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‘We should all know where we came from.’ Identity and personal experiences at heritage sites.

This paper considers the role that heritage sites as visitor attractions play in the creation and reinforcing of identities at different levels through individual visitor experiences. In-depth interviews with participants at three heritage sites in Scotland reflect the role archaeological heritage can have in creating and reinforcing identities at different levels. Archaeological heritage, and its associated artefacts, creates a tangible link to ‘the past’, providing legitimacy for the creation of particular narratives of the past. In contrast, perceptions of individual identity are often bound up within broader notions of identity and place, but also reflect less obvious but equally valid personal interpretations of heritage sites. Personal identity manifest in different ways in the interviews, through engagement with tangible remains alongside authoritative accounts of ‘the past’. The results show the complex nature of identity when considering visitor experiences at heritage sites, and how recognised narratives of identity may be reimagined and reconstructed through individual experiences on site.

Keywords: heritage tourism; visitor experience; heritage; identity; Scotland

Introduction

This paper considers the role that heritage sites as visitor attractions play in the creation and reinforcing of identities through individual visitor experiences. Excerpts from in-depth interviews with participants at three archaeological heritage sites in Scotland reflect the role which experiences of archaeological heritage have in creating and reinforcing identities. Heritage is central to the construction and reaffirming of collective identities (Graham, Ashworth & Tunbridge, 2000), but individual experiences on site reflect a more complex situation where these recognised narratives may be repeated but also reimagined and reconstructed on a personal level, and new narratives of identity created. As the responses of participants in this article show, concepts of identity at archaeological heritage sites are multi-faceted, reflecting a constructivist

perspective that identity is not fixed, but constantly (re)negotiated (Bamberg, De Fina & Schiffrin, 2011). Data from the case studies is reported here under broad thematic headings, with interview excerpts reflecting the nature of the data and the multi-layered and temporal nature of many aspects of identity.

Literature review

Identity is a key concept discussed in a variety of contexts across the humanities and social sciences (Huddy, 2001), though it is one of a number of words that is ‘continually used, abused and reused’ (Waterton and Smith, 2010, p. 4). Identity does not exist nor evolve in a vacuum: ‘individuals are born into an already structured society’ (Stets & Burke, 2000, p. 225). Identity exists at myriad levels, and can be both introspective and outward-looking. It creates a link between people and wider cultures in relating what is similar or the same, though identities are not fixed in time or space, but rather are socially constructed, and are constantly being evaluated at multiple levels (Ballesteros & Ramirez, 2007; Brewer & Gardner, 2004; McLean, 1998; Tong & Chang, 2008). This is a process that involves the selection of narratives that suit the predominant ideology, relegating or ignoring other aspects of identity that do not suit this discourse (Palmer, 1999).

An individual may have multiple identities existing and evolving at any one time, based on various different characteristics such as gender, religion and place of birth (Palmer, 1999), and may draw on these at different times depending on the specific situation (Palmer, 2005). In this context identity can be understood as something that is temporary, being re-evaluated and reconstructed as a result of daily lived experiences (Giddens, 1991), as a form of self-narrative regarding who people are

and who they are not (Safi, 2013). Through these daily experiences and the wider structures of the societies within which people inhabit, identities are created and reinforced.

Aspects of identity can have a geographical context (Howard, 2003). Place-identity was a term devised to define the way people use place to help create their identities (Proshansky, Fabian and Kaminoff, 1983). Individuals may develop a stronger attachment to place through time (Tan et al., 2018), with space and landscape allowing people to form deep connections to place, defined by Tuan as topophilia (Tuan, 1974). Bilig discusses the medieval concept of 'terra', reflecting the perception of place-based identities which were limited to the immediate landscape surroundings of a community (Bilig, 1995).

National identity, by contrast, requires a change of perspective towards less-tangible 'imagined communities'; elements of identity that have a shared geographical context and bring people together through a process of 'deep horizontal comradeship', but without familiar, individual connection (Anderson, 1991). Symbols of 'national identity', such as flags and anthems, were created to evoke this communal identity, and many other cultural symbols have been incorporated into constructions of national identity (Bechhofer & McCrone, 2013; Bilig, 1995). These national identities are not fixed, but rather can change over time as what defines and informs constructs of national identity changes (Palmer, 1999), including aspects of heritage which are valued in the present.

Heritage plays a role because it is ubiquitous, tangible and intangible, and in myriad forms (Graham, Ashworth & Tunbridge, 2000), leading to heritage having 'an identity-conferring status' (Urry & Larsen, 2011, p. 142). As part of the process of creating identities, heritage sites, as part of a tangible heritage, may become important

symbols linked to personal or national heritage and identity (Jones, 1997; Macdonald, 1997).

These imagined pasts are, then, a temporal construct. In this way it has been argued that, rather than being the physical remains of the past, heritage is a 'social practice' that employs 'the past' as a mechanism for creating meaning in the present (Smith, 2006; Smith, 2015). Heritage sites are the physical manifestation of these ideas, helping to construct identity (Pretes, 2003; Silva & Leal, 2015), with heritage tourism creating a 'set of touristic 'sacred centres'' (Palmer, 1999, p. 316). reflecting a selective process where views on the past are chosen or disregarded to create a dominant narrative (Anderson, 1991; Pretes, 2003).

Through heritage tourism, dominant narratives are projected onto these historic resources as 'mythical discourses' (Palmer, 1999) or 'guiding fictions' (Pretes, 2003), used to convey this sense of identity to visitors. These guiding fictions present an image of the past that people can relate to (Palmer, 1999). At the same time, this process means that heritage sites may play a role in creating divisions between 'us' and 'them', a process that strengthens connections between some by highlighting differences with others (Palmer, 2005; Poria & Ashworth, 2009).

Heritage tourism, as part of the wider tourism industry, needs these forms of 'nationalistic rhetoric' to reinforce ideas of what it deems to be the nation's communal heritage (Palmer, 1999). This hegemonic discourse influences how a nation is viewed by others, as well as influencing the identity construction of individuals within nations (Palmer, 1999). In this way heritage tourism sites play a variety of roles in constructing and reaffirming identity.

At an individual level, visits to heritage tourism sites are used as a method of reinforcing and/or legitimising personal identity amongst many visitors (Smith, 2015).

As identity is a construct which is constantly being (re)negotiated, experiences at heritage sites can play a role in this process of identity creation. This can be manifest through reflections on the past to reaffirm perceptions of identity in the present. These may be twofold: both how sites are viewed and what they represent; and how they enable visitors to make sense of the place and themselves. In the context of heritage tourism, Poria, Butler and Airey seek a distinction between what they term heritage tourism; as something undertaken by visitors 'who perceive a site as a part of their personal heritage'; and visitors with no personal connection to a place, but who visit through a desire to learn (2003, p. 247).

Traditionally, visits to heritage sites (including museums) were understood as activities undertaken with visitor-learning as the central objective of both organisations and visitors (Falk & Dierking, 1992; Hooper-Greenhill, 2007). The predominance of the learning paradigm within the visitor experience has been criticised for ignoring or rejecting other ways visitors may use heritage sites, particularly in reference to visits as emotional experiences (Bagnall, 2003; Palmer, 2005; Smith, 2015). The visit can be an opportunity for visitors to consume and/or reaffirm identities and belonging through a process of cultural performance (Pretes, 2003; Smith, 2015). This may link to an individual's heritage, creating an emotional attachment to place that encompasses a sense of ownership and connection to a personal past (Palmer, 2005; Poria, Butler and Airey 2003). This personal context reflects the individual nature of heritage experiences, even when they occur in the same place (Timothy, 1997). What this also suggests is that the visit may be as much (if not more) about 'feeling' rather than 'learning' or 'gazing' for many visitors (Poria, Butler & Airey, 2003).

Study method

A qualitative methodology was devised for this research, involving in-depth semi-structured interviews which were digitally recorded. A series of general questions were developed as part of an interview guide (table 1), though these could be negotiated and the order altered depending on the interviewees' responses, ensuring that the interview discussions flowed. The questions were non-leading, and designed to be as open and general as possible to enable participants to discuss their experiences on site in a more natural way, and to allow participants to discuss elements of the experience that were important to them. This process also allowed for the interviewer to recognise and establish new ideas or themes which arose during the interviews, and investigate these further through follow up questions with respondents.

Table 1. Interview guide questions

A purposive sampling approach was taken (Bryman, 2004), with participants selected on the basis that they were 'users' of the resource in some way. Viewing participants as 'users' of the resource circumvented the challenge of how to classify participants as 'locals' and 'visitors', as all participants were visitors to the sites or had visited the specific sites. Much research in the social sciences has focused around the issues of how 'local' is defined, in terms of locals and incomers (eg Burnett, 1998; Crow, Allan & Summers, 2001), and local communities (Liepins, 2000; Waterton & Smith, 2010) and the complexities this raises. This includes the challenge of identifying at what point someone becomes 'local', as opposed to a 'visitor'. The discussion of these issues is beyond the scope of the research reported here.

For the study sites reported here, a total of 101 participants took part in 63 interviews, with some interviews involving couples or small groups (table 2):

Table 2: Number of participants and interviews for case study

Those involved with the sites or in positions within local communities were contacted as gatekeepers, to help with the dissemination of information about the research on site, and encourage people to take part (Lewis, 2003). An information leaflet was distributed at each of the sites providing information about the researcher, the nature and potential outcomes of the research project, and the ways that people could become involved (see Arksey & Knight, 1999). The leaflet was sent out to various groups, individuals and organisations within each of the study areas, as well as to Tarbat Discovery Centre and Urquhart Castle visitor centres (Rough Castle does not have a visitor centre). Participants were recruited primarily on site, with visitors approached and asked to take part in the study, a method Bryman describes as ‘hanging around’ (2004).

The interviews were transcribed verbatim into text documents, and analysed and coded using qualitative data analysis software. Through this analysis themes were identified within the research data from individual case studies, and across case studies, allowing theory building informed by the responses of participants, referred to as grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Themes identified included the presentation of heritage sites; the nature of visiting sites; experiencing the past on the ground; authenticity; and conserving, preserving and valuing the past. Alongside these, a theme around identity was established. This article uses interview excerpts to give a sense of the richness of this

data and the ways participants discussed concepts of identity in their experiences at the case study sites.

Case Studies

The findings reported here are drawn from the results of a wider research project focused on the presentation of archaeological heritage sites to the public in Scotland (Timoney, 2008). The case studies were chosen to reflect heritage sites presented to and interpreted for the public in different areas, from different time periods, and by different organisations in Scotland. This article reports on data collected from three case study sites: Urquhart Castle; the Antonine Wall at Rough Castle; and Tarbat Discovery Centre in Scotland.

Urquhart Castle

Urquhart Castle (fig. 1) is located on the banks of Loch Ness, 27 km south-west of Inverness, Scotland. The site comprises the ruined remains of a medieval castle with later additions. In the late-1990s a visitor centre, including shop, café and exhibition were developed. Today the Castle is in the care of Historic Environment Scotland (HES), a national public body set up to investigate, care for and promote Scotland's historic environment. Urquhart Castle is one of the most popular sites under the care of HES, with visitor numbers of 277,394 in 2007 increasing to 518,195 in 2018 (Association of Leading Visitor Attractions, 2019).

The visitor centre and car park were constructed into the side of the hill behind the castle ruins, in an attempt to minimise the impact of the centre on the castle remains. A small exhibition displays artefacts from the site, placed in context through a series of panels outlining the roles and activities of all those involved in the day-to-day life of the castle, and the hierarchies which existed. A scale model of the reconstructed castle

highlights the various areas of the castle. A cinema shows a short film highlighting the castle's origins, development, and eventual destruction, before the screen is removed and the curtains draw back to reveal a view over the castle ruins today.

The castle remains are presented through the use of a number of different levels of interpretation panel, from name plaques, to small and larger information boards.

Antonine Wall at Rough Castle

The Antonine Wall (fig. 2) is a turf, earth and timber wall with fortifications constructed by the Roman army c.AD142 under the order of the Emperor Antoninus Pius (Breeze, 2007). It spans the Forth-Clyde isthmus in central Scotland. Today the Antonine Wall survives as a series of pockets of archaeological remains; its limited survival due to the nature of the archaeology (earth and timber); and its location in the Central Belt, the most populous area of Scotland, where a great deal of activity in the last two millennia has resulted in the destruction of most of the extant remains. One of these surviving pockets is Rough Castle, the site of a fort, located near to the town of Bonnybridge. It is in the care of the local government authority alongside Historic Environment Scotland. Rough Castle is an unstaffed site, with no visitor numbers recorded, though the author estimates annual visitor numbers in the low thousands. The Antonine Wall was inscribed as part of the Frontiers of the Roman Empire World Heritage Site in 2008.

The site contained a series of four interpretation panels, focusing on four broad aspects of the Wall during its construction and use. This included information on the Roman occupation of the area and the changes to the landscape since then; the construction of the Wall and the scale of the structure; the Wall's defences; and the fort itself. All of the panels included reconstruction images of the site.

Tarbat Discovery Centre

Tarbat Discovery Centre is a museum located in the former parish church of Portmahomack, Easter Ross in the Scottish Highlands (fig.3), and is run by the Tarbat Historic Trust. It is adjacent to the site of a Pictish monastic settlement dating from the 6th century AD, which was the focus of intensive excavation and analysis from 1996 to 2007 (Carver, 2008). The museum tells the story of the monastic site, and displays artefacts from the excavations, alongside exhibits relating to the later history of the area.

The Picts converted to Christianity at some point in the mid-first millennium AD, possibly through contact with St Columba and Iona to the west (Carver, 2004; Henderson, 1987). It has been argued that the monastery at Tarbat was established by monks from Iona in the later 6th century AD, developing into an international centre by AD800 (Carver, 2004). The excavations of the early-medieval monastery, and the wider landscape analysis which took place through the Tarbat Discovery Programme, have resulted in an interpretation of the site as an ‘Iona of the East’, arguably as important as Iona in the early-medieval period (Carver 2004). The site opens seasonally, from April to October, and has visitor numbers in the low thousands, with 2,227 in 2009 (Moffat Centre, 2010).

The exhibition space is divided into sections, focusing on various aspects of the site’s discovery and subsequent excavation, as well as including a broader timeline to help visitors place the early medieval monastery within its broader context. The exhibitions include information panels, interactive computers, video screens, and artefacts.

Results

The case study results are presented under a number of themes identified in the data, related to the connections between the identity of places and the identities of individuals.

Identities of place – a national identity for Scotland?

Perceptions of Scotland as a nation are often bound up within national stereotypes of a land of mountains and lochs, castles and clans, a wider cultural construct that has evolved since the eighteenth century (Basu, 2007; McCrone, 2001; McCrone, Morris & Kiely 1995; Sim & Leith, 2013). This period saw a shift from viewing the Scottish Highlands as a dangerous and remote hinterland to an area to be admired and explored; a reimagining of Scotland (particularly the Highlands) that is the origin of a particular national identity for Scotland which is marketed and celebrated today, as Paul Basu discusses (2007, p. 67):

A Highland country with a wild and rugged landscape of mountains, lochs and rivers. It is a place of great scenic beauty [...]. It is an historic land of castles and clans, of traditions and Gaelic language and lore.

In this way castles are perceived to assimilate within broader perceptions of Scotland, through this reimagining of the Scottish Highlands as a location of mystery and wonderment (Basu, 2007; McCrone, 2001). Urquhart Castle can be seen to play an active role within this construction of identity as a site promoted as a visitor attraction and part of an organised, recognised and national cultural narrative. Its place reaffirms for visitors these preconceived ideas of Highland Scotland, and by extension, Scotland, as discussed by John, a visitor from Australia:

Well, Scotland's famous for castles; it's famous for castles from the Middle Ages so we thought we'd have a look. We've only just arrived in Scotland yesterday so we thought we'd come here and it's the first castle we've visited.

Scotland was famous for castles; it was symbolic of Scotland and a national identity. As such, castles were a key part of their itinerary during their visit in terms of experiencing Scotland, and the first thing on their list to do.

With the nature of time-bound visits, it was important to make sure that the real Scotland was reached, a point that Richard, an American visitor on a three-week holiday to Scotland, raised:

I've always been fascinated with Scotland, and the scenery; and Glasgow and places like that don't give me the feeling you're in Scotland. It feels you're in Scotland when you're in the Highlands. It's different.

Glasgow, as the most populous city in Scotland (approx. 1.2 million inhabitants) is, along with the capital Edinburgh, located in Scotland's Central Belt – home to approximately two-thirds of Scotland's c. 5million population (National Records of Scotland, 2017). The perception of a modern, dynamic, bustling city did not equate with Richard's preconceptions of Scotland, nor what real Scotland should feel and look like; the scenery of the city was not the scenery of Scotland. This sense of place was not Scottish in the mythical sense. In this way, parts of Scotland were therefore perceived as authentically more Scottish than others, as they assimilated with these commonly recognised stereotypes (Basu, 2007; McCrone, 2001).

While visitors to Scotland discussed castles as important parts of what they thought they knew about Scotland, a number of participants who identified themselves as from Scotland discussed the importance of learning about sites such as Urquhart Castle as key to instilling a sense of identity for people living in Scotland more generally. Alison, a visitor from Aberdeenshire (c. 120km to the east), discussed this:

You must remember the people of my generation we were never taught Scottish history at school. It wasn't allowed. [...] I think a lot of the Scottish history that I know I've only read since I've been an adult.

In this way the site was seen as part of Scottish history (and Scottish identity) that had been hidden from Scots; 'it wasn't allowed' as part of the focus of formal education. Instead, it was something that had to be sought out, discovered by individuals themselves. In this way, ruined castles, as well as being cultural clichés, were still viewed as important in instilling a sense of national identity for Scots, in connecting them to the past, through which a sense of identity could be formed in the present.

Reflecting on why they had chosen to visit Tarbat Discovery Centre, Rhona, a visitor from the Highlands who had visited the site with her husband and grandsons, discussed similar perceptions of heritage and history, viewing these as an important part of the development of her grandchildren:

To keep them [her grandsons] interested in their history as well. To let them know what was in their native land before they appeared you know?

The 'history' was both part of their personal development, and part of their identity. In this way the Centre played a role in communicating specific values to younger generations in the form of constructing identity; it was seen as *their* native land, a sense of belonging to place, and of place belonging to them. The visit was a means of connecting her grandsons with a less-tangible sense of belonging through engaging with the physical remains of the past.

The presentation of sites, and information about the past, were seen as crucial, not just for those who identified themselves as Scottish, but with regards to the

importance of maintaining a connection with the past to inform modern perceptions of identity. May, a visitor from England, discussed this idea:

I think it's great that people do things like this [the Tarbat Discovery Centre], because otherwise the past would be lost, wouldn't it? And I think that would be a great shame. We should all know where we came from, shouldn't we?

From May's point of view, 'the past' was something that had to be remembered and (re)presented otherwise it would be lost; the site, under excavation during the period of data collection, represented the past *literally* being uncovered. May's comments reflect the idea that the past is something fixed in time and rooted in place, waiting to be discovered. Uncovering the material remains of the past creates a tangible link to *the past*, and a direct link to 'where we came from'. This was perceived to be important for the identity of the place, but also for the identity of the local community in creating a bond between past, present and place.

In contrast, research at Rough Castle saw some participants discuss the Antonine Wall as having no place within concepts of a Scottish past and Scottish identity. Even though the Romans occupied a large area of what is modern central and southern Scotland, the perception that the Romans only reached as far north in the British Isles as Hadrian's Wall continues to pervade popular thought (Breeze, 2007). As this historical knowledge has not permeated the wider public consciousness in Scotland, the Romans may be viewed as an alien or other, and the remains of their activities in what is now Scotland viewed in this way. This perception was discussed in contrast to England, where the Roman heritage was considered to be something which was more widely valued and embraced, as David, a member of a local history society, explained:

I don't think there is a national consciousness in Scotland about it. There is in England, because they see it as dividing them from the barbarians to the north.

Whereas in Scotland it's almost the other way around, it could be seen as sort of an intrusive feature in our national consciousness.

In this way, the notion of the Romans as being linked to perceptions of English heritage and identity has led to the belief that anything Roman represents the English *other* when compared to perceptions of Scottish identity and heritage (McCrone, 2001; McIntosh, Sim & Robertson, 2004). David's comment also reflected a view of a collective national consciousness around identity and what being Scottish meant and represented, something which the Romans did not have a part in (except as an 'other'). This Roman heritage didn't *belong* to his perception of Scottish identity.

The complexity of perceptions of historical identities and how they influence modern constructions of self was also reflected in the response of Michael, a teenage university student, who identified himself as 'half-Scottish' and 'half-English' (based on having a parent from each country) when discussing his perceptions of heritage:

Well.... obviously because I live in Scotland, and I'm half-Scottish and half-English so I've got the half-Scottish and the idea of the Picts living here so I'm sort of descended from them. But also because I'm half-English I have the Anglo-Saxon and Roman side to it. So since a lot of the Romans will actually be English and so they'll be the ones invading Scotland. So I have the kind of mixed, I have both sides essentially, of people defending their homeland, but I also have the, my people trying to extend their homeland. So I like to think that while they're not directly related to me, both sides are part of my heritage.

Michael's response reflects a complexity of thought in trying to bring together what he perceived to be conflicting aspects of regional/national identity in the past and contextualising these with his personal identity in the present, connecting perceptions of Scottish identity with the Picts, and English identity with Anglo-Saxon and Roman heritage. In this way modern national boundaries were superimposed on historical territories to create a direct link between these groups and historical antecedents as a

way for Michael to position himself and show who he was. Michael also acknowledged the distance of time in that they were ‘not directly related’ to him, but at the same time he viewed them as an important part of his own heritage.

The Antonine Wall was also discussed in terms of its importance in *British* history. Heritage is a key factor in the construction of a British identity, but it has been argued that this is achieved through a disregard for regional differences within the British Isles to achieve a homogenous whole (see Gruffudd, Herbert & Piccini, 1998). In this way the concerns over what was or was not Scottish or English heritage could be bypassed when the monuments were considered in the broader context of the British Isles, as Liz, a local resident who had moved to Scotland from America, discussed:

But it is an amazing part of British history, isn't it? Because the Romans got here, in my book they didn't leave much trace, but they got this Wall and retreated. And when you think about that, that's the northern, it's not the edge of the world but it's getting there.

Referring to the Antonine Wall as ‘British history’ avoids the modern juxtaposition of Scottish/English heritage (and identity); it also provides the site with a more geographical, and less political, framing, if British in this sense is taken to relate to the geography of the British Isles as opposed to a British state.

Personal identities

Many of these dialogues on national identity are also discourses on personal identity. Specific or idiosyncratic aspects of identity were also discussed by a number of participants in relation to their experiences on site.

At Tarbat, faith and religion were raised as topics of discussion by some participants in relation to their personal identities, and in recognition of the site's role in the spread of Christianity in the north of the British Isles. In particular, some

participants acknowledged the link between their visits and the central role their faith had in their everyday lives. Paul, an American visiting with his family, identified himself as an active Christian, and discussed the importance of the link with Iona in their experience:

We're pretty active church musicians, and the Iona community now is a source of a lot of more modern sacred music, and we've played and sung music from a number of the composers there. So that was kind of the connection [to visit Tarbat], and then it had the long history, St Columba connection.

Tarbat's connection with St Columba and Iona was important in encouraging a number of participants to visit the site. In this way, journeying to Tarbat could be viewed as a form of pilgrimage, part of a process of reaffirming what was important as part of the identities of Paul and his family.

Tarbat was also seen as an important site in the construction and reaffirming of other aspects of personal identity. For Andy, a visitor from Aberdeenshire, Scotland (c. 110 km to the east), discussion of the Picts developed into a contemplation of his own north-eastern Scottish identity, in particular through his perceptions of a separate language and culture between the north-east and the north-west of Scotland:

I've got a great affinity for the things [Pictish symbol stones]. And I feel myself that I'm a Pict, and not a Celt. I don't feel Celtic. I went to Ireland and I didn't feel part of it, you know? [...] 'Cause I used to think that our language [Doric] was kind of bastardised English and we were a bit thick in the north-east [of Scotland] and got words wrong. But it's not. We've always had a separate language. [...] And if you take a line between Forres and Nairn, that's exactly where Doric changes to Highland [Gaelic]. It's exactly that area. So I think it's always been a distinct, separate kingdom.

Andy's ideas reflect perceptions of his own identity and his beliefs about a hidden regional identity, which more closely align with concepts of cultural or ethnic

identity (Arnold, 1990); his identity was rooted in place. His separation of the Picts from other late Iron Age groups in the north of Scotland is erroneous, as the Picts were one of a number of Celtic tribes from within Scotland (Ritchie, 1994). Andy used the terms 'Celtic' and 'Pict' to create and define separate cultural identities, which were, in his mind, an ancient mirror which could be held up to reflect his modern context. The regional variations within modern day Scotland were viewed as having a much more important historical legitimacy and legacy, to the point where Andy identified himself as Pictish.

Conclusion

This research adds to the body of work that focuses on identity and visitor experiences (see Palmer, 2005; Poria, Butler & Airey, 2003; Smith, 2015) through the discussion of individual interpretations of identity in the context of visits to heritage sites.

The varying discussions of identity reported here link to a deeper need to 'know where we come from'; an emotional connection that is inherent in many visitor experiences at heritage sites (for example Bagnall, 2003; Palmer, 2005; Poria, Butler & Airey, 2003; Smith, 2015). This relates to Poria, Butler and Airey's (2003) concept of heritage tourists as individuals whom have a direct connection to the heritage being presented, but the discussions reported here also highlight the emotional aspects of heritage tourism experiences for participants who have no direct connection to the place or heritage presented. The visit may stimulate an emotional need to connect to a place on a personal level, reflect back on what is important to participants (pause for thought), with the visit then having an 'othering' effect as participants consider their own personal heritage connections and a need to belong (Palmer, 2005; Poria & Ashworth, 2009; Smith, 2015). These identities may be fixed or long-held elements of a sense of self, such as national identity or faith. Other aspects may be more fleeting or temporary,

for example concepts of Pictish identity, possibly an instance where participants constructed knowledge (Kvale, 1996) through the action of reflection which the interview process provided. These can take varied forms, from visitors seeking out stereotypical images of Scotland as representative of Scotland, to those identifying as Scottish seeking out those same narratives to build a stronger sense of self (McCrone, Morris & Kiely, 1995; Sim & Leith, 2013).

Through this process, features in the landscape that did not fit with this vision were viewed as having little place in concepts of a 'Scottish' past; they did not belong to this construct of identity. Participants discussed these incongruous elements in different ways; neither the bustling modern cities of Glasgow and Edinburgh, nor the fragmented remains of Roman archaeology in the landscape adhered to this sense of Scotland.

Instead, visitors select aspects which are relevant to them in constructing and reaffirming identities in a more complex process, as highlighted through discussions of specific aspects of personal identity and how they manifest on site. For example, the modern conflicts of national identity could be sidestepped by reframing the discourse of the 'nation' from Scotland to Britain, as one participant did, though this may simply create a different conflict (Kiely, Bechhofer & McCrone, 2005).

This research highlights the benefits of the methodology employed in accessing the detail and complexity of individual encounters with heritage sites. The use of general questions in the interview guide democratised the process of the interviews further than may be the case with other visitor studies focusing on identity, as participants were not led into discussions around identity, but instead contemplated their experiences in their own terms. This process enabled participants to reflect on different aspects of the visit, confirming personal experiences of heritage that involved identity-

building or identity-confirming elements (for places and for individuals). It gives a much clearer sense of the multiplicity of experiences, and how participants make sense of concepts of identity in relation to their experiences on the ground. This shows the importance of an identity-related context to experiences of the heritage presented, an important aspect whether participants are heritage tourists or visitors to heritage sites.

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Table 1. Interview guide questions

Table 2: Number of participants and interviews for case study

Figure 1. Urquhart Castle © the author

Figure 2. The Antonine Wall at Rough Castle © the author

Figure 3. Tarbat Discovery Centre © the author