

Paul Kirtley's Blog

Wilderness Bushcraft • Survival Skills • Outdoor Life

Paul: This is the Paul Kirtley podcast, episode 16.

Announcer: The Paul Kirtley podcast Wilderness Bushcraft. Survival skills and outdoor life.

Paul: Welcome, welcome to this episode. Episode 16 of the Paul Kirtley podcast with me Paul Kirtley. My guest on this podcast is a friend. It's Lisa Fenton, who's one of the founders of the Woodsmoke school of Bushcraft and Wilderness Survival, based in the Lake District in the northwest of England. Lisa and her partner Ben McNutt apprenticed with Ray Mears[SP] in the late 1990's and early 2000's, before going on to set up Woodsmoke together in 2001.

In 2006, Lisa's interest in anthropology and ethnobotany led her to enroll in a Master's degree in Ethnobotany, offered by Kent University in conjunction with Kew Gardens. Lisa obtained her MSC in 2008, gaining a distinction for her final thesis on British wild plant foods. Lisa followed this by remaining in academia and reading for a Ph.D. in ethnobiology, again at Kent University at the School of Anthropology and Conservation. Which she's recently completed gaining her Doctorate. Dr. Fenton's research area was Bushcraft and Indigenous Knowledge Transmissions.

Her work examining the relationship between Bushcraft and indigenous knowledge. Lisa's research was supervised by the distinguished anthropologist, Professor Roy Ellen. And comprised a historical review, and examination of ethnographic literature, field work in multiple locations including Sweden, the U.K, and the USA in addition to interviewing professional Bushcraft instructors, and surveying those who use Bushcraft as part of their outdoor lives. Case studies of several iconic aspects of Bushcraft, including the Figure-4 Deadfall trap, and fire by friction were used to explore a number of themes in contemporary Bushcraft.

I was keen to invite Lisa on to this podcast, to find out more about her academic work, and the unique perspective she's gained from her research. Our conversation here covers a good amount of ground, and we dig deep into the

history and origins of Bushcraft, as we know it today. It's relationships with indigenous knowledge, modern camping as well as survival and survivalism. So please join me in welcoming Lisa Fenton, and enjoy this conversation which we had shortly after Lisa gained her doctorate.

So I'm sat here with Lisa Fenton. Hi, Lisa.

Lisa: Hi, Paul.

Paul: Welcome to the podcast.

Lisa: Thank you for having me.

Paul: You're welcome and it's nicely started raining outside, probably just hear that on the microphone. So if people think somebody is having a wee in the background, or what not, it's not. It's the gutter dripping outside the window.

Lisa: I'm glad you clarified that.

Paul: I think it probably needs clarifying because I can hear it. So it might turn up on the audio. If it doesn't then we're good, but if it's there then people know what it is. We're in a nice sitting room in Lewisham. And you've been down in the south because you're based in the north, but you're down in the south to complete what's been quite a long journey for you in your Ph.D. journey.

And we'll come on to that in detail, but you've...on a high level, you've just got a Ph.D. in Bushcraft, but I'm sure you can define it more clearly than that for us in a little while. But could you maybe...Can we rewind a little bit, and just tell us a little bit about your background, and how you got to where you are in terms of what you're doing with your with your professional life, your academic life, and how all that fits together?

Lisa: Sure. Well, I'll try. Yeah...well I first...it's hard to say when I think for any of us when we first got interested in these kinds of skills because for many of us it's a childhood's interest. And for me, I grew up in very urban landscapes. So the bits of nature that I could interact with were fairly limited, but even so like many children, my curiosity and love for nature was just there.

Later on, I went and did a fine art degree. Well, actually before then I was also very interested in travel. It was actually wanting to travel that drew me into Bushcraft and in my teens. I guess I was sixteen. I decided to hitchhike around the U.K and Ireland. But I've never even been camping before. So I kind of got

an old A-frame tent and various badly put together kits, and off I went and that was really my first experience of camping in the outdoors, and then...

Paul: And what age were you then? Did you say? Sixteen.

Lisa: Sixteen. It wasn't something that we did as a family or anything like that. And I learned a lot from local peoples, from other travelers on that journey. I was I just learnt how to make an ordinary fire for example, because I didn't carry a stove. And I remember three Scottish guys taught me how to make bannock over a fire in...I forgot where it was one of the famous bays in Ireland with an island.

And then after that when I was about 18 I went to India. And that was a self-funded trip that I planned in inverted commas [SP], because really all I planned was the flight. Once I got there I had to quickly make it up as I went along, and experience that kind of deep culture shock. Having never been anywhere like that before. And that was a big adventure, and I headed north up into the Himalayas, and into Lay and Ladakh and trekked in the mountains there.

And decided really then that this is what I wanted to do. I wanted to travel and explore, and particularly other cultures but I got into quite a few sticky situations. And some that could have become quite serious, and I realized that I actually needed some survival skills.

Paul: You said sticky in what sense? Sticking with people or sticky with nature, or...

Lisa: There were lots of situations that were a bit sticky with people. And I did go into a war zone, but the ones that stood out in nature. I lost my guides up in Ladakh, and not for very long but long enough to give me a scare. I was severely dehydrated. You know how guides go way ahead of you, and these were just young guides.

And they were almost like two mountains ahead of us. And I was severely dehydrated. We didn't have anything on us because it was all on the donkeys that the guides had. And luckily there was a Tibetan nomad tent in the distance, and so we wandered over there and they took care of us. They gave us some water and they sent people out find the guides.

And it all ended okay, but there were other things like there was a sandstorm at the same time. We had to get to the sandstorm which was more like a stone storm. It was so painful, and there were lots of different things that happened.

And other occasions we got stuck in a landslide for two days. It was quite an eventful trip really for my first travel experience.

And that made me think I really love this. I love the adventure. I love the landscapes. I love the freedom. I love the diversity of cultures. But I need to understand something about how to do this properly to keep myself safe. And then when I came back I started a fine art degree.

Paul: Is that something that had been pre...you already...you had sort of plan to do that, and then you went to travel and then you came back or was that something that you decided to do when you came back?

Lisa: Sort of. Yeah, sort of. I had got my place but I had actually told everyone that I didn't want to do a degree and that I wanted to just travel. In a naïve, headstrong kind of way and my art tutor and my parents basically pleaded with me to come back, and just try it. They said, "Just try that art degree and if you really don't like it then do what you like."

And I could see the sense in that, so I came back from India four days before I started my degree. And the day I started my degree I met Ben, who's now my partner, and he came from a very different background. A very rural background where his parents had taught him so much about how to live from the landscape, and he'd had a very wild sort of background where he just went off into the woods, and he lived by the coast and did what he liked really. So he knew the land very intimately.

And I seemed to spend my three years doing an art degree saying, "Ben, can you eat this? Ben, can you eat that?" And he said, "Why do you just want to eat everything in the landscape?" But we shared this interest in whatever you would call it then because it didn't really have a name. And the closest thing was survival skills.

Paul: So places and time not...I should never ask a lady her age, but when was this?

Lisa: This was...so my degree was from 1994 to 1997 in Carlisle which was part of the University of Lancaster at the time. And so we both had this interest and the closest thing was survival but at the time, there was still this very much this '80s early '90s military survival really. That was most of what we saw and it's just...

Paul: Cold very...sort of tied it with cold war stuff psychology wasn't it?

Lisa: Yes. Yes.

Paul: And nuclear war was around the corner...

Lisa: Absolutely.

Paul: ...and all of that stuff was intermingled with it. A lot of people forget that, but all the survival publication and what few there was or magazines. You'd have an article about gutting a rabbit, and then you'd have something about knives, and you'd something about how to survive a nuclear attack.

Lisa: That's right. Yeah, definitely. And that sort of emerged in the '60's and '70s didn't it and also this ecological undertone as well, of...but in a very survivalist narrative of what will man do when he's washed up on a planet that's been devastated by his own. So whether it was kind of the cold war thing, or the ecological narrative when we were first realizing, actually we're potentially destroying our own planet. It was framed very much in a survival way, and I had the SAS Survival Handbook as we all did. It was one of my earliest influences, and what an amazing book that influenced so many of us. But it was when I was at University that I saw Ray Mears on TV. And he was just doing five minute little clips on was it? Country tracks?

Paul: Country tracks. Tracks at that point.

Lisa: And both me and Ben were like, "That's what I want to do." "That's what I want to do." So we decided to write to the BBC because there was no Google. Talking about asking a woman her age. There was no Google then, so we wrote to the BBC and they wrote back.

Paul: You wrote a letter.

Lisa: Yeah, we wrote a letter and put it in an envelope and a postbox. And they wrote back a year later with details for Ray and saying that he run courses. So we got in touch and started the following year when we left University, 1998. Did four different courses with Ray in that year. And I also went over to America and did a month long sort of series of courses with Boulder Outdoor Survival School in Utah in the same year.

And at the end of that year, Ray invited us to apprentice, after we had told him that we wanted to do what he did in the profession. In the end, he said, "Well, if you're going to learn to do it, learn to do it properly, and come and apprentice." Or certainly offered it so we jumped on that. Then from '99 to 2002 worked for Wood [SP] Law through the summer as you do, which was yeah an amazing

eye opening opportunity to really learn to see the landscape, as is something different than a hostile place to survive, but a place that can be inhabited and can be known.

And what the landscape can afford us. What it can...what possibilities it holds really I think was the key. The key things that really opened my eyes. And then after that, we set up Woodsmoke in 2001 actually, but foot and mouth hit and Ray offered for us to go back and keep teaching for that season, as well as us building up Woodsmoke. So eventually in 2002, we kind of started proper, and then as you may know we've been building up Woodsmoke ever since really. Academically in 2007 I started...well, I suppose it was before that really. I started to feel that I wanted to balance the practice with a more academic interest.

Paul: So for people...I know Woodsmoke and you know Woodsmoke, no, no, no it's fine but I was just thinking Bushcraft School, based in the Lake District you've been doing that since 2002.

Lisa: Yeah, that's right so we set up in the Lake District because we were at university in Carlisle. We just spent all of our time zipping down the motorway into the lakes, camping, and exploring in the Lake District. And we both just fell in love with the Lake District and felt that this is where we'd like to live and work. So whilst we worked for Ray down in Sussex, which was fantastic. The Lake District just kept calling to us really.

And so that's where we gradually set up, which was which was a difficult thing to do. It wasn't...Bushcraft was just on the verge of becoming more widely known. And also media was just on the verge of becoming a global communications system. So yeah it all kind of intertwined.

Paul: So while that was going you were then...you then started to think you wanted to balance that practical side, with something else...

Lisa: Yeah, and I suppose because we ran our U.K courses in the summer, but during the winter we went overseas and worked for a camping called Biosphere Expeditions for a while, which was fantastic as well. And we were...I suppose different landscapes, different peoples, and it just ignited my earlier curiosity about culture. Just sort reignited that and the kind of budding anthropologist in me was starting to come out again. So yeah, I guess I started thinking about anthropology and ethnobotany and saw that Kent University did a course in ethnobotany. The only one in the country certainly at that time. I don't think there's anymore in the country now.

Paul: Explain for people who don't know...

Lisa: To ethnobotany.

Paul: ...the term ethnobotany. What does that encompass?

Lisa: Yeah, ethnobotany is basically the study of the relationship between cultures, or peoples and plants, and that can encompass really anything. It's hugely broad. So it could be pasts, it could be an archaeological relationship that you're interested in. It could be plants for ritual purposes. It could be plants that holds medicinal...or it could be coming at it through a very through a very cultural lens.

So what does this mean? What do these plants mean to people? Could be plants for food. It could be investigating just various relationships between peoples and plants. Gendered knowledge, for example. A spiritual cosmological knowledge. It's quite vast actually. And it's very anthropological.

Paul: Okay, and so when you say very anthropological again, how would you characterize that in terms of how does anthropology operate, that might not be so obvious to people that haven't studied in the realm of anthropology?

Lisa: Well, I suppose anthropology itself is such a diverse subject, and you've got social anthropologists, and cultural anthropologists, and cognitive anthropologists and so for myself and for ethnobotany, I suppose it was very cultural and environmental anthropology. So looking at the study of other people's...well, the study of people's culture.

It doesn't have to be other. It came out a very much...anthropology arose from the study of inadvertant commas of other people's cultures, but now it's probably just study of our own culture, as much as anything else. So the study of culture.

Paul: So you went to do...did you say Kent?

Lisa: Yeah, Kent in Canterbury. Yeah.

Paul: And that was a post grad course?

Lisa: That was yeah, Master of Science post graduate. And it was absolutely fantastic. Completely recommend that course to anyone. And it was partly at Kew Gardens as well. So it's a collaboration actually between the University of

Kent and Kew Gardens. And that I suppose gave me a huge appetite for academia. I just really loved it.

I went there being very apprehensive, because I hadn't really been in academia in the sense, and I had just spent the last 10 years in the woods really. But it just really grabbed me. I really became very fascinated by the diversity of it, and the understanding and insights that it provided that were more deeper into culture, and how people thought about the environment, how they interacted with the environment.

And the relationship between different peoples, and the natural world became my core interest, yeah.

Paul: So what was the span of that particular course, what was...

Lisa: That was 2007. I began it. I took a break to work back the Woodsmoke season. So it didn't mess the Woodsmoke season, and I finished it in...no I think I started in 2006, and I finished it in 2008.

Paul: Right, okay, okay. And covering a range of topics. What did it include? What I'm getting at. It's probably a big question but there's clearly ethnobotanical bit and there was a bit with Kew. Did you go to Kew for those sections?

Lisa: Yeah.

Paul: So you visited Kew? Was that a regular thing that you did?

Lisa: Yup, we spent time at Kew. I can't remember how regularly probably once a month something like that. Spend a couple of days at Kew, and that would be looking at things like the botanical collections, which fascinating. You've got samples from Darwin there. Just amazing place.

Paul: And was that just to build your familiarity with particular species, or build a familiarity with the range of species that were there or...?

Lisa: That particular exercise looking at these kinds of samples, was to more look at the technique of taking plant samples. The names...there's actually a proper name for it and it's escaping me.

Paul: It's all right. We can come back to it.

Lisa: But yeah, that was actually looking at how you take plant samples because it is quite a technique. If you're in a rainforest to essentially press a plant, and store it. You could be there for months or even years. Back in the day particularly.

Paul: Yes. They were traveling for a long time on those expeditions.

Lisa: Yeah, how do you keep those precious samples safe, and how do you transport them, and how do you keep them from being eaten by everything in the jungle, and the mice. Just there's some that. And just the...just how incredible it is to how well these things survive. And then there was the side of it that looked at how things are classified, and just gave us an introduction really into the classifications.

And then we had lessons about the different plant families. The kinds of chemicals that they might contain, that are in commonly throughout the family, and how therefore you might start to go into a completely unfamiliar terrain. And start to key things out and say, "Well, I think it's in this family because it has this many sepals and this many petals. And it looks like this so this could be in the coffee family, and if it's in the coffee family it might have been active chemical that might be interesting from a use perspective."

Which brings me to one of the of the big things that was very important to study in ethnobotany which was ethics, because so many indigenous cultures have been mined for information. Which is then sold to big pharmaceutical companies. These days that's really, really not okay. And so there's a huge ethical dimension to how do you study the knowledge of other people and their knowledge, without reproducing colonialism essentially.

Paul: Okay, interesting.

Lisa: I think as an interesting point for the whole of Bushcraft.

Paul: Indeed, indeed. Lets come back to that. Let's come back to that. Let's finish that. So that course sort of lit a fire under the academic side of your interest in all of these things. Did it immediately follow that you should go on just to do a Ph.D, or was that something that came a bit later?

Lisa: It wasn't in my mind to do that. Everybody asked me...was asking, "Why? When you finish your masters what you're going to do?" And I just thought I would feed things back into Woodsmoke, and that it just broadened the way that I view things. Although I would do some ethnobotanical studies overseas, but I was very much encouraged to apply for a Ph.D.

Paul: Encouraged by your supervisors? Encouraged by family?

Lisa: Yeah, encouraged by my supervisors. And yeah very much by my supervisor in my ethnobotany which was Dr. Simon Platten and by Professor Roy Allen, who was interested in supervising a Ph.D. And it became increasingly difficult to not do it, because it was...it felt as though it was kind of being put in front of me, which is quite unusual.

And it's a fully funded Ph.D. and it just happened. Yeah. It wasn't really my intention. I did actually try to at one point, and then it just seemed too much of a good opportunity, when I was asked what would you like to study and I said, "Well, the only thing that's really held my interest all my adult life has been Bushcraft." And the response was, "Well, that's fine then. You can do a Ph.D. that looks at Bushcraft."

And I thought, "Now I can't turn away from this." Because this is a unique opportunity. And not just for me but for anybody really. When else might Bushcraft be studied an academic level? What would that throw up? I was really interested. I didn't really have any ideas, but I wanted to know. And the obvious thing was the relationship that Bushcraft has to indigenous knowledge.

Anthropologically it's the study of the ethnographic study of Bushcraft, but also underlying all of that is the relationship that it has to indigenous knowledge, which to start with I had no idea where to begin. I knew how to relationship to indigenous knowledge, because we'd all seen Ray out with indigenous peoples. We'd all read books going back to sort of gotten us out of trouble, which include plenty of indigenous knowledge.

And those references to indigenous knowledge is all the way through survival manuals. If you look at Lofty Wiseman, same thing. So there's this clear relationship but it hasn't in anthropology, it hasn't been picked up on or theorized or problematize, or analyzed, or explored in any way whatsoever so that it was a huge task.

Paul: So how did you start, because on the one hand it sounds great but you've got a blank sheet of paper almost. You can approach it however you want, but equally you've got a blank sheet of paper, and you've got a almost like a paralysis of choice presumably about how you even start something like that.

Lisa: Exactly, exactly that. You hit the nail on the head. It was both a blessing and just disaster. What have I done? Yeah, having come by originally from a fine arts background. I actually use the analogy to myself a lot of writing a

Ph.D., is like painting a picture. First of all it's just blocking out the background color and the shades.

It's only at the very end actually that you put in the finishing touches, that everything comes together. But it was really difficult. It had been completely untheorized, there was nothing to go on. I had to first produce a history of Bushcraft and through an academic lens. And that was a huge task and this...there's a lot of responsibility in feeling like you're the one that's first deciding how this is going to happen.

And what you're going to choose, and how you're going to choose to represent it. So firstly I had to look at the deep history. And Bushcraft only emerges with the enlightenment. So Bushcraft as we understand it as a modern concept, only emerges only starts to emerge during the enlightenment as this colonialism starts.

And you get the first marine based explorations. But even then it's only when those sailors' meet indigenous peoples, and want to colonize their lands, that we start to see Bushcraft emerge, because it's a land based practice. It's a practice that arises out of various needs to live in a landscape that was alien to them, and because it was alien the indigenous peoples were the experts obviously.

And they necessarily had to engage with an indigenous population. Of course it's written as lands like Australia were empty. Nobody lived there and this is all part of the colonial narrative, but in practice indigenous guides became necessary to most all of the early expeditions, and the ones where they didn't include indigenous guides, like...names gone.

One of the early Australian ones they all perished. So particularly Australia is a good example, and I started with Australia because the need for water was so desperate. It was life and death. Water's not something you can carry very far.

Paul: No. It's heavy.

Lisa: Yeah, so they had to find it in the landscape, and they had to learn to find it in the landscape. The only way they were going to do that was through the local people. And there's usually when you do find accounts in journals of interactions between western colonizers, and local indigenous peoples, it's about finding water in the Australian context.

So I was going through a lot of these journals trying to pull out examples of where it had been written about. And at the same time having to look at these

journals from a particular point of view, if they're written by a particular peoples...

Paul: With a particular perspective.

Lisa: Exactly.

Paul: Or bias.

Lisa: Exactly. So starting to have to read between the lines a bit. And look a little bit at the construction the cultural construction of journals, of explorer journals and I started to look a little bit about this idea of the heroic explorer, and how that's constructed by the metropolis here, or the empire and the kind of colonizing gaze of...and how these are not dispassionate reports. They are the personal accounts and narratives. And the story is told how the colonist wants it to be told, and of course, the colonist carries with him, or even her their own cultural bias as you say. So I started there, but the history is fascinating. It just continues right at the beginning we see the emergence of the desert island survival tale.

And the huge popularity of it during 1600 and 1700s. The Robinson and Crusoe stories, Alexander Selkirk. The story is based on Captain Dampier and his journals, his voyages around the world, and how they get a shipwrecked and abandonments, and people being taken captured...taken prisoner and captured and how they escape. This was fascinating to the reader back in London and in the metropolis. And they were very sensationalist tales and by the academy back then kind of very frowned upon, because these weren't the official stories of scientists really going out and documenting the natural world.

You had two threads right from the start of this kind of survival sensationalism, and the scientific documentation in the natural world.

Paul: With the scientific...because I was not so familiar with the history of anthropology. At that point were they even looking at that side of their interactions? Were they studying the natives for want of a better way where there is more interested in the fauna, and the flora that they saw as they went along collecting their specimens to send back to London, or take back to London?

Lisa: Yeah, good question. They were very much studying the fauna and flora. They were looking for resources, geology. They were looking for could this land be farmed, settled and just inventories. Linnaeus was 1600s I believe. And he first had himself and his students out documenting parts of America and just

classifying, so that the project of the systemization and classification of nature began then.

And that was a project really. A scientific project in itself and a colonial project in itself. And so I suppose the interactions with indigenous people came as guides because often the local peoples would provide some kind of explanation or insight, and hugely helpful and useful to the scientific project. Linnaeus' spent a lot of time in Saltney didn't he? With his army.

Paul: Right. Yes.

Lisa: And he wrote...actually he wrote amazing proto-ethnographic of the Sámi people and very detailed accounts of their lives. So you can say there's a proto-ethnography happening already at that point, because yes they were recording details about how indigenous peoples lived. Depends on who.

Paul: Yes. There was something that some of them might have done.

Lisa: Particular interest. Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah, interesting. Interesting. So where does that take us then in terms of the evolution of...

Lisa: Do I keep going?

Paul: No, do. Keep going, keep going. For me it's fascinating. You might...I'm sure it is for other people listening as well because to capture in a very base, internet discussion world. You do often see people debating where term Bushcraft came from. I think it's worth separating out the term Bushcraft, and the activity that has become known as Bushcraft.

It wasn't necessarily known as that, and you [inaudible 00:37:17] and you can tell us in a second. But that discussion goes on, doesn't it? Add in for an item it seems in different corners of the internet, about who invented Bushcraft, where did it come from, who used...who invented the term, where does the term come from? All these things. Where does the activity...was it...I think people don't look much beyond any books that have Bushcraft in the title?

They refer to Robert Graves' [SP] book and they refer Lord Gadsby's [SP] book, but it doesn't seem to go much deeper than that, but this is going a lot further back and a lot deeper than that.

Lisa: It's probably a good point to just mention something about the etymology of the word bush for example. And the word bush kind of arose during the colonial period, and the period of the Sussman of what we talk of as the neo-Europe's, which is the new Europe's, in America, in Australia, in New Zealand and Africa. And you can see documents about kind of land claims and things. The word bush comes into America, and it seems, I think it needs more explanation...more exploration than I have currently given it. But it seems to be first arising in America and Canada, and then in Australia which historically would make sense. And then of course in Africa as well. And it's just used to differentiate urban centers from the rest.

So it's a very generic term. It can refer to forests. It can refer to anything that's other than urban. And so the word bush came up, but Bushcraft doesn't start to appear in the literature and until the late 1800s, but what you also get is a term called colonial craft as well. Which also starts to appear in the date 1800's. So yeah Bushcraft was an activity before it was named if you like. A long before then, and in a way I think colonial craft is a good term when we're talking about the early explorers, and what was...what they were deeming were the requirements, the skills that you had to learn or know for travel in different alien ecologies.

And so then where you kind of...where do we go next? So there was the Australian development, which developed into what one author...one author has really written about this, McLaren calls "Bushman ship, Australian Bushmanship." So there's the development of bushmanship in Australia, and that carries on for hundreds of years really. Well, 100 or so years before they seem to feel that they don't need really indigenous knowledge anymore, and they never did actually. I say that obviously jokingly.

Paul: Yes, but that attitude persists actually in Australia.

Lisa: You have a layering effect. It's not an accusation of racism or as such, but it's just that the layering effect of history, you lose the roots of what has taken place. And then in America, you had a number of processes that are raised to become known as Woodcraft. And so to start with the very first colonists, I don't think it's the right word actually were actually French traders. And they were looking for furs, and so in the 1600's you get...there was a time when they said every French family had a son in America. They would put these young men into families with different indigenous first nation's peoples, to learn the culture, to learn the skills, to learn to emphasize trade. And they became known as the Coridubois [SP].

And as you know they would transport the first by canoes, and became exceptionally skilled individuals. If they survived it long enough, and then the French authorities became, or perhaps it was the British authorities by then, became quite annoyed with the Coridubois because they had their allegiances tended to reside with the first nation's peoples. And not with the metropolis and so they started to legitimize the trading, and that they have the voyagers. And so these two hybrid cultures which is more or less the same thing developed free trade. Again you had westerners who didn't know that landscape, didn't know anything about it. Purposefully placed to learn from the local population.

And that formed a hybrid culture through which acts as a conduit. Well, first a new transformation of knowledge into this hybrid, which was the conduit that led to Woodcraft really in America. And you also had at the same time the similar hybrid process going on in America, with...through war. So you've got the Robert Rogers stories and journals.

Paul: Robert Rogers.

Lisa: Robert Rogers yeah.

Paul: Robert Roger Rangers. Yeah, there's too many R's, yeah. Rogers Rangers, yeah. Well, he took indigenous knowledge on, didn't he?

Lisa: Yes, so...

Paul: Which is unusual for a military...or so they say. So it's recorded it was unusual for a military unit to take on some of those skills. Although a lot of them must have had the skills to sustain themselves at least in the basic way if their fight in the colonial wars in Canada. They must have had some ability to look after themselves.

Lisa: Well, I think they were getting hammered. I don't know because they'll be historians of that period that will know this far more in-depth than I do. But I think that they weren't doing so well. And whether it was out of any desperate need, or just starting a realization, a growing realization that they would do well to start to learn the tactics of the inadvertent commerce [SP] Indians.

I'm not entirely sure, but certainly yeah, Robert Rogers was quite the most famous example, and quite a pioneer. I think he was the first unit to have western soldiers and first nation's peoples side by side. And but before that they were learning. They would have first nation's peoples as their teachers, allied first nations people. So they were learning and Robert Rogers came from a frontier upbringing. So he already just from living in a wild part of the world,

while trying to live in it already by the age of 14 could trap and shoot, and was very...

Paul: Capable.

Lisa: Yeah, and obviously very noted for it. And so he put together this unit of mercs, and they really begin to learn skills of reconnaissance, long distance travel, the tactics of ambushes, and surprise and basically learning the Indian tactics that was working against them, because they came there...

Paul: Rather than marching around in red uniforms with columns yeah...

Lisa: Exactly, exactly. They were still wearing red coats, and I'm not sure what you call it, but that formation where they literally stand up and be targets, and shoot and of course the Indians were being sneaky, and tactical and stealthy.

Paul: And working on behalf of the French.

Lisa: Yeah. Well, of course, you had both.

Peter: Yeah. Well, the ones that were shooting at English anyway. And that went on for years, and years, and years, and years didn't it?

Lisa: That's right.

Paul: The French and Indian war was a long drawn out process.

Lisa: That's right but I think for Bushcraft the interesting part is that part of its history, part of its genealogy is already seated in military.

Paul: Yes.

Lisa: And part of its genealogies a rise in art of trade, and the need for being able to inhabit an environment. Rather than...

Paul: And travel through an environment, so you talked about the voyageurs and the Coridubois, and they were very capable, but they'd have to go out in the spring and be out all season. And come back in there before the freeze.

Lisa: That's right.

Paul: Yeah, so they were out for a long time. They weren't just out for a couple of weeks.

Lisa: Very much so, very hard life, very difficult. And it would only make sense to them to adopt as much of the local technologies as they can, and of course, the beach bot [SP] canoe was the ultimate local technology adopted by them. And no doubt many learned the techniques to make and repair those same technologies. So there was a huge absorption of indigenous knowledge that was unaccounted for.

Never really recognized as such, and therefore, we can say appropriated to an extent, and hybridized. And the third strand really is explorers. People like Antony Hyundai. I don't know, give me some explorers. There was like Ray and there was...

Paul: Oh Yup, yup. Okay, we're sticking to North America.

Lisa: Samuel Hearn.

Paul: Samuel Hearn, yeah. I was about to say Samuel Hearn.

Lisa: So you had that which often overlapped with the trade, because some of those explorers were Coridibous or voyagers. And then later on when you've got Ray in the arctic, that was specifically more looking at geology and mapping wasn't it?

Paul: Yeah, again resources.

Lisa: Resources.

Paul: Yeah, yeah. It's quite amazing as well is that they didn't know how big the continent was really. They didn't have any maps.

Lisa: And these were situations where the technologies that they had at the time, didn't really work for them in those sorts of circumstances. So they had to adopt as far as possible the indigenous technologies. And not only that but the likes of Samuel Hearn and Ray. Why is his first name going out...

Paul: John Ray.

Lisa: John Ray. They tended to be the only western person in an all indigenous party.

Paul: Yeah, if you read Hearn's account is...how he didn't end up getting murdered at some point I'm not sure. On his own with having all of his stuff

nicked from him, and just left sometimes. How he wasn't either dead or murdered in that environment, or murdered I don't know. He was obviously a tough, tough cookie.

Lisa: I know. It's amazing. Interestingly I noticed in his accounts. He comes across female indigenous peoples living on their own in the bush. And you think, "Christ, that must be tough." There's a woman with a child on her own in the bush. Having to provide for all her own needs. There's obviously for some reason left in the groove. I thought that was in comparison to how they were struggling to do it in a group.

Paul: I think it's worth mentioning, because I think the thing that somehow Hearn was trying to do is make a journey.

Lisa: Yes, that makes a big difference.

Paul: And it's the same with the voyageurs. They weren't...and again there is this romantic idea that you can kind of, and it's persists to this day that you can make these big journeys, and just forage as you go. You have to spend a lot of time foraging to get the calories that you need. And that's why the voyageurs took basically what was sort of pemmican with them.

They took rations with them to eat, because they didn't have...they were paddling all day. And I think as soon as you start making a journey, then it was much harder to live from the land.

Lisa: Yeah, yeah. You're expending so much more energy. And as you say you don't have the time to be foraging for food. So those were the really the three main strands in the deep history I would say. They're all colonial essentially. They're all hybrids. Hybrid knowledge domains. And by the time you get to the mid 1800's it starts to formalize a bit.

And so this isn't just something people just did, but it's now starting to be more formalized into a type of knowledge. And that's when you start to get the first travelling manuals really.

Paul: I was about to ask you do you mean by formalized, do you mean people teaching it, people writing it down?

Lisa: Writing it down, yeah. So that yeah you get Gordon's art of travel, and get Lorden Baines [SP] fantastically titled which I can't remember, Shifts and Expedience.

Paul: Oh that one yeah.

Lisa: Something, something, and something.

Paul: Yeah, yeah. It's quite long isn't it? Exactly. I know the one you're referring to. I can't remember the name. The full title and it goes on a bit.

Lisa: Yeah, yeah. And this is the first time we kind of see it the knowledge being written down, centralized, and kind of codified really. So and they're fantastic books today even. But obviously it's still very much through a colonizers perspective.

And these were written at a time when people were wanting to start to travel for pleasure. It wasn't just for resource or for the metropolis. It wasn't just about expansionism or imperialism anymore. They wanted to start travel just because that was the thing to do. And so these guys tried to put...I say tried. They did an amazing job of putting down knowledge about what you do if you're stuck in a desert.

And you don't have any water. You get up in the morning and you take a sponge as it says, and after watching the indigenous people...I can't remember who it was who talks about this. Soak up water with a fibrous bark or something, and collect it in a container. He goes out with his sponge and his partner does the same. And there you have immediately a hybrid between indigenous knowledge, and the technology of the time.

And so these provided, yeah the first of a new genre really, of traveling knowledge. And this is I say that Bushcraft emerges out of so strongly all these historical threads, tell us that Bushcraft a domain of traveling knowledge, and quite often refers to travelling in unknown ecologies. But only by consulting the skills of those who know the landscapes very intimately. And learning them for themselves.

Paul: So for you then there's a very clear demarcation, between indigenous knowledge which is what the indigenous people are using to live in that particular environment, that particular ecology and the knowledge that would be required to travel through it by outsiders. Is that the distinction?

Lisa: Yes...

Paul: If can make a distinction.

Lisa: Yeah. It's always difficult. I think the more you get into academia the more you hate to kind of make a total distinction about anything. But yeah. Yes. It's a different skill set in a way. I'm quite sure that the indigenous peoples that did guide western exploration, explorers probably thought they were completely nuts half the time. It didn't really get why you would do this because this is just dangerous. And we wouldn't do this. So it's an entirely different approach to landscape.

Paul: Different motivation, different perspective. So you mentioned Africa. Where does Africa...So you mentioned North America, which is interesting because is the etymology of the word bush, is that through the Dutch connection? There were Dutch colonists.

Lisa: In Africa.

Paul: In Africa as well as North America. New York had a lot of...that area had a lot of Dutch colonists. The east coast there. I was wondering if the word bush...

Lisa: It seems the most obvious.

Paul: Comes from Dutch route?

Lisa: It seems the most obvious route. I don't know exactly just that it does seem like the most obvious route. If I had to say that, that's what I would say. There's also like north words I think, and stuff that similar I can't remember. Yeah, and then in Africa...Well you also in America then by the mid 1800's you have this rise of Woodcraft as a recreational category as well.

And certainly by the end.

Paul: So that's people like Seta.

Lisa: Ben Powell.

Paul: Ben Powell of course yeah.

Lisa: And that's kind of my link to Africa really because from the perspective of the emergence of Bushcraft. It's really when you put Africa and Baden-Powell together, from a British perspective. Something really starts to emerge quite strongly. So he heads off to the Boer wars, and meets Burnham. Is it Richard? No, Burnham. Can't remember his first name. And Selous..

Paul: Selous, yeah.

Lisa: It's Frederick isn't it?

Paul: Felix and Louis.

Lisa: Both of them are Frederick.

Paul: Scouting on two continents.

Lisa: That's right. That's the thing.

Paul: And again it's there in there in the title isn't it? Scouting On Two Continents is the connection there isn't there? American and Africa.

Lisa: Yeah. And then America. There's so much history. We could talk for hours about the history. And there's also I didn't get on to the Indian wars in the south, and way starts to get the emergence of Indian scouts. Burnham was an Indian scout and he had learned from scouts like [inaudible 00:58:13] Crook.

Paul: I don't know. I don't recall, sorry.

Lisa: But he had learned from some of the famous scouts anyway. And then he got a bit bored when the Indian wars kind of came to an end. And Africa was the place to go if you were looking for adventure and excitement. Somewhere to use your skills, and by all accounts he was an excellent scout. So he went to America to fight in the Boer wars.

Baden Powell went to Africa to fight the Boer wars. Baden Powell went to Africa. Fredrick Selous went to Africa. And they all met and intermingled there, and influenced each other's skill basis. But in my thesis I start to make a distinction between the Woodcraft of people like the voyagers, or the backward settlers, or the Coridubois. They were quite anti establishment. They were quite independent, and the mountain men of course we haven't talked about.

Which is another hybrid culture. And there's a bit of a distinction between their kind of their anti...general anti-establishment and scouting in Baden Powell's formulation, which is very attached to the establishment.

Paul: Yes, almost part of the military.

Lisa: Exactly.

Paul: I guess the other thing people forget. In North America the trading network was somewhat removed from the military complex. But in the east, the East India Company pretty much had its own private army. And it was very...the trade in the military expansion It was all completely interlinked and so all of that expansionism, and colonialism, and trade, and warfare was all wrapped up in one big bundle, wasn't it?

Lisa: Yeah, and if the thesis wasn't complex enough. Just to talk about Bushcraft in the historical context. I'm kind of grappling with the complexities.

Paul: The world history as well.

Lisa: Yeah, and trying to draw out the places where it feels that this really resonates. And then try to contextualize. It's a lot to do. I could have written a whole thesis about the history of Bushcraft, and I really hope somebody does. It's a thesis that needs writing. And so then in Africa those guys got together, and the British idea of scouting became a very strong notion, and representation really of the imperial center.

And at the same time you've got Earnest Thompson Seaton in America, very much an ecologist and pioneering. An environmentalist is really a better word, and pioneering this program for youths, which was about playfulness, imagination using the archetype of the Red Indian as a symbol of relationality with place. Whereas for Baden Powell it was very much about militarism. It was about training youths for the potentials of war, and sort of a systemization of people. So those guys thought they had a lot in common before they met, and they Seaton had written this whole program for youths, and Baden Powell as the historians tell it, hadn't really. But once he saw Seaton's work. He kind of adopted everything in it that was useful.

And was in the more sort of a better position to execute the thing called scouting. And I think he and Seaton fell out, because they ideologically they were entirely different. And those kind of ideological threads, I think follow through even today. Where on the one hand and in this domain, this broad domain of Bushcraft there's a survivalist and militarists ideology. And on the other hand there's a deeply ecological and relational ideology, and all everything in between. And people can be both. Not that any...that's the problem, that's the complexity of thinking about Bushcraft.

Is the same person in a different situation can occupy a different ideological space. So people might have a dominant approach, but it might not be the approach that they always wanted. It might be very circumstantial.

Paul: Interesting, interesting. So how does that lead us on to where we are now?

Lisa: Well, I suppose a quick...I'll try and to it quick.

Paul: Oh, no do. Go for it.

Lisa: It is just so complex. Yeah, so you then get the emergence of manuals really from the late 1800's. And you've got Seaton writing, you've got Baden-Powell writing. That turns into the youth movements and then you get other people like the...oh God, there's the Kindred.

Paul: Oh the [inaudible 01:04:11].

Lisa: Yeah, yeah. Those guys. Kibo Kendrick Kifts [SP] something like that.

Paul: Kiff, yeah. Kibo Kendrick Kiff or Kendra or Kibble Kiff.

Lisa: There's a range of the green shirts. Is that another one?

Paul: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Lisa: There's a range of...

Paul: Woodcraft people is that...

Lisa: Woodcraft folk.

Peter: Woodcraft folk, that's it. Yeah.

Lisa: So by the 1930's you get this range of youth movement. And then we...that's coming out of World War 1. And its during World War 1 really that the old scouts kind of finally died, and really scouting shifted into a youth movement, and out of the adult domain. And then the youth movements were really complex to look up, because they again occupy a huge ideological range.

Some are very, very left and some are very very right, and there's everything in the middle. But what was interesting was how the same set of skills can be used in such different...to establish different ideologies, and it's all based on the same skills that we're using today. So that was quite interesting. And then we go into World War Two, and suddenly even though obviously we had soldiers airborne in World War One.

It was still very new but by the time World War Two came along, there was the real threat of pilots being downed almost anywhere in the world. And therefore the need arises for survival manuals. But interestingly immediately you have this connection back to indigenous people, because it was as ethnographers that we're providing the military with the detailed information about how to survive in different environments.

And all of the early survival manuals like South Sea Lore, and The Arctic Manual by Stephenson. And so the military used, or took, or bought this knowledge from the ethnographers and started to codify it, simplify it and make it universal knowledge eventually. But to start with these they were really quite detailed local survival manuals for want for a better word, because it want quite survival as we know it now.

So from there we then get the survival manuals that we have today, where that same knowledge has been reduced. It's a very reductionist process and more and more looking for universal principles, so that...

Paul: Broadly applicable.

Lisa: Yeah, so that you then have more of the case of one survival manual, with as many broad principles as possible, that people or downed pilots could then apply in any environment. That's the kind of ethos and approach behind the contemporary survival manual, but it started from manuals that were specific to types of ecologies. And so again we have the influence of indigenous knowledge, because this is filtered through ethnographers.

This is indigenous knowledge filtered through ethnographies, and into something as dissimilar as western militarists. After World War Two we start to enter an era of recreation again really. I'm kind of skipping through things but to skip forward a bit, from the 60's we've got the rise of camping, which we did have camping before actually.

It came out campaigning's so again it has a military heritage slightly. This reliance on technology, and in the '60's when people were starting to backpack in hordes essentially. At the same time technology was really increasing. Technology that had been increased during war time, to form things like nylons and...were now finding their way into the popular scenes that were emerging.

Whether that was surfing or backpacking. And that can also be traced back to the late 1800's and the early 1900's. Where you had a divergence from Woodcraft into a kind of leave no trace movement as the first wave of national parks, and recreational of visitors that with the first automobiles, and campers

were taking technologies into the wilderness for recreation. And the second wave really I would say is during the '60's and '70's with the backpack...

Paul: Is that going to come in when more people had more leisure time, more vehicles to get into national parks [inaudible 01:09:49]. If they were hiking, once they got there and yeah, yeah.

Lisa: Yeah. So what began in the early 1900's just became emphasized with more technology. But I think the point is that camping diverged away from Woodcraft, so that the Woodcraft ethic of taking an axe, and a gun, and a hunting knife into the wilderness, and a woolen blanket and not much else of the kind of icons of Woodcraft. They became kind of overtaken by the development of technology, and reliance on technology. So instead of an axe to go out and cut your wood for your fire, and to make a fire by friction if necessary to make a lean to shelter, or to combine that with a sheet of canvas. And instead of that you had replaced with stoves, and tents, and things like that that are iconic of camping.

But not really iconic of Bushcraft. So where your axe and your tarp for example, might be or your lean to, or your fiction fire is highly symbolic of Bushcraft. And I think anyone who does Bushcraft will recognize that, and that will feel congruous to them. Camping stoves and tents, car camping is different. It's different and it...

Paul: It's camping isn't it? And camping is a separate thing...as you say it's more about the technology.

Lisa: Yes, I think it was Leopold who described Woodcraft as the working knowledge of the land. And camping is not a working knowledge of the land. Camping is how to work technology to live on the land. So Leopold first created that distinction actually, and he said how as the rise of camping emerged, how technology pads us against the bumps of nature. Something like that.

And he was in a quite disapproving of this. And yes, so camping diverges from Woodcraft, and I would suggest that Bushcraft's lineage is Woodcraft from my studies. It certainly does not come from camping, and I think it's a different ethical approach, or different ethic rather...

Paul: No, no. I'd agree and I think when people ask me about my background, and how I became interested in Bushcraft. The story that you started this podcast with how did I get where I am now, and one of the key distinctions

with me was I was doing a lot of backpacking, I was doing a lot of walking and after...particularly I remember after doing a trip in the Pyrenees.

Where I had done a hiking trip with a friend from University. And there were a couple of things which spiked this thinking, but I came away thinking, "I'm completely dependent upon my tent, my stove and I'm in a bubble. I might as well be on the moon landing. The amount of interaction I'm having within the environment most of the time." Because there are a couple of things. One was an instant where I foraged a lot of wild strawberries, and Mike, my friend wouldn't eat them, and I ate them and I did convince him to help, but he was really suspicious. He was like, "Are you sure you can those. They're not like strawberries. They're too small." And I'm like, "No, they're strawberries."

So anyway I didn't twist his arm too hard because I knew how good they tasted, so I ate them. And I knew about wild strawberries because I've spent a time growing up in North Wales. And we had wild strawberries in the garden, and parents were keen gardeners, and they'd show me. So I'd grown up sort of nibbling on them, and one of the thoughts there was for me was I wonder what else I can eat.

I want to learn more about this, when I'm doing trips. And then there was another occasion...one occasion where we had a camp fire on that trip, and I thought, "Yeah, "I'd like to..." But I didn't do very well. It was...and I thought, "I want to know more about this as well." But I had been interested in survival skills in my early to mid teens in the little village that we live in. And we used to go out, off the Wiseman's Handbook again. That came out I think Lofty Wiseman hand book came out when I was about 11 or 12.

Lisa: Yeah, I think I was 12.

Paul: I got it when I was 13. Yeah, but there was that distinction that you talk about, between being in a bubble entirely reliant upon technology, and wanting to know more about how I can relate to nature, or bust through that bubble.

And that for me I think created the bridge between that lead me from that style of outdoor life, with the camping and hiking, and mountain biking that stage through to wanting to learn the Bushcraft skills.

Lisa: Yeah. Absolutely, obviously there's intermixture.

Paul: Of course.

Lisa: But to just take the core approach of each, it's very different. The core approach historically for camping was about not leaving a trace in the environment, and to not leave a trace meant insulating yourself from the environment. To someone who has to leave no trace ethic of camping. The idea of taking an axe into a wilderness, or a gun to shoot animals for food, or an axe to chop a tree.

Might be quite horrifying, and it comes from...it's not unreasonable. It comes from a place of the notion of conservation by hands off conservation essentially. And let's face it if we all went into the woods in the U.K with axes, there would be no woods left. So it's not that it's a wrong thing. It's just that in terms of our relationship to the environment, it's a different thing. And I would suggest a bit of a shame. I think that's why quite often we find our way, many of us have found a way from camping to Bushcraft because we get exactly as you describe, frustrated with that insulated experience. And then something in our lives introduces us to something as simple as carving a spoon, and suddenly we have a tool that we have to make a relationship with.

We have trees that we have to understand. We have to understand properties, and we have to understand how to use this tool in relation to natural materials, and just to carve a spoon. And as often as that's sort of divided and Bushcrafters are somehow just spoon widdlers as though that's a terrible thing. It's actually really symbolic of the relationship that people who enjoy Bushcraft have where...

Paul: And it's a microcosm of the skills that you need to do other things as well.

Lisa: Yeah, yeah. If you can carve a spoon, a nice spoon then you've understood how to select wood. You've understood therefore something about the properties of wood. You've understood also the something about the agency of the natural world. You have to go with the grain.

You have to listen to what the natural world says to you. It's different from the ethic that you often see in survivalism of conquer and overcome. It's different...

Paul: Person versus nature.

Lisa: Yeah, so instead of conquer and control. It's more like a process of revelation. What does nature reveal to me? What can I...what does it offer? There's an ecological psychologists called James Gibson, very famous who calls it affordances. And it's a great concept to apply to the landscape. What does the landscape afford you? What possibilities does it hold for you as a human agent in that particular niche?

And niches are not habitats. Niches are co-created between an organism and its environment. It's not just a landscape that you inhabit, and when you think of many indigenous peoples such as I don't know...the Inuit or something. It's an environment that they co-create. It's a niche and to co-create you have to understand properties. You have to understand landscape, you have to understand tools, you have to understand how to use them effectively, and economically, and not waste time needlessly running around. So the spoon symbolizes that and the knife, and the axe. It's that relationship to the natural world, but it's also your relationship to a tool, which any craftsman understands.

That's there's certain.

Paul: Yeah, because some people say, "Well, it's the tools that define Bushcraft. Like the axe or..."

Lisa: I think they're symbolic. I don't know about define.

Paul: I'm just prodding you.

Lisa: I think they symbolize Bushcraft. When we see a Gransfors Bruks Axe, just as when we see a picture of someone blowing a tinder bundle to light. These are iconic images of Bushcraft. Whereas that wouldn't...they wouldn't be iconic images of camping, or even survival because you might have an axe. Probably more of a machete to symbolize survival. And it would probably be a bit more gadget orientated, rather than the simple tool. So these things do separate. You can start to find distinctions and of course that blurred...

Paul: How would you distinguish between a gadget and a tool?

Lisa: Yes. Well, that's a good question. There's a guy called Sennett. And academic called Sennett, who wrote a book called The Craftsman, and in it he makes a really useful distinction between the all purpose, meaning a general purpose tool, and the fit for purpose only tool. So that all purpose tool is...would be representative of the Bushcraft knife.

It's a simple blade. Whereas the fit for purpose only tool would point more towards the kind of gadget knives that you get...you see particularly in the survivalist genre. And he talks about the values underlying these tools. And he says how it's rather nice he says that, "If you're a curious person, and can tolerate a certain degree of frustration. Then you can use a all purpose tool." Basically it's an exploration of things. Trial and error and if you don't...if you're

a bit more impatient than you can us...you're more likely to be a gadgetry kind of person. You just get something that gets the job done.

Paul: That fills that gap.

Lisa: But it's a very specific. It's a difference between universal and specialist. And I think in camping there's a lot of very specialist gear. So we could take the camping stove that's very specialized. If you want to boil water, yup, you've got your stove. You can boil water in a pot, so long as you've got fuel and so long as it nothing goes wrong. With an axe, you can make a fire, boil water, make a shelter, make a trap, effect repairs on your snowshoes, your sled. There's a myriad of things that you can do, which you can't do with a camping stove. It's these kinds of things that start to distinguish more clearly between the two. Or at least the useful in helping us to understand the directions from which different things come from. Like survival Bushcraft and camping.

Paul: No, I think that thinking of a gadget in those terms is useful, because I think we do see that creeping into the Bushcraft world, with Bushcraft kit. And then I keep banging this drum where there isn't such a thing as Bushcraft kit. There's Bushcraft in this kit, but people keep wanting to try and find ways of doing things involving kit. Whereas it should really be the materials and the skill, and the knowledge.

Lisa: Yes.

Paul: And that's something that I keep. You see it on courses. People...you know you're teaching people who want to learn the Bushcraft skills, and yet they will say, "Well, couldn't we just use this to do that?" Or couldn't I take...one of my pet hates is blow pokers.

Lisa: I don't even know what that is.

Paul: It's like a bit of...it's like you could make one. It's a piece of wood with a tent pole. It's a mouthpiece and people use it for blowing into the base of a fire to...but it's a gadget doing something you don't need a gadget for really, other than maybe not getting quite as much ash on your face occasionally. But that's the kind of thing I think you're talking about. Where you can do it with some skill, that you can manage with skill or knowledge. Or you can manage it with a bunch of gadgets you don't really need.

Lisa: There was a really nice distinction that a very, a great academic, Paulsen. He wrote lot of anthropological stuff about skipper hood and fishing in Iceland. That was his study group, but he made a nice distinction between skill and

force. And he said that the experienced fisherman used skill, while what he noticed was and what the experienced guy said about the novice fisherman. And everyone has to start somewhere, but this is what you tend to see. That the novice end they're to focus on kit, because they haven't yet moved into a different way of knowing, and a different way of being. We all have to start there. I think we'll have to start with what the Greeks called episteme, which is the facts of the matter.

And there tends to be a reliance on kit, and then move into a type of knowledge that the Greeks called gnosis which is a very relational knowledge, a much broader knowledge. Where you can start to leave the kit...you don't have to cling to that anymore, because you've made a relationship with your tools, and your environment. And you don't have to rely on kit, but what he noticed was that he called it force and he says, "There's a fetishization of kit at that level." Where all the novices talked about was what fishing equipment they had, and looked for fishing equipment that had an element of force in it. Rather than simple stuff that relied on the fisherman's knowledge of where to put nets.

And where to put the lines in. And so it sort of speaks to the similar thing but I think underneath it all is this...I think in Bushcraft certainly talking to a range of senior practitioners globally, for the research. There was a definite value of simplicity. And for these people it wasn't about kit. I'm sure you're right that there is a lot of focus, and increasingly you see it in shops. There's a lot of Bushcraft equipment in shops now. It's amazing.

Paul: They've branded Bushcraft.

Lisa: Yeah, it seems to becoming quite overwhelming. And sometimes you think, "Wow, fantastic. That's really useful." So there's benefits to it. When I started in Bushcraft you couldn't even...they literally they didn't exist female khaki pants for civilians. They just...you took wear British army kit. That's all that there was really. If you wanted cheap equipment.

So there's nice that there's materials and stuff have advanced, but I think it's a shame if values get lost, because I think the core values of Bushcraft are something quite different, and actually there's the core values actually tend to refuse levels of commercialization, and levels of...it's about, it's like when you must have had this a million times as well. When you demonstrate fire by friction somewhere public. Somebody always comes along and says, "Do you need a lighter mate?"

Paul: Gives you a box of matches yeah. Yeah, absolutely. I think that's probably universal of anybody who's ever doing one of those now.

Lisa: And of course what they're saying is do you need technology. It's the food processor I was talking to you earlier about engulfs distinction.

Paul: Yeah, offline we were talking about this, weren't we? So yeah. Think that's a nice distinction.

Lisa: Yeah, this distinction between...he was illustrating a similar thing by saying...he's an anthropologist. And he was saying about the [inaudible 01:27:10] daemons Losou. The simplicity in inverted commas of that compared to the food processor. That actually underneath the Reindeer mans ability to catch his Reindeer with a lasou is a lifetime's worth of skill, or many years of skill.

Verses the 30 seconds it takes to operate...to learn to operate a technology, but then of course you're reliant on that sophisticated technology. And if it goes wrong there's nothing left to...You have no self reliance or independence beyond reliance on that technology.

Paul: And of course somebody has collectively at least has the knowledge how to make that thing, but there's only one person have the knowledge how to make that thing.

Lisa: Yeah, and we get into this whole fragmentation of knowledge, and Marxism. But Bushcraft is also about all these things are what the research showed, about underlying motivations, and themes that were arising in Bushcraft. I'm not saying that people walk around saying, "I want to become an anarchist and refuse technology." Because that's not the case.

There are obviously sort of anarco-primitive, anarco whatever they call them anarchist, who do want to refuse all of technology, and go back to just living off the land, but most Bushcrafters don't. It's a blend but there is a certain element of refusal of technology in order to create self-reliance, and independence from the center, from the urban. And to be able to exist outside of that. And I think that's all part of making knowledge holistic again, so that you can know the whole of something.

Paul: Yes, yeah. I think that's...that was certainly a powerful motivator for me.

Lisa: Me to. And I think that's where we also end up looking at various indigenous knowledges, because they're holistic and there doesn't seem to be any need to fragment much. Yeah, so I think that is very much part of it. Well

of course Bushcraft doesn't have...which indigenous knowledge. There's this ecosmology, that's...

Paul: That's an interesting distinction, yeah.

Lisa: And I think in a way in a very positive way it doesn't seek to appropriate other people's cosmologies. It's a very genuine relationship with land. Not saying that having a cosmology is not genuine, but it's not trying to construct anything for itself, any kind of reinvention. It just seems to be a very direct genuine relationship to land that people are seeking. And in a very sensuous, tactile, skilled way.

Paul: Because you did some surveys, didn't you? When you were doing your research, is that the message that came back, was it...?

Lisa: Yeah, the surveys were fantastic and appreciate so many people filling them in. And yes that showed almost completely that essential component for Bushcraft practitioners, or motivation was connection to nature. That was absolutely central. Another was self-reliance, but what was interesting I put in some more sort of survivalist tropes.

Of do you think nature is harsh and we need to survive it. And then there was not particularly an agreement on that. Whereas there was really high agreement...And I was looking at this data, and what I was seeing was that survival in Bushcraft overlap, in terms of their desire for self-reliance, but they start to move away from each other in their desire for connection and relationality to the natural world.

That's philosophically how it looks.

Paul: Interesting. And in practical terms are there any other distinctions that came out, or was that...did you not ask that question? How people...I'm coming back to that old question about philosophically you talked about a person's survival, but did people...or were you just asking from a perspective of you're interested in Bushcraft, how do you perceive these certain things?

Lisa: Yeah, and then I was looking for themes that arose, and then cross-referencing that or triangulate that with lots of different methods. So, historical analysis. The same themes arose to a lot of the historical analysis, and themes in interviews with professional practitioners, interviews with students that were attending courses. And then just my own experience of what I've heard, talked about so many times and things like the survival Bushcraft distinction has been talked about for years, and year, and year, isn't it? It's like people still, they

sense the difference from each other, but also sense the connection between the two. And that this is all sorts of tensions arising from it.

But and yes there were some themes that helped me to separate them philosophically. In practice I think we can all move from one to another, but philosophically and ethically as well, we can go into directions. If you think survival, we can think of quite often has been about survival at any cost. Whereas, Bushcraft there's always a cost. We're very much stewards of the land in Bushcraft. People are very concerned about not over using resources, and not causing suffering to anything and so on. Whereas...

Paul: And sticking to the law as well, of course. You get that when you're teaching people certain traps. There's only very few traps which are legal in the U.K for anybody to put down. And yet there's lots and lots of traps that you can teach people. Particularly the ones that don't rely on manmade materials. And you have to very clear about the ethics, and legalities of using those.

Lisa: Well, that was one of my case studies, was looking at the figure four chart. And the ethical from talking to professional Bushcraft people, and also just witnessing what happened on courses. That the ethical component was so strong. It was really important that people understood that this is not something to mess around with, or play at.

And the suffering of the animal was an at absolute minimum. As really any hunter would say the same. Yeah, any hunters I've ever met. The suffering of the animal, or the lack of it is paramount in their minds. And so there's a very strong ethical base that in Bushcraft that when you get to the other extreme end of the pole of survivalism, it's needs must. And that's it.

Ethics go out of the window in order to just stay alive, because you're in a survival situation now. So they come from different ethical standpoints, and I think they also...you could broadly say move in different directions, in the sense that one is about trying to either get back to a civilized in inverted commas or urban environment .

Or recreate some level of civilization in place of the frantic survival situation. Of and Bushcraft looks to go into nature from the point of view of personal, therapeutic recreation, or enjoyment. It's a simple distinction really between fear and joy. One has a underlying approach that comes out of fear. I'm not saying that every person that does survival is fearfull of nature.

But there's an underlying fear based narrative there.

Paul: Well, certainly in a lot of the TV shows around survival.

Lisa: Yeah, that's what's highlighted isn't it? Is the fearful situation. The hostility of the environment.

Paul: I've got to get out of here.

Lisa: Yeah. Otherwise, something's going to attack me, or fall on me, or whatever.

Paul: Freeze to death or whatever.

Lisa: There's this narrative of being overwhelmed, and Bushcraft is very much a joy based narrative. All the research shows that this was something that people experience voluntarily. They wanted to do this, they felt enriched by it. It was recreation, it was joy, it was satisfaction in their lives. It was something they bring into that domestic life, as well as go out there to do.

Paul: So it's very much something enhanced aspects to their lives.

Lisa: Yeah, so again they're quite different. There's a lot of duality here. It's not just similar but a bit different. They can be actually very oppositional to each other.

Interviewer: That's interesting.

Lisa: And yet then within the same category. And most people would think of it as the same thing.

Paul: Well, they're often mentioned in the same breath, aren't they? Or in the same book title or magazine title, or whatever it is.

Lisa: Yes, that's right. Yeah.

Paul: Interesting, so you're examining, is that the right word, the examiners?

Lisa: Yup, from my vivo [SP].

Paul: Vivo, they were very complimentary about your research.

Lisa: Yes, there were.

Paul: I don't want to misquote them, but you said that they...you pretty much opened a whole new area of...

Lisa: Inquiry.

Paul: Inquiry here.

Lisa: That's right. Yup, and in the examiner's report as well. They reiterated the same thing that this is a new field that's ripe for academic inquiry, that I've as they put it competently, or confidently opened up. Which is really exciting I think because there's so many areas of Bushcraft. And indeed survival and survivalism, and well, camping and outdoor education is also that's already got a big literature, big academic literature around it.

But it doesn't mention Bushcraft, which I find quite amazing or survival really either. So yeah, there is so crossovers between indigenous knowledge, and Bushcraft, and survivalism, and outdoor education, and how the whole thing interlap, interlinks. And I think there's so much research recently that's emerging about well being in nature.

There's loads isn't there? All of a sudden it's everywhere but what I notice is there's not very much that says how, or that we're saying our brain changes when we're around nature.

Paul: Yes, we must be outside. We should spend at least this amount of time outside every day, and see green things and be subject to natural light. Spend time in the fresh air. And interacting with natural materials and yet, okay, well that's prescription, but what's the drug?

Lisa: Yeah, what you do, because it's not just about just walking outside. And it's moving towards saying that things like the whole forest school thing. It's not just using nature of as a backdrop. That's not enough or that it's good enough but it needs to go further. And it's about participating in nature. It's about getting children to do things in nature.

Rather than lets...let's face it we could all go out into the woods and get pests. And I sometimes do. But that's not necessarily going to have the kind of benefits that they're talking about. So it's not just using nature as backdrop. It's what do we do when we're in nature that's important. And I don't know about you, but well, I'm sure that you will say the same that one thing that you see...I've been teaching for 17 years. And one thing I see over and over, and over again is that therapeutic effect of the deep satisfaction, the glow that it gives people who have been in the rain, and the mud for weekend. Should be

going, "I just want to go home." And they're not. They're saying, "I just want to stay here and carry on learning, and using my knife, and my axe and I don't want to."

Paul: Spending time in the woods.

Lisa: It's incredibly enriching. Just sitting around the campfire is as well.

Paul: Fantastic, so where do you think it's going to go next, is it early days to say for you personally? But also is it subject you think more people will come into this area of research, or would you hope that they do?

Lisa: I definitely hope that they do. I think it's a very rich area of research and an important area of research in a world that's increasingly urbanized, and the difficulties that some people face with that. I don't suppose that everybody walking around in a city, is thinking, "Oh, I feel disconnected from nature." But for many of us...for some of us it is true.

So I think it's important for wellbeing and health. I think it's increasingly going to find a place that I think it's important for understanding, some things around leadership and community, and just the crafts basis are interesting from the point of view of refinding our way back to certain knowledge. Knowledge of our environment, our indigenous knowledge if you like.

And the bridge that it creates with a whole array of a of indigenous knowledge's, that we once just drew from without asking. But has the potential to really create understanding for us in the west, about how to live more closely in an environment. If done in a respectful way, and that we are ask first. I don't know it's hard to know where it could go, but it's got a lot of...there's a lot of potential there I think.

And I really hope that more and more thesis, and master's thesis are written around the area. For me personally I'm not 100% sure where I'll go at this point, but I hope to have a lecturing position. And I hope to push the academic side of it further. I definitely want to do lots more research, and yeah, we'll see.

Paul: Yeah, fantastic. We'll get you back for round two at some point. So you can update us on more of the same, on more new things. That will be fantastic but yeah, I'm conscious that we've taken up quite a lot of your time today. So thank you very much for coming on the podcast, and sharing all of that, and I appreciate it's a tiny slither of the work that you've done.

But thank you for sharing those elements. And I'm sure people find them interesting, and they can let you know in the comments sections on the various platforms that this podcast will be on.

Lisa: Yeah, I'd be really...

Paul: And if people want to give you a shout. Where can they find you online, is there's a preferred...don't give your email address out. Before you open your mouth.

Lisa: Well, there's Woodsmoke.

Paul: Web address.

Lisa: Yeah, so there's Woodsmoke, which is www.woodsmoke@uk.com.

Paul: woodsmoke@uk.com.

Lisa: Yeah.

Paul: Okay.

Lisa: And that's probably the best place actually.

Paul: As a contact.

Lisa: To go via Woodsmoke.

Paul: Okay, cool.

Lisa: Well, thank you very much for listening.

Paul: No, no. Thank you, thank you for coming on. And I'm sure people find that interesting and they can let you know.

Lisa: Yes.

Paul: Super, fantastic. Thanks very much.

Lisa: Cheers Paul.

Paul: No worries. Well, thanks again to Lisa for joining me and having that conversation, and for it being shared with you. And I hope it gave you some

insight into Lisa's research. I hope you found it interesting, and if you did please let us know. Please leave a comment on my blog in the comments underneath.

Or message Lisa in the way that she described in the interview. Also what would be super, super useful to share Lisa's work, and to raise awareness of it, is for you to share this podcast. So if you're a member of a Bushcraft group, or a Bushcraft forum. Please share it there.

Please share it via your favorite social media. The social media that you're active on. Share a link to this podcast, and spread the word about this interesting research that Lisa has spent the last six years undertaking, and writing up into a comprehensive thesis. So thanks again for listening. Thank you for your attention.

Please do leave a rating or a review if you've not done so already, on the platform that you're listening to this. And I look forward to speaking to you on the next podcast. Take care now. Bye-bye.