

'I would much rather be still here and travel in time': the intertwinedness of mobility and stillness in cottage living

MAJA LAGERQVIST



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Along with urbanisation and modernisation, the use of second homes has increased in the Western world. This can be seen as part of the increasing mobility of people in society, but also as part of a search for stillness and escape from modern urban society. Recently, scholars in geography and other disciplines have argued that mobility and fixity are two sides of the same coin. This paper aims to explore the complex, manifold and often paradoxical relationship between mobility and immobility in practices of dwelling and seeking stillness in a highly mobile society. It elaborates on how mobility and stillness, in both space and time, are intertwined and mutually influence each other by analysing second home usage of old cottages that formally were dwelling houses of poor tenant smallholdings in Sweden. How do mobility and stillness exist and interact at these cottages and what parts do the cottages themselves have in this? This is studied through interviews with cottage users regarding their daily life practices and encounters with history and materiality at the cottages. These cottages are easily thought of as places of immobility where time has stood still. However, the paper shows that these cottages are places that continuously emerge through entanglements of mobility and stillness and of present and past times. The practices and experiences of mobility and stillness at the cottage are much integrated in and directed by the cottages' specific geography, history and materiality, and the activities and thinking of their users because of these characteristics. The users go to the cottage to be at a place where they, with the help of the preserved materiality and history of the cottages, can feel rooted and still. At the same time the cottages offer imaginary time travels and experiences of other times and lifestyles.

Keywords: Sweden, mobility, stillness, interviews, second homes, materiality, time-travelling

Maja Lagerqvist, Department of Human Geography, Stockholm University, SE 106 91 Stockholm, Sweden. E-mail: maja.lagerqvist@humangeo.su.se

Introduction

Picture yourself strolling down a small gravel road in the seemingly uninhabited Swedish countryside. Further ahead, a small one-story cottage is at the end of the road and you cannot help but appreciate its red painted wooden walls and aged windows. Scents from the wild flowering garden, with its roses, lilacs and old gnarly apple trees, fill the air. The cottage is surrounded by old stone walls, a small barn and small-scale fields, and fur-

ther beyond it, the forest and a few more arable fields and pastures frame the area. It is an old dwelling-place run down by the hand of time, formerly home to the poor family of a tenant smallholder, a home that lacks hot running water. The bone-chilling cold of winter and the dewy mornings of spring and autumn are meekly driven away by the old wood-burning stove in the antiquated kitchen, sparsely aided by one or two small radiators. Simple electricity has been installed to make everyday life work. Besides that, the interior is kept

old-fashioned and simple, guided by values of simplicity, patina and heritage and a romantic idea of the rural idyll, but also by the assets of money, time and desire. Life at the cottage revolves around quality time with family and friends, relaxing from work and urban life and keeping the old, worn and ever decaying, yet still picturesque, cottage and its garden in shape. This picture that you now have in front of you serves as an illustration of the places where many Swedes spend, or dream of spending, their summer holidays. Today, these cottages have strong idyllic connotations and great symbolic values connected to national identity and dreams of summer holidays, stillness and the "good old days".

Along with urbanisation and modernisation, the use of second homes has increased in Sweden, as in many other parts of the Western world (Löfgren 1999). The trend can be seen as part of the increasing mobility of people, things and information in modern society (Sheller 2011) but also as part of a search for stillness and an escape from that society (Halfacree 2011). This paper aims to provide a much needed engagement with the complex, manifold and often paradoxical interrelationship between mobility and immobility in practices of dwelling and seeking stillness in what is often experienced as a highly mobile and rapidly changing society. This is done by exploring practices connected to movement and stillness at old cottages used as second homes in Sweden. Two questions guide the analysis. How do mobility and stillness exist and interact at these cottages? What parts do the cottages themselves, with their history and materiality, have in their present users' practices and experiences of mobility and stillness? The cottages in focus here represent a specific type of second-home in Sweden that originates from the now abolished historical agricultural system of tenant small holdings called *torp* in Swedish. It is in this particular sense the term *cottage* is used in this paper; as the dwelling house of a former tenant small holding that is now used as a second home. As a consequence of that history, this type of cottage is usually older than most purpose built houses that are used as second homes in Sweden. Although linked to histories of emigration to North America, local migration and abandonment, these cottages, like many old rural dwellings, are easily thought of as immobile and fixed places, as historical places where time has stood still. Looking at the cottage described above, there are not many signs of mobility or movement, except the wind in the trees,

someone having her morning coffee on the steps in front of the house, the industrious work of someone clearing the land in the garden or re-erecting an old stonewall, and a car parked somewhere nearby. However, while these dwellings can be perceived as immobile or slow places, and are highly valued for those characteristics, their existence is a much more complex configuration of various practices of both mobility and stillness than they might appear at first sight. Thus, this paper provides insights on how places such as these cottages emerge through entanglements of mobility and stillness and highlights aspects of materiality and the past in the present in this emergence.

Mobility, materiality, time travelling and second homes

The capacity of built environment and architectural spaces to facilitate, form, constrain, and channel movement has not, until recently, received much focus in research on mobility. Now, within what loosely can be termed "the new mobilities paradigm" (Sheller & Urry 2006), a growing literature concerned with this has emerged among social and cultural geographers and other scholars, as "[m]obility is always located and materialized" (Sheller & Urry 2004: 2). This growing interest in the spatial groundings and material infrastructure in research on mobility can be seen in the works of Adey (2007) and Crang (2002) on airports, Strohmayr (2011) on bridges, Merriman (2005) on motorways, Saville (2008) on creativity and movement in architectural spaces and Rérat and Lees (2011) on gentrification and urban geography. An academic merging of materiality and mobility can also be found in the growing focus on non-representational approaches and how human beings sense and experience places and movements (e.g. Crouch 2000; Bondi et al. 2005; Wylie 2005; McCormack 2008; Doughty 2013, see also Hannam et al. 2006; Sheller 2011).

Overall, there is a new appreciation of materiality in recent works in the social sciences and humanities. In the history of human geography, material dimensions have often been the focus for both explanations and consequences (Jackson 2000). Later on, social constructivist perspectives and the cultural turn developed and thus great attention was paid to discourses and representations and how these influenced people and places (as in

much work that followed Cosgrove & Daniels 1988). The role of materiality in this became fairly downplayed, perhaps to break with the earlier academic focus and because such influence in many cases was, and still is, perceived as obvious. Responses to this development can be seen in the newer, and quite diverse, attention to materiality, as in the works by Mitchell (1996) on landscape morphology and labour struggles, Edensor (2005) on industrial ruins and Cashman (2006) on how material remains from the past influence present practices and ideas about the past. The importance of materiality is also reflected in research on tourism (Haldrup & Larsen 2006; Ramsey 2009) and human relationships with nature and objects (Whatmore 2002). In recent mobility research, this interest in materiality is present in discussions that highlights the importance of also paying attention to immobility, stillness and moorings in the world and to the complex relationships that link mobility and immobility together (Crang 2002; Urry 2003; Sheller 2004; Hannam et al. 2006). As a part of this, several scholars have recently argued that mobility/movement and immobility/fixity are two sides of the same coin (see e.g. Rérat & Lees 2010), recognizing “stability-within-movement and movement-within-stability” (Halfacree 2011: 146). This paper takes this as a point of departure and elaborates on some of the different ways mobility and stillness can be seen as intertwined and as mutually influencing and empowering each other. The dwellings in focus in this paper – the cottages – can be seen as spatial, immobile and material moorings. However, while they bring stillness and continuity to life they also configure, enable and require various mobilities.

This paper interacts with the increasing amount of literature that places new emphasis on materiality, while not forgetting the importance of the more immaterial dimensions of the world we live in and the togetherness of these two dimensions. In many studies on mobility, the main concern has been the movement of people and goods. This kind of mobility is of course crucial in this paper since the utilisation of second homes comprises human beings travelling from their ordinary, permanent homes to somewhere else. However, the paper is also concerned with another type of mobility, namely the imaginary (even though the imagination has an embodied dimension): that is, the imaginary travelling back in time. Time travel, and related concepts like re-enactment and living history, is characteristic of how we approach the past

in contemporary society. It has become increasingly significant in tourism, entertainment and education, especially museum and heritage pedagogy (Anderson 1984; Lowenthal 1985; Crang 1996; Gustafsson 2002; Petersson 2003; Agnew 2004; Sandström 2005; Westergren 2006; Holtorf 2009). Archaeologist Cornelius Holtorf defines time travel as “an experience and social practice in the present that evokes a past (or future) reality” (Holtorf 2009: 33). The emphasis on experiences reflects the significance of the senses, in mind and body, which govern time travel. Importantly, what time travel actually does is that it evokes a pastness (Lowenthal 2002: 17; Holtorf 2005: 127–129) rather than the past. Pastness has little to do with actual age, it is a contemporary quality or condition of being past that comes with the perception of something being past (Holtorf 2009: 35). In the words of Hannam et al. (2006: 14), imaginative travel, like travelling in time, “involves experiencing or anticipating in one’s imagination the ‘atmosphere of place’”. Atmosphere is neither reducible to the material infrastructure nor to the discourses of representation”. However, material remains are very effective in providing pastness and evoking life in past periods through the sensual experiences they afford (Lowenthal 1985; Holtorf 2009).

Second homes

Keith Halfacree (2012: 216) has stated that “[i]n the era of mobilities, people have not ceased to dwell but as being changes so do ways of dwelling, and the latter can now incorporate consumption (and production) of second homes”. The usage of second homes can be seen as a kind of temporary mobility (Hall & Müller 2003) and, consequently, most research on second homes touches upon questions of mobility. Research on second homes with a specific focus on questions of mobility has for instance paid attention to the bodily performance of movement in second-home tourism (Haldrup 2004), how practices and ideas of mobility and land use influence second-home areas (Overvåg 2009) and how second-home migration generates new social groups in the countryside (Müller 1999). Others have dwelled on the ‘home’ aspect, and discussed how the contemporary increase of second homes expresses changes in our cultural attitudes towards ‘home’ (Ellingsen & Hidle 2012). Halfacree (2011) has highlighted that there are different readings of the use of second homes. It can be perceived as an important

dimension for achieving a sense of home in times of frequent house moves and associated uprootedness, but also as a flight from, and challenge to, the busyness of the urban middle-class everyday life. This issue is linked to key questions in second-home research, namely why people have second homes and what the significance of these homes in people's lives, and in society today, can be. The phenomenon of second homes is quite complex and diverse. As Zoran Roca states in the anthology *Second home tourism in Europe*: "The complexity of the driving forces across diverse geographic contexts have resulted in countless types of second homes – ranging from old to modern buildings and from modest to opulent dwelling units, from isolated locations to contiguous developments...as well as in numerous motives to own, purposes of use and frequency of occupancy of second homes." (Roca 2013: IXX). Second homes can thus be very different and there are many reasons for having and using a second home. The more commonly known reasons are based on dreams or aspirations for simplicity, tradition, going back to nature, and experiencing continuity, roots and peace and quiet (Cohen & Taylor 1978; Williams & Kaltenborn 1999). A second home can be an escape from the hectic life in a city (Hall & Müller 2004). It can be a way of experiencing other dimensions of life, living life differently and "temporarily disengag[ing] from a deficient mainstream everyday life" (Halfacree 2011: 150). It can be used to revitalize life, which makes the second home integrated with, rather than separated from, ordinary life (Overvåg 2009; Halfacree 2010).

Williams and Kaltenborn (1999: 196–197) write about life at the second home as being an escape from modernity into something more rooted, where the emphasis is on the continuity of time and space and a return to nature and simplicity, "an escape for home, not just from home" (Crouch 1994: 96). Second-home researchers Kaltenborn (1998) and Quinn (2004) have argued that people need to attach to a 'home' or have a place to return to from time to time in a society marked by a highly mobile lifestyle, and that this need can be served by a second home. On the other hand, a second home can also be seen as an "extension of modernity" (Williams & Kaltenborn 1999: 197), since modern life and development have made second-home mobility possible. Thus, as Williams and Patten (2006) highlight, the use of second homes, and the second home itself, can represent both a yearning for mobility and adventure and a nostalgic

longing for roots. This double-nature of second homes makes a study of cottages a way to further the elaboration on the now often stated intertwinedness of mobility and stillness, in particular since these old cottages allow for such an analysis to include an extra dimension; the entanglements of present and past times.

Introducing the cottages: from poor smallholdings to leisure dwellings

Nowhere in the world is second-home ownership as common as in the Nordic countries, and Sweden has a long, and widespread, tradition of second homes (Müller 2007). The focus here is, as already stated, a particular type of second homes in Sweden. This type consists of cottages that formerly were the dwelling houses of tenant smallholdings (so-called *torp*). The study is based on in-depth interviews conducted between 2007 and 2009 with users of thirteen cottages located in three different areas (Värmland, Småland and Uppland) in Sweden. These users were chosen based on the history (as part of a *torp*) and the present use (as a second home) of their cottage. The interviews were part of a larger study of the historic transformation of *torp* in Sweden (Lagerqvist 2011). Most of the interviews were conducted at the cottages and included an almost obligatory cup of coffee and a guided tour of the cottage and its surroundings. This visiting interview provided opportunities to observe, and at the same time talk about, daily life practices and encounters with history and materiality at the specific cottages. For an example of a cottage, see figure 1.

These cottages are often associated with rural Swedish summer idylls. Yet, they also have an older and harsher side to their history, a history of poverty and hard work. Before they started being used as second homes, e.g. from the 17th century up until the mid-1900s, they were homes for a group of rural poor, *torpare*, that rented a piece of land and a small cottage from large farms or estates. In a historical sense, a *torp* can thus be defined as a small tenant holding, like a small farm, on someone else's land (Bäck 1992). Due to industrialisation, urbanisation, changes in agriculture organisation and techniques as well as poor living and working conditions at the *torp*, they started to be abandoned from the second part of the 19th century, and especially after 1900. Interestingly, as



Fig. 1. One of the cottages in the study (photo M. Lagerqvist 2007).

the number of various agricultural and industrial workers grew and the number of torp and torpare started to decline, idealised representations of them became visible in a number of novels and political debates. In these works, the torp was portrayed as an idyllic and good, yet poor, home that brought up decent, hardworking, faithful and un-socialistic rural Swedish citizens, as opposed to the unreliable and revolting labourers in the industries (Lagerqvist 2011).¹ This positive view existed among many politicians and landowners. Many of the users themselves, however, left these small-holdings for better conditions elsewhere if they had the opportunity (Svensson 2002). Nonetheless, the narrative of the cottage as an idyllic, ideal Swedish home has prevailed. This has been evi-

dent in media, in particular in writings on second homes, since the 1960s. Following urbanisation and increased mobility, prosperity and leisure time, many torp-cottages have, since the 1950s, been converted into second homes. Hence, these dwellings have acquired new economic, functional, social and symbolic values and are in most cases totally separated from the land that provided the livelihood for its former users. They are now associated with leisure, consumption, home-furnishing styles, preservation ideas and national identity; values which one imagines would have astonished the former users of the cottages.

The interviewed inhabitants of the cottages were all aged between 40 and 80. The users consisted mostly of families with children, or were older

couples with adult children. They all lived in urban areas, in houses or in apartments, for most of the year, and they mostly used their cottage, whether it was their own or rented, during the summertime. Those who lived nearby often travelled to the cottage on the weekends during the rest of the year. In contrast to the former users of the *torp*, the large and poor families of tenant smallholders, the present-day users in this study show some diversity in regard to socio-economic status, but display much less diversity in terms of ethnicity. They were all white Swedes (although there is a general increase in other northern Europeans as users/owners of second homes in Sweden, see Müller 1999). Overall, the use of second homes in Sweden has been quite common and has not only been an elite phenomenon since the mid-1900s. A large supply of abandoned and unmodern, and therefore accessible and relatively low-priced, cottages or other rural dwellings made a rented or purchased second home an option for large portions of the Swedish population as prosperity, leisure time and individual mobility increased during the post-war period (Pihl Atmer 1998; Löfgren 1999). In general, second homes in the Nordic countries have been interpreted with a stronger focus on their connections to common traditions and national identity, rather than on elitism and affluence (Williams & Kaltenborn 1999; Hall & Müller 2004; Periäinen 2006; Müller 2007; Lagerqvist 2011). However, even in the Nordic cases of second home usage, the presence of issues regarding class and elite consumption are hard to reject (see Halfacree 2011 for a criticism of the lack of analysis of second homes as elite consumption in the Nordic countries). Even though the second home phenomenon in the Nordic countries might be distinctive in some ways, many issues of the cottages that are brought to light in this paper, such as the entanglements of mobility and stillness and the significance of materiality and history, do have resonance in second home practices elsewhere.

Going to and being at the cottage

This part of the paper discusses the empirical findings from the interviews with the cottage users. It illustrates how the cottage and the practices there are very much produced through both mobility and stillness.

Stillness, continuity and materiality

For many of the users, the cottages contain and provide continuity and stillness and this is partly connected to them being old places with an unmodern appearance, something I will return to later in the paper. The sense of fixity and of the cottage as a place of stillness is also created in other ways. Similar to other types of second homes, the interviews revealed the cottage as a place where you can belong, stay rooted, relax and experience different dimensions of life. The users travel to the cottage for peace and quiet, to be rooted. However, the practices there actually do not only entail stillness, but also very much involve movement and bodywork. As with most second homes, life at the cottage seems to revolve around relaxation from urban and work life, meeting or gathering family and friends but also fixing, renovating and doing garden work. Most users stated that "there is always something to do at a cottage" (all quotes are translated from Swedish by the author). This is a statement that is connected to cottages often being old buildings built during the 19th century, with less than modern standards in regard to heating, sewerage and water supply. They are buildings in "constant decay", as one user expressed it. At the cottage, relaxation seems for many to come from doing actual bodywork: putting your hands into the soil and working it, removing vegetation and stones in the garden and having to use your body in order to get water and fire wood into the cottage. One user explained: "It is a bit primitive, you can't take a shower every day and you have to walk over to the water pump to get fresh water. It is slower, and that's how we want it. These things are what makes it calm and relaxing here."

Moreover, a large number of the cottages have been kept within the families for decades. Many of the interviewed users considered their cottage as one of the most important places in their lives, while their permanent homes were just somewhere they lived when they had to work. The cottage is thus often really more of a first home than a second one. This has also been highlighted in the second-home literature. Marjavaara (2008) and Kaltenborn (1998) have both argued that the second home does not necessarily have to be located on a lower level than the permanent 'first' home in a dwelling hierarchy. Jansson and Müller (2003) points out that people may change their permanent homes but seem less likely to change their

second home; this is kept throughout the course of life, and also often within a family. Thus, second homes provide continuity, across the life course and across generations (Williams & Kaltenborn 1999: 223, see also Müller et al. 2010).

Beside many of the cottages being kept within families for longer periods than ordinary residences, the sense of continuity at the cottages is also enhanced by their history, in that they were homes in the past. The idea that someone has actually lived there before, and survived, is strong and often articulated. In the kitchen of her cottage, a user explained how she sometimes reflects: "When the lightning strikes, I use to think, well this cottage has stood here since the 19th century, it's been experiencing this before, it can take this! So you do feel the breath of history, there has been people here for long, living and struggling...and now we're here."

Consequently, many of the users talked about gaining a sense of rootedness from dwelling at the cottage. It is perceived as a fixed point in life and in society. While the rest of life is passing – kids grow up, workplaces change and generations pass – the cottage and life there stay (more or less intentionally) the same. The cottages are thus seen as places of stillness, rootedness, pause and continuity, a continuity that can stem from personal and family histories as well as from the past of the specific cottage or more general national history. These qualities are much appreciated and are often compared to the current, fast-changing modern society. The significance of feeling rooted and connected to the past is, however, not only visible in the interviews. Rather, it is also an argument for why modern Swedes need, and love, these cottages that has been strongly present in media discourses since the booming of cottages as second homes in the post-war period (Lagerqvist 2011). Media's descriptions of the cottage can boost these places with an even more positively charged atmosphere of being fixed and, as described by several users, as being "something apart from modern society".

The sense of the cottage as an immobile and rooted place is also much connected to its old and worn materiality. Much effort is put into decorating cottages genuinely and preserving their old characteristics, and much enjoyment is derived from the simplicity and pastness of them. The original users' harsh conditions and the respect of the "hard work and poverty that made Sweden what it is today", as one modern user put it, seems to add

meaning to the present-day lives there. It makes the stillness of the cottage today even more accentuated, and valued. The old material forms of the cottages and their sense of place generates a fixation of time, a sense of time standing still or slowing down (links between materiality and time will be discussed in more detail later on). Furthermore, the users' practices of preservation and their efforts to keep the cottages simple and old-fashioned reinforce the sense of continuity, stillness and fixity there. This makes the cottages become even more "apart" from the rest of the modern, mobile and fast-changing society. Nevertheless, as much else in this world, these cottages are not stable, fixed and durable entities, but are always in processes of morphing and becoming (Hannam et al. 2006: 10).

Movement for stillness and rootedness in one place

Simply by being second homes the cottages require a certain degree of mobility in space. All interviewees used cars to get to their cottage. Some even rented a car for the summer in order to be able to be there. The cottage therefore requires mobility simultaneously as being the material base in a search for stillness and temporal fixity. That the users have to be mobile to be able to get to a place where they can be rooted and still illustrates a very apparent intertwined situation with stillness and movement. This points at the first half of Halfacrees (2011: 146) recognition of "stability-within-movement and movement-within-stability". However, the mobility of the cottages also encompasses more than spatial and material travelling.

Imaginative travelling, moving bodies

The unmodern materiality of the cottages and the sense of stillness, continuity and pastness that they provide, along with the users' practices of preservation, provide opportunities for people to make other trips; imaginative travels into the past. As one user explained: "I have no need to travel abroad; I would much rather be still here and travel in time". However, in contrast to heritage pedagogy or leisure entertainment, the time travelling and re-enactment of the past at the cottages are not always so conscious and intentional. They can happen in a variety of ways and at a variety of intensities, ranging from just thinking of

the past to more or less living as in "the old days". The following quotations from two users illustrate this:

"For me the past is present here, you saw the ruin down there...and when renovating the shed and the barn we thought a lot about how they lived before, how they used these houses and how it all looked. What kind of animal did they have? It is not like we have done research, it is just that these thoughts emerge when we're here."

"All these small things, they are the cottage life, and it is like the old *torp* living. To go for water and firewood, that is what we find so cosy."

The interest in the cottage and its history, that someone had lived there before, have for most of the users been triggered by being and living at an old cottage, and practising life and work there themselves. A user explained how just being at the cottage evoked thoughts and emotions; "Everything here has a history, a past... You just walk around in the cottage or the garden and just feel something; it is a lot of emotions and thinking. Because you know where it all comes from, its origin, everything has a story to tell us."

The sensual encounters with the materiality of the cottage, its small-scaled characteristics and old, worn forms, the old relics in the surrounding landscape and all the histories embedded in them, influence the feelings and practices of the users. They create gateways for thinking about, and experiencing, past times. As one user said, "It is hard not to think of all the lives that have passed here, when being and living in the same cottage". The users talked frequently about the significant experiences of actually doing the same things as past users. Many spoke of making dinner for several people in an old-fashioned kitchen, fetching firewood and making a fire on a cold summer morning, moving their feet over the old and worn wooden floor, bending their necks when passing through a low doorframe, walking on old and used paths, growing and eating their own potatoes, using old materials and tools when fixing the cottage and repairing or building stone-walls.²

The atmosphere that creates a sense of pastness cannot, as stated by Hannam et al. (2006), simply be reduced to either materiality or discourse. Yet, the importance of the material infrastructure for thinking about the past (as highlighted by Holtorf 2009) is prevalently articulated in the interviews:

"Well, you always get reminded, it makes you drift. When the flowers come up in spring, we always wonder: who put these into the soil? It is not a dead thing, the cottage, it is like it stands here and waits for you...and it is all part of it: all these old things, its pastness, all that has happened here and how you always wonder about it."

The interviewees often made references to former users of their cottage when they spoke about life there and, more specifically, what they had changed or preserved at the cottage. However, references were also made to more general historic knowledge about *torp* in the past and to popular novels and movies about *torpare*, as ways of talking about how life and existence had been, and in some ways still were, at the cottage. One user highlighted the interest in, closeness to and empathy with the past users of her cottage, saying: "Living here and seeing all the remains makes you wonder how the families lived and carried on here in the past. All these stones and ditches, such hard work! There are traces of people everywhere here." Likewise, several of the users talked about how they felt the presence of the past, and the passing of time, when being at the cottage. See figure 2 for one example of a user showing the everyday experience of pastness and the closeness of long gone lives of others at her cottage. The closeness to the past makes the contrasts between the modern holiday life and the harsh lives of earlier users very apparent. This seems to add value and meaning to present-day lives on the cottage. The contrast, which fascinates the users a great deal, has become an important part of understanding the history of the cottage as part of an old *torp* as well as an essential part of its present place identity. As one user put it: "We have been thinking about what 19th century users would think of the modernities we have installed here, and vice versa, how would we cope if we were to go back and live here in the 19th century?" Accordingly, living at the cottage, and in various ways going back in time, makes the users think of the present as well as of the past. One user described it this way: "Being at the cottage makes us very aware of how lucky we are today, even if there are some parts of life in the past that we in a way long for. The simplicity, the real life...". Perhaps this feeling of what is good but also real and important in life is part of why people are enchanted by these old cottages? They make their users experience past times, while they simultaneously raise the awareness of the advantages, and disadvantages, of the present time. The



Fig. 2. Material traces of older lives at the cottage (photo M. Lagerqvist 2007).

idyll today gains significance from the awareness of the poverty that existed in the same place not too long ago. Following Crang (1996), DeLyser (2003) and Cashman (2006), engagement with the past does not have to be counterproductive and conservative. It can also be an avenue for a reflexive and critical interpreting of past, and contemporary, times.

Having established the recycling and fixing of the past at the cottages, a few words should be said on how this occurs regarding materiality. It is done by both large measures and small details, such as a preserved wall, renovated old windows, and old materials found and kept, including a dog's leash, keys, maps and photographs. There are strong ideas guiding how a "real cottage" and life there should be. A great deal of time and substantial resources are devoted to saving or reinstating as much as possible of

what is seen as the "original" or "real" cottage, decorating it "correctly" and creating an "an old-fashioned cottage style". If some of the "real cottage" characteristics are missing, these are added in order to make the cottage as it should be (or should have been). Many of the cottages are thus being recreated with old, or new-but-old-looking, additions to become more genuine. This resonates with Umberto Eco's (1986) term *hyper-reality*, where the difference between the fake and the original is engulfed and the former sometimes even become more real than the latter. The preserved, or sometimes created, unmodern materiality makes the users think of and adapt to, but also in many ways value, a more simple and unmodern way of living. To introduce modern technology in the heating or water supply would destroy the atmosphere of the place and its pastness, many of the users argue.

The argument for preserving the pastness and the simplicity, and not modernising the cottages, is to a large extent grounded in a respect for past users and for the cottage itself; it "deserves to be treated with respect and be kept as it was", one user told me. A user described the hard, but important, work with the continuous preservation of the landscape of the cottage by stating "It is a lot of work! I'm trying to keep the landscape open, and it is killing me! ...But I think it is important to keep it open as it was." The practices of preservation and keeping some selected old ways of living reinforce the experience of continuity at the cottage. One user described how he and his partner have tried to keep the past of the cottage while also making it their own: "We have tried to save all of the old things and materials that we have been able to save... although some things have been moved and reused in new places. You can in a way follow the history of the cottage in the traces from the changes that we, and earlier users, have done."

The saving, or creating, of old characteristics can be thought of as influencing what environmental psychologist James Gibson (1979) would have called the affordances of the cottage. An affordance, here explained in a fairly basic fashion, of something refers to what this something can offer its user, and by that enable or complicate actions in mind or body. For example, a handle of a tea cup provides an affordance for holding. Hence, what can the cottages offer its users, besides being a material shelter for holiday living? One affordance, as pointed out above, is a sense of continuity and rootedness. Another of its affordances is how the cottage enables time-travelling. The more effort put into preserving or recreating the pastness of the cottage and the past life there, the more likely it seems to be for the users to get the feeling of the cottage as being part of a different time, and for them to make that trip in time when coming to the cottage. Even if the practice of going back in time was not mentioned as such by all the users, most of them have put effort into conserving or creating a certain pastness and keeping the simplicity of the cottage. In this, one can observe a trip into the past and into a seemingly less complicated life. Imaginative time-travelling is often based on a longing for times that are considered to have been simpler (Anderson 1984: 183ff; Petersson 2003: 337). However, the fine thing about imaginative travels is that they can be partial and momentary. Most users were very aware of the hard times of the past, in particular for *torpare*, and ap-

preciated living most of their time in the present and being able to choose what parts of unmodernity and modernity to have and experience at the cottage.

Here mobility and stillness become very much intertwined and they mutually influence each other. The users go to the cottage to be at a place where they, with the help of the preserved materiality and history, can feel still and rooted. At the same time the cottage makes them think of, travel to and physically experience other times and lifestyles. To deepen this idea, one can actually speak of two types of time-travelling. The first one is looking back and travelling into a non-personal and, in a way, more general Swedish history. The past that is travelled into here is often a quite selective Swedish history fashioned by collective national memories of these cottages (and of *torp*) reinforced by education, novels, movies, arts and magazines. This trip is also often connected to the specific cottages of the users, depending on how much information they have on the history of their cottage. While talking to the users, it became evident that most of them could refer to the names of and anecdotes about at least some of the former users. Many showed me traces of past users with explanations like "this is where they got their water in the past" and "the path we are walking now is the old path to the cottage".

Secondly, the time travels can also be into family or personal history. Many of the users have, so to speak, gathered their lives at the cottage, through both objects and memories. Thus, the cottage becomes a shrine of private or family memories. "You see, this is our own family tradition", a user explained to me after giving me a winding tour at the cottage and its garden. The tour was full of stories stretching from the old *torpare* to his own parents and grandchildren. Hence, the cottage enables the users to travel in various periods of the past at the same time, while also being in the present. The stories and remainders that can be embedded in the materiality have also been highlighted by Cresswell and Hoskins (2008: 395); "The material nature of buildings...means that they endure—not forever perhaps—but for considerable passages of time. Endurance provides an anchor for stories that circulate in and around a place. It reminds us of things". To sum it all up, being or becoming aware of the past takes the users on imaginary trips. The mind slips away back into history for a longer or shorter while, although often with

the person's own body and own experiences at the cottage as a starting point for further thinking. Time-travelling at the cottage is therefore imaginative. It is guided and enacted in the mind of the users, but it is also often quite practical and corporeal, guided and enacted by the body and its engagement with the environment as part of actually living at an old cottage.

Looking back into history: a decrease of mobility at the cottage?

Historically, as long as these cottages have existed, they have been implicated in contemporary mobility practices. The inhabitants of the cottage when it was the dwelling of a *torp* were constantly changing. Then, users moved to and from the cottages at a much higher rate than contemporary users do. When the cottages were a part of small holdings during the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, they were homes for the rural poor sometimes for only a few months, but more commonly for a few years at a time, depending on the tenure contracts. After that, the user family moved away and another family replaced them. A study of the users of over 150 cottages in Sweden since the late 17th century to 2010 shows a general increase in the number of years per family, and hence time to, so to speak, grow roots, after the 1950s. This reflects the time when the cottages started to be used as second homes (Lagerqvist 2011). So while these cottages may seem like immobile places, dwellings with continuity that stretches through history, they have actually been ever-transforming and quite fluid places. They have had large changes in regard to users and conditions over time, even if the material forms of the cottages in some respects have persisted. This rate of moving and changing users has only slowed down during the second half of the 20th century. It was then replaced with another type of movement: the back-and-forth travelling between first and second homes. Hence, the decades around the 1950s were times of change for these dwellings in terms of mobility. In a way, their modern history is an account of a decrease of mobility in an otherwise highly, and increasingly so, mobile society. Yet, it is also a story of how they became part of another type of mobility that was enmeshed with strives for stillness and continuity, as second homes.

Concluding remarks

By its history and preserved appearance, a cottage can afford an atmosphere of stillness, fixity, continuity and pastness. Simultaneously, as a consequence of these characteristics, it provides several types of mobilities, such as imaginary travelling in time, besides the obvious mobility in travelling between homes. The experiences at the cottage described by the users reflect Marcel Proust's argument in *Swann's way* (2003, first published in French 1913), the first volume of his classic novel *In Search of Lost Time*, where the human senses open up the contact between the past and the present. Proust speaks of how one's own memories and past come to life through the experiences of sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch. The pastness of the cottage is different from Proust's writing in that it is not exclusively connected to personal history. Knowledge or memories of a more collective kind, created by media, education and popular novels and movies can also be influential. These can work beside or together with personal memories and present sensual encounters in shaping experiences of the cottages and enabling time-travelling or other practices there. Furthermore, the imaginary time-travelling at the cottage is seldom a journey taken from a cosy armchair. It is an imaginative trip into the past but, as shown, it is often guided by a very physical engagement with the cottage. This creates bodily experiences and activates thinking and drifting. This points to the significance of practical experiences regarding how places are produced and understood, which also has been argued for in much recent geographical literature (see e.g. Crouch 2000; Wylie 2005; Haldrup & Larsen 2006; Simonsen 2007; Anderson & Harrison 2010).

Drawing on empirical evidence, this paper illuminates the integration and interaction of practices of mobilities and stillness at one specific, but not unique, type of second home. This has been done by highlighting different kinds of mobilities, in space and time, and how these mobilities are linked to stillness and perceived fixity and continuity. The cottages are easily thought of in terms of immobility and fixity, as places of stability and continuity. At the same time as society is becoming more high-tech, mobile and modern, these dwellings are kept very simple and seemingly unchanged. They are valued for being the opposite of the fast-changing urban and modern society and for providing fixity in life: "the journey to the sec-

ond home is also a journey of nostalgic proportions" (Ellingsen & Hidle 2012: 15). Now, one should not forget that the processes of urbanisation and modernisation and the increasing mobility of people today is the very basis for the possibility of spending all the time and money that people do at these cottages, and thus for being "rooted" and still there and enjoying their unmodern simplicity. This point is also made by Williams and Kaltenborn (1999) when they highlighted that second homes can be an extension of, as well as an escape from, modern society. The cottage may be perceived as a fixed, immobile, and perhaps even conservative place, yet it offers its user opportunities to come closer to and experience the past and different ways of living. As an old dwelling-place it enables opportunities to reflect upon, and travel to, several different histories while still remaining in the present. Echoing Doreen Massey's (2005) argument about places being hybrids of several places, these cottages can also very much be hybrids of several different times. An understanding of these places and of the practices of being at them in the here-and-now is very much about the here-and-then-and-now.

Conclusively, while these cottages can be perceived as immobile places firmly grounded in the soil by stone and timber, and are highly valued for that, the existence of these cottages is a much more complex configuration of requirements and affordances of various practices of mobility. This is also part of why they still exist. These cottages are places that continuously emerge through entanglements of mobility and stillness and of multiple times. The practices of mobility at the cottage are much integrated in and directed by the specific geography, history and materiality of the cottages, and the activities and thinking of their users because of these characteristics. What we see here is the significant role that certain places can themselves play in the construction of practices and experiences of mobility and stillness (a similar conclusion is stated by Hoskins and Maddern in their study on immigration stations 2011). The cottages, with their materiality and the pastness and symbolic meanings embedded in this, influence the users' practices and their possibilities for experiencing mobility and stillness in space and in time. As such, these old cottages seem to have become important places in our ever-changing society with needs for being both still and moving, at least for those who can afford not just one home, but two.

NOTES

¹ The history of *torp* and the living and working situations for the *torpare* in Sweden was less affected by politically radical influences and oppositions compared to the history of *torp* in Finland (see Peltonen 1992).

² In connection to this, but outside the scope for this paper, one can certainly see interesting, but not yet fully explored, gender aspects of the activities at the cottages.

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