for example another skipper Kyle 'will take a transit between those baskets and Richmond dock which is further up here and that will be a transit line going like this [angle of hand] and he will turn at a certain point' (Interview Hudson, skipper, Torridge), showing how the creation of transit lines are deeply personal, as well as context specific.



**Figure 5. 5 An illustration by skipper Hudson. The route of the Appledore – Instow ferry in relation to transit lines, imaginary forms of connection across the river between two fixed points on the bankside, October 2019**

A transit line brings the spatial frame of the riverborderscape (bank – river – bank) to the forefront. In advance, the skippers have to read the landscape of the bankside, to look for identifiable structures on either side of the river, such as a 'church', 'slip' with a roughly parallel 'veranda', 'drainpipe' and 'dockyard' on the other bankside (Interview Hudson, skipper, Torridge). These fixed bankside points are important to align the course of the ferry to, in the context of a tidal river,

where there is more-often a 'strong incoming tide and strong outgoing tide' (Interview Hudson, skipper, Torridge). These imaginary lines become crucial to project onto the surface of the water and the banksides both in-front and behind the ferry as it moves across the river, in order to stabilise the directional course of the ferry, with varying factors such as the wind and weather having the potential to 'drift' off-course, as Hudson explains:

You really need to know your drift, because looking ahead sometimes is not good enough, so you need to be looking forwards and back, forwards and back, so you know that line you're on. So you can be coming down parallel to Instow beach when we drop someone off, and we'll come across [...] and we will see the transit line immediately, between here and there, or actually there's another house here which has got a green veranda. And that's a line as well. And the moment you see the line, you turn, and you go straight onto there.

(Interview Hudson, skipper, Torridge)

A transit line pulls together a specific visual point on either bankside within the kinaesthetic context of navigating the ferry. It demonstrates how the river crossing is interpreted within the context of the bankside spaces on either side of the river, and therefore the spatial area of the riverborderscape: bank – river – bank is to be recognised as a holistic spatial area, as drawn by Hudson in Figure 5.5. These are imagined lines between bankside spaces and become performed once on the river, projected onto the surface of the water. This is a constantly negotiated process of looking forward and looking backwards, in order to ensure that the ferry aligns with the bankside points. These transit lines are deeply personal to each skipper and reflect skill, experience and knowledge. Hudson frequently stands on the Instow beach 'to try and get transits', to project different lines from different bankside points, depending on different variables once on the river, and these

transit lines become shared between the different skippers (Interview Hudson, skipper, Torridge). That the transit lines are imagined in advance and correspond to the route of the ferry reveals the interrelationship between the imagined line between two fixed bankside points and the directional movement of the ferry once on the river. Although as has been demonstrated, the tide, wind, and presence of other boats moored in the middle of the river-bed influence the route of the ferry, the transit line is the most clearly distinguishable projection which the skippers follow, in order to focus upon the opposite shore. Whilst Peters (2019) has shown the importance of looking at routes through a three-dimensional lens, and through digital technology such as depth sounders, this section shows the importance of the skipper using imaginary lines to align to the landscape on each side of the river. These transit lines are therefore, calculated through the spatial frame of the riverborderscape: bank – river – bank, which demonstrates the priority of the skipper, whose purpose is to manoeuvre the ferry across this space, from one bankside to the other. Rather than being reliant upon the mobile elements of tide, wind, or other materialities, the line is anchored in fixed, unchanging bankside points which are far less likely to change. Projecting on lines of fixed points in the landscape aids in the movement through the constantly watery materiality of the river.

### 5.3.7 A Skipper's Perspective: Summary

I mean I have got a geography degree. In itself it means I have spent a lifetime studying tides and wind and weather as a skipper

(Interview Isaac, skipper and river decision-maker, Torridge)

Detailing the complex navigational considerations of skippers: including tidal range, wind, eddy currents, close manoeuvring around moorings on the river, a watchful eye on other river users, transit lines and the shifting spaces of the slip to embark/disembark passengers is important, as it reveals that the route from a – b; bank – river – bank is complex and ever-changing. This section has complicated the traditional notion of water routes being taken for granted, fixed lines marked across a two-dimensional surface (Steinberg, 1999) and has argued that tidal range, and the rhythmical cycle between low water and high water needs to be included in theorisations of terrain (Peters, Steinberg & Stratford, 2018a). The dramatic differences between high and low tide in the case of the Appledore – Instow Ferry crossing demonstrates how the skipper's awareness of the subsurface, obstacles and hazards that lie hidden or exposed to the ebbs and flows of the shifting river influence their crossing route, and is echoed in the priorities of skippers on the Cremyll (Tamar notes, June 2018) and Helford ferries (Helford notes, October 2018). The shifting tides create different material challenges for the skipper. In addition, as a material vessel within its own right, the ferry is also enrolled into the shifting height and depth of the rising and falling tide, both having a weight and depth to the vessel itself, whilst also responding to other, what might be termed circular movements of wind, or eddy currents.

The riverborderscape is negotiated and re-negotiated at every crossing, with the ferry 'skirting low water, navigating currents and, at every crossing, landing at subtly different locations on the river bank as the water ebbs and flows' (McGrath, Harmer & Yarwood, 2020, p.330). From the skipper's perspective, the riverborderscape is an interactive space, between people, materialities and

elements, and the skipper is tasked to find pathways and routes through and across a moving terrain. In short, tidal terrains need to be interpreted through a three-dimensional lens, which reflect the rhythmical tidal range of low tide, to high tide.

Tides, and the shifting terrains of high tide and low tide, also adjust people's perspectives of the border edges, muddying where one bankside begins and the other ends, which I turn to in the next section. Thereafter, the final section will pick up the strands of ropes, anchors, moorings and routes to consider how tidal ranges enable us to consider ownership and ordering of the space of/across/and on water. Paying attention to the water flows within, across and through tidal estuaries follows Adey's (2013) call for geographers to respond to what 'fills' voluminous spaces (p.50).

#### 5.4 Muddying the Borderlines



Figure 5. 6 Reflection Card Torridge 74

This artistic interpretation represents the tidal terrain of the River Torridge. Sand on the riverbed is demarcated through small pockmarks, whilst the mud, slugging to the lowest point of the river is revealed through interwoven swirls, in the lowest section of the drawing. This is a terrain that is depicted through various levels. Three wave-like lines, at the top, medium and mid-points of the drawing mirror each other in their horizontal movement across the page, but each wave like form is subtly different, in its interweaving lines and the relationship between other lines which represent elements (sand, mud, seaweed, water). The lowest wave-like line has vertical strokes arising from its form, whilst the line above has shaded elements, and the top line jagged, interwoven lines reach out above and beyond the linear form. This abstract drawing reflects the movement of a tidal terrain, as the grains of sand shift, shape and re-shape the surface of the riverbed, denoting where the water rises at high tide, and shrinks to the bottom of the riverbed at low tide (cf. Lahiri-Dutt & Samanta, 2013). The notion of a stable terrain is an allusion,

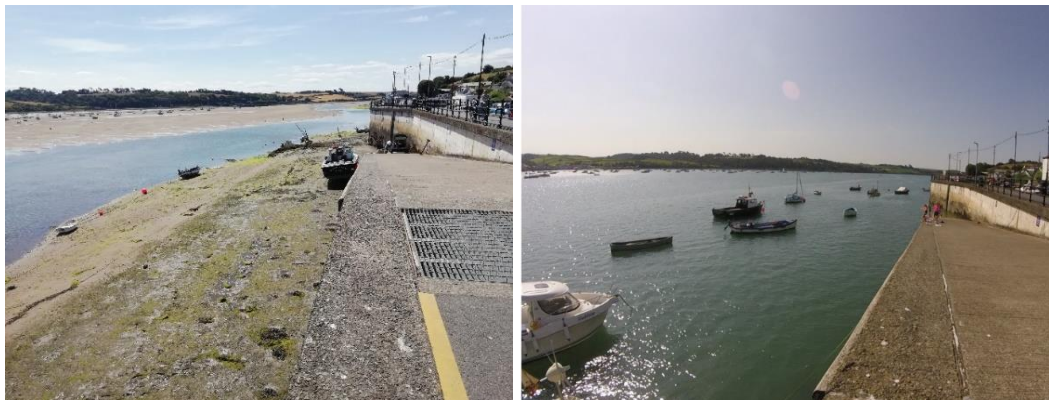
The river it's never the same twice, you know. The tide is different. Everything is going up and down. It isn't like looking at the ocean where you can't see everything going up and down. But in a river you'll see the bottom of the tide, the top of the tide. Whatever time you look out, there's a different scene to watch.

(Interview, Tom and George, residents, Helford)

Contrary to Elden (2013), where he argues that terrain should be analysed through 'height and depth *instead of* surfaces' (Elden, 2013, p.35, emphasis own), tides attune our attention to surfaces and areas, *as well* as height and depth. At low tide, more surface of the riverbed is seen, 'you'll see the bottom of the tide', whilst at high tide, the surface terrain shifts; the sandy surface of the riverbed becomes concealed by water and water rises to become the new surface.

### 5.4.1 Edge

Surfaces shift, on a tidal river, between land (riverbed) and water. This shift is most evident in the space between Appledore and Instow, on the River Torridge (Plate 5.9). At low tide, the water is reduced to the deepest part and mid-section of the river, whilst at high tide the river rises to meet the edge of land, on the slip. Not only is this a movement of height and depth, as the volume of water in the river expands, but it also needs to be recognised through the lens of surfaces, as at low tide, a sandy, muddy, sea-weed surface emerges, once the water is temporarily removed.



**Plate 5. 9 Muddying the Borderline: Appledore Slip low tide July 2018 (left), Appledore Slip high tide, October 2018 (right)**

For Appledore resident and ferry volunteer Vince, these emerging and concealed surfaces muddy the borderline between the two bankside places of Appledore and Instow:

When the tide is high, obviously the boundary is a very solid one, it's the quayside and that's pretty obvious. But when the tide goes out, particularly on a very very low tide, you've got a very narrow shallow channel in the middle and you've then got this space which is quite ephemeral between the channel and the hard boundary of the quay and I think it's interesting to see how people perceive that. Do they see that as part of Appledore, it's their space, and the way people claim that space? I mean for example there are boat moorings there for

practical reasons, but I mean people go down there for recreation, dog walking, digging lugworms for bait, that sort of thing but's it's very ephemeral. When the tide comes in, that temporary space has gone. So is there a momentary change in your feeling of the boundary? Between Appledore and Instow? Is it that channel? Or is it the quayside? And what you've got really is almost a section of no-man's land which people will look at quite differently or use in different ways.

(Interview Vince, resident, Torridge)

This quote exemplifies the relationship between rivers and everyday borders, as he suggests that the position of the river influences the space and parameters between Appledore and Instow. On the one hand, the 'very very low tide' can create a greater surface area for activities such as 'digging lugworms' or 'dog walking', as more sand and beach opens up; whilst at the same time, this is a space characterised by its temporality, 'when the tide comes in, that temporary space has gone'. Nevertheless, the language of ownership is connected to activities that take place at low tide, as it is described as 'their space'. For Vince, the shifting waters of the tidal terrain reveal that a border is not a line, but an area as, in the terrain between Appledore and Instow a 'no-man's land' emerges.

The river, at different states of the tide is secondly equated with a semantics of surfaces. The river at high tide is described as a 'solid', a clear, 'hard' surface. This is a complicated phrase to use in relation to water, which is usually characterised in terms of liquidity, movement and flow (Bowles, Kaaristo & Caf, 2019). Paradoxically, when the riverbed (land) emerges at low tide, it is characterised by its ephemerality. The following section discusses the temporality of the tidal terrain and discusses how the various surfaces and levels between high tide and low tide create a series of allusions as land and water muddy at the point in-between.

### 5.4.2 Crossing

At the very lowest tide, when sand stretches out to the centre of the river, it gives the appearance of a beach-like terrain and a stable surface, and people utilise the greater surface area available. With no water filling the river between, it seems possible to walk from one side of the river to the other. Such was the case with a young family, who, at very low tide were on Instow beach and decided to 'walk across the gut', towards Appledore (Torridge notes, 29<sup>th</sup> May 2018). Nancy, a ferry volunteer describes how her daughter was sitting at the Coffee Cabin, a café on the Appledore side, watching the scene in disbelief, as they started to walk across the seemingly stable terrain. As they were just about to set up a picnic, 'my daughter went up to them to say, "you have forty five minutes before you're underwater"' (Torridge notes, 29<sup>th</sup> May 2018). It is likely that, for this young family, the potential danger of the inter-tidal area was not known. Their intent to 'set up a picnic' on the other side suggests that they were anticipating that the sandy surface would continue to remain stable. After the warning from Nancy's daughter, they quickly rushed back up the slip, away from the river channel and onto the safety of land.

This story emphasises the rapidity and potential danger of this changing environment; between a greater and lesser surface area of sandy land. Although the tidal fluctuations can be predicted and are known by residents such as Nancy's daughter who grew up in Appledore (Torridge notes, 29<sup>th</sup> May 2018), for visitors, the tidal shifts and the changing terrain might be an unknown concept. Ferry volunteer Ed narrates this dilemma,

And yet you know, when the tide goes out, I mean some people might look at the water and go: "Ok there's a ferry, fine", but if they're not aware of that, they go, "Well actually I want to go over there but I can't because there's water!" But of course, when the tide goes out they go: "Oh great, no water, that means I can walk across!" - Which of course they can't because it's bloody dangerous and some people have tried and yeah, never come back. And then there was the incident with the vehicle recently, not for the first time trying to drive across.

(Interview Ed, ferry personnel, Torridge)

Here, Ed dramatises the simplicity of people 'wanting to go over there', what Magris calls the 'aesthetic of the other side' (Ciccarelli, 2012, p.3). A tidal terrain is a shifting terrain; at the highest tide enabling a ferry route to cross over, but at the lowest tide, as the sand emerges, it appears possible to 'walk' or 'drive' across. On the Helford, the language used is that of the space between 'drying out',

It dries out both sides so you can't run the ferries spring tides. In fact, it probably dries out today, it dried out yesterday and the ferry can't operate for a period of time and then the tide comes up and the ferry floats again and off it goes.

(Interview Sid, river decision-maker, Helford)

The 'dry'/'wet' coupling parallels with land-water binaries, wherein rivers correspond to 'wet' and land 'dry'. However, as has been demonstrated (Peters, Steinberg & Stratford, 2018a; Whitt, 2018), terrains may not be so easy to distinguish and the area between dry and wet becomes a dangerous space, as it can often be hard for people to read. There are several accounts on the Helford (Helford notes, 7<sup>th</sup> September 2018) and Torridge (Torridge notes, 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2018) where vehicles became stuck in the sands, and passengers had to be rescued, caught unawares with the swift moving tide. The driver of the vehicle may have seen the 'dry' riverbed as an extension of the road, or they may have been inspired by the challenge of crossing a different terrain. Whatever the motive, it is

interesting to connect the tidal shifts of water within the estuary as inspiring and creating different modes of crossing, or pathways (Scheldeman, 2011). Rather than the river being a physical border, these crossing attempts – whatever the state of the tide – demonstrate that the river is seen as a permeable (Wonders, 2006) terrain which can and should be crossed, whatever the broader weather and tidal system. The attempt of driving across the river is a desire to move quickly from one bankside to the other, as opposed to detouring around via bridge up-river. The river, therefore, rather than always presenting as a border, at low tide, actually encourages the act of crossing. These shifts in behaviour are accentuated when the material conditions within the riverborderscape change, and can seem to facilitate the crossing in various ways.

#### 5.4.3 Terrain as an allusion

This is a shape shifting river  
lifting with the tides  
sand now covered  
will soon become concealed  
in the whirring swish of the  
high rising tide

that man walking along this beach  
stooping to gaze at the sand dunes  
will in a few hours be

s u b m u r g e d

the water painted ripples  
inching onto the sand  
will rise and stretch out in time

this stretch of water  
is fluctuating movement -  
betwixt and between



**Figure 5. 7 Reflection Card**  
**Torridge 15**

the ground a terrain of sand - stone - rock – shell – mud - shaped -

u n s t a b l e

(Field Poem, August 2018)

A final phrase I want to focus upon was one spoken by interviewee Penny, when she discussed the recent incident of a vehicle getting stuck in the middle of the Torridge River (Torridge notes, 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2018). She narrated, 'it may look as if you can cross but you can't' (Interview Penny, resident, Torridge). This description of the deception of terrain, how it 'looks' stable, but is actually hazardous reveals how on a tidal river, stability of terrain is an allusion.

Macfarlane (2012) narrates an account of walking across a shallow tidal channel which was only visible at the very lowest tide. Signs warn of the hazards of this crossing point, due to quick-sand, mist and the limited, temporary time between the tides which limits when it is safe to walk over. MacFarlane (2012) describes how, walking across at the lowest of tides, he experienced disorientation in the altering landscape, as 'sand mimicked water, water mimicked sand, and the air duplicated the textures of both' (p.75). Terrain is hard to read, unmappable, unpredictable and subject to material shifts and changes, which have the potential to catch people out: 'some people have tried and never come back' (Interview Ed, ferry personnel, Torridge). A notorious example of the danger of intertidal areas is Morecombe Bay, Lancashire, where at least twenty three Chinese migrant workers drowned whilst picking cockles in the vast expanse of sandflats and mudflats (Roberts, 2018). Although, in comparison, the River Torridge is not as dangerous, it is clear that tidal terrains hold danger: between expanding and contracting sandy

land and rising water, with uneven levels of surface. In this marginal space, some people are 'caught within – and often at the mercy of – material and economic geographies' (Roberts, 2018, p.41).

I reflect in my poem how the surface of this ground is 'unstable', with the sand, stone, and mud creating different layers, creating a river that is 'shape shifting' in accordance with the tides. Kothari and Arnall (2020) similarly note how sand is a shifting particle, not only a single 'grain' (p.303), but also entangled with and enrolled within a larger landscape which moves 'with the waves, currents and tides that continually wash it onto and off the shore, its' direction, form and extent dependent on the seasons and prevailing weather conditions' (p.305). Yet, whilst this swirling environment is made and re-made through the tidal rhythm, the sandy riverbed is also a deceptively temporal surface, the surface changes between water and sandy land. This changing, swirling environment, makes and remakes these spaces.

The 'temporary space' between the tides also becomes a tension space. Whilst it expands the position of the border line between Appledore and Instow, shifting the line away from the 'quay' and towards the middle of the channel, the surface area that emerges is not like the land on either bankside (Interview Vince, resident, Torridge). This is a sandy land, composed of various levels, with water and mud and movements which are challenging to map and to read. Through a focus on the tidal terrain, this section has demonstrated the importance of analysing surface and area, as well as height and depth.

## 5.5 Turning the Tide towards Ownership

Tides attune our attention to three-dimensionality. On the one hand, ferry routes are shaped by the motions of the tide, as well as wind and dodging other boats on the water (section 5.3), but on the other, ferry routes are mapped, owned and therefore restricted to the specific space and crossing point as demarcated and settled through land ownership. Chapter 4 gave an overview of the various histories of the ferry routes, including ownership. This next section further considers how territory works 'at depth' (Bridge, 2013, p.55) by taking a three-dimensional view of the river, alongside the ferry crossing, in relation to ownership.

### 5.5.1 Vertical: Floating/Fixed

Water is absolutely political, in terms of it can't be owned, but the river bed surface below can. Nobody has the right to prevent you travelling on water – I can float my boat wherever I like but it's the questions of who owns the land directly adjacent on the bank edge

(Interview Reuben, resident, Helford)

Everything down here is owned by the Duchy isn't it? So the water itself is a means of getting beyond what he owns. He owns the bed but he can't stop people floating above the bed. But what he can do is stop you putting the mooring on the actual river bed

(Interview Finn, skipper, Helford)

Who's to own the upper part of the water and who's to own the soil beneath it? Who's to say that because the substance is so fluid and so interchangeable that nobody can really have a gallon of water and be like "this is mine" because the next second, it's going to be somewhere else. You can't really pin it down

(Interview Rita, ferry passenger, Tamar)

In all of these accounts, there is a recognition that water itself cannot be owned, corresponding with ideas established as far back as Roman Law, that aqua profluens (flowing water) is a common good, neither public nor private (Sadoff &

Grey, 2002). As interviewees Reuben, Finn and Rita recognise, 'the water in a border river has the character of commons' (McCaffrey, 2019, p.82). Attempts to stop people 'floating above the bed' become slippery; 'nobody can really have a gallon of water and be like "this is mine"' (Interview Rita, ferry passenger, Tamar), as water is a natural resource characterised by 'fluid' movement. Even when a riverbed is privately owned, the public have a right to use its watercourse for navigation or fishing, a right first initiated under English Common Law (Maloney & Ausness, 1974).

Legal scholar McCaffrey (2019, p.81), writing in the context of rivers between international borders goes on to argue:

The boundary that follows a watercourse is, after all, only an imaginary line. It does not prevent either the water itself, or living (e.g. fish, birds, aquatic mammals, plants) or non-living (logs, silt, gravel) resources in the water from crossing from one side to the other.

This recognises that any one molecule of water may shift from one side of the river to the other side of the river, thus transgressing established boundary lines. Although set within a large-scale context of international river borders, these observations reflect on the river ferry crossings of the Tamar, Torridge and Helford rivers. Furthermore, it can help further examine the materiality of the riverborder and the legality of routes lined into the river bed, used to determine and demarcate contemporary ferry routes.

Chapter 4 considered the systems of ownership for the ferry routes on the Helford and Cremyll Ferries, whilst noting that the Torridge route is more complex. A private landlord owns the ferry route for the Helford, and the route across the

Tamar is in joint ownership with Plymouth City Council and Cornwall County Council. Whilst recognising that the water itself cannot be owned, that the water is in a three-dimensional form above the river bed complicates perceptions of ownership. That water is regarded as a 'common good', contrasts with concepts of more fixed land ownership, which is more familiar to terrain on land. This seems to account for the tension that emerges on the river between the ideas of fixity and flotation, permanence and temporality in the quotations above and ties into a broader theorisation of border spaces being between 'fixity and unfixity' (Rumford, 2014b, p.52). Although a boat can hover and move across the surface of the water, if the owners intend to anchor the boat, affix it to 'ground', 'pin it down' (Interview Rita, ferry passenger, Tamar), then they transgress the lines of ownership, and may be trespassing on somebody's property. Such an analogy is recognised by those that own the Helford River route,

I don't think it would be right that we could say that we owned the water. This particular river is a ria which is a sunken river valley and so if you took the analogy that a farmer owns a field on a floodplain and it floods and he still owns the land underneath it, but he doesn't own the floodwater over the top and that's the same scenario here. It was owned by somebody millions of years ago or hundreds of years ago or last year. And all riverbeds or areas of sea within county boundaries are owned by somebody; whether it's the crown or, you know, whoever! [...] It's an area of land that they own and it's covered by water at high tide and it's probably not covered by water at a low spring tide.

(Interview Sid, river decision-maker, Helford)

Comparing the riverbed to a 'field on a floodplain' reveals that, in his mind, the relationship between property and terrain is interrelated. Blomley (2011) notes how property, at its very core 'seems to entail boundary-work' (p.205) as spaces

become bounded, marked, owned and defined. Certainly, the discourse on borders is evident here, as land is extended to what is 'below and above the surface' (cf. Butt, 1988) and for Sid, the border applies both at 'high tide', with a higher volume of water in the channel and at 'low spring tide', with a smaller volume of water in the channel. In reiterating the geological topography of the Helford, a 'sunken river valley', the property terrain extending towards land and water becomes more blurred. The argument here is that the grounded surface of the riverbed is a stable terrain; a fundus that can be clearly mapped, delineated and claimed.

However, whilst recognising that the landowner does not own the water, but owns the riverbed, terrain appears to limit and restrict the possible movement on the surface of the water. When I asked skipper Finn to describe the ferry's route across the Helford, he noted that the route actually reflects the legal line of ownership,

And I suppose, (chuckle) we follow their owning of the river bed to the other side [...] because I think it goes to that corner there, so we probably just come outside it on the far end.

(Interview Finn, skipper, Helford)

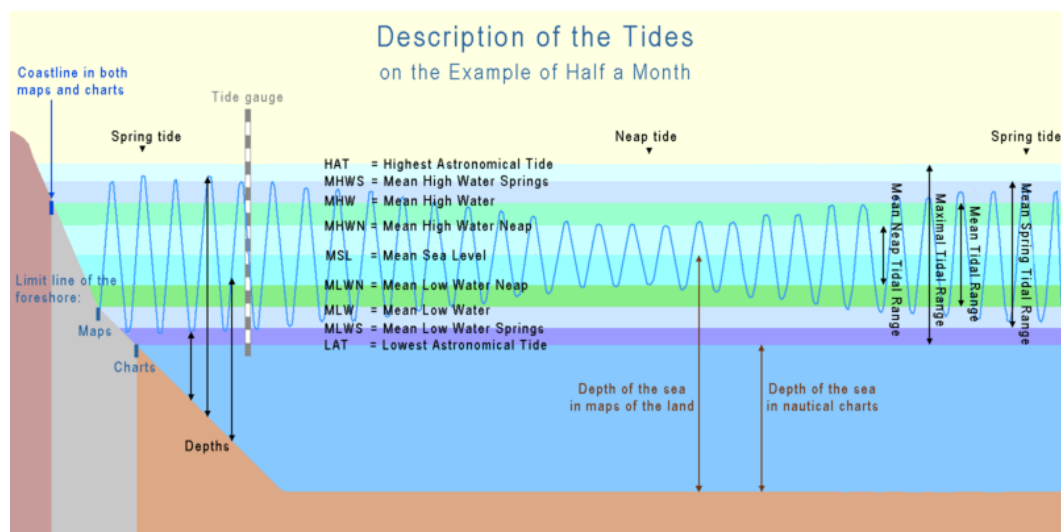
These legal concepts complicate the first half of this chapter, which demonstrated how the materiality of the river, such as tide, wind, and sub-surface influences the route of the ferry. This extract reveals a further layer, as the route of the ferry actually follows the established legal lines of ownership. Although there is the possibility of a greater surface of water in which the ferry can move, it is interesting that the route, on the whole, remains tied to the ownership line, as established and agreed historically in the title deeds. This would seem to suggest that the route of the ferry from one side to the other is linked to the line of ownership demarcated on the fundus below. Therefore, although it would seem that the ferry 'floats'

(Interview Reuben, resident, Helford) on the river, the route actually corresponds with ownership, the licensing agreement and limits of the 'rights to the ferry crossing' (Interview Finn, skipper, Helford).

This is more complex to trace on the River Torridge, as the riverbed at various points is divided between different landowners. River decision-maker and skipper Isaac describes how,

There's an argument over who owns what. The land owner owns the bit above high water mark. Somebody else owns the bit below high water mark and then somebody else owns the fundus under the low water mark! So you could have a vessel that's involved with three different land owners to start with and of course nobody really wants to accept responsibility, because if you accept responsibility, then you've got to actually do something

(Interview Isaac, skipper and river decision-maker, Torridge)



**Figure 5. 8 A graph describing tidal movement which visualises interviewee Isaac's observation that assets are divided according to what is 'above high water', 'below high water' and 'fundus'. Source: (Ulam, 2017)**

Notably, ownership can be seen through a vertical structure: there is the 'bit above high water mark', the 'bit below high water mark' and the 'fundus under the low water mark'. This is important to recognise as, although it would appear as if the

river (characterised by water) is a continuous space, Isaac shows how the river is fragmented in accordance with the river system: high water, low water and fundus, for a vessel that crosses from one side of the river to the other. Therefore, the route intersects with the multiple lines of ownership on the river. Ownership then, not only is connected to terrain, but also the types of terrain, of what is above, and 'below'. The concept reveals how, far from rivers being a homogenous space, there is often a 'divided ownership of the riverbed' (McCaffrey, 2019, p.149). Interestingly, the aim of property law is to "fix" territory through material elements such as 'land' or the 'riverbed', and yet rivers can change over time, and where the volume of water within the channel can fluctuate depending on the tidal movement (Elden, 2017; Krause, 2017b; Whitt, 2018).

A further observation that extends the concept of the riverborderscape is the lens of breadth, as well as depth. Land has been extensively recognised as a terrain that has been divided into private ownership (Linklater, 2014; Shrubsole, 2019), but tidal rivers have not been explored to the same extent. And yet, ferry passenger Hamish recognises how rivers have been 'split up and a lot of royalty have claimed it; it's fragmented and full of hundreds of private ownerships' (Interview Hamish, ferry passenger, Helford). That individuals can historically own the riverbed reveals the importance of reviewing rivers through the three-dimensionality of borders: height and depth. However, as well as depth, it is important to take note of the spatial area of the riverborderscape: bank – river – bank. The cross-section of the river was also seen to be split across multiple ownerships on the River Torridge, as further explained by skipper Isaac,

This first bit. Down to the end of the slipway is owned by Hector Christies and they manage it. So if you're on this bit, you pay mooring fees to an individual, onwards to an estate. If you keep a boat on the other side of that gut, where there's water there, although less at low tide. If you can't walk across. On the bank on the other side and in the middle there, doesn't cost you anything. And where, in the estuaries that you've been looking at, can you moor for free? Nowhere. Because there's mooring for free, everybody does what they like. There's no regulation at all when you've got to be anywhere, there's nobody saying "you've got to be 50 metres away from the nearest boat" or "you've got to have a certain standard of mooring that isn't going to break and cause damage to other". And then the third side, over the other side is Appledore and I don't know if you've heard about this so called "Free Port business"

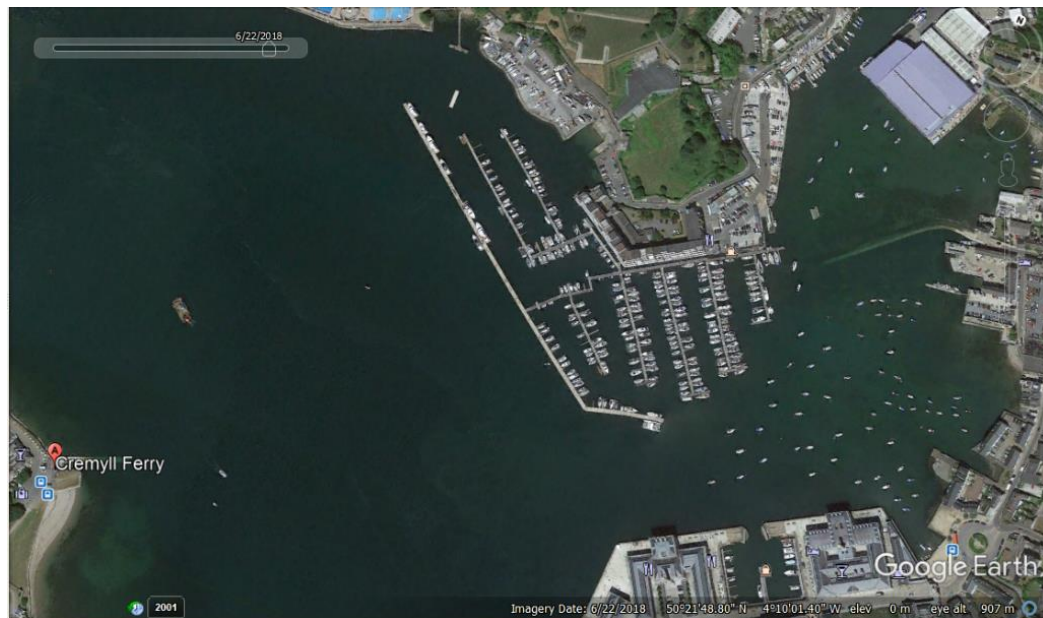
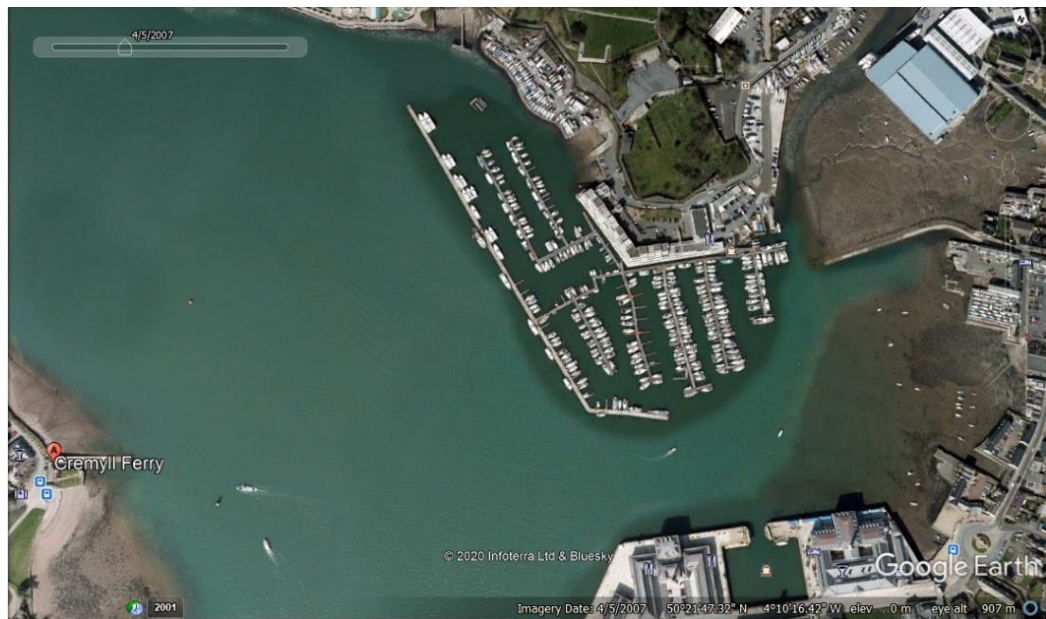
(Interview Isaac, skipper and river decision-maker, Torridge)

The ferry crossing of the Torridge is thus entangled with three separate ownership domains across the spatial area of the riverborderscape. On the closest edge of Instow, the foreshore is owned by a private estate, meaning that the ferry company pays a mooring fee to use Instow Quay. However, the middle zone of the river is likened to a no-man's land, as a stakeholder is not responsible for that area. This is unlike the spatial area of the riverborderscape on the rivers Helford and Tamar, wherein a single land-owner owns the rights to the ferry crossing. This observation shows how the riverborderscape as a spatial area should also be reviewed in relation to routes and ownership lines, and that systems of ownership might influence other materialities encountered on the river. The following section develops this in relation to mooring.

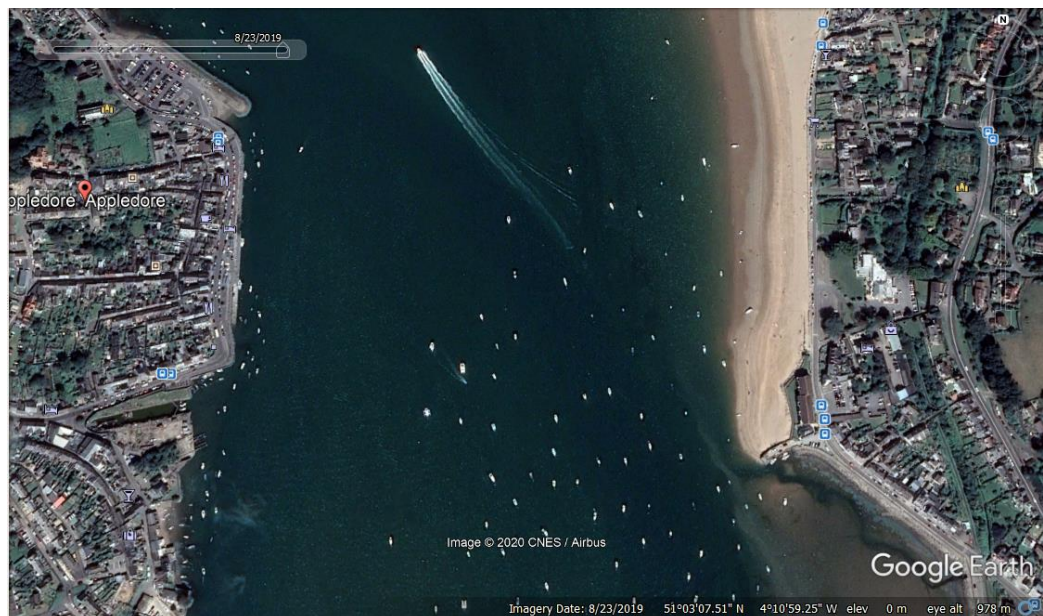
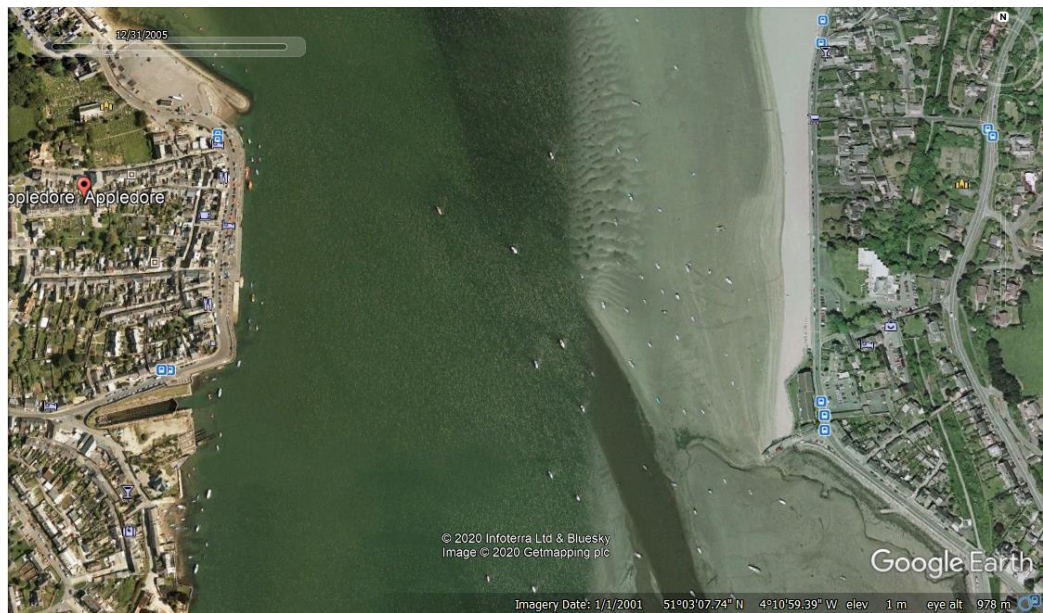
### 5.5.2 Punctuated Space: Mooring

Where these spatial and ownership questions intersect with the ferry crossing is the impact of the increased number of moorings on the River Torridge, in the last

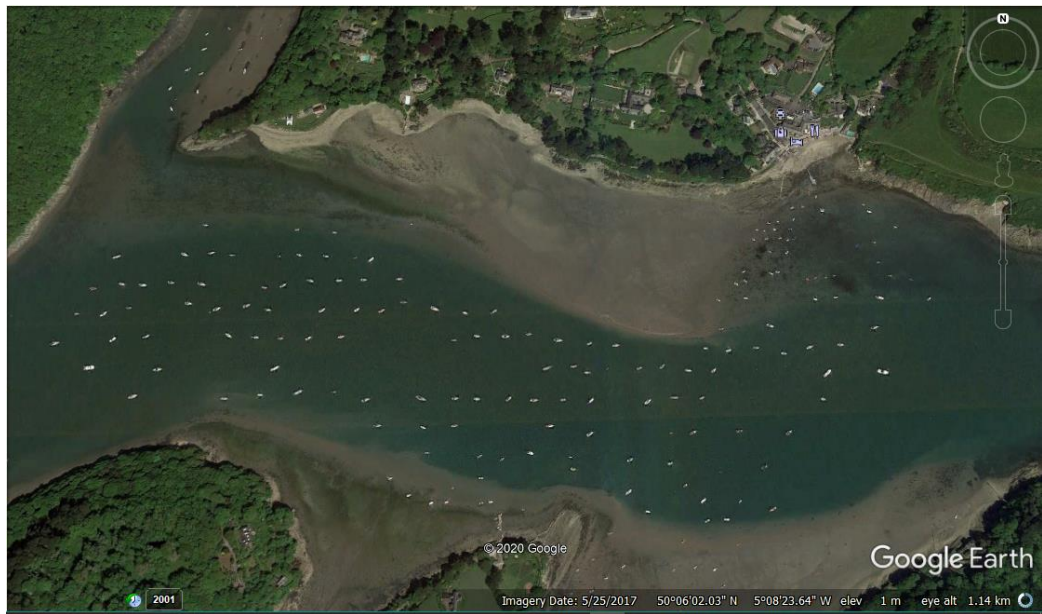
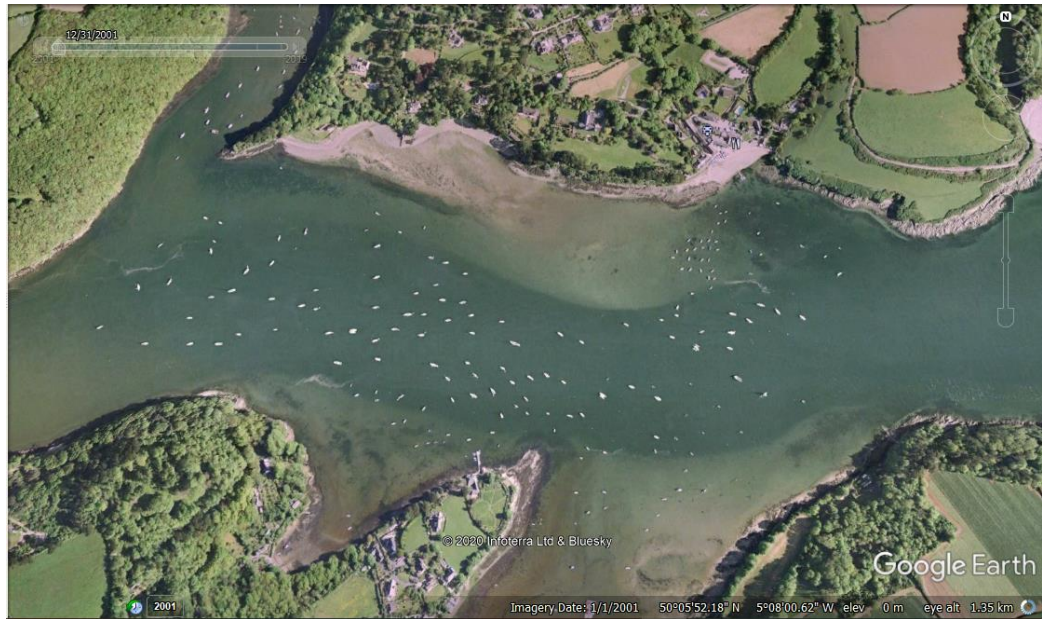
decade (Interview Hudson, skipper, Torridge). Although on the one hand, this can be seen as beneficial as individual boaters are benefiting from access to rivers which might otherwise be greatly restricted, as demonstrated in section 5.3.5, the moorings can impact the ferry crossing, as moored boats can become obstacles to the route of the ferry. Mooring can be visualised by analysing Google Earth satellite imagery through time. Mather et al. (2015) demonstrates the value of analysing satellite imagery for recognising coastal erosion. Edgeworth (2018) also advocates Google Earth imagery in order to visualise a river's system, from source to delta. The analysis of satellite imagery in relation to moored boats shows how such moorings attune our attention to the spatial area of the riverborderscape, as well as indicating depth, ownership and terrain.



**Figure 5. 9 Satellite Snapshots: Cremyll – Admirals Hard 2007 (up) Cremyll – Admirals Hard 2018 (down), Source: Google Earth (2021)**



**Figure 5. 10 Satellite Snapshots: Appledore - Instow 2001 (up) Appledore - Instow 2019 (down), Source: Google Earth (2021)**



**Figure 5. 11 Satellite Snapshots: Helford - Helford Passage 2001 (up) Helford - Helford Passage 2017 (down), Source: Google Earth (2021)**

The increase in the number of moorings within the Tamar, Torridge and Helford Rivers were identified as reflecting the privatisation of the river. Interviewees Tom and George, suggested that the River Helford has 'become a car-park for boats' (Interview Tom and George, residents, Helford), in contrast to the river crossing George was familiar with, as a skipper in the 1970s. Whilst the International Marina (River Tamar) is an



**Plate 5. 10 Cement filled tyre connected to buoy, July 2019**

infrastructural mooring point for boats, comparing Satellite images shows an increase in boats to the South-East of the ferry crossing (Figure 5.9). Figure 5.10 shows approximately a three-fold increase in the number of boats between Appledore and Instow.

Whilst satellite imagery is limited for analysis, as it only provides a snapshot of a landscape, it provides visual evidence to reflect and confirm interviewee's sense of an increase in boats on all three of the rivers. The increasing number of moorings and boats across the space of the rivers Tamar, Torridge and Helford which intersect with the routes and navigational pathways of the ferry crossings can be linked with the privatisation of rivers, as each mooring post is a small indication of permanent or temporary private ownership. Moorings are also a visualisation of the need to interpret rivers through the materiality of height and depth as mooring chains are cemented to the bottom of the riverbed, and so, as Plate 5.10 demonstrates, physically punctuate the terrain across the spatial area of the riverborderscape. Moorings are an example of the everyday context of rivers as

borders, as each mooring position signifies individual ownership. The ferry crossing, interpreted through the lens of the politics of mobility will be further considered in section 7.4.

## 5.6 Summary

This chapter has brought the 'river' into focus, by bringing together diverse literatures on the materialities of water, the materialities of borders and the materialities of landscape. In answering RQ1, 'What are the materialities that influence the river ferry crossing?' it has rebuffed the idea that maritime realms are a 'surface of connection' through which ships pass to connect land masses on either side (Peters & Squire, 2019, p.102). The chapter has taken seriously Jones' (2011) call to consider the materiality of tides, and how they impact places and landscape. In so doing, it has demonstrated that river spaces are three-dimensional, complex spaces, also characterised by other materialities such as wind, currents and the presence of other boats. These intersect with the riverborderscape as a spatial frame (bank – river – bank), as they may impact the routes and directional movement from one side of the river to the other.

Whilst intertidal spaces such as chars, sand and mudflats have been analysed through a detailed analysis of terrain (Elden, 2019; Peters, Steinberg & Stratford, 2018b) this chapter has contributed to the materiality of watery spaces through bringing attention to tidal rivers, alongside the knowledge and expertise required to cross over, through the accounts of ferry skippers. It has developed Peters' (2019) call to pay attention to the routes across waterways. In so doing, I have considered how the materiality of the riverborderscape interacts with a broader

range of activities and perceptions of everyday borders. At high tide, the river appears to offer a clear and solid space to cross-over; whilst at low-tide, channels and sediment emerge to meander and muddy questions of ownership and territory, with people questioning where one bankside ends and where the other begins. I have also argued that area and surface are important lenses to consider the terrain that emerges, shifts or moves in relation to the tides, and how such a space can become a space of tension. The river as border has also been examined in relation to ownership, and I have detailed the conflation of tides and legality through arguing that property and ownership is connected to tidal structures.

Such entanglements may not be fully comprehended by those passengers who step on-board, to whom we now turn. In order to understand the riverborderscape, we need to look at materialities, experiences and narratives, and so the next chapter centres on the experiences of ferry passengers, as they move from one bankside to the other, across the river.

## 6. Experiences

### 6.1 Introduction

This chapter centres on passenger experiences of the ferry crossing, and is predominantly based on responses from the reflection card methodology, designed to be completed on the river. Reviewed as a whole (347 collected), these reflection cards document the movement across the riverborderscape (bank – river – bank) and, taken together with landscape theories and border theories, show the body to be the ‘very basis of experience’ (Crossley 1995,p.44) and that our ‘main experience of borders is by confronting or crossing them’ (Szary, 2015, p.13). To answer RQ2, ‘What are the thoughts, imaginations and experiences of ferry passengers as they cross from one side of the river to the other?’ a diverse set of theoretical literature is brought together, including watery geographies, borders, betweenness and landscape to more fully understand riverborder crossing experiences. The suffix ‘-scape’ is used to interpret the wide range of meanings and experiences therein (Tilley & Cameron–Daum, 2017) including drawn, written, imagined, experienced, embodied, and with attention to the sound, sights, smells and the process of movement. References are made, too, to the communal or social elements of the ferry crossing, including conversation themes and routine tasks of the ferry operator, interacting with passengers.

The chapter is structured through the constituent spaces which make up the riverborderscape, namely the ‘bank’ (section 6.2), ‘river’ (section 6.3), ‘ferry’ (section 6.4), ‘crossing’ (section 6.5) and ‘bank’ (section 6.6) to consider what takes place ‘during movement’ (Cresswell 2006, p.6), although in reality there is overlap and

crossover in the mobile experiences of each. Referring to Figure 2.1, whilst this chapter mainly focuses upon experiences, the ferry crossing is also entangled with the materiality of the river, and experiences are narrated through the qualitative data of the reflection cards.

## 6.2 Bank

The ferry comes in as I walk down the slip

Green clothed mud digger; spade in hand; trench swiping  
Seagulls landing behind  
I asked him what the green suited man was doing  
“Digging bait for fishing” King Hackers or something

-- slippery –

An edgy looking man said he would love to get creative.  
A woman with dog cascading down the slip.  
She catches the ferry every day.  
A couple were revisiting Plymouth after 16 years. Her sister lived  
down here. Retracing footsteps.  
Slurred speech for late arrivals to the river. Aware of the rumbling  
horn and minutes ticking.

“Love the water” she said, running aboard

(snippets from Tamar notes, 20<sup>th</sup> November 2018)

The water’s edge is a ‘marginal territory’ that becomes invested with layers of meaning (Cusack, 2012, p.1). In this context, the water’s edge is at once the location where the ferry embarks and disembarks, and a public space which is accessible to other users of the river: such as, ‘crabbers, swimmers, tomb-stoners, fishing boats, gig racers (Interview Oliver, ferry personnel, Torridge) and ‘walkers and yachters’ (Helford notes, 7<sup>th</sup> September 2018). The water’s edge is a meeting point between land and water, seagulls and seaweed, built infrastructure and open space. The

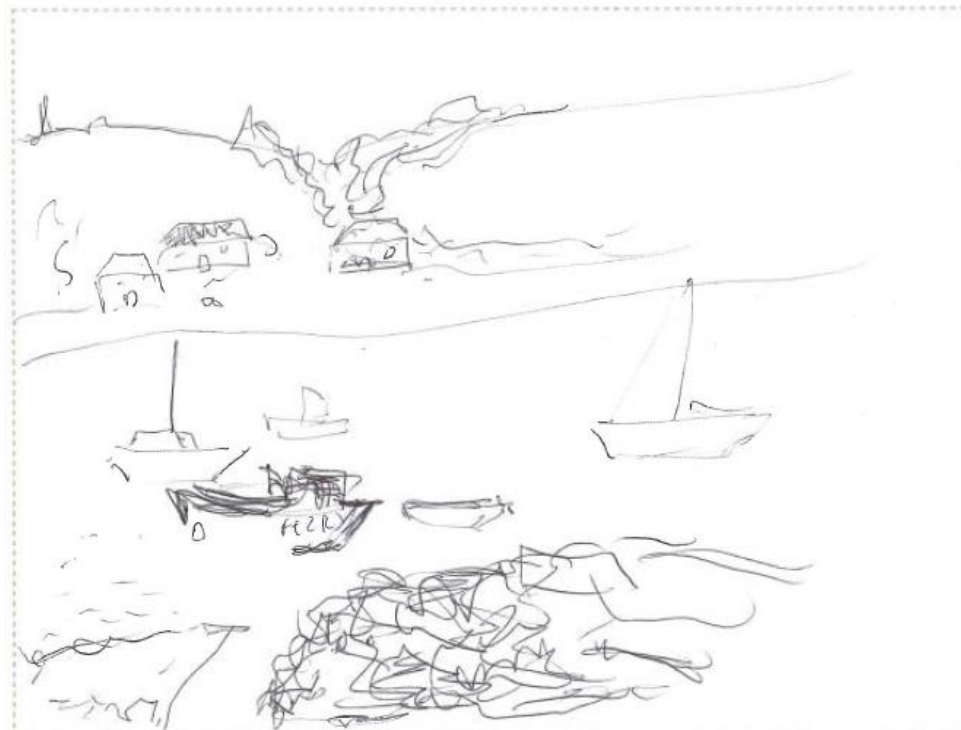
edge of the water was a location that people felt 'drawn to' (Interview Hamish and Olivia, ferry passengers, Helford). Participant observation revealed how people would walk down to the edge of the water, and sit or stand there for a while, in silence or quietly chatting with those they were with (Torridge notes, 15<sup>th</sup> April 2018, Tamar notes 10<sup>th</sup> June 2018, Helford notes, 17<sup>th</sup> September).

### 6.2.1 here – there

At the water's edge, there is a sense of anticipation and curiosity as to what might be on the other side. An interesting tension arose between 'here' and 'there'; 'this side' (Helford 76) of the river and 'that side of the river' (Tamar 65) and is further considered in section 7.2. Many had 'not yet been to the other side' (Torridge 120, Helford 117, Helford 131) and summarised the two opposite bankside spaces as 'where I want to go and where I have been' (Helford 113).

The comparative spaces, between 'here' (present bankside edge) and 'there' (future bankside edge) were drawn by several individuals, as they were standing on the bank of the river, waiting for the ferry to arrive. Helford 53 (Figure 6.1) marks the rocky shore of Helford Point with thick, jagged, interweaving lines to demarcate the stones, shingles and sediment. This present edge is drawn with darker, fuller, surer lines, reflective of the immediate present. Beyond the ferry, towards the river and the bankside beyond, the lines are fainter, and more impressionistic. Although the fainter lines of the opposite shore could simply provide a rudimentary perspective to the drawing (Corner, 1992), I suggest that they also reflect how the other side is not yet known or explored by this individual. Some houses are positioned on the bankside beyond, but the hills are outlined,

giving an impression of the topography without the detail. Beyond the three yachts in the foreground, the river too is an empty space (following Steinberg, 2013).



**Figure 6. 1 Reflection Card Helford 53**

This drawing encapsulates the relationship between here and there; present and future; surrounding landscape and anticipated bankside. The opposite bankside is, at present, physically and spatially distanced. Details within the landscape will unfold and become embodied, if they cross over to the other side. The ferry, edging towards the slip certainly suggests such a journey.

Torrige 120 (Figure 6.2), similarly captures the two bankside spaces, on either side of the river; between here and there. The participant describes how she is 'excited about boat', and in her time of waiting, draws the immediate bankside of Appledore Slip. The sounds of the bankside are brought to the fore in this reflection card, as she documents 'kids happy shrieks', 'water noises', 'sea breeze'.

This is the first time she has travelled on the ferry, and so she is filled with a sense of 'adventure':



**Figure 6. 2 Reflection Card Torridge 120**

The spaces of 'here' and 'there' are represented in Figure 6.2 as vignettes, suggesting that there are two separate spaces within her imagination. Her attention is focused upon a solo crabber, casting their net down to the water, and she captures the material bankside space, in the height of the quay and the gradient of the slip. Peering beyond the water towards the opposite bankside, she notices walkers, and so represents a couple walking along the beach. A flying seagull seems to defy the distance between here and there, soaring above the river.

Observing each drawing, it is important to note that the focus of the gaze is shifted towards land, as opposed to water. The bankside spaces are detailed and their

topography, terrain and activities are represented. In comparison, the water is inferred through sailing boats, as opposed to given full character of movement, flow and pattern. Standing on the shore, the river is a space that is not yet fully known, yet to be experienced. These two individuals are more interested in drawing 'here' and 'there', a focus upon the bankside space they are within and the bankside space they intend to travel towards. In the act of drawing each space, each individual would have had to flicker their eye between the bankside space on one side of the river and the bankside space on the other (Wylie & Webster, 2019). Distance between each space is revealed, by virtue of the river between.

To explore the riverborderscape is to walk down to the edge of the river, and step onto the ferry.

### 6.3 River

Weeden (2011) has demonstrated how individuals claim to have found a sense of inner peace when close to nature. Kaaristo (2014) explores the aural qualities of being next to water.

The ferry offers an opportunity for people to be on and travel across water, through an accessible mode of transport that does not require individual specialist knowledge. As a passenger, there is an opportunity to sit, watch and pay attention to the river. The range of experiences on the river are drawn out in the following sections, firstly through 'perspective' and then through 'proximity'.

### 6.3.1 Perspective

Crossing the river on the ferry afforded individuals a greater perspective of the landscape, a perspective gained from the space in-between. People were also conscious that they are a 'lot nearer the water!' (Helford 33), 'close to nature' (Torridge 111). The temperature difference was noted: it is 'a lot cooler on the water' (Tamar 2).

A South West Coast Path walker, whose route had taken them around the edge of land was grateful for 'finally being on the water after seeing it every day walking' (Helford 31). This reflection recognises the spatial shift that being on the water affords. There are 'different views' (Tamar 29) and a 'changing scenery' (Helford 92) of the landscape that are only possible to see from the water, as 'when you're on the water, you can see a long way, which generally on land you can't' (Interview Oliver, ferry personnel, Torridge). The full-front of the Royal William Yard, for example, can only be seen from the river, as the development on the bankside edge in Admirals Hard means that it is partially hidden from view, on land. The detail within the drawings of Figure 6.3 demonstrate the individuals' interest in this iconic bankside structure, and the unique vantage point of the landscape that being on the river can bring.



**Figure 6. 3 A bankside perspective from the river (left to right): Reflection Card Tamar 30, Tamar 79, Tamar 45**

This gaze complicates the relationship between 'here' and 'there', as shown in the previous section, as it is clear that, once on the river, the landscape opens up in a multi-directional way, as opposed to just forwards and backwards. Attention was given to upriver and downriver landscapes, as being positioned in the middle of the river, individuals could turn their head in all directions. This reflects Vannini and Taggart (2013) who ask readers to 'envision your island from the bow of your ferry boat' (p.233). The authors argue that such a perspective brings greater attention to small details, such as sea-litter. Returning to this context, analysis of these drawings shows that the 'bow of the ferry boat' enables interested individuals to give greater attention to the landscape the ferry moves through. Passengers can look forward and look around, at places and spaces they may not be familiar with. One individual narrates how they were closely watching an 'egret' (Tamar 84) before they got onto the ferry, and how this watching and looking became more intensified once on the 'beautiful water' (Tamar 84). The movement of the ferry, in the same space as the movement of the bird flying low along the river contributed to this individual's reported connection to nature.

### 6.3.2 Proximity

Others were more interested in looking down at the river than watching the landscape and bankside spaces. Strang (2004) details water's 'compelling effects upon the senses' (p.54) and there was evidence across the qualitative reflection card data-set of the river crossing engaging all five of the senses: sight, sound, touch, taste and smell.

Sight is engaged in observing the patterns on the surface of the river, and the movement of the waves in relation to the route of the ferry. One individual writes: 'I see the pattern left behind the boat causing a smooth calm patch for a short period of time before the tiny waves take over' (Tamar 33). Others draw attention to the 'sparkling water' (Helford 13) and 'waves lapping' (Torridge 51). This links to research on the mesmerising qualities of water, and demonstrates the differences in terrain between land and water (Rothenberg & Ulvaeus, 2002).



**Plate 6. 1 Proximity to the River, Appledore – Instow Ferry, October 2019**

Others focus their attention on the sound of 'river noises' (Helford 119), and the 'splashing sound' (Torridge 112, Torridge 103). These sounds are characterised as the 'ebb and flow of the seashore' (Helford 133) and in all three case study sites contributed to feelings of relaxation (Tamar 13, Torridge 94, Helford 128). Interviewee Winnie summarised that the 'swishing and swooshing of the waves' signifies an 'underlying calm', the onomatopoeic language attempting to replicate the sound of the river (Interview Winnie, ferry passenger, Helford). Encounters with the river were mediated through the vessel of the ferry, and so the sound of the

river was at times drowned out by the 'rumbling engine' (Helford 118). The engine's sound is characterised as a 'hum' (Helford 1), sometimes 'gentle' (Helford 46), at other times 'chugging' (Helford 39) and 'noisy' (Helford 35). The sound of the engine is a constant undertone in Sarah's video interview, which takes place on the ferry and punctuates particular points, for example, accelerating and moving at a higher decibel between 6 and 8 seconds, before a releasing and fizzling off of sound at 13 seconds, corresponding with the ferry swinging round and shifting position in the river (section 5.3).

Encounters with touch, taste and smell were reported as briefer sensual experiences, such as when water in the river interacted with the body of passengers. One reports, 'a bit of spray!' (Tamar 20) and others the 'taste' (Helford 1) and 'smell of salt' (Helford 37). These brief encounters demonstrate that the water within the rivers are not a distanced element, but can be tactile: smelt, as well as heard, felt and touched.

Although many relate such a sensory experience to feelings of relaxation, peace and tranquillity, for others, crossing the river may trigger a sense of unease, and trepidation, accentuating water as a different terrain. 'Watery places are not always comfortable, or even familiar. They can be uncanny – a place of others, or an *other place*' (Chen, 2013, p.281). The following section illustrates the ways in which rivers were imagined as a place of threat, of mystery, of otherness, and strangeness. In so doing, I draw out how the narrative of the border crossing is one which is 'accompanied by curiosity tinged with fear' (Newman, 2003, p.21).

### 6.3.3 Danger

Lurking danger was conveyed and communicated through the playfulness of the imagination. Sharks, notoriously one of the most fear-evoking marine mammals within the cultural imagination (Rothfels, 2002), emerged in all three case study sites. These out of place creatures were characterised with sharpened teeth and Torridge 97 (Figure 6.4) details a scene where a shark has seized a ferry passenger, gripping him in his jaws whilst he shouts 'Help!'



**Figure 6. 4 Imagined Sharks (left to right): Reflection Card Torridge 97, Helford 65, Tamar 61, Torridge 53**

Sharks become particularly threatening when the apparatus passengers are reliant upon to carry them across the river malfunctions. Torridge 53 details these underlying fears through a playful limerick. The dramatic turn in this poem corresponds with the failure of the ferry's engine: 'the occasion was fantastically merry / till the engine broke down':

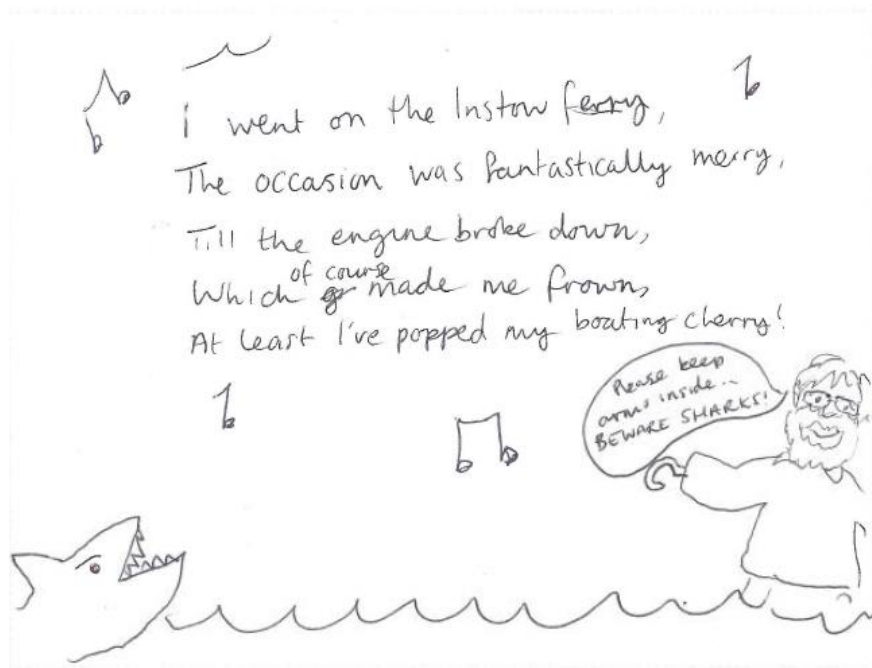


Figure 6. 5 Reflection Card Torridge 53

Here, it is clear that a positive experience of the river ('merry') is dependent upon a smooth, and frictionless crossing experience. The positive mood suddenly disintegrates ('frown') upon the break-down of the ferry. This is not the only imaginative reflection card wherein the ferry breaks down and individuals are left, stranded in the middle of the river. Torridge 110 narrates the 'smell of petrol' and imagines the 'flooding' of the ferry and clearly conveys their 'excitement to get to the other side'.

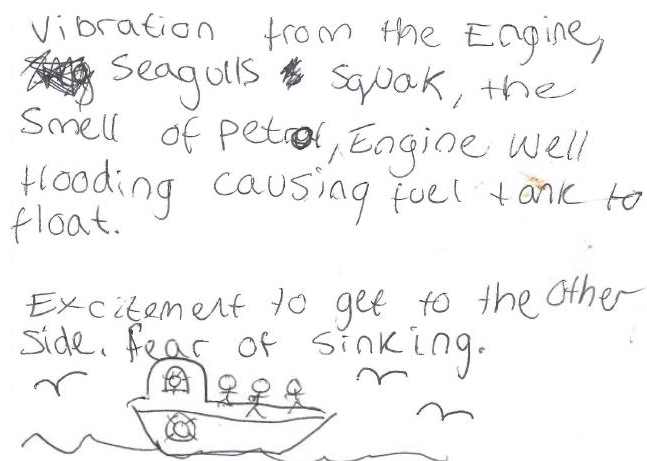
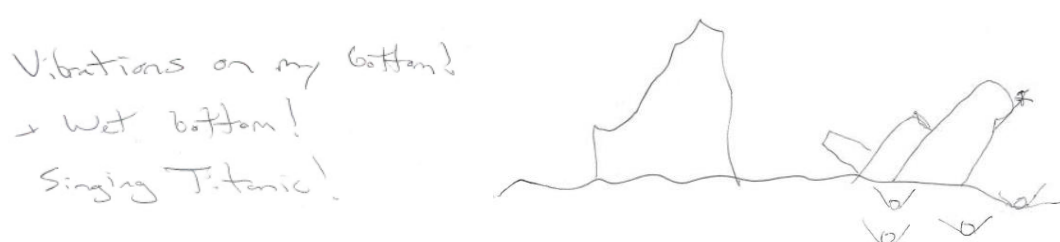


Figure 6. 6 Reflection Card Torridge 110

The ferry sinking was an imaginative theme that continued. An individual describes 'Singing Titanic!' (Torridge 63), as the 'vibrations on my bottom' spur her to imagine the Titanic's collision with the iceberg and failure of the captain crew, a song made famous by the 1997 American epic romance/disaster film and Celine Dion's *My Heart Will Go On*. A scene of the ferry hitting an iceberg is visualised in Helford 60, where the floating obstacle emerging from the river seems to be the cause of a half sinking ferry, dropping below the water at an angle. Four passengers are stranded in the water, with their arms lifted for help, whilst another jumps off the edge of the boat.



**Figure 6. 7 Ferry Disaster: Reflection Card Torridge 63 (left), Reflection Card Helford 60 (right)**

Returning to Reflection Card 53, the skipper has an ambiguous role, both appearing to warn passengers of the lurking 'sharks' hovering by the water whilst his hand is hooked, a synecdoche for a pirate. Pirates were also drawn or referenced in each of the river crossings (Tamar 61, Torridge 32). The sarcastic tone of Helford 77 narrates: 'we were attacked by pirates. Loved the danger'; the ironic tension attributed to such an act of 'danger' being placed within a space of 'beautiful scenery' (Helford 104). Pirates have been traditionally assigned to ocean spaces (Rediker, 1987; Rediker, 2014) and have been recognised for their defiance of governing structures, operating 'outside of territorial borders' (Peters, 2011,

p.281). To place pirates into the river crossings suggests that the river is imagined as beyond the reach of law. The subversion and fantasy also reveals how it is not just characterised by fear, but a sense of excitement about this kind of space, and corresponds to its potential lawlessness.

Although imaginative and playful in scope, these accounts reveal an acute 'fear' (Torridge 110), overall anxiety and demonstrate the imagined or real potential threat of riverborders. Whilst characterised by humour, the repetition of catastrophic events, such as being eaten by a shark, being attacked by a pirate, hitting an ice-berg and the ferry breaking down suggest that the river is imaginatively positioned as a border which is dangerous, difficult to overcome and a terrain that people are not fully comfortable with. Simon, who uses the Cremyll Ferry every day confirms how, 'on a river, even on a beautiful sunny day, something could go wrong!' and he has accordingly calculated where the 'life jackets are located', should they be required (Interview Simon, ferry passenger, Tamar). Despite being set within the imaginative realm, it mirrors how, within a contemporary context, migration by boat remains one of the 'most dangerous forms of movement between nations and the human scale of human tragedies is often overlooked or kept hidden from view' (Mannik, 2016, p.3). The imaginative presence of near-drownings and attacks demonstrates how the river becomes an imaginative border, as it is an unknown terrain that must be crossed over, to get to the safety and security of land on the other side. It reflects the extent to which 'borders and boundaries are elusive and unbiddable spaces' (Roberts, 2018, p.40), at once familiar and at the same time unfamiliar. These imaginative narratives, where passengers are attacked, and where mysterious creatures lurk in the waters,

showcase the imaginative potential of the riverborderscape, but reveal how the river is also equated with an underlying sense of tension.

This unease about, and slippery nature of the border crossing is further revealed through the way in which participants could not settle with one distinct term to describe the river. The river was described as 'water', 'river', 'estuary', 'tide', 'ria', 'sea', 'creek' and often within the space of an interview, an interviewee would interchange between descriptions to describe the same crossing point. Such linguistic uncertainty reveals the river as a hybrid space, where multiple meanings and interpretations are seen as possible. This is a

watery movement of fluid  
interchanging as  
river into ria  
estuary floods sea  
linguistical descriptions slipping  
into the tide

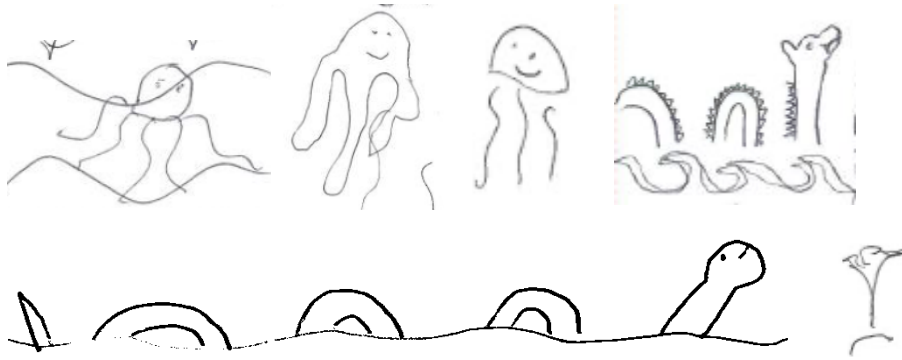
(Field Poem, September 2018)

The oscillation between water categories captures the overall uncertainty as to how the river crossing may be interpreted. Roberts (2018) characterises liminal spaces as 'inherently unstable and uncertain' (p.39). It is almost as if individuals are not content to describe the river using one singular term, and suggests that the view of a river is multiplicitous in character, changing and shifting in form. The varied vocabulary which characterises this space reflects,

An image of between-ness which does not construct a place or condition of its own other than the mobility, uncertainty and multiplicity of the fact of the constant border crossing itself (Grossberg, 1996, p.37).

The instability of border spaces is revealed here through being located within the material space of water, characterised by complex movements of tides, currents, flows, sediment and changing patterns (section 5.3). People use many different terms for the same space, as they see and express it in different ways. This ties into the perception of an unease of border spaces, as identified by Roberts (2018) and is narrated through the everyday narratives and imaginations of those that cross over the space. The riverborder between is, therefore, in tension: refusing to be fixed by a single term and a space where the imagination teeters on the edge of danger.

The slippery hybridity of the water emerges through the strange collection of underwater creatures drawn within the river crossing space. In contrast to sharks, these images of octopus, jellyfish, whale and Loch Ness monster did not appear to represent a threat to passengers. However, that these out of place creatures are imagined within a river crossing further reveals the possibilities of portraying fantasy within the riverborderscape. Like the slippery river terminology, these creatures can escape their actual watercourse, as Loch Ness monsters are most likely to be found in a lake and octopuses within the deep sea: watercourses beyond the river. The presence of these creatures collapse the distinctions between watercourses and that some of them are out of place reveals the imaginative possibilities of the river crossing.



**Figure 6.8 River Monsters (left to right): Reflection Card Torridge 59, Tamar 44, Torridge 85, Torridge 44, Tamar 74, Helford 84**

### 6.3.4 River as Hybrid Space

That the river is both attractive and threatening, familiar and unfamiliar, safe and dangerous accentuates the river as border, which is imagined and interpreted in contradictory and conflicting ways. Although Steinberg (2015) recognises that the sea is a space of tension, such an analysis has not yet extended onto tidal rivers. Tracing imaginative reflections, this section has detailed potential threats, such as real and fantastical creatures lurking within these rivers, which illustrates how this watery border is a place of mixing and mingling between diverse species and imaginations of people, enlivened as they cross over from one bankside to the other.

## 6.4 Ferry

### 6.4.1 Social Experience

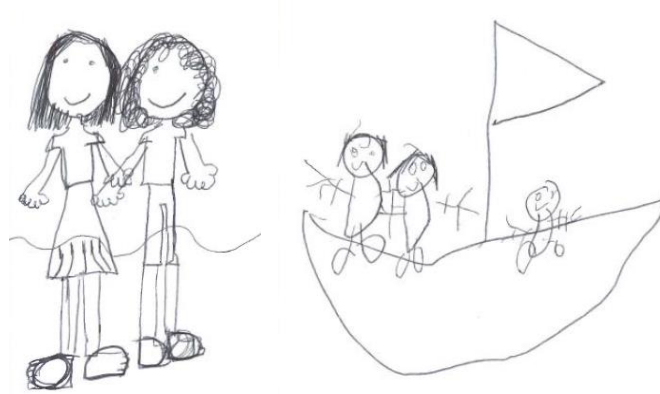
"Yeah you made it"  
 "If you look down you can see the water"  
 "We're going to Appledore"  
 "How many people here – four and two"  
 "Foot on side"  
 "Could you sit on that side?"

(Sound of water churning)  
"They're going to wait for the next one"  
(Dog shaking)  
(Engine rumble)

(ferry crossing sound clip, August 2018)

Boarding a ferry is a social experience (Tamar notes, 10<sup>th</sup> June 2018). For some, the ferry is a 'different' (Interview Sarah, ferry passenger, Helford) and 'special' (Interview Otto, ferry passenger, Tamar) form of transport and the first time some have travelled on water (Interview Isaac, skipper, Torridge). For others, the ferry is a routine mode of transport, 'cheaper than the bus and much quicker' (Torridge 93).

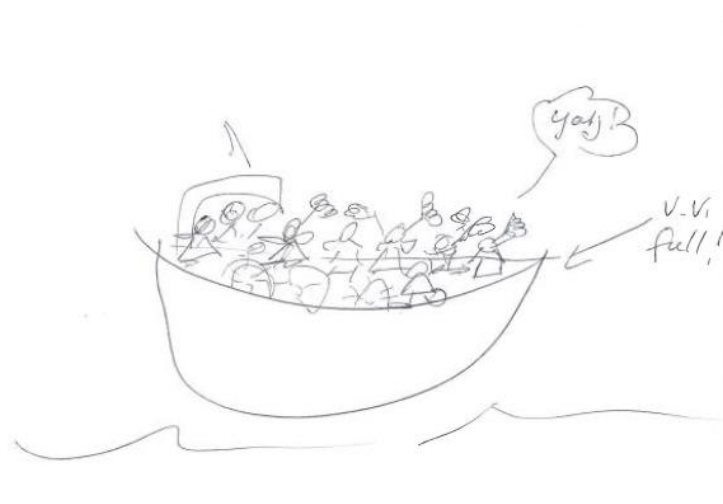
It was visible during participant observation and supported by interviewees, that most people travelled as a group with friends and family or as a couple, suggesting that the crossing was a convivial activity, contributing to a social leisure experience (Torridge notes, 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2018). Torridge 12 illustrates two children together, holding hands whilst crossing the water, and Torridge 25 shows a small family travelling on the ferry together (Figure 6.9). These drawings, created by children reveal the importance of the ferry as a mode of transport for families to partake in together, and its significance, from a child's perspective. One parent wrote that it was 'our girls first experience of a small passenger ferry' (Torridge 112) and another parent, intended to cross the river for a 'coffee and return – with a 'three year old the boat trip is the fun!' (Torridge 120). The anticipated journey of the ferry across the river was an adventure, and was characterised as an event within itself, a significant experience for a small child.



**Figure 6. 9 Social Ferry: Reflection Card Torridge 12 (left), Reflection Card Torridge 25**

Across all three river ferry sites, flattering comments were made about the staff, in particular the way in which they interacted with those on-board. They were 'brilliant ferry staff' (Helford 33), 'funny driver & friendly' (Helford 43), 'staff friendly and jovial' (Torridge 112), 'joking boatmen' (Helford 34) 'volunteers are great' (Torridge 61), 'lots of atmosphere, staff very knowledgable on ferry' (Tamar 26).

At the same time, the ferry crossing was also an opportunity for interactions, conversations and shared experiences to occur on-board, between fellow travellers. Roberts (2018) suggests that liminal spaces have the potential to forge strong bonds. References were made to how 'people on the boat talked to us – nice sense of community/focal point with fellow travellers' (Torridge 111), 'the Cremyll Ferry is a great way to meet people' (Tamar 59). Conversations related to the shared experiences of those on the journey across the river. For example, comments were made about the speed of the ferry (Tamar 64). A reflection card dramatises the ferry, perceived as overcrowded, and signals the differing emotions of this shared experience,



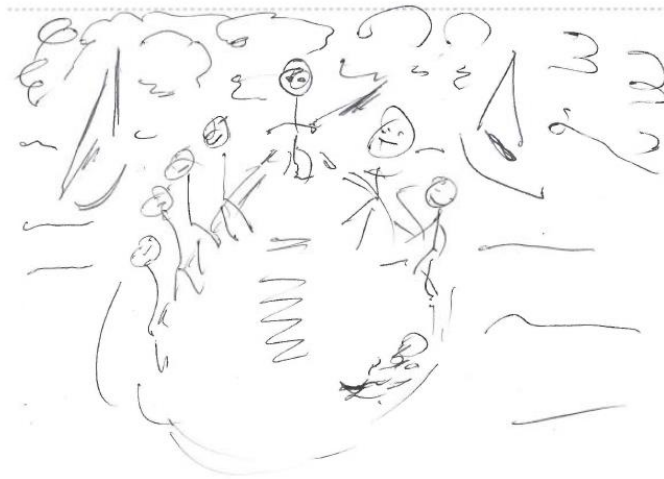
**Figure 6. 10 Reflection Card Helford 20**

The ferry crossing is an example of how

places are continually (re)produced through the mobile flows which course through and around them, bringing together ephemeral, contingent and relatively stable arrangements of people, energy and matter (Edensor, 2011, p.190).

One writes how the ferry 'in itself, is a meeting place, a place to talk, a place to get advice' (Helford 136). The idea of the ferry as a 'meeting place' confirms an interpretation that the ferry crossing is a space of liminality; those that seek to cross the river are temporarily held within the same place, and there is an opportunity for a shared and social experience between passengers who may be strangers.

The sociality of the ferry is attributed to the size of the vessel and how 'you're all sitting looking at each other [...] so I suppose you can't not speak to people!' (Interview Sarah, ferry passenger, Helford). In this interpretation, the material structure of the ferry, wherein people sit opposite each other and make eye contact, contributes to on-board socialising and is further visualised in reflection card Helford 108,



**Figure 6. 11 Reflection Card Helford 108**

In this drawing, it is visually ambiguous as to whether the skipper, at the top and centre of the drawing is holding the tiller of the boat which directs the movements of the boat, or whether they are holding a conductors' baton, as if to orchestrate. Such ambiguity reveals how although the ferry is a 'meeting place' (Helford 136) between passengers, it is also a highly structured experience, and one which is directed by the ferry operators.

#### 6.4.2 Directed Experience



*2 men in charge of a boat*

**Figure 6. 12 Reflection Card Torridge 58**

For a few moments I was hovering between -  
steered into gear by the ferry operator's silent  
command.

Narrated history  
of rowing boats and terrified passengers and  
catfish too large to fish  
fishing its prey,  
a game to play.

(Field poem, June 2018)



**Figure 6. 13 The Skipper:**  
**Reflection Card Torridge 58**  
**(up), Reflection Card Torridge**  
**75 (down)**

The ferry operators were recognised as those with the skill and expertise to safely transport passengers from one side of the river to the other. They work in an ever-changing, multi-dimensional environment which is constantly being shaped and re-shaped by watery systems beyond their control, such as the weather and tidal movement (section 5.3). At the same time, skipper Hudson described what a big responsibility it is to be a skipper, as 'you're fully aware that the one person who can really smash the reputation, which takes a long time to build up, is actually the skipper' (Interview Hudson, skipper, Torridge). This comment was contextualised through Hudson discussing navigational considerations of the ferry, as outlined in the previous chapter. Despite there being real differences between each of the three river-ferries in terms of scale and structure, there are interesting connections to be made by looking at the everyday tasks that the on-board members of staff conduct. These connections suggest that there is a ferry-related task-scape that is unique to passenger sized vessels, and the dynamics of navigating across a river.

A phrase that daily Cremyll Ferry passenger Simon used, was that ferry passengers were 'under their [the skipper's] supervision and guidance' (Interview Simon, ferry passenger, Tamar). To be 'under' something has multiple meanings, but one meaning is to be 'subject to the authority, control, guidance or instruction of' (*'under'*, 2020). This definition reflects the original context of the phrase, as Simon was discussing the decisions skippers had to make about the route of the ferry and the way in which these decisions affected the personal experience of his journey (section 5.4) This prepositional phrase, 'to be under' suggests how the skippers, responsible for the ferry, are, for the ten minutes of crossing, the sole individual in a public position of control and authority. This section begins with the obvious

markers of authority, such as signs, regulated boarding and health and safety procedures that characterise a safe crossing and then considers the subtler ways in which authority is negotiated and inter-played, predominantly through humour. Following Gilroy (1993), I argue that the ferry becomes a 'micro-cultural, micro-political system in motion' (p.4) and the authority of the skippers is made possible through the physical shift between land and water. This section unpacks the 'meaning embedded in motion' (Cresswell, 2006, p.2) and suggests how the space of the river border is subject to different regimes than on land, and which are set apart from the bankside.

#### 6.5.2.1 Authority

"So how long have you been doing this then?"

"40 years", he replied.

The rhythm of 40 years spun into his body.

Perhaps, after 40 years as an onboard worker on the Cremyll Ferry, this crossing is rhythm enough, routine enough, familiar enough. It doesn't need to warrant a momentary reflection. He has seen this river in all tides, in all states. Welcomed millions of people on board. Awaiting their needs and collecting their coins, whilst suspended on the water. He becomes the one in control; despite the skipper's movements controlling the motion and motor in the room located above.

(Tamar notes, 20<sup>th</sup> November 18)

When boarding each ferry, passengers are required to take extra care, and only board the boat under the appropriate supervision of the ferry personnel. Passengers are asked to wait (Tamar 48), form an orderly queue (notes, Tamar 10<sup>th</sup> June 2018, Torridge 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2018, Helford 5<sup>th</sup> June 2018) and advised to 'use the handrails' (Interview Hudson, skipper, Torridge) to aid stability. Ferry personnel stand on the threshold between the slip and the boat, a 'weathered face / who

sometimes lends a hand' (Field Poem, November 2018), to oversee the safe boarding and disembarking of the boat.

Once on-board, the movements of passengers are limited by the spatial dimensions of the ferry, and they are directed to the seats. On the smaller vessels of the Appledore – Instow and Helford River Boats, on a few occasions, passengers were told-off by the ferry personnel for unbalancing the boat, by sitting all on one side. With the boat swaying from the uneven weight of passengers, individuals were asked to shift onto the other side of the boat, to maintain balance (Torridge notes, 25<sup>th</sup> July 2018, Helford notes, 17<sup>th</sup> September 2018). These are unspoken rules that concur with the physical logic of the ferry in motion, as an unbalanced boat has a greater potential for collision. Participant observation revealed that individuals who were targeted to move positions on the ferry did so compliantly, as guided by the ferry personnel. However, it was clear that others were oblivious to the need to distribute weight, before being directed by the ferry operator. This is an example of the ferry operator's authority being listened to, and reacted to, through physical actions. It also emphasises how passengers have to exchange immobility for the mobility of the ferry. Bissell and Overend (2015) show this in relation to train mobilities, where passengers predominantly remain seated, in contrast to the high-speed of the train through the landscape. Mobility on a ferry is not high-speed, but is multi-directional, in the sense that the ferry's movement might be determined by the materiality of the river and, therefore, passengers may jerk, sway or seem to move up and down, as a result of the impact of the ferry on the water, despite being seated. Passengers on a ferry exchange their personal

agency of mobility for a temporary stationary mobility, and that mobility is overseen by the ferry operator on-board.

Passengers are to remain seated at all times, and only the ferry crew are allowed to move around on-board, which they do to collect fares. The 'keep seated' rule is enforced more stringently on the Appledore – Instow Ferry, alongside the instruction to 'keep your hands inside the railings' (Torridge 53), confirmed by a short, spoken announcement from the on-board volunteer. There is a 'verbal health and safety warning, [including] telling us not to place anything beyond the barriers, to keep seated and also that the life jackets are under the seats' (Torridge notes, 15<sup>th</sup> April 2018).

A photograph of a white rectangular sign with black handwritten text. The text is arranged in four lines: 'EXIT' in large capital letters, 'for' in lowercase, 'emergency' in lowercase, and 'use only' in lowercase.

**Figure 6. 14 Reflection Card Tamar 46**

The degree of instruction is more relaxed on the Helford Ferry, but participant observation revealed how all passengers remained seated on-board (Helford notes, 11<sup>th</sup> September 2018). A degree of movement is permitted on the Cremyll Ferry, due to its larger size and capacity, with outdoor and indoor seating areas, and passengers do move between spaces on the ferry (Interview Edith, ferry passenger, Tamar). Although Cremyll Ferry passengers are permitted to move,

such movement is to be minimised, and signs request: 'Please keep feet off seats' (Plate 6.2).



**Plate 6. 2 'Please Keep Feet Off Seats', Cremyll Ferry, November 2018**

While ferry passengers are seated, ferry personnel move around, to ask each passenger for their fare. In so doing, they may have a short conversation with the individuals, or group members, travelling together (Interview Oliver, ferry personnel, Torridge). Each crew member carries a satchel, with spare change, as a visual signal of collecting the toll. One individual jokes, 'don't pay the ferryman 'till you get to the other side' (Tamar notes, 15 November 2018). Reflection card Helford 113 demonstrates that the request for a fare may interrupt personal thoughts and reflections,

*Ferry me off far and away  
where I'm going is easy to say  
I was going to write more  
but was interrupted to pay!*

**Figure 6. 15 Reflection Card Helford 113**

The exchange of money can often spark a conversation, or friendly banter between passengers and crew members (Helford notes, 7<sup>th</sup> September 2018). Some used the opportunity to ask questions (Torridge notes, 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2018). People want to know: ""What's that ship over there? [...] "What's that bird?" [...] "Why do you only run four hours a day?" [...] "What's that place over there?" (Interview Isaac, skipper and river decision-maker, Torridge). Questions are directed to the figures in authority on-board: the ferry personnel. Ferry volunteer Ed describes how he enjoys the knowledge-exchange, and the passing on of information, to people who may be new to the area: 'talking to people and signposting and connecting people to you know, places to see and cool things to do on one side or the other' (Interview Ed, ferry personnel, Torridge). Through this information exchange, the ferry personnel participate in shaping passenger's experiences of the bankside, particularly if it is the first time that individuals have crossed on the ferry. A passenger writes how 'our captain was asked how many journeys he has made; he's not too keen on strong easterly winds' (Helford 22). Naming the skipper as 'captain' confirms the authority figure of the skipper on-board as the term 'captain' evokes a sea-faring individual, responsible for the routes, movement and safety of those on-board.

#### 6.5.2.2 Passport

A recurring joke on-board referred to whether a passport was required to cross the river. Most typically, this joke was initiated by a passenger, who would direct their question at the skipper. The punch-line pivoted around how the passport was not required to get to the other side, but was to be presented upon the return journey:

Someone asked if we would need a passport to get across the river, in which Kyle joked back, saying: "You don't need a passport to get to the other side, but you do need one to come back!"

(Torridge notes, 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2018)

A passenger asked if he needed his passport to get across the river. The skipper joked back: "You don't need a passport to get to the other side, but you need one to return"

(Helford notes 25<sup>th</sup> June 2018)

One of the passengers joked that she had her passport in her pocket

(Helford notes, 13<sup>th</sup> September 2018)

It is significant that this question is directed at the skipper, as it emphasises their position of authority. During the ten minutes crossing time, the skipper and ferry personnel are solely responsible for the safe navigation of passengers and the underlying language of passport checks and border-crossing surveillance accentuates the power and position of the skipper on-board. There is a playful tone to these encounters, and it is almost as if people are acting out a scenario that places the forms of one border crossing onto another.

This is most clearly reflected in an exchange on the Cremyll Ferry,

The skipper leaned down from the operating room where he was controlling the boat. Through the window, he directed his gaze towards the German tour guide who was responsible for 40 tourists, crossing the river to walk around the Cornish grounds. They had boarded the boat on the Devon side.

"You gotta make sure they all got their passports. Get 'em stamped when they get to the other side".

The tour guide laughed; "Of course"

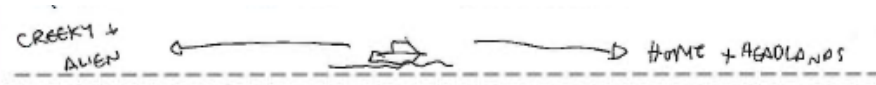
(Tamar notes, 9<sup>th</sup> June 2018)

Unlike the other jokes, where passengers ask the skipper whether they have their passport, in this case, it is the skipper who singled out the 'German tour guide' to

request whether her group of German citizens have their passport, in order to cross the river. This exchange was spoken in the moments before the ferry was about to depart from Admirals' Slip (Tamar notes, 9<sup>th</sup> June), and that the skipper temporarily delayed the beginning of departure reflects the potential for control that the skipper has. Although it was clear that this exchange was light-hearted in tone, and that the German tour guide had an established relationship with the skipper, nevertheless, there is an underlying tension that emerges from this exchange, as nationality is emphasised.

Although the passport control is very much within the realm of the imagination, it exemplifies the river as border, wherein access to the 'other side' requires official documentation. Shifting away from the structures familiar on land, it is as if, through the form of movement across the river, the skipper has the right to apply his own rules and regulations within this in-between space, as he is ultimately in control of movement. Jokes become a means through which the territorial extent of the ferry is expressed, and in particular that the authority and control of the skipper is brought to the fore. Certainly, without the skipper's guidance, it would not be possible for passengers to cross over the river at this particular point, and perhaps the passport jokes underline such an awareness. It exemplifies that the ferry is, as Gilroy (1993) notes in the context of the Black Atlantic, a 'micro political, micro-cultural system in motion' (p.4), directed through the power of the skipper who enables some identities to cross the river without comment, whilst pointing out the identities of others.

## 6.5 Crossing



**Figure 6. 16 Reflection Card Helford 55**

There is a rich literary canon wherein crossing watercourses such as rivers, streams and seas is 'not an end in itself but a means of creating possibilities' (Ciccarelli, 2012; McMillin, 2011, p.127). The word 'transition' was used several times by ferry passengers, to describe the crossing: a 'transition from one place to another' (Tamar 54), wherein people reflected 'you're leaving one place behind and going somewhere else' (Interview Sam and Izzie, ferry passengers, Helford); 'a crossing from the known to the unknown' (Helford 118), suggesting that crossing a river leads individuals towards a 'transitional time and space' (Bristow & Jenkins, 2020, p.220).

Just as writers have used river crossings to explore other crossings (physical, spiritual, personal, historical, political), so too do the reflection card narratives, created whilst crossing the river, explore the creative tensions, possibilities and imaginations of the space in-between. The transverse movement that people find themselves within: above the river's current, pushing and pulling, and the engine's motor, whirring and rumbling, lifts attention to the present; a movement at the junction between here and there, a pause between past and future. These possibilities are made ever-richer by the condensed temporal time frame, where passengers cross the river in just ten minutes. The first half of this section brings together some of the transitional thoughts that emerged whilst passengers were crossing the river, including psalms, myths and memory to position the ferry

crossing as a reflective and contemplative space (cf. Dewsbury & Cloke, 2009; Wylie, 2017). In the second half, I suggest that the ferry crossing creates a 'third space' (cf. Nail, 2016, p.3) for emerging creativity, arguing that the forms, genres and playful writing of the reflection cards emerge from and are shaped by the transitional space of the riverborderscape.

### 6.5.1 Transitional Events

The river ferry crossing emerged as a site through which transitional life-events, such as proposals and the scattering of ashes were located. This reflects the symbolic potential of river crossings as transformative and transitional spaces, as the movement from one side of the river to the other side may come to symbolise a joining together (proposal) or a letting go (ashes).

Skipper Isaac was on-board the Appledore – Instow Ferry and witnessed a couple's proposal of marriage. This was a planned event, and the crew members had to 'engineer it so [there] were only two of them on-board' (Interview Isaac, skipper, Torridge) to ensure the ferry vessel was a semi-private space through which to situate such an intimate milestone,

We got out to the middle. And the skipper stopped the ferry and the man got out his guitar, got down on one knee in the middle of the boat and sang a song which he'd composed which ended with "Will you marry me?" and she was gobsmacked. Absolutely. And he'd got a ring which was her grandmother's [...] it brought a tear to my eye.

(Interview Isaac, skipper, Torridge)

It is significant that the proposal was timed as the ferry was paused in the 'middle' of the river, symbolically the most open space through which such a vulnerable

Similarly, a ferry crossing was chosen as the location for a proposal for two other individuals I met on the Helford. Sam proposed to Izzie on the car ferry 'across the mouth of Poole harbour' and explains why, in the following extract:

Sam it was an in-between yeah it just felt right – in the middle of nowhere

260

The river was chosen for its metaphorical meaning, as an 'in-between space', a border between lands. On the river, between the two banksides was an opening space, 'in the middle of nowhere', where Sam and Izzie could infuse the space with the potential of meaning-making, which corresponds with how crossing water symbolises new life (Bradley, 2012; Wagner, 2013). Within this exceedingly ordinary river crossing, alongside the car ferry's mundane-ness and mechanics, an extraordinary promise of a union is made.

At the other end of the life-stage spectrum, the river ferry crossing was chosen as a vessel from which to scatter ashes, a symbolic letting go of the remains of a loved one. If proposals attune our attention to the transitional potential of river crossings, the scattering of ashes reveal the desired unity of body and water.

I asked a skipper to place a small grey box on his ferry. "Whose ashes are we scattering this time!?" he replied, a half joke smile as he pulled on the rope; the ferry resisting the last edge of water before the slip. I explained to him that I was the social researcher that was partnering with the Appledore-Instow Ferry, and that this box was to hold the research responses of his customers.

"Oh, I thought it might have been Granny". He continued, "A family once asked me if I could tip the ashes of their Granny over the side of the boat. They said she loved the river, loved the ferry and had asked to be scattered at the precise mid-point on the river, right between Appledore and Instow. So I waited for a quiet time, ensured I was downstream, roughly positioned the ferry in the middle of the banks, said a quick 'Lord's Prayer' and chucked Granny's ashes into the river; watching as the ashes mingled with the tide and floated away"

(Torridge notes, 28<sup>th</sup> May 2018)

Like the marriage proposal, in a gesture of eternal connection between two people, the ashes were scattered at the 'mid-point' of the river. This skipper suggests that the positioning of the mid-point of the river was due to her deep affinity with both

'Appledore and Instow', and so the scattering of the ashes on the river's borderline reflected her desire to be part of and remain connected to both banksides.

These two important transitional life events, a marriage proposal and scattering of ashes, reveal the river to be fluidly conflated and symbolically aligned with events relating to life and death. These are meaningful gestures, away from the constraints of land, located within the very 'mid-point' of the river and suggest a desire for opening, to re-configure and expand the normal customs and traditions associated with land. The river crossing also represents a symbolic letting go (ashes) or coming together (union), a releasing of tension through which new meanings can be made. This corresponds with the poetic nature of 'flowing water and its appropriateness as a metaphor for time passing for life, and for death' (Cusack, 2010, p.2).

### 6.5.2 Myth

Within various mythologies, rivers are seen as transitional borders between worlds. To cross a river within Greek mythology was to enter the realm of the underworld and a place of spirits and the dead (Beaulieu, 2008; Mack, 2013). The ferry, as the moving material structure between two opposite banksides is, for Rita, reminiscent of the River Styx crossing. She writes on her reflection card,

I was thinking about Hades, transporting souls across Styx in Greek mythology. Crossing rivers always means transition and crossing borders, so something you might need a guide for – even a translator maybe.

(Tamar 42)

In recalling the Greek myth, she attributes a greater significance to the purpose and meaning of her journey to the other side of the river and recognises the need

for a 'guide' (Interview Rita, ferry passenger, Tamar) to assist such a transition. Others referenced 'The Parable of the Ferryboat' (Helford notes, 11<sup>th</sup> September 2018), a metaphoric representation of a spiritual journey towards enlightenment. In this story, the ferryman rows back and forth each day, listening to stories of passengers and transporting people from one side of the river to the other. By the end of the book, the main character is just about to become a ferryman (Helford notes, 11<sup>th</sup> September 2018). Connelly (1997) argues that in this fable, the 'ferryboat is the particular religious doctrine which aids us on that journey; once doctrine has been outgrown, we can leave it behind and move forward' (p.12). Therefore, in this story, the ferry becomes a literal and metaphorical aid through which passengers can move across and, in so doing, be changed.

Tamar 75 hopes that the ferry will 'once more carry me to another land' (Figure 6.17), a phrase which shows how she hopes that arriving on the opposite bankside will unlock a greater imaginative spectrum. She suggests that the opposite bankside is for creating, and thinking and the ferry crossing is a significant transitional vessel to aid in that transformation. Positioning the other side as an island connects the opposite bankside with a space of creativity, play and experimentation, which has historically been associated with island spaces (Brown, 2003), but not yet been considered through the lens of rivers between places.

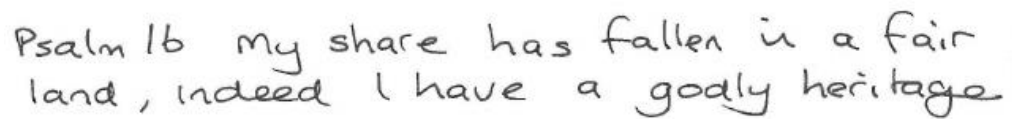


**Figure 6. 17 Reflection Card Tamar 75**

### 6.5.3 Spiritual

Dewsbury and Cloke (2009) use the term 'spiritual landscapes' to suggest that, within everyday life, some people can find a spiritual experience through the aesthetic, affective and bodily moving through, within, and across various landscapes. Kalnin (2008) argues that the connection or reconnection to the natural environment can be considered as spiritual. Jarratt and Sharpley (2017) argue that the seemingly limitless sea helps people consider their place in the world, as their participants discussed the themes of time, expanse, beauty and gratitude in Morecombe Bay.

Although they suggest that the sea is a site where 'religion spirituality and the sea inter-connect' (p.354), I argue that rivers, and river crossings are a temporal space between two adjacent land terrains where, once on the water, individuals can reflect upon spiritual dimensions. A psalm is remembered when crossing the river,

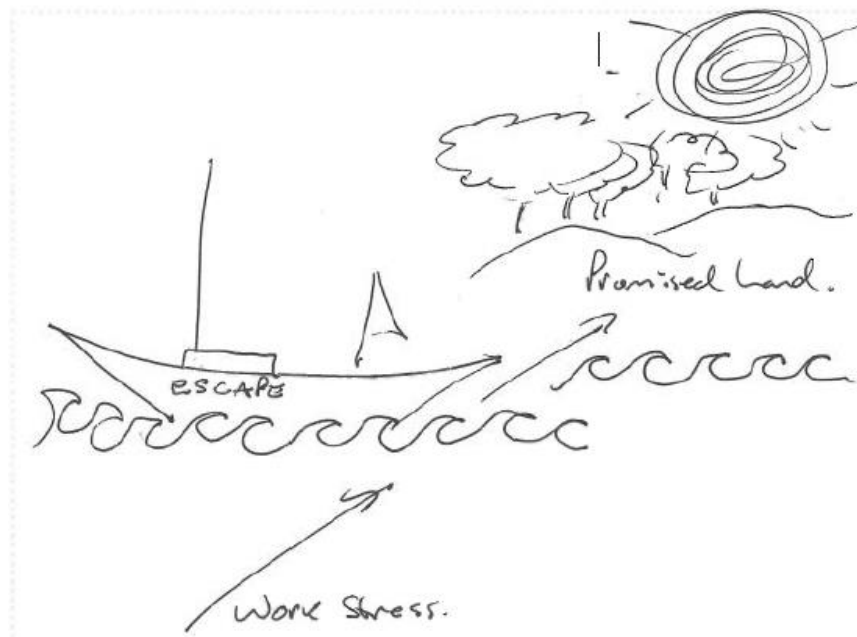
A photograph of a white card with handwritten text in black ink. The text is written in a cursive, slightly slanted script. The card is placed on a light-colored, textured surface.

Psalm 16 my share has fallen in a fair  
land, indeed I have a goodly heritage

**Figure 6. 18 Reflection Card Helford 137**

This psalm reflects a deep sense of gratitude and thankfulness for what God gives his people. In other versions, 'my share' is translated as 'the boundary lines' (Psalm 16.6, NIV), referring to the terrestrial limits of historic lots where people were demarcated to live. A recollection of the 'fair land', once given to the Israelites parallels the beauty of the land and river that the participant is surrounded by, there is a sense of gratitude perhaps reflecting the beauty of the landscape she is travelling through, on the Helford. For her, crossing the river is an embracing of a spiritual realm, as a liminal path of searching, reflection and gratitude that may or may not reflect her present.

Another uses the biblical term of the 'Promised Land' (Tamar 76) to describe what is on the other side of the river. Stories of river crossings are a part of the Judeo-Christian canon (Bradley, 2012), a symbol of liberation and transformation from slavery to freedom (Havrelock, 2007; Havrelock, 2011):



**Figure 6. 19 Reflection Card Tamar 76**

The ferry here is a physical and metaphorical vessel that will enable this individual to 'escape' from the worries on one shore and arrive at the 'Promised Land' on the other. It positions the river as a barrier, and confirms how people often talked about a 'mental separation between being on the ferry' (Tamar notes, 20<sup>th</sup> November 2020). For those who might have work associated with one bankside and home with the other, the ferry crossing is a buffer space and becomes a 'third space' (Nail, 2016), where such associative thoughts can be temporarily suspended. Whilst Thomassen (2012) has revealed how liminal spaces are attractive spaces; 'places we go in search of a break from the normal', this reflection card, supported by interviews with regular ferry passengers, demonstrates how the river is often seen as a welcome barrier or buffer zone between two separate spaces (section 7.2).

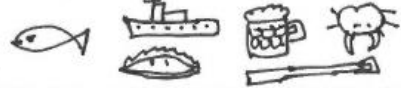
#### 6.5.4 Memory

Crossing the river on the ferry was an opportunity for those with connected memories to share those formative crossings and river-related experiences. Jones (2012) demonstrates how 'memory makes us what we are, and, along with emotion/affect, forms the interrelating foundational processes of our ongoing lives, and is inextricably linked to imagination/creativity' (p.875). The ferry crossing can bring to the fore memories and is, at the same time, memory-in-the-making.

Tamar 25 writes: 'this trip brings back many memories – I used the ferry to go to work in Plymouth for over 40 years on and off' (Tamar 25). It is in the physical crossing, the 'trip', between Cremyll and Plymouth that sparks this individual's process of recollection. Travelling across the same route that transported them for 'over 40 years' is a way in which they can reflect upon the past, and connect more intimately to that memory, through being in and passing through a familiar landscape (cf. Wylie, 2017).

Whereas Tamar 25 showed how being on the Cremyll Ferry sparked a case-site specific memory of travelling to work every day, for traveller Helford 44, the ferry became a broader symbol of recollecting a memory, set within a different geographical location. Whilst travelling on the Helford ferry, he writes 'I used to get a ferry to work – Gravesend to Tilbury – always a ferry reminds me of this' (Helford 44). For him, *any* ferry triggers a memory of a very particular time in his working life. This suggests how a ferry is a unique mode of crossing a river, and has a special place in his personal identity.

It has already been argued that 'nostalgia is a significant aspect of seasideness, associated with childhood, play and issues of identity' (Jarratt, 2015, p.158). Nostalgia emerges in relation to the ferry and ferry crossing too. Another shared how she had faint memories of a 'childhood Falmouth holiday with a Helford River cruise' (Helford 136) and crossing the river on a ferry enabled her to connect with that memory,

bus stop<sup>u</sup> location. Memories (faint)  
of a childhood Falmouth holiday with  
a Helford River cruise - my mother was  
fond of Daphne du Maurier's books and  
wanted to see Frenchman's Creek.  
Happy, happy, happy. 

**Figure 6. 20 Reflection Card Helford 136**

Other, family memories surface on the ferry, with Torridge 29 reflecting upon the historic and personal relationships within his own ancestry,

I am reminded that my father and  
grandfather both travelled the world by  
sea.  
Enviously watching the teams rowing  
along the estuary.

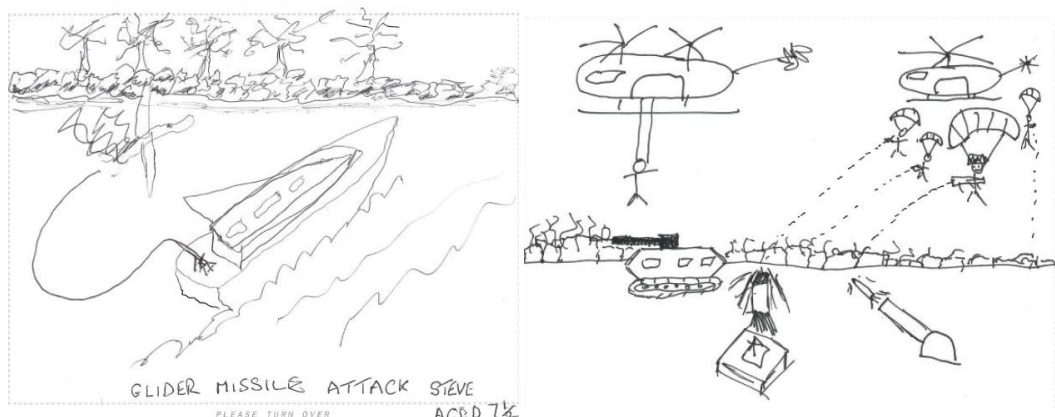
**Figure 6. 21 Reflection Card Torridge 29**

Here, travelling on a ferry is a small-form of connection he can make to his heritage, and shows how 'the present is clearly burdened with all our temporalities' (Dodgshon, 2008, p.300), as he 'furiously' watches rowers on the water. Being

within and crossing over the fluid border of the river was shown to be a spatial opening for people to reflect, observe and participate in recalling memories. This may be due to the sensory experience (section 6.3.2) of being on the river, or the novelty of ferries as a form of transport (section 6.4). I suggest that the physical movement across the riverborderscape triggers and encourages those with memories to share them, within the space between.

### 6.5.5 Military

The river crossing was fantasised by others as military battle-ground. The opposite bankside was imagined as an enemy camp, fortified by a barbed wire edging and the river being the strategic position from which to launch the attack of a 'glider missile' (Helford 100) and rocket (Torridge 5).



**Figure 6. 22 Military Imagination: Reflection Card Helford 100 (left), Reflection Card Torridge 5 (right)**

These drawings introduce the river as no-man's land and correspond with Leshem and Pinkerton's (2016) observation that 'no-man's land entails a direct and often violent encounter of the human body with the materialities of the earth' (p.50) as the military technologies of tanks, missiles and helicopters (Torridge 5) dominate.

Here, land is enemy camp and the river the allies' domain; a territorial division that reflects the distinction between the terrains of land and water.

These fantasies shift into reality on the Tamar River, as the Cremyll Ferry shares its waters with military ships, such as naval frigates and submarines. Simon describes the sinister perspective of how these 'act as nuclear threats underground or under water' (Interview Simon, ferry passenger, Tamar). Whether real or imagined, the presence of violent military encounters in the no-man's land of the river crossing is a startling contrast to the narratives of the river as an aesthetically beautiful place (section 6.2). They suggest the threat of the river as border, despite being military fantasies. These drawings extend beyond the river, to other geopolitical contexts where water is the site for military intervention (Wolf, 1998). At the same time, these drawings aim to enliven the mundane act of crossing the river, and suggest that anything can be possible en-route. In sum, these military fantasies create the notion of the river as no-man's land and embed a visual and violent narrative of 'us' and 'them', water and land, distinctions and separations on either side of the river (section 7.2.1).

#### 6.5.6 Creativity

The creative potential of the riverborder was reflected through the diverse ways in which passengers narrated their journey through short story, song, experimental forms and poetry. Although the reflection card, with the instruction 'be as creative as you like!' (Figure 3.3) overtly encouraged creativity, the range and inventiveness of the creative outputs was remarkable and tells us something more of the river, and the riverborderscape as a space which lent itself to creative thought (section

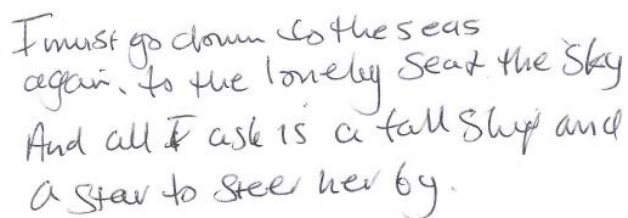
8.2). The physical act of crossing the riverborder was shown to provide a space through which individuals felt they could play with words, ideas, and imaginative capabilities to reflect upon and articulate the sensory and embodied experiences of crossing the river.

There was a surprising influence of literature and the literary imagination, from novels to short stories, and poetry in all three sites. Cresswell (2015) reveals the intimate connections between poetry and place, as 'poets seem to carry with them the places they inhabit' (p.9). One interviewee reflected, 'people come to see the river and those places that inspired those authors as well' (Interview Rachel, bankside decision-maker, Helford). Being by the water, and crossing the water also reminded people that there are,

lots of adventures to be had in the water, you know, like you could be one of the Famous Five or the Secret Seven of Enid Blyton's imagination and you could just imagine the pirates coming out and you see these people coming, travelling on their boats.

(Interview Winnie, ferry passenger, Helford)

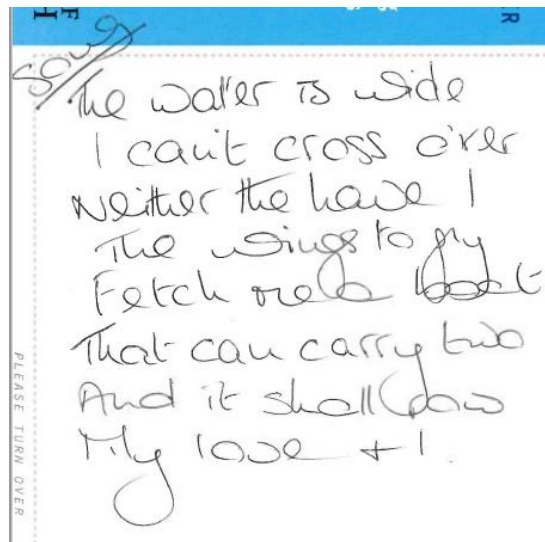
When crossing the Helford River, one individual is reminded of the poetry of John Masfield and his imperative:



I must go down to the seas  
again. To the lonely Sea & the Sky  
And all I ask is a tall Ship and  
a Star to steer her by.

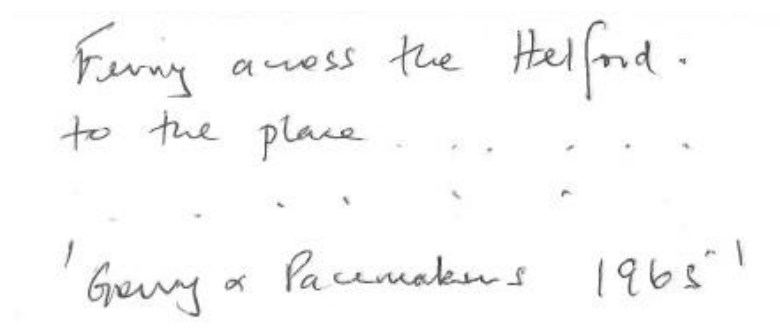
**Figure 6. 23 Reflection Card Helford 6**

One recounted the lyrics of a more traditional ballad, 'The Water is Wide', whilst themselves crossing over the width of the Helford River:



**Figure 6. 24 Reflection Card Helford 121**

Whilst another transposes a popular song relating to the Liverpool – Mersey ferry crossing onto the Helford River:



**Figure 6. 25 Reflection Card Helford 83**

This is not only an imaginary geographical transportation, to a location over three hundred miles away from the Helford, but is also a transportation across time, using the music of the 1960s to articulate the experiences of being on the river in the present. The ellipses create dramatic suspense, leaving an ambiguous ending, wherein the reader can either piece together the remaining lyrics, or create their own meanings. These three examples evidence the connections between water and music, as being on the water and crossing over the water leads people to

contemplate rhythmical and musical reflections, embedded within popular culture and popular literature (Lauterwasser, 2006).

A surprising creative form that emerged on the river was what I call an unfolding narrative (n=7). This involves separate adjectives, nouns, thoughts, question marks, or drawings notated on the page, as a record of the unfolding emotions and thoughts of a ferry passenger through the space of their journey. This form captures the often random, sub-conscious, narratives that occurs as a stream of consciousness during the journey, and highlights varying thoughts and emotions through the river-crossing.

Figure 6.26 is an example of this unfolding narrative, and reveals the traveller's connection between discovery, mobility and thought. The words on the card are written at different angles, only made possible by the constant circulation of the page: pausing before writing, turning the page around, pausing and writing.

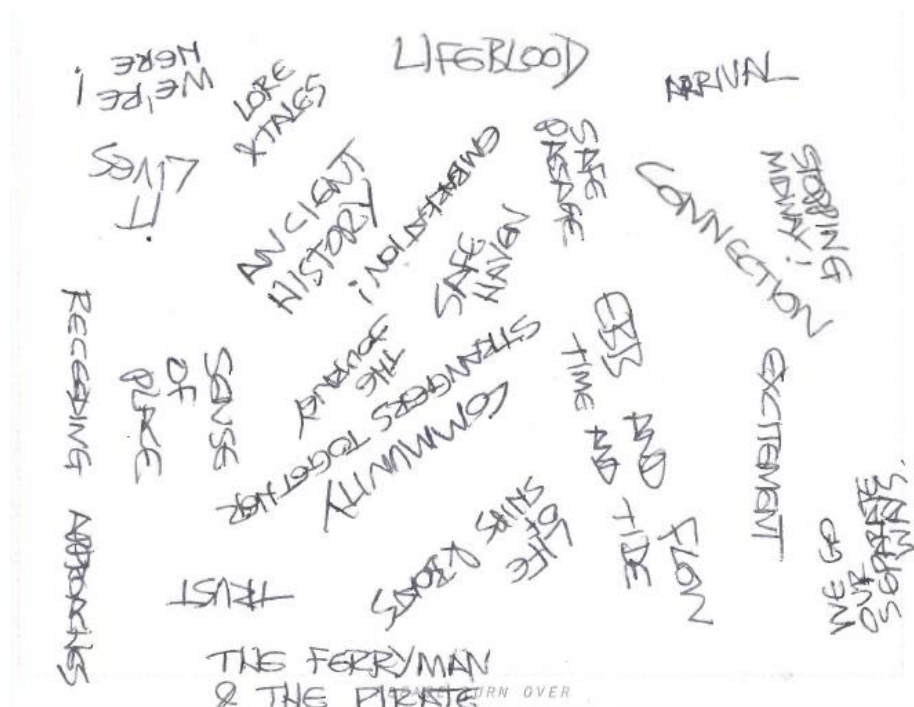


Figure 6. 26 Reflection Card Torridge 32

Whilst this individual reflects upon the 'sense of place', he also uses the construction of the reflection card as a performance of his own travelling 'sense of place'; interweaving tales of 'ancient history' with the emotional 'excitement' and anticipation of the other side. Underlying these are philosophical statements of how he understands the river to be a place of the 'ebb and flow, time and tide', as rivers are the 'lifeblood' that sustains and connects ecosystems (section 8.6). At the same time, he recognises the temporary co-mingling of different people on the ferry, 'strangers together', 'community', 'trusting each other whilst crossing the river (section 6.4.1).

Not only is the physical mobility of the journey across the river narrated, such as 'stopping midway!', 'we're here!', 'arrival', but he also uses this narrative form as a way to reflect upon the broader 'sense of place' and the river itself. This reflection card demonstrates the performative aspects of tourist mobility, as it provides the freedom to weave together and narrate reflections, memory, fantasy and philosophy whilst travelling across the river. It also reveals the instability and temporality of travel, as emotions shift and thoughts change, stimulated by the environment whilst in motion.

Altogether, 'unfolding' narratives combine purpose with emotion and thought with observation. Created on the move, they reveal the complex thought-patterns that may occur whilst crossing from 'a to b' (Peters and Turner, 2016, p.29) and reveals how a journey across a river is not a linear, singular experience, but can change and adjust in relation to the dynamic movement of the river and ferry. Each of these cards bridges both the internal experiences within the ferry with the

external context of the river, suggesting that the ferry crossing is a gateway for passengers to access and engage with the environment through which they are travelling.

#### 6.5.7 A reflection on the self?

Although Chen argues that boats are an 'apparatus with which to know a watery place' (Chen, 2013, p.281), this section argues that the ferry crossing became a vessel for individuals to reflect upon their self, whilst travelling through a 'watery place'.

A theme of gratitude emerged whilst crossing the water. This was connected to the aesthetic of the landscape, 'I feel a sense of freedom and appreciate how lucky I am to live in an area of such wonderful natural beauty' (Tamar 1), the 'natural beauty' relating to the river and the bankside places opened up to view whilst on the water. Being immersed within the landscape provided an opportunity for others to reflect upon personal circumstances, 'gratitude to live here, to have my health, my family' (Helford 46). Gratitude here is intertwined with small and often taken-for granted aspects of life, such as relationships, mobility and physical wellness and the broader landscape of being by and travelling on the water. The relationship between wellbeing and water is increasingly being recognised (Foley *et al.*, 2019). Perhaps, on a boat surrounded by others who stated that they were on holiday in the area, Helford 46 reflects upon the deeper sense of permanence and meaning that the river and the banksides have on her life. Others used the ferry crossing to imagine a future where they could live within close proximity to the river: 'fantastic weather, clear blue sky and amazing scenery. Lovely sandy

beach at Instow. Hope to retire and live in Devon. Sea is crystal clear' (Torridge 49). Here, it is evident that the good weather, sky and 'scenery' of the river and bankside places contribute to the positive sentiment and life-plan to 'retire' within Devon.

For walkers of the South West Coast Path, the ferry crossing was a brief relief from the tiring act of long-distance walking across diverse terrains (cf. Wylie, 2005, p.244). People made reference to their 'sore feet' (Helford 74) and saw the ferry as a 'great time to lean back and relax and let the feet recover from a nice long walk on the coastal path' (Tamar 5). Sitting on the ferry, individuals have the opportunity to be active spectators of the shifting landscape, as opposed to the active motion of walking through the landscape. Others reflect upon how this 'river crossing' offers a 'shortcut' to their destination (Helford 12).

This section on river crossings has contributed to the renewed focus on liminal landscapes (Andrews 2012, Ghassemi 2018) by indicating the diverse realms of possibility and meaning that are imagined and created on the water, from the scattering of ashes to wedding proposals; spiritual and mythological connections, military fantasy to poetry, literature and memory. A new type of writing form was created through the reflection cards, what I term unfolding narratives, which are distinctly shaped by the ferry in motion and the river crossing (Figure 6.26). Here, the physical route of the ferry, as well as the dynamics of motion, conversation and observation can be traced through the words and lines on the page, capturing non-representational feelings.

## 6.6 Bank

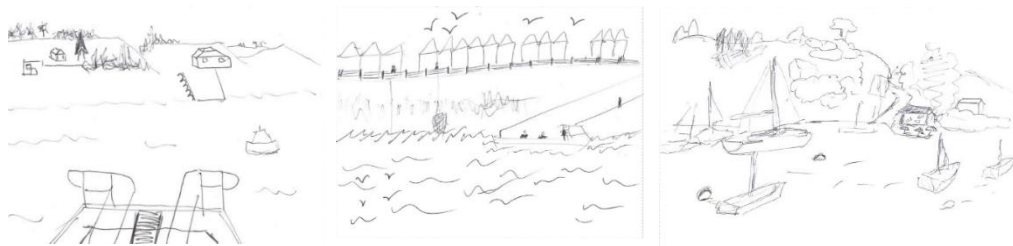
### 6.6.1 Approaching Land



**Plate 6. 3 Sunset on the River: photo taken by Cremyll Ferry passenger Rita, November 2018**

Gammon and Elkington (2016) reflect 'we can travel through landscapes and encounter the many spaces and places they hold, whilst gazing back to the landscape from which we came' (p.1). No crossing of the river is ever the same. As this chapter draws to a close, I focus upon the final few minutes of the ferry crossing, wherein the ferry is manoeuvred towards the edge of the slip and where crew members focus upon the disembarking tasks as the 'ferry pulls in' (Helford 117). I capture some of the reflected meanings of what the other bankside might mean: a place of home, of anticipation. In so doing, I bring together the experiences of crossing the riverborderscape and use this next section to tie together thoughts and reflections into the themes of this chapter, just as the ferry crew reach for the rope to tie the ferry to the juncture on the edge of land (Figure 6.28).

This final stage of the ferry crossing, as the approaching bankside comes into clearer focus is drawn by passengers at all three case sites (Figure 6.27). Individuals flicker their gaze between the internal structure of the ferry and the approaching landscape, the visual movement of eye pre-empting the physical movement of the ferry. Following Wylie and Webster (2019), this is a process of looking, being 'drawn in' to the approaching bankside and being enrolled in a process of 'attention, immersion and absorption' (p. 38)



**Figure 6. 27 Approaching Land (left to right): Reflection Card Tamar 85, Torridge 105, Helford 8**

There are two spaces that are expressed in each of these drawings: the intimate space of the ferry, where these passengers are temporarily situated in the present, and the anticipated bankside. Tamar 85 most clearly distinguishes between these two spaces, through the detail of the exterior balcony of the Cremyll Ferry, beyond which is the river and the shore of Cremyll. In each of these drawings, the gaze of the landscape is looking up; to hills which are beyond and distanced, but shifting ever closer into view. The low-lying structure of the ferry is inferred in each of these drawings and being on the water is represented through the squiggly lines of waves which notably mark the largest expanse of space in all three drawings (section 6.3.1). Looking up at the prospective bankside, attention is given to some of the activities that characterise the landscape, such as figures on the slip (Torridge 105), as well as architectural features such as houses, trees and the slip.

Others used the last few moments on the ferry journey to anticipate what they were about to do on the other side of the river. One can see the 'pub getting closer!' (Helford 10), whilst others reflect that they are 'hungry for lunch' (Helford 133). The anticipated sense of arrival is welcome to those who 'feel tired and excited to finally get home! 😊' (Tamar 14). In these final moments, a repeated theme emerged about the distortion of time: where time felt like it was 'slowing down' (Helford 124), or where it felt like 'we took the ferry and within five minutes, we'd travelled like a hundred and fifty years back in time' (Interview Rita, ferry passenger, Tamar). The sentiment of going back in time was repeated across each of the case study sites (Helford 3, Tamar 51, Torridge 40). This sense was perhaps derived from the visual attentiveness of the changing bankside spaces, in combination with the sensory and experiential presence that travelling on the river offers passengers, an attentiveness to the present moment. Time was also stretched through the method of the reflection cards, wherein temporary or otherwise unspoken thoughts are documented in the scurried final few moments as passengers anticipate arrival onto the other side.

For those who have found the ferry journey uncomfortable, due to the 'very subtle fear you might have of water' (Interview Rita, ferry passenger, Tamar), there might be an overall sense of relief when passengers can safely disembark onto the other side. For 'travelling on the water is not the safest thing humans can do' (Interview Rita, ferry passenger, Tamar) and individuals might actually 'feel quite vulnerable' (Interview Simon, ferry passenger, Tamar). When passengers step onto the ferry, they are, either consciously or not, giving up control for a few minutes and 'giving a single person responsibility for taking care of you during the ferry crossing and

bringing you to the other shore' (Interview Rita, ferry passenger, Tamar), 'you're not quite in control are you?' (Interview Charlotte, river decision-maker, Helford). Drawing these themes together; of the potential danger of the tidal river and reliance on the ferry crew members to 'guide' people safely from one bankside to the other, the river was narrated as an obstacle to cross,

It's like the water is something you have to cross. You have to cross it. It's kind of like, it's almost as if it's in the way (laugh) of getting to the other place, you have to get to the other place so you have to cross the water.

(Interview Edith, ferry passenger, Tamar)

At this point in the journey, as the prospective bankside can be seen, there may be a sense of satisfaction at having 'overcome the hurdle' of the water that once 'lay in your way' (Interview Aeron, ferry passenger, Tamar). Land, a terrain that is most familiar to humans as a primary place of habitation may, therefore, signal emotions of a return of individual agency upon which people will be able to walk, move and create routes of their own accord (cf. Ingold, 2011), as opposed to having to sit, comply and wait under the direction of the ferry operator (section 6.4.2), moving through a terrain which is unfamiliar and potentially hazardous as there is a 'greater force in control' (Interview Tom and George, residents, Helford). Straddling these emotions, Cremyll Ferry passenger Aeron reflects that you cannot arrive the same as you left and attributes such an emotional shift with the experience of moving across different terrains:

I think you kind of go through this weird sort of altered state because of the mode of travel you've done and because of the way you've arrived, there's a sort of sense of occasion [...] And there's a transition that's gone into it, yeah there's a huge sense of occasion. So you can't arrive the same as you – it's not like stepping off a bus. You come off

one element onto another. You know, you come off terra firma and it's sort of, yeah it makes you feel a bit heroic in a way! I don't want to magnify the language, but there's a sort of heroic feeling about it.

(Interview Aeron, ferry passenger, Tamar)

The focus here is on the way in which the spatial area of the riverborderscape: bank – river – bank is described. Arriving on the opposite shore is, for Aeron, a marked sense of 'occasion', because he recognises the tidal challenges that require ingenuity and effort to navigate across (section 5.3). The ferry crossing is, therefore, an 'image of transitioning from one border to another' (Interview Ruth, ferry passenger, Torridge); between one landscape and another, across one set of possibilities and another.

There may be an element of regret at the anticipated dispersal of passengers and inevitable ending of the journey. One records, 'Ferry ride could be longer. Now at the end of journey ☹' (Torridge 97). Here, her 'journey' is equated to the physical movement of the ferry crossing the river, anticipating that being back on land will dispel the sense of suspense and adventure that being on the river affords. Another realises, 'this will be the last time I cross the Helford River for a while. A bit sad really because I loved this place' (Helford 89). Such a sense of nostalgia is triggered by the personal circumstances of the individual, as well as the anticipated movement of the ferry crossing transporting passengers to the opposite shore. The river is therefore crossed with a myriad and mixture of feelings and the sight of the approaching bankside, edging nearer releases a variety of emotions in individuals that are about to disembark.

## 6.7 Tying Together



**Figure 6. 28 Reflection Card Tamar 45**

In conveying the experiences of ferry passengers and personnel crossing a river, this chapter has unravelled various tensions which, I argue, characterise the riverborderscape. In the bank section (6.2), I argued that there was a spatial tension between 'here' and 'there', 'this side' of the river and 'that side', as individuals anticipate what might be on the other side, whilst responding to people, architecture and activities on the slip. The river section (6.3) illuminated how the river was a space of tension; at once visually aesthetic, beautiful and attractive, whilst under the surface lies a terrain characterised by possible threat, danger and fear. The ferry (section 6.4) was seen by some as a social space to meet and mingle with other passengers, but it was also clear that the ferry was characterised by spoken and unspoken rules that passengers were expected to follow. The skipper was shown to be a key authority figure on the water, as passengers temporarily 'gave up control' (Interview Rita, ferry passenger, Tamar), reliant upon the skipper to navigate them to the other side. Passport jokes revealed the river as border and there were shown to be different rules and regulations characterising the river

crossing as opposed to on land. A fourth tension emerged of individuals wanting to enjoy the process of the journey, whilst eager to anticipate what might be on the other side. The crossing section (6.5) revealed the various imaginaries and fantasies that emerged whilst on the river, including memories, mythological thought and military conflict, although the content of these reflections were often at odds with reality and reflected the unique and personal circumstances of the ferry passenger, as well as the particularities of time and place. 'On the border, these similarities and difference meet' (Vila, 2000, p.14).

As an innovative method, the reflection card captures the thoughts and experiences of those travelling across a river. It is a methodology which aims to understand the border crossing experience and aids in addressing Mezzadra and Neilson's (2013) attempt to 'try to map from the point of view of subjects in motion the elusive geography resulting from these [bordering] processes' (p.65). Such a mapping in motion was achieved through inviting participants to draw and write what they saw and experienced whilst on the river; within the short time frame between two distinct terrains, between this side and that side, land and water. The reflection cards have also demonstrated that thoughts on a river are diverse and rich in creative form. Whereas Foucault (in Dumm 2002) described the ship as a 'floating piece of space, a place without a place, that exists by itself, that is self-enclosed and at the same time is given over to the infinity of the sea' (p.41), I have demonstrated the relational nature of the ferry crossing. The reflection card methodology has captured the sociality on-board the ferry, including conversations, social behaviours and compliance with distinct rules, which the ferry operator is responsible for overseeing. The ferry therefore becomes a 'third space'

(Nail 2016, p.3), a temporary enclosure not connected to land, floating over water and contained and shaped by the people on board, the wider weather system, the route that the ferry takes and the realms of imagination and meaning that are made.

Wylie (2005, p.237) describes how,

a walker is poised between the country ahead and the country behind, between one step and the next, epiphany and penumbra, he or she is, in other words, spectral, between here and not-there, perpetually caught in an apparitional process of arriving/departing.

The same can be said for a ferry passenger: poised between the bankside ahead and the bankside behind, with a river between; within a watery terrain that requires a 'guide' (Interview Rita, ferry passenger, Tamar) to navigate, in the form of a passenger ferry. So too, the passengers are dependent upon a material structure to make the crossing and find themselves caught between here and not-there, suspended for ten minutes in the space between, before the inevitable process of arriving/departing.

The following chapter will continue to draw out the riverborder, through an in-depth focus upon participants' narratives that describe and define the river as a place of (dis)connection.

## 7. Narratives

### 7.1 Introduction

This chapter serves to address RQ3, 'In what ways does the river and ferry crossing connect and divide people and places?' The paradoxical role of rivers – that both connect and can divide – has been established by scholars (Krause, 2016; Roth, 1997). Borders too are defined through contradictory terms, as 'bridges, gateways and meeting points or barriers, obstacles and points of separation' (Diener & Hagen, 2012, p.2). Scholars have identified that the way borders are interpreted are influenced by a range of factors, including political, social, economic and personal (Rajaram & Grundy-Warr, 2007) and this also extends to everyday borders between places (Rumford, 2014a).

Previous chapters have focused on the act of crossing a river, from the perspective of skippers (Chapter 5) and ferry passengers (Chapter 6). In so doing, I have argued that rivers are three-dimensional, and need to be considered through their material properties. Utilising the suffix '-scape', I have brought to life the wide variety of thoughts, imaginations and experiences that take place in the transitional space of crossing a river, from bank to bank. If Chapters 5 and 6 have focused on the river-crossing, this chapter takes a wider view of the riverborderscape, to consider the bankside spaces on either side of the river. Whilst previous chapters have focused upon the ferry crossing as a point of connection, this chapter considers the river and ferry as everyday border. To do so, this chapter focuses upon narratives.

Paying attention to narratives is important, Prokkola (2009) argues, for it is 'through narratives that people make sense of and communicate their ideas and experiences of borders' (p.21). An interview transcript can be defined as a narrative, as it reflects the words communicated through an interview setting and relates to a particular place, and experiences within a place. Everyday language, such as jokes, phrases and stories can provide revealing insights about borders, as it is 'at the level of narrative, anecdote and communication that borders come to life' (Newman, 2006, p.152). Whilst other chapters have been shaped by the narratives of ferry passengers (Chapter 6) and skippers (Chapter 5), which follow the identified entanglement between the three-tiered analytical framework of the riverborderscape (Figure 2.1), this chapter takes a more focused view on language, including comparative phrases, punctuation, jokes and bankside signs that may reflect the river as border in more subtle ways. This approach contributes to Durrschmidt et al (2002, p.124) who suggest,

what is needed is a dynamic understanding of borders and a perspective that takes into account that *inside* and *outside*, *them* and *us*, *neighbourliness* and *strangeness*, *near* and *far*, are distinctions that are, with increasing significance, drawn and maintained in the practices and discourses of people's everyday lives

Accordingly, the first analytical section of this chapter considers key words, phrases and jokes in relation to the river as everyday border. The second half of this chapter begins with a discussion around the ferry as a 'link' between bankside places, and then proceeds to complicate the ferry as a 'link', in relation to three factors, including price, socio-economic groups and seasonality, introducing geographical questions of access and connectivity in rural landscapes. This follows Cresswell's

(2010, p.21) 'politics of mobility' and contributes to a more nuanced understanding of the ferry crossing. Whilst in some cases, the narratives of the river and ferry as an everyday border between places might be at odds with personal behaviours and mobilities, reflecting upon the river and ferry through narratives is valuable. Seeing borders through everyday language reflects Hinchliffe's (2013)'s observation that borders are 'always contact points; they join words together and act as conduits as well as barriers' (p.535). This chapter examines the river and ferry as 'contact point', both literally and symbolically through language.

## 7.2 River as barrier

For there is where I want to be.  
And there is where these broken pieces of stone  
could lead me like a causeway  
were it not for the surface glimmer of the river  
which floods this place  
separating into inconsistencies  
that place over there from here.

(Field Poem, September 2018)

The river was repeatedly seen to be a 'very physical barrier' (Interview Charlotte, river decision-maker, Helford), 'a physical divide, it's a very clear line' (Interview Reuben, resident, Helford) between two bankside places. 'You can't really cross over!' (Interview Sarah, ferry passenger, Helford). Ruby describes how the Tamar 'cuts' (Interview Ruby, resident, Helford) into the land to forge the border between Devon and Cornwall, the transitive verb 'cuts' illustrative of a highly dynamic incision separating land from water. A report commissioned by Cornwall Council and Plymouth City Council (Brett, 2013) describes the River Tamar as forming a 'major physical barrier between South East Cornwall and Plymouth, constraining

travel across the river to four main crossings' (p. 5). To describe travel as being 'constrained' by virtue of the watercourse, necessitating infrastructures such as a bridge and ferry suggests that the river physically limits mobility across landscapes. Seeing the river as an un-crossable line, 'a sharp cut-off point between two polarities' (Newman, 2006, p.148): a challenging, tidal, material waterway that at times prohibits movement contributes to a discourse which heightens the differences between one side of the river and the other. Interviewee Aeron suggests, 'there's always that tribal thing, you know, of people living on the other side of the river are not the same as people on this side of the river' (Interview Aeron, ferry passenger, Tamar), a statement that might draw upon the European practice of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, wherein rivers would be constructed as borders by merit of their 'physiographic features' (Diener & Hagen, 2012, p.41). His phrase requires further investigation. One idea for why differences emerge on either side of the river corresponds to the physicality of the river within the landscape, as interviewees Sam and Izzie further explain:

Sam Even a small brook – if it's more than a leap across, you need someone to help you cross it. Or you need a bridge, so it's a very defining point to go across. So in terms of the territory, having a river barrier, or a river line, as your territory marker it will /

Izzie /it's something to identify with as well isn't it

Sam Yeah. It identifies you with one side or the other [...] it's a very physical barrier that you can't always cross easily.

(Interview Sam and Izzie, ferry passengers, Helford)

The discussion in this extract revolves around strategies used to cross a river, such as a 'bridge', or 'someone', such as a ferry operator giving a helping hand. It is, they suggest, the very act of requiring someone, or something that contributes to the river being a 'defining' place within a landscape. The effort required to cross over this different terrain therefore provides a landscape feature for individuals to 'identify' with, on one side or the other. In so doing, Sam and Izzie emphasise the 'physicality' of the river, and suggest that that is what corresponds to the separation between places. The following section further considers how interviewees reported to 'identify' with one side of the river or the other and how an examination of such language contributes to the river as an everyday border.

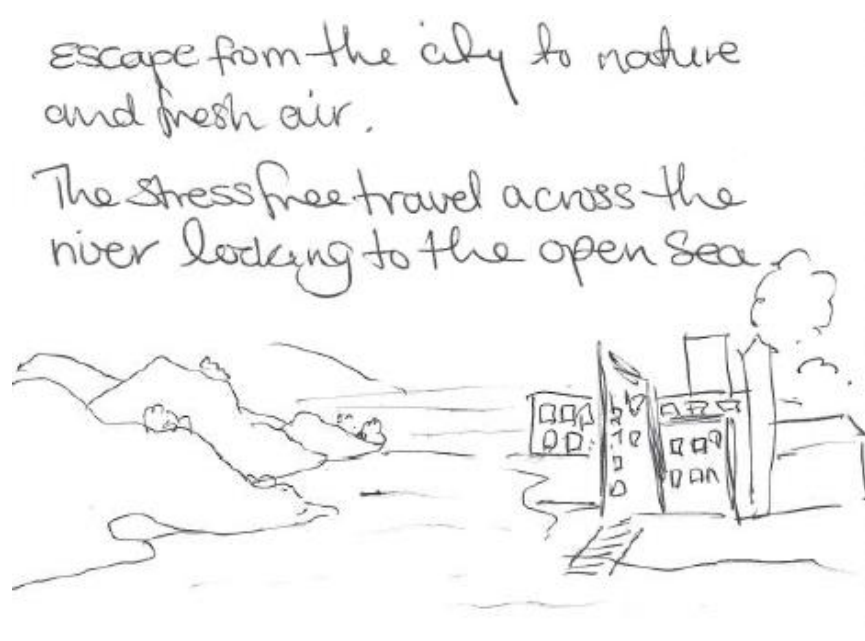
### 7.2.1 This side, That Side

There was a repeated comparative narrative which interviewees deployed, wherein 'this side' was distinguished from 'that side'. Bankside landscapes were rarely described in their own terms, but more-often referred to in relation to the bankside landscape on the other side of the river. For example, Howard, talking about the Appledore free port status stated that such a historic agreement enabling access to the water was 'distinctive to this side of the river' (Interview Howard, bankside decision-maker, Torridge). Calculative judgements also used a comparative frame of reference, such as ferry passenger Jill, who mused: 'If I was going to come here and live here, I'd want to live on this side of the river as opposed to that side' (Interview Jill, ferry passenger, Helford). This was because she characterised Helford as more of a 'village feel', whereas Helford Passage attracted a 'sailing community' (Interview Jill, ferry passenger, Helford). It is to be noted that the phrase 'this side' / 'that side' is spatial, inferring that the bankside places on either

side of the river are described by individuals in relation to what might be there, or what might be lacking, on the other side of the river.

The comparative language was evident in responses to the survey side of the reflection card (Figure 3.4): 'Do you identify differences between the two sides of the river' (question six). On the Tamar, 91% marked that there was a difference between the two sides of the river. Of those, thirty three individuals (57%) described a spatial difference between the two sides of the river. Answers included 'urban / countryside' (Tamar 87), 'city / countryside' (Tamar 85), 'built up town – open countryside' (Tamar 71), 'town and rural' (Tamar 52), industrial and rural' (Tamar 52), 'rural vs developed' (Tamar 49). Others stated 'one is Cornwall the other Devon' (Tamar 35), with comparative sentiments such as 'Cornwall is nicer' (Tamar 36), 'Plymouth side is better traffic regulated' (Tamar 31), 'city/countryside, Devon/Cornwall' (Tamar 86). Note the comparative structure which frames each of these responses, with individuals using punctuation such as hyphens (-) or dashes (/), or indeed linking words such as 'and', 'vs' to emulate the spatial division between the urban/rural sides of the river within the semantic micro-context of the answers themselves. From these comparative phrases, the river emerges as a barrier, as the presence of the river forges a topographical difference between the two bankside landscapes. The banksides are also associated as different spaces, with different purposes, by virtue of being different terrains. Semantic categories develop around the bankside spaces of the 'urban' and 'rural'. The former is equated with 'buildings' (Tamar 63), 'built up' (Tamar 62, 72, 75), 'shops' (Tamar 76, 86), with an implication of development and density. In contrast, the latter is equated to what has been described as 'green space' (Alcock *et al.*, 2020), where

colour is highlighted 'greenery' (Tamar 53), 'green' (Tamar 38, 65), woodland emphasised 'trees' (Tamar 43, 50) and where landscape values are shared, for example 'scenic' (Tamar 80), 'environment' (Tamar 56), 'natural' (Tamar 59). One individual summarises the relationship between either side of the river 'like chalk and cheese' (Tamar 76). This corresponds to Newman's (2011) idea that borders are 'the sharp point at which categories, spaces and territories interface' (p.37), as the banksides on either side of the river become distinctive places, which are identified by different activities and seen as spatially separate.



**Figure 7. 1 Reflection Card Tamar 72 summarising the associations and spatial differences on either side of the River Tamar**

The same is apparent in the context of Appledore and Instow, despite analysis estimating that the majority of those encountered on the ferry were deemed to be tourists (cf. McGrath, Harmer & Yarwood, 2020). Seventy-five percent (91 passengers) identified differences between Appledore and Instow: 'different character of the two villages' (Torridge 102)', with most answers relating to what each respective bankside offered. Appledore, for example 'seems busier – probably

because more shops and activity on the quay. Instow also seems more tranquil because of the beach' (Torridge 94). Responses also compared the kinds of activities that could be undertaken on each bankside: 'One's for the beach the other is for crabbing' (Torridge 110); 'Appledore – great history/social interest. Instow – sandy beach' (Torridge 2). Although it could be argued that the ferry crossing extends the recreational options available to those who cross over the Torridge, characterising each bankside through such distinctive vocabulary, both in landscape, character and range of activities available, suggests that each bankside place has developed in separation from the other. The river is signalled, subtly, in the grammar through punctuation: hyphens, full stops, dashes – phraseological units that reflect the separation of the river's terrain between the two bankside places.

The narrative of 'this side', 'that side' extends also to the experiences of those who are responsible for more of a managerial or a local political role within each of the river sites. When I asked a bankside decision-maker on the Helford River about the 'other side', she was uncertain as to what the other bankside space was used for. She went on to reflect how,

We probably don't have many connections across the river but certainly within this area, so you've got Trebah Gardens next door and local places like Budock Vean Hotel, and there's a local kayaking company and we all sort of work together to support one another so you'll see on our website, we've taken part in a video that promotes all the attractions along the Helford and it's just, yeah supporting one another in our businesses.

(Interview Rachel, bankside decision-maker, Helford)

Perhaps in order to compensate for the lack of connections 'across the river', Rachel uses intimate phrases, such as 'next door', 'local places' and repeats

'support one another' to emphasise the infrastructural networks between businesses 'within this area': 'along the Helford'. Her comparative language reveals how bankside infrastructures on the northern shore strategically 'work together'. Analysing this transcript reveals how the position of the river on the one hand restricts the kinds of collaborations that can take place 'across the river', as Rachel reveals the impracticalities of her business connecting with other businesses on the opposite shore, but at the same time reveals the strategic benefits of connecting with other bankside infrastructures along the river. When I asked Charlotte, responsible for some of the cross-border collaboration between Helford Passage and Helford through a focus upon the Helford River, why parishes work along rivers as opposed to across rivers, she detailed how it related to the historical 'physical boundary', which derives from legal boundary limits forged in 'parishes, old church lands', where the river was an obvious and 'physical' dividing point between two places (Interview Charlotte, river decision-maker, Helford). Whilst Rachel focused on the businesses on the northern shore, more broadly within the video, which includes stakeholder views from local businesses in the area, the ferry was emphasised as playing a role in 'connecting the coast path – north and south side of the river' (Fripp, 2017). As will be further discussed in section 7.3, to use the word 'connecting' ironically seems to emphasise the physical separateness on the 'north' and 'south' side of the river.

The dynamics of 'this side', 'that side' were evident in local politics on the Helford. I asked an individual actively involved in Mawnan Smith parish council about the role of Manacchan parish council, on the other side of the river:

Sarah Yeah I don't know much about Manacchan parish council so I don't know what they do over there

Eva *I guess all of your activities are on this side aren't they!*

Sarah Yeah and because I'm in Mawnan Smith village, and I'm also helping with the Mawnan Development Plan, so we're very concerned with our patch. So the ferry, and the really river doesn't really come into this. We've been doing the Landscape Character Assessment, looking at the landscape character in the parish of Mawnan Smith which is what we've been identifying. So we've been talking about the beaches and the sort of low level land that runs down to the beaches and the characteristics along the

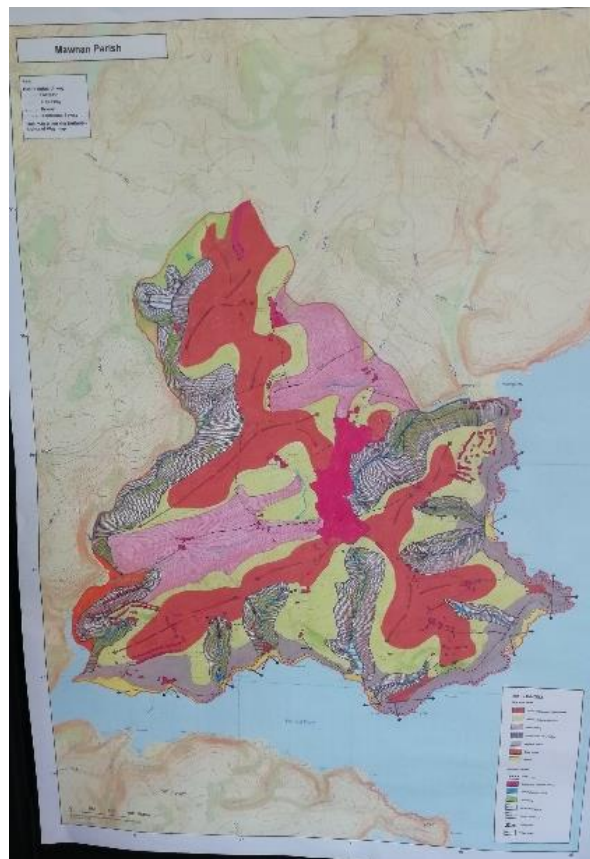
Helford such as the Monterrey pine trees which are very specific to this area. But we haven't dealt with the other side at all so I don't know what Manacan think or do

*Eva So there isn't much communication across the river?*

Sarah As far as I know, none really. But there might be councillors that know each other personally but I don't think there's any sort of business proposition or sort of village collaboration. I think we're pretty separate.

*Eva So it's kind of interesting then that the river runs between*

Sarah Yeah. It is a border. Two countries: Mawnan Smith and Manacan (laugh)



**Plate 7. 1 A photograph of Mawnan Smith Development Plan: Boundary Area and Landscape Character Assessment. Note that the limit of the plan is the perimeter of the northern side of the river, September 2018**

Laughter is a device used to equate the very local context of separate decision making within a parish council setting, to imaginatively make a leap positioning the river as a national 'border', between two 'countries'. Underlying this, there

seems to be a self-deprecating irony that at once recognises the separate local-scale practices on either side of the river, and suggests that it is akin to national borders, where there are different governing structures and sets of decision-making practices (cf. Durrschmidt, 2002). At the same time, laughter may reveal that Sarah is conscious of the separate spheres of local decision making that take place in relation to the northern and southern sides of the Helford. She personally reports to have no understanding of the role or activities of the parish on the other side of the river, despite being involved in a Landscape Character Assessment. Referring to Plate 7.1, the physical limits of the Mawnan Smith Development Plan correspond with the coastal edge of the northern side, around Helford Passage. Sarah deploys territorial language 'our patch', 'specific to this area', to seemingly emphasise the focus and direction of the local parish plan that she is involved with.

I noticed similarly how, on the Torridge, 'the river really is the dividing line in demarcating political decisions' (Torridge notes, 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2018). A local district politician, co-responsible for decisions made by Torridge District Council, which includes Northam, Orchard, Westward Ho and Appledore admitted, 'I don't know much about Instow' (Interview Howard, bankside decision-maker, Torridge). The eastern shore of Appledore formed the limit of his district boundary (Figure 4.23), and therefore his focus was upon that area, as opposed to what was on the opposite shore. The river separating the district decisions was affirmed by Isaac, part of a cross-riverborder forum, River Taw and Torridge Forum 'originally set up because the two district councils [...] weren't speaking to one another' (Interview Isaac, river decision-maker, Torridge). He went on to describe how 'decisions were being made on either side without any relationship to the fact of what the other

half was doing so there was no overall view of what was important to the estuary' (Interview Isaac, river decision-maker, Torridge). Although he admits that relations are a 'little bit better now, there were occasions where one side would not speak to the other, on a political level' (Interview Isaac, river decision-maker, Torridge). This comment embeds the idea of the river as a border between the two banksides, which requires a holistic river perspective to overcome.

### 7.2.2 an 'Almost Island'

The discourse of 'this side', 'that' side is reiterated by the geographical positioning of the Tamar, Torridge and Helford rivers. Certainly the Tamar and Helford have each been recognised as a watery border forging an 'almost island' (Hayward & Fleury, 2020). As stated previously, Cornwall becomes an 'almost island' by virtue of the river running almost the entire length of its county boundaries (section 4.1). Hayward and Fleury's (2020, p.223) recent research sets a case for the Tamar and Helford contributing to an 'almost island', based on archival analysis of tourist brochures. Their understanding is that such demarcated differences are 'clearly a rhetorical description and one that appears to have little buy-in from residents of the area who have no history of perceiving themselves as separate from the remainder of Cornwall' (p.233). However, this section builds upon their work by discussing how residents contribute and perform a narrative of separateness by virtue of the river between, performing 'island jokes' and jokes wherein the river is framed as a border to perform differences on either side of the river. The river forming an 'almost island' is apparent in the context of the River Torridge too. Ferry

volunteer Oliver suggested that Appledore seemed 'as an island' (Torridge notes, 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2018), due to being surrounded by water,

Well if you if you just look at the geography there's water there, there and there on three sides and there's sort of only one way in more or less [...] The only way out is to turn around and go back again which is sort of like an island isn't it? And I feel that gives it even more of a feeling of sort of isolation and peace and quiet.

(Interview Oliver, ferry personnel, Torridge)

For Oliver, the river that circles around the edge of Appledore on each 'side': north, east and south, with only one direct road running into the village, contributes positively to place, ensuring Appledore has an increased sense of 'isolation', 'peace and quiet'. However, he also equates the geographical limitations from land routes as contributing to the distinctive character of the village, which he characterises as 'different from the world over there' (Interview Oliver, ferry personnel, Torridge). Therefore, distance and separation by virtue of the river has contributed to a sense, over time, of Appledore being a distinctive community.

### 7.2.3 Metaphors: dark side – light side

A sense of islandness was predominantly narrated through metaphors, where the Helford would be equated as the 'dark side' and Helford Passage the 'light side'. Appledore, similarly, would be discussed as the 'dark side' and Instow the 'light'. Nicol (2012) reveals the rhetorical agency of metaphors in border regions, focusing upon the imaginary wall, fence and gate in archival media along the USA-Canadian frontier. Metaphors are a figure of speech that makes an implicit, implied or hidden comparison between two things that are unrelated, but which share some common characteristics ('Metaphor,' 2020). In this case, the nouns 'light' and 'dark'

are of a comparative structure, and the words have multiple cultural meanings, in particular in relation to weather conditions (sunrise/sunset), good vs. evil (light represents good/ dark evil), knowledge vs. ignorance (to be enlightened/the dark ages) (cf. Lakoff & Johnson, 2008). These metaphors are used playfully in relation to the bankside spaces on either side of the Torridge and Helford, but nevertheless are telling in terms of how the river is constructed as a barrier, through language.

Ferry volunteer Ed who had lived in Instow for 30 years before buying a house on the opposite bankside, just beyond Appledore, reflects upon the wider meaning of using metaphorical language:

People still remark "oh you've moved to the dark side" and you know it's all in jest but behind that obviously there's this sense that Appledore is a *different* community. Quite how they genuinely think of that difference is perhaps an unknown, unless you quiz them on it but what they mean of course by dark side is that Appledore loses the sun whereas Instow gets to enjoy these beautiful sunsets. But of course, as I think I mentioned to you when we spoke, Appledore gets to see the sunrise and I've recently wondered whether that kind of geographical scenario results in a community that witnesses the sunrise more than it does the sunset being more youthful, energetic, "get up and go" than one that watches the sunset and is a bit more, I don't know, retiring (laugh) in all aspects of that word. So yeah, maybe you can kind of see that reflected in the two communities. I don't know! It's just a thought but I think there was definitely a strong sense of "us and them" in the past. For me Appledore, I mean there was a ferry in the old days and maybe I used it a handful of times but I have no recollection of it but I must have been on it, but it seemed, a long long way away.

(Interview Ed, ferry personnel, Torridge)

Ed narrates how Instow residents joked he was 'moving over to the dark side' when he made the decision to find a home west of the Torridge, beyond Appledore. Underlying this joke is a sense of difference, which Ed perceptively is sensitive towards, but does not explicitly define. Likewise, tourist Ruth characterised

Appledore as more active, with more activities to do, in contrast to Instow whose activities mainly centred around the beach (Interview Ruth, ferry passenger, Torridge). Whereas Oliver considered the role of water in forging a barrier around Appledore, thus creating a micro community surrounded by water, Ed considers the influence of the sunset and sunrise to symbolise the attitudes of residents, including age and stage. What is important to draw out in this extract is that the river participates in creating a sense of distance between the bankside spaces of Appledore and Instow. As a child, Ed reflects how Appledore 'seemed a long long way away', perhaps by virtue of the distance and the passenger ferry crossing which facilitates such a journey.

The river being seen as creating distance was emphasised on the Helford too, embedded by a similar narrative pattern of dark – light metaphors. Ferry operators would contribute to performing this discourse. In my field notes, I describe how, 'when I got to the Passage side, the skipper Owen joked that I had "made it back from the dark side" (Helford notes, 26<sup>th</sup> June 2018). That the joke was timed on return to the northern 'Passage' side of the river emphasises the two river shores as being distinctly different, with the river crossing contributing to the transition between two distinct places.

This contributed to an emerging narrative wherein Helford was characterised as 'more isolated – Helford Passage as more connected' (Helford notes, 10<sup>th</sup> October 2018). Residents John and Betsy, who live in Helford similarly noted such a difference:

- John    there is a difference between here and the Passage. And I notice from my colleagues, my friends in the gig club most of whom are from the north shore that they regard us as very different. We're sometimes even called the dark side and I do think it's good humoured, but nevertheless there's *very clearly* a different feeling
- Betsy    I think that this side is far more remote in the fact that the Lizard itself is quite barren and the north side is much more near the big cities like Falmouth, far more populated. People come out from towns, probably to go to Helford Passage. They would very rarely drive all the way round to this side because you would have to go all the way round
- John    well it's a 40 minute journey
- Betsy    so we're slightly more isolated here
- John    What I was saying earlier. The Lizard's viewed more as an island so we're sort of separate from the mainland. It's the north side and though we all get on very finely together, you know row together and stuff like that, there is a feeling of difference

(Interview John and Betsy, residents, Helford)

In this extract, a connection emerges between the discourse of 'dark – light' metaphors, physical geography and islandness, by virtue of the river creating a physical barrier between the 'connected' northern side of Falmouth, and the terrain on the south. When there is no ferry between, the single road journey around the Helford is a significant time factor which extends the geography of distance and perception of the Lizard as a 'barren' place. Being surrounded by water, the Helford similarly is characterised as 'more isolated', ensuring that the Lizard is viewed 'more of an island'. I write in my field notes (26<sup>th</sup> October 2018) how,

The Helford's quite a special little place really, because not only does it separate two kind of communities on either side, but on the south side of the river, it's also a peninsula, so that emphasises feelings of remoteness.

This develops Hayward and Fleury's (2020) research, as the southern shore of Helford being an 'island' is a narrative put forward by residents, as opposed to through tourism articles. Both Betsy and John 'feel' and live with a sense of 'difference', by virtue of the river creating a barrier, and the physical distance from the northern shore.

That the river is a different terrain, creating a barrier between two otherwise continuous stretches of land, clearly contributes to the sense of the southern shore being a remote peninsula. Furthermore, the role and significance of the river is further reflected upon by Reuben, a resident on the northern side,

Going across the Helford to the south bank there's this implication that you're then on the Lizard. And the water there creates that sense of separation. If the Helford wasn't there and it was just a continuous piece of land, maybe the Lizard - I don't know - would it have quite the same identity?

(Interview Reuben, resident, Helford)

This rhetorical question suggests that the cultural attitudes of separateness, described above in relation to the north and south shores, would not be so acute if it was a land border. In so doing, he suggests that the 'water' creates visible separation, an acknowledgement of the differences in types of terrain (Peters, Steinberg & Stratford, 2018b). This extract reveals the intricate connection between physical terrain, cultural identity and the narratives that emulate and embed comparative structures of the riverborderscape.

#### 7.2.4 Signs: emphasising separateness

The previous section focused on the spoken discourses which separate 'this side' from 'that side'. Following Rumford (2014b), the next section develops these ideas

through a focus upon the bankside signs on either side of the Cremyll Ferry crossing, to suggest that the infrastructure within the landscape contributes to embedding such distinctive discourses. It has been established that signs are a visual symbol which signify an attempt to control space (Storey, 2012, p.27). The public signs placed on either side of the river indicate how the bankside spaces are distinguished and they matter, as it is through language that ideas about place and territory are read (Berg & Vuolteenaho, 2017; Rose-Redwood, 2011).

Those travelling on the ferry between Cremyll and Admirals Hard encounter two sets of signs affirming a regional discourse: 'Welcome to Cornwall', 'First/last pub in Devon' (Plate 7.2). Monuments can 'communicate a range of values and meanings – meanings that vary based on the audience and the cultural and political context in which they are read' (Mains, 2004, p.182).

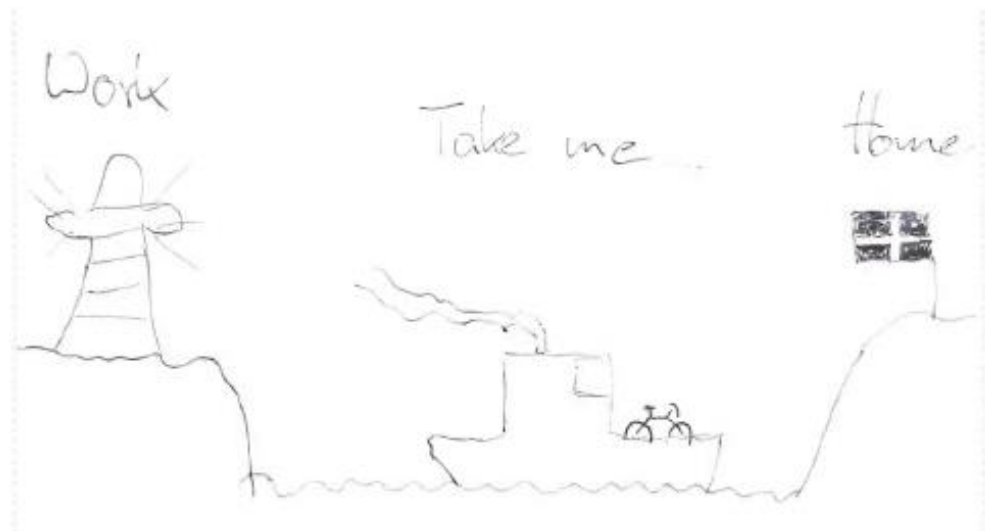


**Plate 7. 2 Regional discourse on either side of the River Tamar: 'Welcome to Cornwall', located by Cremyll Slip (left), 'First Pub in Devon: Last Pub in Devon' located by Admirals Hard, February 2018 (right)**

These are examples of border signs offering a 'welcoming' function (Cooper & Rumford, 2013, p.3). On the one hand, such signage is part of a jovial discourse, which builds up anticipation and excitement, as in the case of Edith, who exclaimed to her young grandchildren "we're going to Cornwall for the day" (Interview Edith,

ferry passenger, Tamar). Here, to arrive in 'Cornwall' is to suggest an additional level of excitement and anticipation, as Edith draws upon the regional differences to highlight the sense of occasion of their day-visit. In emphasising regional difference; arriving in 'Cornwall', departing from 'Devon' the message that such signs impart to the public is that the ferry crossing participates in facilitating a journey of transition between two distinct bankside spaces.

On the other hand, the signs on the bankside edge publicly embeds the idea that the river is a barrier between each place, and that the view of the river between participates in constructing distinct identities for communities on either side of the river. Ten percent of respondents demarcated 'Cornwall' and 'Devon' as the key distinctions between either side of the river, a factor which may indeed be influenced by the bankside signage on either side of the river. Several of the reflection card drawings incorporated what is known as the Kernow flag, or Saint Piran's Flag, a black bordered, white cross icon which is used by some Cornish people as a symbol of their identity (Helford 76, Helford 77). One of those was drawn by self-identified 'European' Otto, who regularly uses the Cremyll Ferry to get to work. He placed the Kernow flag on the Cremyll bankside, to distinguish 'home'.



**Figure 7. 2 Reflection Card Tamar 36**

He later explained how he drew the Kernow flag in jest, as a semi-mockery to the differences and 'subtle jokes' he had heard,

Otto I'm so European, I have lived in many different countries, but it's funny because I'm not Cornish, of course I'm not Cornish (laugh) but it is like I realise that very subtle difference between Cornwall and Devon. The people in Plymouth sometimes make jokes about the people over in Cornwall

Eva *In what way?*

Otto Ah, people in Plymouth, say: "ah they're strange in Cornwall" or whatever but it's very subtle and not bad way of jokes so it's ok

Eva *And do you think that the river Tamar plays a role in accentuating those identities?*

Otto Yes I think it does, at least in the southern part, it is a particular landmark you can't miss when crossing it. So you are very aware of entering Devon or Cornwall, and that by itself gives a special emphasis on the place

(Interview Otto, ferry passenger, Tamar)

Despite seeing himself as a cross-border citizen, living in 'different countries', Otto still performs the regional divisions within the space of his reflection card. He suggests that the river, as a 'landmark' and visual crossing point within the

landscape contributes to difference. This visual inscription of the border within the landscape corresponds to Rumford (2014b) and his analysis of the River Tweed, demarcating different administrative jurisdictions within UK governance. His case study aligns to the proposed construction of a border monument, 'Star of Caledonia' (p.79) as a way of drawing greater attention to the crossing point marked by the river. On a very small and personal scale, Otto's drawing of the Kernow flag reflects that instinct to mark borders and distinguish space, even when it does not reflect his personal philosophy (van Houtum & Kramsch, 2017).

#### 7.2.5 Laughter: the riverborder

Jokes, and the telling of jokes require a highly creative deployment of language. They are reliant upon tone, timing, narrative arc and a contextual understanding of the people or places that are the subject of such jokes (Chiaro, 2006; Cresswell, 2001). There seems to be scant attention to jokes in relation to borders in the discipline of human geography, although Dodds and Kirkby (2013) have pointed out the 'geographical and geopolitical implications' (p.48) and potential of jokes. Macpherson (2008), in her ethnographic research reveals how the 'material and symbolic' (p. 1081) landscapes of the Lake District can be subverted, experienced and generated through jokes and laughter, by visually impaired walking groups. This next section aims to bring together border jokes with Macpherson's concept of the materially experienced landscape in a discussion on the impact of border jokes on the Tamar, Helford and Torridge rivers. A close reading of such discourse will unravel attitudes to how the river border is viewed.

The River Tamar as border was frequently at the centre of jokes. Cornish residents Tom and George light-heartedly suggested, 'Oh well we all think that the Tamar's the border between Devon and Cornwall' and recalled, with a laugh, how they 'used to sing Trelawney going across the bridge' (Interview Tom and George, residents, Helford). Although laughing about this memory, to sing Trelawney is a participation in Cornish folklore and identity, as the song is an 'old Cornish rhyme' (Macirone, 1876, p.1) that has become an unofficial anthem, sung at communal events such as Cornish rugby union matches, taught in some Cornish schools and sung at other Cornish gatherings (Helford notes, 17<sup>th</sup> September 2018). The river is mentioned in the verse 'we'll cross the Tamar, land to land / The Severn is no stay: / With "one and all" and hand in hand / And who shall bid us nay?' Storey (2012) affirms that one way in which national identity is expressed is 'through the singing of national anthems' (p.69) and, following Cusack (2010) who shows how rivers express national identity through representation, it is interesting that rivers have a symbolic role in many national or local anthems.

The river as a physical border between places was revealed through stories. Interviewees Winnie and Alex describe the anxiety of some older members living in their village of a riverborder town (Calstock) who, until recently had '(Cornish accent) "never been up country, never been over that Tamar bridge"' (Interview Winnie and Alex, ferry passengers, Helford). By shifting her tone to emulate a Cornish accent, Winnie at once mocks the viewpoint that the Tamar is a solid border, whilst also fondly using the space of the joke to empathise with the perspective put forward. Laughter is an appropriate response here as Winnie herself crosses the Tamar Bridge every day to get to work. These stories highlight

the disparity between individuals staying at a very local level, and the bridge as a connective to larger urban centres such as Plymouth. For individuals who have a cross-border mobility, they find these stories surprising, and that is why the comical genre of the joke is often used as the form through which these stories are told. These perspectives were shared in a similar story, narrated by travellers Sam and Izzie, who themselves had crossed the Tamar River to arrive in Helford:

Sam I was about to say about the Cornish lads. They were going to a rugby match and there was an inter-county rugby match and the coach driver was driving up towards Plymouth and he announced that they were about to cross the Tamar and some of the people on the coach didn't realise it was in Devon as opposed to Cornwall. So they asked to be dropped off at the next pub. They wouldn't cross the Tamar. They'd never been out of Cornwall, they weren't going to cross the Tamar, so they bought tickets and everything and they got out, because they weren't going to leave Cornwall [...] (chuckle) and there were about 6 of them and they got picked up on the way back.

Eva *Hmm. So they really see that river as a defining border*

Sam a very defining border. And because it's a river, it's not like a painted line. Normally you can't see a boundary, on the ground, can you? If you walk between counties you, rarely will you see a feature that's so defined that you can't cross it without using something. And I think that's the thing about a river isn't it – you *need* something to cross it.

(Interview Sam and Izzie, ferry passengers, Helford)

In both stories, the River Tamar was the outer limit of the Cornish boundary that some citizens, who prided themselves in being Cornish (Laviolette, 2011), were not prepared to cross. Whilst these narratives might be exaggerated, it does suggest that rivers contribute to being seen as a defining border in the landscape. Yeh (2017), in his analysis of border-crossing jokes on the US-Mexican checkpoint

argues how jokes 'hinge upon their ability to hold contradictory elements together' (p.159). In this context, jokes can therefore reflect the contradictory element of the riverborder which is at once 'barrier; bridge and gateway' (Diener & Hagen, 2012; Roth, 1997; Unwin, 2003). What aids the joke is the way in which the storytellers are cross-border citizens (Durr Schmidt, 2002), comfortable to cross the river via the Tamar Bridge or Cremyll Ferry and experience 'both sides' (Interview Winnie and Alex, ferry passengers, Helford). In so doing, these stories, and the laughter used, shows how 'everyday life, reproduces and negotiates existing borders' (Durr Schmidt, 2002, p.125) at the local scale.

#### 7.2.6 Summary: River as Barrier

The first half of this chapter has drawn attention to several examples where the river participates in separating and distinguishing the communities and spaces on either bankside. In paying attention to language, it has demonstrated patterns where rivers are described as barriers and dividing lines, separating people and places. Such analysis complements cross riverborder research in Guben – Gubin (Durr Schmidt, 2002), as the language of '*inside and outside, them and us, neighbourliness and strangeness, near and far*' (p.124) are evident in everyday language, even when there is frequent movement across the riverborder for socialising with work and family. As residents John (Helford), Ed (Torridge) and Otto (Tamar) described, banter and jokes were everyday strategies within social settings to embed the subtle differences between the communities on either side of the river.

This section has contributed to the riverborderscape in two ways. Firstly, as a spatial area of focus (bank – river – bank), I have shown how narratives create

distinctive sides where 'this side' is separate from 'that side' and this has implications for decision making, and the management of local politics. Although each river may be connected to a broader region, this section has demonstrated the subtler ways in which the terrain and topography shapes attitudes towards daily life and decisions about activities on either side of the river. Secondly, in placing the 'river' adjacent to 'border', within this section I have considered the analytical crossover between rivers and borders. This section has brought to the fore the various ways in which rivers are defined as borders, through comparative phrases, metaphors, jokes, and physical signs in the landscape which seem to cement differences between the two sides of the river. Following Paasi (2001), the discourses trace the role of the river in relation to landscape, and reveal the river's influence within the landscape as distinguishing and separating people and places.

### 7.3 Link

Perhaps recognising the dual role of the river, as a place of separation and connection, the ferry was alternatively repeatedly described as a 'link' (Interview Otto, ferry passenger, Tamar) the noun suggestive of a physical action which brings 'one thing (in) *with* or (on) *to* another' (OED, 2021). Interviewees primarily used 'link' as a linguistic device to describe a sense of connection between the two opposite banksides, as in: 'it's the perfect *link* between this side of the river and the Lizard' (Interview Brenda, ferry passenger, Helford – emphasis added); 'so this is such an important *link* between the two communities on either side of the river' (Interview Sarah, ferry passenger, Helford – emphasis added), 'important *link* for both communities' (Torridge 90 – emphasis added).

A similar word that emerged was that of connection, or connectivity. The ferry was also seen as a 'great little connection' (Interview Charlotte, river decision-maker, Helford), ensuring that either bankside was 'connected to the other side through the ferry' (Tamar notes, 20<sup>th</sup> November 2018). The ferry was imagined as a vessel 'connecting Instow and Appledore' (Torridge 98), the 'freedom of being on water and a sense of connectivity between two sides of the river' (Helford 108). These words have a role in how the ferry is imagined. A 'link' and 'connection' infers that the route of the ferry is permanently operational, and continuous in its service. There is a sense of ease of crossover that is implied in this language a 'little connection' (Interview Charlotte, river decision-maker, Helford) which does not seem to require much effort, or time spent waiting. Both words, 'link' and 'connection' also seem to reduce the space and width of the river between, as the narrative imagination spatially brings together the 'two sides of the river', pulled together by a continuous action, a linear 'link'.

At the same time, the word 'link' draws attention to what is separated, and begs the question: what bankside places does the ferry link (section 7.2) and to what extent does the ferry link? (section 7.4)

#### 7.4 Ferry as Barrier

On the other hand, it could be seen that the ferry is a barrier, for there is a 'politics to mobility' (Cresswell, 2010, p.21). Not everybody can afford the ferry fare or, if they can, it might only be for a 'one off' occasion (Interview Winnie and Alex, ferry passengers, Helford). It was also observed that the ferry service attracts those of a typically higher socio-economic background, who may have the benefit of more

leisure time (Helford notes, 8<sup>th</sup> March 2018). The tide was also a significant factor in restricting the timetable, and therefore determined the frequency in which the ferry could be used. This next section, which discusses these barriers is not designed to criticise the ferry service. The intention is to raise a broader question that is situated within the politics of mobility, and which includes who can cross, and at what price. Such a discussion is relevant to the conceptualisation of the riverborderscape as, most simply, these factors influence the mobility of those moving from one side of the river to the other. In addition, it provides additional insight into the border as a crossing point, to consider how people are 'differently enabled and constrained' (Adey, 2010, p.125).

The aim of this next section is to consider the varying and complex social and economic factors that may prevent people from accessing, and therefore participating in a river-ferry crossing experience. Although structured through the themes of 'fare', 'social' and 'tide and time', each component is entangled and interrelated, so expect a level of crossover betwixt and between each section.

#### 7.4.1 Fare

Who crosses over?

Who remains on the bankside?

The financial capital required

To pay for the crossing.

(Field Poem, September 2018)

The prices of each of the ferry fares were outlined in Chapter 4, but it is notable that, during the time of fieldwork (2018 – 2019), the price of the Cremyll Ferry rose by 50 pence: from £1.50 for a single journey to £2.00 ('Cremyll Ferry,' 2019). The

price of a fare on the Helford rose by one pound: from £4 for a single and £6 for a return, to £5 single and £7 for an adult return trip between Helford and Helford Passage. Volunteers on the Appledore – Instow Ferry would comment on how the ferry fare had not increased since 2014, and were accordingly assessing the financial situation (Torridge notes, 21<sup>st</sup> August 2018). For the 2020 season, they announced a fare increase: 'as costs have risen the decision has been taken to increase fares from £1.50 to £2.00' ('Appledore Instow Ferry,' 2020). Identifying the marginal increase of the ferry fare on all three sites reveals the financial pressures that ferry operators were under in maintaining such a time-limited, weather dependent mode of transport, some of which are located in geographically isolated places.

Certainly, ferry fares were factored in by those who wanted to cross the river on the ferry. A daily commuter on the Cremyll Ferry evaluates how he enjoys the ferry, 'even when it costs you money, which it blinking well does': only advising that the ferry company 'just keep the prices down'. (Interview Simon, ferry passenger, Tamar). The impact of rising ferry fares is discussed by Vannini (2012) in the context of islanders, who rely upon the ferry to connect to mainland services. Vannini identifies how the sea routes around British Columbia have shifted from 'public marine highways' (p.133) to being monopolised by a private company, creating 'semi-privatised transport routes' (p.133). On a smaller scale, the same analysis extends to ferry companies responsible for the ferry crossings across the Tamar, Torridge and Helford rivers, who are reliant upon passenger numbers and the fare of each ticket to keep afloat.

However, the incremental increase of the fare has impacts on those who might use it. A resident living locally who occasionally used the ferry would have to consider carefully whether she really wanted to visit the other side of the Helford River, due to the price of the fare,

Maybe now it feels you'll go across just because you can and it's quite nice to go across and you'll have lunch. But it is quite expensive though that's the other thing, it's six pounds return each, so you know if you did want to go for lunch, it is twelve pounds for two of you on top of the price of the food [...] But some people with a family maybe if they were just going to pop over for a lunch, they may have to reconsider that, I don't know.

(Interview Sarah, ferry passenger, Helford)

This extract reveals the decision-making process that ferry passengers anticipate when using the ferry, particularly as part of a convivial activity. She anticipates that 'people with a family' might have to re-consider whether they really want to 'go across' the river on the ferry, as the overall cost might outweigh the benefit. These considerations reveal the potential financial barriers of crossing the river on a ferry, and is indicative of the socio-economic circumstances of those that might be able to regularly use the services.

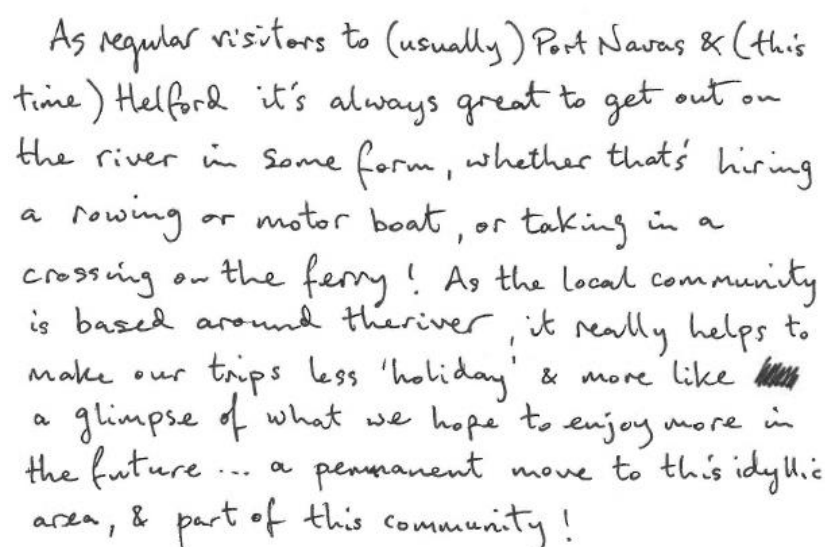
#### 7.4.2 Socio-economic

Cost is absent in Cresswell's politics of mobility (Cresswell, 2010), but is an aspect that, in this case, determines those who are able to cross over the river on a ferry. A ferry operator told me that he had 'Cornish people complain about the high prices' (Helford notes, 8<sup>th</sup> March 2018). This statement reflects the responses of those who participated in the research. Out of the 135 people that filled in a reflection card on the Helford, only six were deemed to be 'local', from the nearby

villages of Mawnan Smith (Helford 119), Constantine (Helford 25, Helford 26) on the north shore and Mullion (Helford 46, Helford 96, Helford 99) on the south shore. None of those deemed to be local were from larger residential areas on the Lizard such as Helston, recognised as a socially deprived area (*Helston & The Lizard*, 2017). The vast majority of people I encountered on the Helford who were using the ferry (96%) were holiday-makers from further afield, typically staying in the area for a short period of time, or walking the South West Coast Path. Holidays have been recognised as a time of 'suspension' (Hall & Holdsworth, 2016, p.6) from everyday routines where individuals are more open to new experiences, which includes consumption (Andrews, 2011), and perhaps allows people to spend money in a way they might not otherwise, during their everyday lives.

A friction emerges, then, between those who can afford to use the ferry, and those that cannot. Ferry operator Finn concurs, describing those that used the ferry as '99.9 per cent visitors and holiday makers' (Interview Finn, skipper, Helford). In order to sustain a business within a time-limited, seasonal environment, Helford River Boats have had to rely on a business model that predominantly caters for tourists. They rely on the assumption that one-off visitors to the area, who are in their recreational time, or on holiday are able to afford the price of the ferry, at £7 for a return trip for one adult. But, in so doing, the price of a ticket becomes a financial barrier, excluding others who may personally benefit from crossing the river on the ferry, in which the cost of the ticket may prevent them from doing so on a regular basis.

That said, annual visitors to the area, such as Helford 132 (Figure 7.3) would argue that participating in river-related activities such as the ferry crossing, which requires financial contribution and investment of time demonstrates their willingness to be part of a broader community, as they outline plans to 'permanently move to this idyllic area',



As regular visitors to (usually) Port Navas & (this time) Helford it's always great to get out on the river in some form, whether that's hiring a rowing or motor boat, or taking in a crossing on the ferry! As the local community is based around the river, it really helps to make our trips less 'holiday' & more like ~~like~~ a glimpse of what we hope to enjoy more in the future ... a permanent move to this idyllic area, & part of this community!

**Figure 7. 3 Reflection Card Helford 132**

What is clear from the narrative on this card is that they see a link between participating in activities 'based around the river' with their overall attachment to place. Following Stokowski (2002), place is not only linked with its embedded behavioural possibilities but also its ability to unite and connect people within a community. As place is a meaning-based concept, the meanings here are generated by a variety of experiences and interactions within the physical landscape, the landscape of the river, and the various modes of travel that are possible, through 'hiring' the facilities.

And yet, if, as Finn suggests, the majority of ferry traffic and river-based activities are for the benefit of tourists and other holiday makers, is Helford 132 getting a

realistic picture of what life in this 'idyllic area' will actually entail? Finn is aware of the holiday maker's desire to connect with the local area through crossing the river, but goes on to question whether such holiday makers are actually getting any form of real 'connection' to the bankside places, or indeed whether such connection is actually a performative illusion (cf. Overend, 2012):

But you know the ferry is 99.9 per cent visitors and holiday makers. So are they connecting with either side? And they bring stuff to the community, but I don't think they're linking the communities. And if you bear in mind that the place they land, here and there, is predominantly holiday homes. They're only meeting other holiday makers aren't they? The people that live here, are the people who they meet in the pub, who live on both sides, really and the person in the shop over there. So is it bonding the community? A little bit, but we're mainly moving holiday makers.

(Interview Finn, skipper, Helford)

The question, therefore, returns to the ferry as a 'link' between places (section 7.3), which not only facilitates a mobility of either bankside, but also in this context refers to the 'link' between holiday-makers and the wider community. Whilst Finn identifies that the ferry 'links' those who are on holiday, there is limited opportunity for wider connections to be made with permanent residents, as the village of Helford becomes an attraction to others on holiday, shown through the area being comprised of 'predominantly holiday homes'. Sam and Izzie reflected a similar sentiment, 'I bet those communities on either side don't have joint anything just because there's a ferry that goes between' (Interview Sam and Izzie, ferry passengers, Helford). Whilst the ferry is, on the one hand, a material vessel that may 'link' bankside places across the river, in this case, the 'link' between residents and holiday-makers are more limited, due to the high proportion of holiday-

makers who self-identified through the reflection card methodology and who represented users in the area.

These insights continue to build a picture of the ferry as a barrier, as those that can afford to use the ferry are representative of a particular socio-economic group, typically 'middle aged, a lot of elderly people' (Helford notes, 8<sup>th</sup> March 2018), predominantly white and typically with a good disposable income and the benefit of leisure time. They are analogous to those who might be able to afford to hire a canal boat for a week (Kaaristo & Rhoden, 2017), or indeed enjoy a cruising holiday (Gibson, 2008). This observation introduces the idea of ferry passengers comprising of a surface level travelling and recreational community. The meaning of this being that holiday-makers are typically interacting with other holiday-makers, as opposed to forging any deep and meaningful interactions with members of a wider, residential community. This within itself is not a negative, and research has shown the benefits of tourists within a place (Kaján, 2014) but it is important to consider in the wider question of the ferry being a form of transport which, to some extent, only a particular groups of people can access.

Similarly on the Appledore – Instow Ferry, between 'seventy and ninety percent of their customers are tourists' (Torridge notes, 29<sup>th</sup> May 2018). When I asked a member of the Torridge District Council about their perceived value of the ferry for the local area, he dismissively replied: 'it's just serving the tourists isn't it?' (Interview Howard, bankside decision-maker, Torridge). However the slightly lower cost, of £2 for a single adult does make the ferry more accessible for a wider demographic and it was estimated that thirty percent of those who participated in

the research through a reflection card were deemed to be local residents on the River Torridge, as opposed to four percent on the Helford River.

However, attention was made to those who actively participated in the running of the Appledore – Instow Ferry, through volunteering their time and expertise. As only the skippers are paid (Torridge notes 15<sup>th</sup> April 2018), the running of the ferry is otherwise reliant upon volunteers. These are typically enthusiastic individuals, who enjoy spending their time by the water (Torridge notes 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2019), who value the local area, and want to 'do their bit' (Torridge notes, 28<sup>th</sup> May 2018).

When asked whether the ferry service offers a link between the bankside spaces, ferry volunteer Oliver reflected how there is a clear 'divide' between residents who choose to be involved with the running of the ferry, and others who choose to be involved in separate community initiatives,

The socio-economic group that actually comprises the volunteers - and I don't know all the volunteers by any means - but there is a divide in Appledore between the incomers: the retired professionals like myself who buy somewhere as a second home. There's a divide between "us" and the locals: that is the people who have been born and brought up here. We're accused of house price inflation and so on and so forth. But the ferry and the volunteers generally comprises of those volunteer professionals. We're the ones who are sort of running it on behalf of the local community. People may say, 'Well, it's no use to us we can't use it' because it doesn't run every day, but I'm sure in their heart of hearts they would say, "yes it's a nice thing to have" [...] So there aren't many what I would call born and bred locals involved with [the ferry] which is a bit of a shame I guess. [...] Well on the other hand, I feel that by volunteering, by doing something for the community, something for nothing, I'm trying to put in some effort to bridge that gap [...] But then there is another sector in which we are excluded from. Well I say excluded - it's a bit of an "us and them" which is the Appledore Pirates who run the Carnival every year. A very

successful event, again it's a big event and they put a lot of work into it. But that's run by the locals and these other things are run by us.

(Interview Oliver, ferry personnel, Torridge)

The differences in volunteer investment in the ferry does not appear to be shaped by the spatial area of the riverborderscape (bank – river – bank), that is, which side of the river people live on, but Oliver's personal viewpoint is that there are more complex differences between residents within the village of Appledore. He reports that these divisions can be shown through the types of 'community' activities and events that long-term residents and more recent residents choose to be involved in. He characterises a viewpoint he has heard, which suggests that because the ferry only runs in the summer months, and at tide-specific times, this means that it is more attractive for day-visitors or holiday-makers, and therefore long-term residents, 'born and bred locals' do not choose to invest their time into the service. This does not negate the positive impact of the ferry, which is repeatedly seen as a value in connecting people to places (Torridge notes, 28<sup>th</sup> May 2018), but this extract does introduce the subtler ways in which the ferry is a barrier, based upon socio-economic tensions. It is not that the locals are excluded from being part of the volunteer workforce (Torridge notes, 1<sup>st</sup> October 2018), but it seems that it is not an attractive community organisation to be part of, by virtue of the seasonality and tidal influence of the service, which limits how long the ferry can operate for and accordingly, the audience it attracts. Accordingly, the ferry is reliant upon holiday makers and seasonal visitors, as opposed to daily commuters (such as on the Cremyll Ferry). The tide is, therefore, an influencing factor in attracting those who seek to invest in volunteering time and expertise to the running of the ferry.

In contrast, eighty-five percent of those that filled in a reflection card on the Cremyll Ferry were from the surrounding area of Plymouth, including Devonport (Tamar 60), Stonehouse (Tamar 34), Greenhouse (Tamar 26) and Richmond Walk (Tamar 25). The more local use of the ferry might be influenced by the regular running of the ferry, which crosses the river every thirty minutes, all year round. However, that Stonehouse is two miles away from the commercial centre of Plymouth (Drake's Circus), contributes to the fact that for many, the ferry crossing is too far away to access, being on the very edge of the city: 'It is out of sight, and therefore out of mind' (Tamar notes, 24<sup>th</sup> October 2018). In addition, there are poor transportation bus links to the city centre and they do not always correspond with the ferry crossing timetable (Interview Simon, ferry passenger, Tamar). Although the ferry company have lobbied the council to utilise and co-ordinate transport connections between bus and ferry, to reach a wider audience, it remains disconnected (Tamar notes, 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2018). Therefore, if the ferry is slightly delayed, 'that few minutes delay turns into half an hour, turns into missed appointments' (Interview Simon, ferry passenger, Tamar). Accessibility and ease of crossover, may therefore, become a barrier, and cause people to reconsider whether they want to rely upon the passenger ferry, as opposed to having greater independence and autonomy in their own car.

### 7.4.3 Friction and Flow: Tide



**Plate 7. 3 'Time and Tide Tarry for None', Cremyll Clock, September 2019**

The connection between time and tide can be traced through etymology as 'tide' was once used to mark 'time', as derived from the Anglo Saxon word 'getîde' (Pulsiano & Treharne, 2001). The ebbs and flows of the river, and the six hourly shift between high tide and low tide would have been one of the first obvious markers of the passing of time, through the landscape, in ancient vocabulary. Such themes, of time and tide, are apt to draw out in relation to the ferry, as 'they can only operate at certain times', (Interview Howard, bankside decision-maker, Torridge), due to the tide. In addition, the Helford and Torridge ferries are only licensed to run between April and October (*Inland Waters Small Passenger Boat Code* 2007), leading to a common joke in relation to the ferry operator: 'I wonder what he does off season!?' (Helford notes, 25<sup>th</sup> August 2018)

The tide has been discussed in Chapter 5, in relation to navigational routes. Section 5.4 discussed some of the accounts of individuals attempting to cross over from

one side to the other at low tide, and in so doing, considered the allusion of terrain and the desire to cross over to the other side. The following section develops this and considers how the tide might be a material barrier in relation to the ferry crossing as a link between bankside places.

The ferry timetables and seasonality of the services affect the experiences and perceptions of users differently across the three different locations. The seasonality of the Helford and Torridge ferries were found to be one of the factors in preventing locals from regularly using it. A resident in Appledore describes how 'because the ferry is seasonal, she uses it more as a convenience within the summer months, so that she doesn't have to cycle all the way round to Bideford' (Torridge notes, 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2018), the casual noun 'convenience' suggesting that the interaction with the ferry services is according to her terms and timetable. Yet the time restriction of the 'summer months' implies that the ferry is not always available, and therefore not always accessible to suit her recreational needs. Ferry volunteer Oliver goes further, to argue that the seasonal patterns limit any sort of 'structured activity' such as a daily commute and therefore is one of the factors for why the ferry is most suited to tourists,

The ferry is not much use for commuting or any structured activity because of its limited and variable timing. If you worked over on the other side you couldn't rely on it as a means of transport. Some days it doesn't run at all. Some days it's in the morning. Some days it's in the afternoon. So that's really why it becomes a tourist thing.

(Interview Oliver, ferry personnel, Torridge)

In addition to the seasonality of the Helford and Torridge ferries preventing all-year round movement across the rivers, even when the ferry was able to operate

during the day, others complained about the restrictive timetable. Ferry volunteer Ed caricatures a demanding holidaymaker who is perplexed as to why the ferry does not run continuously,

We get people who say:

"Yeah we would like to take the ferry at four o'clock this afternoon. That would be ok won't it?"

"No, I'm afraid we're not running later..."

"Why not? Why not!?"

"What, you only do half days!? That's not very good is it?"

You know: "Well dear, there is no water. It goes out."

"What do you mean it goes out?" - They respond and you explain. And again, they just have no frame of reference.

(Interview Ed, ferry personnel, Torridge)

In this fictitious exchange, the holiday makers imagine a continuous cross- river service, that will still be there 'at four o'clock this afternoon'; a request analogous perhaps to the expectations of a bus timetable, or indeed a train timetable. That there is no water in the estuary at 'four o'clock' accentuates the ferry as barrier, as its irregular service may be against the expectations of those who are used to more regular, reliable and routine modes of transport (Bissell, 2018). It is to be expected that such knowledge may alter their plans, as in the case of four walkers who were told 'they had to be back by a certain time because of the tides' (Helford notes, 13<sup>th</sup> September 2018). Furthermore, the weather, an elemental system beyond the control of the ferry operators, is an additional factor in preventing mobility from one side of the river to the other as in adverse conditions, such as storms, or on 'wet and windy days we don't carry anybody' (Interview Isaac, skipper, Torridge).

On the River Tamar, interviewee Simon complains how,

if the ferry's not running and you do have access to a car, you're going to lose an hour. If you don't have access and the buses are temperamental to say the least in terms of the timetable, you know you could be two hours late getting into work.

(Interview Simon, ferry passenger, Tamar)

On the one hand, this quote reveals the potential benefits of the ferry whilst it is running, and on the other hand, emphasises the geographical distance between the two banksides, across the river, as when the ferry is not running, alternative routes around the river can add up to an additional two hours travel time. The same can be said on the Helford, as resident Sarah describes how, 'you're counting down the days when you get across on the ferry because in the winter it's such a long way round to drive so it really is a connection' (Interview Sarah, ferry passenger, Helford). 'In that respect', adds resident Quentin, 'it's an obstacle. But with modern transport, you know, there's a different way around the obstacle' (Interview Quentin, resident, Helford). Such lengthy detours around the river links to Krause's observations of a car ferry on the Kemi River (2010, p.189),

The ferryman explains that when people cannot pass the river here, villages from the southern shore have to drive an almost forty kilometre detour to the next bridge to bring their children to school on the northern shore. Otherwise, getting to school can be a matter of a few hundred metres.

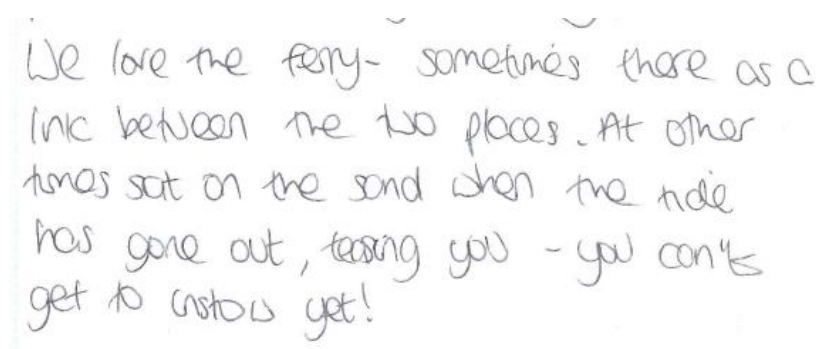
Krause goes on to describe the ferry as a 'floating road section' (p.190), which posits the ferry as a connective bridge from one side of the river to the other. In this context, the ferry's timetable and seasonality of the services affect the experiences and perceptions of users differently across the different locations, and shows how materiality, experiences and narratives cannot be separated. There is,

in summary, an entangled relationship between the price of the fare, the socio-economic context of users and the tidal timetable. This section has demonstrated how the price of ferry fares is calculated in accordance with a range of factors, including type of ferry service (commercial, recreational) which determines the shape of the business model (small scale – Helford, larger scale– Tamar, volunteer dependent – Torridge). The parameters of these business models are determined by jurisdictional factors such as licensing restrictions, as well as wider material factors such as the volume of water in the estuary, time of year and weather conditions.

## 7.5 Summary

So both rivers and ferries have this binary structure of both connecting and disconnecting and whichever situation a person is in, he might use one side or another, depending on what he wants to say. So if a person wants to distinguish himself from another person, he'll be like "there is a river between us, sure we are different". And if you wanna, I don't know, connect with different villages, to form, I don't know, community against a big city, you would be like "we are all connected by this river". So I think we have both opportunities to like read rivers in one way or another and I think a person subconsciously would think either one way or another, depending on what he's trying to say, or the situation, I guess.

(Interview Rita, ferry passenger, Tamar)



We love the ferry- sometimes there as a link between the two places. At other times sat on the sand when the tide has gone out, teasing you - you can't get to Bristol yet!

Figure 7. 4 Reflection Card Torridge 20

Torridge 20 accentuates the complexity of interpreting the ferry as a 'link', as such connection is dependent upon a range of external factors, including the 'tide', seasonality and the price that individuals are willing to pay to cross the river, instead of driving upriver and crossing at another junction, such as a road car bridge. As discussed, there is a temporal aspect to the words 'link' and 'connection', and the sub-text behind such a deployment of the terms is that, otherwise, the river is a barrier between places. The ferry would not have to be emphasised as a 'connection' were it not for a river separating the two banksides. Separating and connecting are two sides of the same act (Simmel 1984), as 'in separating two objects, we underline their connectedness and in connecting two objectives, we simultaneously acknowledge and underscore what separates them' (Baldacchino, 2007b, p.21). Likewise, interviewee Rita is attuned to the way in which 'both rivers and ferries have this binary structure of both connecting and disconnecting' (Interview Rita, ferry passenger, Tamar). Her use of her term 'binary structure' suggests that there is a dual way in which rivers can be seen, either as a place of connection, or disconnection between people, places and purposes. 'This is why ferries tend to be both loved and hated: because they embody the struggle between connectedness and separation, between insulation and isolation' (Vannini, 2012, p.73). Such a paradox lies at the heart of the conceptual framework of the riverborderscape, which has framed this thesis; wherein the river is interpreted through a prism of borders. Certainly, the contradictory role of borders as 'bridges, gateways and meeting points or barriers, obstacles and points of separation' (Diener & Hagen, 2012, p.2) have been emphasised in this chapter.

In paying attention to narrative, I have drawn out the complex relationship between words and behaviours. For example, banter, in the form of jokes, metaphors and stories were often used to emphasise difference between the two sides of the river, whilst at the same time individuals socialised, interacted and crossed the river. I write in my field notes how although the 'discourse of "us and them" was important within the Helford River, the river also connects' (Helford notes, 25<sup>th</sup> June 2018). Similarly, Kernow flags, a marker of Cornish identity, were drawn by the very individuals who crossed the river on a daily basis in order to get to work, but who chose to live in Cornwall and work in Plymouth (Interview Otto, ferry passenger, Tamar).

Through interpreting the ferry through the politics of mobility, I have complicated the simple connective of the ferry linking one shore to the other, and have introduced how socio-economic factors, as well as temporal factors can influence and affect how the riverborderscape is viewed. Although much work has been done in establishing the politics of mobility in relation to public transport such as trains (Bissell, 2016), planes (Adey, 2006) and island dependent ferries (Vannini, 2011), this chapter has contributed to such debates by bringing to the fore the materialities, experiences and narratives of tidal rivers, and passenger ferries. As opposed to island ferries, where a ferry is the only option for islanders to connect to the mainland, a river ferry is distinctive, by virtue of the fact that individuals have alternative options of mobility such as infrastructural crossing points upriver (bridge, chair-ferry, road).

If viewed from a terrain perspective, it is clear that 'although the river divides land, the communities from either side use the river to come together' (Interview Iris, resident, Helford). Charlotte shares a similar sentiment, 'on the one hand you've got this barrier which everyone has to work around but at the same time it just brings everyone together as well doesn't it' (Interview Charlotte, river decision-maker, Helford). How rivers and ferries are viewed and narrated is, therefore, a matter of perspective. There is an ambiguous relationship between rivers as a place of division and as a place of congregating and crossing, as some interpret the river as a meeting place, whilst others a place of separation; and such attitudes can often be shaped by 'where you need to be on the other side' (Interview Simon, ferry passenger, Tamar). And yet, in focusing upon the oft contradictory narratives of rivers and ferries, this chapter has contributed to calls for paying attention to the language of borders and border crossings. It has also demonstrated the impact of words, and that 'we all have our own personalised borders, and the borders which regulate one person do not necessarily apply to others' (Cooper & Rumford, 2011, p.53). Rivers and ferries can therefore 'connect' or 'disconnect' with imaginative flexibility depending upon person, purpose and place. The riverborderscape as a conceptual framework, focusing on the spaces in-between reveals this complex relation between rivers and borders, between connection and disconnection and the attitudes and behaviours that have been revealed through language in this chapter.

The following chapter will continue to evaluate the riverborderscape as a conceptual tool in structuring this thesis' interpretation of rivers and ferries, through drawing more widely on interviewee insights.

## 8. Riverborderscape

We just use rivers to materialise the idea of borders

(Interview Rita, ferry passenger, Tamar)

### 8.1 Introduction

In this reflective penultimate chapter, I evaluate the riverborderscape as a conceptual framework (RQ4). The creation and application of this term has drawn upon literature relating to watery geographies, border studies and landscape to use the river and river crossing to examine in-between spaces. The spatial area of the riverborderscape was inspired by border theorists such as Nail (2016), who argue that borders are the space between two sides, and that attention should be given to what lies in-between. Therefore, a passenger ferry, crossing from one bankside to another bankside across a river which forms an everyday border between places has provided a holistic analytical approach to examine the materialities of border spaces, experiences of border crossing and narratives of bankside spaces on either side of the river. Situating research on the river, through the vehicle of the ferry, has provided a key contribution to a methodological approach which has valued paying attention to what happens in-between border areas. The approach has corresponded with Rumford (2014) who suggested that 'rather than looking both ways' across a border, we need to aspire to look from the border' (p.24) as a method through which to understand the transitional time and space between the crossing points from one side of a border to another.

In this chapter, I reflect upon the benefits of the riverborderscape, and the new insights that such an approach has enabled. First, I draw upon interviewee insights

wherein the river crossing is described as a space where people come together and ideas are exchanged. In so doing, I also reflect upon insights developed in Chapter 6, where the riverborder becomes a third space and where creativity and ideas were shown to flourish. This ties into theoretical discussions wherein borders and the edges of borders have the potential to be fruitful, creative and innovative areas of diversity and transition (Attrill & Rundle, 2002; Gillis, 2014; Shepard & Krall, 1994). Building upon these insights, I reflect upon the utility of the riverborderscape approach as a spatial focus. Secondly, I draw attention to a repeated pattern, what I call riverborderscapes beyond, wherein interviewees discuss riverborder dynamics, such as in regions, cities and nations, where a river forms a local or political border, separating and distinguishing bankside places. These insights suggest that the riverborderscape is a spatial frame which has a wider resonance, beyond the local scale of the case study sites researched, and is a lens through which individuals can make sense of places.

There were limitations to the riverborderscape approach. The river did not resonate as a border for all participants and some saw the framing of the river as border an artificial lens. This response corresponds with contemporary debates on the politics of drawing borders in nature, and brings attention to the human-made creation of borders in places (Fall, 2010; Ramutsindela, 2015). The research focus on and around the ferry route defined the river crossing to examine in-between spaces, and was ideated as a response to gaps in literature, as discussed in Chapter 2. Hence, I focused on a short stretch of water, across the horizontal plain of the river, that is, at a tidal river's navigational section (bank – river – bank). This was not an approach that considered the whole length of the river, for example from

source to sea (Chesshyre, 2017; Dudley, 2018; Hansen, 2019; Happer & Steward, 2015; Hewitt, 2015; Ladd & Brooks, 2012; Magris, 1989; Nicholas & Nicholas, 2014; Thompson, 2019), an approach which might have been aided if I had taken a different vessel as my focus such as an urban liner ferry (Kamen & Barry, 2011; Soltani *et al.*, 2015).

This chapter discusses the benefits and limitations of the concept of the riverborderscape, through a final discussion drawing together interviewee insights and evaluating the impact of a framework which uses rivers as a way of interpreting borders. To summarise, I reflect upon a theme that has been a constant presence throughout the analytical chapters of this thesis, and that is the relationship between rivers and identity. The main contribution of this thesis has been situating research on and across rivers, and examining the relationship between two bankside spaces from and across the river in-between. Chapter 9 then details how this thesis has more broadly contributed to the disciplines of watery geographies, border studies and landscape, and returns to the research questions in order to summarise key findings.

## 8.2 Thinking about the river through borders

Framing the river through border theories, and explicitly asking participants to reflect upon whether they felt there were differences between the two sides of the river (question 6, Figure 3.4), alongside more in-depth and explicit questions as to whether participants saw the river as a border through interviews, was, upon reflection, a conducive research inquiry (Appendix D, Appendix E). To many, the river as a border resonated. Overall, 65% percent of participants (n=229) who

answered the survey question observed that there were differences on either side of the river, with that percentage appearing higher on the Tamar ( $74/88 = 85\%$ ) and Torridge ( $91/124 = 73\%$ ) and much lower on the Helford ( $64/135 = 47\%$ ). These answers, in respect of differences, reflected a number of factors, including the state of the tide (section 5.4), bankside signs that stated 'Devon', 'Cornwall' (section 7.2.4), perceived differences in the bankside spaces on either side of the river (section 7.2.1) and the sense that the ferry played a role in facilitating a physical connection between the two sides of the river (section 7.3).

Discussing the theme of borders helped some to make sense of the relationship between the river, the bankside spaces on either side and the ferry crossing in-between. For example, Ed, a volunteer on the Appledore-Instow Ferry, who was born in Instow and who now lives just beyond Appledore used ideas around borders and border spaces to analyse the ferry, and river crossing,

Well to use an ecological analogy, the verges - I think maybe they're called ecotones - but anyway maybe that's the wrong term but it's the kind of overlap between distinct habitats. Ecotones are known to be the richest elements of the whole macro system because of the overlap and the mixing and the creativity that results, you know from an evolutionary perspective or whatever. And I guess it's exactly the same at whatever scale of existence that you look at. So the estuary is, the ferry, is probably a very good example of that overlap - overlap of the communities of Instow and Appledore, but obviously further afield too but particularly of those two. I was struck actually, I was sitting near the bough and I was sort of staring down at the water and it occurred to me, with this interview in mind, of this expanded sense of belonging. The fact is, in the middle of the river, you are not necessarily of Appledore or of Instow, or of anywhere in particular but you are where you are, being part of something bigger if you see what I mean. And obviously being on the water - the waters are a major connective element for all life. You know we are, what, 80, 90 percent water? So I was open to a greater resonance really and a sense of belonging which

is what I am prone to anyway, that is what I like to see and think and feel but yeah I don't know to what degree other people experience that. I mean maybe to a certain degree just being on the water. It's only a five-minute trip across but there's a sense of neutrality. It's almost like a (laugh) not that Instow and Appledore are militarised but it's like the DMZ, the demilitarised zone between North and South Korea you know, where incidentally it's massively rich in wildlife because nothing goes there and of course it's mined to the hilt so nothing dare go there but you have this amazing wildlife which is just allowed to flourish and I wonder whether you could, you know, make a case for life and ideas flourishing in these neutral borderlines, yeah like in an estuarine space like this. And if you were to put that frame onto this estuary, which I guess is what you are doing, and see how the two communities overlap, where new life arises because you find pressures, selective pressures there that inevitably shape new patterns of behaviour when communities, people meet, you know?

(Interview Ed, ferry personnel, Torridge)

An ecotone is a well-recognised term, traditionally used to refer to adjacent spaces such as the 'meeting point between field and forest' (MacFarlane, 2015, p.358) or land and sea (Mortimer-Sandilands, 2009; Sprackland, 2013), with social researchers recognising the term's metaphorical potential (Neimanis, 2017; Shepard & Krall, 1994). Neimanis (2017, p.3) discusses how,

more than just a marker of separation or even a marker of connection (although importantly both of these things), an ecotone is also a zone of fecundity, creativity, transformation; of becoming, assembling, multiplying; of diverging, differentiating, relinquishing: something happens.

An ecotone is therefore one way of making sense of the richness and creativity experienced by passengers in this particular transitional space on the river, between land and water, as it draws attention to the possibilities of both connection and separation, within everyday border spaces. Whilst Ed uses the term to explore the ecological potential of rivers, and uses the term to bring together

ideas in an abstract sense, I have created a framework for analysis through the riverborderscape that encompasses a much broader scholarly focus.

The spatial area of the bank – river – bank is a central feature of the extract above. The spaces can be clearly identified, as the bankside community of 'Appledore', the river, the ferry and bankside community of 'Instow'. The ferry becomes a vehicle by which either side is brought into contact, whilst also becoming a meeting point within its own right, as Helford 133 writes,

the ferry unites the two communities, it brings people together. It allows access to services on either side. In itself, it is a meeting place, a place to talk, a place to get advice.

The ferry is, therefore, a vessel for a physical passage between the two bankside spaces, whilst providing a means through which individuals can temporarily come 'together'. Furthermore, the reflection card methodology, situated in the 'middle' of the river demonstrates the range and diversity of thoughts in motion, across an everyday border space. Being on the river and crossing over the river also signified a temporary break from the rhythms and routines of everyday life. This was most apparent for those using the ferry recreationally (Torridge notes, 28<sup>th</sup> May 2018), but also extended to those who regularly crossed the river on the ferry (Tamar notes, 20<sup>th</sup> November 2018). As the reflection card analysis in Chapter 6 demonstrated, the physical act of crossing the river was an opportunity for individuals to become more attentive towards and resonant of the experience of moving through a landscape and to pay attention to the shifting bankside spaces. Straddled between land, on water, the cross-section movement across a river became a space of creative transition, a space through which thoughts, emotions,

memories, imaginations and creative processes could be brought to the fore. Accounts included proposals, the scattering of ashes, connections to memory, poetry and imagination. At the same time, these were situated within a very specific social and cultural context of the ferry, with its own set of rules and strict parameters that had to be adhered to by passengers, for the overall safety of those on-board. This river border was at once ordinary, and extraordinary and the movement from one side of the river to the other shown to provide a reflective space, in-between, where thoughts and ideas could come to the fore (Dogan, 2019). Bristow and Jenkins (2020) have recently argued that the 'transitional time and space for the tourist experience is an important one to understand since it has a great impact on the overall encounter and experience' (p.220) and yet has, to date, been largely ignored.

The development of the riverborderscape has aided a scholarly consideration of liminal spaces, and the interactions between and across rivers and land. Recognising the intricate relationship between people and water (section 8.4), which, as Ed notes, constitutes a significant part of the human body, the 'river' has been the focus of enquiry. The river has been explored not only as the space between bankside areas, but also through an understanding of the materiality of the watercourse, including its tide and current, and has been situated through border studies which suggest that attention should be given to the physicality and materiality of spaces. This scholarly attention has ensured that the water, and being on the water is considered, and therefore reflects how rivers can provide an insight into everyday borders between places. The border is not just the bankside edges, but the spaces in-between. The '-scape' has focused upon the movement across

everyday borders, and given a framework through which to analyse the varying thoughts, experiences and imaginations of participants travelling in the spaces, between a and b. Rather than Ed reflecting as a solo individual, attentive to the water and 'being' on the water, the research approach has demonstrated the diverse ways in which rivers are viewed and considered, and given wider meaning. Rather than an ecotone, focusing upon the ecology, the riverborderscape has been a holistic framework through which to consider the relationships between and across a spatial area of a river crossing, and to take into account the materiality of the spaces, the experiences across and everyday narratives.

Situating the riverborderscape approach on and across rivers as a way in which to explore in-between spaces is apt, as 'estuaries, tidal zones, wetlands; these are all liminal spaces where two complex systems meet, embrace, clash and transform one another' (Neimanis, 2017, p.103). Within marine biology, estuaries are commonly regarded as a transition zone linking freshwater and marine systems; a mixture between 'inflow freshwater and outflow seawater' (Boulton, 2019, p.21) and are therefore 'important salinity boundaries between two major ecosystems' (Attrill & Rundle, 2002): the river and the sea. Exploring the concept of the riverborder within and across a tidal system which is itself recognised as a watery border space, through which waters meet, mingle and overlap is, therefore, a fertile research site through which to explore the concepts of borders. The ferry route crosses over the river and brings passengers through this complex terrain, whilst the mixing of waters beneath the bow of the boat, as well as tidal flux, change, height, depth and surfaces creates a complex, material border crossing space.

### 8.3 Riverborderscapes

The utility of the riverborderscape spatial approach, (bank – river – bank) was evidenced in the way in which interviewees, without a prompt, would observe how rivers often distinguish places on opposite banksides in other geographical locations. I wrote in my field notes (Helford notes 17<sup>th</sup> September 2018),

Connection

Separation

A reflection of water identities through self: across region, nation.

The mind meanders to riverborders beyond

Rumford (2014b) describes borders as 'engines of connectivity [as they] not only divide; they also connect, both to the other side of the border and, on occasions, far beyond' (p.3). As the majority of interviewees were encountered on the banks of a river, waiting to cross over on a ferry to the other side, the vehicle of the ferry seemed to be an important physical structure through which the relationship between bankside spaces across rivers in other geographical locations could be reflected upon. In total, over 40 locations were discussed by participants, where they felt that the river distinguished one side from another. These included rivers and watercourses which formed different scales, such as at a local scale, national scale and international scale. Table 8.1 documents the 20 ferry crossings participants discussed, 14 rivers separating bankside places within a town or city, and 11 watercourses beyond, some of which formed trans-border rivers (3), whilst others were larger water bodies such as fjords, bays, canals, or sea between countries and nations (8).

<b>Ferries</b>	<b>bank-river-bank</b>	<b>broader border watercourses</b>
<b>Torpoint Ferry</b> Plymouth – Torpoint Interview Simon, Interview Winnie and Alex	<b>River Dart</b> Dartmouth – Kingswear, Devon Tamar notes, 10th November 2018	<b>Zimbabwe river borders</b> Botswana, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Zambia Torridge notes, 22 <sup>nd</sup> August 2018
<b>Cawsand Ferry</b> Plymouth – Kingsand/Cawsand Interview Isaac, Interview Edith	<b>River Otter</b> Sidmouth – Budleigh, Devon Interview Isaac	<b>Rhine River</b> Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Austria, Germany, France, Netherlands Reflection Card Helford 106, Helford notes 14 <sup>th</sup> September 2018
<b>Dittisham Ferry</b> Greenway – Dittisham Tamar notes, 15 <sup>th</sup> March 2018	<b>River Trent</b> Sneinton - West Bridgeford, Nottingham Interview Harry and Jill	<b>River Nile</b> Egypt, Tanzania, Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi, Kenya, Ethiopia, Sudan, Zaire Helford notes, 28 <sup>th</sup> June 2018
<b>Starcross Ferry</b> Starcross - Exmouth Interview Isaac, Interview Sam and Izzie	<b>River Thames</b> North – South, London Interview Aeron, Interview Ruth, Interview Hamish and Olivia	<b>Bosphorus Strait</b> Istanbul, Europe – Üsküdar, Asia Interview Rita
<b>Torbay Ferry</b> Torquay - Brixham Tamar notes, 24 <sup>th</sup> October	<b>River Soar</b> East – West, Leicester Interview Harry and Jill	<b>Kiel Fjord</b> East Shore – West Shore, Germany Interview Otto
<b>Padstow – Rock Ferry</b> Padstow – Rock Helford notes, 7 <sup>th</sup> September 2018	<b>Looe River</b> East – West, Looe Helford notes, 28 <sup>th</sup> June 2018	<b>Irish Sea</b> England – Ireland Interview Harry and Jill, Interview Ruth
<b>Fowey – Polruan Ferry</b> Fowey – Polruan Helford notes, 28 <sup>th</sup> June 2018	<b>River Exe</b> East – West, Exeter Interview Sam and Izzie	<b>Channel</b> England – France Interview Aeron, Interview Edith, Interview Ed, Interview Ruth, Interview Quentin
<b>Flushing Ferry</b> Falmouth – Flushing Interview Quentin, Helford notes 8 <sup>th</sup> March 2018	<b>River Penk</b> East – West, Wolverhampton Torridge notes, 25 <sup>th</sup> July 18	<b>Atlantic Ocean</b> Appledore – North America Torridge notes, 28 <sup>th</sup> May 2018, Interview Ed, Interview Howard and Penny

<b>St Mawes Ferry</b> Falmouth – St Mawes Torridge notes, 21 <sup>st</sup> October 2019	<b>River Wear</b> Sunderland – Gateshead/Newcastle Helford notes, 11 <sup>th</sup> September 2018	<b>Pacific Ocean</b> Falmouth – round the world sea race Interview Brenda	
<b>King Harry Ferry</b> Falmouth – Roseland Peninsula Interview Sarah, Interview Quentin, Harry and Jill, Interview Sam and Izzie, Isaac, Helford notes 5 <sup>th</sup> June	<b>River Tyne</b> Gateshead – Newcastle Interview Edith	<b>Mediterranean Sea</b> Plymouth – Greece Tamar notes, 10 <sup>th</sup> June 2018	
<b>Poole Ferry</b> Poole – Studland Interview Sam and Izzie	<b>River Deben</b> Hemley – Ramsholt, Suffolk Interview Hamish and Olivia	<b>Arabian Sea</b> Southampton – India Interview Edith	
<b>Christchurch Ferry</b> Mudford - Christchurch Harbour Helford notes 26 <sup>th</sup> June 2018	<b>Medway River</b> East Farleigh – Baring, Kent Interview Hamish and Olivia		
<b>Oldenburg Ferry</b> Bideford – Lundy Island Interview Howard and Penny	<b>River Severn</b> England – Wales Interview Ruby		
<b>North – South Shield Ferry</b> North Shields – South Shields Tamar notes, 20 <sup>th</sup> November 2018, Reflection Card Torridge 50	<b>Berwick River</b> England – Scotland, Berwick upon Tweed Torridge notes, 23 <sup>rd</sup> April 2018		
<b>River Mersey Ferry</b> Birkenhead – Liverpool Interview Ruby, Reflection Card Helford 83, Torridge notes 25 <sup>th</sup> July 2018			
<b>Weymouth Ferry</b> Weymouth – Jersey Helford notes, 8 <sup>th</sup> September			
<b>Isle of Wight Ferry</b> Portsmouth – Isle of Wight Interview Hamish and Olivia, Reflection Card Torridge 121			

<b>Scottish Island Ferries</b> Interview Aeron, Interview Edith, Interview Charlotte, Interview Otto, Interview Sam and Izzie		
<b>Norway Passenger Ferries</b> Tamar notes, 10 <sup>th</sup> June 2018		
<b>British Columbia Ferries</b> Helford notes, 18 <sup>th</sup> September 2018		

**Table 8. 1 Riverborders Beyond: Ferries, bank – river - bank, broader border watercourses**

‘Lots of people have stories about ferries’ (Tamar notes, 10<sup>th</sup> June 2018), I discovered, from overnight cross-channel ferries, to ferries between mainland and island communities, such as the Isle of Skye, Isle of Wight, Lundy Island and British Columbia ferries. Individuals would most often share memories of using these ferries, which suggests that the ferry is a distinctive mode of transport that facilitates the creation of a transitional time and space for individuals to access while moving between different places (section 6.5). For example, one individual, who lived in Liverpool and was visiting Appledore and Instow through the ferry reflected that the ‘Liverpool Mersey was a connector of two very different and separate communities’ (Torridge notes, 25<sup>th</sup> July 2018). The ferry crossing on the Torridge became, therefore, a vehicle through which he could recall and reflect upon places and experiences, and the subtleties between bankside communities that he was more familiar with. Half of the ferries that participants discussed (10) were local to the South West, and affirmed the way in which ferry crossings characterised the region, as discussed in Chapter 4.

The spatial frame of the riverborderscape, that is the relationship between bank – river – bank emerged through these stories. Referring to the second column in Table 8.1, rivers running through cities were often noted to separate east from west, or north from south. Interviewees Sam and Izzie, who lived in Exeter, for instance, reflected how,

There is so much more development on the west side of the river, as a result of the university, with an asymmetry on the other side of the river, with the east characterised as more economically insecure and where locals are pushed out to.

(Interview Sam and Izzie, ferry passengers, Helford)

Interviewees Harry and Jill, who lived in Leicester, similarly reflected how the River Trent in Nottingham was a 'boundary', (Interview Harry and Jill, ferry passengers, Helford), separating two different kinds of communities. The more affluent suburbs of Lady Bay and West Bridgford are situated on the east side, whilst on the west side of the river, are Sneinton and The Meadows, which they indicated were more socially deprived communities. These differences were apparent, they argued, even when 'urbanisation submerges the river borders' (Interview Harry and Jill, ferry passengers, Helford), a statement which acknowledges where urban structures are in place, such as bridges and roads, to more easily overcome the transport obstacles of rivers and connect communities. Notwithstanding, interviewee Sarah, who was born in Newcastle reflected that 'river identities remain a real issue', (Interview Sarah, ferry passenger, Helford) in her hometown. I record the conversation in my field notes (Helford notes, 11<sup>th</sup> September 2018),

There is a real divide between those that live in Newcastle and those that live in Sunderland. She said that when she was a small girl, she was told that if she crossed the river to the other side, she would get a

screwdriver turned into her stomach. That terrified her meaning that whenever she did go on the ferry, she was always a little bit watchful. She reflected on how the river is a physical border there. Even though the ferry goes from one really lovely beach to the other. She said that because Sunderland was on the other side, she would never really go

Here, the river is attributed to dividing the river into 'very distinctive parts' (Interview Otto, ferry passenger, Tamar). These stories reveal the entangled relationship between people and place, at different scales, through the river that runs between. These accounts, spanning different geographical locations, indicate that the riverborderscape as a spatial concept (bank – river – bank) is a useful framework through which to examine the relationship between the two sides of the river, from the perspective of the river in-between. The observations indicate that more research can be done to explore the transitional spaces between bankside areas, and the role of the river in creating physical separation between areas, and the ways in which rivers have provided, for some, an insight into the cultural histories and everyday identities of those who live on the banks of a river.

#### 8.4 Borders as a conceptual barrier for thinking about the river

From another perspective, to place 'river' adjacent to 'border' is inherently ironic, as there has been much debate about the issue of so-called natural borders, referring to the process of rivers, deserts, lakes, mountains being used as border lines, by virtue of their terrain (Fall, 2010; Gleditsch *et al.*, 2006; Methi *et al.*, 2019). There is 'nothing at all "natural" – physically or socially – to borders' (Agnew, 2008, p.7) and the discourse of 'natural divisions of peoples along geographic lines' (Espejo, 2020, p.105) is deeply embedded within colonial and political processes.

Many interviewees did not resonate with the river as a border. Ruby, who lived in Helford Passage, articulated, 'by definition, although I was crossing from one side of the river to the other, I didn't see it as a boundary' (Interview Ruby, resident, Helford). This quote is revealing as although Ruby recognised the spatial dimension and transition between one side of the river and the other, she did not identify with the river as border. Moreover, for her, to cross the river was an act of extension, ensuring that she could make the most of and experience the places on either side. Interviewees Hamish and Olivia, who were visitors to the Helford, shared a similar viewpoint,

We as outsiders view this as one thing. You know the gardens over there and the two pubs. We don't separate that as a "foreign land". This is one bit we're looking at, geographically.

(Interview Hamish and Olivia, ferry passenger, Helford)

Rather than seeing the river as a border separating places, the river was interpreted as linking the bankside places, and the spatial area of the riverborderscape (bank – river – bank) was attributed to being a holistic place of connection that individuals could explore as a connected, whole landscape, as 'one'. As discussed in Chapter 7, the river as border is often a matter of perspective, and to place borders, lines, and limits onto a natural flowing watercourse was, for some participants, at odds with their broader experience of landscape and place.

The river is a 'barrier that is yet not a barrier' (Interview Aeron, ferry passenger, Tamar). On the one hand, the riverborder is seen and recognised but, on the other hand, that is of insignificance in the context of personal mobility where borders are easily crossed every day (Diener & Hagen, 2012). The perception of rivers that separate places is not as pronounced as perhaps they might once have been. The

everyday nature of the river borders in this thesis has been evidenced through analysis of narratives. The river as a border has often been discussed by participants in a light-hearted manner, such as through passport jokes on the ferry (section 6.4.2), banter about 'this side', 'that side' (section 7.1.1) and bankside signs declaring 'Welcome to Cornwall' (section 7.1.4) set within a landscape jointly managed by both Cornwall County Council and Plymouth City Council (section 4.3.3.2). The jokes, nevertheless, indicate that there is a historical or cultural context relating rivers to borders, even where each side of the river can be accessed easily. This combination of materialities, experiences and narratives is revealed in relation to the river as border in the following extract, as Simon, a regular ferry commuter on the River Tamar reflects,

You joke about the difference between Devon and Cornwall in that Cornwall's a far better place to live than Devon, putting it mildly. But in reality, no. People are all the same. I think the separation is more work time, non-work time. I think that is the more important one when you're going into work, the arrival on the other side represents your work environment. And you can leave your work environment behind and go onto leisure time the minute you step on the ferry [...] Yeah. But being perfectly honest, over the last 60, 70 years where there's such high levels of personal mobility, I'm sure one family who used to be resolutely from one side, is now intrinsically linked with several on the other side.

(Interview Simon, ferry passenger, Tamar)

Whilst there is an awareness that the river represents a regional border, between 'Devon and Cornwall', Simon's lived experience of crossing the river situates the river as border within the separation or division of time into associated activities, 'work time', 'non-work time'. This observation reflects the river as more of an imagined, or psychological border between places, with different sets of emotions

and expectations assigned to one bankside space, than the other. The contextual focus of this research project has been across rivers that form small-scale and highly local borders, such as between parishes, districts and regions, but which members of the public might be unaware of, and so accordingly, in this thesis, I have explored the more subtle and everyday borders between places. In so doing, rather than following borders corresponding to jurisdictional lines, the river itself is considered. Interviewee Ruth reflects that all borders, no matter the scale are a reminder that,

One is constrained within a bodily format, within a land mass format and all borders are a reminder of our self-limiting. So if we choose to cross these borders, we are saying to ourselves, we are not going to be limited.

(Interview Ruth, ferry passenger, Torridge)

The research, situated on and across these everyday borders has been an investigation into the liminal spaces, between one side of the river and the other and this has value in understanding the transitional experience of movement between places. The three-tiered approach of the riverborderscape has argued for an analytical framework to pay attention to the materiality of spaces, experiences and narratives, holistically.

## 8.5 The limit of the ferry

As I discussed in Chapter 2, the riverborderscape as a spatial frame was investigated through the routes of a passenger ferry, crossing from one bankside to another bankside space, as a way of bringing attention to the river in-between. This necessitated a narrow focus, as the ferry only operates across the navigable

part of the river, and requires favourable conditions, including depth, width and current of the water in the river channel.

Whilst the benefits of this approach will be further discussed in Chapter 9, in relation to the research questions and overall insights of the thesis, at this point, it is clear that focusing on a ferry has presented two limitations to the research, one from a land perspective, and the other from a water perspective. From a land perspective, the focus on the Cremyll Ferry, Appledore – Instow Ferry and Helford River Boats river crossings has meant that I have neglected other structural crossings further upstream, from one bankside to the other bankside such as bridges, or other chain ferries. From a water perspective, my focus on the experiences of crossing a river on a ferry has meant that I have side-lined experiences on other vessels, such as paddleboards, kayaks, fishing boats, yachts, or river ferries travelling up river. Future research could expand insights I documented in my field notes, to further explore the river as border, a) framed through the interactivity of border zones through different users of the river; and b) to consider upstream and downstream communities, and their experiences of the river as border. In the next section, I briefly expand upon my field note observations in relation to these two themes.

In relation to the water, shifting the emphasis from the ferry crossing towards the river as a site through which the interactivity between different vessels, swimmers, boats and other navigational routes, whilst not explored in this thesis, could be developed in subsequent research trajectories. Kaaristo et al (2020) have recently used a mobilities framework to analyse the various tensions and co-existences

between user groups on a canal. They put forward an approach that is sensitive to the multiple mobilities of users, such as boaters, walkers, cyclists and runners, whilst recognising the subtleties and hierarchies between such groups, arguing for a 'watery blueprint' (p.861) to bring together various factors such as regulation, tensions and diverse mobilities. Very similar dynamics were evident in ethnographic analysis on-board ferries, and which I describe in my field notes (Torridge notes, 15<sup>th</sup> April 2018),

He started to talk about the hierarchy of the ferry on the space of the river – how there are different stakeholders such as the industrial workers, the crabbers, the swimmers, the giggers, the boat owners, all vying for shared space on the water. More often than not, the ferry is at the bottom of that pack, because the volunteers aren't perceived to be water experts, or to be on the water all the time. They spend the majority of their time on the banks. This was a really interesting observation about the tensions on the river, and the different stakeholder which operate and grapple for space on the river. It reveals that this is a very active river, with lots going on – conversation and ideas on the waterway, which shapes the area and shows how time spent on the water was seen to be a contributing factor to knowledge and power.

These observations reveal the river to be a space of multiple uses and users, and demonstrates that there were user-groups that I side-lined in the research, by virtue of being connected through having their own boat, vessel or mobile structure to navigate on the water, and who did not, therefore require a bankside crossing through the ferry. A future research question could investigate how the ferry crossing interacts within the space of the river and could extend the riverborderscape framework, through situating the 'river' as a way of exploring the interactivity of border zones, as well as the tensions, collaborations and other routes that might arise and cross-over in and across these watery spaces.

In relation to the land, previous research focusing upon river border areas have used the river, from source to sea as a structure through which to analyse upstream and downstream communities living next to the river and who may experience differing social, economic and political realities (Bear, 2015; Thomas, 2017). Interviewee Rita reflected how rivers are seen differently, depending on whether you look at the 'source, the middle part, or the delta' (Interview Rita, ferry passenger, Tamar). She then reflected,

If you are just taking the ferry, it kind of narrows down what you see because you have a direction and you have a destination to go and you go for a reason and because you made an effort. So that sort of narrows your perspective of the river.

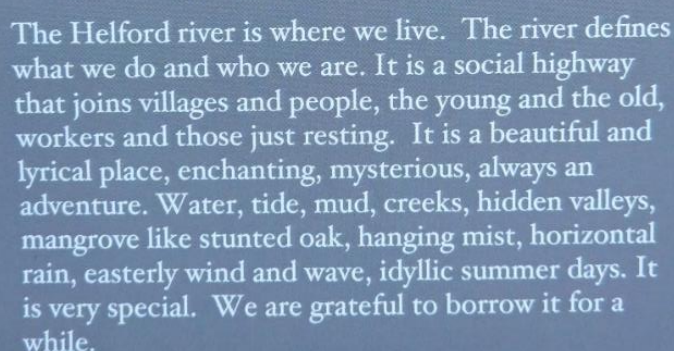
(Interview Rita, ferry passenger, Tamar)

In summary, the research project was framed through the ferry crossing, to anchor a theoretical idea that explored the relationship from one bankside to another bankside, across a middle stretch of water. Recognising that the ferry crossing has necessarily given a 'narrow' perspective of the river and bankside areas on either side of the river, at the same time, the research has provided an in-depth ethnography of the accounts of ferry operators, experiences of ferry passengers and narratives of a diverse range of individuals, in an exploration of everyday borders.

## 8.6 Summary: Rivers and Identities

Rivers and identity have been an overarching thread of this thesis. The riverborderscape as a conceptual framework, embedding rivers through borders and borders through rivers, has provided a research approach that has considered the role of place in the formation of identities, as identities are at the forefront of

border-studies (Brambilla, 2007; Carli *et al.*, 2003; Newman, 2006; Prokkola, 2009; Rumford, 2014b; Trillo-Santamaría & Paül, 2014) and watery geographies (Chen, MacLeod & Neimanis, 2013, Moles and Bates, 2020, Strang 2005). The importance of identity is fore-fronted in these contexts to understand what might define a person and a place (Storey, 2012), and has been revealed in the narratives and experiences of residents, visitors and ferry operators navigating a ferry from one bankside space to another. The importance of the river, in defining a place is summarised by Reuben, a resident living on the banks of the Helford River, in a narrative written to accompany a photobook of the Helford River he put together:



The Helford river is where we live. The river defines what we do and who we are. It is a social highway that joins villages and people, the young and the old, workers and those just resting. It is a beautiful and lyrical place, enchanting, mysterious, always an adventure. Water, tide, mud, creeks, hidden valleys, mangrove like stunted oak, hanging mist, horizontal rain, easterly wind and wave, idyllic summer days. It is very special. We are grateful to borrow it for a while.

**Figure 8. 1 The Helford River, a photo-book. Shared with permission.**

From his perspective, the river is the centrally shared commonality which 'defines' the identities and activities of those who live and work within the river's radius. It is the relationship that individuals have with the river, both individually and collectively as 'villages and people' that 'joins' and brings people together, no matter the length of time an individual remains. Taking the metaphor of the river as social highway, therefore, Reuben expresses how the river can socially structure and provide meaning about what takes place on the river's banks, and within the space of the river itself. To equate the river as a 'highway' is to infer that such a

diverse grouping of people, 'young and old' are heading in the same direction, and that they harbour the same philosophies and values: recognising the river and valuing it as a 'beautiful place', which they can experience and 'borrow for a while'. This idea is paralleled by another participant, who shared that the 'river is the life-blood – linking/joining communities. Love being out on the water – connecting with nature' (Helford 38).

In fore-fronting the river, I have shown how rivers play a significant role in formal place-making, and how the routine and recreational crossing from one side to the other is imbued with social life and meaning, not only for individuals, but also for the wider community and region. That rivers have historically been used as place markers, as the boundary between parishes, counties, countries, or nations incidentally showcases the symbiotic relationship between people and place, terrain and territory, water and identity. Situating research on the river, in-between bankside places has brought the river to the fore, and demonstrated the range of significant and often imaginative realm of meaning associated with rivers, including the creativity and interactions within and across the border space.

In the following chapter, I return to the research aim and research questions to draw out key findings of the thesis, and discuss how the research methodology has contributed to the wider disciplines of watery geographies, border studies and landscape and thereafter share final thoughts.

## 9. Conclusion

A border writer knows that the cultural perspective may change entirely by simply crossing a river and sitting on a bench on the other side

(Magris, 1999, p.51)

### 9.1 Introduction

This research has brought together three theoretical conversations in the discipline of human geography and the wider social sciences: watery geographies, border studies and landscape, through the concept of the riverborderscape. I have put forward a spatial approach (bank – river – bank) to examine the spaces on the border. I proposed a three-tiered analytical framework to evaluate the materiality of borders, experiences of border-crossing and everyday narratives. In so doing, estuarine passenger ferries, including the navigational routes, on-board experiences, imaginations, narratives and mobilities have been brought to the fore of this research and have been given detail through ethnographic fieldwork, extensive interview techniques, and archival data.

Recognising that water worlds 'often remain at the edge of everyday consciousness' (Peters & Anderson, 2016, p.4) and that water has been significantly overlooked, this research project was very purposefully situated on and across the river. Rather than viewing rivers as being on the periphery of landscape, the research approach has reconsidered and highlighted their importance.

In this chapter, I review the methods used and return to the research questions to summarise key insights developed in the thesis in relation to the overall aim.

Secondly, I reflect upon the project as a whole, and suggest directions for future research.

## 9.2 Methods and Research Questions

Research insights discussed in Chapters 4 – 7 were predominantly informed by an ethnographic research approach, where three ferry companies providing a transportation service across rivers in the South West of England enabled access to prospective ferry passengers and personnel. In the main, my interactions were shaped through the reflection card methodology, whereby passengers were asked to record their thoughts whilst crossing a river (347 collected), alongside subsequent participant observation and follow-up interviews (43 interviews).

A main methodological contribution to landscape studies has been in the development and design of reflection cards, which invited members of the public to draw and write a response to their experience of the river and landscape they were travelling through. Wylie and Webster (2019) observe that the practice of drawing is a technique that 'offers the possibilities of new, maybe renewed, senses of place, world and self' (p.33). The gathered reflection cards revealed a unique insight into place, and was a form that captured the otherwise 'fleeting' (Spinney, 2015, p.232) thoughts, ideas and conversations that occur whilst on the move. Responses were shaped by the environment that individuals were travelling across, and so provided insights into the social and cultural geographies of passenger ferries, the role of the river as a crossing point between places and a place within itself, as well as depicting the landscape of the banksides, that were often drawn and narrated by participants in detail. Were the reflection cards not to have been

completed on the ferry, it is clear that participants may have omitted such intricate details within the landscape. The cards were designed to provide an understanding of the thoughts of individuals moving between landscapes, across an everyday border between places. The method was successful in showing the river crossing to be a creative space, evidenced by the range of genres that were identified, including short stories, limericks, poetry and songs. This methodology could be developed to reveal insights into the experience of users of other vehicles travelling through landscapes, such as by car, train or aeroplane that would document the interaction between people, the sensory environment and moving landscape, as individuals are in passage.

A secondary contribution has related to my participant observation informed field poetry. A recent collection (Magrane, Russo & de Leeuw, 2019) has established the term 'geopoetics' (p.1) to consider the relationship between geography and poetry and which extends to the growing number of geographers who incorporate creative and artistic practices into their geographical research (cf. Cresswell, 2013; De Leeuw & Hawkins, 2017). In so doing, it is argued that creative expression, such as poetry, can reveal insights into and new approaches or ways of thinking about a range of geographical issues. My field poetry emerged in response to the research process, and my time spent on the river, engaging in conversation with ferry passengers and personnel. It became an instinctive mode of communicating research observations in relation to my embodied experiences and knowledge gathered from the field sites. The form reflects my immersion and creativity within the research project, and the poetry goes beyond the traditional practice of field notes, as they attempt to tie together the different voices and elemental dynamics

of and on the river. The poetic form reveals that the river was not only a subject of research, but it also influenced me and understanding of my own identity and sense of place. Extracts of my field poetry were embedded into the analytical chapters because they were a lyrical form that tried to make sense of the various research scenarios and narratives that interviewees and participant observation brought to attention. As a form, field poetry reflected the landscape of the river, and the layers of temporalities: including people, weather, the river itself, as well as my personal thoughts and emotions, resulting from leading research in these places.

Nevertheless, it is acknowledged that the understandings presented in this thesis are inevitably interpretive, partial and situated (Haraway, 1988). Fieldwork relating to passengers experiences, was, in the main, completed during the ferry season of 2018, between April and December, with additional follow-up interviews in 2019 with skippers, ferry personnel and decision-makers. Whilst this reflected a particular moment in time, it is clear that continued longitudinal research of the river ferries would have been valuable, to further explore the river as border and ferry as a connective structure, particularly as in 2020 the Appledore – Instow Ferry was cancelled for the duration of the season and both the Cremyll Ferry and Helford River Boats cancelled for a short time, due to the national limitations restricting mobility as a result of Covid. Furthermore, the majority of interactions with ferry passengers were time-limited, and, with the exception of those who then had a follow up interview based on their reflection card (n=13), I did not encounter the participants again. Whilst reflection card responses were indicative of an in the moment account of crossing the river, it is acknowledged that they are partial

insights, as the method does not provide a strategy for collecting in-depth narratives, which would only be possible through subsequent interviews and a broader contextualisation. For those who were interviewed, I did not conduct repeated follow-up interviews, as the focus of the research was not so much in changes over time, but present experiences of the river and adjoining landscapes. To do so might have added an extra dimension to the river as border, for example in relation to tides, seasons and everyday decisions about crossing a river.

I also recognise that the ferry crossing framed the research focus of an exploration of the riverborderscape (section 8.5). This focus meant that the investigation of the river as border was situated on and across the river, as opposed to a more in-depth study of the bankside communities on either side of the river, such as following scholars Durrschmidt (2002), Coplan (2001) and Havrelock (2011). This approach was purposeful, as it responded to identified gaps in the literature (Chapter 2), and subsequently shaped the investigation of everyday borders to focus upon materialities, experiences on an across the river, and everyday narratives. The ferry as a vehicle was a rich data-set to analyse these dynamics, but at the same time, there is an awareness that broader issues relating to the bankside spaces, such as local politics, the role of parish, district and regional counties, cross-border mobility and infrastructure at other crossing points on the river, whilst discussed in Chapter 7, became beyond the remit of the study and requires subsequent in-depth future research to explore such subtleties, for example in relation to cross-river management.

Notwithstanding, the primary aim of this thesis was to evaluate the idea of the riverborderscape through an exploration of three ferry crossings in the South West of England. In order to achieve the aim of the thesis, four research questions were developed. In the following section, these questions are revisited in order to highlight key findings of the research.

### 9.2.1 RQ1: What are the materialities that influence the river ferry crossing?

The first research question was largely addressed in Chapter 5, although Chapter 4 set out a contextualisation of each of the case study sites in relation to the spatial area of the riverborderscape: bank – river – bank. I drew upon academic understandings of materialities from watery geographies to examine the role of the river, including tide, wind, and current, using the skipper's navigational perspective to draw attention to the water. In so doing, findings showed that although tides were an important characteristic of the river ferries in all three sites, tides could be calculated and mapped in advance. Skippers alerted attention to other significant materialities that might change in accordance with the wider weather systems, such as wind and current, as well as other vessels or boats that might be on the water, the presence of which affects navigational routes. The river was seen as an ever-changing space that had to be assessed and reacted to at every crossing. One strategy of navigating across the space of the river was through transit lines, defined as imaginary points of connection between two opposite bankside spaces and framed through details in the built environment. These fixed points were used to create imaginary connection lines across the river

and demonstrates how skippers relate the route of the ferry to the arrival and destination points on either side of the crossing. Secondly, attention to the river provided a site through which to examine the physical and material presence of the border. Following Elden (2013), crossing a river was shown to necessitate a consideration of both height and depth, as navigational routes had to consider what was beneath the surface of the river. Interviewees discussed the river through a discourse of gradient, angles and volume, showing that they navigated the river through three-dimensionality. However, the spatial area was also seen to be an important factor in perceptions of the border, as the position of the river at varying states of the tide influenced interviewee's perceptions of where the border-line between bankside places was, and shaped activities that could take place there. The river as border was accentuated through the instability of terrain creating a potentially dangerous space that was often hard to read. The materialities of landscape was a further factor in relation to this question, which included the bankside edges such as slips, quays and pontoons, as well as the history of ownership and use relating to the ferry crossing. These structures provided a lens to consider the relationship between land and water, as they were situated on the interface of the ferry crossing. Ultimately, the legal lines of ownership were identified as an influencing factor in the route of the ferry and demonstrates the broader politics of how ferry routes are entangled with private ownership and the necessary tariffs that are subsequently required to cross from one side of the river to the other. These insights correspond to broader research that considers the politics of and across waters, including across national jurisdictions and territorial waters (Bassi, 2017; Thomas, 2017; Wolf, 1998). Centring research on the river, and

through the crossing of the ferry has shown the importance of paying attention to routes in three-dimensions. It has also established rivers as productive sites through which to investigate issues around borders, including their materiality and physicality, whilst paying attention to watery geographies, such as tide and current and landscape influences, such as wind, bankside structures and changes over time in relation to the history of ownership. Altogether, the research has brought rivers and ferry crossings to the forefront of social and cultural geographies.

### 9.2.2 RQ2: What are the thoughts, imaginations and experiences of ferry passengers as they cross from one side of the river to the other?

The second research question centred on the thoughts, imaginations and experiences of individuals as they were situated within a transitional crossing point, interpreted through and situated on the river. This strategy aimed to bring the border itself to the forefront of the research process, and to document experiences in the transitional time and space between two fixed points. Whilst scholars have shown that bridges (Irving, 2015) and doors (Simmel, 1994) are structural transitional sites of liminality, river crossings have not yet been explored through this framing. The research demonstrates the diverse narratives, imaginations and experiences whilst crossing the river, which were shown to depend on a range of factors, including role, how frequently individuals used the ferry and personal connections, such as memories and biographical details. Despite an overt framing, inviting individuals to be as 'creative as you like' (Figure 3.3), the richness of responses points towards the river and river crossing to be a unique transitional, liminal space which caused people to reflect, in the travel time between more

familiar structures on land. The range of creativity showed the riverborder to be a 'third space' (Gilroy, 1993; Nail, 2016), enabling individuals to socialise, think, reflect and connect within a real and imaginative time, on the water.

Landscape is tension (Wylie, 2007, p.2) and borders (Brunet-Jailly, 2005) and border crossings (Teunissen, 2018) have been recognised as sites of tension. The riverborderscape as a spatial approach focuses upon and draws out these sites of tension, in its interest between and across the spatial movement of bank – river – bank. The bringing together of these tensions, on the river in creative, imaginary and narratological ways brings such variety of overlapping discourses and imaginaries to the fore. Certainly the myriad of material, created on the riverborder develops Nails' (2016) assertion that borders should not be seen as the two sides, but a third thing, a space in-between. Focusing upon this space in-between through the ferry, a literal and metaphorical vessel brings to the forefront the dialogues, thoughts, conversations and imaginations that occur in liminal landscapes (Andrews 2012). Chapters have affirmed the importance of paying attention to the process of the journey, of the spaces between 'a and b' (Peters & Turner, 2015, p.3). Focusing upon the river as a watery space, it has also brought into the discussion ideas on between spaces, and the transitional potential of rivers to transport people to different places, time zones, but also the possibility to excite thought and imagination, stories and mythologies.

### 9.2.3 RQ3: In what ways does the river ferry crossing connect and divide people and places?

Research question three related to the simplistic idea that, in crossing a river, one becomes connected to the other side. Ferries are connective vessels, whose navigational movement from one side of the river aims to transport people between opposite bankside spaces. And yet, examining the narratives of those that live on each side of the river, and those who make decisions about whether to cross rivers or not, revealed that this question of connectivity or separateness was much more complex (Chapter 7). One side was shown to be associated with particular activities. The everyday role of borders has been evidenced through attention to language, including jokes and stories, and the research has suggested that laughter is a key device in which to accentuate a sense of difference, whilst set within a hyper-mobile context of individuals having the ability to cross over and between different landscapes. The riverborder approach here provided a lens for comparisons of either bankside spaces, in relation to the river between, as detailed in Chapter 7. The ferry was analysed through the politics of mobility, which included identifying more subtle issues, such as who could cross, at what times, and the impact on individuals when the ferry was not running. The 'link' of the ferry was complex, and the term was used as both a noun and a verb whilst often the 'link' between places was dependent upon a wide range of factors, including price of the fare and tide times, which determined who crossed over the rivers, who participated in the running of the ferry-service and how regularly the ferry was used. In reflecting upon the ferry as a 'link', the physical presence of rivers in a landscape was called into question, and the challenge and effort required to

overcome the obstacle of the physical watercourse. This is significant to the conceptualisation of the riverborderscape as it shows how a river crossing might also be entangled within everyday borders and shows how when a landscape feature (river) is defined in relation to a political feature (border) that itself evades tidy definition. The river as a site of investigation, and the ferry crossing were paralleled with border theorists, who similarly argue that border spaces are complex sites of connection, separation and tension. Examining the river and ferry crossing through narratives revealed the subtle entanglements of everyday borders.

#### 9.2.4 RQ4: Is the riverborderscape a productive concept to understand river crossings and adjacent bankside spaces?

The fourth research question reflected upon the riverborderscape as a conceptual tool, in relation to the spatial area: bank – river – bank and the analytical approach, to bring together materialities, experiences and narratives as a framework in which to analyse rivers that form borders between places. Whilst ‘materialities’, (Chapter 5) ‘experiences’ (Chapter 6) and ‘narratives’ (Chapter 7) were separated according to the different chapters, thereby focusing upon a different element of the riverborderscape approach, in reality each of these analytical focuses were entangled. For instance, the border was examined both through the language of interviewees (Chapter 7), through the material tides of the river (Chapter 5) and was shown to be often entangled with experiences (Chapter 6). Experiences on-board were also shaped by the watery materiality of the river, and wider weather system, which diversely affected the sensory body. Narratives too were shaped by

the diverse experiences of interviewees, including where they lived, what their role was, and their broader philosophy and sense of place. The research focused upon the river and ferry crossing, and therefore the materiality of the river and bankside spaces was always a presenting factor in interviewee's narratives. Recognising this crossover, the benefit of a three-tiered approach, on 'materialities', 'experiences', and 'narratives' brought attention to the physical and material dimensions of the river as border, and presents a framework through which to discuss everyday borders between places.

The spatial area of the riverborderscape, bank – river – bank could be re-framed and utilised by researchers in a variety of contexts, both related to the water, and other in-between environments. The main benefit of the approach is that it pays attention to the space between two fixed points, in relation to its materialities, experiences and narratives. Other examples of riverborderscape approaches could consider other water crossing points such as bridges. Non-watery approaches could consider more mundane places such as pedestrian crossings. The analytical structure of the riverborderscape approach creates a framework through which attention is given to the physicality of these crossing points within the landscape, including understanding the ways in which river crossings are experienced by different people and integrating a wider sensitivity towards how such mobilities are narrated and negotiated.

### 9.3 Future Directions

This thesis has explored the intricate entanglements between humans and water, and the diverse and fluid ways in which rivers shape identities. Through the

riverborderscape, the river as a space has been fore-fronted, and attention has been given to the processes of crossing rivers on ferries. Rivers have been the subject of conversation, the edge of water and land the meeting point between researcher and participant. The research has highlighted the breadth and diversity of ways in which people imagine and narrate rivers, and has reflected upon the tension of rivers, in being an attractive but also a potentially dangerous space.

Through the research, we have encountered skippers who spend hours crossing rivers back and forth, 'reading the river' to look for wind patterns, shifts of tidal depths, strength of current and who are invested in ensuring that passengers have a safe journey across water; to first time passengers, inching with excitement to get on-board, as well as regular passengers who see the river as a transitional protective zone between home and work; commitments and freedom. We have met residents who choose to live by the river, so that they can make the most of it, and decision-makers who ensure that the priorities of the river are kept so that future generations can make the most of it. The words recorded in this thesis, of interviewees, reflection card participants, my own field note reflections and archives weaving landscape and literature to give an account of place reveals the extent to which the language of rivers inspires expressions and conceptions of everyday life. This research has focused upon the specific relationship between water and borders, and how rivers as a spatial form and experiential location within a landscape can reflect broader ideas about what it means to 'link' people and places.

The empirical focus of the research project has drawn attention to the social geographies of three passenger ferries that cross rivers between places. Due to many passenger ferries in the United Kingdom being superseded by bridges (Jones & Fairclough, 2016), those remaining are a relatively rare form of transport. Whilst scholars have drawn attention to historic ferry crossings (Tucker, 2008) this research has provided an original contribution to experiences of passenger ferries. Passenger ferries could therefore be brought into wider discussions, for example within transport geographies (Urry & Grieco, 2016) or, indeed maritime mobilities (Monios & Wilmsmeier, 2017). What this research has drawn out is that a key significance of ferries is that they provide a non-specialist public an encounter with and experience of rivers.

Future research could explore other rivers and ferry crossings, for example those participants discussed (section 8.3), to further examine the utility of the riverborderscape approach on and across different geographical scales. Peters (2019) for instance, has drawn attention to ferry routes across the English Channel, arguing that routeing is itself a political process and the sea is a site of negotiating national jurisdictional territory. Interviewees noted how this water border is particularly apt within the contemporary geopolitics of Britain, where the 'issue of the channel' (Interview Harry and Jill, ferry passengers, Helford) has characterised current debates around Brexit, the exit of the United Kingdom from the European Union, with effect from January 2021. Future research could explore ferry routes between England and France/Spain through the Brittany Ferry, situated a mile from the Cremyll Ferry, using a similar reflection card methodology to gather thoughts,

imaginations and experiences of passengers on-board, as they cross the sea between two separate jurisdictions.

One way in which this thesis has contributed to watery geographies is by bringing the perspective of skippers who operate passenger ferries into the discussion. This follows Steinberg and Peters (2015) who argued that attention needs to be given to the voices, lives and experiences of those who 'actually *engage* the ocean, like sailors (p.252) and Bowles, Kaaristo and Caf (2019) who more recently argue that 'sea-farers, boat-dwellers and fishermen' are best able to describe the subtleties and techniques of how they navigate through the 'fickle and active substance' (p.8) of water. Through ethnographic fieldwork, including participant observation and in-depth interviews with skippers, asking them to draw their navigable routes, I have argued that skippers and ferry personnel have a unique role and responsibility facilitating passenger's experiences and navigating a ferry across a river. A skipper's perspective of rivers has not yet been discussed within geography, and, as this research has demonstrated, they hold a valuable knowledge-set about the river, including its height, depth, width (Peters & Squire, 2019) and subtle changes over time, which scholars can learn from.

The main contribution to border studies in this thesis has been to examine the role of everyday borders between places. Diener and Hagen (2012) argue that most people 'cross hundreds of geographical boundaries on a daily basis' (p.1) and this is certainly the case in relation to rivers, where structures such as bridges and ferries provide, in the most part, a straight-forward passage from one side of the river to the other. And yet, in focusing upon the river as a spatial area, I have

examined the physical landscape, and shown how rivers can be part of physical, political and personal realms of separateness and connection. In so doing, the research has drawn attention to the in-betweenness of borders, in framing the research approach through the spatial area of bank – river – bank, the value of which is expressed through MacFarlane (2012), where he states,

We lack – we need – a term for those places where one experiences a “transition” from a known landscape [...] to somewhere we feel and think significantly differently. I have for some time been imagining such transitions as “border crossings”. These borders do not correspond to national boundaries, and papers and documents are unrequired at them. Their traverse is generally unbiddable, and no reliable map exists of their routes and outlines (Macfarlane, 2012, p.78)

This thesis, situated on the river has contributed to examining the spaces where individuals experience a ‘transition’ between different landscapes, and has demonstrated rivers and river crossings to be fruitful spaces that interviewees value. Recording these subtleties was enabled through situating research on a local scale, where borders ‘do not correspond to national boundaries’, and where there is not an obvious distinction between one side and the other. This has enabled participants to take note of the landscape, and to examine the space of the river in-between. Taken together, these ‘routes and outlines’ have been physically situated on and across passenger ferries.

## 9.4 Final Remarks

To summarise, the main accomplishment of this thesis has been the collection of original qualitative empirical data relating to the diverse experiences of crossing a river, on a passenger ferry. Building on existing literature, I have developed the concept of the riverborderscape, to investigate rivers that run between places. This

thesis is not just about rivers, nor is it solely about ferries, but it centres upon the development of the riverborderscape, and has used passenger ferries that cross rivers to explore everyday borders, and the spaces on either side of borders, from the position of being in-between. In so doing, it has shown the benefits and further possibilities of situating research on water, and has brought together a wide range of literature within watery geographies, border studies and landscapes. And so, I'll finish by saying,

We cross rivers;  
or choose not to cross  
with all of this in mind.

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## Appendix A: Research Information Sheet

### Name of Principal Researcher

Eva McGrath, School of Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences, Plymouth University

### Title of Research

Across the River: the role of border watercourses and ferry crossings in shaping bankside identities

### About the Researcher

Hello! My name is Eva and I'm a Human Geography PhD student currently working on a geography project about river borders and ferry crossings in the South West. I am interested in the role of rivers and river crossings in shaping bankside communities and the lives of local people. I would love to talk to people who live by rivers, visit rivers, work on rivers, have special memories or stories about rivers and who cross over rivers on the ferry.

### About the Research

Whether we notice it or not, lots of rivers form borders of one kind or another. These can be international borders between nations, regional borders between counties, micro-scale borders between villages or even imagined borders.

People cross rivers for all sorts of reasons: from recreational to practical. It is this crossing of the river that this research is interested in, with a particular focus on ferry journeys across water in Devon and Cornwall.

My research explores how the ferry connects people on either side of the river and how the river shapes the lives and perceptions of communities by the river.

### Participating in the Research.

During the ferry season of 2018 and 2019, I will be conducting research in three river ferry locations around the South West - the Tamar, the Torridge and Helford - talking to those you are visiting the river, living by the river and crossing over the river on a ferry. If you are reading this, it means you have already expressed an interest in the project, or that you have just crossed over the river on a ferry!

If you are happy to continue the conversation with me, your opinions and thoughts will give an insight into the role of river ferries and will help to publicise and celebrate such a unique, watery form of transport within the South West. You will also be contributing to my PhD research project. Aspects of the research may go on to be published in academic journals or be discussed at conferences.

### What does it involve?

If you are happy to go forward with an interview, I will be asking you questions about the ferry, the crossing, the river, the border and your sense of place in this area.

You will have a choice of three interview styles: from the traditional to the active to the more the creative!

### Traditional

This style is what you might expect from a traditional interview. We will arrange to meet in a café, at a time that suits you. The interview will last about 20 minutes and in that time you will have an opportunity to discuss the river, the bankside community and the ferry crossing at length. I will ask you to bring a photograph of the river or ferry that is significant to you which will form part of our discussion.

### Active

This style will involve talking and walking. You choose the route, the length of time, the day, and the places along the river that are significant to you. If you are up for it, we could even go across the river on a ferry, to discuss these themes as they unfold around us.

### Creative

This style is for the creatively minded. You will be given either a camera or a video camera and be asked to take pictures or video footage as you cross over the river on a ferry. You will then re-watch this footage with Eva to discuss what you saw, how you felt and your experiences.

### **What are my rights?**

Whatever interview style you choose, you can be assured that at every stage your rights will be respected and maintained. This includes your right to withdraw, your right to anonymity and your right to confidentiality. If you give permission, your interview will be recorded and then transcribed for the purpose of research. At any time, you can ask to pause or stop the recording. Upon request, you can also have a copy of your transcript. If you choose to take pictures or videos, then you will be able to keep the original copy of your creative work, made on the river.

To assure you, the design of this research abides by the University of Plymouth's Ethical Principles for Research Involving Human Participants and Code of Good Practice in Research. If at any point you are concerned with the way in which this research is conducted, please contact the principle investigator in the first instance. If you feel the problem has not been resolved please contact the secretary to the Faculty of Science and Engineering Human Ethics Committee: Mrs. Paula Simson: [paula.simson@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:paula.simson@plymouth.ac.uk), 01752 584 503

If you have any questions or suggestions, please do feel free to contact me directly:

Eva McGrath

[eva.mcgrath@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:eva.mcgrath@plymouth.ac.uk)

School of Geography, Earth and Environmental Science,  
B422 Portland Square, Plymouth University, PL4 8AA





## Appendix B: Consent Form

### Across the River: the role of border watercourses and ferry crossings

#### Taking Part

- ☐ I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about this project.
- ☐ I agree to take part in the project and understand that my taking part is completely voluntary.
- ☐ If I choose to partake in an interview on the ferry, I will pay for my own fare
- ☐ I am happy for my interview to be audio recorded, so that it can be subsequently transcribed.

#### Rights

- ☐ To protect my identity and ensure anonymity, I agree to being given a pseudonym.
- ☐ I would prefer to use my name (first name only)
- ☐ I am aware that I maintain the right not to answer any question(s).
- ☐ I would like to be sent a copy of my interview transcript

**Participant signature**

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Full Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix C: Instructions (creative)

### INSTRUCTIONS FOR TAKING PHOTOGRAPHS AND VIDEOS

This is an opportunity for you to use either photographs or video cameras to document your ferry crossing experience. You will then be able to discuss your footage, as well as what you saw and felt whilst on the river with the researcher.

Feel free to take footage of anything that catches your eye, which is significant, encapsulates your mood or what you see which you are crossing the river on a ferry. This can include events on either bankside or the journey across the ferry too. If you are taking a video, you are more than welcome to incorporate commentary or a voice over.

You will be able to keep the original file of your creative act.

If you are happy, then I will use a copy of your footage as part of the research project entitled 'Across the River: the role of border watercourses and ferry crossings in shaping bankside identities' and, with your permission, may circulate your images in my research or for discussion at conferences.

The photographs and videos taken on the water will eventually become part of an exhibition to celebrate the ferry and the service it provides.

A simple request: do not take any photographs of people without their prior, written consent.

I hope you enjoy the creative crossing of the river!

**I understand that I must not take photographs of people without their informed, written consent**

**I understand that a copy of my photograph or video will be used as part of the research project Across the River**

**I understand that I may be asked if it is possible for my photograph or video to become part of an exhibition to celebrate the role of the ferry over the river.**

Participant signature

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Full Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



## Appendix D: Interview Guide

### Ferry Passenger

#### Ferry Passenger

Go through the information sheet and consent form, to check they are happy to proceed.

NB : the order of the questions, as well as the wording of the questions may change, to respond to interview dynamics

#### ICE BREAKER: River Reflections

I re-show them their copy of the reflection card, created on the river.

I ask them to explain their word choices, picture choices and to describe their ferry crossing experience: **Could you tell me about your reflection card?**

#### RIVER

*Resident:* How long have you lived by the river?

*Visitor:* Why did you choose to visit this river?

Do you have a special memory attached to the river?

#### BORDER

Do you see the river as a border? Do you understand there to be differences on either side of the river?

#### POLITICS OF PLACE

Do you see the river as dividing or connecting the two sides of the river?

Would you be able to explain your answer, with reference to your daily activities?

#### FERRY

How frequently do you travel on the ferry?

Why did you choose to use the ferry, as opposed to other forms of transport?

#### CROSSING THE RIVER

When you cross the river on a ferry, do you think about anything in particular?

Are you able to share a particularly memorable story of crossing the river?

#### FREE FLOW.

An opportunity for the participant to expand on anything discussed in the interview, or talk about any related rivery topics.

Thank you



## Appendix E: Interview Guide

### Ferry Personnel

#### Skipper/Deck-Hand/Volunteer

Go through the information sheet and consent form, to check they are happy to proceed.

NB : the order of the questions, as well as the wording of the questions may change, to respond to interview dynamics

#### ICE BREAKER: Love of the Ferry?

How long have you been working on the ferry? How did you first get into working on the ferry?

Why do you continue to work on the ferry?

#### RIVER

Have you always wanted to work on a river? Do you have a special memory or story attached to the river?

#### BORDER

Do you see the river as a border? Do you understand there to be differences on either side of the river?

#### POLITICS OF PLACE

Do you see the river as dividing or connecting the two sides of the river? Would you be able to explain your answer, with reference to your daily activities?

#### FERRY

Could you talk me through the route the ferry takes across the river? What's the hardest thing you have to negotiate whilst you are operating the ferry? What's the most rewarding element of being a ferry crew operator? Do you think it's important that the ferry is a public mode of transport?

#### CROSSING THE RIVER

When you cross the river on a ferry, do you think about anything in particular? Are you able to share a particularly memorable story of crossing the river?

#### FREE FLOW.

An opportunity for the participant to expand on anything discussed in the interview, or talk about any related river topics.

Thank you

## Appendix F: Risk Assessment


### Faculty of Science and Technology, School of Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences, Risk Assessment Form

**Project/Activity/Task:** Travelling to/staying in communities in Devon and Cornwall, travelling on the ferries for participant observation and initiating conversation with those on-board, talking to members of the public through the reflection card methodology and conducting interviews in the local area

**Emergency Telephone Numbers:** Dr Nichola Harmer, Professor Richard Yarwood, School of Geography Office

Hazard and likely consequences	No. at Risk	Uncontrolled Risk			How is the hazard controlled; (E.g. CoPs – Guidance Notes – mechanical measures – supervision – training etc.)	Residual Risk			Responsible Person
		L	S	LxS		L	S	LxS	
Travelling by car (personal mode of transport)	EM	3	4	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Using personal car (covered on business insurance). Ford KA 2009, next due MOT and service February 2019</li> <li>Will maintain vehicle in good working condition and comply with driving regulations.</li> <li>Plan regular rest breaks for longer journeys (min 15mins break every 2 hour recommended)</li> <li>Plan parking for convenience and personal safety.</li> <li>Check travel information on day of travel if possible</li> <li>Review weather conditions for duration and area of travel and plan accordingly.</li> <li>Prepare contingency plan for breakdowns. Always carry relevant documents for Breakdown Cover, and relevant contact details</li> <li>Carry Mobile phone and emergency contact details,</li> <li>Stop activity if deemed necessary</li> </ul>	1	4	4	EM
Travelling on the ferry (public mode of transport)	EM	3	4	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When travelling on the ferry, listen to crew member's health and safety instructions</li> <li>Be aware of where life jackets and emergency telephone are</li> <li>Do not travel on an overcrowded ferry, always abide by the maximum limit of passengers</li> </ul>	1	4	4	EM

By Water for reflection card methodology	EM	2	4	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When talking to members of the public through reflection card methodology, maintain appropriate distance from the river and stand on the quay</li> <li>• Be vigilant and careful when standing on quays, which may be wet.</li> <li>• Be aware of the tides and current</li> <li>• Wear footwear which is practical and non-slip</li> <li>• If I fall in, swim to shore</li> <li>• Only work during daylight hours</li> </ul>	1	4	4	EM
General environment	EM	2	3	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be prepared for British Summertime weather, which varies between hot, cold, windy, wet.</li> <li>• Carry suitable waterproofs</li> <li>• Apply sun cream during daylight hours even if not overtly sunny</li> <li>• Wear hat, sunglasses</li> <li>• If the weather is too severe, terminate activity.</li> <li>• Be aware of warning signs (headache). Keep hydrated, integrate regular breaks</li> </ul>	1	3	3	EM
Security for interviews	EM	2	4	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be aware of the area I visit for interviews, plan a route to location in advance and always take a map.</li> <li>• Establish a neutral location for interviewing such as a café or pub. When conducting a walking interview, always be aware of potential exit strategies</li> <li>• Communicate with participant at pre-arranged times and have an already agreed procedure to follow in the event of non-communication</li> <li>• Identify a safe location where I can rest and take breaks</li> <li>• Ensure I have mobile phone signal in location, or know where I can receive mobile phone signal</li> <li>• Establish consent to participate and outline research project before interviews begin</li> <li>• Remain vigilant and maintain a low profile</li> <li>• If appropriate, carry a personal alarm to attract attention in an emergency</li> <li>• If in doubt about the mood of the people participating, terminate activity</li> <li>• Report any untoward behavior, alerting police</li> </ul>	1	4	8	EM
Inappropriate or provocative behaviour	EM	2	3	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be fully aware of any professional, social or cultural norms;</li> <li>• Be aware of the potential gender dynamics of interactions</li> <li>• Be aware of ways to establish the right 'social distance' - neither over-familiar nor too detached.</li> </ul>	1	3	3	EM

Approved Signature		Print	M Hagger, SOGEES Health and Safety Officer	Date	02/03/18
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			Severity				
			Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Extreme
			1	2	3	4	5
Likelihood	Probable	5	5	10	15	20	25
	Very Likely	4	4	8	12	16	20
	Likely	3	3	6	9	12	15
	Possible	2	2	4	6	8	10
	Not Likely	1	1	2	3	4	5

Risk Rating					
Low		Medium		High	

Severity		Likelihood	
5	Extreme – Multiple Fatalities	5	Probable
4	High – Single Fatality or Multiple Serious Injuries	4	Very Likely
3	Medium – RIDDOR Reportable Injury	3	Likely
2	Low – Minor Injury, no lost time	2	Possible
1	Very Low – No injury / Near miss	1	Not Likely