CHURCH TOURISM: REPRESENTATION AND CULTURAL PRACTICE

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Abstract

This purpose of this study is to examine the representation of English parish churches as tourist attractions and the processes by which heritage tourism is constructed as a cultural practice. The subject has yielded an intensely critical canon of literature since the 1980s, which has drawn attention issues such as commodification, dissonance and authenticity. An important early question, therefore, is the extent to which heritage can be framed as a useful concept in social science or whether it is simply an object of study and deconstruction. Latterly more attention has been focused on the role and construction of the heritage as process, the study of which reveals a discourse in which national identities and power relations play a significant part. These in turn are expressed within a performative framework characterised by the representational practices of agencies involved in tourism.

Parish churches are seen as material examples of the heritage, are common features of the landscape, and often the oldest building in the locality. As such they form an essential component of the imagery and place mythology of the English Countryside. Tourism agencies and the higher authorities of the Church are active in representing these buildings as, and within, touristic space so as to add cultural capital to the attraction value of destinations and to bolster the Church's role in regional government. In doing so they employ representational practices that draw on the *rural–historic*, an established cultural construction related to the *authorised heritage discourse*, that supports national identity and social cohesion.

This study employs a mainly qualitative approach to identify the key representational practices associated with church tourism and the variations in such practices that exist within the organisation of the Church itself, and between the church and other powerful agencies. It also examines the perceptions, attitudes and behaviours of church tourists and attempts to gain insights on their response to these practices. The research reveals, through its *bricolage*, a duality in the response of churches to tourism between *passivity* and *additionality* in

relation to both representational and spatial practices. Additionality expresses an engagement with the processes of creating and managing heritage attractions whereas passivity describes ambivalence about the value of tourism and a reluctance to take on this additional role.

The research suggests, therefore, that the role of churches as tourist attractions is contested, often within the Church itself. Visitors may feel awkward acting as tourists within a church and there is often little there to support their presence as such. Churches do not appear, therefore, to be fully achieved as tourist attractions and the reasons for this are explored in relation to the cultural work that churches already do, as well as their residual social authority and the perceptions of tourists. It is proposed that without the interventions of Church and State, and the conventional representations of heritage, people and communities might find in churches a more direct and transparent engagement between past and present and between themselves and the places they both occupy and visit.

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Introduction

People *act* as tourists. In doing so they perform in different ways and in different places from those in which they normally spend their time, but the places themselves also perform in order to facilitate tourism. Places and objects, however, do not speak for themselves, and a key part of this process is the representational and spatial practices of those agents and agencies responsible for the management of destinations and attractions. As a result, people have more opportunities than they have ever had before to act as tourists. They tour in space and in time; they tour places and pasts and they tour the places and pasts of other countries, sometimes far distant. In all of this activity they are both producers and consumers of touristic experience, both pro-active performers and passive audiences in activities that take place within a culturally conditioned, representational and symbolic system of exchange. Heritage is one of the cultural contexts within which touristic activity takes place, along with pleasure, recreation, adventure, education and business. It is often perceived as an 'up-market' form of tourism because of its connections with historical knowledge, architecture and other aspects of the arts. In this sense tourism provides an alternative route to the past and one that relies on understanding and interpreting objects and buildings as representative in some way of the past. Whilst this presents an alternative to the 'mass' tourism of the purpose built resort, for historic objects and buildings, touristic activity and representation is an *additional* function.

Heritage has also formed a basis for transformational processes enabling the redundant capital of the past, often associated with industry, to be re-represented as the cultural capital of the present, often in touristic contexts. Old dockyards are transformed into marinas, mines into museums and run down urban districts into locally distinctive and characterful spaces associated with the creative industries, or just good places to eat and drink. As with the tourists themselves, sometimes the role of places is passive, sometimes, proactive, depending on the motivations of those concerned, and this duality is a key theme of the present research. Cities have been transformed thus and the most successful, such as Barcelona, are represented as attractions within the global tourist economy (Degen, 2004). At the same time, in the rural areas of developed countries agriculture has given way to leisure and tourism as providing new and more lucrative opportunities for capital accumulation (Aitcheson, et al., 2000). Everywhere the aestheticisation and commodification of the past has created historic buildings, whole quarters of towns and cities, and culture, in its myriad forms, presented for consumption in a swirling and chaotic exchange of signs and symbols (Zukin, 1995). For some this is the essence of post-modernity, where spheres of activity that were once separate and distinct now collide and merge, and where structural understandings of their significance are replaced by an economy based on the exchange of evanescent surface meanings. For others it is merely the latest manifestation of those deep structures of power and capital that created the very objects that are now re-represented to suit new economic imperatives.

Links between heritage and tourism are now embedded in the commercial practice of the latter and take the form of 'heritage attractions'(Jamal and Kim, 2006), a category that began to develop in its present form in the 1980s and quickly attracted a considerable and somewhat critical literature (Mellor, 1991, 97). The 'Heritage Debate' emerged almost as soon as the 'Heritage Industry', as a description of the growth of commercial and populist representations of the past associated with touristic space: the new museums, theme parks, re-enactments, country houses and other heritage sites. This movement was often characterised by a shift in the representation of space from industrial to leisure use and commercial or commodified and populist representations of the past (Walsh, 1992). Thus, museums and historic sites of various kinds entered and became touristic space either to generate profits or to minimise the level of public subsidy normally required by museums and art galleries (Goulding, 1999; Deckha, 2004). Heritage has thus become a mainstay of the tourism 'product' in the United Kingdom, replacing other forms of recreational tourism with its cultural sensibilities and more upmarket profile, and yet, paradoxically, when combined with tourism and its attendant processes of commodification, it stands accused of debasing its raw material and its cultural contexts (Lowenthal, 1998, 101). Even beach resorts, with their diminishing visitor numbers, attempt to appeal to a traditional imagery of faded Victorian elegance in order to attract new and younger visitors who might want to *play* at being at the seaside.

The heritage debate has now reached a mature phase. The critique so well expressed by Lowenthal (1998, 88-104) can now be scrutinised in the light of more recent thinking, that the objects of tourism do not speak for themselves, but are represented as such by social and cultural process. The deficit of research on individual and personal constructions of heritage has also begun to be addressed, so that heritage can begin to be theorised as a duality of myth-making and display on the one hand and a private and identity-conferring arena on the other (Dicks, 2000, 70). Thus the contemporary uses of heritage at a number of levels and within a range of cultural contexts can now be examined (Smith, 2006). The heritage-tourism link remains particularly problematic because of the complexities surrounding the construction of heritage as touristic space and within it. There is a lack, as Dicks (2000) has identified, of detailed research on both the intertextuality and discourse of heritage constructions, and the reminiscence, identity and personal stories that interact with it. Moreover, there is a lack of critical debate on how particular heritage sites have developed within such systems of meaning (2000, 70-71). The questions are clear: how do heritage sites become touristic? How are they constructed as attractions and objects of the tourist gaze? What are the processes that produce these outcomes? How is heritage tourism achieved, and ultimately, for what purpose? And to what extent is tourism additional in respect of any existing or primary functions?

English parish churches occupy an odd position in the range of objects that notionally constitutes the built heritage. To be sure, they qualify on the grounds of age, often as the oldest building in the district they serve, and they have already been aesthetically 'proven' as essential components of a rural-historic cultural construct based on the English Countryside, which in turn supports established concepts of English national identity (Palmer, 2005). They have also been 'presented' by both church authorities and local governmental agencies as appropriate for inclusion as objects within touristic space, albeit somewhat passively by the church itself. Churches would, therefore, appear to have at least some of the attributes of heritage tourism attractions. They have historical and architectural interest and they contain features and artefacts that are documented by 'experts' and which feature in tourist guide books. They are also repositories of community and personal history, and therefore of interest to the searchers for identity and roots. Their furnishings and monuments often match those of museums in interest and value, some more so than others, but nonetheless to the extent that they represent real cultural capital (Britton, 1991). Indeed, the potential of churches as contemporary tourist attractions was explored by the Church itself in the 1970s, when it set up a working group to investigate the possibilities and implications of such a significant addition to their traditional role (Burman, 1978).

However, the nature of churches as attractions is difficult to define, and their additional role as such is contested, often by members of the churches themselves, the result being that they are often passive rather than pro-active in their own spatial and representational responses to the opportunities that tourism putatively presents. Tourists may also feel ambivalent about their performance as such within a church, and there may be little provided for them either to 'enjoy' their visit or to interpret the physical materiality of the church and its contents. There are none of the services marketing and visitor management issues that might be associated with a 'quality' tourist attraction. As a key element in the new service economies tourism marketing and customer service has inevitably received attention in the heritage management literature (Harrison, 1994; Hall and McArthur, 1998). The 'marketing concept', the principle that products and services are focussed on the needs of consumers rather than the limitations of the producer is now well established in the literature on tourist attractions in general (Swarbrooke, 1999) and heritage management in particular (McArthur and Hall, 1993). The issue of customer service and quality, with its roots in the work of Bitner (1992) and Parasuraman et al. (1985) has also clearly influenced the development of thinking in heritage management (Boniface, 1995; Yeoman and Drummond, 2001). Whilst it is not the purpose of this study to chart a course for the future marketing of churches as tourist attractions, such activities being an object of analysis and deconstruction here, it is also clear that concepts of consumer orientation, quality of experience and communication would have to appear on the agenda of those for whom this was an objective.

Churches thus provide a revealing insight into the dynamics and processes of the heritage-tourism interface and illustrate many of the issues underlying the social and cultural construction of heritage tourism attractions. How is this additional role for churches represented, and by whom? From the non-religious visitor perspective, what do churches offer and what messages do they contain, about the church and about wider social and cultural movements that lie behind it? How is the meaning of a visit to a church understood by the church and by the visitor and how is that meaning constructed?

As a first step it is important, given the extent of the debate about heritage within social and cultural studies, to establish a meaningful concept that can be employed in discourse about it. This is no simple task and requires, at the very least, a thoroughgoing analysis of the debate as it has developed over the last twenty years and a *re-theorisation* of heritage. This is an ambitious project that has begun elsewhere (Smith, 2006) and whilst beyond the scope of the present study, its conditions and pre-figurations are explored here, as prerequisite for further inquiry.

Secondly, it is important to understand how the emergent theories of tourism, derived as they are from the social sciences, can support an understanding of how churches might contain either some value of attraction or of motivation, on the part of tourists, to visit them. Urry (1990), for example, sets out nine 'minimal characteristics' which effectively define tourism as a social practice, the essence of which is that tourism involves physical movement to another place for a period of time; that this involves 'leisure' as something other than the everyday nexus of home and work and indeed something that is experienced with intense pleasure, greater sensitivity and often through a different ordering of the senses than is employed in everyday life, and all of this with a particular emphasis on the visual. This movement and experience is supported by institutional arrangements, socialised forms of provision to enable its mass movement of people from place to place – or from home to destination; sign systems, semiotically ordered imagery and non-touristic forms that reproduce this imagery in photographs, films etc which in turn recapture and reproduce the sign systems that indicate places which can, appropriately and with institutional support, be gazed upon by tourists (Urry, 1990, 2-3). In providing another route to the past heritage provides the material attractions that are then culturally encoded as touristic space, with all the paraphernalia of visual representation and interpretation and the modalities of marketing. This process, whilst essential in encoding space as touristic, brings with it a perception of commercialisation or commodification that threatens the integrity of the material itself and recasting it as an object of present pre-occupations as much as history.

A further interface is that which exists between the modalities of heritage tourism and the Church of England, referred to henceforth as the Church, which is effectively the owner and operator of parish churches. According to Jenkins (1999, xxx) around 8,000 churches survive from the medieval period, although they are likely to have been altered and restored many times. Roughly the same number have been built since the reformation, as populations drifted to expanding towns and cities in the wake of the industrial revolution. The Church itself, however, has also undergone rapid changes in the latter half of the twentieth century. Once woven into the fabric of society and even a part of its ruling polity, it has, since the 1960s assumed an ever diminishing role in both religious and social terms. It remains, at one and the same time a mere vestige and an enduring power, something gone and yet remaining, a symbol of power that was once overt and is now, in its rituals and public moments, a quiet reminder that some things never change. From this, I will argue ultimately that the church is already doing the cultural work that the tourism industry is seeking to commit to it by offering an historic embodiment of enduring social and economic structures and deep seated relations of power. A medieval church does not need to be a tourist attraction to achieve this, it may be that it is achieved timelessly and completely every time a church is visited for whatever purpose.

As tourist attractions, however, churches do additional work, in providing cultural capital to enhance the attraction value of destinations (the products of the tourist industry). This in turn is an artefact of the need to generate capital accumulation from whatever resources are available, and churches, 'doing their cultural work' fit neatly into the product portfolio. Thus they represent a view of the past that can be easily assimilated within an authorised view of heritage, a dominant and ideological construction of history that is consumed elsewhere in the authorised version of the national heritage (Smith, 2006). Most frequently the link is made through a long-standing *rural-historic* cultural construct that emplaces the church in its landscape and which animates a stream of culturally conditioned imagery from tranquil scenery to cream teas.

Against this background the Church is facing the problem that many of its buildings have become redundant and continue to become so as congregations decline. Around 2000 churches have been declared redundant since the 1950s and there is a steady flow of churches entering that state, with 16 churches offered for disposal at the time of writing in June 2006 (Church of England, 2006a). As long ago as 1977, Binney and Burman were cataloguing the trail of destruction that changes in the social significance of the Church were bringing:

> As congregations decline, and grow proportionately older, and as the costs of maintenance and heating soar, churches are being closed, sold, demolished or simply abandoned in increasing numbers (Binney & Burman, 1977, xi).

Like the factories and mines, and the plant and equipment of an industry that has fallen victim to social and economic change, the Church has its own redundant capital, and like those industries there are those who would use its tangible remains to accumulate other forms of capital in the sphere of cultural production and tourism. As the coal mine becomes a museum of itself so also does the medieval church, replete with its dense text of religious practice, attendant ornament and architectural semiotics. Yet there are differences between churches and other heritage resources that point up tensions and conflicts between heritage tourism and the functions of the church, and which imply variations in the way that churches are represented *as* and *within* touristic space. However, unlike much of the industrial plant that that is propelled into touristic space, churches are not actually redundant in their primary function. They still operate as places of religious practice; there are many of them and their text and performance as such is likely to elicit a complex response in non-believers as tourists. Tourism for them is an additional function and one that adds to an already complex mix of cultural meanings.

They also embody the social structures that created them: patterns of land ownership, power and the local state are thus preserved in monuments to the 'great and the good', who in turn sponsored the buildings and endowed them over many generations with the very treasures the tourist is directed towards as cultural capital. In this sense, visiting the church is, in itself, a cultural act of mnemonics, of reproducing those patterns and relations of power. Other aspects of church building have more of a basis in local communities, where money was, and is, raised for new building and repairs and where much of a communities past is represented in both its fabric and its records.

There is something both alien and yet oddly familiar about churches, as religious belief subsides. It has not yet slipped away completely from our social life and its rituals are still used to animate the major passages of life and death. Perhaps then, as some in the Church believe, if visitors could be encouraged, they might contribute something to the upkeep of churches and help to maintain them in use. However, for some churches tourism is seen at best as a dubious opportunity and at worst an abomination, a denial of the Church's real role in society, and its mission. Yet what if tourists, by means of their exposure to the sheer physicality of the church, could be somehow brought into the fold: tourism as evangelism. Could it work?

For the Church, however, this represents an *additional* activity and one which is entirely contingent upon the attitudes and actions of those who are responsible for organising religious practice.

The purpose of this study is to examine the construction of heritage tourism by revealing the particular representational practices that occur around the interfaces and interactions of heritage tourism and the Church. In elucidating the key features of the processes concerned, the study draws attention to the contingent nature of heritage tourism as an outcome which is ultimately determined by the processes of social construction which surround it, and by representational practices that may work together or in conflict. The result is both negotiated and conditional, and reflective of the relative representational power of those involved in the process, including tourists themselves. The construction of heritage tourism is thus revealed in the context of what Hollinshead has described as a 'representational marketplace' (1998, 60), where competing agendas construct through their representational practices the extent to which tourism is possible, viable and understood, not least, by the tourists themselves.

The thesis proposed here is that the churches are not fully achieved as heritage tourist attractions because of the nature of the representational practices surrounding them and the interactions between different narratives of what churches are, and the cultural role they perform. They are the outcome, in short, of both action and inaction, the interplay of passivity and pro-activity that defines the representational marketplace. These interactions are configured by the interplay of representational practices in heritage, in tourism and within the church itself. This interplay, this movement one way and the other, ultimately determines the extent to which something, in this case churches, enters touristic space and stays there. Lefebvre, in mapping the symbolic use of space, provides an agenda for this research:

> Both natural and urban spaces are, if anything, 'over-inscribed' everything therein resembles a rough draft, jumbled and self contradictory. Rather than signs, what one encounters here are directions – multifarious and overlapping instructions . . . But what it signifies is dos and don'ts – and this brings us back to power (1991, 142).

It also brings us back to the passive and the pro-active in spatial practice. The power is expressed through the spatial practices of those involved and especially through what Lefebvre refers to as the *representation of space* (1991, 38), which summarises the activities of officials and their power in defining space in particular ways. If churches are heritage tourism attractions it is because of the exercise of representational power and the relative power of the agencies involved. Between them are people acting as tourists, with their own power to define. What will be argued ultimately is that in the case of church tourism the outcome of these interactions is not yet worked out. There are thus dynamic and potentially contradictory forces of representation that coalesce in the experience of the church tourist, confronted here by a locked door, there by a welcoming face, and everywhere by a dense inter-textual account of why they should or should not be performing the touristic role in the space that churches represent. The uses of heritage are, perhaps, the key to understanding these processes: the re-representation of space into newly authorised versions and the exclusion of oppositional and local voices are noted. In the background, the age old relations of power and property further modulate and condition the representational practices involved. The church speaks directly to the visitor: a *who's who*, in marble and stone, it requires nothing of the arts of interpretation, yet to enter the domain of tourism it must 'qualify' as an attraction. In this paradigm visitors' needs must be addressed; they must be informed and entertained, even fed and watered if at all possible. Whilst marketing planning is beyond the scope of this study, it is clear, as stated earlier, that it would have to form the basis of new spatial practices for churches to be fully achieved as tourist attractions.

The position outlined above is explored firstly in relation to existing theory and literature in the fields of heritage and tourism. In Chapter 1, therefore, I examine the heritage debate as it has developed since the 1980s, to find a concept of heritage that might inform the present research. The chapter presents the argument that whilst the established critique of heritage is both powerful and compelling it leaves room for further examination of the ways in which heritage becomes the locus of a series of often dissonant representational practices on the part of agencies and individuals. This approach both reformulates the critique of heritage by locating it within real cultural practice and allows within its reformulation for due attention to be paid to the way that individuals and communities construct themselves in relation to it. With this in mind it is possible to envisage a version of heritage that exists outside the established structures of the (largely) commercialised heritage industries, facilitates a reconnection between people, places and their pasts and reveals the realities that have constructed those relationships.

In Chapter 2 the debate about representational practice is taken into the sphere of tourism theory. Here is found the contemporary debate about the social and cultural construction of tourist attractions and attraction value, and the response of the subject in terms of tourist types and motivations. In the last few decades new touristic space has been created and a 'clutching of straws,' as Lippard (1999) has put it, has brought cultural and heritage objects within the sphere of tourism in ways that challenge existing representations of space. The Chapter proceeds with an overview of representational practices through a deconstruction of marketing and interpretational practices and offers a framework for assessing the contribution these make to attraction formation and the subjective response of the tourist in the context of churches as new touristic space. If tourism does represent a route to the past through the heritage sub-category then the implications of this are explored in terms of the duality of attraction value and the motivations of tourists.

Chapter 3 develops, on the basis of the theoretical framework already established, a strategy for researching representational practices, meanings and understandings. The strategy is designed to address criticisms of tourism research that it has been too quantitative in its content and 'top-down' in its orientation, and it does so by employing a reflective and interpretive approach, a 'bricolage', based on data drawn from secondary sources, institutional documents, key informants within the agencies concerned, direct observation and interviews with tourists. It also confronts the inherent complexities of conducting such research in a way that reflects the paradigmatic shifts in the nature of qualitative research that have taken place over the last twenty years and which were first explored by Denzin and Lincoln (1994) and applied in tourism studies by Hollinshead (1996, 2004). The field is opened, therefore, to a range of multi-method, multi-theoretical analyses that seek to question the positivistic basis of much traditional tourist research and to allow diversity and eclecticism into the research process (Phillimore and Goodson, (2004a). The challenge then is to develop an enquiry paradigm that constitutes an effective and valid entrenchment of qualitative research in tourism (Phillimore and Goodson, (2004b) and to explore the clear implications of these paradigmatic movements on the disciplinary and epistemological of tourism as a study (Tribe, 2004). Data is thus assembled from a range of sources within a triangulated or 'crystallising' strategy wherein the 'problem' is approached from different directions, with the goal of revealing facets of meaning derived from the key agencies and participants.

In Chapters 4 to 7 the core data of the thesis is represented and examined, beginning with the way that tourism is dealt with by the governing structures of the Church at diocesan level and upwards. Here are observed the first *official* representations of church tourism as the Church seeks to establish, define and propose the nature and benefits of tourism as an additional function. The *additionality thesis* seeks to explain the significance of tourism for the Church as an institution, buying it a place at the table of economic regeneration. The Church thus aims to employ the cultural capital that its churches represent in the new spatial orderings created by new forms of capital accumulation and the concomitant interventions of government and other agencies.

Additionality is also the means by which tourism is sold to the individual parishes, the basic units of Church administration. Tourism represents benefits, in income and therefore long term maintenance of buildings and it provides opportunities for another medium of mission. Chapter 5, however, reveals the first variations in the way that parishes receive and respond to the representational practices of the diocese and church authorities. Parishes are quite autonomous organisations often influenced by not only the vicar, but by other individuals involved in the local Parochial Church Council. Consequently, a position on tourism, whether *passive* or active, is likely to emerge at the parish level and passivity on the part of the parishes is revealed as a key response to the opportunities and challenges of tourism. Add to this the representational opportunities afforded by the internet and the scope is created for considerable variations in the way a church is represented as and within touristic space. This chapter explores issues of dissonance and conflict within heritage tourism by examining the ways that different levels within the organisation of the church perceive the issue of tourism as an additional role and how this variation is reflected at local level as a passive or active response. It also examines the actual representational practices of parishes themselves to identify a rural-historic axis that is a primary correlate of touristic representation. Passivity about the benefits of tourism is, however, the key finding at parish level, with most clergy seemingly unexercised by the issue, preferring to see their buildings as yet another advertisement for the glory of God.

In Chapter 6 I examine the representational practices of other organisations, including local authorities and private operators. It is in relation to these activities that individual churches are often passive in their response. Here are found the vested interests in the accumulation and presentation of cultural capital for economic gain as expressed through the economic development functions of the local state. Here also is a wider context for representation where it is the additional features of the church rather than its primary function that are of interest. A survey of the websites of key agencies including regional and local authorities in England identifies and defines another series of representations that correspond with the official designations of spatial practice identified by Lefebvre (1991). An attempt is made to identify authorised representations of church tourism by examining the representational practices of officialdom and to evaluate these in relation to the representations of the church authorities and parishes.

A further level of dissonance is revealed, where local authorities attempt to include churches within the ambit of their attraction portfolio, to commodify and to package them for touristic consumption within attraction systems that ultimately support local investment and private enterprise. Paradoxically, however, a level of convergence is also revealed, with the same rural-historic axis apparent in parish representations clearly visible in those of the local state and its associated agencies. Thus, where tourism is active and successful it draws on cultural capital that represents more than anything the deep structures and the roots of British society. Despite the dissonance and the fact that the representation of churches as tourist attractions is consequently disrupted, the same cultural processes are clearly at work. The Church's embodiment of the past it shares with the state and its power elites is not only preserved in bricks and mortar, but is reproduced in the authorised representations of a national heritage. The dissonance itself merely serves to reveal the variety of processes at work.

This argument is extended in Chapter 7, where the views and perceptions of tourists themselves are examined. This is against a backdrop of the subjective encounter with heritage discussed in Chapter 1 and the expansion of touristic space that is discussed in Chapter 2. How do visitors construct themselves and their experience as tourists within a church? What is the ensemble effect of the representational practice that conditions this experience and what are they bringing themselves in terms of their response to the church as an object of heritage, tourism and religious practice? The tourist in a church is not merely the passive recipient of representational practice and on the contrary, is active in performing an authorised role within it. The church in this context becomes a 'messy text', over-inscribed by a range of sometimes contradictory messages about itself and in its role in society. Behind these representations, however, there is an historic and abiding link between the church and nationhood, a link that was once animated by religious practice and now, perhaps, by tourism.

The conclusion, however, is that what the tourist is experiencing is the tension or dissonance between the different texts that the church represents: religious, political and touristic. At another level, however, there are opportunities to examine the alternative forms of engagement explored in Chapters 1 and 2, as a more personalised construction of what the past is and what the church represents. On the basis of the tourists' experiences, it is possible to identify a response to the past that was not compromised by both industrial tourism, as represented in its authorised representations, and by the cultural role of the church itself as a place of worship and an embodiment of deep social structures. There remains, thus, the possibility of connectivity with the local past and the local community that is only made possible when official representations are abjured and the traditional social and political roles of the Church are revealed.

It may then be possible to move towards a position that elucidates a more direct engagement between the visitor and the church, one that is distinct from the authorised narratives that are available. If so, perhaps the tourist in a church can at last construct a version of their performance that is directly connected with the past in that place. It is argued, ultimately that in examining the response of tourists in this study such a shift in consciousness might well be possible. This is especially the case where alternative readings or 'subaltern' versions of heritage, as Smith (2006) describes them, are articulated in relation to the sites and places concerned, and where communities can gain representational powers of their own. This is no easy project, and MacCannell has gone so far as to issue a 'manifesto for small places' (1998, 358), to describe the challenge of communities representing their own heritage, but it does address some of the key elements of the heritage debate and in this way provides a more democratic version of heritage and heritage tourism than the *industry,* or indeed the Church, has previously allowed. Such a perspective, in avoiding the machinations of the tourism industry, would have to depend on the capacity and capability of local communities to represent their heritage in the way that they see fit as representative of the past in the places in which they live. This a step beyond the heritage of every day life that is expressed in many contemporary museums and as Horne put it 'one more step – although the greatest – to a community where people develop a taste for preserving an honouring their own things' (1992, 211).

A note on terms and concepts

It is in the nature of a topic that has interfaces with a number of disciplines that terms and concepts will be drawn from them and adapted and employed to address the research question. Whilst the diversity and multi-disciplinarity of heritage has long been recognised (Hufford, 1994, 4) the situation does imply a need to establish a glossary of key terms and concepts before they are applied in the discussion that follows. Whilst the social sciences at the broadest level provide a framework for the analysis specific terms and concepts are employed that require some degree of foregrounding as a prelude to their development and expansion further on.

A key term derived from Foucault (1980) and developed by Hollinshead (1999) is the '*eye of power*', which is used to described the privileged perspective and power of official agencies to inscribe cultural practices with definitions that become institutionalised and normalised. In relation to tourism it is the conceptualisation of attraction and destination that become thus inscribed, so that the officials responsible for economic development and destination management have the power to define what is or is not included in those categories and to represent them as such.

Related to the definitional power of tourism is Lefebvre's (1994) concept of *representational and spatial practice* that describe the way that space is conceived, produced and used. This triadic analysis also enables the construction of a temporal dimension through which the production of space in these ways is seen to change over time. This is crucial to an understanding of the process by which space becomes touristic and the power relations that define it as such. The church as a space on a trajectory from religious to touristic use is an example of this dynamic, and of what Horne described as 'the enchantment of tourism', the many ways through its practices and representations that it can transform one kind of space into another, an endow it with symbolic meaning (1992, 31).

Representational practices generate the possibility of rival representations, contestation and resistance, the results of which are ultimately modulated by the relative power of the agencies, communities and individuals involved. The term 'dissonance' to describe such contested meanings was introduced to heritage studies by Tunbridge and Ashworth (1996), and has since found considerable currency in writing about and theorising heritage. The different uses to which heritage might be put, the conflicting accounts of the past that it reflects and its reflection in the modalities of selection and interpretation are thus key features of the way that objects are brought to popular attention. There is a broader context, however, which is the cultural and political nexus that acts upon these representations differentially, animates them and empowers them in the operational realm and it is this that is found, ultimately, to be the major influence on the representation of churches as tourist attractions. This generally accords with Horne's concept of a generated public culture, a realm of representation which contains the cultural cues and reference points from which a society draws its identifying narratives and creates its mirage of cohesiveness 'in which true citizens share common values and a common life' (1992, 168).

Much of the above assumes a proactive response to the opportunities provided by tourism, but there is another response, a more passive voice that is at most ambivalent about tourism, but also indifferent and occasionally hostile. Passivity as it is framed here reflects Lefebvre's (1994) account of the way space is used in opposition to the way it is conceived and produced often by external agencies. The use of space by those who are intimately connected with it at a day-to-day level may therefore be at odds with the way that official agencies and others conceive it and wish to produce and reproduce it. In the case of churches they may limit their perception of the building to its religious function or its traditional role in its own community. In a way this is also reflective of DeNatale's (1994) observations about the development of tourism in Lowell, Massachusetts which, like Lefebvre's analysis, emphasises the social and cultural complexities at work so that 'the urban landscape is understood as an accretion of social relationships rather than the product of architectural imagination' (DeNatale, 1994, 63). In this sense the passive voice is the one that invests less in the power of the attraction than the simple facts of living there.

For the purposes of the present study the concepts of dissonance, representation and passivity are combined in the concept of representational dissonance, which describes the variation in response to tourism that is the result of the forces outlined above. Thus, there is an interplay between the representational activities of the various organisations involved in church tourism, within the church itself, between the church and other tourist agencies, such as the regional tourist boards, between parish churches as either passive or proactive actor in the production of touristic space. The result of this interplay might be described as 'ragged' in the sense that there are clear organisational divisions reflecting varied representational practices. From the tourists' point of view, however, there is the experience of an *ensemble effect*, the net result of a series of representational and spatial practices that reflect a moment in the development of a tourist attraction and the social, cultural and political world in which such developments take place.

As heritage has developed as a field of study and of professional practice it has also generated a debate about its own ontological status. The 'heritage debate', so well crystallised by Lowenthal (1998), has thus drawn its theoretical substance from the range of social sciences, history and indeed, operational practice. One result of this debate, as it has been framed by Lowenthal, is the idea of an *anti-heritage animus,* a largely theoretical opposition to heritage as a meaningful category in its own right and a category that must, before due examination, bear the inverted commas of a doubtful or challenged concept. The anti-heritage animus contains a range of critical assessments that raise questions of commodification and commercialisation, the trivialisation and debasement of history, authenticity, contestation and the plurality of its construction. An early task, therefore, in the construction of any analysis of heritage is its *de-construction* as a viable category of meaning and activity. The anti-heritage animus, discussed in Chapter 1, provides a conceptual basis for the deconstruction.

In its mature phase, however, the debate has begun to focus on the idea of heritage, not as a category of interpreted objects, but rather as the process by which these objects are recognised and used as such. The concept of 'use' is crucial here in identifying a series of cultural polarities and continua that represent found notions of national identity, belonging or not belonging, and social relations that locate or do not locate the subject in relation to the heritage object. The resulting discourse, the *Authorised Heritage Discourse* (Smith, 2006) is a powerful analytical framework, which, employed here provides a deeper level of meaning than most accounts of heritage have done previously. The Authorised Heritage Discourse (AHD) thus identifies the cultural processes at work in defining and redefining over time the social and cultural modalities of power, property and national identity. In this study a particular facet of the AHD is abstracted and explored: the *rural-historic narrative*, which culturally privileges and underscores the visual imagery and cultural significance of an idealised Englishness based on the countryside, the country house, and not least, the parish church as a focal point, in both concrete and cultural terms. The physical proximity of church and house, with the house as a symbol of power, is a common feature of the rural scene, to the extent that I often felt I was trespassing in trying to gain access to churches that were close to manor houses or something similar. The rural-historic narrative thus establishes a hegemonic and legitimising discourse that supports the permanence of long established relations of property and power, now finding expression in heritage and tourism and the aestheticisation of the countryside and its contents.

The interdisciplinary nature of heritage tourism demands an overview of the terms and concepts that it assembles from its various theoretical components. This review is intended, therefore, to provide a foreground to the discussion of heritage and heritage tourism that follows, in Chapters 1 and 2. Most of the terms themselves have been drawn from the literature that is assembled in these chapters, and others are introduced, applied and substantiated in the light of that debate and for the purposes of the present study.

Chapter 1

Churches and Heritage: a Theoretical Orientation

Introduction

The purpose of this Chapter is to provide a context for the analysis of church tourism within the emerging body of theory and practice associated with the concept of heritage, and the social and economic formations to which it gives rise. It is important, therefore, that the idea of heritage as both a distinctive category of cultural understanding and as a conditioning factor in the touristic representation of churches is fully examined. Having established a set of working meanings with which to pursue the links between churches and heritage the significance of this linkage within the wider context of tourism theory will be examined in Chapter 2. Such a perspective is intended to provide a basis for analysing the nature of churches as objects of heritage and tourism, beyond their primary function as places of worship. The relationship between these roles and functions are examined in terms of the representational practices associated with churches as tourist attractions.

The purpose, therefore, is twofold, firstly to examine the ontological basis for heritage as a meaningful concept, and second, to position the representation of churches as objects of heritage within it. In pursuing the first of these it is essential to address the *heritage debate* as it has developed since the 1980s and in particular, to discuss the various elements that have constituted what remains an active critique of heritage within social and cultural theory. It will be argued that the concept of heritage as a social and cultural construct can support an understanding of the development of church tourism through the understandings and representational practices of the actors and agencies involved.

At the very outset, there is an apparent dichotomy in the literature between theory and practice-based approaches to the study of tourism in general, and heritage tourism in particular. Superficially, the theorisation of heritage directs the student to reference points within the field of management studies and management practice. In other words, heritage is perceived in terms of *heritage management,* which draws its knowledge, understanding and experience from the various fields within its practice, including interpretation, resource management, marketing, business strategy and so forth. Clearly, however, whilst these disciplines do enter upon the theorisation of practice they treat the concept of heritage as *given*, and rarely examine its social and cultural meaning and in this context the term is 'widely discussed but rarely defined' (Herbert 1989, 1). For this reason perhaps, academics more centred within social and cultural theory have treated it with caution, and as a 'bracketed' concept to use Husserl's (1931) term for something that requires examination and deconstruction in both use and context. A problem of definition is also recognised that renders the concept almost meaningless (Johnson and Thomas, 1995, 170; Lowenthal, 1998, 94).

In its operational contexts, however, authors have tended to satisfy themselves with rather prosaic definitions. These are often based on notions of a received past that can be understood and related to the present through the conservation and display of artefacts and buildings, although landscapes, local traditions and other aspects of cultural production may also be included. Typically, however, these perspectives are concerned with the tangible things of the past and despite an increasing breadth in what constitutes heritage, operational practitioners have expressed a common orientation based around:

> the natural and built environment of places and the origins and character of the human endeavour that brought civilisation in general and localities in particular, to their present state (Middleton, 1994, 3).

Whilst such perspectives seem to hold sufficient weight for those concerned with the development and marketing of heritage assets, another level of analysis is clearly necessary in order to fully understand the nature and essential purposes of heritage in contemporary societies. Its contemporaneousness, indeed, is one of its key features, so that heritage is a 'thoroughly modern concept' that somehow fulfils a 'cultural need' in the modern age (McCrone et al., 1995, 1). Fulfilling this need is a process of selection and display, and the ascription of meaning to the objects concerned. As Dicks has put it:

> Heritage is part of a burgeoning new culture of display, in which a variety of different sites are transformed into sights to capitalise on new forms of cultural consumption (2000, 33).

It is in this latter sense that the concept finds its fullest examination: what kind of new cultural movements are responsible for this display, and what does the display seek to reveal (or obfuscate)? How do such transformations take place and why? What are these new forms of cultural consumption and what do they mean? For Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, heritage is a new form of cultural production that 'produces something new' by adding values of 'pastness', exhibition and difference that convert locations into destinations which in turn become 'museums of themselves' (1998, 149–151). The past then, as Wright has put it, is recoverable through the talismanic qualities of its 'bits and pieces', it therefore has substance and reality, and moreover it can be visited by tourists (1985, 75).

There appears, therefore, to be a considerable gulf between those who would explore the idea of heritage from perspectives based in operational practice and its supporting discourses, and those who would seek aetiological explanations for heritage as a form of cultural practice. This dichotomy has, in turn, generated two distinctive literatures, one orientated towards operational issues and the other replete with social theory and critical analysis, in which these same activities are subjected to relentless deconstruction. One of the very few texts that is concerned specifically with tourism and religious sites contains chapters entitled: 'Managing Visitor Impacts', 'Controlling Visitor Flows' and 'Managing, Marketing and Planning' (Shackley, 2001). Other texts provide similar perspectives (Hall and McArthur, 1998; Swarbrooke, 1995; Leask and Yeoman, 1999; McKercher and du Cros, 2002), with perhaps Harrison (1994) providing the most comprehensive account of heritage and heritage tourism from an almost purely managerial perspective. Here the concept of heritage is only briefly examined, and the discussion moves on, with almost unseemly haste, to matters concerned with visitor management and profit margins. Where practitioners do employ theory it is to facilitate meaningful encounters between the material of heritage and its intended audience (Uzzell, 1998). The primary concern remains, therefore, with the practice of interpretation and the modalities of effective operations management, including marketing, finance, human resources, hospitality, catering and retailing.

Against this are ranged the voices of critical analysis, though according to Urry (1995, 29), they are somewhat diverse in disciplinary terms. Sociological, cultural, social geographical and anthropological thought have begun to have an impact on practice, however, in areas such as interpretation and museums, where a rigorous and informative critical analysis has placed theory firmly within the domain of practice and made some progress in exorcising established professional perspectives that appeal to a kind of unchallenged objectivity born of positivistic methodologies and 'neutral' science (Merriman, 1991; Uzzell, 1989 & 1998; Hooper-Greenhill, 1992, 1997 & 2000). Yet as Moscardo (1996) has noted, it is still possible to attend conferences and to peruse papers that are unselfconsciously technical and professionally orientated, and essentially atheoretical in terms of social and cultural discourse. Indeed, so little seems to have changed in the light of the heritage debate that scholars such as Hollinshead (2000; 2004) have continued to ask of practitioners that they reflect upon the meaning of their work and its 'world-making' potential. It could be argued that it is precisely this theoretical deficit that historically, has fuelled the antipathy towards heritage in its operational mode and created an apparently irreconcilable split between much of the theory and the practice of heritage management. This is especially the case where it can be seen how practice has developed around hegemonic versions of heritage which Smith (2006) has framed as the *Authorised Heritage Discourse.*

In the field of tourism studies, Jenkins (1999) has articulated the challenge of making workable links between tourism academics and practitioners, and has suggested ways of facilitating an effective transfer of knowledge by identifying means by which the work of one can contribute something of practical value to that of the other. However, this is the practitioner connecting with the scholar and not necessarily with the theoretical debate, and theoretical analysis would not seem to make for an ideal working relationship between theorists and practitioners with managerial objectives and books to balance.

The real challenge, then, is to explore the possibility of an effective theorisation of heritage and its connections with tourism, one that can form a basis for the present study of church tourism, and which also addresses the heritage debate and its associated theoretical critique. From an examination of the present theoretical debate, an attempt is made to evaluate the extent to which heritage can be understood as a social and cultural practice and how this can inform an understanding of the representation of churches as heritage attractions.

Approaches to heritage and heritage tourism

Heritage as a category of cultural production has been closely associated with tourism for a long time, in providing itineraries for sight-seeing. In historical terms this is perhaps best exemplified by the cultural significance of the Grand Tour (Adler, 1989), and afterwards in the expansion of leisure travel in the nineteenth century (Lowenthal, 1985 and 1998). Tourism in its latter day industrial manifestation has also become heavily dependent on the material of heritage as a source of attraction *assets*. This in turn, is part of what has become a relentless process of touristic representation and the re-representation of places and spaces (Horne, 1992). Often these were formerly associated with other types of capital accumulation, such as mining, agriculture and heavy industry (Dicks, 2000, 33-37). Indeed, it is in heritage that the tourism industry finds much of its significance in social and economic terms, especially since the fragmentation of the traditional, mass market tourism that predominated in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Graham, et al., 2000; Munt, 1994).

From an academic point of view heritage, within the context of tourism, has attracted considerable attention in recent years and within a number of disciplines, including history, social and cultural studies and the nascent discipline of tourism itself. These studies have made it central to the meaning of heritage to develop understandings of the way that the relics of the past have come to represent it, and to explore the relationships between such representations and tourist activity. Heritage as an *industry*, however, is often portrayed negatively and as a *problem* of contemporary culture as famously expressed by Hewison (1987), and further expressed in the work of subsequent commentators such as Horne (1992), Walsh, (1992) and MacCrone, et al., (1995). Ashworth, following Hewison, defines the production of heritage as a commodity:

> History is the remembered record of the past: heritage is a contemporary commodity purposively created to satisfy contemporary consumption. One becomes the other through a process of commodification (Ashworth, 1994a, 16).

Yet, the perceived value of heritage lies in its contrast with contemporary realities, and in a sense that it and its relics are in jeopardy of being 'lost forever' to use a well-worn phrase, unless it is preserved and conserved 'for future generations', to use another. As a result, an *Authorised Heritage Discourse* is established and institutionalised (Smith, 2006). Heritage also contains within it, however, something of the uniqueness of place and the quintessence of locality, that makes it all the more desirable and its loss that much more difficult to bear (Nadel-Klein, 2003, 173-174). Notwithstanding this, however, heritage is still perceived as being somehow less pure than history and something which exists at a further remove from the reality of a past that it is the purpose of history to elucidate. For Lowenthal (1998, 102) this should not be seen as in anyway surprising, as the purposes of history and heritage are entirely different, with heritage necessarily concerned with populism, commercialism and shades of nationalistic chauvinism (MacCrone, et al., 1995). The influence of what Lowenthal has described as an 'anti-heritage animus' on the heritage debate that emerged in the 1980s is such that a theoretical response to it is almost a precondition of any study for which heritage in any form is an object (Smith, 2006, 6).

Two important texts from the 1980s set the scene for the growth of the *antiheritage animus*: The first was Patrick Wright's *On Living in an Old Country* (1985), an incisive and astringent account of the cultural context of the (then) rapidly growing interest in heritage. More influential in the debate that followed was Hewison's *The Heritage Industry* (1987), with its particular position on heritage as debased history, biased in favour of the values of the dominant class and ultimately entropic. Two anthologies on museology from the end of the 1980s have also been significant and formative: Vergo (ed. 1989) and Lumley (ed. 1988) did much to stimulate debate around the nature and essential purpose of museum collection and display, and early research on museum visitors by Merriman (1991) has been equally influential. Contributors variously examine the transformations of museums into attractions, the nature of the artefactual display and question the status of interpretation as a *fully achieved* account of the past. Merriman's detailed survey of Museum visitors' motivations revealed implicit social class-based values in museum presentations and the exclusionary nature of much interpretation, a point that was further emphasised in the more personal observations of Horne (1992, 212 – 221).

Against these critiques, however, is Wright's assertion that the sheer popularity of heritage attractions and activities cannot be ignored: 'we should instead be considering whether all those millions can be so entirely mistaken in their enthusiasms' (1985, 80). Samuel is the champion of such history 'from the bottom up' expressed in a myriad of local conservation societies and restoration projects, the significance of which has led him to describe the critics as 'heritage baiters' (1998,130).

What then is the current state of the theorisation of heritage? Can it be taken seriously as anything other than an object of critical analysis? What processes are at work? These questions are particularly important in the case of churches. Relatively common as relics of the past, and often hugely significant in terms of architectural and social history, they provide the scene and the sanctity for key rites of passage, even if relatively few people use them for regular religious observance. Beyond this they have another role that will also be explored throughout this research, as places of cultural practice, where images of place and identity have long been cultivated, represented and reproduced.

Anti-heritage animus

Lowenthal has coined the term 'anti-heritage animus' (1998, 100) to summarise and express the corpus of theoretical opposition to the concept of heritage and its uses, that has characterised much of the debate on heritage since the 1980s. 'Heritage', Lowenthal states, 'is vilified as selfish and chauvinistic, nostalgic and escapist, trivial and sterile, ignorant and anachronistic. Intricacy is simplified, the diverse made uniform, the exotic turned insipid' (1998, 88). He goes on to identify six basic and elements wherein heritage is variously assailed as:

- chauvinistic and contested,
- elitist,
- incoherent,
- eclectic,
- commercially debased, and
- 'bad' historically.

For Hewison (1987) these 'intrinsic' elements of heritage are symptomatic of a society beset with debilitating nostalgia, and under siege from its own invasive past (see also Lowenthal, 1985, 4-13).

The weight of the anti-heritage critique raises the question of whether the present research represents, in itself, a worthwhile project. If the concept of heritage is so problematic and essentially without value as a basis for explaining behaviour or understanding the various practices that constitute it, and if such explanations and analyses can be more productively expressed through the canons of other disciplines such as anthropology or sociology, then further development of the concept would seem fruitless. It is argued here, however, that the search for an ontologically valid concept of heritage is a worthwhile project. The anti-heritage critique is neither fully achieved in theoretical terms nor fully encompassing in its explanatory power, as Samuel (1994) and Smith (2006) have discussed in wide ranging accounts of the values, meanings and understandings that are packed into the concept and practice of heritage. Moreover, heritage as an object of representational practice is a central component of contemporary touristic practise and essential part of what has become touristic space. Rojek, for example, describes the way that the Robin Hood legend is employed to represent Nottingham, in the United Kingdom, as a heritage site, and as a *discursive system* which 'has real effects on the way in which community and free time practice and association are organised' (1993, 147).

Heritage, therefore, can be seen as a system of representation, of signification that has effects far beyond its mere depiction of the past, mendacious or otherwise, as Samuel's careful deconstruction of the history of the Tower of London suggests. Here, a 'concurrence of different influences' created, from a mere cabinet of curiosities, a monumental tourist attraction, that by the end of the nineteenth century was attracting more than half a million visitors a year. During this time it began to reproduce its *medievality,* as gothic revivalists, led by the architect Anthony Salvin, sought to reconstruct a past in the present, and to create a romanticised gothic past

(Samuel, 1998, 118). Heritage formulates its own spaces and contributes to other spatial arrangements. In doing so it organises practices that are interwoven with capital accumulation, economic movements and political activity. The question of agency is therefore central: who controls heritage and to what end, what means are used to create heritage within touristic space and why? How, as Horne has put it, are 'social, regional, gender and ethnic divisions ... kept in mind by the people who decide on heritage sites and their treatment ...' (1992, 209). Clearly the production and supply of heritage and heritage tourism is highly organised within a framework of institutions, destinations and operators. Other theorists have taken these ideas into a new realm of representational analysis. Lefebvre (1991), Urry (1990), Shields (1991), Rojek (1993) and more recently Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1998) and Hollinshead (1999a, 2000) have explored these concepts in relation the production and reproduction of meaning. In the following sections the ways in which they have begun to unravel the theoretical threads and operational manifestations of heritage will be discussed. The object of this analysis is to formulate the means by which heritage is socially constructed and consumed through an economy of representational practices and semiotics.

Dissonance, chauvinism and contestation

Heritage seems often to have been in thrall to the politics of identity, especially where it helps to support concepts of nationhood and national origins (Ashworth, 1994a and 1994b; 1995; Gruffudd, 1995; Lowenthal, 1998; Palmer, 2000; Hale, 2001, Nadel-Klein, 2003) and there is perhaps an inevitability about its use to support nationalist movements, powerful interests and indeed their opposing factions. As Brett has stated:

> Buildings, parks, exhibitions and displays are created by organisations that have their particular values and assumptions inscribed in their products (1996, 12).

The production of heritage is always in jeopardy of producing 'partial stories', and for Zolberg, the museum in particular has become a focus for disputes about the meaning of heritage objects and the accounts they represent (1998, 69). On a broader scale the concept of 'dissonant heritage' was developed by Tunbridge and Ashworth (1996; see also Graham, et al, 2000) in order to analyse the potential conflicts between different versions of the past, and argue that dissonance is an integral aspect of heritage. Light (2000), for example, draws particular attention to the ways in which the residues of Eastern European communism have attracted an almost unwanted touristic attention. Dubin's (1999) account of museum displays as the site of cultural contests is a compelling analysis of representation and responsibility as expressed by the power of interpretation and its essential contestability. It seems impossible to escape the conclusion that interpretation, however well intentioned, is influenced by prevailing social, political and cultural values one or more of which may be privileged over others. If the particular and often situational points of contestation that can emerge in any representation of the past are not addressed in the context of display then the values that informed that representation will remain unchallenged, whilst the act of interpretation itself garners the spurious objectivity to which reference was made earlier. As Anteric, in her analysis of contested heritage in the former Yugoslavia, has put it:

> The past and its remains never speak by themselves. Their discovery and exploitation involve a process of interpretation and mediation which not only transforms them but also endows them with contemporary meanings (1998, 182).

Horne has taken the analysis a step further in observing that museums are 'collections of objects, not collections of words', and that this necessarily problematises the use of such displays to represent complex social phenomena, such as race, gender, class and attendant inequalities (1992, 209). For Graham, et al. (2000, 18) this is not simply a risk, it is an inevitability. Judgements about representation and interpretation are functions of the values of those who make them and it is possible that such representations may also become a *preferred* medium for the promulgation of such values. Heritage has not infrequently been the handmaiden of strident propaganda as well as more deeply embedded and subtle ideological purposes.

Contestation can also accumulate around the representation of space, so that contexts for contestation and conflict are fuelled by different representations of the space concerned. Lefebvre (1991) is credited with the first account of the differentiation and production of space. His project is to theorise 'the actual production of space' in terms its various representations and beginnings and on the basis of this, to understand how space thus produced can then be 'decoded' or 'read' through a 'process of signification' (1991, 16-17). Encoded space comes into being and disappears, and can thus be understood as a social practice where the key is to decipher the representational activities associated with space as it is perceived, conceived and lived. Space is a concrete manifestation of social relations, the reality that is consequential to them and a definition of spatially modulated behaviours. Second, it is a representation of the plans and policies of politicians and officials, and thirdly, it is a lived system of images and symbols experienced by inhabitants and other 'users' of it, and a context for the development of shared understandings, illusions and beliefs (1991, 38-46).

Lefebvre thus provides a structured and dynamic framework for understanding the way that space is produced in particular contexts and at particular times, and the ways in which the three forms of representational practice outlined above interact together in a wider context of capitalist production. For Shields (1991) the point is that despite the common sense perception of space as a neutral void in which things are *meant* to happen, it is itself a product of those very things:

> People treat the spatial as charged with emotional content, mythical meanings, community symbolism, and historical significance. [It is

> these] that one finds built into the framework of institutions, perceptions and biases which characterise the everyday life of otherwise rational institutions (1991, 57).

As for understanding which of Lefebvre's representational practices may be dominant in any particular space, a mechanism is required by which power relations might be recognised within the context of representation. Urry (1990) has applied Foucault's (1976) notion of the gaze of power that the latter expressed in relation to the medical profession, to the ways in which tourist attractions are defined and institutionalised as such. Expressed ultimately in the concept of the tourist *gaze*, Urry's (1990) book has been both influential and provocative (Chaney, 2002, 196) and according to him,

> When we 'go away' we look at the environment with interest and curiosity. It speaks to us in ways we appreciate, or at least we anticipate that it will do so. In other words, we gaze at what we encounter. And this gaze is socially organised and systematised as is the gaze of the medic (1990, 1).

The key issue here is the possibility of dissonance between institutional or powerful definitions of space, and other perceptions of that space, and to understand the origin and purpose of these privileged and exclusive understandings. Objects of heritage tourism become defined as such by agencies concerned with the representation of touristic space. Thus, what is considered of touristic merit is ordained, authorised and organised according to the mediating process of commodification and its powerful agents. Hollinshead (1999a) examines the various ways that touristic objects, including the past itself, are engaged by the agents of government in a process of 'cultural, social, environmental and historical cleansing, as they promote and project some socio-political universes and chastise or omit other possible contending worldviews'. Thus, as the Foucauldian 'eye of power' is gradually institutionalised within what presently constitutes the tourism industry, it 'restrictively hardens into a normalising discourse that ultimately presents an 'aggregate way of seeing and interpreting its objects' (Hollinshead, 1999a, 8-9). Ultimately, what is said and done in the name of tourism, particularly at the level of representation, what is admitted and what is not, is internalised within touristic praxis and operations, and furthermore this expression of power develops outside the realm of practical consciousness so that its operators unwittingly participate in a self regulating process of signification. Hollinshead's question is ultimately a simple one:

> What do we repeatedly and systematically privilege in tourism representations, and what do we repeatedly and systematically deny and frustrate? (1999a, 15).

For Horne (1992) such designations become part of what he describes as 'public culture', which operates as a kind of mirage reflecting those aspects of a complex society which represent it most clearly and affirmatively to its public. Such culture, however, contains as many silences as it does statements, and the means by which the public comes to know itself is selective, refracted, fractured and inevitably mediated by the interests of the powerful (1992, 182-183). This sleight of hand, or 'legerdemain', as Horne describes it can, in his view, be challenged and contested by the intelligent tourist, by confronting the magic and mystification of the cultural processes that bestow such celebrity on objects and places. In this act, and in a way that equally magically strips away the political and ideological forces that underlie such projections, the act of contestation, for Horne, is enough to make them 'go away' (1992, 37). It seems rather optimistic to believe that such an essentially cerebral act can box up and dispose of powerful representational practices of the sort discussed here. An act of individual consciousness and enlightenment is hardly more than that, a beginning rather than the end of an oppositional social process. This is especially the case when Horne himself suggests that tourism supports the myths and legitimations of social and economic power and elsewhere provides the tools of suppression, subjugation and subordination (1992, 173, 212 – 218).

Cheong and Miller (2000) have also focused on the dynamics of touristic representation and its potential as a site for contestation, employing the Foucauldian concept of power to elucidate a tripartite system of tourists, locals and 'brokers' (operators and tourism officials). Power is thus exercised through another socially constructed 'gaze' through which each of these parties perceives the others. The potential for contestation occurs when one of these groups realises its gaze in the form of social actions or attitudes, such of those of locals who might either welcome or reject tourists, and the meanings the latter impose on their location:

> The power of the local gaze on tourists (and their attending guides) can lead tourists to quickly understand where they might go and what they might do (Cheong & Miller, 2000, 383).

Cheong and Miller's conclusion is that tourists are the targets of Foulcauldian power exercised through the respective gazes of locals and brokers. The potential for conflict in such contexts has also been explored by Hale in the representation of heritage in Cornwall (2001), and Mordue (2005) who has analysed heritage tourism in York (United Kingdom) as it is 'performed' evaluated and contested in terms of Cheong and Miller's tripartite framework. Performance is thus seen as a combination of symbolic interactions, discourses and signifying practices which mediate the use of space and facilitate the production and consumption of 'cultural capital' in the sense of the latter conceived by Bourdieu (1984). This concept of performance appears to correspond with Lefebvre's third triadic component of representational or lived space, although oddly, neither Lefebvre nor Shields are cited in this regard. Mordue's main argument, however, is that the historic core of the City now plays host to a range of 'performative signifiers', from souvenir shops to street musicians, that are expressions of a coupling of commercial activity with heritage (2005, 180-181). This reflects some of the issues highlighted by Hollinshead (1992b) in his essay on Horne, where attention is drawn to the 'performative activity' of the tourism industry in bestowing celebrity on its favoured sites, which often contain ideologically useful messages (1999b, 271).

The process also represents a gradual dislocation of the City and its history from local meanings as it becomes re-represented for the global tourism industry. The City itself, therefore, is a site of contestation between a heritage understood and expressed by locals and another which is conceived and represented by local officialdom, and performed by businesses and entertainers. In this way, and in celebrating its uniqueness it is effectively and paradoxically dedifferentiated from everywhere else in the world that is attempting something similar for the purposes of global consumption (Mordue, 2005). An additional risk is that the officially represented version, the *authorised* version, eventually substitutes local meanings and becomes the only reality available.

According to Brett, again citing the case of York, a reconstructed past which began in the City's Castle Museum in the 1950s has spread throughout the City as a whole, creating a tension between old (or 'olde') York and the new City where the former dominates within a context of touristic development (1996, 10-11). The situation in York, however, is not as clear cut as Brett avers, the civic leadership having resisted touristic development until well into the 1980s because of a perceived disdain for it on the part of voters, and a concern for the poorer quality of employment it brought compared with the City's traditional manufacturing industries (York City Council, 1995, 8-10). Such resistance is not unique. In Cornwall the issue of contestation is heightened by a nationalistic fervour that is not yet apparent in Yorkshire. This has led to 'direct action' on the part of activists who have destroyed English Heritage signage, engaged in acts of vandalism and spray painted slogans reminding tourists that they are 'not in England' (Hale, 2001, 190).

The issues of contestation and dissonance raise the question of the extent to which a concept of heritage can be usefully carried forward into other debates. That heritage as a cultural practice is used to support political and social agendas is clear, but it seems equally evident that heritage shares this characteristic with virtually any other cultural product including literature, popular music and indeed, history. Nor does the risk of an agenda driven heritage preclude the existence of an alternative agenda, one that both admits and celebrates the plurality of meanings that are inevitably attached to the objects of heritage. The issue then becomes one of relative strength and relative power in the production of potentially competing meanings, something, again, which is characteristic of cultural production in general. Thus heritage interpretation can be construed either as a political tightrope with only the prospect of falling off sooner or later, or alternatively as an opportunity for using interpretative processes to explore different, even competing accounts. The accusation of chauvinism in heritage is therefore just one side of the coin and it is at least possible, and indeed often the case, that competing interpretations of it may be placed in the service of genuine debate and political struggle.

A postmodernist perspective might, however, suggest that such structured meanings outlined above are redundant and that such readings can never transcend the state of free-floating signification that is characteristic of contemporary culture (Rojek, 1993, pp.132 & 168). Yet for Dubin (1999), dispute is the very stuff of display and plurality is the field of conflict. Clearly the management of dissonance is fraught with difficulty, and Graham et al. have pointed to the inevitability of privileging a particular viewpoint (2000, 96-7). Nor is recourse to *multiculturalist* perspectives necessarily helpful, in that these could constitute forms of *repressive tolerance*, to use Marcuse's (2002) concept of the way that that political struggle is deactivated by allowing oppositional voices a modicum of expression. For heritage, however, it is not a necessary condition of debate or contest that it should be easy to reconcile competing claims. Nor can these be imagined away by resort to the evanescence or volatility of sign systems as the postmodernists might have it. Dissonance in general and the risk of destructive chauvinism are, rather, a characteristic of heritage interpretation. In a positive sense they enliven it and provide a basis for management of dissonance in a way that enables each case to be 'thought out for its appropriateness and acceptability in time and place' (Graham et al., 2000, 125). Is it possible then that in conceiving a heritage that admits diversity and promotes transparency the inevitability of dispute might be construed as a virtue? There have been some encouraging voices. As Harvey has expressed it:

> Every society has had a relationship with its past, even those which have chosen to ignore it, and it is through understanding the meaning and nature of what people tell each other about their past; about what they forget, remember, memorialise and/or fake, that heritage studies can engage with academic debates ...(Harvey, 2001, 320).

Porter, in her analysis of the representation of women in museums reviles the traditional curatorial perspective on 'unbiased professionalism', objectivity and the 'factual' that renders irrelevant the misrepresentation of gender politics, and she asks ' ... how do we open up criticism and offer alternative and/or additional representations?' (1988, 119). For Hooper-Greenhill, this question generates a new and contemporary modus operandi for the museum. Thus, museums are no longer merely sites of contention as Dubin (1999) has elaborated, but sites for change and for cultural struggle, and opportunities to provide democratic access to representations of the past (Hooper-Greenhill, 2000, 21). Similarly, for Zolberg, museums have a choice, either to avoid controversy or to develop programmes that are transparent and which facilitate 'intellectual experiences for competing publics and even national states' (1998, 80-81).

In conclusion, it might be argued that the kinds of spatial conflicts prefigured by Lefebvre and the power relations exposed by the gaze as articulated by Urry, and developed by others such as Hollinshead, Cheong and Miller, and Mordue, do not diminish heritage, but place it at the forefront of long running debates. At the centre of these debates are conflicts about the representation and appropriation of space by commercial and administrative powers, the use of that space by tourists and by locals as *put upon*, excluded or indeed as victims. Whilst Hale is pessimistic about a situation in which poly-vocalism always tends to be replaced by a single and privileged narrative, he still offers the prospect of a new balance in which a range of Cornish historical experiences are self-consciously promoted (2001, 194). Hollinshead (1999) cautions operators and the agencies of governance (whoever they are in any particular situation) to be more aware of their eye-of-power status and the panoptic implications of their domain and, perhaps optimistically, he points to the instructional value of Foucauldian thought for practitioners in avoiding imprisonment within their own powerful definitional repertoires (1999, 16). Ignoring this risks the creation of an organising and ultimately oppressive discourses expressed through promotional literature and the subsequent absorption of these into local representational practice, a situation with which residents of York, among many other places, might easily recognise.

It follows that a theory of heritage that encompasses and explores dissonance, rather than one that is diminished by its implications, would seem to be vital to its application as a theoretical construct or framework. It begins with an acknowledgement of the plurality of perspectives and a duality of power and powerlessness in the act of representation. Hollinshead (1999a) recognises this in his demand that those who posses the power of representation must become self-conscious and 'vigilant to the fact that their actions are not as 'neutral' and as axiomatically equitous as they might have assumed ...' (1999a, 17). With this in mind operators can admit alternative narratives and recognise the rights of host populations to convey their own story. Waitt proposes a similar solution for the Sydney Cove development, where a 'multiplicity of view points and interpretations' can be incorporated into the narrative formed by officials and operators (2000, 857). Whether they would do so or not within the context of the hegemonic and commercial pressures that operate on and within their domain is, of course, arguable, but a space for other readings can at least be imagined, even where dissonance of various sorts exists. How that space is filled, is part of another debate.

For the present purposes, then, rather than being diminished by dissonance and contestation, heritage, it could be argued, forms a potentially valuable context for open and enlightened debate about the received past and the uses to which it is put in a wide range of contexts. It may thus provide a critical and reflective approach to the past for both the providers of heritage tourism and its recipients as both tourists and hosts and the unexamined, hegemonic, power-related and uncritical narratives for which, by its critics, heritage has long been abjured, are not a necessary condition of its existence.

Elitism

The critique of heritage on the grounds of elitism encompasses two separate but related areas of theory, one focussed the way that heritage finds fascination in the representation of kings, queens, social elites and their possessions, and the other concerned with the way that the consumption of heritage is differentiated according to a distinction between 'low' and 'high culture', so that only an elite possessed of sufficient cultural capital can fully appreciate the latter. The remainder of society are consigned to a kind of cultural netherworld populated by television celebrities, soap operas and other artefacts of 'popular culture'. In other words, the discussion of elitism is concerned with both the production and the consumption of heritage. The two issues converge in the aspects of agency and purpose: what ends are served by focussing on social elites, or indeed, by broadening the content of heritage to include contexts and categories, and what ends are served by exclusivity or by inclusivity in the matter of its consumption?

The privileging of view points in heritage, so that they tend to reflect dominant values and ideologies is a key theme of the anti-heritage animus. Thus, the representation of elites and elite culture as a commodity within the heritage industry can be seen as a way of de-politicising it and isolating it from the social and economic relations of production that created it in the first place. The history of 'Western' Marxism from Lukacs (1975), and Gramsci (1973) through Althusser (1996) to Poulantzas (1973), and not least the Frankfurt school represented particularly in the work of Benjamin (1979) and Marcuse (2002), is dominated by attempts to understand the mechanisms by which the content of an ideological superstructure works to sustain and reproduce existing relations of production. Heritage as a form of cultural production may be seen within this context as both an ideological construct and also as a possible location for the development of oppositional values. The critique of heritage has generally supposed the former to be the dominant role of heritage. Mellor (1991, 98), Horne (1992, 182-183, 212-221) and Lowenthal (1998, 48-52) make the point that the historical experience of women, children and a variety of ethnic groups is not well represented in what is both achieved and received through the production of heritage. The deliberate self-association of the Thatcher Government with 'Victorian Values' (Samuel, 1998, 330-350) and John Major's mawkish reference to cricket, village greens and warm beer both serve to illustrate the possibilities for a hegemonic construction of the past, or at least, traditional values. That the Victorian period also saw the genesis of state intervention to curb the excesses of rampant capitalism was apparently lost on Thatcher as were issues of rural poverty on Major. The past thus becomes a one-dimensional delineation that depends on a distorted abstraction that firstly bears no relation to historical reality, secondly glosses over the political implications of those realities, and thirdly, presents its subject matter as an attractive and aestheticised object of interest, with heritage as the medium by which all of this is achieved.

The charge of elitism is most easily and perhaps appropriately levelled at the Country House, which has come to characterise a particular and one-dimensional view of the English past, supported by popular literature and *period* films and television productions. The suppliers of the country house heritage product are predominantly the owners themselves, although the National Trust also has a significant portfolio of properties and is clearly associated with it. Private owners are represented by the Historic Houses Association which acts as a lobby for the sector and is vocal, for example, in representing the needs of owners for financial assistance from the National Lottery. It is also keen to represent the significance of historic houses in the tourist economy, particularly in rural areas (Historic Houses Association, 2005).

Mellor makes reference to the 'cult of the country house' and associates this with the ascendancy of the National Trust and the Laura Ashley style of interior décor and clothing (1991, 97), reflecting Hewison's earlier observations (1981, 65; 1987). Bennett sees in the Victoria and Albert Museum an attempt to materialise the power of the ruling classes by displaying its collections of imperialist plunder (1988, 64), while Walsh views the country house as emblematic in the production of an English heritage:

> There is no doubt that it is the country house which for many people symbolises the idea of the 'heritage' in Britain or, more specifically, England. It is this type of heritage which should be defined as state heritage, and is clearly a part of a wider hegemonic struggle on the part of the traditional conservatives to maintain their position in British society (1992, 75).

At stake here is a notion of cohesive social values that serve a comfortably conservative view of the past, which was clearly replete with 'eccentric aunts', 'young bucks', 'bright young things' and servants who were 'faithful', 'trustworthy' and 'diffident'. Outside the country house most human life is invisible, as it was in landscape paintings before John Constable and Gustave Courbet populated them with real people. Where hints of the horrors of Victorian urban Britain are referenced in the cultural production of the country house, they are typically accessed via film or television adaptations of Dickens an author known to wallow in misery for the sake of a good story. Alternatively they gather the patina of something grotesque and exist on another plane from the contemporary world, separated by the comforting linear progression of modernity.

Whilst there is little doubt that heritage can be an effective medium for the transmission of dominant cultural values, for Urry, this is related to a broadening of what constitutes heritage and a 'proliferation of alternative or vernacular histories' (1990, 130), and new representations of social, economic, populist, ethnic and industrial images. According to Dubin historians themselves have, since the 1960s, eschewed exclusive and dominant accounts in favour of history 'from below' (1999, 9), which is also Samuel's preferred source (1998, 203-208). As Bennett has expressed it:

> Although somewhat belatedly compared with Scandinavian countries and North America, the post-war period has witnessed a flurry of new museum initiatives – folk museums, open air museums, living history farms – orientated towards the collection, preservation and display of artefacts relating to the daily lives, customs, rituals, and traditions of non-elite social strata (1988, 63).

With an associated tendency to contemporise history, to bring it right up to date, or at least up to the last decade or so, there has been an apparent shift from traditional objects of heritage to the consumption of *pastness* whatever its source. Objects, symbols and representations are sucked into a great eclectic vortex, in which anything old is interesting, and as interesting as anything else that is old (Urry, 1990, 129-130). The real question, however, is how this serves either the interests of capital accumulation or conservative values. It may be, for example, that the interests of capital accumulation are far better served where heritage products are diversified, particularly where previously profitable productive modalities have reached a point of expiry. There may be no better exemplars of this than where the redundant capital of old industries such as mining, fishing and even agriculture, provide the materiel of economic regeneration though a re-representation in the realm of heritage (Dicks, 2000; Nadel-Klein, 2003; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998, 250). The country house as a deracinated abstraction can then simply take its place within a heritage portfolio that also contains the historical theme park, restored railway and museum of lawnmowers.

This broadening of heritage to include the paraphernalia of industry or the folk museum can, however, be seen just like country house heritage as a hegemonic obfuscation of the reality of traditional and abiding social and power relations. The latter perspective is certainly advanced in Bennett's perception of the North of England Open Air Museum at Beamish in County Durham, England. Here, according to him, a working class history is shorn of its political meanings and represented in terms of a nostalgia for artefacts, a point made also by Walsh (1992, 98-99). Whereas in the past the histories of the dispossessed were subordinated through their absence from official narratives, now it is as if they are subordinated by their presence (Bennett, 1988, 67). As Wright has put it, 'Purged of political tension [heritage] becomes a unifying spectacle, the settling of all disputes' (1985, 69). This is particularly the case where a deeper analysis might reveal conflicts and ideas that challenge prevailing beliefs about the national past and its social and economic corollaries. According to Corner and Harvey (1991, 72) an elitism balanced by a broadening of heritage to include the industrial past to which a much higher proportion of visitors can relate, remains essentially hegemonic in its outcome. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett is also sceptical about the democratising effects to which reference has already been made, how can it ever 'remedy the exclusions and inequities of history?' (1998, 2000).

There is, however, another dichotomy here, not just between hegemonic and oppositional values in the production of heritage, but between elitist and populist consumption, the relationship of which to the hegemonic project must also be considered. Again, museums have become a locus for disputes (Dubin, 1999, 8), especially with the advance of theme park attractions (Sorensen, 1989, 60-73). The pervasive distinction of 'low' and 'high' culture with a certain amount of antagonism between the proponents of each might be regarded as a peculiarly British phenomenon. It has certainly reflected various manifestations of class conflict notably the celebration in literature, film, television and music of northern English working class culture in the 1960s (Samuel, 1998, 164-168).

Access to the manifestations of 'high' culture, such as literature and the visual and performing arts, the traditionally ascribed features of Western culture since the renaissance (Williams, 1981) has long been associated with education. The latter, since the nineteenth century, has been seen as the key to exposing the uncultivated masses to the benefits of society's finest works (Hooper-Greenhill, 2000, 11). Whilst the nineteenth century museum found a reforming role in providing this access and arguably still does (Vergo, 1989, 41-59; Bennett, 1988, 63-64), the heritage industry has tended to provide access not so much to 'high' culture but to 'higher class' culture, access in this sense being limited largely to the scopic, in the context of heritage display. Furthermore, it stands accused of doing so in ways that trivialise and gloss aspects of inequality and social conflict.

There is also the complicating factor of *taste*, its variations and the ways in which these are socially and demographically differentiated. Samuel (1994, 95 -110) discusses the influence on interior decoration at some length in relation to cultural movements in the 1980s, but the once ubiquitous Laura Ashley, country house 'heritage look', as Urry (1990, 132) has called it, had probably run its course by the end of the 1990s. Its residual manifestations may be a continued attachment to 'original features' such as pine doors and floors (duly stripped) and cast iron Victorian fireplaces, but these are more easily related to Bordieu's (1984) well-established ascetic aesthetic than to a cultural genuflection to the ruling class (and in any case aesthetic asceticism predates the heritage boom of the 1980s). The point of Bordieu's 'distinctions', however, is that some groups may well attach themselves to an aesthetic that does not reflect contemporary or fashionable taste and may prefer those associated with the 'heritage look', continuing to be inspired by images from, and perpetuated by, country houses. The briefest visit to a National Trust shop will leave little doubt about the existence of a scopic hegemony reproduced in the kinds of goods that are offered for sale and which speaks of a past that seems remarkably free of anything disagreeable. Thus might be preserved and even celebrated, the deferential relations and other mores of the society that constructed the country house, particularly where these are also attached to attractive notions of national heritage, cultural identity, supremacy and a range of attractive printed fabrics (Samuel, 1998, 74-92). According to Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 'Good taste is cultural capital masquerading as the natural attribute of an elite' (1998, 278).

The question remains, however, whether elitist readings, either within the context of a hegemonic project, or that of a contrast between high and low culture are an essential characteristics of the practice of heritage. Even Bennett, a severe critic of the popular museum as an extension of hegemonic practice, is forced to conclude that it need not necessarily be so: Beamish, if nothing else, can be instructive as a museum of 'bourgeois myths of history' (1988, 75). In the context of the high culture, low culture debate it could also be argued that the anti-heritage charge of elitism is itself elitist, located as it is within an elite sensibility that makes claims to artistic and historical knowledge as a basis for judgemental critiques of other and 'inferior' forms of cultural production. Rojek also dismisses charges of cultural elitism in terms of high and low culture on the grounds that it presupposes the possibility that anything might be done through the provision of heritage displays that can effect 'moral; elevation and improvement' and that as with country house tourism, the conditions of post-modernity neutralise the structural distinctions that are necessary for any kind of cultural differentiation to prevail (Rojek, 1993, 166-167).

It could be then, that heritage has at least the potential for radical and oppositional interpretations of the past, and that these can be effectively presented as a counterweight to the scented shops of country houses and therefore provide something closer to the experience those who once worked in its fields and its laundry. For this to be achieved, however, the glass ceiling of heritage, the artificial separation of past from present that is necessary for its successful commodification (Walsh, 1992, 2) would have to be removed. This would involve, perhaps, a more transparent approach to interpretation, one that stressed the continuities by which contemporary social relations have developed and continue to exist. Heritage in the service of raising consciousness may seem a tall order, and irrelevant in any case if the post-modernists are right, but the purpose of this discussion is to evaluate the possibility of a version of heritage that is resistant to the charge of elitism and open, even, to other readings.

Incoherence and eclecticism

The coupling of commerce and heritage is a major theme in the anti-heritage literature (Corner and Harvey, 1991; Johnson & Thomas, 1995). There is inevitability about this when heritage objects are seen as assets and products to be developed and marketed through a process that is analogous to product development in marketing (Johnson & Thomas, 1995, 171; Lowenthal, 1998, 97-102). Related to the broadening of what constitutes heritage is the 'leisurisation' of the past: the past as fun, as excitement, as interesting technology, quaintness or engaging style. The result is an incoherent jumble of industrial heritage, folk museums, a fetish for old machinery, paraphernalia and antiques, and nostalgic associations with the factory, the household and the community, often based on artefacts from the very recent past (Samuel, 1994; Lowenthal, 1998, 94-97; Walsh, 1992, 98-99). This creates a sense that heritage is almost catching up with the present as time between the event and its manifestation as an object of nostalgia becomes progressively shorter (Hewison, 1987, 135). Add to this the development of interactive displays and the use of spectacle in the *new* museums, commercial approaches to marketing, retailing, catering and event management and an image of the heritage industry in contemporary life begins to emerge (Stevens, 1989). Commercial debasement brings on charges of 'inauthenticity', or the 'real' being sacrificed for the spectacular, and the arresting imagery of contemporary display methods and a good story. Anything else risks rejection from the privileged narrative:

> Selling history or heritage is contingent on the commodity being free from any association that could hinder capital accumulation; there is little possibility of selling the local history of Calvinist Presbyterianism for instance ... Selling heritage and place is therefore a highly selective business, which writes out or visually excludes anything it cannot assimilate (MacDonald, 2002, 64).

Ironically, heritage is as much at risk of commercial debasement from its traditional guardians in the public sector as it is from the private sector (Rojek, 1993, 146-152). Museums are under the pressure of income generation and local authorities look to heritage tourism as an economic lifeline, however misplaced this faith in the commercial viability of heritage may ultimately be (Craik, 1997, 113-136). Waitt's analysis of Sydney Cove makes similar observations of a site that emblematises Australian nation building, and which has successfully removed all the 'non-marketable' aspects. Such an effect recalls the previous discussion of dissonance, especially where this leads to conflict and contestation between commercial representations and those of host communities as has occurred in Waitt's case study (2000, 837).

Heritage is thus seen as trivialised by an endless eclecticism that will admit anything (Lowenthal, 1998, 94-102), and devalue it in the process. Heritage therefore becomes an eclectic melting pot that attracts the theorists of the postmodern (Urry, 1990)and the 'post-tourist' (Feifer, 1985). The National Trust may thus present both Calke Abbey and the suburban house birthplace of Sir Paul McCartney as heritage worthy of conservation and presentation, and the post-tourist consumes them as equal products in the shallow multiplicity of the tourist experience (Rojek, 1993, 174-9). However, the very disparateness of heritage provides grounds for criticising anti-heritage perspectives as much as heritage itself. As Mellor (1991, 99) has stated, the critics of heritage have created the misleading impression that it represents a homogenous category of experience and practice. Given the range of agencies and objects involved, however, any attempt to understand its significance *as a whole* seems problematic (1991, 99-100).

Theorists of post-modernity have made heritage and tourism particular foci of attention. They lend themselves well to a concern with the evanescence of cultural forms and changes in the nature of consumption (Urry, 1990; Munt, 1994; Jameson, 1996). Individuals thus define themselves not so much by what they produce as by what they consume, and this is characterised by an almost unlimited choice expressed characteristically by shopping malls, the cathedrals of post-modernity (Ritzer, 2004, 7), and one of the many 'complex and diverse' manifestations that float around in the 'cloudy constellation' of the post-modern (Smart, 1993, 14). The notion of lifestyle and the micro-segmentation of markets support this process, and individuals can exploit the touristic realm to re-understand, rethink and reconstruct themselves and their heritage (Jamal & Hollinshead, 2001, 64). Mass markets hardly exist anymore, having been transformed into a series of niche markets responding to lifestyle/lifestage market segments, each one defined through market research and serviced through carefully targeted marketing strategies (Jameson, 1996).

Heritage in this perspective is defined by those who consume it in subtle reciprocity with those who market it. The relics of the past are less important than their representation and these are not so much linked with the past per se, but with the cultural production and exchange of symbolic value that has floated away from its original context. As Jameson puts it:

> This situation determines what the architecture historians call 'historicism', namely, the random cannibalisation of all the styles of the past, the play of random stylistic allusion, and in general what Henri Lefebvre has called the increasing primacy of the 'neo' (Jameson, 1991, 18).

According to Jameson (1991), the intensity of the cultural activity concerned with what he calls the 'nostalgia mode' has 'insensibly colonised' the present. Using the medium of film as his example, he demonstrates how the past becomes no more than a stylistic referent, with no place for genuine historicity, a sense of *pastness* created from the 'glossy qualities' of images drawn from discrete and easily identifiable periods in time (1991, 19). The past is thus created in the 'depthlessness' of its own representation, the links with relics and their effective interpretation having been dispensed with. Reciprocal acts of marketing and consumption produce a series of representative ideas, stereotypes and images, so that even a decade, such as the 1960s, can be summoned by half a dozen signifiers that have become conventionally associated with it.

For Hewison, however, the depthlessness of commercialised heritage is not the basis for a post-modern angst, but rather, another context for meaningless reproduction. The eclecticism of the heritage industry is thus not so much a characteristic of the post-modern condition, as a gloss on the past that enervates its meaning (Hewison, 1991, 175). Samuel (1994) has pointed to the opportunities it affords for a diversification of capital accumulation so that heritage can be consumed at many levels simply because it is employed as a *leitmotif* in contemporary consumption. The product could be anything from Victorian-style fireplaces to 'retrochic' in fashion and design. Pastiche and reproduction are rolled up together in a colourful and chaotic collage of products, services and lifestyles (Eagleton, 1996). The very word 'heritage' is used to sell all manner of household and other products from bathrooms and carpets to jigsaws, and garden furniture and words like 'classic', 'original' and 'authentic' are used in a similar way. The process that creates the conditions for a chain of shops selling reproduction jewellery and decorative items from every period of British history and allows English Heritage to market medieval imagery and imaginary events, while the York Viking Festival used to end, anachronistically, with a firework display. 'Mendacious celebrations' as Hewison describes them, are truly the stuff of the heritage industry (1991, 175). All of this, it could be argued, presents a view of heritage more closely aligned to the new moments of production associated with 'logic of late capitalism' (Jameson, 1991) than the colourful chaos of post-modernity.

However the commercialisation of heritage is interpreted, its eclecticism seems inevitable. Supermarkets, those post-modern cathedrals of commerce (Ritzer, 1999), aspire to the same objective and call it *choice*, however specious it ultimately is (Baudrillard, 1998), and for producers of goods and services it is seen as diversification. It may be unreasonable therefore to expect a commodified heritage industry to be anything other than eclectic. Once commercialism is admitted then so, inevitably, is the customer's (and therefore the marketer's) need for choice and diversity. Incoherence is only another way of describing the swirling eclecticism of the heritage industry as a form of consumption.

It also seems reasonable to ask how useful are the concepts of post-moderism in understanding the ways in which the past is being received at Jorvik, Beamish and similar places. As Mellor has observed:

> Gloomily sitting in the Orwell Pub at Wigan Pier, worrying about the fake tiffany lamps and the genuine space invaders, we have assumed that others share our disorientation and deracination (1991, 100).

He goes on to suggest that far from being passive consumers the visitors are actively engaging with whatever visual and other cues are provided to construct or reconstruct their own memories and reminiscences. Despite Bennett's doubts about the 'disruptive' potential of the staff in conveying the museum's messages at Beamish, and the possibility that visitors might read 'against the grain' (1988, 74), it does seem that they are more than willing to *play* with the idea of the past and its relationship with the present. In my own experience staff and visitors at Beamish have been seen rather joyfully using irony to reveal what scholars have agonised over, that an authentic past can never be known, only played at (see Smith, 2006, for a more detailed discussion of these dynamics at Beamish). The artefacts create the conditions for this to be achieved, as Mellor (1991) suggests at Wigan Pier, but the result is not a fugal wander through a recreated past, but rather, a playful engagement with the idea of *pastness* as a resource for stimulating subjective responses of all sorts.

This is not so much in the role of ironic, knowing, post-modern, post-tourist, but within a more genuine framework for the negotiation of meaning, the performance of conventional and other roles (Coleman and Crang, 2002) and, as was suggested above, even play (Cohen, 1985, 1988; Mitchell, 1998). Such perspectives are also consonant with Jamal and Hollinshead's five dynamics of tourism, which place emphasis on its phenomenological and constructive powers. Thus, tourists are at once involved in re-fantasising and re-fabricating the world; generating affiliations and identities within a framework of communal connectivities; immersing themselves creatively in the eclecticisms of the heritage industry in all its colourful chaos and exploring the relational possibilities of tourism as a performative site for both hosts and visitors (2001, 64). Such an analysis of the subjective position also resonates with approaches that have problematised the concept of audience and drawn attention to the pervasiveness of the audience role in contemporary life, so that everyone is part of some audience or other all of the time (Abercrombie and Longhurst, 1998).

Also of importance here is the work of Bagnall (1996, 2003) which challenges the view that visitors to heritage attractions are passive and uncritical in the modalities of consumption on such occasions and that rather, they are involved in a complex and discursive engagement that involves the mapping of their own memories, reminiscences, emotions and feelings of nostalgia onto the heritage representations in museums. Key to this process was a sense in which they were performers of their own consumption, meeting and mediating the messages contained in the representative practices employed by sites and admitting or rejecting them according to how well they could be mapped against their own experience and emotional engagement (2003, 96).

Authenticity

Perhaps the most compelling criticism applied to the commercial aspects of heritage is that such versions of the past are heavily dependent on, and potentially distorted by, an emphasis on the visual. Thus they tend, inevitably, towards the marginalisation and trivialisation of social experience in which complexities and contradictions are elided, and important historical, social and political significances are over-simplified (Urry, 1990, 112; 1995, 161; Horne, 1992, 101-120; Crouch and Lubbren, 2003). This leads to another theme in tourism in general, and cultural and heritage tourism in particular: that of authenticity and the risk of somehow 'losing' or compromising it.

Authenticity is an 'eminently modern value' and 'prominent motif of modern tourism' as Cohen (1988, 373) has described it, and is significant if only because of its centrality to tourism theory, particularly and famously through its construction, in the work of MacCannell, as the ultimate goal of touristic activity (1973). MacCannell's proposition derives initially from a contrast with everyday life, whereby the latter is perceived as essentially inauthentic and a condition from which tourists escape in a quest for something more fundamental. As modernity becomes replete with artifice, tourism comes to express an urgent need to find an original in some other place. As Coleman and Crang have put it:

> Very often the toured are marked out as possessing a culture defined as an organic totality, fixed in a place. The local culture is seen as evolving through collective activity, production and reproduction. Local tradition is disrupted by outside forces. Indigenous culture,

> and especially folk culture, is thus framed a non-modern activity (Coleman and Crang, 2002, 6).

Authenticity in relation to the production of heritage also seems to be an important value in the organisation of cultural heritage by the agencies involved. For example, The UNESCO-ICOMOS document on authenticity, the 'Nara Document' (ICOMOS, 2005) makes plain the importance of authenticity in every aspect of heritage presentation:

> The understanding of authenticity plays a fundamental role in all scientific studies of the cultural heritage, in conservation and restoration planning, as well as within the inscription procedures used for the World Heritage Convention and other cultural heritage inventories (ICOMOS, 2005).

Authenticity, however, has a fugitive quality. Whenever tourists arrive in a destination the authentic at once retreats and a contrived version is duplicitously staged for their benefit (MacCannell, 1973, 593-98). As Horne has put it, 'Authenticity can never be achieved. It is a mirage, part of the enchantment' (1992, 111). What is more, such processes can be damaging to the original meanings attached to cultural objects and practices, changing them in order to fit with touristic the imperatives of the spectacular and visual. The *best bits* are thus selected for representation and the rest paradoxically neglected (given their authenticity) (Cohen, 1988, 372). The representations in turn are presented as 'unmediated encounters' creating 'the effect of authenticity, or realness' (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998, 55).

The problem is compounded when the industry itself, perhaps in a perfect demonstration of *staged* authenticity, uses it as a source of attraction value and as a basis of product development and consumption. Authenticity becomes performative, and joins the lexicon of marketing-speak appropriate for historical attractions, whatever their real merit or value (Waitt, 2000, 836). Rendered thus meaningless it is difficult to see how any useful definition of authenticity can be applied in a discourse focused on heritage tourism. Who defines what is 'authentic' and why? Is an encounter with staged authenticity any less authentic to the actors involved than an experience outside this sphere? Cannot the same equation be applied to the activities of playful post-modernists who knowingly experience the worst excesses of commodified tourism but insulate themselves with irony (Coleman and Crang, 2002, 5). Do host communities, as originators of authentic experience view with distaste their increasing commodification? The problem, however, is that authenticity, in whatever guise it is presented, is still an object of the tourist.

Perhaps, as Cohen first suggested, its refusal to wither on the conceptual vine is a result of its firm philosophical origins (Adorno, 1964), and a critical mass that continues to bear down on sociological enquiry (1988, 373-377). If, with this in mind, authenticity is too slippery a concept to deal with, then 'authenticity' (with inverted commas) is much easier to handle, understood, as Cohen (1988) put it, as a social construction with its sociological connotations rendered negotiable rather than given. Thus equipped with inverted commas, Cohen is able to posit a view of authenticity and of commodification (commoditization) that is *not necessarily* critical of touristic activity, although it may be at some times in some places. Selwyn (1996) is perhaps helpful here in determining a concept of authenticity that is contingent on the particular place meanings, destination and tourism development processes that are relevant to particular places at particular times and that authenticity has more to do with the discovery of an authentic 'self' through the act of experiencing *otherness* in different places and cultures (1996, 21). This is a theme developed by Bagnall in exploring the way that if authenticity is a significant value it exists in the emotional response of the subject to the experience of the heritage site (2003, 88). Authenticity remains, therefore, a dynamic concept that is open to negotiated meanings formed and framed in the praxis of the operational environment, and the experience of heritage as cultural production *in situ*, especially where this provides a context for understanding the performativity around which some contemporary tourism theory is currently developing (Kirschenblatt-Gimblett, 1998; Coleman and Crang, 2002). Hollinshead raises a further question that crystallises the debate as it currently stands and provides the basis for an agenda of research:

> If authenticity is not a static property of fixed objects (but something which can be invented or otherwise made sacred commercially) how may those processes of authentication can be defined ontologically and uncovered epistemologically? (Hollinshead, 2000, Exhibit 1, 234).

It may be ultimately that authenticity has little to do with the object so long privileged by the theorists of heritage and tourism, but in the subjective experience of those who construct the engagement with the past that heritage offers. The experience of a cultural performance in doing, playing, responding and reacting is the actual locus of authenticity, in other words it shifts from the object to the subject (Filippucci, 2002, 75-76; Coleman & Crang, 2002, 6-7) where perhaps, it should rightfully belong.

History, bad history and 'pure' nostalgia

Heritage in the service of identity, ideology or commerce; heritage as a colourful chaos of shallow meanings and stereotypical images; all of this tends to the view that it is 'bad' historyand something of a travesty. For example Hewison, in his polemical climax, asserts that 'Heritage, for all its seductive delights, is bogus history' (1987, 144), a theme taken up by many writers since. Ashworth and Tunbridge (1990) for example, have drawn attention to the 'Tourist-Historic City'. For them history has *become* heritage, and heritage has become an urban resource, so that cities are often little more than large open air museums housing a comforting re-creation of a sanitised, reassuring past (1990, 1). Wright sees heritage as an extraction and an abstraction of history. History becomes 'the historical,' a gloss, an 'impression of pastness' redeployed as a new kind of cultural product (1985, 69). In fact, he rarely uses the word heritage, preferring 'historicity' to denote the process he describes. Walsh makes a similar point, but emphasises the damage that heritage does to history in replacing it: 'instead of history we have heritage' (1992, 68). These historicist criticisms of heritage have led Lowenthal to observe that: 'The crux of most aspersions against heritage is that it undermines 'real' history, defiling the pristine record that is our rightful legacy', (1998, 102). The understanding that emerges here is that heritage becomes an inferior substitute for history, subversive of, and ultimately damaging to it.

There is another and related concern raised by both Hewison and Walsh, that heritage does not so much replace history but creates a discontinuity between the past and the present, in effect sealing it, or freezing it over, so that the events of the past are not seen as connected to the conditions of the present (Walsh, 1992, 176). In this way the present can be constructed as something essentially *of* the present and not a result of processes that have a past, as revealed through *proper* history. MacCannell (1999 [1976]) had already signalled this when claiming that modern museums were 'anti-historical' because in preserving artefacts and monuments they were also automatically separating the modern world from its past, and in the process thereby defining modernity as something separate and therefore unrelated to the conditions that created it.

The debate about heritage as bad history recalls the discussion of heritage as an essentially hegemonic construct. A past that is separated from present day realities, and a present that is thus deracinated, will pose no threat to interests that depend upon the construction of those realities as products for consumption rather than expressions of social structural processes and power relations that have a past. It could be argued that a widespread knowledge of how things came about and how things have come to be might reveal too starkly the unchanging nature of structures of power, wealth, prestige and appropriation that have forged the present. MacDonald makes the point that the 'over signification of the commodity spectacle' has a 'naturalising effect on social relations' where issues of social justice are effectively overwritten by a surplus of touristic meanings (2002, 60). Yet, none of this ultimately diminishes heritage in itself. Indeed, given its broad and broadening appeal, as discussed above, it may lend itself well to such an agenda. That heritage can be used in the service of commerce or hegemony makes it rather similar to history rather than different or somehow less worthy, and as with history, it can surely be a forum for many different perspectives.

In order then to find some distinction from heritage, however, history must resort to its scholarly method and objectives. Lowenthal (1998) resolves the issue with what is clearly meant to be a revelatory conclusion that history and heritage are separate categories with different purposes, though Hewison had admitted this ten years earlier (1988, 10) and Plumb (cited Wright, 1985) made exactly the same point over 30 years ago, that to castigate heritage as 'bad history' is unnecessary and pointless. Heritage is no usurper of the past after all, but simply another use of it, neither plausible nor testable, but a declaration of faith, not susceptible to the validations of the historical method (Lowenthal, 1998, 121). Lowenthal might have saved history from heritage, but his argument does not save heritage from its critics. Lowenthal simply *owns up* for heritage, it does not matter that it has no historical veracity, or method; it does not matter that it is biased, for in a sense, it is meant to be; let history keep its method and its 'truth', and yet, even this is dangerous ground.

One of the problems with the concept of heritage as 'bad', or debased history is the epistemological status of history itself. To place history on a pedestal and claim it is the right and proper form of engagement with the past is to invest it with a mythic and rarefied quality that historians themselves have questioned (Carr, 1987; Marwick, 1989). Nowadays it seems almost too obvious to say that history is what historians write about rather than what took place in any absolute sense, and yet the critics of heritage, if Hewison is taken to be their standard bearer, do precisely this. For example, in his introduction to *The Heritage Industry* he criticises heritage for drawing a screen between contemporary British society and 'our true past' (1987,10), three words that analysed separately could generate pages of deconstruction, but together suggest a concept as debased as anything the heritage industry might produce. Indeed, if such a phrase appeared in the guide book for a country house, Hewison's reaction to it might easily be guessed. Historians may own their histories, but nobody owns the past.

For Samuel, history is a 'house of many mansions', with narratives that change over time and always subject to prevailing influences:

> The rival claims of the state and civil society on the historian's attention have been vigorously canvassed ever since Macaulay wrote chapter three of the *History of England* – a dazzling ethnography of the Condition-of-England question as it presented itself in the 1680s. Likewise in teaching methods, the rival claims of 'history in depth' over 'history in breadth' have been a flashpoint of recurrent controversy (Samuel, 1998, 204).

Yet historians, it seems, simply cannot be trusted with history. As Maleuvre has stated:

> Since the past does not belong to the past but to the present, the historian who searches for an authentic relation to the past searches in vain. For if the past only comes to be in the act of being handed down, the very act of receiving the past is nevertheless a betrayal of its actual nature: to create the past as past is a perversion of the fact the past once took place as a present (1999, 272).

Other cultures may have less concern with historical verities. Few would cast doubt on the claims of Maori people to view their own history in the way that they see fit, despite its evident mixture of 'fact' and myth (Hooper-Greenhill, 2000, 58-63). Indeed where meaning becomes dynamic and processual rather than fixed and unchanging, traditional academic historians may have a great deal to learn from them, especially in relation to the construction of history within a subjective consciousness, and the multiplicity of sources this might have.

Heritage, rather than history, seems to share a good deal of its cultural space with nostalgia as one of the principle means by which the past is stripped of all that is disagreeable, contentious and dissonant, and presented as an attractive resort from the present (Hewison, 1987; Lowenthal, 1985; Brett, 1996). According to Walsh, an interest in nostalgia developed with a modern concern for the position of the individual relative to other times and places and a consequential interest in personal pasts (1992, 66). There is a complementary focus on positive notions of community, and a fetishistic approach to objects and artefacts, whilst threatening prefigurations of social change and challenges to privileged viewpoints are filtered out (Macdonald, 1997, 2005).

Nostalgia may be seen as a component of the same hegemonic process that creates a heritage of dominant values, or it can be seen as a more individuated psychological response to the loss, real or imagined, of some past condition in a world of rapid change and disorientation. Nostalgia sounds like a disease and indeed for a long time was treated as such, and a dangerous and often contagious one at that. Less dramatically it is now seen almost always as a kind of malaise, a negative thing which alienates people from their present condition and which has reached epidemic proportions (Lowenthal, 1985, 11). For Hewison, nostalgia is an unwelcome response to times of discontent or anxiety which may be experienced at an individual or a social level and a flight from the present (Hewison, 1987, 46). He sees this as being of particular importance in an atmosphere of decay or decline, better expressed, perhaps as a malaise:

> The nostalgic impulse is an important agency of in adjustment to crisis, it is a social emollient and reinforces national identity when confidence is weakened or threatened (1987, 47).

For Brett, the process of modernisation requires an ideological response, one that provides a comforting continuity in times of rapid and alarming change. Thus, the continuous process of social and economic modernisation and the social and cultural discontinuities to which this gives rise dispose individuals to restore to their 'habitus' something of the past, in an attempt to:

> evade historical time and its real responsibilities and return us to a temporary condition of 'mystic' time/space, where there is relief from uninterrupted disturbance and everlasting uncertainty, and in which all that is solid does not melt into air (Brett, 1996, 35).

Corner and Harvey (1991) link nostalgia specifically to the changes wrought by what they call the Thatcherite reconstruction. For them, heritage is linked to the disruption brought about by the enterprise culture (1991, 46). On this basis notions of identity and belonging are offered as compensation for the alarming discontinuities and destabilising effects of the 'enterprise imperative'. Walsh (1992) sees the past received in this way as something that the processes of heritage have rationalised, completed and distanced from the present (see above). These processes are seen as an artefact of modernity which have uprooted people from their accustomed domain and placed them in the service of industrialised capital. The past then becomes a comforting totem whilst the anxiety of individuals becomes the province of commercial enterprise. The past is thus 'sequestered' from those to whom it belonged:

> This process has been one which has steadily intensified to the point where, during the later twentieth century, the past has emerged as a reservoir of shallow surfaces which can be exploited in the heritage centre or the biscuit tin (Walsh 1992, 3).

Lowenthal emphasises the importance of antiquity itself, the temporal equivalent of distance lending enchantment. The older the better, although the definition of 'old' varies with context (Lowenthal, 1985, 54). It is difficult to see the nostalgic impulse in the same way as other elements of the antiheritage animus. Whilst it is clearly susceptible to critical analysis it cannot, in the same way, be exposed as a sham or hegemonic construction. The worst that can be said of it is that represents an atrophy of the present as Hewison would have it. But maybe this is unfair. It has also, after all, inspired artistic vision, antiquarian study and may well be associated with a less definable and deeply rooted sense of the past that motivates many people to explore their own past and the past of their place. Nostalgia as a route to the past may thus be justified, as an escape from it or an alternative, it may not, and a less positive variant is perhaps the 'golden ageism' associated with the sense that a previous time was better in some specified or unspecified way than the present.

Either way it does not seem reasonable to lay the blame for this flight from the present on heritage as a way of receiving the past, especially if nostalgia in effect predates it. Nostalgia, indeed, may be an entirely rational response to change and where that change is accelerated it seems reasonable to suppose that it might give rise to the occasional 'nostalgia boom', particularly if there are gains to be made commercially from reprising previous, if sometimes surprisingly recent styles, fashions or cultural productions. In short, a need to recycle the past, for personal, political and commercial reasons seems hard to dispute although its relationship with heritage is less easily articulated than may be apparent at first sight. It seems clear, for example, that heritage as it is produced and consumed presents a qualitatively different version of the past that is not so much dependent on constructions of the self as in constructions of itself as an object. Nostalgia, by contrast seems less concerned with a received past than with reconstructions of subjective experience in the present.

Towards a theoretical framework

The critique of heritage outlined above must be addressed as a prerequisite of any study that seeks to employ the term constructively. The foregoing discussion suggests, however, that it is possible to challenge each of the key aspects of what

Lowenthal termed the 'anti-heritage animus', most often on the grounds that none of them is a *necessary condition* of heritage. It is, for example, not necessary that heritage should present a one-dimensional view of the past that favours a dominant ideological view point, or that it presents a degraded version of historical knowledge. What the debate does raise, however, is the question of whether it is possible to theorise heritage in a way that responds positively to the criticisms outlined above and at the same time preserves some concept of it that is useful in describing the way that people, communities and societies receive and use their past in their present.

The work of Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1998) has been helpful in articulating an overview of the anti-heritage animus and identifying some of the potential for restoring heritage as a meaningful category of experience. Her position is based on the effective construction of culture in general and heritage in particular as essentially political acts in which 'locations' are transformed by the powerful representational forces of official agencies into the destinations associated with touristic space. Meaning is bounded by the twin concepts of 'madeness' and 'hereness', the processes by which a place becomes a contemporary destination, (1998, 18) and is recognised and represented as such: the invention of peoples, places and pasts and their associated areas of meaning production. The transparency of 'madeness' and 'hereness' not only reveals those negative characteristics most closely associated with the anti-heritage critique but also provides a basis for addressing them, by making them explicit *in situ*. Hollinshead's (2000, 2005) interpretation of Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's work is also helpful in interpreting it from the perspective of tourism studies, so that the political essence of the aggregate ways in which places are selected and presented is revealed (Hollinshead, 2000, 230).

Others have proposed that the engagement between the heritage subject and object can be isolated from commercial and other imperatives. Horne, for example, has conceived of the knowing 'intelligent' tourist who, with only a superficial interest in the relevant scholarship, can confront and dispel the false consciousness of autonomic tourism that the industry presents (1992, 135, 155, 177). MacCannell provides a prospect that some theoretical space might be found in this avenue of thought:

> Commercialisation is pressing in on sightseeing from all sides. Still, at the heart of the act, the final contract between the tourist and a true attraction, such as the White House or the Grand Canyon can be pure (MacCannell, 1999, 156).

Engagement might thus become more direct, less mediated and perhaps, in a sense, shorn of its commercial logic, messier and less selective. McCabe and Stokoe (2004) found something of this in the way that visitors to an English national park constructed their identities as such from the particularities of their engagement with the place rather than the place itself:

> Their accounts were designed to avoid or resist the implication that they visit certain places because they are popular, because other people go there, or because they are tourism places. Speakers emphasized the 'naturalness' of their engagement with places as something they have always done, and the 'ordinariness' of their trips to these places as something they 'just' do. Therefore respondents worked to maintain individuality in the face of actually 'doing being a tourist' as they were interviewed (2004, 17).

There may be also something of this 'authenticity in engagement' in Bagnall's (2003) concept of performance and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's discussion of the response to the avant-garde in festival performances. For her, 'the most authentic moment occurs when the audience confronts what it does not understand' and 'requiring that [avant-garde performances] be explained, interferes with the purity of the aesthetic experience, because from an avant-garde perspective, explanation mediates what should be a direct encounter' (1998, 239-240). Audiences should be prepared thus to confront what they see and be allowed to make up their own minds about it. This could be a basis for developing MacCannell's further point that it may be possible to remove an attraction from the realm of commercialism where it is firmly anchored outside historical time and defined only in terms of modern values and *re*-socialise it (1999, 157).

Another basis for the re-theorisation of heritage is in the concept of identity, and sense of place. On the face of it globalisation might be seen to have diminished the distinctions of place and locality by a process of homogenisation. A counter argument has emerged, however, that suggests that globalisation has created a re-ordering of the local that emphasises local distinctiveness to attract capital investment of various kinds (Sletto, 2001). The so called local-global paradox, wherein specific localities become more significant *as a result* of global uniformities, and where symbolic economies derived from those elements of a locality that are culturally valued are selected and traded in a global context. For Savage et al. (2004), the global has always had a local significance and influences, while a number of commentators have examined the ways in which local polities have focused on local assets and local cultural capital often in the form of heritage in order to add value to the locale in question and create an attractive image for inward investment (Meethan, 2001, 38-39) Harvey (1989), Corner and Harvey (1991) and Zukin (1991, 1995).

The question of whose version of place identity is clearly problematic, however, and related to the contestability of place to which reference is made above. Jeong and Santos have investigated the ways in which dominant groups gain and sustain their status through the organisation of a community festival and yet how others in the same community contest this version of the event through their own 'meanings of place' (2004, 654). Walsh pointed to the need for a reconnection between people and their places through the establishment of lines of continuity that were effectively emplaced. The progress of modernity had institutionalised the past, at first through the museum and later through the heritage industry with a resulting loss and even denial of historical process (Walsh, 1992, 149).

Such approaches also find expression in emergent theories of interpretation which stress the significance of place and the need for a theory-driven approach to it (Stewart and Kirby, 1998; Stewart, Hayward, Devlin & Kirby, 1998). Ashworth has set it within a planning context that is at once aware of the requirements of consumers and sensitive to the sense of place held by host communities and their assertion of local place identity (Ashworth, 1994a, 15-22). 'The heritage on display', Goodey asserts, 'has not been fully reviewed by its communities' (Goodey, 1998, 201). Other research has provided a new orientation to this issue, in the ways that local people might interpret their place for tourists (Mcdonald, 1997, 2005), and in using this invested sense of place as a device for community development and social inclusion (Russell, 1997; Newman and Mclean, 1998). Some of the practical issues of planning and management are also discussed by Hall and McArthur (1998). The *Local Heritage Initiative* in the UK is a response to these movements, and the provision of Lottery grant support to local groups in order to preserve and present aspects of their heritage of place is of interest within this developing perspective. There is a clear agenda here for research in establishing the conditions necessary within individual communities for such schemes to be successful.

It is also significant that MacCannell has turned his attention to the matter of place. He tells of a lesson long learnt, that 'heritage is not what the dead did and thought, it is more their manner of speaking to the living' (MacCannell, 1998, 352). He goes on to make a distinction between the global industry and its presentation of 'dreamworks', and the local presentation of minor places. Thus, the stewards of minor places should be local people, who 'should be crawling all over the place with the tourists, speaking about the significance of history and heritage for them and making the tourists aware of contested heritage' (1998, 360). The minor place should also be presented in a way that goes beyond the visual and indeed the other senses and engages 'vision, integrity, honesty and sympathetic understanding', and in which mere sightseeing is placed in the service of something more profound (1998, 360-361). It is perhaps fitting that such a significant theoretical development should find a spokesman in one of tourism theory's earliest and most influential exponents.

Lippard (1997) explores such a vision in relation to the role of place in a global society that is effectively multi-centred. Again a paradox is revealed in that individual places become more important at a time when apparently they are less so:

> A multi-centred population is more often forced to consider places than a mono-centred one: choice alone, the forks in the road, demands it (1997, 44).

Place can also provide the literal and physical context for an engagement with the past that is not historical in any formal scholarly sense, but which resonates more with the notions and practices of heritage through the gathering together of residues, memories, local artefacts, traditions and individual pastness in genealogy. Linkage with place is thus achieved through a concept of its past and at the same time linkage with the past is achieved through the place and its continuities. It is perhaps significant in this regard that churches themselves are repositories of the place-based continuities that are contained in their memorials and monuments, and formerly their registers and records. As Walsh has explained:

> Developing a sense of place is crucial if people are to flourish and enjoy living in a world which becomes more and more complex … People must be allowed to develop a sense of perspective within an area which they can manage to understand … Any attempt to develop a sense of place should be concerned with the emphasis on diachrony, an emphasis on the temporal *depth* of places (Walsh, 1992, 150, *original emphasis*).

Depth, here, provides another, temporal dimension to physical space. Free of institutionalised meanings and able to order and create their own understandings of places with temporal depth provides people and communities with a way of recalling and receiving the past, particularly if, as Walsh suggests, museums can become facilitators of this process rather than imposers of institutional understandings. However, whilst such approaches help to re-theorise the provision or formation of heritage, they do little to modify understandings of the nature of consumer engagement.

Academic research on consumers' views of heritage has, however, begun to develop. The pioneering works of Herbert et al. (1989) and Merriman (1989 and 1991) have made significant, though essentially exploratory, contributions. The latter, especially, has made a decisive attempt to theorise museum visiting by focusing on socialisation within a socially determined frameworks of expectation and activity that are related to behavioural norms, education and social class. He has also concluded that the material culture represented in museum displays is only part of a broader narrative that also includes memory and imagination. Outside the museum Herbert et al. (1989) and Light and Prentice (1994b) have focused on heritage sites and while most of the effort was directed at profiling visitors in socio-demographic terms there was an attempt to explore motivational issues, the weakness here being a (purely intentional) focus on operational marketing.

More recent studies support this conclusion. For example, Fyfe and Ross (1996) theorised the structuring of the museum visitors' gaze and found that subjects are able to construct themselves in terms of a museum discourse within the socio-physical space that they represent. Johnstone (1998) has looked at the way museums can display more than artefactual history and make links with personal histories by providing 'substitute heirlooms' with 'emotional resonance'. Curators of social history collections should, therefore, provide displays which are informed by the memories that condition the visitors' gaze. Prentice, Witt and Hamer (1998) have examined the perception of 'beneficial experience' as a key component of visitor motivation at an industrial heritage park. A conclusion was that segmentation based on this can not only be used for marketing and promotional purposes but also to measure the effectiveness of interpretation, especially where personal interest in local history may be a variable (Prentice, Witt and Hamer, 1998). There is evidence, therefore, that visitors vary in the ways in which they receive and consume heritage. Similar research by McIntosh and Prentice (1999) has examined the concept of authenticity in the light of visitors' own responses to heritage attractions and the diversity shown within these. This sort of discussion reflects the approaches to authenticity discussed above, the significance of engagement in situ, performativity and the authenticity of emotional responses to it (see above, and Bagnall, 2003). The cognitive processes at work here and the particular notions of 'mindfulness' and 'insightfulness' as expressions of the way that visitors encode their consumption of the display through the meanings they attach to them have been discussed by Moscardo (1996). The challenge is to encompass what is essentially behavioural, cognitive research into a coherent theoretical framework. What is clear from these, and other more recent studies, is that there are levels of meaning and significance attached to the consumption of heritage that must be acknowledged even by its most ardent critics and ultimately theorised (Poria, 2001; Poria et al., 2003; Poria, 2006; Butler et al., 2006).

There may be room, therefore, in re-theorising heritage, for a more developed synthesis between ideas about place, the past and subjective responses to it. Notions of representation, institutionalised and individuated, authorised and oppositional and of performance and consumption *in situ* could well provide the basis for such a theoretical movement. This might provide the beginning of a discourse between the subject and the past that is separate from purely institutionalised versions although perhaps facilitated by museums acting more proactively to connect people with a place and a past (Walsh, 1992, 160-175). What is revealed here is therefore a more positive picture of heritage than its critics have hitherto allowed, but which is still open to critical analysis through the transparency brought to it by the various deconstructions of commodification, ideology, authenticity and everything else that constitutes the 'madeness' and 'hereness' of the heritage industry. It may even be that the very dissonance and contestation to which many authors have drawn attention could be the means of revealing a multiplicity of meanings and a transparency of debate that purely authorised accounts have failed to achieve hitherto. The fundamental question that lies at the heart of whether heritage is worth understanding beyond its commercial logic is whether there a genuine sense of something that is evoked when people meet and interact with the things of the past. If there were a genuine sense of engagement with the past this would be a thing that is worthy of investigation, explanation and theorisation. These early studies suggest that such enquiry might well be worthwhile.

Theoretical dimensions and conclusions

Emerging ideas and responses to the heritage debate as it has developed since the 1980s have provided opportunities to review the theorisation of heritage as a cultural practice. The effects of the *anti-heritage animus* highlighted by Lowenthal have been explored and the validity of the individual elements within the critique has been examined. The critique is a compelling one. It elucidates the social and cultural influences and issues that underpin the production and consumption of heritage in contemporary contexts such as the tourism industry. Here might be found heritage at its *most criticised*, as an instrument of commerce that has also encoded power relations and authorised accounts of history, an *Authorised Heritage Discourse* as Smith (2006) has recently framed it. It is concluded, however, that the value of the heritage debate lies in a deconstructive impulse drawn from a range of sources rather than a coherent theoretical stance. A Consequence of this is that while the critique of heritage is valid in each of the areas discussed above, none of them are *necessary conditions* of its existence as a means of engagement with the past. Authenticity for example, need not be sought in the heritage object itself, but in subjective responses to it, and dissonance may become a source of transparency and a locus of debate rather than the negative outcome of attempts to produce exclusive and dominant accounts.

In order for a concept of heritage to effectively frame a debate about the role of churches as heritage tourist attractions it must, therefore, be susceptible to a self-conscious and transparent evaluation of the processes it employs and its various productions. Only then will there be value in applying a concept of heritage as a framework for understanding the ways in which people and societies engage with the past. Without such analysis then 'heritage' remains as susceptible to deconstruction as it ever was under the anti-heritage animus. A re-theorisation is implied, therefore, and one that permits the de-construction, reconstruction and consumption of heritage outside the authorised versions represented by the industry and its institutional sponsors in government, quasi-government and the independent sector. Ideally this would facilitate representation and representational practices that reconnect people with places and pasts within a transparent discourse that creates its own authenticity in the construction of subjective experience.

The de-construction of heritage presented above and its potential for reconstruction and reframing as a viable means of analysing engagement with the past provides a basis for examining churches as objects of heritage. Of primary concern are the representational practices that facilitate the production of churches as heritage attractions and the institutional arrangements that support these, and the subjective responses of people who visit churches as tourists. These issues will inform the research presented in later chapters. Before that, however, it is necessary to complete the theoretical framework by examining the contribution of social science perspectives within the field of tourism studies to an understanding of the ways in which heritage sites are constructed as and within touristic space. Dicks has already noted a lack of detailed research in this area (2000, 70-71), and the questions are clear: how do heritage sites become touristic? How are they constructed as such, and what are the processes that facilitate such representation. The concern essentially is with the production and consumption of heritage tourism and whilst some theory has already been examined in relation to subjective responses to heritage, this will now be explored further and linked to wider questions in tourism theory, such as attraction formation and touristic motivation. The objective is to identify the particular representational practices and subjective responses that might inform the representation and consumption of churches as heritage tourist attractions.

In the following chapter, therefore, tourism theory is examined for what it offers in terms of understanding how churches might represent either some value of attraction and stimulate through this a motivation on the part of tourists to visit them. A central theme in tourism research has been the concept of 'otherness' as a basis for attraction and motivation (Urry, 1990, 1-4). The tourist destination is thus framed as a place that is distinct from home and work and which permits and provokes other forms of behaviour on the part of tourists. At the same time, however, touristic space has been expanding as economic conditions have changed. Tourism becomes the medium through which objects are aestheticised and sacralised as attractions, objects that were created, often, for another purpose, perhaps industrial, and in this case religious. Tourists themselves have changed, fragmenting into subgroups with often very specific needs and interests. The following chapter uses existing literature to chart the ways in which these changes have influenced the representational practices that effectively create touristic space and mediate behaviours within it.

Tourism is an *additional* role for churches. They may be represented as touristic space, they may be represented within touristic space, and in either context they require layers of representation that are additional to those that they already have as places of worship and where, in the past, their response to tourism has been largely as the passive objects of touristic interest (see Chapter 2). This additional role must also articulate with the other cultural work that churches do, in passively underpinning established structures of ownership and power and representing these same phenomena in their monuments and their very fabric. Lefebvre's conviction that it is not things in space but space itself that must be analysed is important here 'with a view to uncovering the social relationships embedded in it' (1991, 89).

Chapter 2

Church Tourism and Tourism Theory

Introduction

In Chapter 1 it was argued that much of the critique of heritage, the anti-heritage animus, as Lowenthal (1998) has termed it, has been elaborated by new and emerging theories based on the interplay of representational practices and the subjective responses of visitors to heritage attractions. These new approaches to heritage provide a framework of analysis that is rooted firmly in the social sciences rather than the shorter range theoretical perspectives associated with much of the operational literature. Of interest here are the social and cultural movements that have affected touristic activity in recent decades and particularly the emergence of new and specialist 'tourisms' in contrast to the 'mass' tourism that dominated most of the period of its emergence in the twentieth century (Munt, 1994). It is difficult to overstate the significance of this distinction, which has changed the face of tourism from an artefact of industrial modernity to complex and multi-faceted cultural practice that can be theorised from a range of social science perspectives (Urry, 1990; MacCannell, 1999). This process has been conditioned by the twin concepts of attraction and tourist motivation especially where these also have a clear basis in the social sciences rather than operational practice (Crick, 1989). The means by which places may become significant for tourists, the processes by which distinctiveness and significance are realised in touristic terms, and the representational practices associated with these processes are now reviewed for what they can add to an understanding of churches as tourist attractions.

Within this context the nature of attraction and of tourist types and motivations will be analysed and interpreted in terms of what they reveal about the representative practices associated with church tourism. The implications of this analysis for the representation of churches as tourism attractions are then reviewed, with a particular focus on interpretation, marketing and marketing communications as cultural artefacts of representational practice. A review of the history and development of church tourism helps to place these practices within a longer process of cultural change and provides some insights on the nature of churches as attractions.

Social and cultural contexts

The present Chapter is concerned with the spatial arrangements, and the social and cultural practices that are associated with the transformation of places into tourist attractions. It encompasses a corpus of literature and research in tourism that has developed in the later twentieth century, from Boorstin's (1961) account of tourism as the ultimate 'pseudo-event' and an exercise in artifice, to more recent explorations of tourism in its local and global contexts (Meethan, 2001). It also relates to the shift in the tourist *gaze* from the mass tourism of industrial modernity to the post-Fordist proliferation of smaller products customised for, and targeted at, specific segments in the tourism market (Urry, 1990). It is within these movements that contemporary church tourism must be located. Emphasis is thus placed on the spatial and cultural construction of touristic attraction and the motivations of those who respond to the opportunities offered by what has become the fastest growing global industry in terms of employment and export earnings (World Tourism Organisation, 2004). The literature under review thus provides a basis for understanding churches as tourist attractions, the motivations of those who might visit churches and the ways in which the resulting practices are represented.

According to Urry, spatial analysis is related to concepts of place (1995, 1-30) and he has reviewed these in relation to Shields' (1991) concept of 'place myth', which is described as a dynamic system of representation in which place images are susceptible to re-codings and re-representations over time (1991, 258-260). For Urry, the key constituents of this process are: cultural outputs, local industries, images, the organisation of cultural life and consumption of goods and services (Urry, 1995, 29):

> Understanding these myths entails a process of unlocking or undermining existing interpretations and traditions and of juxtaposing conflicting elements together. Even derelict buildings may leave traces and reveal memories, dreams and hopes of previous periods (1995, 24).

The emphasis on place is of particular importance for Urry when considering the implications of a move away from mass packaged tourism towards a post-Fordist interpretation of touristic activity within the supposed conditions of post-modernity (Jameson, 1991; Lyons, 1999). Urry equates this movement with greater consumer dominance, market volatility and segmentation, a much greater variety of products, preference for non-mass products and the aestheticisation of consumption. This has led to a rejection of mass tourism products, the proliferation of sites and attractions, a greater customisation of products and, importantly from the view of church tourism, the 'de-differentiation' of tourism from, amongst other things, culture and education. Meethan identifies these processes as yet another form of the commodification that is associated with postmodernity and not necessarily a negative aspect of it, because it can take the form of an acquisition of personal experience as well as commercial exchange (2001, 86).

The expansion of touristic significance in specific places with distinct place imagery is also a distinctive and recent cultural development that contrasts strongly with the mass recreational tourism of the past. Typically these are areas that were once used for other purposes, such as industry, agriculture, stately homes and indeed churches. As MacDonald has observed, 'the reorganisation of space around heritage and tourism is now the dominant strategy of economic revival' (2002, 62). These transformations in the *political economy* of place have been well documented (Harvey, 1993; Zukin, 1991), while Graham et al. (2000) have suggested how this process has been aided by a decentralisation of responsibility for tourism management from national local government and organisation and a concomitant increase in local interest and the need to attract capital investment from whatever cultural capital is available (2000, 203).

For Rojek (1997) the process involves the social construction of touristic significance from such resources in a process he describes as 'indexing and dragging' so that tourism involves movement through spaces that are constructed from 'files' of indexed representations linked to an original object, 'that is a range of signs, images and symbols which make the sight familiar to us in ordinary culture' (1997, 53). The system operates at both conscious and unconscious levels and may involve 'privileged readings', authoritative or authorised meanings derived from other cultural productions. These might include, hegemonic images and even the cinema – a source to which people are particularly receptive and which has been manifest in the many ways that literary, cinema and television 'locations' have been attached to touristic space (1997, 54-55).

At this point it is worth recalling the discussion in the previous chapter about the construction of touristic significance from cultural capital. The result of this is what Horne (1992) has described as an 'autonomic tourism' where tourists are contained within the prefabricated world of the tourism industry where nothing may be seen of the host society other than 'a few selected elements of its public culture' (1992, 168, 376). Thus in what amounts to an almost magical or myth-making way, places are transmuted into touristic space through the performative activity of the tourism industry and the celebrity it thus bestows on its objects of interest (Hollinshead, 1999b).

In Horne's view these processes are surrounded by official appropriations of places and objects and also of themes, storylines and past events with tourists themselves becoming unintentionally complicit. As 'tourist-collaborators' they adopt the autonomic mode where, according to Horne, they uncritically consume whatever the industry provides for them, from the banal facilities of travel itself to attractions that are sacralised for them by the industry and by official agencies concerned with tourism development (1992, 154-156, 175). In his interpretation of Horne's work Hollinshead has drawn particular attention to the way it suggests and articulates the 'decision-making capacities' and 'immense representative potency' that underpin the 'industry's exhibits, presentations and images' (1999b, 278).

For the purposes of tourism development, these official designations are easily generated by the activities of locally and regionally-based public sector destination managers who identify all manner of cultural and heritage assets that can be duly packaged and re-represented for the purposes of destination marketing. Lippard drew attention to this trend, rather graphically, in her preface to the 1999 edition of MacCannell's book:

> Bizarre local straws are grasped at as attractions, and where there are none to grasp, no history, no theme parks, no beaches, no mountains, no luxury, no picturesque poverty, straw attractions are created. Where will it all end? (Lippard, 1999, x-xi).

In the United Kingdom, it began in Bradford in West Yorkshire, as one of the first industrial cities to identify post-industrial opportunities to transform the redundant capital of its past into the *material* of heritage tourism (Hope and Klemm, 2001). In a similar vein, Dicks (2000) has examined the role of industrial heritage in providing new forms of regeneration in the Rhonda Valley in Wales, and sets this in the context of a wider analysis of 'vernacular' heritage development, which seeks to employ and develop local assets in the service economic regeneration:

> Heritage, of course, is high on the list of local 'assets'. Different areas attempt to corner different sections of the market . . . The 'presentation of self' becomes all important, and aspects of local identity – such as heritage – that can help to define this image as well as generating local spend and revenue are co-opted into an expanding market of local signs and images (Dicks, 2000, 55).

The process is now widely acknowledged as one of the features of the last two decades of the twentieth century, as Meethan has put it, the *de-commodification* of redundant industrial spaces and their *re-commodification* as places of consumption (Meethan, 2001, 85). Churches might also be understood as redundant capital in the light of their declining congregations and indeed many clergy responsible for large and deteriorating medieval buildings would prefer a simple meeting room in which to carry out their ministry (Ritchie, 2005).

Urry's (1990) concern with the relationships that create touristic significance reflects Lefebvre's (1991) analytical framework in expressing the various forces at work as representational practices, which can be social, political and. For Lefebvre, the analysis of space is characterised by a triad of interpretations based on spatial practices, spatial representations and representational space, which can in turn be interpreted as the economic activities associated with a space, the ways in which that space is officially represented in the processes of planning and bureaucratic management, and the way that the space is understood and symbolised by inhabitants and users – including tourists (Lefebvre, 1991, 36). The value of Lefebvre's analysis, according to Meethan (2001, 36-37), is that by relating it to real economic, social and symbolic processes, space becomes more than a mere container for these processes and more than a philosophical abstraction. Space becomes a process of concretising the dynamics within which various forces acting at different levels construct meaning. The making of a tourist attraction from a church building and its immediate surroundings becomes thus, a process of representational practices that have a real economic basis and real economic consequences. According to this schema the extent to which a church does become touristic space is determined by the interplay of the various elements within Lefebvre's triad.

The expansion of touristic space can therefore be seen to be developing as the result of a number of separate but related movements. These can be summarised as: changes in the nature of tourism itself and of the ways in which it is consumed; changes in the representation of space as the result of an interplay of different levels of representation, and finally, the de-differentiation of tourism from other spheres of activity that may, as a result, be brought within its scope. Again, this represents a considerable divergence from traditional perspectives on mass recreational tourism. What remains to be established, however, are the motile process or processes that occur to make this happen. All the elements of Lefebvre's framework may be in place, but this does not necessarily explain how a church becomes a tourist attraction.

For Meethan the analysis can be applied to the issue of touristic significance as follows:

> Within the restrictions of the global economy, policies and marketing strategies assign symbolic and aesthetic value to the material attributes of space. In turn these representations or narratives of people and place assume an exchange value as the objects of consumption becoming commodities to be traded and consumed the same way as the material goods and services which are associated with them . . . The production of tourist space therefore involves the material environment and the socio-economic circumstances which give rise to its form as well as encapsulating symbolic orders of meaning for both hosts as much as guests (Meethan, 2001, 37-38).

Meethan's analysis places representational practices at the core of the process by which space becomes touristic, particularly through 'civic' marketing strategies, the significance of which is well established (see Light and Prentice, 1994a). Graham et al. (2000, 163-7), provide a closer account of this mechanism in discussing the significance of 'civic consciousness' as locus for collecting, and representing images of place for both tourists and citizens and particularly, the importance of heritage as a component in this process a point made previously by Corner and Harvey (1991), Robins (1991, 58) and Zukin (1995).

The processes of representation, however, must also engage with the 'act' of tourism and the twin motilities of attraction and motivation that animate touristic space. It is important to arrive at a model that integrates these factors in some way in order to account, as Dann (1977 and 1981) has put it, for the 'pull' and the 'push' associated with attractions and tourist behaviour. It is this relationship that forms the basis for the discussion of commodification and marketisation later in this chapter.

Theorising touristic attraction

Within the context of the cultural movements and trends outlined above, individual places are involved in the processes of attraction formation, clutching at the 'bizarre local straws' to which reference was made above. The objects of tourism and the infrastructure to support it, are thus of primary concern in the transformation of places and spaces into attractions. Sightseeing, an oddly tautologous term that is intimately linked with tourism and tourist attractions is seemingly a modern invention. Adler has traced its origins to the renaissance, when earnest travellers could discover a world newly opened to them by explorers, tradesmen and colonists and grand tourists could combine their scholarly interests with development of an aesthetic inspired by the visual aspects of travelling, through the pursuit of beauty in buildings and landscape (1989, 21-23). Whilst these activities seem far removed from the activities of the contemporary sightseer, there is a link, according to Adler through the privileging of the visual and an associated desire to collect objects. The traveller was concerned with a 'survey of all creation' and in essence an inventory. In this way the early travellers and tourists make a 'contribution to the perceptual creation of the earth as a continuous, lawfully regulated and empirically knowable secular terrain' (1989, 24).

According to Urry's (1990) authoritative account, tourist sights and attractions are constructed by the binary opposition between the ordinary and everyday, and the extraordinary. This is either in the form of a unique object that is signed as such, or a particular imagery framed in some way by a culturally determined signifiers that are readily understood by tourists (1990, 11-12). Yet, according to MacCannell (1999), there are few sights in modernity that carry the self-proclaiming powers of the seven wonders of the ancient world, little that is so spectacular in itself, that it does not require institutional support to mark it off as an attraction. They are therefore, in essence, social constructions whereby the 'extraordinary' that is required to distinguish them is defined by culturally determined and conventional representational codes (Rojek, 1997, 70). It is the nature of this institutional support, and the processes by which it forms around an object, that creates the basis of MacCannell's concept of *sight sacrilisation,* by which sites become 'sights' (1999, 44). It is a process supported by four core components: the attraction, the tourist, the sight itself and a marker, a sign or system of signs that indicates the touristic significance of the sight. MacCannell's model is represented in Table 1 below, in which the successive stages are notionally mapped against the development of churches as tourist attractions.

Table 1: MacCannell's model of sight sacralisation applied to churches

Stage	Characteristics of the stage	Characteristics mapped against church tourism
1 Naming	The marker is important in initiating the first stage of sight sacralisation. This could be represented by any form of initial recognition, legislative, scientific or some other attention generated by experts or officialdom	Notice of churches by early travellers and antiquarians. Attempts to taxonomise buildings styles and key features (see historical context later in this chapter).
2 Framing and Elevation	This involves the placing of some official boundary around the object, and its display, often with an associated intention to protect and enhance them or to mark them out as special places worthy of attention and visitation.	Churches that have entered this phase might be expected to be enhanced for the purposes of visitors, by being open. Second, they might be expected to contain some attempt at embedded interpretation as a response to presence of visitors and to be valued, by the host community, or at least the active local church-goers as being of special interest (see following account of attraction theories).
3 Enshrinement	MacCannell's third stage occurs when the framing and elevation modalities become in themselves, objects of the tourist's attention. For example the way that a site is marked off and presented, for example through the addition of structures or interpretation becomes in itself a source of attraction value	A church with its own visitor centre, shop or cafe might qualify for this level of sacrilisation, but it is typically cathedrals that cater for tourists in this way with their enhanced visitor facilities and well presented treasures.
4 Mechanical reproduction	Prints, photographs or other representations of the object are created and widely distributed and valued in themselves. It is this stage of sacrilisation that creates the attraction for serious touristic attention, in producing not merely 'on-site' markers to signify touristic space, but also 'off-site markers' such as guide books and postcards that direct the attention of tourists.	Churches have been the object of such reproduction for some time, being the subject of guidebooks and lithographic prints over a period of two centuries. Nowadays they also feature on postcards and leaflets in tourist information centres and on websites, the latest form of 'mechanical reproduction' (see research on parish websites in Chapter 5)

MacCannell's approach provides a framework for establishing levels of attraction with reference to the various stages of sight sacralisation, and to link these with the context provided by Lefebvre's triad. The activities of those who are professionally involved in the development and management of destinations are key to this, as are the activities of operators, such as accommodation and attraction providers and businesses, all of whom have an interest in representing a place as an attractive destination.

It is apparent, however, that when MacCannell's model is applied to particular cases, some of the stages are either missing or appear to be coterminous (Jacobsen, 1997, 353). In applying it churches for example, it is clear that whilst the fourth stage, mechanical reproduction, is well established, the third stage, enshrinement, is not. It also fails to problematise subjective responses, so that tourism is seen as a deterministic process where the tourist is automatically created when the other two elements are in place. Furthermore, Horne advances the view that the radiance of celebrity characterised by the well established tourist attraction can be challenged and dispelled by the knowing and intelligent tourist (1992, 33-37).

Gunn (1980), Lew (1987) and Leiper (1990) have provided early and formative theories on the nature and importance of attraction and attraction factors that contribute to the formation of touristic space. The most significant differences between these approaches and that of MacCannell is in their emphasis on the spatial and intrinsic aspects of attraction formation. For example, Gunn's (1980) concern is with the spatial centre of attraction or 'attraction nucleus' which is related to the nature and content of the site, its management and representation, and the response of visitors to its magnetic properties. Thus, whereas MacCannell's concern is with the social construction attraction as it relates to extraneous meanings that are mediated by prevailing cultural norms, Gunn has drawn attention to the socio-spatial qualities of attractions and the means by which these are represented.

Lew (1987), attempted to define the physical qualities and delineations of touristic space: its natural beauty, charm, atmosphere etc, features which are characterised by the physical presence of the attraction and its location and context. This approach enabled Lew to focus on the way that attractions are related and integrated in an overall assemblage of features that work together to increase levels of attraction. Within these tourists expect to find risk-free zones where their activities are supported by services and infrastructure. Edensor (1998, 2004) has conceived these zones as 'tourist bubbles', which contain 'staged' authenticities and configurations of Lefebvre's the spatial triad that favour touristic development. Outside the tourist bubble are found conditions where there is less evidence of organised tourism and where, linking these ideas with those of Lefebvre, might be found less evidence of touristic spatial practice, and spatial representations which are understood by both visitors and residents as outside the area of attraction. For most churches, because they are common and often isolated, there would seem to be less intrinsic attraction value, and a consequent need to be associated with surrounding attractions and other touristic features.

Leiper (1990) has provided a theoretical basis for such an approach, developing Gunn's (1980) concept of the attraction nucleus and Lew's (1987) notion of the zone of attraction, he has proposed the 'tourist precinct' which he describes as a 'small zone . . . where tourists are prone to gather because of clustered nuclei with some unifying theme' (Leiper, 1990, 375). It is thus the combined effect of elements of attraction that is significant, so that:

> Each item (a building, site, object, performance, or display) might not in itself be regarded by most tourists as sufficient to influence their itinerary at a trip or daily level. But together the items might be synergistic, forming the basis for satisfying experiences (1990, 376).

Such an approach provides a basis for understanding church tourism beyond the attraction of single churches and towards constructed experiences such as church trails, infrastructures and support services such as transport and accommodation. In a similar vein, Fakeye and Compton (1991) analysed attraction factors from a study of winter destinations in Texas. They were able to identify such features as natural and cultural amenities, accommodation, transport facilities, infrastructure and social opportunities such as food, bars, entertainment and 'social opportunities'. The representational practices thus employed related to the totality of the touristic experience that is attached to a particular location. Attractions may thus be represented in their own right and by other agencies involved in the economic development and management of the destination as a whole. There is potential, however, for contestation, where one agency's representational practices conflict with those of another, local authorities and the Church, for example.

The problem with attempts to theorise attraction value in the ways suggested by Gunn, Lew and Leiper is their lack of empirical depth (Richards, 2002, 1049), and the extent to which these highly developed theoretical constructs have been tested against real developments in the formation of attraction and destination complexes. There are, however, approaches to attraction that are more empirically grounded. Fakeye and Compton's (1991) work has already been mentioned in relation to attraction complexes. Similarly, Turnbull and Uysal (1995) have identified the factors that are related to the nature of attraction in destinations, such as heritage and culture as well as leisure and recreational opportunities. Kim et al. (2000) have proposed four sets of attributes related to infrastructure, physical environment and entertainment opportunities. The important factor here is that these authors have identified attributes from empirical sources that underlie the importance of synergistic relationships between the elements that combine to create the attraction of particular destinations. For heritage tourism, Robb (1998) employs an empirical study of Tintagel in Cornwall (United Kingdom) in which all the attributes of a place converge around its perceived heritage. Tintagel is thus a *heritage attraction complex* that depends on natural and historic features and a modern infrastructure. These are combined with different levels of representational practice involving markers around the destination that reveal different aspects of the significance of the place as a heritage attraction (Robb, 1998, 583).

Whilst theories of attraction have formed a focus of research for scholars in this field, there has been less emphasis on tourist motivations in relation to the consumption of heritage (Richards, 1996, 262). The concern here is with the characteristics of tourists and their 'values and preconceptions' and the ways in which these relate to the attributes of tourist attractions (Meethan, 2001, 81). For Leiper (1990), as has been mentioned these are an essential element within the tourism system, but a more thorough analysis is required in order to establish a basis for examining the implications for interpretation and the relationship of this with representational practice.

Perspectives on tourists

Urry (1990) provided an early attempt to focus on the tourist as a consumer rather than on the institutional arrangements that support the representation and production of touristic space. Thus, tourists could be differentiated according to the particular view of the world or *gaze* that they bring to the object and the ways in which this has changed over time, and is mediated by cultural change, social differentiation and social relations. Whilst Urry's influence has been considerable, his work has not been without its critics. MacCannell (2001) accepts that Urry (1990, 11-12) has identified a significant portion of contemporary tourist motivation, but suggests that as this is based on an over-simplistic binary opposition of the ordinary (everyday) and the extraordinary (touristic). For MacCannell, therefore, Urry's theory is ultimately built on sand and he offers a *second gaze* (2001, 30-31) that eschews Urry's binary 'trap'. MacCannell's view of tourist agency thus recognises and resists the manipulation that is built into the tourism industry's quest to beguile the hapless subject with its limitless supply of beaches, attractions and tourism services:

> I could summarise the central finding of all the research I have done on tourists as follows: the act of sightseeing is itself organised around a kernel of resistance to the limitations of the tourist gaze. The strongest indication of this resistance is the desire to get beyond touristic representation. This is a desire which almost all tourists will express if given an opportunity (2001, 31).

Whatever each of these theoretical orientations offers to the debate, taken together they place emphasis on the heterogeneity of tourist types, experience and motivations and a basis therefore differentiating individual responses to touristic experience and to attractions. This is of crucial importance to the present study developing an understanding of what it is about churches that makes them attractive, and to whom.

There is a growing literature on the differentiation of tourists according to motivational and other characteristics, in juxtaposition to established ideas about attractions and the supposed objects of touristic activity (Dann, 1977;

1981). At its most fundamental level the study of tourist motivation has generally sought psychological explanations of behaviour related to the notions of 'escape' from everyday life and the 'seeking' of other types of experience according to Urry 's perspective (Iso-Ahola, 1982, 1989). Most of these studies are related to specific cases and destinations from which common threads such as novelty value, prestige and social interaction are identified. Kim et al. (2003, 171) have reviewed this literature and conclude that attraction and motivation factors can be seen either as temporally separated, stages in the process of decision-making, or as integrated and fundamentally related, acting simultaneously.

Such studies have been stimulated by the development of marketing as central to the representational practices that contribute to the construction of the highly commodified products of the tourism industry (see Chapter 1). A key feature of contemporary marketing is the need to differentiate consumers and potential consumers in order to identify the most lucrative 'targets' for both existing and new products (for developments in the visitor attractions market see Swarbrooke (1995, 59-84) and Morgan et al. (2002), and also Boniface (1995) and Yeoman and Drummond (2001) for the issues as they affect heritage tourism). Such differentiation, or 'segmentation' has become more sophisticated in recent decades, starting with socio-demographic profiling and moving towards 'psychographics', which is focused on the way that lifestyle, values, attitudes and beliefs might dispose someone towards a particular product or range of products (Kahle and Chiagouris, 1997). A further elaboration has been the segmentation of motivation and behaviour in the structure of consumer choice, and when this is combined with socio-demographic and psychographic dimensions very precise descriptors of particular groups with similar consumption characteristics are held to be possible.

The cultural contexts of these marketing practices are the new consumer attitudes outlined above. Consumption in its endless variety has developed in the wake of new forms of capital accumulation, and consumers seek products that suit their more individuated needs. New products and experiences are also constantly stimulating demand as producers strive to retain competitive edge.

This movement is a major concern in tourism, where the last thirty years have seen a shift away from 'mass' products such as seaside resorts and packaged holidays (Munt, 1994, 102-104) towards 'post-Fordist' products that depend more on customisation and choice. These groups are likely to be relatively better off socially and financially and well-educated, but will reinforce their distinctiveness not on the grounds of wealth or status, as their parents might have done, but rather, in terms of their 'cultural capital', their knowledge, consumption choices, lifestyles and taste (Craik, 1997, 126-127). Munt applies this to tourism choices by indicating that these must also provide a means of 'stoking-up on cultural capital' (Munt, 1994, 109).

The intellectualisation of leisure is of particular significance for Munt. It derives initially from the de-differentiation of social and cultural practice that is seen as characteristic of post-modernity, in that tourism and, for example, education are thus susceptible to de-differentiation. So that, according to Munt:

> Holidays have moved beyond sheer relaxation and moved towards the opportunity to study and learn, to experience the world through a pseudo-intellectual frame (1994, 110).

MacCannell provides an example of this thinking on the part of tourists from the letters of a respondent in the Shetlands who writes like an 'amateur ethnographer', about the landscape, people and culture of the islands:

> The writer wants to impress on us that Shetland Isle is an interesting and worthwhile place for tourists to visit, and she believes that a report on aspects of its social structure and culture is a means of producing that impression (MacCannell, 1998, 176).

This kind of intellectualised tourism has been given impetus by the development of specialist tour operations that offer tours to distant cultural attractions or, at the other end of the scale, and of relevance here, guided excursions around country churches. This further depends upon the availability of suitably qualified and credible guides, so that, as Munt points out, there is a de-differentiation between certain professions and tourism. Combined with other distinctions, such as spatial separation and discourse the 'other' tourist is thus simultaneously de-differentiated from other spheres from tourism was once separate, and at the same time made socially and spatially distinct from the mass of tourists (Munt, 1994, 119).

In this context church tourism can be seen as part of a new mode of touristic consumption. It accords with the transformations of place that have created new attractions, as outlined above, and the development of new consumer sensibilities that require more individuated experiences and customised products. These two dimensions are characteristic of the same social and cultural movements that are associated with tourism in its post-industrial paradigm. Seeing church tourism in this light obviates the need to see it as a mere subset of religiously motivated travel and church visiting. Indeed, if the future of church tourism were to depend on the activities of the religious, it would be at risk of limiting its appeal to an unsustainable level. As Shackley has stated:

> If a sacred site becomes a tourist attraction its visitors are unlikely to be drawn exclusively (or sometimes at all) from the religious tradition to which the site belongs (Shackley, 2001, xv).

The implication here is that a simple dichotomous analysis of church tourists into the essentially pious and the essentially touristic is inadequate. Insufficient attention is paid to the variety, complexity and economic significance of the latter category (Winter and Gasson, 1996). This is especially the case where its development is related to the social movements and transformations, discussed earlier, that characterise tourism as a social and cultural practice. It may also be the case, as Winter and Gasson have observed, that the distinction between pilgrimage as a form of religious tourism in cathedrals and heritage tourism as a broader cultural activity may not be as distinct as might be imagined. The sanctity of the place may even lend something to its attraction value for visitors who profess no religious beliefs or who have a broader and more diffuse notion of spirituality than practicing Christians (Winter and Gasson, 1996, 182). The extent to which this constitutes an attraction factor for churches can only be established, however, from the responses of tourists themselves.

How else might heritage tourists be differentiated? Academic research on the issue has been very much based on visitor surveys at established sites such as those managed by English Heritage. Prentice summarised the available data from his own research and that of others in the early 1990s, with fairly unequivocal results:

> The summary of visitor surveys ... would give strong support for a view that holiday-maker tourists visiting heritage sites are likely to be of a socially unrepresentative social class profile, with a substantial bias to non-manual worker social groups (1993, 53).

Zeppel and Hall's review (1991, 32-36) produced similar conclusions in that cultural tourists tended to be characterised as middle aged, middle class and well educated and a clear consensus has built up around this profile (Hughes, 1987). Craik, summarised Australian research on 'non-users' as a group that is:

> predominantly male, of lower socio-economic status and with lower educational qualifications – lacks or refuses cultural capital; its members are unlikely to consume cultural tourism, although some may become casual or accidental cultural tourists (1997, 128).

Similar surveys revealed that heritage tourists were likely to be over-represented in the middle age ranges with a corresponding under representation of younger and older people (Tunbridge and Ashworth, 1996). The socio-economic profile of heritage tourists has also been a particular focus of attention for both operators and academics, the former concerned with maximising revenue from higher-spending visitors and responding to political pressure to be more 'socially inclusive'. Prentice's (1993) study marshals strong evidence in support of a 'non-manual' bias in heritage tourists at heritage sites in the Isle of Man, with a particular emphasis on the over-representation of professional and managerial occupational categories (1993, 91-92). According to Smith, heritage tourists are believed to be of higher social status, with consequently more money to spend in the destinations concerned, a higher level of educational attainment and more alert to issues of conservation and the environment (2003, 104). The middle-class orientation of those 'who are not content to accept commercialised entertainment as defining the limits of the tourist experience', is simply assumed by MacCannell (1999, 203).

Tourists, like other consumer groups, can also be differentiated on the basis of behaviour and motivation. Cohen (1979) was an early exponent of psychographic perspectives although his analysis was firmly based on an established sociological perspective, that of phenomenology. Cohen thus identifies tourist motivations and behaviours so that the *recreational* mode implies a restful resort from the travails of everyday life, whilst the *diversionary* mode restores meaning and significance to lives which, through work and everyday experience, have been diminished. *Experiential* tourists (following MacCannell) are alienated from their own material culture and seek meaning, therefore, in the experience of other cultures, which are perceived as more authentic. *Experimentalists* 'dabble' in otherness, whilst *existentialists* fully immerse themselves in it as an 'elective state' in a way that resembles religious conversion (Cohen, 1979, 190).

Cohen's relatively early attempt to differentiate tourist motivations and behaviours has been influential in identifying the diversity of subjective responses to touristic experience. After Cohen it became impossible to analyse touristic behaviour as a homogenous construct and many other attempts to identify tourist motivations and to relate these to particular tourist groups have followed. The importance of subjective response to heritage has been discussed in Chapter 1, but there is a wider debate in tourism itself. For example, Galloway has attempted to differentiate national park visitors according to the personality construct of *sensation-seeking* so that lower sensation seekers, rather like casual heritage visitors, were less engaged with particular aspects, sought a more general involvement, and were more interested in the facilities and services that were provided (Galloway, 2002, 588).

The integration of attraction and motivational factors into a satisfactory *theory of tourism* is less well developed, although even MacCannell's early analysis (the first edition of *The Tourist* was published in 1975) is driven by the integration of attraction and tourist into a structure that creates, in that moment, a 'sight'. Both Dann (1981) and Leiper (1990) were aware of the need to look at both sides of this equation, but only limited research has been directed at the production of a fully integrated analytical model (Uysal and Jurowski, 1994; Klenosky, 2002).

The significance of subjective responses to heritage was introduced in Chapter 1. In the context of tourism and tourism studies outlined here it can also be seen an important counterpoint to analyses of the 'supply side', and a basis for understanding the way that the tourist subject is constructed in relation to touristic experience and attraction value. This, in turn, enables a perspective on representational practices to be developed that is sensitive to the essential reciprocity of the engagement between the providers of touristic experience and its intended (and accidental) recipients. In the case of churches this means understanding how it is that churches have come to be represented as and within touristic space and the intended and actual outcomes in terms of subjective response.

Representational practices and marketing

Tourism has been explored above in relation to theories about attraction and tourist motivations. For the present study, however, it is important to understand what these processes contribute to the representation of places and the objects of heritage as and within touristic space. The most significant representational practice associated with contemporary tourism is marketing. For Rojek (1997, 54-55), the indexing and dragging model of representation, to which reference has already been made, is accomplished in large measure by marketing and advertising, something of a challenge to the MacCannellian view that tourism is a quest for authenticity!.

Marketing as a representational practice is traditionally presented as a mix of processes involving product development, price, distribution and methods of promotion (Kotler, et al., 1999). Preferably products will be developed that are 'differentiated' in a positive way from other, similar products, in order to gain some competitive advantage over them (Porter, 2004) and to build consumer awareness and loyalty to the brand (Bloemer and Kasper, 1995). Clearly this implies an understanding on the part of the supplier, of what the consumer expects from the transaction. If this understanding is non-existent or incomplete, then the positioning of the product in its market is not fully achieved. The activities of local authority tourism and economic development officials to represent churches as part of their destination's attraction value are thus focused on the need to market this 'product' to potential tourists. This reflects Horne's view of the marketing of cultural experience:

> The idea of tourism as a way of buying bits of cultural experience, piece by piece or in packages, is one of the basic marketing strategies of autonomic tourism in commercialist societies (1992, 175).

From a marketing perspective the challenge would be to identify valuable market segments. Tourism research reflects this activity by identifying the marketing implications derived from combining push and pull factors into models of consumer behaviour. For example, Kim et al. (2003, 179-80) have intimated the need to respond to push-pull integration with specifically tailored visitor experiences or products. Sirgy and Su (2000) have applied their analysis of decision-making to traditional concepts of the 'marketing mix': product, price, place and promotion. A series of 'controllable cues' are thus identified and fed into the marketing policies for a particular destination (Sirgy and Su, 2000, 340-352).

Such findings are in accordance with marketing theory, which relies to a large extent on theories of consumer choice that have a psychological basis (Kassarjian, 1971; Kassarjian, and Sheffet, 1981). Operationally, the approach to marketing tourism will, thus, like any other product, be determined by two things: the nature of the product, and the market segment to which that product is meant to appeal, an approach that has been pioneered in the marketing of tourism products by Middleton (1988), developed by Witt and Moutinho

(1989), applied in various heritage contexts by Herbert et al. (1989) and explored in some depth by Prentice (1993) and Robinson (1994). Developing the product in reciprocity with a concept of its likely market thus involves a detailed examination of what is and should be offered to the visitor and the likely response of visitors to what is offered.

Marketing as a practice is thus a process involving product development, definition, distribution in reciprocity with the expressed or perceived needs consumer segments. Preferably products will be developed that are 'differentiated' in a positive way from other, similar products, in order to gain some competitive advantage and to build consumer awareness and loyalty to the brand. Clearly this implies an understanding on the part of the supplier of what the consumer expects from the transaction. If this understanding is non-existent or incomplete, then the operation might expect to fail in its operational objectives.

A key problem, however, is that much cultural sightseeing conforms to the less committed more casual categories of visitor identified by Bywater (1993), Silberberg (1995) and McKercher (2002), and those for whom, using Leiper's (1990) typology, cultural attractions would be a secondary or tertiary nucleus. This has led Craik to the somewhat gloomy conclusion that the faith placed by destination managers in cultural tourism is somewhat misplaced:

> Advocates of cultural tourism too often hope to attract the 'ideal' cultural tourist who is highly motivated to consume culture and possesses a high level of cultural capital; yet most cultural tourism consumers are adjunct, accidental or reluctant visitors.
>
> Visitor profiles suggest that cultural tourists are a distinct minority despite increased opportunities to include cultural components in cultural packages (Craik, 1997, 120-121)

Craik's initial pessimism is leavened, however, by the possibility for developing a broader base of visitor types than the literature suggests, but apart from references to 'populist' exhibitions her evidence is somewhat limited. More scope is offered for broadening the attraction value of heritage through the more 'socially relevant' interpretations of the past offered by theme parks such as New Lanark (Beeho and Prentice, 1997), the Rhonda Heritage Park (Dicks, 2000), and the North of England Open Air Museum at Beamish in County Durham. The risk here is that much of what constitutes heritage, including churches, remains exclusive because it does not actively engage with those large segments of visitors who are pursuing expectations that are beyond their capacity to provide. They may also be ambivalent about representing themselves as tourist attractions in the first place because they are engaged in other social and cultural agendas. In the case of churches this has typically resulted in a passive response to their treatment as and within touristic space: it appears to happen in and around them with very little real engagement on their part.

Davies and Prentice (1995) have gone some way to address this issue by analysing the extent to which a latent demand might exist for heritage tourism. This perspective is based on the premise that the non-visitor market is heterogeneous and therefore susceptible to segmentation into people who never visit and who would never consider visiting a heritage attraction; those who never visit but who might consider visiting; those who might have visited once but not subsequently, and those who visit infrequently. The question then, is whether one or more of these segments might yield visitors to heritage attractions if the latter were developed in some way to broaden their appeal and to alter the critical balance between positive motivations and negative constraints. Apart from proposing the need for further research on the nature of the constraints Davies and Prentice offer a model that enables managers to conceive of a 'bundle of benefits' that would enhance the non-visitors perception of the value of the experience associated with a particular heritage site or sites (Davies and Prentice, 1995, 498). Dicks has expressed this as a movement away form heritage objects to heritage experiences (Dicks, 2000, 33) which implies the need to look at what else could be brought into the heritage product to increase and broaden its experiential appeal.

Such considerations also need to be set against the changes that have taken place in the representation of heritage attractions and especially museums (Sorenson, 1989; Goulding, 1999). The commercial marketing of heritage has created products that are 'market led', and which respond to the 'needs' of customers in all their various guises, such as families with children. The consumers of heritage thus segmented have come to expect a much higher level of visual production and interactivity than in the past (Craik, 1997, 124)

It is also argued here that interpretation is not only part of the process of marketing a heritage site, but a form of product development. The typical and traditional view of interpretation is that provides a layer of meaning between the object and the viewer (Anteric, 1998) and is predicated on the assumption that a direct connection is not possible for most viewers because of the need for specialist knowledge to create a meaningful engagement (1998, 182). In addition, interpretation is held to be laden with the values of the interpreter and therefore open to deconstruction (Hooper-Greenhill, 2000). Dicks provides the following definition, which summarises the position in relation to her own version which she describes as 'encoding':

> Heritage encoding ... deploys a mediating layer of knowledge which is inserted between the 'raw material' and the 'visitor experience'. Interpretation is thus not merely a field of specialist knowledge. It also entails the power to define the historical subject and translate this into exhibitionary forms (Dicks, 2002, 174).

She draws on Foucault, as does Hollinshead (1999a), in relation to the selection of attractions (as discussed in Chapter 1), to suggest that interpretation is a 'technology of power' designed to produce a meaning that is represented to a 'specific public'. It is not the intention here to present a lengthy rehearsal of the development of interpretative techniques, but rather to suggest that there is as yet an under-researched link between the purposes of interpretation and those of marketing as a representational practice. Uzzell has provided a basis for this perspective with a themes-markets-resources model that represents the integration of heritage resources (the heritage itself and interpretive media), heritage themes (stories and messages) and market characteristics that determines the interpretive experience:

> It is the resolution of the three elements of themes, market and resources where all three circles overlap that comprises the interpretive experience, such as the range of intended cognitive and affective responses to the heritage or the anticipated or desired behavioural outcomes (1998, 240-241).

Whereas in the past, interpretation served the interest of the specialist, the student or the educator it now has a wider brief in the investor, the tourist and the host community. It is reflective of the debate in Chapter 1 about authorised and privileged accounts and the 'eye of power' that enables marketers to select and cleanse their heritage assets (Urry, 1995, 188) for representational purposes as Degen has illustrated in the new representation of Barcelona (2004, 134-136). It also implies process that operate at two levels, a macro-level, that of new product development, or attraction formation, and a micro-level at which the product or attraction is consumed; both levels offering opportunities for intervention, firstly in *what* and secondly in *how* an object is represented.

Tilden (1957), one of the earliest and most influential authorities on interpretation, provides a basis for the argument that it is a kind of augmented product development process. He asserts, for example, that interpretation should relate its object to some characteristic of the personality of the visitor, and suggests that different interpretative approaches should be applied to distinct visitor segments such as children (Tilden, 1977, 9). This is a point that has been echoed by Rumble (1989) and taken up by Herbert (1989b, 196-228) in expressing the need for interpretation to meet the varying needs of a varied audience. Tilden also asserts that rather than being blandly instructive, interpretation should provoke interest and awareness and the desire to seek more. Here is a strong link between interpretation and marketing practices: Tilden's 'provocation' matches fairly accurately the step process of creating awareness, interest, desire and action that is the basis of advertising (Lavidge and Steiner, 1961). Herbert (1989b) goes as far as to say that interpretation should be seen as part of a marketing strategy:

> Interpretation has become an integral part of the development and 'marketing' of historic sites. The interpreter has the role of 'broker' between the place and the visitor and has to relate his efforts to convey messages against the diversity of tastes and preferences which the clientele represents (1989b, 228).

Nuryanti defines interpreters as 'culture brokers', who 'create and package products, interact with markets, deliver experiences and match the transaction goals of both producers and consumers'. McArthur and Hall (1993) are also explicit about the role of interpretation in shaping and defining visitor experience by helping to control through-flow, implementing guided walks at historic sites or by determining that access to a historic house might be on the basis of a guided tour only. It is difficult to distinguish such an analysis from the conventional view of the marketing mix, of which the nature of the *product* on offer is the primary component. Robinson (1994) similarly relates the presentation of sites to the notion of a marketable product and states that interpretation should not even begin until the visitor market is properly understood. The interpretative strategy will then be dependent on how 'asset ingredients are presented, and the experience and level of enjoyment that the visitors receive' (1994, 382). The key according to Goodey (1994), is to establish an *interpretative plan* that effectively integrates interpretative strategies with other aspects of operational management, especially marketing:

> However much the reader experiences discomfort with the dominant role of the market in determining our understanding of, or selectivity towards heritage, it is likely to dominate heritage definition and management into the next century (1994, 305).

Moscardo (1996) was mentioned in Chapter 1 as employing the concept of 'mindfulness' as a means of understanding the visitor experience of built heritage. Moscardo draws on social cognition theory and especially the work of

Langer (1989) who makes a distinction between *mindless* behaviour, which is related to repetitive activity and the unquestioning application of preconceptions to experience, and *mindfulness*, in which the subject is responsive to new perspectives and situations and open to the influence of these on their thoughts and actions. Langer further associates mindfulness with creativity and educational attainment, and Moscardo applies it as a theoretical model to understanding the dynamics of interpretation at built heritage sites to identify the factors in both the site and the visitor that might induce mindful responses (1996, 382-387). Whilst some of Moscardo's conclusions might appear banal: 'Visitors who have a low level of interest in the content area and who are fatigued are likely to be mindless', (1996, 385), there is here a clear attempt to identify the means by which interpretation is *designed* in such a way as to actively engage the subject, in much the same way that products and services are marketed. The significance of this position lies mainly in its practical implications, for the presentation of material, guides and visitor orientation and in Moscardo's closing assertion that successful interpretation can create visitors who appreciate and understand both the site and its socio-cultural context (1996, 393).

Dicks intimates the marketing significance of successful interpretation in recounting the difficulties faced by heritage consultants in translating the raw material of the Rhondda Heritage Park into heritage industry product. To this end she quotes an interview undertaken with a local authority tourism officer:

> We have to translate [the research] into a *workable product*. It would be easy enough to appoint an academic consultant who would come in and do a wonderful job of research and then write a brilliant treatise on the development of the Rhondda Valleys, and all we would be able to do is paste it on the wall like wallpaper and nobody would read it ... What we have to do and what the group of consultants has to show that it can do is take that and turn it into a form that *people would actually enjoy* (Dicks, 2000, 174, original emphasis)

For this purpose, as Dicks makes clear, interpretation is a 'mode of address' that creates access and enjoyment. In fact, there are two issues here, that have been conflated and which need to be separated for the purposes of analysis. The first is the contention that interpretation creates access by producing, in marketing terms, a 'workable product'. The second, which is implied throughout, and certainly by the term 'mode of address', is that there is, of necessity, a simplification, or to use the vernacular, a 'dumbing down' or even a sanitisation of the original research, something that Waitt revealed in his analysis of the marketing of heritage in Sydney (2000, 843). The challenge for the agencies involved is, as ever, to convert historical text and physical remains into a heritage product without compromising the value that might be drawn from a serious, scholarly or political account.

The first issue is important here because it supports the notion that interpretation is, in marketing terms, a form of product development. Thus interpretation can be seen to add commercial value to the material object by creating a meaning around it that can then be understood and 'consumed' by the subject. This does not diminish the non-commercial act of interpretation in conveying some meaning or understanding that supports an engagement between the object and subject, so long as the process is transparent and its purposes understood. A 'workable product', however, is more than just engagement, it is an object the consumption which *benefits* the consumer in some way that is felt subjectively, and for which the consumer will exchange money, time or attention. The product must therefore fulfil some need or desire on the part of the consumer and elusive though it is, as demonstrated by the review of touristic motivation outlined above, it is this transaction that lies at the heart of the relationship between marketing and interpretation.

The second issue, that the creation of a workable product necessarily implies over-simplification is, as was suggested in Chapter 1, no more than a commentary on the capacity for any interpretative act to manipulate meaning, and is related to the motives of the interpreters, who are always in jeopardy of distorting for the sake of increasing popular appeal. Whilst over-simplification and distortion are likely outcomes in a commercial culture that stresses the visual, the arresting, the exciting and the grand, this is not, as was argued in chapter 1, a necessary condition for the production of heritage, which can equally focus on clarity, knowledge and the elucidation of plurality if these are valued goals. Interpretation, according to Goodey (1994), is about 'adding value to the experience of place' and as such it can be achieved in both financial and cultural terms with each requiring that intended audiences for interpretative presentation be identified (1994, 306).

Interpretation has become a core activity in the management of heritage resources and can be seen as a means by which heritage products are developed and in a marketing context. If marketing is concerned, essentially, with the ways in which products are developed to meet consumer needs, the systems by which products are brought both to the attention of consumers and the physical means of consumption, then surely this encompasses much of what heritage interpretation is about. The fact that different types of interpretive media are often made available for children (even in churches) goes some way to support the contention that interpretation is a way of developing the heritage product to meet the needs of particular consumers. In fulfilling a need and notwithstanding the susceptibility of objects to a plurality of meanings, it is argued here, therefore, that the act of interpretation effectively 'creates' the meaningful object of heritage in the mind of the subject in the same way that marketing creates a product with exchange value for the consumer. Interpretive meanings are also fed into marketing communications which themselves perform the object's interpretation through representational practices such as printed media and the internet and which feed back into it. The meaningful object of heritage is thus constructed from the opportunities that exist to interpret and communicate it within a representational framework. The sense in which a heritage object thus becomes and 'object of heritage' is represented schematically in Fig. 1, below.

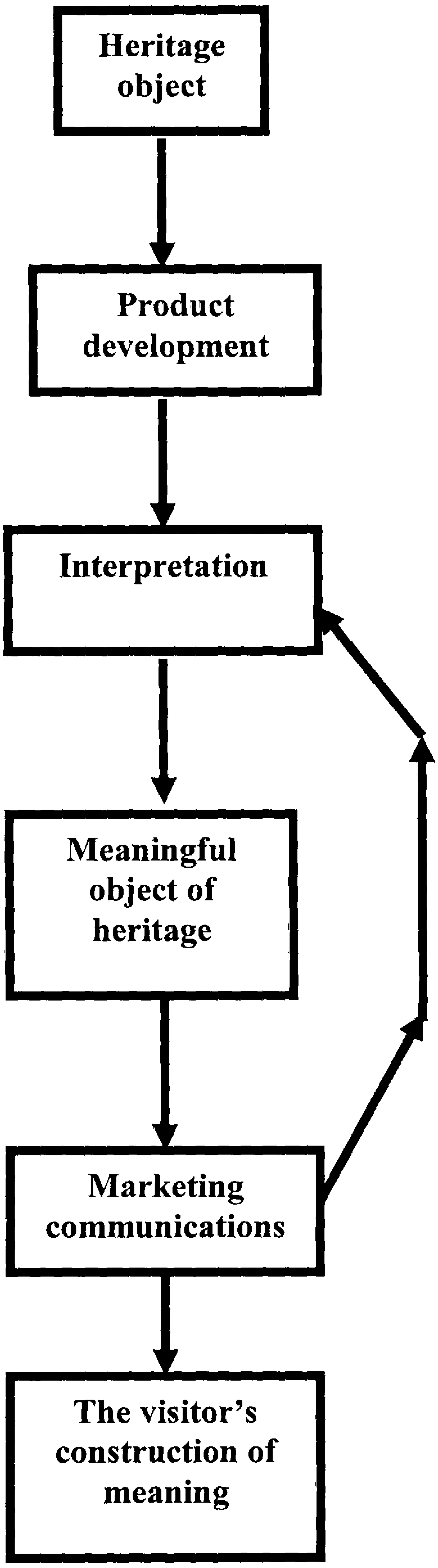

Fig. 1: A representational framework for marketing, interpretation and the meaningful object of heritage

Marketing, as a set of ideas about production and consumption, has been woven through the present discussion against a backdrop of theory about touristic significance, the concept of attraction and the nature of tourists themselves, but what are the implications for the development of church tourism?

Implications for marketing church tourism

It is argued here that the marketing of churches as tourist attractions traditionally takes place within a context of passivity in relation to the possibilities and opportunities offered through tourism and yet the challenges for the marketing of churches as conventional tourist attractions begin with attempts to define them as workable products. For example, churches are immensely varied, in respect of their historic and architectural vale, their age, their location, their surroundings and their relationship with other tourist attractions and touristic space. Whilst people are accustomed to visiting cathedrals and the larger more spectacular churches, smaller churches are still marginal attractions, even in established destinations (Hanna, 1984). It seems unlikely that the average village church would be able to meet the kind of expectations discussed in the previous section to any appreciable degree. It is this aspect of representational practice, the experience of visiting a church as a tourist, that is therefore most challenging to those agencies involved in destination management and marketing and for churches adopting this additional role as attractions within such contexts. As Nolan and Nolan have observed:

> Regardless of their motivations, all visitors to these attractions require some level of services, ranging from providing for the most basic human needs, to full commercial development that rivals the most secular resort (1992, 69).

Whilst none of this provides a concrete agenda for promoting the appeal of churches to those socio-economic segments that are not normally associated with heritage tourism, it does suggest a basis for understanding the value of churches as attractions in the heritage tourism 'portfolio' of destinations.

With churches, however, an awareness of the content and meaning of ritual and liturgical practice is often assumed, despite the fact that 'general knowledge' of this is arguably at its lowest ebb for centuries (Voas and Crockett, 2005). The 'little guides' provided in churches, along with the often handwritten 'labels' attached to notable objects offer little more than sketchy accounts of a building's architectural and artefactual features. There is little attempt to provide real social, political, historical or religious contexts or local significance. The relatively low level of interpretation in churches is therefore a key indicator of their stage of development as heritage tourism products when compared to other heritage tourism attractions, and this at a time when heritage interpretation elsewhere has developed a vast array of technology and techniques. For churches to assume a less passive and more proactive approach to tourism this latency of attraction would need to be stimulated by marketing interventions and their associated management and organisational structures.

On the basis of the discussion above it might seem reasonable to isolate a series of preliminary conditions that might favour the development of church tourism. First, it is apparent that the kinds of social and economic transformations identified by Lefebvre, Urry and Meethan will favour the expansion of touristic space to include churches and their contexts. Second, the literature on attraction provides a number of models that might explain how churches might become tourist attractions either passing through the stages of sight sacrilisation or by forming clusters of attractions that create a kind of critical mass integrating the characteristics of an attraction with other attractions and services such as transport and accommodation. Third, the relatively nascent research on visitor types and motivations points to the problems of social differentiation associated with heritage tourism, but also employs psychological categories to elucidate the possibility enhancing visitor experience in order to broaden the appeal of heritage. The possibility of such developments depends on the susceptibility of church tourism to effective marketing interventions, such as product development, segmentation, and promotional activity and whether these are practicable from an organisational point of view that has traditionally taken a passive view of tourism.

It is incumbent, therefore, as well as highly prudent in operational terms that any organisation or attraction which enters the market should be alert to the imperatives expressed by Sirgy and Su (2000) to attend to those controllable cues that will maximise the attractiveness of churches in relation to specific market segments. This, in turn implies a need to be able to invest in those pull factors that are considered to favour effective marketing to target groups, the segments *most likely* to visit churches, but is this niche substantial enough to provide a viable visitor base to sustain church tourism despite the efforts of those professionals dedicated to the expansion of newly commodified touristic space? Table 2, below, provides a brief analysis of the main marketing issues and how these could translate into a range of appropriate actions for marketing churches as tourist attractions in a conventional sense. In other words, this is what the literature suggests *could* be done.

TABLE 2: **Analysis of Marketing Issues for Church Tourism**

Marketing Issue	Marketing Significance	Implication for Marketing Churches as Tourist Attractions
Expansion of touristic space	A greater number and variety of objects are marked out as potential heritage attractions	Churches can identify and realise their potential as tourist attractions
Portfolio approaches	Attractions can be presented together to create attraction value	Churches can be promoted as part of a portfolio of other attractions to create value *within* touristic space
Product development 1: enhancing attraction value	Product definition and development can be aimed at particular market segments (see below)	Selections and clusters of churches might be packaged together for promotional purposes to create critical mass and enhance their attraction value *as* touristic space in themselves eg as "church trails"
Product development 2: interpretation	Interpretation is part of the process of creating a workable product aimed at particular market segments (see below)	On site and embedded interpretation could be developed and improved to meet the standards normally associated with heritage attractions and to communicate effectively
Market segmentation	Helps to identify groups with shared characteristics so the marketing communications can be targeted more effectively	Groups 'most likely to' visit churches can be targeted through marketing communications and cross marketing with National Trust, English Heritage etc.
Non-visitor segmentation	Segments in the non-visitor category might be susceptible to marketing interventions	Churches might attempt broaden their appeal by providing and enhancing features and services to attract new visitor segments
Customer services	Customers have been led to expect certain standards of service in relation to access and use	More could be done to improve access 'welcome', and engagement with more pre-visit information, signage, parking, accessibility, facilities and information about local services.
Marketing Communications	Communications content and channels are vital in addressing market segments and creating customer value	This affects all of the above in some way and would be essential in addressing the overall marketing development
Organisation	Organisations need to be capable of planning and delivering marketing interventions	Churches either singly or in groups, within their dioceses or in association with local authorities, tourism agencies and operators need to have the skills and resources to make effective marketing interventions

Table 2 is predicated on an assumption that churches are willing to take on the additional role and see value in it. The scale of heritage operations varies enormously and individual churches are, in effect, small organisations run by local parishioners though their parochial church councils within the larger structure of their Church of England diocese. This, in fact, corresponds with heritage tour operations in general, for according to Middleton most heritage attractions are small, often not run on a profit basis, operate independently and typically have no management links with other organisations (Middleton, 1994, 3). Yet, whatever the nature of the operation, a number of organisational and management issues are relevant from an operational point of view and will determine in various ways the type and quality of visitor experience.

Equally relevant is some clarity about whether encouraging tourism is a viable objective within the context of the scale of church tourism organisation and operations. If it is viable then what resources and operational activities need to be applied in order to support effective systems of visitor management? A corollary of this, of course, is whether the organisation actually has either the capacity or capability to conduct itself at the most basic levels of marketing activity.

The starting point for such a debate, as outline above, is an acknowledgment that churches do represent attraction value, albeit as an additional function to their existing role, and that there are particular types of tourists who might respond to this, and that they can be effectively marketed as a tourism product. At this point it is important to recognize that there are other stakeholders whose involvement may be crucial to the success of any church tourism initiative, not least because they can supply resources and competencies that might not exist with the organisations surrounding the church or diocese. These are the local and regional organisations for whom tourism is a key driver of economic growth, the local authorities, regional development agencies and tourist boards. In this respect the actions of regional tourist boards, regional development agencies and local authorities are key, especially in respect of their economic development objectives and their ability to act as 'network managers' bringing together the various stakeholders, including local communities, identifying funding opportunities and facilitating marketing initiatives. Indeed some regional organisations such as the Yorkshire Tourist Board for example, have led initiatives to develop the tourism potential of churches within their jurisdiction and management of an appropriate network has been a key concern (Yorkshire Tourist Board, 2004).

What is presented here is a conventional approach to marketing tourist attractions and the ways in which churches might find a context within that, and a more pro-active position based on effective marketing planning. This, however, is largely beyond the scope of the present research and a matter for further study in the future. For the present study, it is more important to contextualise the marketing activity itself within social and cultural perspectives and analysis. It may be, for example, that the lack of interpretation in churches is already culturally conditioned; in other words, it may not be necessary in cultural terms. The church may already be doing its cultural work in marking out and presenting spaces for the reproduction of existing social values. Paradoxically, however, it is possible to identify a well established cultural momentum behind the representation of churches as touristic space. It is necessary, therefore, to place the development of churches as tourist attractions with an historical context in order to examine the cultural dynamics that have contributed to contemporary representational practices.

Historical context

Churches have frequently been the subject of popular guide books and gazetteers that point out for the enthusiast the various features of the building, the architectural styles associated with particular periods and the noteworthy objects they contain. This inevitably involves processes of selection on the basis of received notions of the 'interest' contained in the building architecturally and historically and thus, why the building should appeal to the visitor. This is the world of misericords and screens, baptismal fonts and squints, and it also represents a long-established movement to attach cultural significance to churches beyond their liturgical function. This, in a sense, is the origin of tourism as additionality and locating the church guide literature historically provides an opportunity to examine the way that ideas of Englishness and national identity have been attached to the church in the countryside as an identity-making discourse. It also demonstrates, as shown below, that at various stages this imagery has been has been revivified at certain times, particularly during the 1930s when there was a renewed interest in the idea of rural England just at the time when towns and cities were making one of their periodic suburban expansions, and during the 1960s and 70s when the churches themselves were increasingly threatened with redundancy. In the present century the link, significantly, is with tourism and the new middle class cultural tourists, and the need for new forms of capital accumulation in a countryside characterised by agricultural decline.

Church visiting in the form of pilgrimage and shrine visiting is an ancient cultural practice (Nolan and Nolan, 1992, 68). In England, the sheer abundance and visibility of churches within their landscape settings has attracted the attention of travellers and antiquarians from the seventeenth century. In his research in the 1980s Hanna (1984) discerned a clear bias in church visiting in favour of rural locations. Thus 48% of the estimated visits in his survey were located in villages compared to 3% in suburbs and only 1% in inner cities. Furthermore, 63% of open churches in the survey were located in rural settings. 'The parish church is almost always the predominant feature in a village, so that it is often seen to its best advantage in this setting' (1984, 24). The country church thus has an iconic quality in the popular consciousness that is fuelled by representations of the English Countryside and history (Burman, 1977, 13). As such it represents a cultural axis of the rural, expressed as landscape and the historical, expressed as a narrative that the visiting of churches in the countryside animates and expresses (Daniels, 1993). Zukin (1991,16) refers to landscape as an 'ensemble of material and social practices and their symbolic representation'. Such ensembles were already being expressed in H.V. Morton's (1927) book, *In Search of England* which ran to twenty five editions between 1927 and the Second World War. Its dust-jacket cover, by the artist A. E. Taylor, sums up the character of the rural-historical axis as a cultural construction (see Figure 2). Here are all the essential components, the winding road, lush green pastures with grazing cows, an ancient bridge across a river, and of course, a medieval parish church nestling in the corner of that other archetype, a country village. This cultural axis was much celebrated in the first half of the twentieth century, especially in music and poetry, such as Houseman's *Shropshire Lad* and the pastoral music of Vaughan Williams, Holst and Others. For such places there is something of what Rojek and Urry note as a 'timelessness' that is expressed in their survival over long periods. This enables them to be appreciated as places apart from the instantaneous *placelessness* of modernity (1997, 15). Here is evidence then of what Daniels and Cosgrove describe as the 'conservative picture of a 'deep' England with its stable layers of historical accretion profoundly threatened by modernisation ... (1988, 8). It is also a deep and abiding cultural construction that symbolises and in itself represents the social structures that created it.

> A landscape is a cultural image, a pictorial way of representing, structuring or symbolising surroundings (Daniels and Cosgrove, 1988, 1)

For Aitcheson et al. (2000) the cultural value of landscape has been revealed by the growth of leisure and tourism as activities which are characteristically located within the countryside. Lanscapes are thus 'regimes of signification in which the production, representation and consumption of landscape are mediated by sites and processes of leisure and tourism' (2000, 4).

Jenkins draws attention to one instance of the way this has influenced contemporary representational practice even in urban settings:

> The picture on the cover of the guidebook to Luton Parish is almost comical. The photographer contrives an angle that gives it a site in rural woodland. In reality, this fine perpendicular church is set in some of the worst urban development that even the Home Counties have to offer, a horror of car parks, one-way systems and hostile shopping centres (Jenkins, 1999, 9).

There can be little doubt then, that the rural church is a significant cultural construct and one that is reproduced and reinforced through the medium of the tourist guide book and gazetteer,. This is especially so in those with a strong visual emphasis, not only in the United Kingdom but also in the United States, and certainly where the link is made with vague notions of spirituality expressed through pastness and tranquillity (Brabbs, 1987; Morgan & Kurzai, 2004).

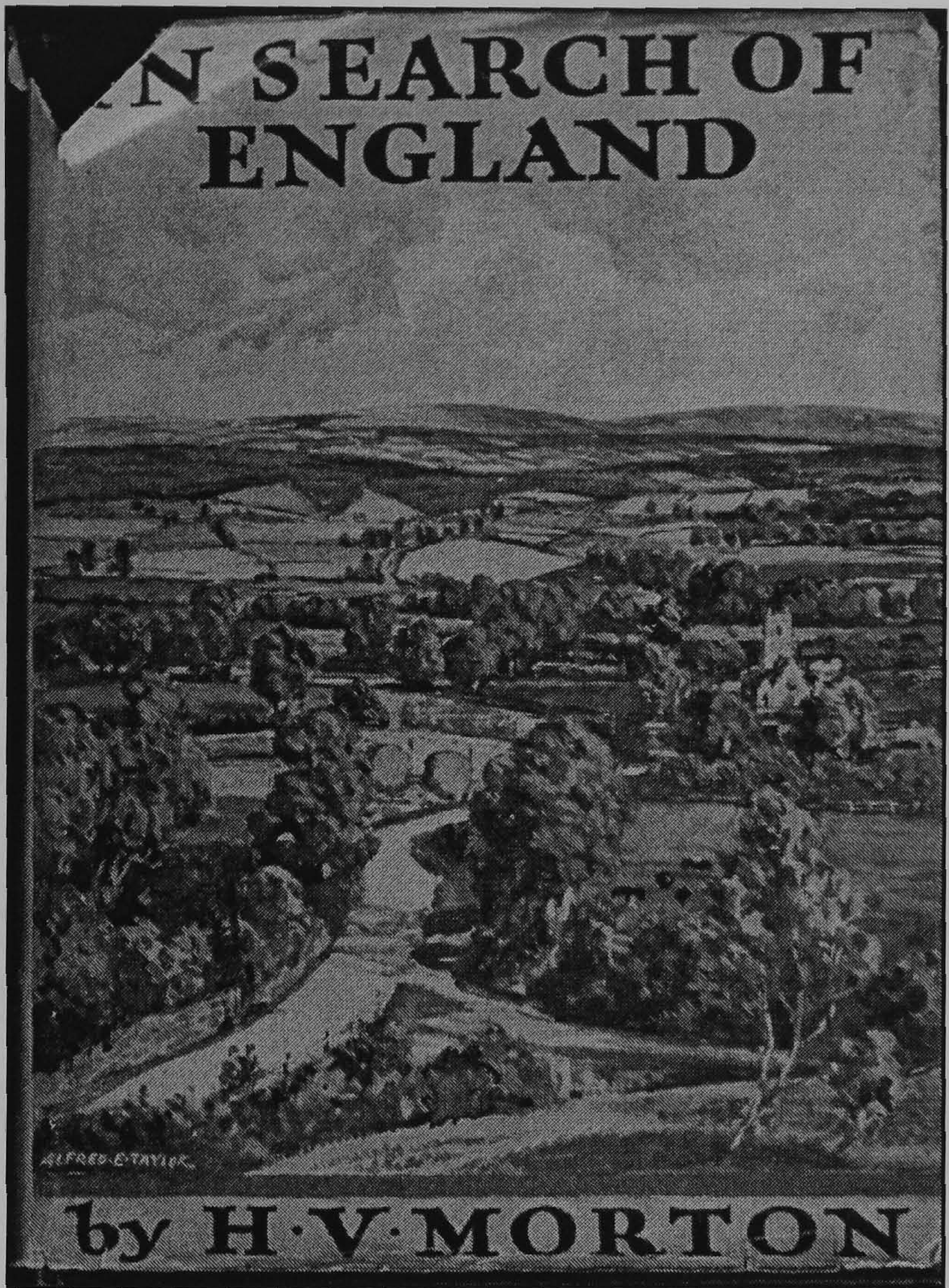

Figure. 2: Dust jacket of H.V. Morton's book, In Search of England, 1927, from a painting by Alfred. E. Taylor.

Lowenthal identifies the 'look of age', an aesthetic quality that has its origins in the renaissance appreciation of classical ruins and the eighteenth and nineteenth century aesthetics of the picturesque, the romantic and the sublime (1985, 148-173). The efforts of Victorian church restorers were thus deprecated even in their own time because they took away the appearance of antiquity that was part of the appeal of medieval churches and replaced them with an imagined period correctness (Clifton Taylor, 1974, 10-17) According to Cox and Ford, 'the thirteenth century was the criterion aimed at, and irreparable damage was done to ancient fabrics all over the country by the efforts of church architects to wipe out the blot of later centuries and restore the fancied characteristics of that period (1935, 66). Churches were thus restored to a point where they were as good as new, but not unfortunately, 'as good as old' (Dellheim, 2004, 100). The belief, according to Lowenthal is that old things should *look* old and carry the patina of age. This not only endows them with the cultural value that has long been placed on the objects of antiquity, but also guarantees their provenance, thus 'the scars of time are the signs of life' (1985, 180), and the latter day signifiers of the 'authentic heritage' that forms the basis of the marketability as such.

A well-known theoretical basis for the aestheciation of ruins in particular, is the eponymous essay by Georg Simmel, for whom ruins were interesting and appealing because they represented, uniquely, the works of humanity as a product of nature and the vitality of opposing forces: construction and destruction; spirit and nature. Here was the source of fascination in things that showed the look of age 'sensing these contradictions within ourselves, we notice the salient beauty of the object in its passage through time' (1959, 259). Ancient buildings, as well as looking the part, stimulate an emotional response in the viewer, a fact not lost on poets and artists as well as early sociologists. Choay (2001) has charted the historical development of the 'ancient monument' as a symbol of pastness, power and malaise, and even, as a an embodiment of humanistic values that seem less relevant in contemporary society. Thus, the tranquillity of the church interior, the setting and the mystery of so many stories untold were enough to stimulate Thomas Gray's imagination, especially where the country churchyard could be held in such contrast to every day life: 'Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife'.

For the tourists of the eighteenth century, the medieval in particular, had a distinct cultural significance and the medieval ruin became part of that ensemble of components in a landscape which according to Gilpin would 'look well in a picture' (cited in Brett, 1996, 40). The activities of aesthetes such as Gilpin at once established medieval remains as being of interest, and modified the sense in which they were appreciated in accordance with contemporary taste. The picturesque thus enshrined a landscape of which medieval relics were an intrinsic, but purely decorative part and objects of the new aesthetic sightseer (Adler, 1989, 22). This process continued until medieval relics became an adornment to the parks surrounding neo-classical country houses, as at Fountains Abbey in Yorkshire, suitably trimmed and dressed for the purpose. The medieval itself was thus 'named' as something distinct and of interest, albeit to a limited number of spectators through what might be termed the antiquarian gaze, which in turn became an important cultural movement.

At the turn of the nineteenth century Thomas Rickman created the basic typology of gothic styles with his *Attempt to Discriminate the Styles of English Architecture, from the Conquest to the Reformation; Preceded by a Sketch of the Grecian and Roman Orders, with Notices of Nearly Five Hundred Buildings* (1817). By 1881 the book had run to seven editions and introduced such terms as 'Early English', 'Decorated' (or 'Middle pointed') and 'Perpendicular' into the lexicon of the architectural historian. In 1825, Britton produced a corpus of detailed elevational drawings of medieval buildings of all types, and his seminal Cathedral Antiquities of England in fourteen volumes was to have a lasting influence on the development of the gothic taste in the nineteenth century. Travel writers of the middle and later nineteenth century extended this interest to a wider public. For example, Walter White wrote his *Month in Yorkshire* in 1858 and was in no doubt about the significance of its medieval architecture to the motivations of the tourist:

> St Patrick's Church at Patrington is an edifice to linger in; an example of beauty in architecture in itself worth a journey to Yorkshire (White, [1858] 1991, 23).

The rapid expansion of the rail network was, of course, the most significant development for tourism at this time and made medieval destinations more accessible. At the same time interest in medieval buildings and remains was sustained by the various county archaeological societies which emerged through the nineteenth century. Their activities would include day trips by train to examine the ancient buildings, archaeological remains, flora and fauna of a particular locale, a domestic version of the great explorations of the Empire. Thus, on Wednesday, May 31st 1882, the members of the Berwickshire Naturalists Club arrived by various means at the town of Haddington:

> Soon after 11 o'clock a start was made for the Garleton Hills, some members driving [in 'waggonettes'] while others remained behind to

> make leisurely acquaintance with the antiquities of the town ... The line of the excursion lay along the public road past the District Lunatic Asylum to the Hopetoun Monument. Then the route was taken along the ridge of the hills eastward to the British camp on the Kae Huegh; from which the members of the party made their way in groups in as direct a line as possible to Haddington (Farquharson, 1882, 3-5).

Then were examined several species of plant life, birds and some ancient churches. The primary motivation at this stage was to name, to analyse and to taxonomise these 'new' objects of expert attention. The first guide books, both learned and popular began to appear at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries. H.B. McCall's *Richmondshire Churches* (1910) and Fallow's *Memorials of Old Yorkshire*, with its detailed description of the County's village churches (1909, 106-164) are typical.

For later writers there was never any doubt as to the attraction value of churches. W.R. Inge in his foreword to the first edition of Cox and Fords' *The Parish Churches of England* extols the 'priceless legacy of beauty' that churches provide in the countryside and hopes that readers will 'feel an enhanced pride and interest in the exquisite buildings erected by their ancestors', and even finds a quote from Wordsworth on the good fortune of Englishmen to have a 'goodly heritage' (Inge, 1935, vii). A decade later Pontefract and Hartley felt able to state that 'Most of us are interested in churches. They are our common heritage ...' (Pontefract and Hartley, Author's Preface, 1936). This is a very clear articulation of the rural-historic cultural axis: a countryside full of stout fellows who could follow the plough, build a church and create a nation bound together in 'common' beliefs about who and what they were, no schisms here between rich and poor, privileged and dispossessed, master and servant. Here in the formulation of a national heritage are some of the essential components of the Authorised Heritage Discourse to which Smith (2006) has drawn attention.

The development of motor transport in the twentieth century went hand in hand with the access created to many medieval sites by public ownership. This coincidence of travel technology and access was a major impetus in the transformation of churches from objects of antiquarian interest to tourist attractions. The church guides published by Methuen and George Allen and Company arrived just in time to support motor touring, but too early for them to be conceived as guides for this purpose. By the 1920s, however Gordon Home was offering the following guidance to tourists:

> In order to make it easy to reach any of the places described, I have indicated the nearest railway station ... This information is of no interest to the motorist, for his means of locomotion will take him right to castle, abbey, village or moor (1922, 21).

A series of books published by Batsford from the 1920s 'relating to Decorative and Fine Art, Architecture, Interior Decoration, Gardens, Social History, the Countryside, Crafts, Construction etc' (Crossley, 1935, appended advertisement) with authors such as Budden (1927), Howard (1936) and Cox and Ford (1935), provided a level of information that effectively constructed the church in the 'common heritage' mode. Budden for example, prefaced his book with the following observations:

> The opening of the country through increased road transport is one of the features in our modern national development. Remote villages that were inaccessible to the majority of people are now visited with ease and comfort and a new field of architectural interest is revealed in our wealth of old parish and collegiate churches, cathedrals and abbeys.
>
> To assist the tourist in his rambles round these relics of bygone England, this little volume is written. Its aim is to direct him to the choicest examples, and to translate for him some of the language of the mason and carpenter (Budden, 1927, Preface).

Again 'our wealth ...' is the key feature of this discourse. It is not clear, however, how and when it became 'ours'. The climax of all this activity was the forty-one County Guides of Arthur Mee, Published by Hodder and Stoughton from the 1930s to the early 1970s and published as a series entitled 'The King's England'. Now the object of collectors, these books are characterised by their jingoism and grandiloquence. For example, the preface of Yorkshire East Riding Edition is introduced with the title: 'The County Too Great for Words', which does not stop the author from expending a great many of them on hyperbole:

> Every Yorkshire boy will tell you that Yorkshire has an acre for every letter in the Bible, and some over, and the traveller who sets out to explore it is not surprised, for its vast spaces seem to have no end (Mee, 1941, 1).

Churches are described as the centre pieces of each village with wonderful spires 'soaring above the roofs', and 'sturdy embattled' towers (1941, 154, 201). This is treasure indeed, and what is more, it belongs to 'us' the newly motorised tourists, the youth hostellers and those like H. V. Morton who went *in search of England*.

The later twentieth century saw a continuation of interest in country churches, as car ownership became ever more extensive and the countryside itself developed as a tourism destination (Glyptis, 1991; Aitcheson, et al., 2000). Illustrated guides and more scholarly accounts of churches multiplied, finding a culmination in the work of Nikolaus Pevsner, whose popular and encyclopaedic survey of the buildings of England, county by county is unique. Other accounts have a more explicitly aesthetic intent with a 'churches as art' movement expressed in the work of Clifton Taylor (1974) and latterly Jenkins (1999). These contain echoes of the picturesque in which churches are perceived as essential elements of the English rural scene, a theme which features in many guides, and certainly those under the editorship of John Betjemen (1968). Most of these contain self-conscious attempts to select the best examples, on the basis of 'atmosphere and aesthetic merit' (Betjeman, 1968, 15). There have also been accounts of specific features within churches presented as worthy of the visitor's attention, such as Bond's detailed volumes on screens and galleries, stalls, misericords and fonts (Bond, 1985). Latterly, more county guides to churches have been produced, such as Mortlock and Roberts' three volume 'popular' guide to the churches of Norfolk:

> More books on Norfolk churches? Yes. But this series, we believe, is the first which combines a straightforward pocket guide to every 'living' medieval church in the area covered; with a substantial reference back up in encyclopaedic form to host of questions and queries which may tease the church visitor (Mortlock and Roberts, 1985, vi).

It is clearly the tourist as much as the specialist that is being addressed here, a trend further demonstrated by a host of pictorial guides, with an emphasis on the visual and photographic centrality of touristic activity (Urry, 1995, 176). Barker's 'Churches of the Wolds' (1982), with its distinctly *unpocketable* dimensions and text interspersed with large photographs is typical. Such books (together with leaflets and brochures), are now found in tourist information centres and often contain homilies on the pleasures of church tourism as well as the obligatory map, gazetteer and glossary:

> As John Betjemen said, church crawling is the greatest of pleasures. He understood the anticipation of a church tower glimpsed between tall trees, or an elegant spire in a distant landscape. He knew the pleasure of opening an ancient door for the first time, of the smell of old wood and dusty hymn books and the atmosphere of a building that has been a place of worship for hundreds or even thousands of years (Lees, 1998).

The 'elegant spire in the distant landscape' is the active semiotic here, enough to recall instantly the entire plethora of rural-historic imagery: here are those stout fellows again. Nicholson's *Guide to English Churches* was published in association with the English Tourist Board in 1984 with a foreword by the then

Archbishop of Canterbury that mentions both the attraction to visitors from abroad and those 'on pilgrimage in their own country' (Vayne, 1984, Foreword). The main distinction of this book, which largely follows the pattern of its numerous predecessors is the involvement of the English Tourist Board and the emergence of their *representation of space* in terms of churches as touristic assets, albeit on the usual selective basis. In the early 1980s an attempt was made, for the first time, to research and evaluate church tourism based on fieldwork carried out by the English Tourist Board (Hanna, 1984). This 'snapshot' survey was then tracked in subsequent surveys published in the English Heritage Monitor annually (see for example, English Tourism Council, 2000). Hanna's survey and subsequent editions of the English Heritage Monitor suggest, however, a very patchy kind of development, with well known 'honey pot' sites such as Bolton Abbey, Tewkesbury Abbey and Holy Island, St Mary the Virgin, all of which are parish churches, dominating the statistics.

Binney and Burman provided the first recognition that tourism might be a factor in the long term care of churches in the late 1970s (1977). Nowadays it is almost common place for the redundant capital of industry to be repackaged as a visitor attraction, whether it is a steel works, a coal mine or even a power station, but in 1977 there was a certain novelty to the idea that tourism might provide an additional purpose for churches that had long since failed to engage the community with their liturgical function. In his introduction to Binney and Burman's (1977) book, Strong provides unequivocal support for the idea of treating churches in a different way:

> We need to develop for a wider public our approach to churches as expressions of past human beings, everyone's ancestors over the centuries (Strong, 1977, 8).

This a theme to which Strong has recently returned, this time in a history of country churches, once again emphasising the rural and historic, but this time tinged with melancholy and a sense of loss as the buildings themselves slip from use into redundancy (Strong, 2007). Yet again, the commonality of the heritage represented by churches is stressed. Churches are somehow 'everyone's', unlike the country house with its elite connotations, or the castle, even more symbolic of the nation's real distribution of power. A heritage that belongs to everyone and still encodes and represents key social structural dynamics is clearly a powerful cultural tool, and one that is supported by the aestheticising impulse of the guidebook or the 'coffee table' tome such as *England's Thousand Best Churches* by Simon Jenkins (1999). Here 'the best' are duly described and photographed as worthy objects of the aesthetic tourist.

In recent years there have been accelerated attempts to represent churches as marketable heritage tourism assets. These efforts, on the part of the Church and local authorities are surveyed in chapters 4-7. Theoretically, they can be seen as part of the expansion of touristic space, to which reference has already been made, and are related to the significance of rural tourism in both economic and cultural terms (Aitcheson, 2000; Hall et al., 2004). Rural tourism occupies a cultural space that is very familiar: the historicised and aestheticised sense of rurality from which are constructed hegemonic and essentially idealised notions of the countryside and, ultimately, the nation. Rural tourism therefore provides another, or perhaps an 'other' route to the cultural and identity work of idealised pasts that can be found in the countryside, and the role of churches in this construction is, I will argue, of key significance.

That there is a history and a cultural momentum behind the development of church tourism is clear from the discussion above, although it is also clear that the processes of representation are incomplete and apparently very selective. They also take place in the context of other cultural formulations, such as the primary function of churches in religious practice and the social and cultural construction of an authorised version of heritage that lends weight to representational practices, but which also supports an essentially hegemonic agenda. The issue now is to establish the nature of these representational practices in context: local authorities, development agencies and the partnerships they spawn, the governing structures of the Church of England, and tourism operators.

Conclusion

From the literature and research surveyed above it is apparent that tourism is organised within a complex network of representational practices involving a variety of agencies and the responses, at various levels, of tourists themselves. At the heart of this are processes of social and cultural construction that create the meaning systems, signs and signifiers of touristic space. These spatial practices can be both authoritative and transformative, and condition, as Lefebvre would have it, the way that space is conceived, understood and ultimately lived. This *production of space* is manifested in the representational practices associated with the transformation and definition of places for various purposes including tourism. Such practices include marketing, marketing communications and interpretation, and a series of associated activities including product development, income generation, promotional activity and the provision of access and services. Together these can be seen, and in deed manipulated, to create an *ensemble effect* which effectively defines places in the global economy and reproduces the meanings associated with them.

Churches, however, have traditionally been passive in relation to the development of touristic space, but once absorbed within the sphere of marketing they are susceptible to the same understandings, interventions and processes as any other tourism product or service: These include:

- product development and the creation of *workable products* from the available cultural capital, which may involve single buildings, trails or the representation of an agreeable selection in a specific locale, and also forms of interpretation that construct meaning and significance;
- an understanding that effective interpretation is instrumental in the construction of those workable products;
- the generation of income streams from visitors paying the price of admission in the form of a donation (which already exists in most churches and the sale of merchandise;

- the production of printed or web-based guide material that indicates locations, routes and access issues, and ensures that the church is open to visitors;
- the production of effective promotional material for distribution via the internet or in tourist information centres that draws attention to the selected churches and *marks* them as attractions;
- concern with quality of experience in the churches themselves so that objects and structures are properly interpreted and that visitors feel welcome and that their presence as tourists is appropriate;
- an understanding that for the Church in general, and for individual churches in particular, these are additional functions to which they may or may not feel equipped to respond

Beyond the marketing sphere there is, however, a far more significant issue for this study, which is the deconstruction of these representations and their analysis and interpretation as cultural phenomena. There is, for example, an overarching cultural context in which churches both in general and in particular might be seen to contribute to hegemonic constructions of the national past and they may even achieve this with their traditional passive voice. These constructions rely on the spatial imagery of the church in the countryside to the extent that the country church is almost a cultural artefact in itself. It is supported as such by a variety of cultural productions of which tourism is the latest manifestation.

The framework of analysis is therefore based on understandings of heritage drawn from the theoretical movements explored in Chapter 1 and, additionally, concepts of representational practice drawn from an emerging literature that is located within social science perspectives on tourism. From Lefebvre and Meethan's formulations of representational practice to new the forms of touristic consumption identified by Urry (1990) and Munt (1994), it might be inferred that churches may be developing as attractions because of changes in spatial practices that reflect social and economic restructurings that are taking place on a global scale. Thus, churches may find their additional purpose and value as objects of heritage within an emerging service-based tourist economy.

The creation of *workable products* within this framework is the role of the various agencies possessing the kind of definitional authority that can project an object or place into touristic space. Thus, we might expect to see the inclusion of churches within the attraction portfolio of a destination to the extent that they are subject to these new representations of space. On the ground, MacCannell (1999) has offered a schema through which churches might be differentiated according to the extent of this representation. This is expressed through the concept of sight sacrilisation, where churches as tourist attractions are represented in terms of the relationship between the sights themselves, markers or signifiers of the sight's touristic significance and the activities of tourists in relation to both of these.

From Gunn, Leiper and Lew are derived notions of the attraction in context and integrated with other attractions and services. Churches may thus be represented as single attractions, grouped together in 'trails', or 'packaged' with other heritage attractions. They may also be represented within a wider attraction complex involving tourist services and a supporting infrastructure such as hospitality services, transport and organised tours. This provides opportunities to explore, empirically, approaches to the study of specific places, as suggested by Robb (1998), Kim et al. (2000) and Grant et al. (2002), all of whom support the notion that churches as attractions must be seen within an overall context that emphasises the relationship of the attraction to its surroundings and other attributes of place.

Perspectives on tourists themselves underpin the concern that marketing activity in the heritage sector, and for churches in particular, must focus on the congruity between workable products and tourist motivations. The latter are diverse, and the market is correspondingly segmented, and the kind of cultural tourist who would take a close interest in churches would seem to be something of a rare species. Nonetheless, the re-ordering of space that has occurred in the post-industrial period has created the conditions in which touristic space has expanded, and has come to include a broader range of what constitutes cultural capital which could include churches. An analysis of the relationship between marketing and interpretation emphasises the significance of both as representational practices within the context described above. This potential is underlined when their historic significance as attractions is analysed. There is thus a historical momentum behind the development of churches as touristic space, and the social cultural space they occupy helps to provide an understanding of how, and indeed why, churches might be significant as, and within tourist destinations.

Two major themes emerge from the literature on tourism, the first concerns the definition of touristic space, the way this has been re-ordered by global economic forces and the implications of the definitional authority on the way that churches might be represented as tourist attractions. The second concerns the response of churches to the opportunities posed by conventional touristic development and the modalities of organised marketing activities. The two are linked through the notion of marketing as a key representational practice and there is a further linkage between marketing and the objects of heritage tourism through the process of interpretation.

The response of churches is conditioned by their traditionally passive response to tourism and the extent to which they may wish to engage with the additional role that it represents. There is also the broader cultural context that is of interest here. Churches may well be passive in touristic terms, but they have always had a voice in representing identity and authoritative accounts of the national past. It may be then, that tourism is simply providing another route to the cultural work that churches do within the spectrum of an authorised heritage discourse.

The purpose of this chapter has been to interpret tourism theory in general, and theories of attraction and motivation in particular, in order to identify the means by which places may become significant for tourists, and to explore the processes by which this is achieved, in a social and cultural context. The theoretical framework, as it is presented above, provides a basis for the development of appropriate research methodologies, and it is these to which attention is focused in the following chapter.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this Chapter is to outline a methodology for the investigation of the representational and spatial practices associated with church tourism, and their social and cultural context. This implied the need for a well-formulated research strategy that was sensitive to the changes that had taken place in church tourism, and the perceptions and understandings of those who were involved. It also reflects the concerns expressed by Hollinshead (2004c) that decisions about research strategy should be made at a reflective 'methodological level' rather than a technical 'methods level'. This enables such decisions to pay due attention to matters of ontology, such as the influence and effect of 'being, meaning and identity' and the epistemological concern with how things are known. The object for Hollinshead is thus to present methodological strategies that address the need for:

> reality-aware and context–appropriate 'human instrument' understandings to uncover 'the real cultural world' of the individual realm or the societal spectrum being explored (2004c, 85).

Whilst 'the real cultural world' may seem an elusive concept and a somewhat optimistic goal for any research, there is a need for ontological awareness here, not least because of the unfolding nature of the events and phenomena under study, but also because of the emergent and interpretive nature of the research. It also pays due regard to Hammersley's critique of ethnographic practices in that to distinguish them from commonsense descriptions they should be explicit and coherent in application and rigorous in analysis (1992, 28). The research strategy is thus characterised by four fundamental principles:

- **It is ontologically grounded in an awareness of the paradigmatic debates that have characterised thinking in qualitative research and its recent ascendancy over established positivistic approaches.**

- **It is largely interpretative in that it seeks to generate understandings of particular situations and interactions between individuals and relevant agencies. It is not, therefore, intended to be *generalisable* in the sense that this would be understood within a positivist paradigm.**

- **It is intended that the findings should be situationally meaningful and layered, so that understanding develops and emerges from the researcher's interaction with the operational environment of church tourism. The findings are presented, therefore, as provisional and emergent.**

- **The study requires is faceted and requires a strategy that involves 'crystallisation' as a more recent three dimensional approach to the use of multiple methods. The term 'bricolage' is also used to describe both the content and the process of data collection. These terms are discussed in more detail below.**

These four principles form the methodological framework of the present study and have informed the design of the research strategy. First, however, there is a need to explore some of the ontological and paradigmatic issues surrounding the use of the qualitative and interpretive approaches used in this study.

Paradigmatic issues and the search for a strategy

The significance of paradigmatic debates in tourism research has been highlighted by Hollinshead in an analysis of the need for a careful and considered approach to qualitative research within what he describes as 'post-positivistic, critical theory and constructivist thought' (2004b, 64). This implies the need for an awareness of the ontological basis of qualitative research. The discussion presented here is therefore intended to provide an adumbration of the *knowledge basis* of the research strategy. In doing so it touches on the key debates in qualitative enquiry: ontological and epistemological issues, paradigmatic debates and the influence of these on the validity and generalisability of the findings gained from such research. These debates refer in large measure to the conceptual frameworks within which qualitative research is carried out: constructivism, interpretivism, realism and hermeneutics (Schwandt, 2000). Much of the debate has taken place within a context of ontological scepticism and about relativism, what is knowable from the modalities of research, and what separates this knowledge from simple or commonplace narratives (Velody and Williams, 1998, 3).

A question that emerges from this debate is the ontological basis for qualitative research when several perspectives have in common a perception that knowledge emerges from social discourses that contain the values, ideologies, institutional knowledge and other socially constructed understandings, rather than claims to traditional scientifically mediated objective knowledge. Thus one version is concerned with ultra-sceptical views of reality based on a perception of its endless relativism and another is concerned to identify the unobstructed realities or residua that are left after constructivist analysis has done its work (Lovie and Lovie, 1998). As to what constitutes knowledge after all this, there is, unsurprisingly, no definitive account, but there are at least two useful perspectives that help to create some methodological structures amid these shifting conceptual sands. Manning (1998) presents two differing approaches to constructionist accounts of research practice and the qualities of interpretation they offer. The first is 'procedural', which allows for the production of detailed accounts of naturally occurring events and their underlying structures and processes; and the second is reflexive, and admits the significance of the research process itself in influencing and constructing outcomes on the basis of an emergent and self consciously literary style of construction (1998, 163).

These approaches each have their supporters and detractors and it is not a debate I wish to engage here other than to reflect on the influences that shaped the research strategy employed in the present study. Whilst the present research refers to real structures and processes with causes, effects and outcomes that are both knowable through experience, observation and interpretation there is also an acknowledgement that knowable realities are the outcome of socially constructed meanings. There is also an awareness, however, that research involves decisions, judgements and understandings that emerge from the researchers relationship with the researched and with the methodological concerns of the inquiry. With this in mind, it is perhaps time to turn to those paradigmatic-methodological considerations.

Such considerations relate strongly to, and influence, concepts of research strategy. The need for well thought out strategic approaches in tourism research was first advanced by Dann et al. (1988). Having acknowledged the origins of tourism studies in the social sciences and the various disciplines within it, they argued that scholars 'should now be not only better acquainted with the subject but also the different ways in which it can be conceived and investigated' (1988, 3). This point is amplified by Tribe in his discussion of tourism as a field rather than a distinct discipline and in which he particularly advocates the use of interpretive methods (2004, 56). Walle had previously suggested a broadening of research strategies to encompass the multiplicity of research questions generated in tourism studies, where both 'demand', 'supply' and contextual issues need to be addressed. With this in mind he has suggested a 'toolkit' approach that owes something to contemporary marketing research (1997, 526), but which is essentially strategic in nature in that techniques are selected that are appropriate to the demands of the particular research context.

Such approaches correspond with conventional wisdom in social science that supports the use of a methodological 'mix', involving secondary research, based on a range of documentary sources, and primary research using both quantitative and qualitative techniques. As a way bringing a range of methods into a single piece of research *data triangulation* was originally conceived by Campbell and Fiske (1959) in the context of behavioural psychology, and was later elaborated by Denzin (1989). It is now widely applied in the social sciences, not least for the way that a variety of methods can be applied to the same research problem without producing data of competing veracity or contradiction (Jick, 1979; Burgess, 1984). Its use in tourism research has been discussed more recently by Oppermann (2000) and Decrop (1999), who employ the concepts of corroboration and validation to support the credibility of qualitative techniques in the face of criticisms that it lacks what might once have been termed 'scientific rigour'. Layers of data are thus created with the intention that each should add value and credibility to the overall analysis and understanding of the issues concerned. More recent approaches which express such strategies within a three dimensional model of 'crystallisation' will be addressed below.

There is an inevitable link here, however, with paradigmatic debates to which Hollinshead has referred within the context of ontological thought in tourism studies (2004b, 63-101), and within the broader context of research in the social sciences (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994, 99-117). It is important, for example, that the freedom allowed by qualitative methods is balanced by rigour in their application. This has been a source of concern in the social sciences for some time (Hammersley, 1992), and has exacerbated the well-attested tension between quantitative and qualitatively-oriented research (Walle, 1997). These approaches have been represented as two opposed camps, the one producing 'hard' statistically valid data, the other producing more insightful interpretations and depth of understanding (Hammersley, 1996). The origins of this debate have been dated to the early 1960s by Oakley (2000), and Zelditch was one of the first to ask what a researcher was to do in pursuit of the data that was both *deep* and that also satisfied the more statistical dimensions of 'scientific' enquiry (1962, 566).

A solution based on a third paradigm 'interpretivism' offers a 'principled deployment of both quantitative and qualitative methods in a complementary fashion' (Roberts, 2002, 11). According to Cupchik (2001), this complementarity can be resolved into a framework of contructivist realism that acknowledges the need for a positivistic, quantitative approach to the measurement of objects and essences and a constructivist and essentially qualitative approach to processes, contexts and understanding. In placing the emphasis on situation and purpose within the researcher's own research strategy, rather than the adoption of paradigmatic positions the researcher is enabled to return to the point where methods can be selected and justified in relation to the research question rather than rival epistemologies.

Patton (2002) has claimed that the value of qualitative techniques depends to a large extent on the skills, sensitivities and integrity of those involved, but there are ways of minimizing the risk that the freedom and flexibility of qualitative methods might otherwise imply. The first requirement in this respect is to ensure that qualitative techniques address clearly the objectives of the research as a whole and that they remain relevant to these throughout (Morton-Williams, 1985, 27). This implies a certain amount of standardization in the design of the research and its instruments, that according to Jones (1985, 47) renders it impossible to achieve the total lack of structure that some ethnographers have sought in order to accurately reflect a respondent's position. This structure will relate to the range of issues under consideration, which in turn are derived from the research question or questions. The subject, in other words, is not approached with a blank sheet of paper, on which to record any fortuitously relevant data, but rather an *agenda* of issues is pursued in a way that reflects the objectives of the research, and which also acts as a guide for the interaction that the interview represents. The same principle applies to observation. The researcher is not looking for *anything*, but for *something*. Attitudes, opinions and understandings are thus related to the research question allowing patterns of response to be identified at the analysis stage, along with responses that support or contradict the responses of others and findings from other methods and techniques.

The issue of validity within a qualitative methodology is, however, a legacy of positivism and therefore, according some authors, it has limited epistemological value within a paradigm that is essentially constructivist, and views knowledge as contingent on human perception and social interaction (Lincoln and Guba, 1989, 37; Blaikie, 1991). The positivist tradition as summarised by Kim is that:

> Validity means that findings are accurate statements about the world as it is without the researcher's involvement, and reliability holds that the proof of such truths are able to be replicated (2003, 12).

Validity must therefore either be accommodated, modified or replaced by a concept that engenders confidence in the findings without crossing the paradigm boundary into positivism and all that thus entailed in terms of methodological practice. The problem, according to Schwandt is what he describes as 'the lack of critical purchase' in constructivist and interpretive research resulting from an uncritical integration of the perceptions of the researcher with the position of the actors in the research setting (1994, 130). Kincheloe (2003) observes, however, from his own experience in educational research that the problem of validity is as much a problem for positivism as it is for the constructivist researcher, because it reveals the limitations of the positivist approach and the need for a wider perspective:

> The notion of research adequacy needs to be extended. Scientific research is not adequate simply because it is valid and reliable in the positivistic sense. Adequacy must take into account moral considerations, purposes and ethical premises ... Educational research must expose the pretensions and deceptions that make unjust educational structures seem benevolent (2003, 213).

On this basis and on the basis of research approaches derived from constructivism and feminist research practices he challenges many of the assumptions contained within the positivist paradigm and in particular its spurious separation of subject and object, its claims to external validity and the Cartesian obsession with the limitations of what can be known from observation. In connecting the 'knower with the known' within the perspective outlined by feminist scholars he claims that the 'everyday and the mundane', the 'silences and the absences' can be used to open up new areas of inquiry and insight situated in lived experience and the researcher's relationship with these (2003, 52-53).

For Kincheloe and others, therefore, the debate has moved on from simply defending constructivism, interpretivism and qualitative methodologies from the scorn of 'hard-nosed' positivists. They have felt free to take the initiative by casting doubt not only on positivist epistemology, but also its adequacy in addressing research questions that require situational understandings in sociopolitical contexts. Positivism, for Kincheloe, simply does not answer all the questions, and by synthesising a 'critical system of meaning' from a 'variety of alternative epistemologies' a new relationship can be established between the researcher and researched that offers 'insight' as the primary research goal rather than internal or external validity (2003, 66, 170). This point is amplified by Hollinshead, although he is at pains to point out that qualitative enquiry can also be poorly handled, and advises that qualitative research demands a longer and more reflective approach than some have been prepared to adopt (2004b, 67-68). With this in mind he advocates 'more situationally sympathetic and more contextually pertinent thinking about the issues of *being*, *seeing*, *experiencing*, *knowing* and *becoming* which they wish to explore' (2004b, 68, emphasis in original).

For Lincoln and Guba (1989) the solution is found in a reframing of the process of research so that starting from an initial issue concern it unfolds through a dialectical and iterative series of analyzed, reanalyzed, negotiated and provisional positions until a construction of reality is reached. This position is summarised in Denzin and Lincoln's subsequent statement:

> Knowledge accumulates only in a relative sense through the formation of ever more informed and sophisticated constructions via the hermeneutical/dialectical process, as varying constrictions are brought into juxtaposition. One important mechanism for the transfer of knowledge from ones setting to another is the provision of vicarious experience, often supplied by case study reports (1994, 114)

The object is thus a 'credible' or 'believable' level of understanding rather than one that necessarily appeals to positivistic notions of validity. Flick offered the further view that triangulation is an alternative to the search for validity and that it generates 'different versions of the phenomenon that is studies' which can then be compared and contrasted (1992, 194). More recently, however, the concept of triangulation has been brought into three dimensions by Richardson (2000) who proposes that from a postmodern perspective of mixed-genre texts the 'crystal' should now be the central metaphor in the operation of qualitative research and that the term 'crystallization' should replace triangulation as a concept of research practice:

> Crystals are prisms that reflect externalities and refract within themselves, creating different colours, patterns and arrays, casting off in different directions (2000, 934).

The concept was elaborated by Janesick (2000), and by Denzin and Lincoln (2000) in the same volume, so that what was previously considered to be a two dimensional process that was essentially in the service of the positivist paradigm, by providing it with additional methodological strength, could now be recast as a responsive and reflexive model that was consonant with emerging interests in inter-textuality, 'messy' texts and 'the display of multiple, refracted realities simultaeneously' (2000, 6).

A related issue to emerge from this debate is that of generalisability or the extent to which any findings from the particular can be used to make inferences about larger populations, which is one of the key principles of traditional positivistic enquiry. The received wisdom is that smaller scale interpretive studies cannot be used as a basis for generalisation. In sociology this has been framed in a debate about whether interpretivist approaches can ever be considered 'scientific' in the traditional sense of the term or whether they should be considered for merits other than those that are drawn from a positivist tradition. For Hammersley, this began with a somewhat pessimistic argument that ethnography was in crisis, because it had developed as a response to positivism rather than as a method in itself (1992, 11-12). Part of that response, however, was an antirealist perspective that jeopardised rational discourse. Another way clearly had to be found which he ultimately described as 'subtle realism' that must in some way transcend the very label of ethnography and find a new way to integrate methodological ideas and methods into a framework that is more appropriate for the social sciences (1992, 201-203). What this framework might be was left for others to consider, but there were clearly problems for ethnography and interpretive research that had to be addressed almost as a prelude to any study (Hollinshead, 2004c, 83-84).

Williams has also attempted to find a way through a methodological maze, where to turn one way is to remain in thrall to positivism and to turn the other is to place the researcher in jeopardy of meaningless relativism and commonplace description that cannot be generalised. He has thus expressed the interpretivist dilemma as being that 'the self reflective, autonomous nature of human subjects produces states which are not amenable to the explanation-prediction schema of natural science' (2002, 125).

Clearly this creates problems where the findings from interpretive research are intended to contribute to broader understandings and not just to act as particularistic 'snapshots', or paintings, to use Williams' metaphor, with a consequentially limited predictive or explanatory scope. If these broader understandings are also required to contribute debates about policy or the allocation of resources, then the debate becomes even keener (Rist, 1998). The question that emerges, then, is the extent to which findings can be generalised from particularistic interpretivist studies. It seems to be the Denzin (1983), Guba and Lincoln (1982) triumvirate that have created the impression that interpretation and generalisation are incompatible and that references to the latter should be expunged from interpretive accounts. For Williams, however, this is based on too narrow a definition of generalisability and one that most sociology, and much of the natural sciences, could never aspire to in the first place (2002, 130).

Williams goes on to posit a range of meanings for generalisation and proposes a version he describes as *moderatum* generalisations where aspects of the case under study 'can be seen to be instances of a broader recognisable set of features' (Williams, 2002, 131). These in turn can be detected and constructed within a complex inter-textual reality which is nonetheless characterised by a level of cultural consistency that denies the endless relativism of some forms of interpretive study. Cultural consistency, Williams argues, can be found with sufficient regularity in such things as shared normative values, language and physical contexts to the extent that some reciprocity between researcher and researched and the case in question and a wider reality might be allowed (2002, 137). None of this denies the caution with which generalisability in this research context should be approached, but it does, at least, provide a basis of legitimacy and perhaps a way forward.

As it happens, no extravagant claims are made for the research presented here. The strategy is formulated on the basis of the discussions outlined above and with due respect to the ontological perspectives and debates that have been adumbrated. Thus, if 'hard' generalisability is not sought from the in-depth interviews that were carried out, or the observational work, then some moderatum conclusions might be reached and offered provisionally in the light of the methods adopted here and the possibilities implied by future research in this area.

According to Hollinshead (2004b), a return to Weber's concept of *verstehen* or *understanding* applied to research practice that seeks to differentiate lived experiences and worldview realities offers a strategic benchmark for researchers. Thus, the operating worldviews of the various actors, agencies and 'populations' provide the *verstehen* researcher with opportunities for immersion within the multiple realities and the necessarily complex social interactions that represent the range of publics involved in the development of tourism (2004b, 68-69). Thus equipped, it is time to address the movement from strategy to method.

In concluding these discussions of paradigmatic and strategic considerations as a basis for the present study it is worth exploring another concept that helps to bring some clarity to the research process and to encompass the breadth and diversity of the debate outlined above. Denzin and Lincoln (2000, 3) have employed the term *bricoleur,* first advanced by Levi Strauss (1966), to describe the location of the researcher within the context of their 'broadly conceived' enquiry, observing, interpreting and attempting to make sense of phenomena in terms of the spectrum of meanings that the various actors involve bring to the situation. The bricoleur is thus a collector, and the brocolage a collection of empirical materials that could include tests, interviews, observations, historical materials and personal experience, each of which makes the world visible in a different way like the facets of the metaphorical crystal to which reference has already been made.

Other metaphors are useful here. According to Levi-Strauss (1966), the bricoleur is a 'Jack of all trades' or an intellectual do-it-yourself person. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) refer to the piecing together of representations, like a quilt or a montage, so that a picture is created from this blending and overlapping of empirical impressions and materials that is, in effect, something new, something constructed from everything that the bricoleur can bring to it. The impression is also one of simultaneous expression rather than sequential impressions so that 'the viewer puts the sequences together into a meaningful emotional whole, as if, in a glance, all at once' (2000, 4). Stitching, slicing and splicing these multiple realities together is a process that is reflective of and responsive to the messy texts that form the source material and the crystallisation that expresses the methodological modalities of qualitative, interpretive research.

As well as being competent in a wide variety of such modalities and a having these animated by an intensive self reflection and introspection the researcher as bricoleur might also follow Kincheloe's (2001) advice and seek a range of interpretive paradigms, philosophical approaches and disciplinary perspectives that bring with them the possibility of a new dimension of analysis and subsequent thought. Since then, Kincheloe has extensively developed Denzin and Lincolns concept of bricolage, describing at as

> the process of getting down to the nuts and bolts of multidisciplinary research. Ethnography, textual analysis, semiotics, hermeneutics, psychoabalysis, phenomenology, historiography, discourse analysis, literary analysis, aesthetic criticism and theatrical and dramatic ways of observing and making meaning constitute the methodological bricolage (2005, 323).

Thus for Kincheloe, the bricolage is more than a collection of empirical impressions gained from an eclectic range in an act of knowledge creation, it also a coherent process of seeing and locating the researcher's work within the complex web of reality and in relation to the similar acts of other researchers. For the present study with all its multi-faceted realities, Kincheloe offers the following strategic manifesto:

> The task of the brocoleur is to attack this complexity, uncovering the invisible artefacts of power and culture and documenting the nature of their influence not only on their own scholarship but also scholarship in general. In this process, bricoleurs act on the concept

> that theory is not an explanation of nature – it is more an explanation of our relation to nature (2005, 324)

From a methodological perspective Kincheloe implies that this requires the researcher to employ a range of devices from those at hand, rather than to blithely accept and employ standard and 'correct' techniques from the universal pantheon of conventional research. At the centre of this process is the researcher rather than a naïvely constructed reality. The researcher as active agent constructs, reconstructs, negotiates, readjusts their understanding in their complex interactions with the objects of their inquiry. Thus what we assert that we know, and how we come to know it, become key forms of consciousness for the researcher and in itself a source of the rigour that bricoleur necessarily brings to the complexities that lie behind the assumptions and constructions of everyday life (2005, 327).

For Kincheloe this 'complexity principle' equips the researcher-as-bricoleur with a fundamentally more sophisticated understanding of the social world and its constituent structures. For a start, the identification of social structures is always modulated by the problematics of contingency and context and open, therefore, to new or adjusted readings in the light of the researcher's activity: 'digging', 'scratching', analysing from different angles and employing a range of interpretive strategies in examining the various aspects of the object or situation under study (2005, 330). Kincheloe's contribution, then, is to empower the researcher, more than anything, with the privilege of their own position and closeness to the object of research, a position that enables new and novel insights on strategy and method.

Strategy and method

Kayrooz and Trevitt (2004) have linked the closeness of researcher and research advocated by Kincheloe with the concept of crystallization to synthesise an approach to fieldwork strategies where researchers immerse themselves in their fieldwork and interviews to derive an intuitive crystallization of meaning that compared and contrasted with existing literature, previous research and related data. This reflects a number of the concerns expressed above about the sensitivity of the researcher to the research situation in 'allowing' understandings and meanings to emerge from the researcher's contact with it. Hollinshead expresses this in terms of a 'human instrument' form of understanding that is painstakingly embedded, iterative and sustained (2004c, 84).

The more exploratory, discursive and interpretive approach of qualitative techniques based on ontological concerns thus permits responsiveness to the personal understandings of the various participants and flexibility on the part of the researcher in seeking to understand and interpret these perspectives (Silverman, 2004). Such approaches are also intended to address 'the real cultural world' as Hollinshead refers to it, 'of the local groups and other involved populations which are concerned in the given study locale' (Hollinshead, 2004b, 64). He makes the further point that the 'circumspection and rigour' that such an approach implies is important in the field of tourism because of its impact and influence on a wide variety of interest groups. For this reason Hollinshead urges all tourism researchers to be 'tuned in to such matters of reflective ontological concerns (2004b, 64). For Hollinshead this is not simply a matter of choosing the right technique so as to make a methods-level judgement about appropriateness, but rather, a matter of 'applied philosophical awareness and applied critical literacy' (2004b, 64). The exploration of meaning and perception, the construction of attitudes and opinions and the gaining of insights into the growth and development of church tourism are therefore the main thrusts of the primary research strategy in the present study, together with an attempt to privilege the understandings and perceptions of those directly involved in the processes to which the research questions refer. Research on visitors, clergy, diocesan officials, local authority officers, was therefore based on their first hand accounts of what has taken place, and the relationship of this to the theoretical frameworks explored in Chapters 1 and 2.

The qualitative focus of the present study also addresses a criticism of tourism research that it has been over-reliant on quantitative techniques: numbers and flows of tourists and the attempt to measure motivations and attitudes in quantitative survey questionnaires (Riley, 1996; Walle, 1997; Decrop, 1999). The linkages between academic enquiry in tourism and the expectations of policy makers and destination managers are probably the main reason for this, especially where 'hard data' is required in order to justify policy and investment decisions (Herbert, et al., 1989; Prentice, 1993; Lee, 1998; Swarbrooke, 1999). Dicks makes the same point in relation to the pressure from local authorities to capitalise on their heritage assets for the purposes of economic regeneration in a market driven and competitive atmosphere, and the need to minimise investment risks in the process of business planning and securing funding from government sponsored agencies (2000, 55, 63 – 67). Dann and Phillips (2001), however, have noted a movement away from quantitative to qualitative approaches in tourism research as the field has matured. The use of quantitative data in this research has been minimal and largely confined to basic frequencies and ratios and correlations drawn from documentary sources, the case study areas and specific churches (see below). For example, the numbers of visitors in particular churches sampled as revealed by visitor books, or the number of parishes within a diocese that have web sites with guidebook type information, the purpose being to elucidate the characteristics associated with touristic representation.

The methodology also addresses the 'top-down' approach of much traditional tourism theory, especially in respect of touristic behaviour and attraction formation. A neglect of the subjective participant is apparent in much of this work, an issue to which reference was made in Chapters 1 and 2 and which led Dicks to conclude that 'The ways in which the past assumes a shape and a form in visitors' minds during ... different kinds of encounters has not, so far, received adequate empirical investigation' (2000, 69). It was important, therefore, that the present research acknowledged and employed a methodology that drew from the experience of tourists as well as the accounts of operators, policy makers and other practitioners.

Other strategic concerns are implied by this approach. The first is the emphasis on grounded and emerging theory, the second is what this implies in terms of sampling techniques and, particularly, the use of theoretical sampling within a specific contextual framework. Glaser and Strauss (1967) are credited with bringing together the disparate strands of qualitative research in a way that expresses its response to situational issues and its potential for generating new concepts and theories from those issues (Strauss, 1987, 7). It proceeds, therefore, in steps and stages, inductively moving towards understanding and theory. Within this context 'purposive', or 'theoretical' sampling, is used to identify groups or individuals that are representative of the population, setting or context that is the object of study (Patton, 2002, 169). This helps to ensure that respondents are selected who are appropriate and representative on the basis of categories that are considered relevant both prior to the commencement of fieldwork and during its process. In this way, respondents can continue to be selected in ways that elucidate emerging or 'working' theory or add new dimensions to it until it is apparent that all of the relevant possibilities and perspectives have been explored, and no new or unexplained issues have emerged (Strauss and Corbin, 1999). The constant modification of working theory together with an emergent approach to research design, also provide opportunities to decide the direction of the research and to explore aspects of the study that have assumed a greater importance as it has progressed (Sarantakos, 1998).

An attempt has been made in this chapter to chart a course from the broadly philosophical influences on research in general and this study in particular, through matters of ontology and the paradigmatic issues and debates that have surrounded qualitative research as it has developed over the last twenty years. Having arrived at and explored the strategic terrain within which this study is located it is time now to begin to focus on the particular range of methods that have been employed here, and to do so, however, always having in mid the *stance* of the research in relation to the theoretical journey that has brought it to this point and a necessarily tentative, reflective and provisional construction of the realities it seeks to adduce. The bricolage may thus be assembled from the following resources.

Documentary sources

The use of documentary sources is considered essential in providing contextual data and a baseline for further research (May, 1997). Cicourel (1964, 142) refers to these as 'historical materials', their function being to help to formulate a hypothetical perspective for the research as a whole, which is why an early phasing in the sequence of research is normally required. The reality, however, is that documents are not always 'historical', and may appear at any time during the research process and impact upon it, especially where the object of research is susceptible to rapid and dynamic change, their principal characteristic being that they have been created for a purpose other than to address the researcher's objectives and information needs. Nor are they the only source of hypothetical invention: previous literature, as discussed above and even impressionistic evidence may serve just as well. The use of documentary sources in the present study is thus part of the process of emerging theory that has informed the research as it has progressed. Its limitations are recognised therefore, but its contribution to the study is apparent from the volume of such material that has appeared on the internet in recent years.

Documentary sources have been identified in relation to the following organisations and individuals as making a contribution to the representation of churches as tourist attractions. The purpose in accessing and employing these resources has been to identify and analyse the extent of church tourism development in England, and to examine the nature of representation by the organisations and individuals concerned. For some of these tourism is the primary aim, whilst for others churches are represented to potential visitors in support of other objectives such as religious mission or genealogy. Documentary material from the following sources has therefore been researched:

- Church and parish organisations;
- Local Authorities;
- Regional and national bodies;

- Independent organisations and charities;
- Tour operators.

It is argued that whilst these sources effectively saturate the representational activities that occur on the internet more could be made in future research of the modalities by which such material is produced, selected and published through that medium. Although this development is still at an early stage, a measure of its significance is the extent to which individual parishes and even interested individuals use it as a means both of textual representation and contact and communication.

One of the most important of these sources has been the internet output of dioceses, local authorities and tourist agencies, such as the regional tourist boards, development agencies, and operators. This material was used to assess the extent to which churches were already represented as touristic space, and for this purpose, 'web presence', or the availability of information on the internet was taken as an indicator. The type of information was as follows:

- The representation of churches for touristic purposes in parish websites;
- Information about Diocesan Tourism Policies and the presence of designated tourism officers;
- Local authority tourism policies that made specific reference to church tourism or specific church tourism initiatives;
- Information from Regional Tourist Boards or Regional Development Agencies;
- Information from operators about guided tours, etc.

The limitation of this approach is that some touristic activity might not be represented on the internet, but this becomes less likely as the latter becomes a prime means of marketing communications and of placing documentation in the public domain. However, a number of important feasibility studies and strategy documents have never been posted on the internet, either because they predate its regular use for this purpose, or because it was felt that the information was of insufficient general interest to be posted in this way. This material was therefore obtained directly from source as hard copy.

Another weakness in this approach is that it has tended to substitute more interrogative techniques such as the in-depth interviewing of key informants, and whilst such interviews have been carried out, perhaps more could have been made of the connections that this documentary research might have facilitated. In future research, therefore, efforts will be made to use internet sources as a first step in collecting a broader range of impressions from people and stakeholders who might provide better insights into representational practices.

One of the most significant web-based sources was the representation of churches in parish websites, the latter a relatively new phenomenon since none existed at the beginning of the research. A focus on these was justified theoretically on the grounds that they acted as 'off-site markers' for churches as attractions (MacCannell, 1999,109-133), and also because they represent, in Lefebvre's terms, a form of representational practice that allows space to be conceived by a governing agency, in this case the Parochial Church Council (PCC). These sites were surveyed in order to establish: 1) the extent of touristic representation on the part of the parishes as opposed to other representational agencies such as local authorities; and 2) the correlates of this representation in terms of other characteristics such as the age of the church and its location. All of the dioceses in England were investigated, and the findings were analysed using a proprietary statistical software package, *Statistical Package for the Social Sciences* (SPSS), Version 12.

Parish websites were accessed through the Church of England's diocesan websites each of which contained a directory of parishes and web links. These were usually constructed by parishioners themselves or by local consultants working on their behalf. This presented a rich source of data on the representation of churches as tourist attractions by their *primary users*, the clergy and parish officials. The sites were highly differentiated in terms of the amount and type of information they contained, and a method was designed to measure the level of touristic representation on each one. This could then be correlated with other characteristics. The following indicators of touristic representation were used:

1) The amount of historical and guide-type information provided: Four categories were thus identified:

High:	over 500 words;
Medium	between 100 and 500 words;
Low:	less than 100 words;
None:	no information about the church that might be of interest to a visitor;

2) the presence or otherwise of links to other attractions in the area, in order to test the extent to which a church was part of a local attraction system as discussed in Chapter 2;

3) the presence of visitor information such as opening times (other than for services) and provision for more distant visitors, such as car parking.

4) the existence or otherwise of a 'virtual engagement' with web visitors through the use of 'virtual tours', or photographs linked to interactive plans;

The characteristics chosen to correlate with these features were:

1) the setting, in terms of an urban or rural context;

2) the age of the church, in terms of five categories:

churches with substantial medieval fabric, (to circa 1500);
renaissance (1500 – 1700);
Georgian (1700-1830);
Victorian (essentially the neo-gothic buildings of the period 1830 – 1900);
Modern (1900 -).

These are the five categories that are immediately apparent from the established literature on the history and architecture of parish churches, and would be clearly represented, for example, in a classic guide such as Pevsner (1997). It is acknowledged, however, that a medieval church may have been altered many times and restored to the point of obliterating much of its original fabric by Victorian and other restorers, but if a church was of medieval foundation and contained medieval fabric, monuments and fixtures it was classified as such for the purpose of the research. 'Modern' churches also vary from neo-gothic styles surviving into the twentieth century through 'arts and crafts', art deco and art nouveau styles to the modernism of the Twentieth Century. Attempts were made therefore to indicate where a modern church had been recorded by other authorities as having particular architectural merit, as indeed, many of them have. The strength of this approach was in the enumeration and evaluation of levels of representational activity and the relationship of these with other characteristics of the church such as its age, location and aesthetic qualities. The weakness of this approach was that it produced a relatively thin layer of data that required elaboration from the collection of other materials and the use of complementary sources.

Local authority websites were examined to establish any differences in representational practices from those of the parishes diocese, and to provide information on the extent to which churches were represented in local and regional tourism strategies. Local authorities in England vary in their commitment to tourism, as it is a non-statutory service provided purely at the discretion of individual authorities. At times of budgetary constraint, therefore, such services tend to be reduced in order to make savings to support more basic services such as housing, social services and education. Nonetheless, as was discussed in Chapter 2, local authorities are key organisations in the representation of touristic space because of their role in economic regeneration and development. This occurs in both rural and urban areas, because tourism is seen as alternative means of capital accumulation where other industries, including agriculture have declined or disappeared. The evidence was drawn from policy statements and strategy documents and from operational initiatives such as web-based guides and tours.

Complementing, and in some cases replacing, the activities of local authorities are the Regional Development Agencies (RDAs). In many areas the RDAs have funded the development of Destination Management Organisations in association with local authorities, and these have largely superseded the tourism functions of the latter, with the added advantage of being able to draw upon European funding. The RDAs have also begun to replace the Regional Tourist Boards so that at the time of writing there is considerable flux in terms of the organisational structures and responsibilities in relation to local tourism development. The advantage in this situation is the large amount of documentary material relating to the development of tourism that has been generated as part of the process, and this has been investigated for evidence of the representation of churches as touristic space.

At a national level tourism has been promoted by *Visitbritain*, the national tourism organisation, which is funded by the Government through the Department of Culture, Media and Sport. The main theme in this organisation's strategy has been to encourage the improvement of quality in tourism services (Department of Culture, Media and Sport, 1999, 19-46; 2004, 19-22), and an emphasis on cultural tourism as a preferred focus for future development (1999, 34-35). Various strategy documents were analysed and references to heritage in general and churches in particular were identified.

Several other organisations have been involved in the representation of churches as touristic space, and documents from them were analysed in terms of their particular approaches and concerns. The most recent and significant of these is the Churches Tourism Association (2004a) which, under the auspices of the Church of England, promotes and encourages church tourism amongst the churches themselves. Also significant is the Open Churches Trust (2004), which provides financial support for churches to remain open. The Churches Conservation Trust (2005) was set up by the Church of England to maintain churches that were no longer used for worship and the Historic Churches Preservation Trust (2005) is a charity set up in 1953 to raise funds and award grants for the preservation of Anglican churches.

Another organisation that represents churches to visitors is the Genealogical Information Service for the United Kingdom and Ireland, and was set up as a web based resource under the auspices of a charitable trust with the object of providing a virtual reference library for individuals researching their family history. The organisation is run in conjunction with the Family History Society, and depends on volunteers providing information and maintaining the web site. It is of interest from a touristic point of view because it is likely to be one of the primary resources used to find out about family origins and attention will be drawn to the parish church both as a focal point in the location (the possible site of baptisms and marriages) and because it also provides access to 'documentary' sources such as gravestones and the more conventional parish records that date from the mid-sixteenth century.

Each of these organisations has a primary function other than tourism, but each of them encourages tourism to varying degrees in support of their activities. Their approaches were therefore compared and contrasted using documentary sources in order to identify their concept of 'church tourism', and the way that they represented churches as touristic space. The internet has also been used to locate documentary evidence of tour operators who base their programmes wholly or in part on church tourism. The internet has therefore been trawled in order to identify the locations and types of churches that have been brought, operationally, within the sphere of touristic space, and the way this relates to other aspects of attraction systems in the areas concerned.

Visitors books are a much neglected source of documentary evidence, and provide a gross indicator of the level of visitation and therefore of attraction. Visitor books in case study areas were examined primarily as gross indicators of visitation as few of those who visit churches actually sign them. Hanna (1984, 20) reckoned that the ratio of signers to visitors was in the region of 1:4. Samouelle (1996) found a ration of 1:8 in her research and a number of vicars have suggested to me during the course of the research that it is nearer 1:10. The truth may, therefore, lie somewhere between these estimates. It would seem reasonable to assume also, that visitors from further afield are more likely to sign than regular or local visitors. Nonetheless, taken in this context, the visitors' book does provide a basic level of evidence on:

- whether a church is visited;
- the level of visitation, and therefore, attraction, relative to other churches;
- the origins of some of its visitors; and
- their perceptions of the visit.

Visitors' books only provide this level of evidence, however, where churches are open to general visitors and beyond the time allocated for the conduct of services. Only those that were open were therefore included in the survey. This is obviously a weakness in the methodology, but one that was inevitable given the problem of tracking down keys and key holders in the time available for fieldwork.

Documentary sources have obvious and clear limitations. Most were not created to provide data for researchers, and many do not even relate to tourism per se, but to some other primary function such as religious mission or genealogy. The survey of parish websites, for example, was limited by the fact that only a proportion of parishes have them and that this varied substantially from one diocese to another. It seems clear, however, that the existence of a website for a parish church was not primarily a function of its touristic ambitions, but rather, its religious mission. Its development was also found to be largely contingent upon the motivation of clergy and members of the congregation, the technological ability of those concerned, and the level of support from the diocese. Once a website exists, then the tourism potential of the church may become an issue, not least, because the website provides an opportunity for this to occur if key participants are thus motivated. This means that the proportion of parishes with websites cannot in itself be taken as an indicator of touristic representation. Rather, it is the use to which the website is subsequently put in representing the church as touristic space that is significant. It is here that the differentiated practices of touristic representation are found, and it is these that are the object of this research. It is also important to recognise that at this stage of the research design there was no assumption that one type of church or setting would be more susceptible than others to this kind of representation. Rather, it would be an object of the research to identify such correlations.

One of the most valuable aspects of strategic and policy documents from various organisations is that in expressing their aspirations and unrealised goals, they reveal something of their representational practices. This is especially the case where they ascribe touristic value to hitherto unregarded objects and space and the marketing of these within their attractions portfolio. These aims may conflict with the views of parishes and local people who may have no desire to see tourists in their midst and the potential for representational dissonance is then apparent.

From the point of view of a research strategy, the limitations of documentary sources emphasise the importance of using complementary methods and an emerging bricolage of sources and empirical materials. Research questions are thus addressed, but only partially; evidence is adduced, but it requires further elucidation. However, a valuable baseline of data and a platform for the use of other methods is established.

In-depth interviews with key informants

The use of key informants is also well established in social research, anthropology and policy studies, especially in the fields of health and education (Burgess, 1984, 73-75: Gilchrist and Williams, 1999; Lavis et al., 2002), and it has found favour as a method for elucidating deeper meanings about social situations and the meanings attached to them by the actors involved (Rubin and Rubin, 1995). Fielding (2001, 136) has expressed the benefits of such methods in terms of flexibility and depth of meaning so that interviewers can follow their own path in reciprocity with responses of the interviewee, but within the guidelines of a pre-designed loose agenda of issues. The exploratory nature of such approaches has also been emphasised by Oppenheim, who has advocated their use as a precursor to more focused approaches (1992, 51).

The significance of key informants lies in their special knowledge of the issue in question, their experience or their particular involvement in it. Burgess makes the point that informants are selected on a completely different basis to respondents in a sample survey and that selection should be based on the value of their triangulated knowledge and experience:

> in field research informants are selected for their knowledge of a particular setting which may complement the researcher's observations and point towards further investigation that needs to be done in order to understand social settings, social structures and social processes (1984, 75).

In order to address these requirements, semi-structured interviews were designed around a 'loose agenda' of relevant topics derived from the research question and the existing literature (see Appendix 1). The interviews were carried out with key informants involved with church tourism and church tourism projects and individuals who are active in one way or another in the case study areas, such as clergy and local authority tourism officers. The respondents thus selected are represented in Table 3, below, in terms of methods selection, the purpose of selection, the difficulties encountered and the weaknesses of the selection:

Table 3: Key informants – methods and problems of selection

Key informant Group	No. of resps.	Purpose of Selection	Difficulties encountered	Weakness of selection
Clergy	12	To identify the perspectives and understandings of parish priests in relation to the supposed opportunities and threats posed by the addition of tourism to their responsibilities; whether they had adopted these and how this shaped the representational practices of the church at this level.	Main problem was the identification of clergy with sufficient experience to be able to comment on the issues involved and to develop, therefore, a viable sample who were prepared to comment in the three very different areas	The sample was inevitably skewed by the availability and willingness of clergy to be interviewed in depth on a subject that was obviously very marginal for most of them
Local authority tourism officials	6	To identify the perspectives and understandings of local authority officers responsible for tourism development and to compare and contrast these with the views of clergy and to understand how these influenced official representations of church tourism	For many local authority tourism officials this was dealt with as one among many initiatives and few at this stage had sufficient experience to be able to comment in depth on the issues. This required a network of contacts to be constructed	Relatively small numbers due problems of identifying and selecting relevant and experienced respondents
Diocesan officials	6	To identify the perspectives and understandings of Diocesan officials and to compare and contrast these with the views of local clergy and local authority officers – to identify any differences in representational practices with the church as a whole and between the church and other agencies	Very few diocese had any direct experience of church tourism at this stage and much of the work carried out was concentrated in a small number of areas. Individuals were relatively easy to identify but few in number.	Research tended to be led by the presence and availability of a small number of key informants – the experience of whom tended to be dictated by the novelty of their experience rather than established practice.
Regional agencies	2	To identify the perspectives and understandings of key informants in regional agencies and to map these onto representational practices at local levels of governance both within the church and local authorities	The experience of regional bodies in tourism was only just emerging at this time, although it is now formative and influential. The problems was to identify individuals who had actually gained some experience in this area	Because of the problems of identifying experienced individuals the research tended to be led by the availability and accessibility of such key informants
Operators	2	The objective here was to identify the operational consequences of the practices of the other key informants identified and interviewed in the research – what did it amount to, in effect, for those individuals who were operationalising church tourism, and how did their work relate to the representational practices of the others?	Very few operators in this field and those that were well known were successfully accessed. Very much the 'big' personalities in church tourism and obvious stakeholders. Still very few of them around	Very few people involved, so very few people to find and to speak to, findings therefore limited and constrained by a lack of breadth of response.

Most of these were located in case study areas, but not exclusively so, as important initiatives were developed in some local authority areas, diocese and regions and these were considered worthy of close examination for what they might reveal in relation to the research questions (see Appendix 5).

This approach was in line with the purposive sampling technique to which reference was made earlier and which subject to a process of transparent reflexivity alluded to by Patton (2002). Thus it is important that failures be accounted for, choices made, opportunities and advantages identified and constraints adequately addressed. With members of the clergy for example, the case study areas provided the basic sample as was suggested above, but this was enhanced by contacts that were facilitated through contact with Diocesan Officials (especially in Norwich and Lincoln) and through the vicars' own networks of colleagues and friends. Thus the *Social Responsibility Officer* at the Diocese of Norwich was able to indicate which clergy in the case study area had been actively engaged in promoting church tourism and through her immediate colleagues some insight was gained into who might also be approached for an alternative perspective.

A similar approach was attempted in the Cotswolds through the Diocese of Gloucester, but the lack of interest in tourism at Diocesan level militated against gaining access to a suitable sample or network of clergy. In this case the clergy were accessed directly though on a fairly exploratory basis with a number of 'false starts' before one individual was able to provide some useful contacts that were subsequently followed up and which yielded a range of opinions about the value of church tourism in the area.

In the Bradford Diocese the Tourism Officer was only able to provide limited contacts and none of these in the urban area. This created a limitation in the research in the Bradford case study that was exacerbated by the fact that churches in the urban area were, without exception, locked when visited. The failure to address this problem through the network of clergy was problematic throughout the study, until a chance meeting with a former vicar opened up some more contacts, but in over all terms the purposive frameworks was not ideally applied in this context and much had to be made of limited access opportunities. In a sense, this in itself was a 'result' reflecting, as Hollinshead has put it, the various lived experiences, world view realities and complex social interactions that represent the publics involved in tourism development (2004b, 68-69).

Local authority and diocesan officials were approached directly and no problems were encountered in finding or accessing them. They tended to be associated with the case study areas, but not exclusively so and in three cases they were approached because they had been instrumental in an initiative that was directly related to the study. A weakness of this approach was the that both diocesan officers and local government officials were often marginal in respect of the policies of their organisations as a whole and their views presented an often very partial account of what was going on even within their own diocese or local authority. If this weakness had been anticipated the sample size would have been increased and possibly doubled especially outside the case study areas. In conclusion it has to be acknowledged that the 'official' account was not fully saturated by the process of inquiry in this study and would merit further research. Regional agencies were accessed through personal knowledge and contact and posed no problems although the use of documents at this level tended to militate against further interviews. Future research would benefit from the use of documents as a first step in accessing more of such high-level personalities. Tourism operators were very difficult to identify and locate but the two that were accessed were very active and were vocal in expressing their views.

Taken altogether the strength of the in-depth interviews was in the breadth of organisational contexts and experiences that they represented, but an identifiable weakness is that more depth in numbers, particularly amongst officials would have helped in achieving full saturation of the official account. Future research should avoid a situation where documentary sources are effectively substituting the value and immediacy of the verbal account.

The rational for the topics that formed the basis of the unstructured interviews was similar for all the key informants on the 'supply' side, with variations according to their particular role and perspective. The main themes thus established were as follows:

- purpose and motivations for the touristic representation of churches;
- churches as heritage;
- churches as and within touristic space;
- representational practices;
- relationship/conflict or dissonance within representational and spatial practices;
- organisational motives for representing churches as tourist attractions;
- organisational structures and processes that enable representation to take place, and relationships with other organisations;
- tourism as an additional role for churches;
- the ascribed characteristics of church tourists;
- churches as contested spaces;
- the cultural significance of churches.

Conversational interviews were built around these themes, and although respondents were guided through them they were also given the opportunity to develop and express their own themes. This was done in accordance with the research strategy outlined above, and aimed to encourage a 'bottom-up', and evolving approach to the development of theory. Interviews were carried out in the offices of the individuals concerned, or often in churches where clergy were involved. Approximately half of the interviews were taped and later transcribed into notes. On the remaining occasions notes were taken during the interviews to reflect the preference of the respondents. Field notes and transcriptions were later analysed in relation to the major themes outlined above and any that emerged during the course of the interviews. All the interviewees were guaranteed anonymity, not because the information they disclosed was particularly sensitive, but rather because it helped to create an atmosphere within which the respondents could speak freely.

A similar methodological approach was carried out with visitors in churches, and although these interviews were again conversational and informal in nature, they were steered towards the key themes of the research: their perceptions of the church as touristic space, their feelings about how this was represented to them, if indeed it was, their purpose and motivations in visiting the church and their response to the experience. The interview schedule used for this purpose is provided in Appendix 2.

Thirty interviews were carried out in the case study areas – ten in each area and in well-visited churches (this was after spending several fruitless days in other churches waiting for a single visitor to arrive). The weakness of this approach was that research effort was focused on the 'star attractions' rather than the generality of churches in each area, but for practical purposes there was no other way of being sure to access visitors in sufficient numbers to make it worthwhile from a fieldwork point of view.

The implementation of a new church tourism initiative in the North Yorkshire area did, however, provide an opportunity to conduct interviews where the awareness and facilitation of church tourism had been consciously and deliberately enhanced by printed media, web-based materials and the opening of churches to visitors. It was decided, therefore, to take advantage of this development and another thirty interviews were conducted in the area concerned. All the interviews took place in either Easter of Summer holiday periods in order to maximise the possibility of finding visitors in remote churches. Attempts to conduct the research in the October 'half term' holiday period in Norfolk had previously failed because of the lack of respondents at this time.

It is important to note at this stage that no attempt is being made to generalise from these methods. Rather, the intention is to provide a deeply layered and *thickly described*, to use Geertz's (1984) term (employed also by Hollinshead, 2004b, 69), to address a particular social nexus where actions of various sorts are evolving, interacting and producing change that can be detected in the various accounts of the people interviewed.

Observation

Observation is an important and revealing method that employs both qualitative and quantitative methods. It has received some criticism in recent years, however, largely as a result of a somewhat overstated critique by Angosino and Mays de Perez, in Denzin and Lincoln's *Handbook* (2000). These authors are so keen to associate observation with the dubious 'hegemony of positivistic epistemology' (2000, 696) and to do so from the comfortable standpoint (and assumptive hegemony) of postmodernism, that they clearly feel confident about demolishing a method that has stood the tests of time and intense scholarship in twenty four pages of laboured argument.

More balanced accounts are available, however, from Adler and Adler (1994) in an earlier edition of the *Handbook,* and in a closely argued account of applied health research by Tjora (2007). For these authors observation is valuable as an alternate source of data that can elaborate or enhance other methods such as interviews or as a means of cross-checking or triangulating against these other means. Its principal value here, therefore, lies in its role as one of a range of other methods within the context of methodological bricolage that is assembled for the purposes of this study, and its particular quality is in recording incidents, actions and behaviours as they occur, and without the need for direct interaction with respondents. Recording the actual behaviour of individuals and groups in a given situation is also a useful check on other sources of information about their activity, such as that which is elicited through semi-structured interviews. The use of observation need not be confined to the behaviour of people, however. Feldman (1994) has demonstrated that it can be a useful way of analysing and interpreting the environment, physical surroundings and the social contexts for that activity by developing strategies based on ethnomethodology, semiotics, dramaturgical analysis in respect of the interactions that can be observed in given situations. This approach has reflected the work of Merriam (1988) in identifying the frequency and durations of actors' activities, and has been elaborated by Corbetta (2003, 246) who has emphasised the importance of interaction with the physical setting and interactions between participants.

Observation can be both structured, in which both qualitative and quantitative data can be derived, and unstructured, which like semi-structured interviews, helps to generate deeper understandings and meanings (Kirk & Miller, 1985, 9-10). Observation can also be either obtrusive or non-obtrusive depending on whether the observer is involved in the activities concerned or establishes some degree of distance from it (Turnock & Gibson, 2001). The great weakness of observation is its reliability and the extent to which findings can be reliably generalized and applied to other actors and situations. There is also a problem with potential bias in that there is always a risk that researchers will pay particular attention and undue emphasis to the behaviours and phenomena that they are looking for and which support their hypothetical positions. In other words, it has to be acknowledged that the observed phenomena may be socially constructed by the observer and observed, with both the researcher's and subjects' behaviour altered by the research event (Kirk & Miller, 1985, 41-58).

Published research in the area of heritage interpretation reflects a methodological approach that has been termed 'behavioural mapping' by environmental psychologists (Breakwell, et al., eds., 2000; Lee, 1998, 208). It has also been used by researchers concerned with the effectiveness of interpretation (Beer, 1987; Ham and Shew, 1979; Landay and Bridge, 1981; Lee, 1998). The main concern in these studies was that visitors were simply not doing what they were meant to do when confronted by an exhibit or display, in the sense that they were not spending the time needed to read text that was part of a museum display or watching video presentations in their entirety. Whilst this was not the object of the present research, the circumstances being somewhat different, it is clear that the engagement between the visitor and the material that is purposely or otherwise on display is central to the idea of the church as a heritage attraction. A concept that has been employed in the evaluation of interpretative techniques has been that of 'attraction and holding' (Lee, 1998, 206), which is based on ideas originally advanced by Melton (1972 cited Lee 1998, 206) concerning the 'drawing power' of a museum object and its capacity for holding the attention of the viewer. The object of such research was to understand more clearly the process of engagement between the viewer and the object on display and to examine the role of interpretation in facilitating and reinforcing that engagement.

In terms of research practice these ideas generated a sampling technique based on tracking visitors around a site or checking on activity at prescribed time intervals. The latter method was not considered appropriate in the context of the present research because of the sporadic and episodic nature of visitor arrivals. Structured sampling would thus be at risk of missing important visitor events. A simplified version of Lee's (1998) methodology for unobtrusively tracking visitors was thus designed (see Appendix 4).

In addressing these issues and in keeping with the ontological and paradigmatic concerns outlined at the beginning of the chapter observation was approached with an awareness of its limitations but for its value in adding something to the overall bricolage of findings. There is no claim to generalisability based on observation alone. In contrast, self-consciousness reflection and reflexivity were expressed through awareness and sensitivity to the development of my own impressions of what was happening and the motives of those observed (Tjora, 2006, 441). I also consciously employed Tjora's reflexive approach, in this case constructing a narrative of why people were acting in the way they did by relating this to the cultural constructs apparent from the literature on heritage and tourism. This approach was complemented by attempts at quantifying various forms of behaviour, the actors involved and the time spent on various activities and by describing and interpreting behaviour to construct understandings of what was taking place and to explain the actions of those observed (Tjora, 2006, 441-444). An example of this was the identification of a category of behaviour characterised and interpreted as 'wandering and gazing' to which reference will be made in subsequent chapters.

The observation was unobtrusive, and involved taking notes discreetly during the period of the visit. At these times I presented myself simply as another visitor, and apart from the odd exchange of civilities when the situation demanded I engaged in no other interaction with the visitors. Thus the various movements and actions of visitors around the setting were noted, and from these notes an attempt was made to interpret the actions and behaviour of the visitors in accordance with the approaches described above. Observation was conducted for one weekday at one of the more regularly visited churches in each of the case study areas (see below for further information on the selection of these areas). Before the observation was carried out churches were 'pre-visited' or piloted for observation and by this means I was able to identify those churches that were relatively 'popular' with visitors and to differentiate and select churches for observation on this basis. In order to avoid services weekdays and Saturdays were used, with the latter not significantly greater numbers of visitors although on one occasion the research had to be abandoned because of a wedding. In total, therefore, observation was carried out over three days and generated notes on twenty three visits involving individuals or groups.

Observation was also used to evaluate visitor management modalities at churches in the case study areas and the extent to which visitors were catered for, or even expected in the first place. To enable a consistent approach to all of these issues research instruments were designed on a pro forma or checklist basis so that the same types of phenomena could be investigated at each location. No attempt was made to translate qualitative evaluations into numerical scores as it was decided that these would introduce an unnecessary risk of inconsistency and dubious validity. Instead, a purely narrative approach was employed that sustained a sufficient level of comparative analysis without spurious measurement. Five churches in each of the case study locations, of different sizes and in different locations were analysed in this way, with written notes and photographs supporting the process of observation. The churches were chosen to broadly representative of the types, sizes and local characteristics of churches in each of the areas. Some of these, especially in North Norfolk and the Cotswolds were well off the beaten track, whilst others were clearly well visited. Goodey's (1999) 'Health Check List for Heritage Sites' was adapted for this purpose. Examples of the documents that were used as a basis for note-taking are provided in Appendix 3.

Case studies

The value of case studies is in the opportunity they provide to describe, analyze and interpret a single instance or a small number of instances of the same phenomenon and to capture as much information as possible that is relevant to it (Stake, 1995 and 2000). In its simplest form a case study is merely an illustrative example of the issue under consideration. More complex approaches would examine a number of cases to gain insights of structures and processes in a range of circumstances and would examine changes in these over a period of time (Yin, 1994). The objective, therefore, is a comprehensive understanding of the circumstances and characteristics of a particular situation, with reference to local documentary material, the physical context and the attitudes and motives of the individuals who were active within it (Gomm et al., 2000).

As with other methods employed in this study the question of generalisability has to be addressed. To some extent this is a misunderstanding of the purpose of case study research, which is to describe *that particular case* in detail. It is therefore intentionally particularistic and contextual and *generalisability* is not normally an issue for the researcher involved in studying a specific situation. It may, however, be problematic where there is an imperative to apply the findings elsewhere, and in this situation it is a matter of judgment whether or not the case being described is sufficiently representative (Guba and Lincoln, 1998).

Three destination areas were chosen for the present study in order to explore variations in the development and representation of church tourism within them. They were selected according to the following criteria:

1. that they should be sufficiently distinct from one another to provide meaningful data on broad range of activities and operating conditions;

2. that they should offer different types of resource in terms of the nature and quality of the church buildings which exist in each location;

3. that the physical environment should be different in each location so that the totality of the tourist experience differs accordingly;

4. that tourism itself should exist at different levels of development and that the contribution to this of churches as cultural capital might also vary;

5. that there might be variations in the extent to which churches are represented *as* and *within* touristic space.

The use of these criteria resulted in the following selection of case study areas:

North Norfolk;
The Cotswolds;
The Archdeaconry of Bradford.

Clearly, other selections might have served the purposes equally or better and with hindsight that might well have been the case in respect of the Bradford area. The strengths of the selection were found, however, in the diversity of the response to tourism that was encountered, and the opportunities, therefore, to compare and contrast different experiences and attitudes on the part of the main actors. Some of the strengths and weaknesses of the case study selection are discussed in more detail below.

These areas were then used as a basis for investigating individual churches, the views of clergy, diocesan officials, local authority officers and observations and interviews with church visitors. The geographical locations of these three areas are shown in Figure 3, below.

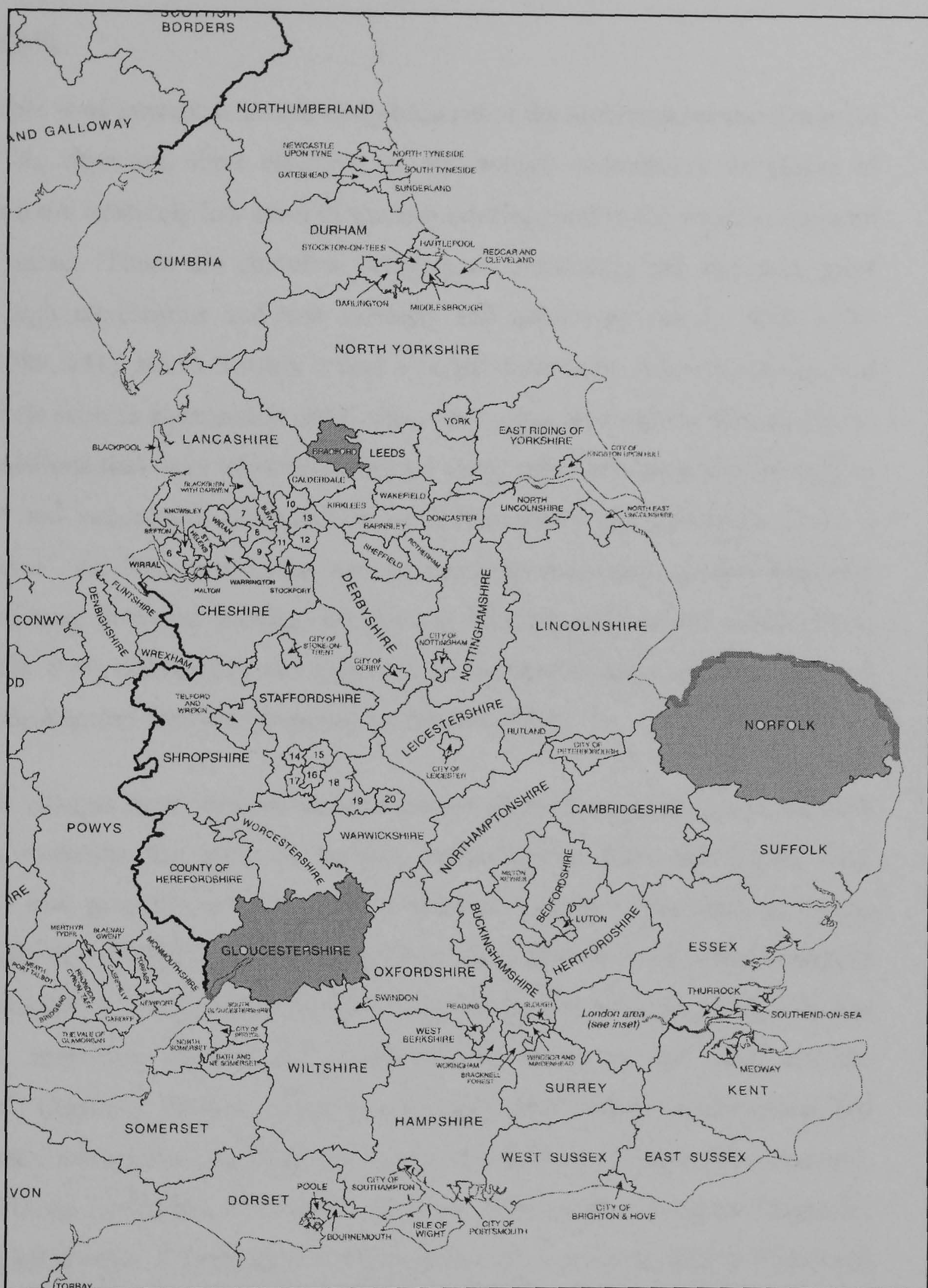

Figure 3: Geographical Locations of the Case Study Areas (Ordnance Survey)

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North Norfolk

North Norfolk is of interest as a case study because of the architectural and historical quality of its churches, their effective (if not actual) redundancy as places of worship, and the relatively low level of tourism development in the rural, as opposed to coastal areas: 'There are churches everywhere, beckoning the eye with great windows, high clerestories and rich carvings and beckoning the ear with bells' (Jenkins, 1999, 441). North Norfolk is thus a varied destination. There are traditional coastal resorts such as Hunstanton and Cromer struggling to maintain their profile in market conditions that have adversely affected many other coastal resorts: a lack of investment and consequent deterioration of infrastructure and attraction value, a 'down-market', old-fashioned image and desertion by traditional market segments which have long favoured package holidays in sunnier parts of the world (Urry, 1990, 16-39). Such destinations can generally be ascribed to the stagnation phase of the classic destination lifecycle proposed by Butler (1980).

The coastal villages have attracted another market segment in recent years, the area in general entering the orbit of holiday home-buyers from the South East, weekenders and generally more up-market tourists. Coastal towns such as Wells, Cley-next-the-Sea, Blakeney and Stiffkey have been affected by this trend together with an interest in local cuisine (mainly sea food) and wildlife (Holkham has become an important location for bird-watchers). Close to the coast are the 'Burnhams': Burnham Market, which is associated with holiday home ownership and up-market restaurants, Burnham Overy, Burnham Overy Staithe (boat owners), Burnham Thorpe (birthplace of Nelson), Burnham Norton and Burnham Deepdale, all within 5 kilometres of each other. Further inland there are a number of traditional market towns such as Holt, Swaffham and Aylsham, all of which attract tourists. Deeper still into the countryside are the villages themselves, often with large and important churches, such as Salle and Walsingham, which are very much on the church tourist's itinerary, and other places with large medieval churches and diminished communities. These areas whilst conforming with the imagery of traditional rurality are still, essentially, agricultural, and touristic representation and operations are embryonic where they exist at all, despite the efforts of local authorities to stimulate rural tourism.

Commonly, large medieval parish churches are attached to villages that have diminished or disappeared entirely. Sometimes the church has been left isolated, as the focus of settlement has shifted in response to changes in agricultural activity or the actions of landowners. At Roughton the large church occupies an elevated site that is now at least half a kilometre from the present village centre. The churches at nearby Tunstead, Suffield and Colby are even further away, while at Worstead an enormous medieval church dominates a small quiet village. The decline of the primary functionality of the churches in Norfolk poses problems of its own, not least in respect of maintenance and the necessary fundraising. At the same time the buildings have become part of the landscape. Indeed the sheer profusion of them, often little more than a kilometre or two apart creates the kind of place image that underpins the attraction value of an area. Arguably, the additional tourism function of these churches has superseded the religious meanings attached to them. It follows from this that tourism might be expected to constitute an additional if not substituting role for churches in Norfolk if they are to survive in their present form in the longer term. At the moment, however, most of them appear to play passive witness to the development of rural tourism around them. A map of the area is provided below (see fig. 4).

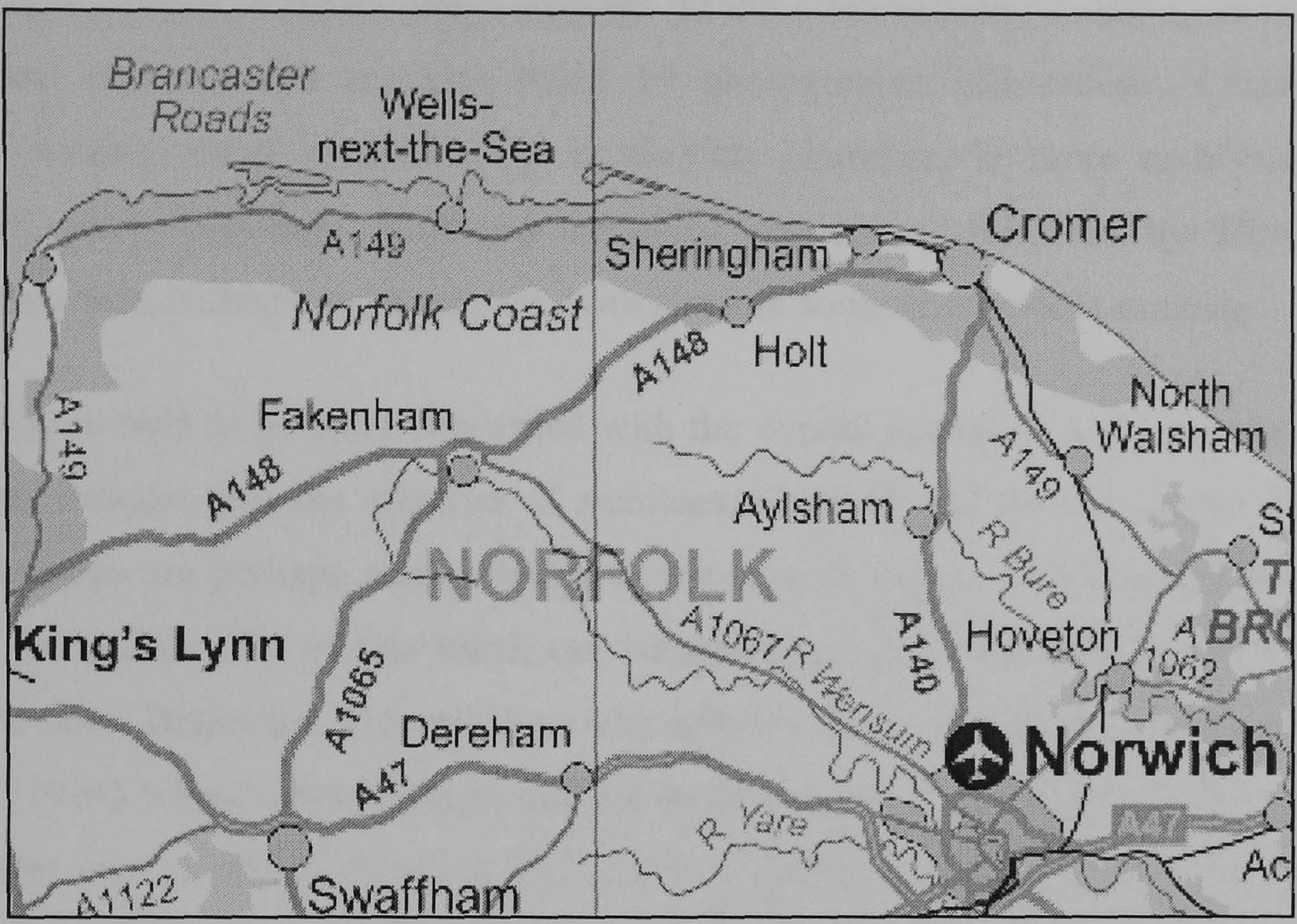

Figure 4: North Norfolk Case Study Area (Ordnance Survey)
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To satisfy the second of the case study selection criteria the nature and quality of Norfolk churches in terms of cultural capital is also addressed. Their contribution to landscape has already been mentioned, but what else have they been said to offer in terms of cultural experience and heritage value?

Budden (1927) provides an early touristic survey of churches with a concluding chapter dealing in gazetteer format with the 'best examples of architecture'. Within this he makes reference to 38 Norfolk churches, a figure exceeded only by Suffolk and exceeding Lincolnshire with 28 references: 'A great number of these Norfolk churches may be placed in the first rank, and hundreds are of the most intense interest' (1927, 132). Howard (1936), provides another relatively early authority. In his County Index, 'Brief Index of Illustration and Chief Text References, Arranged Under Counties' (1936, 92), and referring to both text and photographs in his book, he lists 14 Churches in Norfolk, a figure only exceeded by Lincolnshire, with 17. However, within this index are 37 specific references, 19 of which are to photographic plates, a figure which exceeds all the other counties listed apart from Yorkshire, under which are also listed 19 photographic illustrations. Crossley (1941), writing about craftsmanship in English churches, is more ambivalent, however, with Yorkshire receiving the most references, followed by Devon, Gloucestershire, Suffolk and Somerset, with Norfolk somewhat middle-ranking.

Later writers tend to be more concerned with the overall appeal of a church and its landscape context than the minutiae of architectural detail, and for this reason their considerations are perhaps more relevant to the present study. The Collins Guides (1968) are emblematic of this trend, not surprisingly since they were edited by a poet, Sir John Betjeman. This position was echoed, if not uncritically, by Clifton-Taylor (1974) whose criteria for evaluation were based on 'first-hand impact', and as he goes on, '... which churches, I have asked myself, are the best worth visiting from the *artistic standpoint*?' (original emphasis). On this basis he was able to 'reject' churches of architectural merit because they were 'aesthetically deficient' (1974, 236). He was also able to say of Norfolk, that its Marshland area alone (between King's Lynn and Wisbech), '... contains memorable churches in greater numbers than any other part of England of a comparable extent' (1974, 249). He refers to 38 altogether, more than for any other county including the usual favourites, Somerset, Suffolk, Lincolnshire and Gloucestershire. Platt (1981) extends the brief to provide a context in social history, using the fabric of churches to demonstrate changing liturgical practices and socio-economic conditions. He makes 36 references to Norfolk churches, more than any other County. In a similar vein, Randall (1982) makes 62 such references.

The most significant recent exponents of church visiting are Pevsner, because he is encyclopaedic and commands a loyal following, and Jenkins (1999), because he is contemporary and clearly focused on a market segment that might be associated easily with National Trust members and others with more than a passing interest. Pevsner's work on Norfolk is in two volumes (1984 and 1997) one covering Norwich and the North East of the county, and the other covering the remainder.

These accounts are detailed and analytical in his introduction and makes reference to the extent of the task he faced with 659 churches built before 1700, before committing himself to an overview that would itself fill a modest volume. Pevsner, however, is primarily a cataloguist and unlikely to inspire any but those who are already committed to the pursuit of detail and a complete account. Jenkins, on the other hand, has produced a 'coffee table book', replete with good quality colour photographs, a jaunty and personalised text and a gazetteer that would satisfy all but the most punctilious of Pevsner purists. He describes 65 churches in Norfolk, more than he does so for any other County, commenting in general terms on their quality and their profusion.

In terms of the research objectives this area provides a useful case study because of the well-attested quality of the churches in historical and architectural terms, within the context of a relatively undeveloped rural tourist destination. It provides an opportunity, therefore, to examine the way that representational practices are seeking to establish attraction value and to employ churches as resources to support that value. At the same time, the churches are under severe threat of redundancy, because of their profusion and their declining utility to small and diminishing congregations who might also be seeking to abandon them for more favourable accommodations in other buildings. A found weakness in the Norfolk case study is that many of the rural churches share the same issues: large church, small village, tiny congregation and within the area therefore, there was little variation except in matters of scale. It did, however, provide ample opportunities to explore the problem.

The Cotswolds

The Cotswolds, by contrast, has a long standing image as a rural tourism destination. Its location in the South West of England also makes it accessible to visitors from London, Birmingham, Bristol, Oxford and South Wales. Its churches, whilst less numerous and splendid than those of Norfolk, appear to be of more than average interest to the authorities quoted above. This includes their architectural and historical value and other less definable attributes such as character and setting. In particular the aesthetic qualities of their limestone fabric with its mellow, honey-colour have been remarked upon (Clifton-Taylor, 1974, 69-70; Jenkins, 1999, 201). There are also some individual churches that have attracted admiration for their scale and architectural magnificence, the 'wool churches' of Fairford, Northleach and Cirencester, buildings that reflected the agricultural wealth and social structures of the times in which they were built.

The Cotswolds case study area was more difficult to define geographically, however, and it was decided, therefore, to delineate a 'natural area', that is to say, one that was clearly defined by natural and related features. Though possibly a weakness because of its contrived definition and boundaries it proved a relatively straightforward task to identify a roughly triangular area with its south western border linking Brockworth with Cricklade via Cirencester; a south eastern border linking Cricklade with Burford via Fairford and Lechlade, and northern boundary from Burford back to Brockworth via Northleach (see Fig. 5). This forms a typical 'segment' of the Cotswolds with its characteristically rolling upland scenery in the west gradually falling away to the Thames Valley in the east. All the major towns are on its borders and the interior is characterized by small stone built villages the most significant of which is the 'honey pot' tourist destination of Bibury.

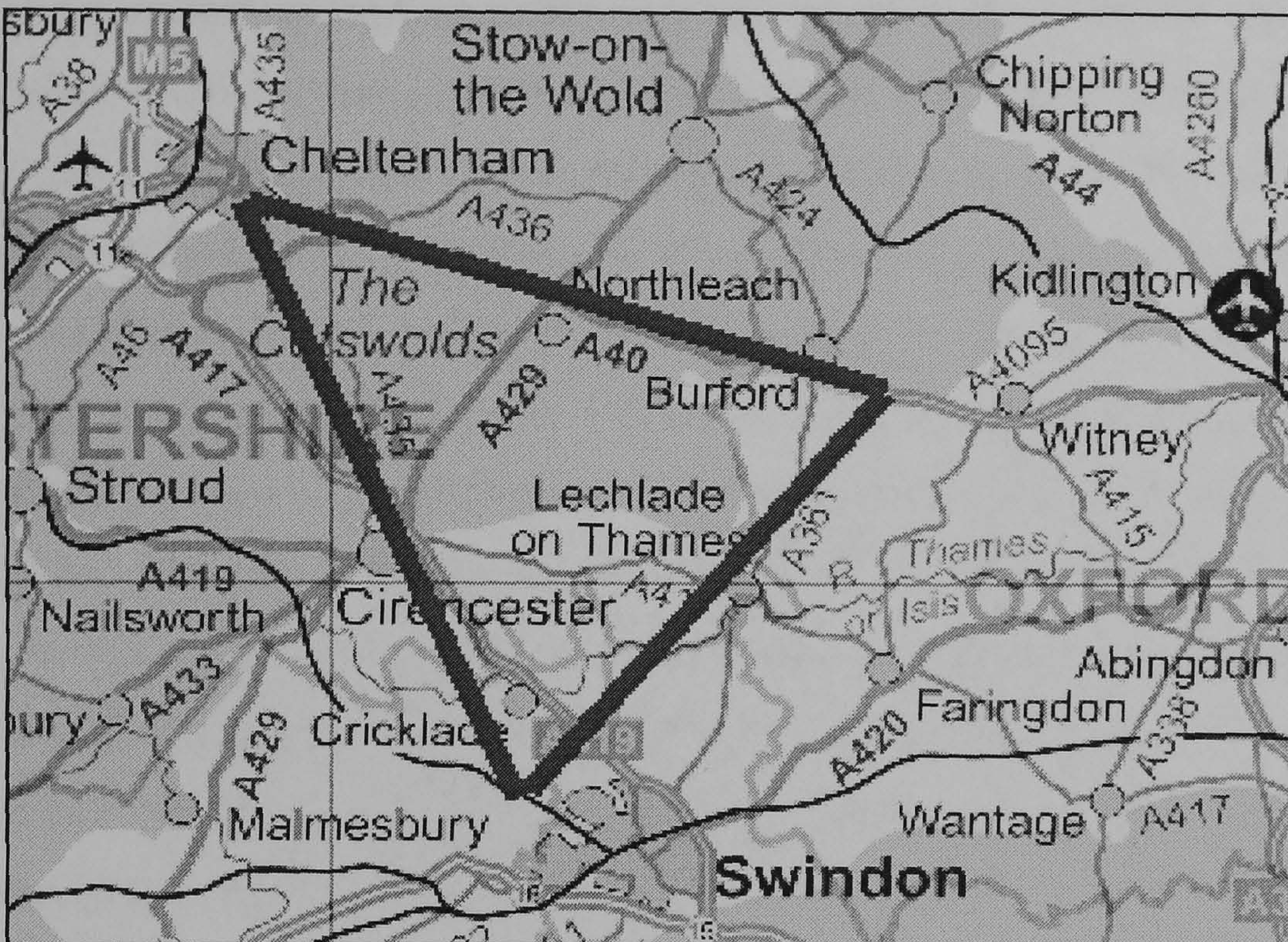

Figure 5: The Cotswold Case Study Area (Ordnance Survey)
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Churches in the area range from the parish church in the small town of Cirencester, one of the largest parish churches in England, and the large, the impressive fifteenth century wool churches previously mentioned, to the small isolated village churches which help to define the Cotswold place imagery of mellow stone-built villages (Verey, 1970, 68).

The Cotswolds has a relatively long history as a rural tourism destination, and as an example of the rural-historic cultural axis it is almost iconic, a characteristic that feeds its developed tourism industry with a plethora of signs and images. Bibury, with its row of weavers' cottages is now entirely owned by the National Trust, and just. Just outside the case study area the small towns of Bourton-on-the Water and Stow-on-the-Wold are established rural destinations and within the area itself there a number of classic 'chocolate box' villages such as Windrush and Eastleach. Rural tourism in general and church tourism in particular have been actively encouraged by the Cotswold District Council.

The reason for including the Cotswolds as a case study is based on the range and variety of churches in the area, from the spectacular and well-visited to the small and remote, within a landscape that is well represented as touristic space. For this reason it was considered useful for what it might reveal about the relationship of churches with an established tourist economy and their role in supporting the cultural production of the English countryside. The towns, villages and landscape might be acknowledged attractions, but to what extent, if any, did the churches contribute to this and how was this contribution represented in touristic terms? The found weakness in this selection was the stark contrasts between those churches that were isolated and clearly little visited and those in the market towns that were clearly celebrated as important focal points. Whilst this contrast made it difficult to draw general conclusions about the area it did provide opportunities to explore a range of different situations.

Diocese of Bradford

The Diocese of Bradford stretches north and west from the City across the lowland agricultural valleys of Nidderdale and Wharfedale, and extends almost to the farthest side of the Pennine Hills at Sedbergh (see fig. 6 below). The diversity of its social and economic conditions exceeds even that of its landscape, however, with the area characterised by both rural wealth and urban deprivation. The metropolitan authority (the boundaries of which are not coterminous with those of the Diocese) covers 32 square miles of Yorkshire including Airedale, Wharfedale and the Worth Valley, and it has a population of nearly 500,000 spread across the city of Bradford, the towns of Shipley, Bingley, Keighley and Ilkley, and large areas of green, open space, such as the Pennine moors near Haworth. Nine wards (local authority sub-units) are in the bottom 10 per cent of the UK Government's Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). A further ten are in the next most deprived 10 per cent. Yet six of the remaining 11 wards are in the least deprived 50 per cent. The IMD is made up of six sub-indices, relating to income levels, employment and health. These sub-indices generally correlate strongly with overall deprivation levels (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 2004).

Fig. 6: The Bradford Case Study Area (Ordnance Survey)
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The more opulent rural areas have a long tradition of tourism, associated with the dales landscape and Haworth, the home of the Brontes, is a significant literary destination in itself. Bolton Abbey, the remains of which also contain the local parish church, is a major 'honey pot' destination. With visitor services, riverside walks, shops and catering facilities it is one of the most visited churches in England. The towns of Ilkley and Otley now form part of the commuter belt to the north of Leeds, and Bradford itself has the unusual distinction of being one of the first of the large northern industrial cities to embrace tourism as a substitute for its declining manufacturing industries. Attention was first drawn to this transformation by

Buckley and Witt in the 1980s, where they employed the concept of 'tourism in difficult areas', not least because of the unexpected success of developing tourism in an industrial city (Buckley and Witt, 1985).

Bradford's history as a northern industrial city also provided a rich endowment of monumental Victorian architecture, both in the industrial buildings themselves and in its civil and religious architecture. Its turn towards tourism fortuitously coincided with a reappraisal of such architecture after a long period of disfavour (Rosse, 1972, vii). Thus, the woollen mills of Sir Titus Salt at Saltaire were transformed from industrial to cultural space, and now serve as an arts complex and tourist attraction. In the City itself the civic and commercial buildings of the nineteenth century have attracted the adjective 'Italianate' in favourable contrast with the heavier gothic of Leeds (Pevsner, 1967, 65).

The City's rebirth as a tourist destination renders it a classic example of the kind of transformation described in the last chapter, and Urry (1990) identifies the ingredients that he believes made this transformation possible, in the context of a new type of vacation product, the *short break*:

> These [ingredients] were, apart from plenty of hotel rooms, proximity to internationally renowned destinations such as Howarth and the Dales and Moors; a substantially intact industrial heritage of buildings, railways and canals derived from Bradford's status as 'Worstedopolis'; its location within the high profile county of Yorkshire; and the existence of a large and vigorous Asian Community which had generated a plethora of small enterprises (1990, 144).

Urry also observed that the local authority rather cleverly realised that Bradford becoming a tourist destination was news in itself, thus generating a considerable amount of free publicity.

West Yorkshire as a whole contains few churches of interest to those authorities previously quoted, apart from Pevsner who, typically, was motivated by the need for a complete account of what is there. Jenkins Mentions only 9 churches and none of these receives more than three of the fives stars used to rate the individual buildings. The area offers the advantage, however, of being able to compare the urban area of the City of Bradford with a large rural hinterland. Apart from the cathedral, which is the medieval parish church of Bradford, most of the City's churches are Victorian, the designs of a limited number of architects, mainly Mallinson and Healey, and Healey and Healey (Ayer, 1972) and unremarkable at that (Pevsner, 1967, 122). In the countryside the churches follow a more traditional pattern of medieval and later building. The most useful way of expressing the rural-urban dichotomy in this location is to use the Archdeaconry of Bradford as the area for study, with opportunities for examining the different approaches to the two environments from the point of view of tourism development. Whilst churches in the rural area might be expected to reflect the same kinds of development issues as those in the other case study areas, there might be particular challenges associated with the development of church tourism in the City itself, especially since the City Council's Tourism Unit had been closed in 1995 with a gradual disengagement from tourism as a viable industry (Hope and Klemm, 2001, 630).

From the point of view of the research objectives, the Bradford area offered a diversity of physical environments from the extremes of urban deprivation to the 'ready made' destinations of the Yorkshire Dales, with its honey pot destinations and traditional excursionist routes. For representational purposes a major challenge would be the integration of urban churches in Bradford with those of the rural areas of the Diocese, and thus resolving a contrast between the very opposite of touristic space in the urban area and suburbs and the very apotheosis of it in images of English rurality constructed for the tourist gaze. A considerable problem with the selection of Bradford, however, was the difficulty in accessing the urban churches and at the time of the visits none was found to be open. This has introduced a considerable weakness in the study when the diversity of the urban and rural was considered, from a research planning point of view, to be a strength. With hindsight another urban locality might have been selected instead of, or in addition to Bradford. This would have retained an urban-rural comparison within the study as a whole.

Conclusion

The methodology outlined above is an attempt to chart a course from methodological theory to a research strategy that responds to the ontological challenges of conducting effective qualitative research whilst providing a practical methodology. Such an approach has been advocated by Hollinshead as a prerequisite for qualitative research (2004b and c). As in all such journeys there are false starts and blind avenues, and with the benefit of hindsight things that might have been done differently. For example, at the methods level the research is open to doubts about sufficiency and some of the selection of respondents within the purposive sampling framework might have been better planned. However, a level of transparency has been attempted which explicates the decisions made and admits the weaknesses that occur in all methodologies with openness and circumspection. For example, the criticisms of observation as a method have been acknowledged and the particular approach adopted here has been explained. In terms of interviewing stakeholders with well-documented opinions the research, in retrospect, could have paid more attention to those opinions through the medium of interviews, and perhaps less to the documentary sources which were accessed.

Altogether, however, a strategy was derived and with its found weaknesses there were some found strengths. For example, there was a degree of reflexivity and reflection that was appropriate to the nature of the research and the unfolding dynamics surrounding the research question. Thus decisions were made 'on the ground' in order to address weakness and build empirical strength, such as with the opportunities presented by the Yorkshire Church Tourism Initiative. The concept of the bricolage also provides a framework within which strategic decisions were made that added meanings and interpretations from a range of data and wove these into the fabric of the study. With all of this in mind the findings are presented with a degree of circumspection and in the awareness that they provide provisional insights that are open to further elucidation in future research.

The purpose throughout has been to investigate the ways in which churches are represented as tourist attractions and the processes and practices that support such representation. These explore variations in representational practice within and between different agencies and the level of convergence or ensuing representational dissonance; the ways that such representational practices are related to organisational goals, and the effects of these processes on the development of churches as tourist attractions and on the perceptions and experience of tourists themselves. There has been a need, particularly to examine the churches themselves as agents of chance and their frequent recourse to a passive role in relation to tourism that has acted against the need to address the additional roles associated with it. A sensity, therefore, to a wide range of perceptions and motives and the effect of these in terms of the response of tourist has been the major challenge for the methodology in this study.

In responding to this challenge I have attempted the construction of an interpretive bricolage including secondary and documentary sources, together with the perspectives of key informants and tourists themselves. Accordingly, I have sought to identify and interpret the activities of those involved and to evaluate the extent to which the process has developed over recent years within the 'real cultural world' that surrounds these phenomena. Case study areas have been selected in order to provide a variety of contexts within which representational practices associated with church tourism have developed, and to examine the actual practices that have emerged in areas with different types of churches and varying levels of touristic development. In overall terms, the strategy has been designed to capture a particular moment in the representation of churches as, and within, touristic space. The purpose has not, therefore, been to generalise or to construct large scale theories. These are insights and facets captured with a framework of open and reflective qualitative inquiry. This is perhaps all that can be achieved when the pace of change has been so rapid, even since the present study began. However, the information generated by this particular methodological approach has at least begun to elucidate some of the major themes and insights that might ultimately explain social and cultural construction of churches as tourist attractions.

Chapter 4

Tourism and the Church

Introduction

This Chapter examines the policies and practices of the governing bodies of the Church of England in representing churches as tourist attractions, and the social and cultural organisation of these representations. It illustrates that where such representations are active they are linked to both authorised notions of national heritage (Smith, 2006) and local and regional agendas that are concerned with economic regeneration. This is compared, in subsequent chapters, with the representational practices of parishes, local authorities and other agencies. This approach is derived from Lefebvre's (1991) theory of the representation of space which has been discussed previously and which, as Meethan has expressed it, is an attempt to focus on the 'material production of places, of sites, of economic and social practices as much as the symbols and representations they give rise to, and which are also derived from them' (2000, 39). Lefebvre, however, is at pains to point out that he is concerned with the 'actual production of space' through processes of coding and encoding and the coming into being and disappearance of such codifications in systems of signs and signifiers (1991, 16-18).

For the various levels of Church government the challenge has thus been to identify the *official line* in respect of church tourism, and it is apparent in what follows that this is compromised by a degree of dissonance within the church itself about how it represents tourism as a viable additional activity for churches. At the highest levels the Church has been concerned with establishing a role for itself in the national fabric of governance, community development and economic regeneration. In a sense then it has already taken on a new and somewhat political role which can be detected in its assertive and controversial *Faith in the City* report of 1985, a response to the perceived urban decay of the 1970s and 1980s (Church of England, 1985).

Its problem has been to represent this policy to other levels within the organisation of the Church and in a way that ensures their commitment to it given their traditional passivity. Thus it is evident that a level of dissonance exists between the highest levels of the Church and its regional (diocesan) structures in terms of representational practice, and that to ameliorate this the Church has had to represent the benefits of tourism as an additional function in ways that might garner support from the diocese. This has normally taken the form of expressing the missionary and economic benefits of tourism although the reality of such benefits to parish churches remains questionable. At the centre of the debate, however, is a conflict in the minds of some Church officials and parishes between the primary function of the church and its additional interest in tourism. The resulting representational dissonance within the church itself is the most significant finding from this part of the research and charts the faltering progress of a transformation from the passive response to the additionality that tourism represents. Such considerations lie at the heart of any attempt to interpret the spatial arrangements and representations that underpin the response of the church, at each of its levels.

Churches as touristic space

The role of the Church of England is central to the representation of churches *as* touristic space not least as the de facto owner of the resources in question, which amount to 16,000 church buildings in England, 12,000 of which are listed as being of architectural or historic interest (Church of England, 2004a). The Church's representational practice is conditioned by two further factors. First, the Church is charged with the responsibility for the disposition of individual buildings, either as places of worship or, in the event of redundancy, as real estate. Second, the resource is based on a collection of buildings that are predominantly of architectural and historic interest. Indeed, 45% of all grade 1 listed buildings in England are Church of England parish churches, and 26% of Church of England Churches are Grade 1

(Church of England, 2004a). This in itself is evidence of the high degree of cultural legitimacy given to churches as objects of heritage and potentially as objects of heritage tourism. It is also thus provides a point of contact between the Church and other agencies, such as local authorities, in terms of representational practice.

Redundancy, of course, is an ever-present and increasing threat, and in this context alternative uses and representations are an absolute necessity if a building is to survive at all. As was indicated in Chapter 2, Lefebvre himself points to redundancy in spatial practices as a basis for this representation (1991, 113-114). The statistics have already been alluded to with a steady stream of buildings offered up for sale or disposal in other ways (around 2000 since the 1950s). According to the Churches Conservation Trust the rate of redundancy may double to sixty per year as congregations continue to age and dwindle and finding new uses for these buildings will become a major priority for the Church and for the communities they serve (Kennedy, 2004). As one commentator, and representative of the Society for the Promotion of the Preservation of English Parish Churches, has observed:

> ...since the late-1970s, if not before, Churchmen and conservationists have had to address the growing problem of declining congregations and the resultant necessity to make churches and chapels which are not adequately used face redundancy. Such controversies will not go away overnight as the 21st Century appears (Whitworth, 1998).

As far as the cultural value of the resource is concerned, the Church at its highest institutional levels has become more assertive about what it sees as a contribution to its notion of national heritage and the economic significance of this through tourism. In this context the Church's main policy document on its built heritage, *Valuing our Eccliastical Heritage*, is explicit about their role in stimulating tourism:

> This portfolio of cultural assets serves many purposes in addition to Christian worship. The buildings are a focal point of urban and rural communities alike, studied as part of our children's school curriculum,

> play a key role in supporting and stimulating tourism and represent an important strand of national consciousness (Church of England, 2003, 1).

'Cultural assets' and 'national consciousness' is a heady mixture. What kind of national consciousness is at stake, and what kind of culture do churches represent? The same references are made at several points in the document and, in particular, in relation to economic development issues. This is culture with a hard edge, whatever the national consciousness suggests. Churches are thus described as 'important engines for attracting tourism' in rural areas and furthermore, 'A well maintained Ecclesiastical Built Heritage is crucial to the success of this industry' (Church of England, 2003, 2). In urban areas similarly, 'the Ecclesiastical Built Heritage has an important role to play in sustaining tourism and engendering civic pride' (2003, 2) Whilst there is little evidence here of the ambivalence to which reference was made earlier, such expressions of interest in and support for tourism should be seen within the wider purpose of the document, which can be interpreted as a bid for government financial support to maintain the building stock. The 'priceless heritage' that churches are represented as here is a representation in the service of a clear and distinct appeal for a change in government fiscal and funding policy in favour of the church, by linking it with an authorised version of the national heritage, however vaguely that is expressed. There is also a sense in which tourists are being perceived here not as people to whom the Christian mission might be extended, but purely in terms *resource management*, and an opportunity to generate income.

A year later the Church published *Building Faith in Our Future* (Church of England, 2004a) with a much wider focus. Here is a clear statement that churches, as buildings, represent cultural capital beyond their primary use, and much of the report is concerned with providing a rational for this additionality:

> Church Buildings are also often the oldest in a settlement still in continual use. Even in industrial or twentieth-century settlements, they are a focus. Many churches - and cathedrals particularly - are the largest,

> most architecturally complex, most archaeologically sensitive, and most visited building in their village, town or city (Church of England, 2004a).

It is interesting, however, that in an earlier draft of this passage published on the internet by the Archbishop's Council, it was preceded by a brief but unequivocal concession to the primary purpose, 'Though first and foremost a place of worship churches are also often the oldest building in a settlement still in continual use' Church of England, 2004b). It is impossible to prove that the message was altered or amended for an internal audience, but it does demonstrate a need to *justify* the message to an internal audience that is more concerned with the Church's primary role.

The report continues, however, with what seems like an unconditional commitment to additionality, not just in relation to tourism but other additional uses and purposes such as general arts and cultural activity, community activities and the role in urban and rural renewal. Some of the quotes from influential individuals that are used in the report are also instructive. For example, in an oddly convoluted reading of additionality, the Very Revd Nicholas Coulton, Sub-Dean of Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford, points to the fact that it is religious faith that has provided some of the raw material of the heritage industry:

> Any truthful presentation of heritage needs to acknowledge the role of faith in sponsoring and inspiring the building of churches and cathedrals (Church of England, 2004a, 2).

He might have added that it was itself sponsored by the very social structures that each and every building celebrates alongside its liturgical message. The report is silent on whether or not the tourism industry has subsequently recorded its gratitude to the Church of England, but Simon Thurley, the Chief Executive of English Heritage was at effusive in his acknowledgement of their overall significance:

> The parish churches of England are some of the most sparkling jewels in the precious crown that is our historic environment (Church of England, 2004a, 6).

The 'priceless heritage' is now a 'precious crown', perhaps appropriately given its monarchical obsessions, the national heritage is a context, literally the setting for the nation's churches. The section of the report that deals with tourism also focuses specifically on the significances of churches in the tourism economy. The emphasis is on cathedrals and greater churches and the extent to which they are visited by tourists with an admission that the evidence in relation to parish churches is somewhat sketchy. There is also an account of the advice and support available for churches in attracting and catering for tourists and some helpful pointers in terms of interpretation and visitor management. It also contains some discussions of recent initiatives and case studies (Church of England, 2004a, 36- 39). Moreover, it uses its commitment to additionality, to make a case for a more favourable financial framework for churches, and makes the first explicit reference to churches within a broader context of touristic activity:

> Cathedrals and churches are a major draw – not just the building itself, but as the backdrop to a destination offering other attractions. Newly regenerating inner cities, cathedral cities, market towns, rural villages, all attract visitors (Church of England, 2004a, 36).

The first point to be made here is that there is no equivocation about the role of churches as visitor attractions. On the contrary they are being represented directly as such and this representation is being employed to mediate the effects on churches of the social and economic change that threatens their survival – the *spatial practice* to use Lefebvre's first triadic category that would engulf them and render them redundant if left unaddressed. The report makes no direct link between tourism, or indeed any other additional activity and the Church's primary purpose and mission.

Indeed the primary purpose of the church is not articulated until page forty of the forty-eight page document that any reference is made to it:

> The challenge of looking after any historic building, keeping and respecting its special character while enabling it to adapt sensitively for modern and future needs, is complex: perhaps particularly so for churches, given their primary role as places of worship and mission (Church of England, 2004a, 40).

Parallels can be made with the Country House and indeed the countryside, as similarly represented spaces in the tourist economy, but with the same kinds of issues surrounding primary use (as a home and as an instrument of agricultural production and both, ultimately, as private property). The question that emerges, however, is the extent to which this level of representation and commitment to additionality permeates the Church as an organisation with a strongly vertical structure but with high levels of local independence. At this local level it is essentially traditional and based, in operational terms, on activities at the level of individual parishes overseen by priests as opposed to facility managers. The parish priests, in turn, are working with local lay activists who, though relatively small in number, are more likely to be committed to their faith than the building within which they practice it, a key factor in their traditionally passive role in relation to tourism.

In this context additionality can display another facet and become an object of internal rather than external communication. As such, and in contrast with its appearance in the report, it must make a link with concepts of mission as well as the possibilities for income generation and, in a more immediate sense, with the survival of the building. This is additionality justified in relation to internal imperatives rather than additionality as an appeal to a wider polity. It may thus be seen as a last resort or a necessary though largely unwelcome development. Here in the third of Lefebvre's triadic categories is the representational space in which the symbols of primary use and those of the touristic representation meet and mix in real space and time. In this context the representations of space keep or break their promises to tourists as the latter encounter in some churches effective interpretive media, in others the incomprehensible spatial and material codifications of religious practice, or as often as not, a locked door. The choice for clergy and practising Christians *on the ground* is whether to abandon their passivity and embrace these 'opportunities' of additionality or alternatively, to divest themselves of the responsibility for looking after the buildings and opt for redundancy.

The concept of mission is hardly mentioned in the most up-to-date and relevant report advocating tourism, probably because it lacks convergence with the sensibilities of a wider audience. For internal purposes, however, it is the most commonly expressed motive factor amongst key informants and Church websites (see below). Tourism is thus perceived as means to evangelise and to communicate with groups of people (tourists) who might not ordinarily be susceptible to the Christian message. At times the Church *has* been quite explicit about this. For example, in its 1995 report *Heritage and Renewal*, the Archbishop's Commission recognised the importance of tourism to cathedrals in terms of mission, evangelism and income generation (Church of England, 1995). In advice published for individual parishes the message could not be clearer:

> Is the church building being used as a Tool for Mission? Our churches are a great resource for attracting tourists and presenting them with the Gospel through the architecture and history they contain and the personal contacts that meeting and greeting tourists affords. . . Also available is a one day course aimed at helping churches exceed their visitor's expectation: 'Welcome to the Church' (Diocese of Wales, 2004).

Here is the church as a product writ large. Exceeding customer expectations is a goal of every high street brand, but the product, ultimately, is not the *church* as an ancient building, but the *Church* as an historical text. The Diocesan Tourism Officer at Lincoln was very clear that that tourism was an opportunity to promote the Church's mission:

> 'People have both conscious and unconscious reasons for visiting churches and if an unconscious belief can be transformed into a conscious one with tourism that is all we can hope for'(Diocesan Official #1).

There was no doubt in this respondent's mind that if church tourism had any value it was primarily as an instrument of religious mission, not simply through the direct linkage of the church with the tourist, but also imbuing the church with this additional role within its community.

> 'Tourism is a way of integrating the church with the community by creating linkages and partnerships with other agencies and service providers, including local businesses' (Diocesan Official #1).

Whilst evangelism might be considered a part of the Church's role at any time (Church of England, 2005a), it has been brought into particular focus by an apparent decline in the numbers of people attending church services, even though this does not necessarily imply a decline in belief (Davie, 1994; Davie, et al., 2003). The actual mechanisms by which tourism might contribute to the Church's mission are not, however, clearly articulated, nor evidence for its efficacy fully adduced. It is also based on the assumption that at the very least, a significant proportion of church tourists are currently bereft of religious faith and that their appearance in church is evidence of a needful susceptibility to the Church's message. Yet there is a suggestion here that passivity in relation to tourism may also represent passivity in relation to the opportunities for mission. Ignoring tourism may therefore be a source of some tension in respect of the latter. The motives of church tourists are of central concern however, and will be discussed in a later chapter, but for the present it might be concluded that whilst a mild evangelism may be sufficient to propel parishes and their priests towards touristic representation, there is no evidence of its success or otherwise.

It is apparent, however, from some websites and interviews with clergy, that there is a simple acknowledgement on the part of the Church that the buildings are often of architectural or historical interest and that it is simply reasonable to indulge this interest to an extent that varies according to the attitude of the incumbent clergy or diocesan officials. This is demonstrated, for example, in the Diocese of Southwark (2004), where every church is represented on the internet via a link from the Diocesan site and is described in terms of its architectural and historical interest as well as its primary functions. This approach appears at first sight to be at odds with the notion of tourism as mission, or at least not necessarily convergent with it. There may, however, be some connections: by associating the physical attraction values of the church with the practice of Christianity and by making claims to the sanctity of the *place*, there may be an opportunity here to add value to the mission and practice of the religion itself.

> 'These are beautiful and tranquil places, and that is part of the value that people see in them, the church itself and its immediate environment' (Vicar #12, Bradford).

In short, the Church shines somewhat brighter in the reflected glory of the buildings it occupies. Around half of the vicars showed an appreciation of the historical and architectural merits of the buildings for which they were responsible.

> 'it's a very beautiful building. Every church is unique and those I am responsible for are important historically and architecturally. These are some of the best churches in the country, many of which have survived Victorian restoration' Vicar #2, Norfolk).

Perceptions at parish level are dealt with in more detail in the following chapter.

The second motive factor is based on the notion that visits from tourists will contribute to the economic well-being of the individual church through donations, which are eagerly encouraged, and the sale of various merchandise such as postcards and guide books, most of which is pursued through the 'honesty box' system. Some of the larger and more obviously tourist-orientated churches have sufficient numbers of visitors to warrant the provision of a small shop or visitor centre staffed by volunteers, but these are a tiny proportion of the whole:

> Most of the attention in tourist terms has been on the Cathedral and the real tourist centres like Bolton Abbey. It's actually very difficult to see these sorts of things in the average church, especially in the urban area. In fact it's almost impossible to sustain it anywhere' (Diocesan Official #2).

The only other available data on the economic benefits of church tourism for the churches themselves is over twenty years old, and the picture presented is not encouraging, with a third of churches earning no more than £50 a year at 1984 prices (Hanna, 1984). The point is also made, however, that there is a small minority of buildings that do earn much more and that some, such as Romsey Abbey and Bolton Abbey have successfully increased their income from donations (Hanna, 1984, 13). In a similar vein, the sale of merchandise and the range available for visitors is generally minimal, with most offering little more than a guidebook and a postcard though others will venture into the sale of tee-shirts, mugs, tea towels, pens, bookmarks, notepads, the standard paraphernalia of heritage retailing as well as reproductions of objects associated with the church such as brasses. The costs of production are an obvious obstacle as, of course, are losses from theft. According to Hanna, guidebook sales were encouraging, although many of these were either free of charge or sold at a nominal price. Only those with well produced (relatively expensive) guidebooks are properly relevant here and these were confined to a limited number of well known and well-visited churches such as Bath Abbey, Cirencester and Tewkesbury (Hanna, 1984, 36, 50). The correlation between revenue generation and visitor numbers is an obvious one and the possibility for making significant income from visitors is consequentially limited. Evidence of this from the case study areas is discussed below.

Diocesan activity

The perceptions and role of the Church on the ground are expressed largely through the activities of the forty-three individual diocese (ancient regional bodies) and their constituent parishes, which are often equally ancient and which are based around one or more parish churches (Church of England, 2005b). The diocese are roughly coterminous with civil administrative areas although in reflecting the significance of specific locations as they existed a thousand or more years ago there has clearly been some divergence between the two. Each diocese has a structure of boards and committees responsible for different aspects of the church's work, such as ministry, mission, education and social responsibility. A map of Church of England dioceses is provided below, see Fig. 7. Issues involving tourism are likely to be considered by the Board of Social Responsibility in the diocese concerned, and by the Diocesan Advisory Committee if any alterations to the building or its furniture and fittings are being considered (Binney & Burman, 1977, 63-64).

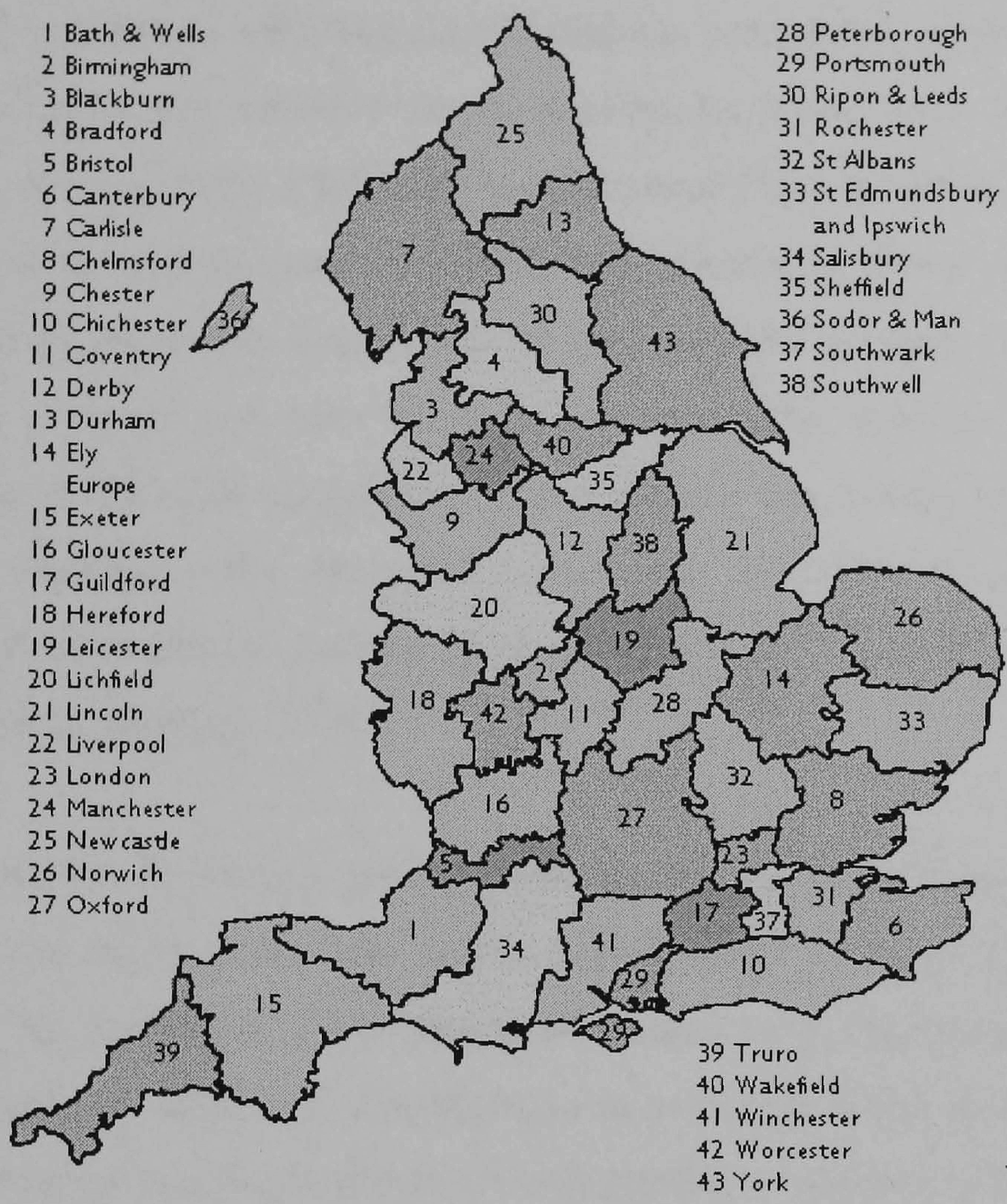

Figure 7: The Dioceses of Church of England
Reproduced from Church of England Website (church of England, 2006b

Diocesan Advisory Committees were set up in the 1920s to offer advice to officials who were responsible in each diocese for granting 'faculties' or licenses to change church buildings in various ways (Binney & Burman, 1977, 63-4; Hill, 2001). By the 1920s this had become a matter of aesthetics as well as building, particularly as churches were 'threatened' by the erection of a mass of family memorials to those killed in the First World and where a preponderance of 'cheap and worthless' Victorian stained glass had dimmed the interiors of buildings so much that a ban was called for (Central Council for the Care of Churches, 1930, 4-5). For practical purposes any proposed alteration, repair, extension or demolition of fabric, and the addition or removal of contents, is subject to the Bishop's approval exercised by the Diocesan Chancellor as Judge of the Consistory Court (Binney and Burman, 1977, 63-71). Advice will be taken from the Diocesan Advisory Committee upon which

English Heritage is represented. This system enabled the Church to be exempt from the usual regulations affecting listed buildings until 1993, when a code of practice was introduced that retained the exemption for those who adopted it, although planning permission is still sometimes required (Hanna, 1996; Fairclough, 2006). These bodies, and the responsibilities they discharge, are a major influence and constraint on the physical arrangements that might be necessary to cater for visitors. Amenity societies are also likely to be consulted, because of their expertise, according to the code of practice. These include the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, the Georgian Group, the Victorian Society, the Twentieth Century Society and the Ancient Monuments Society (The Archbishops' Council for the Church of England, 2001).

The promotion of tourism per se, however, has no natural organisational location within a diocese, and this may help to explain some of the variation between them. Where it has developed, it has been greatly aided by a 'champion' willing to explore its potential and support its development in a context where general ambivalence is likely. Possibly as a result of this, a small number of dioceses have been particularly active in the development and promotion of church tourism. These include Lincoln, Carlisle, Hereford with Worcester, Southwell and Chester, with some interest expressed at Chichester, Ely, St Edmundsbury and Winchester. At the time of writing, the Churches Tourism Association lists thirty-three individuals with a role in church tourism at a diocesan level, but only 3 of these are given to the role on a full time basis (Churches Tourism Association, 2004b).

The Diocese of Lincoln was the first to appoint a tourism officer, with funding from the European Union (Diocese of Lincoln, 2003). Its primacy in the development of church tourism is clearly represented on its website, with a clear appeal to the missionary possibilities:

> The Diocese of Lincoln has an internationally recognised asset in its churches, spanning the whole story of Christianity in England, and a

> Church Tourism Project, running since 1987 has made Lincolnshire the national leader in church tourism. The project has been successful in securing funds for full-time officers, and is presently seeking to develop a new Cascade Project which will involve most of the regions religious buildings and the communities that support them. Whilst this brings undoubted economic benefits it is also an opportunity for Christians to share their life of faith with the visitor (Diocese of Lincoln, 2003).

During the early 1990s the Diocese, local clergy and local authority tourism officers established the Church Tourism Network as a means developing and promulgating best practice and a report on the nature of Church Tourism in the Diocese was published in 1996 (Samouelle, 1996). The author establishes the case for church tourism with a robust appeal to additionality:

> ...there seems little doubt amongst social commentators that the parish church has an importance beyond that of a place of worship. Its focus for spiritual, cultural and village life represents all that is important to rural communities; it symbolises tradition, values, good neighbourliness, history, conservation and stewardship (Samouelle, 1996, iv).

Tradition and values have been seen in other representations, but here they are interwoven with concepts of rural community, conservation and care for the building. The Network was the culmination of a three year scheme that was designed as a partnership between the Diocese, parishes and local authorities, in which a variety of projects were initiated (1996, 11-12). These involved the installation of interpretative exhibition units at the most architecturally significant churches in the Diocese. This was followed by the publication of a promotional leaflet, the *Treasures of Lincolnshire*, which was funded by the Regional Tourist Board and the

Rural Development Commission, with help from some of the local authorities. This was made available for churches to sell and although the take-up was somewhat variable. The material concerned was later recycled into website with interactive maps based on each district within the diocese. Activation of locations on the map reveals a short descriptive paragraph. An access code is also used to indicate whether the church is open and for how long, wheelchair access and whether a key-holder is available if the church is normally kept locked (Diocese of Lincoln, 2003).

Another project initiated by the Network was an audit of tourism activity related to access, partnerships, festivals and other visitor related issues. Incumbents and locally active parishioners were also offered training in visitor management issues (Samouelle, 1996 11-12) and the appointment of a tourism officer within the diocese was key to ensuring that this support was sustained in the longer term.

The most recent manifestation of this project is the *Cascade Scheme,* which is an attempt to direct the attention of tourists from the main attraction, Lincoln Cathedral, to nine *cascade* churches of high architectural and historic interest within the Diocese. The churches, which are to some extent staffed, direct attention and provide visitor information for a further forty-four stream churches nearby and in turn, to the remaining pool of churches. Over three hundred churches became involved in the scheme, which also created a locus for the development of interpretive material (Church of England, 2004a, 38).

The development of church tourism by the Lincoln Diocese and its partners is now well established and it is clear that the additionality thesis is fully supported. The missionary and economic aspects are overtly referred to in documentation about the initiative even though the issue of revenue generation is treated realistically and tentatively in terms of suggested practice (Samouelle, 1996, 27). Throughout, however, there is a clear concern with churches *as* touristic space and the opportunities and problems that potentially result, rather than a perception of the role of churches *within* touristic space. This is despite the view of the Diocesan Tourism

Officer that much of the impetus for the initiatives came from the local authorities, who were keen to develop the area as a destination and accordingly sought to include the cultural capital of parish churches as an attraction factor within it.

> You could see that the District Councils were looking at churches and thinking 'Hmmm that looks interesting, how can we work that into the tourism strategy?' which I suppose is a recognition of the importance of the churches. The background was also one of fragmentation and a lack of community support and for the clergy the buildings were becoming a liability. The tourism initiative would bring the churches back into the focus of peoples' attention and provide opportunities for reaching out to people – which is what the church is all about (Diocesan Official #1).

In effect there were two distinct representational practices at work in the Lincolnshire Diocese, although they were apparently working in partnership. Propelled towards touristic representation, the Diocese sought to represent churches *as* touristic space and as such an opportunity to reach out to a new audience whilst, propelled by an economic development agenda, the local authorities sought to represent churches *within* touristic space as a component resource in their tourism portfolio. Whilst these representations are not necessarily dissonant (they may indeed be complementary) they clearly represent differing perspectives that may have implications for the operation of church tourism. The findings from the research on local authorities are discussed in Chapter 6.

The Dioceses of Hereford and Worcester began developing an initiative in the mid-1990s. *Through the Church Door,* was intended to encourage small country churches to realise their potential to more effectively welcome visitors (Diocese of Hereford, 2002). The main results of the initiative were a series of stewarded church open days, a handbook to be sold through participating churches, bookshops and the tourism information centre network, and a training programme for local church activists in participating churches. The project was overseen by a steering group with representatives of the Dioceses of Hereford, Worcester and Coventry, the local Training and Enterprise Council and the Regional Tourist Board (Keeling, 2000, 20). A further group, *Caring for God's Acre*, was established to promote the interpretation of churchyards to encourage and inform visitors through advice for churches and interpretative material (Diocese of Hereford, 2002).

The main benefits of the project according to Keeling, were improvements in the quality of welcome experienced by visitors as a result of a greater awareness of their needs, a better quality of interpretative material, the development of partnerships with tourist organisations and, possibly, an increase in the number of visitors within the churches (2000, 29-31). Attention was also drawn to a greater recognition within the church organisation of the opportunities for ministry that ensued from welcoming visitors although again, the mechanics of this process did not appear to have been explored. There is evidence of considerable passivity on the part of the Church and the churches involved. Keeling concluded that funding and support from other agencies were very much dependent on the Church being seen to back it and local churches taking an active interest. The active involvement in clergy was central to this, but participation seemed to be dependent largely on the enthusiasm of a small number of activists who recognised some benefit in it (2000, 21). For the most part, however, the passive voice remained dominant.

More recent manifestations of the initiative have involved funding for another three year project by the Countryside Commission, the European Union and the Church of England, the appointment of a diocesan tourism officer, the establishment of a website and a pilot project involving four churches at the outset.

The aim of the project was:

> ...to encourage Churches to take a more active role in developing a co-ordinated approach to tourism...making themselves available, informative, welcoming and interpretative to visitors through a variety of

community partnership initiatives and through the sharing of best-practice (Diocese of Hereford, 2004).

The approach reflected the comments of a diocesan official in the Cotswolds case study who insisted that to be successful such activities should be developed on a bottom-up approach with the active involvement of church and parishioners and that such initiatives should be 'owned by the church':

> There is no point in creating tourism initiatives if they exist outside the remit of the Church and the Church's mission. That would simply take the whole process away from the church and turn the churches themselves into museums (Diocesan Official #3).

Similarly, in Norfolk, it was suggested that they should be based in communities, but also take an outward looking approach, with ideas developed in partnership with other agencies in the tourism sector and wider community, so long as these were 'realistic and appropriate' for each church:

> Not all churches can do it anyway. In some places there is neither the will, nor the people on the ground to do it, so we have to be careful about what we can promise with church tourism, but we are keen to develop some definitions of good practice, particularly in terms of partnerships with local authorities and then spreading the good practice' (Diocesan Official #4).

Other objectives at Hereford related to the improvement of visitor attraction value, an events programme, a more developed web presence and a handbook of best practice. Though outward looking in its aims the initiative was clearly orientated around activity in churches, and churches represented as (individual) attractions. It is not clear what practical links were to be attempted with the wider attraction system.

The Carlisle initiative, facilitated by a full-time tourism officer, is an unselfconscious attempt on the part of the Diocese to market its churches as tourist attractions. The mission is a clear motive factor:

> The primary function of all churches, whether pre-Norman or present day, is as a place of worship; and it is hoped that visitors will spare some time from admiring the structure of the buildings to join the local congregations at their services (Diocese of Carlisle, 2004).

This missionary perspective derives from the earliest stages of the project when an ecumenical group, *Faith in Tourism*, was established by the Diocese with the specific intention of promoting a ministry to visitors. One of the first objectives of the group was to advise parishes on ways in which the ministry might be extended to visitors through the churches.

This position was reinforced in interviews with the Diocesan Tourism Officer and is reflected in the job description for the post:

> The Officer is appointed by the Bishop of Carlisle and reports to the Bishop's Council. S/he will work in conjunction with the Officer for Evangelism, and relate to the Council for Evangelism (Job Description obtained in personal communication).

The operational focus was also clearly concerned with the mission:

> [My job is] to ensure that publicity material of professional quality is available in promoting Church tourism; and to assist individual churches in finding the best possible ways of promoting their buildings in a way that also witnesses to our faith (Diocesan Tourism Officer #5).

Here again we are presented with churches *as* touristic space, and a movement from passivity to additionality expressed through the opportunities for mission, with each building allocated a short paragraph describing its key architectural or historic features and its overall aesthetic qualities, either as a building or within a landscape. This web-based material is accessed through the Diocese of Carlisle website (Diocese of Carlisle, 2004), and consists of an overview guide and eleven separate church trails based around various locations and made available as portable data files for easy downloading and printing. A link is provided to the Cumbrian Tourist Board website, but there is little evidence of integration with the attraction complex as a whole, which may be considered surprising in a location that in part includes the Lake District. According to the Diocesan Tourism Officer there seemed to be reluctance on the part of the Tourist Board to be involved:

> I do have to report with sadness that Cumbria Tourist Board are totally negative to church based tourism initiatives, and have rejected all my overtures to see how we could work together in partnership . . . and as a result churches in Cumbria seem to have been frozen out of any CTB policy planning strategies (Diocesan Tourism Officer #5).

The problem here seems to relate to the construction and representation of the Lake District as a particular type of tourism product and churches simply did not fit with an existing dominant narrative, that was more concerned with landscape and the place image of the Lake District. In other words the representation of churches as and within touristic space in that area was dissonant with the representational practices of the most powerful representational agency, the Regional Tourist Board. The situation in Cumbria seems, therefore, to be in stark contrast with that of Lincolnshire where it was the local authorities that were keen to include churches in the tourism portfolio. In Cumbria, it seems, the churches did not fit with the Tourist Board's concept of tourism in that region which is already well-visited for its other attractions and were therefore excluded, much to the frustration of the Church. This manifestation of representational dissonance recalls the debate in Chapter 1 about the eye of power in touristic representation and *who* wants *what* to be represented as touristic space, and to what ends. On this occasion, and in contrast with most instances the authoritative representation was seeking to exclude rather than to include a new touristic asset, because it apparently did not fit with existing portfolio and the image construction of the area as a destination.

At Southwell, in the Midlands of England, the Diocesan website provides a lively and colourful series of pages featuring such items as featured churches and links to individual parish websites which contain more detailed information (Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham, 2005). The web material perhaps owes its quality to the presence of a leading tourism academic as its adviser on such matters. It lists various activities at churches within the Dioceses and sources of advice on church tourism matters. It also publishes a regular newsletter covering similar material and makes links with other tourism services. The link with an authorised heritage discourse is also apparent, from its references to the rural-historic cultural axis, to good old Robin Hood, whose marriage in the local church is presented in the classic matter-of-fact prose which is often used to make extravagant claims:

> Laxton, St Michael. Beautiful village famous for its medieval open-field farming system. Waymarked walks and Visitor Centre. Pub food, bike route. Edwinstowe, St Mary. Robin Hood and Maid Marian were married in this church, (open 12-4, near Center Parcs and Sherwood Forest) (Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham, 2005).

Here churches are represented both *as* and *within* touristic space with the Church itself attempting to integrate itself with the tourism economy. Additionality is thus simply assumed and there is little overt mention of the missionary possibilities in the published material. By contrast, however, the Diocesan Tourism Officer was at pains to establish the missionary basis for church tourism:

> For me the whole thing that appeals about being involved in church tourism is that I see it as part of the Church's ministry and the whole area of the Ministry of Welcome' (Diocesan Officer #6).

She was even able to distinguish several different types of visitor and levels of engagement with them:

I try to get the church members to acknowledge that there are mainly five types of visitors to our churches,

1. the tourist, researchers. musicians/artists, stained glass experts, walkers cyclists;
2. those coming for spiritual reasons, the bereaved, personal tragedy, national crisis;
3. the casual visitor the person on business, or in the middle of shopping who just needs somewhere to relax for a while, the newcomer to the village, homeless and unemployed;
4. people coming for special events, festivals concerts etc.
5. and not forgetting the visitor to the services, those coming for pastoral services, baptism weddings and funerals... and especially not forgetting those who come to our Sunday services (Diocesan Officer #6).

Whilst this was a clear expression of additionality in the missionary role of tourism, and even an acknowledgement that churches are both familiar and alien spaces, it also revealed a dynamic between tourism and missionary purpose in that as the possibilities for tourism increase so does an anxiousness to exploit it for missionary purposes. It becomes thus, for those church officials who see opportunities in tourism an opportunity not to be missed:

Importantly we need to remember that we are getting a number of people through our doors who know nothing about what goes on in a church; and people from other faiths and for whom the Christian church is a total alien atmosphere. So we must go out of our way to be hospitable and welcoming ... that first impression counts (Diocesan Officer #6).

Similarly, at Chichester, the Diocesan website makes a brief reference to tourism within its section on the activities of its Board of Social Responsibility. The Bishop himself, however, articulates the primary motive factor:

> Think too of the opportunities through pastoral offices, occasional services like harvest, crib services, through the work of the churches' tourism officer and the opportunity to try to turn visitors into pilgrims and worshippers. (Diocese of Chichester, 2004).

At St Edmundsbury and Ipswich Diocese the website contains a church tourism page contained within the section on mission. Here is posted information on open churches and a newsletter with details of events at particular churches. There is also one of only two examples discovered in this study of the Church contextualising churches within a wider attraction system. The emphasis is still, however, on individual churches and the opportunities to pursue missionary objectives. An example of 'how to do it' is also provided, based on activity in one of the participating parishes:

> [There was] A Bible, a book of prayers, a leaflet about what Christians believe, a leaflet about the parish church, and a leaflet about attractions locally. Then together in a plastic pocket were well typed and presented sheets with: an introduction to the Benefice and a map; a Welcome to the passing friend or pilgrim; a page with local information which included the local shops, filling station, pubs, restaurants, toilet facilities (an apology in one that the only available was a nearby hedge!); Places to stay; local B&Bs; garages; where local produce (including local beef, pork lamb, cider, apple juice and country wines) could be purchased .... (Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich, 2004).

Another diocesan project that attempted to find a place in the wider attraction system was *Sacred Sussex* initiated in 2002 at the Diocese of Chichester. This was a membership-based organisation that invited individual churches to take part, and which provided an internet portal to encourage and engage with visitors. The website contains an interactive map that provides links to pages for individual churches. These provide, in standard format, architectural and historic details, photographs, opening times, details of visitor facilities and contact details. The aims of the project are to 'promote visits to places of worship in Sussex and to develop religious, cultural and heritage appreciation' (Diocese of Chichester, 2004). Here is presented a familiar weaving together of touristic attraction, heritage and religion. No conflicts are perceived and all of the various practices work together seamlessly in promoting that holy grail, the local economy:

> We encourage congregations to develop innovative ways of attracting visitors and interpreting their heritage and to develop educational opportunities. We also encourage them to develop partnerships with heritage and tourism organisations and to work with local businesses to boost the local economy' (Diocese of Chichester, 2004).

This is actually the only other few instance of the Church at diocesan level representing its churches as attractions *within* touristic space. Whilst this may be due to the influence of the local authorities with which the project developed in partnership, the Diocese was also reflecting quite precisely the touristic goals of the Church at National level and adopting a representational practice that facilitated this, one that was clearly linked with capital accumulations and the authorised national heritage discourse.

This review of representational practice at the level of individual dioceses revealed considerable variation in the way that the opportunities for representing touristic additionality were addressed in the face of traditional passivity towards tourism. Dioceses were thus found to be organising their representational practices around three key themes:

1) **Adopting the heritage agenda:** the Church's national political agenda, by becoming involved in partnerships with local tourist agencies and linking church tourism with other attractions and tourism services such as hospitality and nearby attractions, and adopting authorised notions of what the national heritage constituted.

2) **Capital accumulation:** exploiting the opportunities offered by touristic development in the surrounding tourist economy, by adding tourism to the Church's primary purpose of mission and representing the church accordingly, and possibly income generation as a way of ensuring long term financial security. This might involve agitating for involvement in the local tourist economy, by seeking to assert and to represent the touristic value of churches within in the local attraction complex; it might even involve leading in a local tourist economy that is poorly developed, by 'going it alone' in developing representational practices.

3) **Passivity** and a rejection of heritage and tourism as issues with which the church should be involved.

Having identified this considerable variety in the response of the dioceses to the opportunities afforded by the journey from passivity to additionality, it is worth exploring the way these variations are manifest in the three case study areas where closer attention was paid to the interrelationships between the diocese and their local authorities

As with the national picture analysed above, there was a considerable variety of representational practice at diocesan level within the three case study areas and by comparing and contrasting their representational practices it is possible to analyse in more detail the themes that were derived from the general survey outlined above.

The first issue was the amount of touristic representation by the Church in each of the areas concerned. The area that was least active was the Cotswolds, overseen by the Diocese of Gloucester and here was found the most resistance to the idea of additionality at a diocesan level. A senior diocesan official expressed the view that the physical buildings had been taking precedence over the Church and its agenda rather than simply being used as a tool for mission, and another, was keen to assert that whilst aware of the history and architectural interest of the buildings: 'we do not live in the past. We are serving a living God in the present ...' (Diocesan Official #3). What was being articulated here was a view that whatever was done in terms of touristic representation should take place within the culture of the church itself rather than something 'taken on from outside' (Diocesan Official #3). The physical and organisational infrastructure of the church was there to serve a specific purpose and the representational practice surrounding it primarily reflected that.

During the course of the research little changed in this perception and a second official interviewed some time later and towards the end of the study confirmed that nothing of substance had been implemented in terms of touristic representation. She did think, however, that it was beginning to be talked about, and an event of some kind was being planned for the Forest of Dean (a distinct touristic area with the Diocese, but separate from the Cotswolds). She also reported that there was talk of adopting the *Hidden Britain* project (2005). This is a Government initiative to promote less well known areas currently being piloted in Cumbria. Although not necessarily Church led, these projects are intended to involve local communities in touristic representation by identifying and promoting what they have to offer in terms of attractions and services (Gloucester Diocesan Official #3b). These developments could represent a move closer to the first and second positions outlined above, in becoming involved with local agencies and national initiatives and grasping the opportunities these afforded, a movement in other words, from passivity to additionality.

Whereas the Cotswold case study showed evidence of ambivalence and possibly resistance to the additionally thesis, the Diocese of Bradford appointed a Tourism Officer in the early stages of the present study. This was a three-year funded project that was established by a vicar who was particularly interested in the touristic potential of churches in the area. The interview with the Tourism Officer took place towards the end of the initiative and provided an opportunity to reflect on the issues and challenges that had emerged during its course (Diocesan Officer #2). From the early stages it had become clear that there was a strong divergence in representative practice between Bradford's urban and rural area (see Chapter 3).

> It really is a split between the urban area and the countryside. The countryside is a well established destination – even internationally as far as Haworth is concerned, and then you have all these opulent villages surrounding the City and then further afield. Contrast with that an urban area with some very serious social problems and a reputation for being 'unsafe', you know the Manningham Road and those sorts of areas. It's not really conducive to church tourism (laughs) (Diocesan Tourism Officer #2).

The vicar responsible for creating the initiative had planned to begin in the rural part of the Diocese with the design of trails and the production of leaflets and promotional material. An information exchange network was also established so that church leaflets could be distributed to other outlets such as teashops, and vice versa. After this it was intended to extend the project in to the City, where urban churches might be included. The plans were shelved, however, because of the problems associated with representing the urban churches as attractions. The majority were of Victorian foundation and often located in areas that had clearly never been represented as touristic. As it happened, attention began to be focused on the Millennium celebrations (of 2000) and most of the urban investment was directed at Bradford Cathedral (its former parish church). The situation at the time of writing is now largely reflective of this development with the Cathedral represented as a major tourist attraction within the City and supported by detailed and well presented web resources (Diocese of Bradford, 2005).

The Bradford Project represents a determined but short lived effort to invest in tourism and to do so from a clear additionality perspective and corresponds, therefore, with positions 1 and 2 in supporting touristic representation, linking to the national heritage discourse and attempting to integrate with other agencies in promoting capital accumulation from the project as a whole. The promotional material, whilst clearly representative of this is also concerned centrally with the Church's mission in the area. The material is also clearly focused on individual churches though there is a tendency to see the touristic context as a major determinant of whether the church itself can be represented touristically. Indeed it was deemed impossible to represent churches *as* touristic space within areas that were not, i.e. the urban area. On this evidence it would suggest that it is difficult for representational practices to supersede the real and lived spatial practices associated with a location that are artefacts of its social and economic realities (Lefebvre, 1991, 33 & 38) and to which attention has already been drawn in the case of Bradford (Hope and Klemm, 2001). They may eventually succeed, but it suggests that because of the context of urban Bradford as a 'difficult area' in terms of spatial practice, the Church has not been able or willing to take a lead in representational practice in the urban area, a clear indication of the cultural momentum that supports the rural-historic axis in heritage representational practice.

The North Norfolk case study showed evidence of support on the part of the Diocese for touristic representation, with a Tourism Officer reporting the Diocesan Board of Social Responsibility. The primary factor here in terms of motivation was the sheer number of medieval churches that were at risk of deterioration, especially where congregations were small:

> We have churches of all shapes and sizes and many of them ... most of them, are significant buildings architecturally. Some of them are huge, so you have these enormous medieval buildings in the middle of nowhere with congregations that have virtually disappeared. I mean there has to be something . . . its just not a sustainable situation, not

> with the costs of maintenance. It can cost a hundred thousand pounds just to fix a roof. If tourism can offer a lifeline then that's something worth exploring (Diocesan Official #4).

Prompt: How can it offer a lifeline?

> Well, I suppose by having the buildings used for something else as well, it brings them into peoples' awareness …

Prompt: You weren't thinking just in terms of donations and fund raising?

> No, it would have to be more than that. It would have to that the buildings were valued as part of the national heritage. That gives us a role in creating that value, in addressing the needs of tourists in our way, so that we are not simply relying on the local Tourist Board to do it for us, but working in partnership with them (Diocesan Official #4).

The scale of the problem was such that the Diocese felt almost compelled to regard tourism as a potential means of maintaining the churches as places of religious practice. There is evidence, therefore, of the Diocese adopting positions 1 and 2 as outlined above, by becoming involved in touristic representation, linking it with authorised notions of heritage and grasping, rather desperately, the economic opportunities it offered.

The representational practice was still based on individual churches, however, to the extent that particular vicars and parishes were singled out as examples of good practice. The challenge as they saw it was to enable other clergy and parishioners to follow the same path and to

> …appreciate the value of creating an atmosphere of welcome and the benefits of this in terms of mission (Diocesan Official #4).

The case study areas thus broadly reflected the three positions identified from the responses of dioceses, generally, to the perceived opportunities that tourism offers. There was evidence of support for the Church's agenda in becoming involved in regional economic development through tourism; there was evidence that the opportunities for mission and economic gain were being grasped at diocesan level in the case study areas, although there was also evidence of rejection in the Cotswolds area, at least in the past. The one opportunity to lead the touristic representation of churches in a poorly developed attraction system was at urban Bradford, but the diocese here had eventually decided not to develop touristic representation in the face of the spatial practices that existed in most of the City, and to focus its attentions on the Cathedral and the rural area with its established cultural capital. Where links with tourism are made, they are made clearly within the hegemonic rather than dissenting heritage discourses (Smith, 2006, 35). Here is the hegemonic continuity that Smith (2006, 118) observed in relation to the country house, and here are the usual formulations of pricelessness and 'treasure', and even mythical figures, although if Robin Hood ever did rob from the rich to give to the poor, his efforts were largely ignored, even by the church in which tradition says he was married.

The emphasis on context is supported by evidence from the Cotswolds and in Cumbria where the representation of churches was influenced by the developed nature of the touristic space around them. In the Cotswolds this generated some ambivalence on the part of the Diocese about the perceived benefits of tourism and a desire to remain separate from such representations, whereas in Cumbria the Diocese's attempts to represent churches as part of a developed touristic space were frustrated by the indifference of local tourism officials whose portfolio was, in a sense, already full.

In Bradford it seemed apparent that representational practices could be frustrated by spatial practices, where the latter militated against the creation and representation of touristic meanings. The urban area simply did not occupy the cultural space of the church as tourist attraction, firmly rooted in its rural-historic context. In Lincolnshire there was more of a shared ownership of the representational practice: for the local authority it enhanced the portfolio in a destination that was otherwise weak in its attraction value, whilst providing the Diocese with opportunities to develop a wider audience for its mission, through the wider use of its buildings. Established notions of heritage provided the cultural backdrop.

Conclusion

This analysis of the Church's representational practice at level of its central government and regional diocesan structures has provided the first evidence of dissonance in the representation of church tourism within the Church itself. First, despite the economic strength and power that supports the expansion of touristic space there is evidence of resistance to it that derives from the ways that space is actually lived and used. This divergence is already apparent between the Church's central government and its diocese, which are physically and organisationally closer to that lived space. At its highest levels of governance the Church seeks involvement in tourism as it provides access to regional government and regeneration. Representational activity at this level is therefore focused on gaining such a position in the politics of regeneration especially where the audience is an external one. Here its positioning and influence operate within a broader polity where the evangelical role might be regarded as unhelpful and would certainly not be easy to reconcile with the standard heritage discourse.

Internally, however, the Church is required to justify such a position to its constituent diocese and this it does by appealing to the potential of tourism as an additional function that is both a tool of evangelism and a means of generating interest (with possible revenue earning effects). The extent to which this motive factor has transferred to the diocese is, however, problematic and diocesan activity is at best patchy. There is thus a marked ambivalence about the value of church tourism and a dynamic in which the wider context and the opportunities it either affords or denies is modulated by the concerns of individual dioceses and individuals within the dioceses about their primary function.

To return to Lefebvre's triptych, what can be observed here is a conflict between the representations of churches as tourist attractions and the must 'lived' spatial practices of the primary users who are associated with the traditional passivity of the Church towards tourism. The problem for the Church is that the existing spatial practices are empowered by their own reality in the eyes of those involved in the operation of churches as primarily religious buildings. In his interpretation of Lefebvre's triptych Shields suggests that such practice forms a 'continual appropriation and re-affirmation of the world as structured according to existing socio-spatial arrangements' (1991, 52). The representation of space must first, therefore, challenge the lived sphere that expresses the traditional passivity of the Church in relation to tourism and provide the grounds for additionality. Until these additional functions are 'known and expected to take place' (1991, 53) then that change in spatial practice is likely to be contested and continue to be contested until it is somehow concretised by an empowered representation – in this case the Government of the Church of England over its constituent dioceses.

The evidence of a dissonance in the representation of tourism between the governance of the Church at its national level and its regional dioceses, and the variety of positioning adopted by the dioceses in relation to the opportunities and perceived threats posed by tourism, provides a first insight on the processes that are influencing and affecting the representation of churches as tourist attractions. Given the history of church tourism and the well attested value of the buildings in cultural, historical and architectural terms, here is the first indication that the quality they represent as a cultural resource is not necessarily sufficient to propel them into touristic space and that there are other factors involved, such as the dynamics of context and the continued passivity of the Church's response to tourism. This is perhaps all the more surprising when the socio-economic context for this development is the powerfully motivated expansion of touristic space in the post industrial environment. The irony is that both the primary purpose of churches and their additional touristic function, where this has developed, are both organised around hegemonic expressions of the Church in society. Tourism forcefully reproduces authorised and acceptable notions of the past and what is valued, whilst the churches are cultural artefacts of those same forces, 'frozen' as buildings and monuments. The challenge set for themselves by the advocates of tourism is to use their representational power to re-represent churches as and within touristic space, linking them with established heritage constructs. For churches *as* and *within* touristic space this is a journey from passivity to additionality and a proactive role in developing tourism and contributing something to the destination as a whole. A primary means to achieve this is by associating them with the authorised heritage discourse identified by Smith (2006), and linking them with typical heritage formulations such as 'priceless treasures', 'jewels in the crown', 'history and tradition', and the established cultural constructs of rural history and tradition. The manifestations of these forces will now be investigated within the parishes themselves.

Chapter 5

Tourism and the Parishes

Introduction

In Chapter 4 it was suggested that the representation of churches as tourist attractions has been influenced by pressure from within the Church hierarchy, and external agencies which see churches as cultural assets within a framework of economic regeneration (Meethan, 2001). This, it is argued, has been achieved by linking churches to an established concept of heritage that supports national identity and authorised notions of the national past. A kind of representational dissonance has emerged, however, even though these processes are powerfully promoted by authorities concerned with economic development and governance. The traditional passivity of the church in relation to tourism has been addressed by an appeal to the potential of tourism as both a tool of evangelism and a possible means of revenue, or at the very least a kind of protective awareness and interest that might contribute to their long term survival as buildings, and as churches. The response of the dioceses has, however, been varied, with some grasping the opportunities afforded and others expressing the passive ambivalence to which reference has already been made.

This chapter develops the analysis by examining the response of parishes to church tourism in relation to their own spatial and representational response to the potential of tourism as an additional function. Their role is crucial in providing an operational context for the representation of churches as touristic space. They also provide, however, a context for the spatial practice of the church as a religious organisation. Parishes have considerable autonomy within the Church, which explains the variation in representational practices between parishes that was one of the findings of this part of the research.

The main sources of information about the activities of parishes have been the ever increasing number of parish websites, together with on-site observation, which took place in the case study areas, and interviews with clergy. The primary focus here was the way in which individual churches were represented as attractions, how this was manifested at the churches themselves, and how the clergy understood or responded to what could be seen either as an opportunity, a threat or an irrelevance. A major area of inquiry is the response to the idea of tourism as an additional function and the ways in which this has been presented by the Church's government to the parishes. In other words, to what extent are the website, the place itself, and the clergy expressing a touristic role for the church?

Parish activity

For the purposes of both governance and religious mission the dioceses of the Church of England are divided into parishes, each of which is presided over by a priest, known as the vicar, although nowadays it is likely that they will have several parishes within their jurisdiction. There are 13,000 such parishes in England. The vicar is responsible for the spiritual needs of everyone in the community, not just regular church goers, and this provides a basis and a liturgical authority for involvement in that wider community. The individual parishes, whether or not they are encouraged by their diocese are, potentially, the most active agency in the representation of individual churches as tourist attractions, and appear to have considerable freedom and autonomy in this as in many other regards. It is to the parishes, therefore, that attention must be directed in order to evaluate the nature and extent of touristic activity at an operational level.

Current practice, however, has been prefigured by considerable interest and activity on the part of the Church authorities. In 1980, the Society for the Promotion of the Preservation of English Parish Churches organised a two-day conference at Bradford Cathedral, the purpose of which was to develop a concept of 'church management' that included the encouragement of visitors. This might be seen as a version of the concept of cultural resource management, seen elsewhere and particularly in relation to archaeological resource and national parks management in the United States (Lee, 2001, 3). The central theme in this regard is a perspective on management that represents the historic resource as a cultural object for which access and interpretation are central rather than peripheral.

A year later the Council for the Care of Churches submitted a report entitled *Churches and Visitors* to the General Synod of the Church of England. The recommendations, for the encouragement of visitors to churches were commended to the dioceses and to the parishes themselves. Whilst later developments included the establishment of the Open Churches Trust (2004) and the Churches Tourism Association (2004c), to provide advice to individual parishes on how they might encourage and welcome visitors, progress at parish level was regarded as slow by at least one commentator (Whitworth, 1998). Among the measures suggested by Whitworth to overcome this apparent tardiness were links with the local tourist information office, events and festivals, guided tours, brass rubbing and the identification of a church's points of particular interest. Amidst the celebration of such wonders, however, reference is once again made to the possibilities for mission and the ways this can be linked with established concepts of heritage that link the glories of the building with those of God:

> Some parishes are already seeing the generosity of the tourist and benefiting from it. While the casual holiday visitor may not be directly interested at that moment in the worship of the Church, only a few fail to be moved by the glories of architecture and craftsmanship expressed in so many of our churches. If encouraged to appreciate and understand these treasure houses, the visitor may well be inspired to Christianity (Whitworth, 1998).

The use of the words 'treasure houses' has a particular resonance with representations of the country house, which for marketing purposes have also been represented in this way (Smith, 2006, 115-122).

The role of parishes in promoting tourism has increased markedly since the present research was begun, for reasons related to factors that have already been discussed: the activities of the Church's government and of external agencies such as local authority tourism offices, all of this within a context of expanded, post-industrial touristic space. At a practical level the opportunities afforded by the internet for representational practices are also apparent and as a result individual parish websites have developed very rapidly since the end of the 1990s. The internet has provided, therefore, opportunities to move from a passive approach to tourism to a more proactive form of representation and the purpose here is to assess the extent to which this has occurred.

The first significant finding, however, is that parish websites have not developed in order, simply, to facilitate tourism. Where they have developed it is with the active encouragement of the diocese or through the efforts of interested and highly motivated individuals within the parish, and largely as a means of communication with parishioners and the outside world. It is apparent, however, that the internet has provided a medium through which messages about tourism and about individual churches as attractions can be promulgated where there is a will so to do. In 2005, a charitable organisation, the Anvil Trust, set up an agency to promote and develop the use of websites by churches of all denominations, its mission being to provide 'a range of services and resources for people who want help in applying theology and Christian ideas to the world around them' (Ekklesia, 2005). The agency provides training, consultancy services, conferences and workshops based around Christian issues. It seems apparent, then that such developments are likely to increase the use of the internet by parishes although, again, the primary function is evangelical.

It was decided, therefore, that as an essential part of the present research individual parish websites should be investigated for what they represented about their own churches as touristic space and to identify any correlates of such representational practices. These were hypothesised on the basis of a notional touristic attraction value so that location (urban or rural), age and architectural interest were posited. These 'variables of attraction' were thus related to those factors indicated by the history of church tourism (See Chapter 2). Briefly stated it might be hypothesised that medieval churches in rural locations might be deemed more viable by parishes as tourist attractions and therefore might be represented more clearly as such on their respective parish websites. This could be seen as a manifestation of the rural-historic cultural construct to which reference has already been made. By the same equation, modern churches in urban contexts might be supposed to be less attractive and thus to benefit less from touristic representation. Yet these distinctions were never expected to be clear cut: the foregoing analysis of diocesan activity might lead to a supposition that a strong sense of primary purpose and mission might diminish an interest in tourism even for the most attractive and historic parish church, and again, that where tourism might be seen as an opportunity for mission, it might motivate touristic representation in modern and urban contexts. Victorian churches present a third possible modification, in that perceptions of their historic and architectural value have changed over the years as the period becomes more remote in time and the aesthetic movements associated with it have become more highly valued. Thus the work of particular architects such as Scott and Street might now be worthy of note and the productions of the Arts and Crafts movement, art nouveau and art deco are widely celebrated (Kirk, 2005).

In all 1,730 parish websites were investigated across 22 dioceses, representing both urban and rural locations and each of the English regions. Those diocese that were not included either had no web presence at the time the research was conducted or because they were exceptional in some way. For example, the Diocese of Lincoln had a highly developed tourism policy that was reflected at parish level with internet presence as an integral part of the process of representation (see above), and the Dioceses of Southwark and Carlisle had standardised web pages for each parish, which negated somewhat the possibility of examining developments initiated by individual parishes. The extent of parish website development is shown in Table 4, below:

Table 4: Parishes with Websites, by Diocese (2003-4)

Diocese	Number o Churches	No. of Church with Websites	% of Churche with Websites
Chester	306	66	22
Coventry	240	42	18
Durham	290	71	24
Ely	341	43	13
Exeter	613	81	13
Gloucester	400	37	9
Guildford	217	145	67
Leicester	350	72	21
Lichfield	580	205	35
London	479	202	42
Manchester	363	31	9
Newcastle	245	20	8
Oxford	800	157	20
Peterborough	350	25	7
Ripon	267	50	19
Rochester	264	90	34
St Albans	400	50	13
St Edmundsbury	478	91	19
Wakefield	213	43	20
Winchester	400	77	19
Worcester	281	19	7
York	605	113	19
TOTAL	**8,482**	**1,730**	**mean = 20.38**

Table 4 also indicates the proportion of churches in each diocese with its own website, and it is clear that there is a considerable degree of variation around the mean of 20+%, although Guildford with 67% is the only one with over half its churches represented in this way.

There are no readily apparent correlates of the extent of website development. St Edmundsbury with 94% of its churches listed grade 1 or 2 has a slightly lower than average level of website representation, and there appears to be no relation to the type of location, that is, whether the diocese is largely urban or largely rural. The data supports the conclusion that the extent of website development is not related to either the desire for touristic representation or, indeed, any intrinsic qualities of a church that might in turn be related to attraction values, such as age, location or architectural merit. It seems, rather, that it is more likely to be a consequence of the interest of individuals and the organisation of support for website development within the diocese and individual parishes.

The extent of touristic representation was then examined within each website. It should be understood, however, that in no instances was this a primary motivation for the creation of the site. The main purpose, by contrast, was to create a presence on the web for parishioners and others who had moved away but maintained an affiliation with it. Thus, points of contact, schedules and details of services, news items relating to the parish and clergy and items relating the Church's ministry in the locality and at a wider level formed the staple content of the sites.

Four indicators of touristic representation were selected as set out in Chapter 3. These were: the amount of guide-type information provided; the presence of visitor services, such as access (other than for services) and provision for more distant visitors, such as car parking and the presence or otherwise of links to other attractions in the area; and finally the existence or otherwise of a 'virtual engagement' with web visitors through the use of 'virtual tours', or photographs linked to interactive plans.

The characteristics chosen to correlate with these features were the setting, in terms of an urban or rural context, and the age of the church, in terms of five categories:

> churches with substantial medieval fabric, (to circa 1500);
> Renaissance (1500 – 1700);
> Georgian (1700 -1830);
> Victorian (essentially the neo-gothic buildings of the period 1830 – 1900);
> Modern (1900 - present).

Information for visitors

The primary means of evaluating touristic representation was the amount of guide-type information provided about the church as a building rather than as a place of worship. Four categories were thus identified:

High:	over 500 words;
Medium:	between 100 and 500 words;
Low:	less than 100 words;
None:	no information about the church that might be of interest to a visitor.

Images were also associated with the high, medium and low levels of content and since a photograph is clearly a piece of information about the building that would be of interest to a potential visitor, sites that contained little more than one or two pictures were categorised as "low" content rather than "none". The extent of information provided about church buildings in parish websites is presented in Table 5 below, for the sample as a whole.

Table 5: Extent of Information Provided about Church Buildings

Content	
High	18.9
Medium	42.1
Low	25.6
None	13.5
	n=1,730

Whilst it was clearly more common for churches in the sample to provide high levels of information than none at all, it was also evident that the majority satisfied themselves with a medium amount or a modicum of information rather than a detailed account of the building that might be of interest to the committed church tourist, or which might be used to attract the casual visitor. The dioceses of Peterborough, St Edmundsbury and Ely contained the highest proportions of churches with high levels of information (30 – 40%), but this never exceeded the proportion offering a medium amount. At the other end of the scale the diocese of Exeter and Guildford contained the highest proportion of churches offering no information and in both cases this exceeded the proportion offering medium and high amounts combined. This evidence from the parishes reflected the situation in the dioceses, in that the levels of representation were extremely variable. There was also evidence, however, of the modulating effect of the touristic environment that was suggested from the survey of dioceses in Chapter 4. The Dioceses of Leicester and Manchester, for example, contained parishes with higher levels of touristic representation than that of Gloucester, which contains the highly represented touristic space of the Cotswolds and the Diocese of Exeter, which contains most of Devon with its highly developed tourism economy. Once more, the presence of churches within developed and highly represented touristic space does not mean that the parishes themselves will take on the role. On the contrary they may eschew it completely or simply go along with it. It is worth noting, for example, that the churches in the Cotswold case study area were normally open even though they were not particularly well represented by their parishes. It may be that the local authorities and other agencies having taken a lead in representational practice in these areas have already signified churches as touristic space and left the churches themselves with no particular role other than to react either favourably or unfavourable depending on the attitudes towards the potential of tourism as an additional function and, perhaps, the influence of their diocese.

By contrast, in areas traditionally under-represented as touristic space there may a motivation to lead the process if it seems viable, as has been the case at diocesesan level. Yet this is a complex dynamic. We have seen at Bradford that the urban project seemed to be thwarted by the sheer difficulty of representing particular spatial arrangements in a touristic way; and in Cumbria the local tourist authorities seem to think that the attraction value of the destination area was sufficient without adding churches to the portfolio. All this suggests that in representing themselves as tourist attractions churches are, rather like the dioceses, responding in some, often quite complex way, to their overall touristic context, a point that will be examined further below.

Age of church buildings and information for visitors

The relative ages of churches in the sample are shown in Table 6, below. As stated in Chapter 3, most medieval churches and some from later periods contain fabric or fittings from other periods. A judgement has been made in each case, therefore, as to the period to which the church *substantially* belongs. For example, a medieval church that has been significantly (and typically) restored in Victorian times is classified as medieval, whereas a church with a medieval foundation that was substantially rebuilt at a later period and preserves few medieval features is ascribed to that later period. For the sake of clarity some liberties have been taken with the boundaries of these periods and nominal dates are used to indicate the prevailing style. For example, it is unlikely the churches built before 1910 will exhibit modern stylistic features although they may well be ascribed to the later Victorian styles such as the Arts and Crafts Movement or Art Nouveau, that immediately prefigure modernist design in their simplicity or naturalism as opposed to the high medievalism of earlier decades.

Table 6: Substantial periods of Churches in Sample

Substantial Period	
Medieval (- 1550)	45.6
Renaissance (1550 – 1700)	1.3
Georgian (1700 – 1840)	3.8
Victorian (1840 – 1910)	35.7
Modern (1910 -)	13.7
n=1,730	

Clearly, the largest proportion of churches in the sample is substantially medieval, although Victorian churches also form a relatively large group. Fewer than 2% belong to the renaissance period and although no comparable figures are available for churches as a whole the sample would seem to be representative of the periods to which churches typically belong. It is perhaps easy to forget what this represents in terms of real cultural capital. Churches of medieval origin, with medieval fabric, artefacts and works of art are a common feature of urban and rural landscapes. They represent the activities of both religious authority and of communities over the past thousand years. In both their context and their detail they effortlessly convey the effects of change, continuity and ordinary life in ways that museums and themed attractions can only aspire to. They are, as such, the accidental repositories of identity, culture and social change, whether they were built a thousand years ago or a fifty.

When the periods of churches are cross-tabulated with the amount of information displayed on their websites a very clear association becomes apparent, see Figure 8 below:

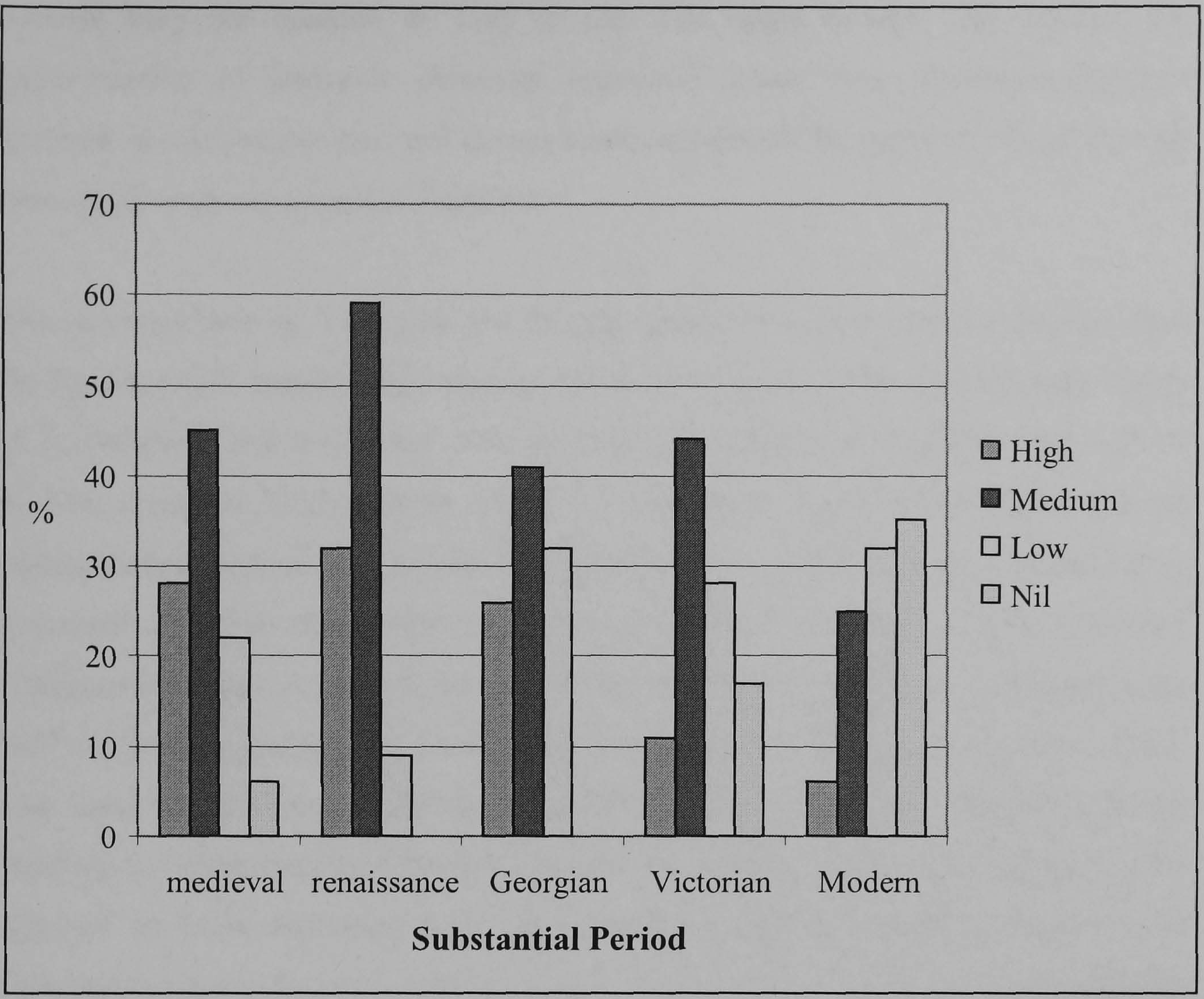

Figure 8: Amount of Information Displayed on Websites by Substantial Period of Church

Perhaps surprisingly, churches of the Renaissance period appear to display the highest level of information about the building, although medieval and Georgian churches are a close second and third respectively. Victorian and modern churches are substantially less well represented in the high information category. Amongst medieval and renaissance churches, high and medium levels of information predominate; amongst Georgian churches there is a fairly even balance between high medium and low levels of representation. For Victorian churches medium levels predominate, and for modern churches low levels of information or none at all predominate. There is evidence, therefore, of a correlation between the age of buildings and the level of touristic representation displayed in their websites, although the renaissance period churches are slightly anomalous in this context. It is possible that their relative rarity and unusual form perhaps have a part to play. They can be perceived as 'old', like medieval churches, but perhaps more interesting because they are unusual as well as old. The same factors may explain the representation of Georgian churches, especially since most Victorian churches returned to medieval styles and consequently enhanced the rarity of churches with renaissance and neo-classical features.

The representation of Victorian and modern churches is also of more interest than the figures might immediately suggest. Of the former, over 10% provide high levels of information and well over 50% provide either high or medium levels. Even modern churches receive what might be considered surprisingly high levels of representation, with almost a third displaying high or medium levels of information. A number of factors might help to explain this finding. First, there is little doubt that Victorian buildings in general, including the great civic architecture of the period as well as churches and houses, have come to be more highly regarded in recent years. The distancing in time has perhaps contributed to this, but whereas Victorian church building has been tarnished by the less than sympathetic restorations carried out by some of its major architects, those same architects have now come to be revered as individual interpreters of the various gothic styles. Jenkins, for instance, has felt able to assert that 'Hardly a county in England is without its magnificent Victorian church, buildings which deserve to rank amongst the masterpieces of English Architecture' (1999, xxiii)

The appearance of modern churches within this type of representation is still more interesting, although the category most certainly includes churches that are of significant interest as well as the nondescript. Amongst these might be included St Jude on the Hill in Hampstead, London. This church is a grade 1 listed building designed by the eminent English Architect Edwin Lutyens, and is one of only two twentieth century churches listed by Jenkins (1999, 431 – 432). In addition it hosts concerts and an annual music festival. Also, St Francis Terriers in High Wycombe, designed by Giles Gilbert Scott and built in 1930, offers flower festivals, art exhibitions and in 2005 celebrated its 75th anniversary. Both of these churches are significant because of their architectural value, but others draw on whatever cultural capital can be mustered. All Saints Dedworth, near Windsor was built in 1972 to replace a Victorian church although the windows of the latter, created by William Morris on site, were included in the new building and are duly celebrated. What is perhaps even more significant is that some 'modern' churches have begun to celebrate their history, so that for example St Peter's Church in Watford, Hertfordshire and St Barnabas, Cray, in Orpington, Kent, though built in the 1950s, display through the internet a history that can be represented as a source of attraction through an appeal to the cultural capital that they are held to contain.

That value can be discerned even in modern churches, and can be represented as attraction value, is a significant finding albeit within the overall finding of a clear association between antiquity and representation. Theoretical explanations of this phenomenon evoke the levelling effects of post-modernity and a de-differentiation of periodicity from the medieval to the modern, with the associated effect of the past coming right up to date. Urry's remarks (1990, 129-30) about the shift from auratic to nostalgic engagements with the objects of the past has already been mentioned (see Chapter 1) and may be relevant here. Thus, personal and family histories, genealogy and 'new' histories of place, of the sort that Walsh (1992) describes, are unlikely to depend for their achievement on the antiquity or architectural merit of a church. On the contrary these narratives and their construction will use the church as a facilitating locus of interest and attachment to place (Lippard, 1997), and may engender visits of a different kind from those normally associated with church tourism and devotees of Pevsner.

Church and setting

Churches in the sample were classified according to whether their setting was predominantly rural or urban. A basis for this analysis is the cultural construction of the countryside and English rurality, to which reference has been made. Smith observes the phenomenon again, in relation to country houses:

> The country house is made up of more than grandiose architectural styles and monumentalism. Integral to the traditional conceptualisation of the country house are also the ordered rural landscapes or parks within which they sit (2006, 117).

The countryside thus takes on an emblematic quality in terms of heritage and national identity (118; Daniels, 1993, 8; Aitcheson, 2000; Smith, 2006), a cultural construction that has already been discussed (see Chapter 2).

Definitions of rural and urban are hard to apply in some marginal areas, particularly in the suburbs of large towns and cities. A similar problem arose over what size of settlement merited the term 'urban'. Obviously villages in the countryside were not judged to be urban, but what of small market towns? Ultimately judgements had to be made and a set of rough benchmarks were established. For example, a town of over 5,000 population was regarded as urban. This seemed to work where it was applied in the Cotswolds, so that a town the size of Cirencester (population 15,000) would be regarded as urban, whereas one the size of Fairford (population just over 4,000) would be considered to be rural (Gloucestershire County Council, 2005). This method of differentiation, whilst by no means perfect did provide a kind of 'ready reckoning' for the purposes of the survey. On this basis 53% of the churches in the sample were to be found in rural and 43% in urban locations.

Further analysis indicated a statistically significant relationship between setting and the amount of information provided about the church. The analysis is summarised in Table 7, below.

Table 7: Amount of Information about Churches by Setting

Setting/ Amount of informatior	% of churches in Rural Setting	% of churches in Urban Setting
High	20.8	16.7
Medium	47	36.6
Low	23	28.3
None	9.1	18.4
TOTAL	100	100

n=1,730

As Table 7 suggests, nearly 21% of rural, as opposed to 17% of urban churches were represented by high levels of information on their websites. The difference is replicated with medium levels of information, but with low and levels and nil information the figures are significantly reversed with twice as many urban churches represented by no information as those in rural settings.

In all, however, the data indicates a higher level of representation among urban churches than conventional wisdom might suppose. The possible reasons for this are complex. First, there is the propulsion of the urban into touristic space, which is likely to bring churches along with it as potential cultural capital (Page, 1995; Law, 2002). Second, there is the emergent interest in Victorian and later architecture and the work of particular architects. Amongst many others, St Augustine's Highgate in London provides a typical example of the representation of an urban Victorian Church as viable touristic space. The website provides pages on the history of the church and its architects, with contemporary illustrations, and pays particular attention to its statuary, stained glass and interior fittings all of which are illustrated with high quality photographs (St Augustine's Church Highgate, 2004). Some urban churches may be of interest for conventional reasons, especially those of medieval origin or the churches of Wren and Hawksmoor in London. Also evident, however, is the 'new historicity' of the modern church to which reference was made earlier, and that seeks to place the building within the context of the development of a community, or to record events that parishioners are likely to remember, or in which they might be interested.

Sources of value or cultural capital that were ascribed to urban churches on their websites were many and varied. The most significant, however, was the architect. The mention of Wren would be no surprise, but eminent Victorians also figured largely: Butterfield, Scott and Street were all mentioned as was anything related to Lutyens, the arts and crafts movement and the Pre-Raphaelites. The provision of musical concerts was also significantly represented, especially if this was associated with a highly regarded or recently restored organ or the activities of a choir. Connections with historical personalities, ranging from the classical composer Handel to Tony Hancock, (a popular television personality in the 1960s), were also represented, as were literary connections such as Lord Byron and Oscar Wilde. It was also clear that a number of churches had capitalised on their urban location and their intrinsic qualities by providing shops, cafes and even visitor centres, managed and guided by friends groups and charitable trusts.

In both settings, however, the churches as cultural capital are subject to representational practices that either include or exclude them from touristic space. In urban locations the churches themselves can be newly prized as cultural capital in post industrial urban space (Zukin, 1991). In the countryside, however, they help to support and to reproduce the rural-historic cultural axis and linkages with established heritage and it is these linkages that enable their touristic representation. In both settings they constitute objects of heritage and potentially of tourism where opportunities are available. These opportunities are, in turn, influenced by the immediate touristic environment and the representational practices of both the Church and other agencies. Clearly, it is the rural-historic axis that is predominant in the construction of touristic space in and around churches, and Jenkins' amusement at the way that the parish church in Luton (an urban area) was represented is emblematic of the situation. However, reconfigured urban space may also provide the fillip necessary to project a church into touristic significance. In both cases, however, the imperatives of capital accumulation and the contents of an authorised heritage to which linkages are made are crucial conditions.

Representation and technology

The technological features of the internet provide opportunities to engage with audiences on a global scale. Attracting and sustaining the viewer's attention is an important issue for marketers particularly where complex or detailed information is to be conveyed (Leong, et al., 1998). Websites were therefore investigated for the specific types of information that might create interest for a potential visitor and contribute to the attraction value of the church. This involves the use of 'virtual tours', a combination of pictures and text that directed potential visitors to significant points of interest in the building; visitor information concerning when the church is open, apart from services, and other facilities such as car parking, and other local attractions and tourism services. It was clear that only a small minority of churches offered such additional information and its provision acts as a useful indicator of the extent to which the church is represented as touristic space.

Only 8.6% of church websites provided something that could be regarded as a 'virtual tour'. Almost 80% of these are accounted for by either medieval or renaissance churches although the latter period records the highest proportion of churches offering this facility: 18 % as opposed to 15% of medieval churches. Less than 5% of churches of the Georgian, Victorian or modern periods offered virtual tours on their websites.

A typical example of such representation is St John the Baptist, Royston (2004) in Hertfordshire. Here several web pages guide the virtual visitor through all of the significant areas of the church, and with supporting photographic illustrations point out important features such as the monumental brasses. Something similar is provided at St Mary's church, Bourne in Hampshire. The church history page contains the following invitation to tour the church and to view some of its more valued features in detail:

> Like many churches St. Peter's has a long and varied history. Take a tour around our church by clicking on the 'Church Tour' link or if you would like to see a more detailed description of our famous Font, or the unique Effigy situated in the Wyke Aisle click on the links below (St Mary Bourne, 2004).

The site is provided with an interactive plan that enables 'visitors' to view different parts of the church, and the font and effigy are provided with separate pages containing detailed and scholarly interpretation. The only modern church (dating to 1916) offering a virtual tour was St Augustine's, Gillingham (2004) in Kent. The tour was accessed from a link on the front page of a well designed website.

Applying MacCannell's (1999) framework for the process of sight sacrilisation, this is *mechanical reproduction* par excellence, and it could be argued that the display offered by the website fulfils the final stage in that the website itself becomes an object of interest, perhaps to an even greater extent than the kinds of physical enshrinement to which MacCannell refers.

Apart from this theoretical point of reference, another issue to emerge from this part of the research was the extent to which 'real' visits are facilitated or encouraged by websites. This in itself is a useful indicator of the representation of churches as touristic space. Whilst all of the church websites that were examined contained a map or a link to a map showing the location of the church very few provided information that would be useful to visitors. This included information on whether and when the church was open (outside the schedule of services and religious celebration), from whom a key might be had and whether tours were available. In a small number of cases, such as All Saints, Newmarket (2004), guides and historical information were provided in easily downloadable formats for printing at home prior to a visit. However only a very small number of churches in the sample provided any kind of information that might be considered 'facilitating' in terms of an actual visit. Indeed, only 6% of churches in the sample provided such visitor facilitation and it is clearly related to the substantive period of the church with medieval and renaissance churches accounting for 78% of those offering such information. Only 3% of Victorian and less than 1% of modern churches provide visitor facilitation on their websites. When related to setting, the now familiar pattern emerges. Whilst only 8% of rural churches provide this information, this is above the average for churches as a whole and twice the level recorded for churches in urban settings.

The information provided by Christchurch Priory in Dorset is typical, with an indication of "times for viewing" as opposed to times for services and religious events. The church also provides contact details for arranging tours, information about when "welcomers" are available to guide visitors, opening times for its shop and a diary of events (Christchurch Priory, 2004).

St Andrews Church Medstead in Hampshire charts a careful course between catering for worshippers and for visitors:

> We always welcome newcomers and visitors to the church, so please join us in worship or simply come and visit our beautiful historical building.
>
> Visitors are always welcomed to the church. Our opening hours are 9am until dusk each day. There is good access for the disabled.

The website is well-designed and obviously well-maintained, its purposes clearly expressed:

> The aim of this site is to enhance communication across our large and diverse Benefice, which comprises three other churches besides St. Andrew's.
>
> It does this by advertising our services and events, providing contact and location details so you can stay in touch, by reporting news and by proclaiming the teachings of Jesus.
>
> If you are not yet a Christian but are considering coming to church, already a Christian but do not worship at St. Andrew's, an existing church member or just a casual visitor, we welcome you to our website, and hope you find something to inform, entertain or even inspire (St. Andrews, Medstead, 2004).

The ever present opportunities for mission are thus clearly articulated, and the touristic additionality is linked to the possibility of evangelism by association with the church's touristic attraction factors. It could be argued that there is little that is new about this. The buildings, when they first appeared would often be the only, or certainly one of the few stone structures in the locality. Before the reformation their interiors were garishly coloured and decorated with wall paintings depicting liturgical episodes. The liturgical calendar is punctuated with festivals and holy day holidays, performance and spectacle that survive in regions served by the catholic faith. With all of this in mind it is easy to perceive a role for church buildings and the events they hosted as attractions par excellence, the pilgrim now in the guise of a tourist. A grasping of opportunities is evident here, much as it was in those dioceses which saw in tourism more of an opportunity than a threat.

The final indicator of touristic representation was the extent to which local churches provided information about other attractions and tourism services in the locality. This type of representation is related to the systemic theories of touristic attraction advanced primarily by Leiper (1990), and to which reference has been made (see Chapter 2). It also relates to the second aspect of this investigation which is the representation of churches *within* touristic space. This will be developed in the following chapter in relation to the representational practices of local authorities and other 'official agencies'. It is included here, however, as a further measure of the extent of parish activity in touristic representation.

The types of information represented are concerned with other tourist attractions and links either directly to them or those agencies that promote tourism in the area, such as the tourist board, tourist information centre or promotional partnership. Occasionally reference is made to hospitality providers and transport links. Just under 15% of churches provide information on their websites relating to their context within an overall attraction system, and again, this is closely related to the period of the church, with 40% of renaissance and 24% of medieval churches making these links to the wider attraction system. By contrast only 7% of Victorian and 2% of modern churches made such links. The setting of the church was also, once again, a key factor, with over 20% of the 916 rural churches in the sample and 8.5% of the 813 churches in urban settings recording connections with other tourism providers. Thus it is churches, primarily of the medieval and renaissance periods, in rural settings, that are 'interesting' and which will therefore tend to find a context in local attraction systems, and actively recognise that context in their own representational practices.

Case studies

Five individual churches were investigated in each of the three case study areas, Bradford, North Norfolk and the Cotswolds were investigated for evidence of provision for visitors and their relationship with the wider attraction system. A pro forma was designed in order to record the details observed in a consistent manner (see Appendix 3).

Churches in the three areas varied considerable in the extent to which they were represented as and within touristic space. Only in the Cotswolds, for example, were all the churches open when visited, something which, according to one of the vicars interviewed, was a matter of policy in the Diocese:

> I think it is important that churches are kept open and I hope they will be for as long as possible, this is an area where you expect to see lots of visitors and I think they expect the churches to be open (Vicar #8, Cotswolds).

In Norfolk, whilst many were open, many more were closed, and with no indication of how admittance might be gained. In the Bradford Diocese, there was considerable variation between the urban and rural areas, with no churches in the former open when visited, whilst most of the rural churches were open. Only those churches that were open could be fully investigated.

Whether or not a church is open, of course, is a primary indicator of touristic representation on the part of individual parishes and the focus of the Open Churches Trust, which maintains a list and details of those churches around the country that have undertaken to remain open to the public (Open Churches Trust, 2004). The findings from the present survey tend to support evidence from Chapter 4 of the modulating influence of the touristic context over and above any intrinsic attraction value in the church itself. Thus churches in Urban Bradford are not open because their spatial environment does not permit touristic representation, whereas those in rural Bradford, the southern part of the Yorkshire Dales most assuredly do, and this is reflected in the fact that most are open. In the Cotswolds, again, an established tourist area, nearly all the churches were open at the time the research was carried out. By contrast, in North Norfolk, only a handful of churches were open, usually in established touristic locations such as Sheringham, Cley and Blakeney. Occasionally, in North Norfolk, there were churches that seemed, by their intrinsic qualities of scale and architectural merit, to generate a high level of attraction value and recognition: the well known churches of Salle and Wiveton amongst them. These were churches *as* rather than *within* touristic space. The representational practices associated with them as individual buildings, and sacralised in the MacCannalian sense, transcended the poorly developed tourism in the area as a whole.

These were exceptions, however, and for the most part local parish churches remained resolutely locked, the ultimate manifestation of passivity and indeed resistance, to the idea of tourism. This is despite the efforts of the local authorities in attempting to include churches in their portfolio of attractions. The dissonance seemed to occur when local tourism officials attempted to represent churches that were not already recognised, and to do so within under-developed touristic space. In such cases there seemed to be insufficient incentive or motivation on the part of the individual parishes to open their doors and take on the additional role of tourism. Here was evidence of real representational dissonance, between the parishes themselves and the representational activities of tourism officials. The clearest example occurred where a local authority attempted to include churches in a trail and to publicise it, only to find that one or a number of the churches featured remained (Tourism Official #3, Breckland District Council). It will be seen later that such dissonance in representational practice has real implications for tourism and for tourists in the areas concerned, with attraction formation effectively disrupted and an uncertainty on the part of visitors about how they construct their own presence in and around the building.

The combination of an open church with a 'brown sign', the standard official signifier of touristic space, was a rare occurrence in any of the case study areas, with one each in Norfolk and the Cotswolds and none in Bradford. In a way, this indicates the extent to which a consensus has emerged between official agencies and local parishioners about the touristic value of churches in the area concerned. The scarcity of these signifiers is therefore a significant measure of the perception of churches *as* touristic space.

The next indicator of touristic representation 'on the ground' was the level of interpretation available in individual churches and at the outset it was clear that this was for the most part absent. Whilst there was, in most churches, a 'short guide' this had often been written many years before, and was often written in a style that would suit the informed enthusiast rather than the casual tourist. In terms of providing information to explain the significance of the various features in the church or the liturgical significance of the design of the building very little information was available in any of the case study areas. The best that was achieved was a descriptive label attached to the most obvious features and monuments, in some cases typewritten, in others the obvious product of work on a word processor, the paper yellowing and the writing faded.

In none of the churches investigated was there a serious attempt to interpret the building and its contents in a way that visitors might expect from other heritage attractions. This recalls Uzzell's (1998) themes-markets-resources model (see Chapter 2) and the ways in which a concept of the product and its market will determine the nature and design of the interpretative experience. In this case the lack of any such concept has clearly prevented the development and representation of an interpretative scheme for the buildings.

In the case study areas this was most apparent in the Cotswolds where, although most of the churches were open few were 'receptive' in the way that Uzzell (1998, 240-241) suggests a heritage tourist might expect. Of the fifteen churches in the three case study areas, only four had signage and embedded interpretation of a depth and quality that might be expected of a tourist attraction. In Norfolk only two churches were active in providing a welcome to visitors in general, by using signage, interpretation and indeed, the spaces within the building itself. The latter were variously zoned for books, leaflets and merchandise, and for children, with books, toys and art materials and places to play. One church (Aylsham) did have guidebook written especially for children, but this was a very large church in an established touristic market town and the instance was unique.

A particular characteristic of embedded interpretation that was apparent in almost every case was that much of it was religious in tone, reflecting a clear missionary function in engaging the visitor. There was a corresponding shortage of information about the meaning and origin the historic and architectural features and internal arrangements in the church. Most of the churches used short guides or leaflets to present the history of the building in a chronological sequence and occasionally drew attention to their 'best' features, whether it was a font, a stained glass window or a collection of monuments. The question in every case, however, was the effectiveness of embedded interpretation within the building as a way of addressing the information needs of visitors as visitors, and not as worshippers who might want to know a little more about the building. Casual visitors, attracted by the church as a represented attraction are obviously the most problematic for churches who seek to use tourism as a medium for religious mission: these are the individuals that the church, presumably would want to engage and yet this is the group that is most likely to be alienated by a religious forms of interpretation.

Here was the clearest evidence yet that the primary function of the church as a place of worship seemed to obviate the need for any other meaning to be attached to it. It might also be argued that the church was already 'doing its cultural work' in representing in tangible form an authorised pastness that celebrates the achievements of the great and the good, of land ownership and power, albeit with a gloss of contemporary religious practice. In this cultural context, especially where an established cultural construct such as the rural-historic is also at hand, interpretation might seem unnecessary: the tourist gets the whole story as soon as they open the door. From a MacCannellian point of view, however, the story is not told, because an essential semiotic of attraction, the markers, the story board interpretation and the other visitor service are all missing. Thus whilst the attraction remains unachieved in touristic terms it's cultural work is already done, achieved at the level of the visitor's response to an established sign system. In this sense the need for a touristic construction of the attraction is obviated.

The most significant point, in terms of the present research, is that here is evidence that church tourism is not fully formed in the actions of churches themselves, and that their traditional passivity is still a powerful force. Despite the policy statements of the Church government and the efforts of the dioceses to draw some benefit from tourism, the situation on the ground within individual parishes is that they have not generally engaged with the processes of touristic representation. There is a dissonance, therefore, between their spatial practices and the representational practices of local authorities, which have a vested interest in including churches within their attraction portfolio. Churches are, in their eyes, objects of heritage, signifiers of rural mythology and part of a cultural aesthetic that has some provenance. Yet, in the parishes and in the churches themselves, there is a passive reticence that disrupts the normal processes of attraction development. Where the churches do communicate with an audience the message itself is not one that is easily assimilated within touristic representation. The religious tone is dissonant with the production of tourist attraction value in a way that recalls Dicks' discussion (2000, 187-194) of the way that the tourism consultants failed in their efforts to encode the reminiscences and meanings and personal accounts of local people into a coherent and essentially touristic narrative: 'Again, it seems, accessing local voices resulted in unmanageable and unusable kinds of material' (2000, 188). The 'unusable material' of the church was thus its mission focused communications and the dissonant declamation of its primary purpose. From a cultural point of view, however, tourism is simply providing another route to long-established understandings about the cultural space that churches occupy, and whilst visitors are still engaged by those original representations then the representation of churches as touristic space will remain incomplete.

Clergy

The most potentially important figure in the representation of a church as a visitor attraction is the parish priest or vicar, although decisions are likely to be influenced by active members of the congregation, particularly those represented on the Parochial Church Council (PCC). Evidence of the views of the clergy was drawn from in-depth interviews and from comments on individual parish websites. Twelve members of the clergy were interviewed, four in each of the three case study areas. The interviews took place in churches and vicarages and notes were taken on the question schedule or taped and transcribed onto the schedule later, depending on the preferences of the respondent. A copy of the question schedule is provided in Appendix 1.

The views of vicars should not be taken as representative, proportionately, of attitudes within the clergy as the sample was neither large nor random enough to achieve that objective. The sampling was, however, 'purposive' in identifying key informants with special knowledge, experience and involvement in the issues surrounding church tourism. They were selected on the basis of personal contact and recommendations from others that a particular member of the clergy might have something of interest to say.

A number of themes emerged that relate to the perception of additionality and sympathy with aims of tourism development. These ranged from complete disinterest to a purposeful engagement with the opportunities that tourism presented. It was difficult, however, to isolate clear and unequivocal responses and various themes often co-existed often within the same interviewee's response. For example those who were uninterested in tourism were also mission-based, but they did not share the view that church tourism was a basis for mission. Those who were 'engaged' with tourism development were generally happy to be associated with it, so long as others accepted the main responsibilities for organisation, funding and promotion. Those few who evinced a more purposeful attitude towards tourism were keener to be actively involved. As might be expected none of the clergy interviewed were uninterested in the idea of mission, but some placed more emphasis on it than others. All of the respondents acknowledged that churches played a part in the tourism of the area because of their intrinsic qualities, but they differed significantly in relation to the significance of this and what it implied in terms of representational practice.

Three of the twelve respondents claimed to be largely uninterested in tourism, two in Norfolk and one in the Cotswolds. Whilst none articulated the 'extreme' view that they would sooner move their congregation to the village hall, a common theme with these respondents was that tourism was largely irrelevant to their activities as clergymen and to the church in general. Whilst they understood that their churches were significant historically and architecturally, and therefore might be of interest to visitors, they did not see it as their role to represent this quality in any way. All three claimed that these features of the church were an encumbrance rather than an advantage and meant that they were charged with responsibilities for the buildings that they did not relish. This was often combined with a withering criticism of the buildings from a utilitarian perspective:

> If these churches are of architectural and historical interest than they should be looked after by the relevant agencies, not by us. For me a church is about is about what happens in it, not the building itself, which is often entirely inappropriate... then of course you are limited with what you can do with the fabric because it's a historic building.

> It's not as if you can knock a wall through or build one to make the space better for worship and for the groups that use it (Vicar #4, Norfolk).

The mission-based perspective on tourism was expressed to some extent by all nine who took a more positive view of tourism. This was often expressed in the simplistic terms of which evidence has already been noted. Five respondents placed mission at the forefront of their interest in tourism expressed in a belief that simply getting people into the church would be sufficient to influence their attitudes to religion. This was based on a concept of the multiplicity of the ways in which people might receive the Christian message. Whilst some might be affected in a very direct way there was room for others to be admitted via a kind of amorphous spirituality which would find resonance in the building, its symbolism and ultimately in the liturgy:

> There is no prescribed way of receiving Christ into one's life. I certainly wouldn't expect anyone who ventured into the church to spontaneously pick up a prayer book and find the meaning of life! People can find God's love in all sorts of ways and I'm sure the building helps to create an atmosphere for reflection in which their receptiveness might be enhanced (Vicar #9 Bradford).

Related to this was an expressed belief in the qualities of the building as a place of quietness and calmness, a place of refuge and reflection if not retreat, and a resort from the cares of modern life. Great value was thus placed on this quality of the buildings as spaces that were 'mellowed by centuries of prayer' (Vicar #6, Cotswolds). The links to pilgrimage are perhaps obvious, but this is a less structured sense of the spiritual that is could be aligned to notions of 're-creation', with Victorian undertones of moral restitution. Rojek (1993) quotes the example of Canon Barnett and his scheme for bringing art to the poor of East London in the Whitechapel Exhibitions which took place regularly between 1881 and 1898. Thus, by teaching the 'poor and ignorant' to appreciate beauty through the medium of moralistic paintings, 'their hearts would be opened to receive Christ' (Rojek, 1993, 34). A more contemporary reading is also possible, and is related to tourism as an agency of *being* in which travel and tourism are seen in terms of their educative, self-formative and spiritual potentialities (Jamal & Hollinshead, 2001, 64; see also Featherstone, 1995, 127). Echoes of this response were also found in the response of some church tourists (see Chapter 7).

The concept of attraction as an adjunct to mission is perhaps less surprising when viewed in the context of church history. The earliest church buildings were attractions *par excellence* and some of the first were, as a matter of policy, sited within pagan shrines and sanctuaries in order to capitalise on their existing attraction value as religious centres. Indeed in a well-known letter sent by Pope Gregory to Abbot Mellitus on the occasion of his missionary trip to Britain in 601, the latter is instructed not to destroy pagan temples but to sprinkle them with holy water and set up altars within them (Bede, 1968, 86). Moreover, churches in the middle ages seem to have been built and decorated with a deliberate ostentation that was calculated to make them focal points of attraction, often the only building of note in an area apart from a manor house or castle. Their building styles, use of monumental scale, sculpture and colour were clearly designed to endow them with a level of attraction only marginally enhanced by their status as houses of God (Howard, 1936). It may well be argued, then, that if churches were built as the attractions of their time, it is hardly surprising to find within them a residue of this function and one that was still attached to the concept of mission.

Three of the clergy interviewed were positive about the idea of tourism in their churches although they did not see it as their personal responsibility to organise or promote it in any way. Another perception was that an interest in the church as a building was natural and that its intrinsic qualities would inevitably make it attractive to tourists:

> This is a tourist area and people will inevitably gravitate towards old and interesting buildings like churches. They are very much a part of the landscape and a matter of local pride, so it's good that people come and visit them when they are in the area (Vicar #12, Bradford).

There was no evidence, however, that this group of respondents saw churches as being anything more than incidental to all but the most enthusiastic visitors:

> I can't imagine that people would make a special trip out here to see the church unless they had some family connection with it. Often visitors are people who were married here and have returned after many years for sentimental reasons. It's a thing they often mention in the visitors' book (Vicar #6, Cotswolds).

The one vicar who evinced a wholehearted belief in the importance of tourism was not without practical concerns at an operational level (Vicar #1, Norfolk). He suspected, for example, that churches that were successful in representing themselves as tourist attractions would be left to their own devices in terms of financial assistance:

> Look what happened at Ranworth [a popular tourist destination on the Norfolk Broads with an attractive and interesting church (Pevsner, 1997, 642-643)]. They were punished for being successful [at attracting visitors] by losing out on funding (Vicar #1, Norfolk).

This vicar, however, was alone amongst those interviewed in reflecting the positive attitude towards tourism advocated at the level of Church government. For him tourism was a 'lifeline' and would bring in much needed income for maintenance. Churches should take their place in the tourism infrastructure and help to create the necessary critical mass to bring more people in as visitors. Representing churches in this way would help to 'get the whole area on the map'. Tourism, in effect, was a necessary substitute for the now extinct landed gentry who had previously acted as benefactors. For him, tourism was a way of sharing the responsibility for protecting and conserving churches. It transferred the burden from the few to the many and in doing so reflected wider social change.

As to whether tourism might be encouraged, there was further evidence of the traditionally passive role in a general disinclination to actively promote it. Only Vicar #1 in Norfolk, perceived that it had economic benefits and was keen to explore methods for increasing it, particularly where this could be done in partnership with other agencies. He mentioned useful connections with the East of England Tourist Board and referred to the church at North Elmham (which also benefited from its proximity to the ruins of a unique Anglo Saxon cathedral) having received European structural funding for a visitor centre. He was particularly enthusiastic about hosting events, such as flower festivals (for which the church at Worstead was noted), concerts and refreshments, for which St Margaret's, Kings Lynn provided a useful model. Another point this respondent stressed was the need for better interpretation within the churches. The paucity of effective interpretation has already been noted (see above), but for this respondent it was not so much the amount, as the quality and its appeal to a broader audience:

> Interpretation tends to be too wordy and a bit amateurish. The old guidebooks are full of detail but they are not going to engage with people in general, who might just enter the church out of curiosity. It needs to be more direct and more engaging (Vicar #1, Norfolk).

This vicar expressed the clearest vision of churches as attractions and recognised the need for an engagement with visitors that was beyond the Church's traditionally passive approach and close to Uzzell's (1998) model of what a heritage attraction should seek to offer. His perspective was, however, unique in this survey.

Respondents were asked whether they felt that casual visitors and tourists would feel comfortable about entering their church or whether the primary religious function might put them off. The general response was one of doubt that people would feel this way and dismay if indeed they did. Those clergy who expressed least interest in tourism simply reasserted the primary function of the church, whilst others claimed that 'the welcome' was a central part of the Church's mission and could not imagine how people might feel otherwise. When prompted that some visitors might feel alienated from the liturgical and symbolic aspects of the church and indeed its traditional associations with local landowners and other powerful groups there was little recognition that this might be a problem. For at least two of the respondents, who had evinced the mission-based approach to tourism, this was simply a reminder that the church had a contemporary role within the community and in wider society, and that this was to embrace everyone:

> You make it sound as though we are some sort of exclusive club which we're not. That's part of the problem of using these old buildings, they reflect things that no longer exist and I think people understand that, its part of history, not what we are now (Vicar #10, Bradford).

Another said that there was always room to improve things but that people 'should know that they are not excluded – far from it' (Vicar #2, Norfolk).

When prompted that churches were full of obscure symbolism and celebrated the lives of the landed gentry to perhaps an excessive degree, most of the respondents agreed, and took this as a further justification for not focusing on the building too much:

> Yes, it's all irrelevant really, but we're stuck with it. We can't redecorate it can we! (Vicar #3, Norfolk).

The point was also made that it was precisely this material that connected churches with other objects of heritage:

> Well, I agree [with the prompt] but I can't see how it would be otherwise. Churches like this were built by the wealthy of the parish. They even had there own seats! (Vicar #7, Cotswolds).

[Prompt]: But is this a problem when it comes to tourism, that people might be alienated by the pomp and circumstance?

> Of course not, that's what they like, that's why they visit Blenheim [a large country house in the Cotswolds] and all the National Trust places. It doesn't alienate people, that's what they're looking for (Vicar #7, Cotswolds).

Here, then is a clear statement that churches are part of the same cultural construct as other heritage sites, and that it is the appeal to this construct that provides their tourist attraction value.

For most of the clergy there was an ambivalence about the value of tourism that reflected their traditional passivity, with perhaps a blithe acknowledgment that people might be interested in churches because of their history and architecture, but that it should not trouble them too much. Clearly they have a centuries-old perception of their role and a social and cultural affirmation of it (despite recent trends). This was not a situation in which the potential touristic value of a building might be expected to be a significant issue for them, especially if that same building was cold, drafty, and far too big for its small congregation, as well as a constant drain on resources. Seen in this light it is perhaps not surprising that churches are not fully achieved as tourist attractions and that passivity is a natural response to what tourism offers. The clergy are ultimately responsible for the spatial practices associated with churches and for their representation for religious or additional purposes and if they are not fully cognisant and supportive of the Church's policies in relation to tourism they are unlikely to make it a priority, particularly where the context is not one of established touristic space, such as Norfolk or urban Bradford. Where they are located within such space they would tend to respond to it positively as long as they did not have to be involved too much with it at a practical and operational level.

Without the gloss of tourism, the visitor management and services, the interpretation and the signage, churches continue to fulfil their historic cultural role, as the loci of religious practice, however vestigial, and as benign symbols of tradition and continuity. In other words they already do the cultural work of the heritage industry, without further investment of time and energy. There inclusion in the local tourism portfolio and their role in contributing to new forms of capital accumulation is clearly someone else's job.

Conclusion

Given that the Church of England at its highest levels has recognised, in tourism, an additional role for its churches as heritage tourist attractions, it might imply that the Church as a whole has responded positively to the perceived opportunities it offers.

It was suggested in the last chapter, however, that an ambivalence about tourism can be encountered even at the Diocesan level and that this reflects the traditionally passive response of the Church to the idea and operation of tourism. If anything, this passivity is amplified within the parishes. The result is a dissonance within the Church itself in terms of its position on tourism.

Evidence from church websites suggests that, as with the dioceses, there is considerable variation in the representation of churches as touristic attractions. For example, there was plenty of evidence that many churches with a wealth of potential attraction value, as indicated the relevant guides and authoritative texts, were not represented for touristic purposes in any way. Notwithstanding this observation, however, it was also apparent that those churches which could be linked to the rural-historic construct and established notions of what constitutes heritage, were more likely to be represented touristically and more willing to take on this additional role. Mediaeval and renaissance churches in the countryside were, therefore, much favoured. In urban contexts, those that could be linked with re-represented urban space might be included within representations of new cultural capital, especially if they had some other distinguishing feature, such as a well-known architect, artistic movement, a link to famous person or even a reputation for musical concerts.

Modern and Victorian churches were the least likely to be represented as touristic space, although there was evidence that supports the perception that Victorian churches are more highly regarded than they were in the past. The various manifestations of the 'modern', are also celebrated, such as the art deco style that has attracted a popular appreciation over recent years. Indeed the Victoria and Albert Museum hosted a major exhibition dedicated to it in 2003: 'celebrating art deco, the most glamorous and popular style of the twentieth century' (Victorian and Albert Museum, 2003). It would appear to be one of the consequences of the heritage boom in the 1980s, that more recent periods have achieved the patina of heritage, and reproduced in contemporary culture, a 'generational period opened up for aesthetic colonisation …' (Jameson, 1991, 19).

The second factor is the growth of interest in community history as an expression of place identity. For this purpose the Victorian or modern church in an urban environment can be as significant as any other. Here, perhaps, are communities finding some temporal depth, a concept that as Walsh (1992) would have it, is a precondition for the development of a sense of place:

> The argument is founded on a belief that the locality within which people spend the majority of their working and social lives is a place which, in the majority of cases, can be potentially knowable, and understood as a node in a network of relationships which cross both time and space (1992, 149).

The point was made earlier in this chapter, that churches could provide such a nexus, and one that might link community interests with those of tourists who are visiting because of family connections or for genealogical reasons. Such factors support the more inclusive approach to the presentation of heritage that was discussed in Chapter 1, and to which Russell (1997) refers to as an alternative to tourism industry concepts of heritage.

Even where churches *are* highly represented for touristic purposes this is always expressed in some relation to the Church's sense of mission, a responsibility that parishes and parish priests have always expressed, but the practical effects are variable. Some clergy are reluctant to accept that it has any benefit from an evangelical point of view, and this perception seems rational given that non-religious tourists could be alienated by religiously motivated interpretation. Whilst few of the Clergy interviewed saw a conflict between the religious and touristic, and were happy to celebrate the architectural and historical merits of their buildings, most were reluctant to be actively involved in the representation of the church as touristic space. The dissonance thus occurs when attraction values are perceived by the clergy and other active parishioners as *extrinsic* to their work and their response remains passive, though not often hostile.

The problem of representing tourism as an additional function with missionary intent, however, is the way that this might be received by non-religious visitors. Whilst tourists who were believers might be content that a sense of mission accompanies the development of churches as touristic space, there remains a question of what this means for non-believers. The latter might be led by other media and agencies (including the government of the Church of England) to suppose that churches are now offering something akin to a touristic experience of the sort offered by other attractions in the heritage sector. This is particularly the case when churches do not engage visitors with the usual semiotics and cues associated with contemporary heritage tourism: popular guide books, effective interpretation and most of all, a recognition of the tourist as a tourist and not as a practicing Christian or a potential convert. This is a form of dissonance between the representation of churches attractions and the spatial practices associated with church's primary function. It is also possible that a formulation of tourism that places emphasis on its missionary possibilities actually exacerbates this dissonance and further disrupts the process of attraction formation. This is explored in more detail in Chapter 7 where the responses of church tourists are analysed.

A possible basis in cultural practice for this dissonance, and the traditional passivity of the Church towards tourism, may be that churches are already 'doing their cultural work' in the way that they have done for centuries. They provide a locus for mission and they proclaim their sponsors, the owners of the land that surround them. The clergy, indeed, would tend to agree, and to present this as further evidence of their need for a better place to worship. They might also acknowledge that it is precisely this materiality that renders them grist for the mill of the tourism industry by linking them with the Authorised Heritage Discourse (Smith, 2006). If churches are, however, already providing routes to an authorised past, what is tourism adding in cultural terms whilst they are still performing this role? Another route to the authorised past would seem to be one answer, and certainly another way of connecting people to it, if they would not otherwise visit a church. Thus, if people no longer visit churches as worshippers, perhaps they can maintain their traditional cultural role by engaging them as tourists.

The representational and spatial practices of parishes have been examined in this chapter, and whilst no claims are made for the universality of the findings or their generalisability beyond the contexts in which the research was carried out, there is evidence to support the idea that representational and spatial practices are a locus for the interaction of a variety of cultural forces that are linked to received notions of heritage and its relationship with tourism. The key thought to emerge at this stage is that tourism as a spatial practice may be doing some of the cultural work that the church used to do in producing authorised notions of identity and the past. The dissonance occurs when these movements in practice and their associated representations are still in flux, and not fully worked out. The question also emerges as to what space remains for people to make their own representations about their past, their place and their identity. For the moment, however, it is necessary to examine the spatial and representational practices of other organisations involved in the development of church tourism.

Chapter 6

Other Organisations and the Wider Context

Introduction

The purpose of this Chapter is to examine the representation of churches within the representational and spatial practices of other organisations involved in the production of church tourism. At issue is the representation of churches as attractions within the wider attraction system (where this exists), and the activities and understandings of the various actors who contribute to the process. This adds a significant layer of analysis to that already presented in that the organisational context is largely outside the control and jurisdiction of the church both locally and nationally. The main point of interest, therefore, is the extent to which churches contribute both to the overall representation of touristic space, the reciprocal effect of that on the representation of the churches themselves, and the social and cultural forces that condition this process.

Here is revealed a complex arrangement of governmental bodies and other agencies all of which are involved to varying degrees in representational practice. Before this analysis, however, it is important to recognise one feature of the spatial distribution of touristic space that was apparent from the literature discussed in Chapter 2, which is the tendency towards touristic representation as a formulation of space in post-industrial contexts. Thus configured as 'representational challenges' for the agencies concerned in regeneration, local resources of all kinds are scoured for what can be offered as cultural capital and attraction value in the new context of touristic consumption (Dicks, 2000, 55). It is also worth considering in this context the extent to which these agencies express 'spatial assumptions and judgement', to use Shields' (1991) phrase, to favour the touristic representation of spaces that have another primary use (see Chapter 5).

Here also is the source of the power and authority of touristic representation to which Hollinshead (1999) has drawn attention. Is it possible to resist the representational power of official agencies and what happens when it is imposed on a category of cultural capital, such as parish churches, that have much potential, but another primary purpose? It is argued in this chapter that the other agencies involved in the representation of churches as tourist attractions are attempting to draw them, or index and drag them as Rojek (1997, 53) puts it, into the touristic space that they are populating with a range of assets that create attraction value and generate capital. Given the Church's somewhat ambivalent position on tourism (see Chapters 4 and 5), the enthusiasm of external agencies to include churches within the attraction portfolio is another source of representational dissonance. The implications in relation to church tourists are examined in the following chapter.

National Governmental structures

The Department of Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) is the United Kingdom Government Department charged with the overall responsibility for overseeing, co-ordinating and developing national policy in the field of tourism. Its role is largely concerned with the development of tourism as a 'product' for consumption domestically, and by inbound tourists from abroad. To this end it is responsible for funding the National Tourism Organisations (see below) and where it is considered appropriate, funding other agencies concerned with its objectives. The latter are expressed as an aim 'to improve the quality of life for all through cultural and sporting activities, to support the pursuit of excellence and to champion the tourism, creative and leisure industries' (DCMS, 2005a). This is a direct appeal to tourism as new and developing source of capital accumulation, and one that brings with it all the forces of marketing, with its attendant representational practices and a business orientation to the concept of tourism. This, in turn is conditioned by a strategic context that is characterised by a national deficit in balance of trade in tourism services, and the competitiveness of tourism services within the United Kingdom, compared to overseas locations.

The trade deficit in tourism has risen over the period 1995-2005, from £4.4bn to £15.2bn, and according to the UK Treasury this reflects the strength of demand for overseas holidays by UK residents as real incomes have increased, air fares have fallen, and credit facilities have been more easily available to a broader cross section of the population (UK Government Treasury, 2006). On the other hand the competitiveness of the UK as a destination has diminished under pressure from emerging destinations in other parts of the world, the effects of the Foot and Mouth cattle disease epidemic in 2001 and recent terrorist attacks. Whilst, however, the UK is a net 'importer' of tourism it has been asserted by the Department for Trade that overseas tourists spend 20% more in the UK than UK residents spend abroad and that eventually the trade gap will lessen (UK Government Treasury, 2006).

The Government's interest in cultural tourism, expressed through successive policy documents is, therefore, partly a response to the need to provide higher quality tourism products, and to attract higher spending tourists (DCMS, 1999). For this reason heritage and the 'historic environment', which are also part of its remit, are seen as important tourism products, particularly in attracting overseas tourists:

> Britain's historic buildings, sites and landscapes are enormously important to our appeal to inward and domestic tourists. For example, the UK has within its shores fifteen World Heritage Sites, many of which are major attractions. Among these are the Tower of London, Stonehenge, the city of Bath, Canterbury Cathedral, Edinburgh Old and New Towns, Maritime Greenwich and the Giant's Causeway
> (DCMS, 1999, 37).

The scene was thus set for Governmental agencies to evaluate the potential of cultural and heritage resources and to include them, if possible, within touristic space and representation. Later a nationwide monitoring body was established to measure progress and to consult with other agencies on matters of policy development. This 'Prospectus' finally emerged as the second policy document published in 2004, its enthusiasm for culture and heritage undiminished from the previous document. Culture now included national characteristics, however, as well as the built heritage:

> There is a close relationship between the successful development of tourism and the strengthening of the cultural assets of the country – our heritage, the vibrancy of our communities, the natural beauty of our landscapes, our attractive public spaces, and the openness and friendliness of our people. While these assets are important to the success of all tourism in Britain, they are vital in rural areas where there is a greater reliance on the quality of the wider environment

(DCMS, 2004, 3).

As part of these policy developments, a programme of 'reform' was established that devolved much of the responsibility for tourism onto regional development agencies (see below). It also merged the two bodies previously funded by the Government to oversee inbound and domestic tourism into one agency, *Visitbritain*, whose function was largely marketing and research, both within the UK and abroad (*Visitbritain*, 2005).

The situation is complicated by the role of the DCMS in protecting the historic environment, including the ecclesiastical built heritage. For example, it manages the contractors who administer the *Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme* and it sponsors the Churches Conservation Trust (see below). It is also responsible for developing the means to realise the economic benefits of the historic environment, and the link between these two functions is exemplified by a recent example of grant support in which St Margaret's Church, Stratton Strawless, Norfolk, having thus benefited, was represented as a more attractive place for visitors:

> Owing to the ensuing local publicity, the church had an unusually high number of visitors in summer 2002 who have been impressed by the quality of the work, and also by the beauty and peace of the interior (DCMS, 2005b).

As the main Governmental body concerned with both the tourism industry and the protection and presentation of the historic environment, the DCMS is clearly pivotal in the representation of churches as touristic space. However, but the devolution of its responsibilities to English Heritage and to *Visitbritain* inevitably affects the ways in which tourism policy is formulated. The role of English Heritage in providing attractions is also significant in that it provides the core of heritage tourism attractions in the country, it also has a functional relationship with *Visitbritain* as a tourism provider and operator.

In 2004/05, £35.5 million was made available for promoting Britain abroad, whilst £14 million, was made available to the Scotland, Wales Northern Ireland and the English Regions (*VisitBritain*, 2006). Of this £3.6 million was provided to Regional Development Agencies to fund tourism as an aspect of their economic regeneration agenda. The primary concern for *Visitbritain* is the development of a 'product', and its representation as such to both domestic and overseas tourists. To this end attractions are gathered together and themed in various ways so as to represent various aspects of what the country has to offer (*Visitbritain*, 2006). The regional bodies thus take their lead from this national Government agenda.

Regional bodies

Nine tourist boards pursue the national agenda at a regional level. Some of these have now been assimilated into larger regional structures, the Regional Development Agencies (RDAs), which act as a regional government in waiting, should the populace evince a desire to be governed thus. The representational practices of the regional bodies are similar to those of the DCMS and *Visitbritain*, but with more detail and obviously, a regional focus. Once again lists of attractions are marshalled together along with accommodation and other service providers in ways that reflect and reproduce aspects of an 'authorised' regional identity. This product development is very much isolated from the people and culture who live in the areas concerned, but draws upon what is offered in terms of regional culture and character. Major themes are common to most of the regional boards, and while the countryside and heritage figure largely, regional cuisine has also been promoted recently:

> Perhaps one of the best things about being on holiday is that delicious breakfast you look forward to each day. In Yorkshire we are particularly proud of the quality of our **'home grown' ingredients** and you'll find them being served up at breakfast time all over the region. How about a couple of **fresh outdoor-reared pork sausages**, rashers of locally cured bacon and a free-range Yorkshire egg? **Perhaps a freshly baked croissant**, made from scratch by a Frenchman in Leeds. Pressed for time? How about whizzing up a **rhubarb smoothie?** (Yorksire Tourist Board, 2006a, original emphasis).

Churches (usually medieval) are also brought into the offer, and often linked to the countryside as a supporting feature of the attraction value with much hyperbole employed, reflecting the marketer's art. This is very much the territory of Lefebvre's representation of space, and especially conceptualised space (1991, 38), with conventionalised systems of signs, in which the verbal and especially the visual are dominant, nowadays abetted by the scopic regimes of website design. It is also explicit in its reference to the rural-historic cultural axis, which becomes increasingly apparent as a key reference point in the touristic representation of churches. The representation of rural Lancashire by the relevant tourist authority is typical:

> Now is the time to visit Lancashire. From the splendour of the Forest of Bowland to the wild and majestic Pendle Hill, Lancashire is the place to relax, revive and indulge. Work up a hearty appetite on a long walk or relaxing ride then sample the much-celebrated Lancashire hospitality in one of our local eateries serving the finest of local fayre (North West Tourist Board, 2005).

Lefebvre's deconstruction of such material is as valid now as it was when it was written, in the prehistory of internet representation. The originating place is thus sieved for nuggets of attraction that can be assembled as the features and benefits of product development:

> These spaces are produced. The 'raw material' from which they are produced is nature. They are products of an activity which involves the economic and technical realms but which extends well beyond them, for these are also political products and strategic places (1991, 84).

They are 'political' and 'strategic' in the sense here that they belong to, and are controlled by specific groups with specific interests. It is not only places that are manipulated, but place-identities, constructed by selecting and arranging signifiers of place and easily recognisable cultural referents, such as landscape, landmarks, local food and various other traditionally ascribed characteristics (see for example Yorkshire Tourist Board, 2006a). Herein the Authorised Heritage Discourse (Smith, 2006) reproduces its hegemonic constructs of a national past free of conflict and full of idyllic rurality. Here is that same discourse not only marshalling its resources, but finding new voices in the techno-representational practices of contemporary marketing. This process has found its apotheosis in the concept of 'destination branding', where not only is a product developed but an image and even a 'personality' that can be used to differentiate one place from another:

> Branding is perhaps the most powerful marketing weapon available to contemporary destination marketers confronted by increasing product parity, substitutability and competition. Today most destinations have superb five-star resorts, hotels and attractions, every country claims to have a unique culture and heritage (Morgan, et al., 2002, 11).

This recalls Shields' (1991) notion of place-myth as a version of the interplay and succession of representations that enable authorised versions of place and identity to develop is useful here. Place-myths combine with images of place to produce a constellation of myths and images, which have become the raw material of the marketer, sifting and sorting, as Rojek (1997) has it, to create a systematic and selective representation that is susceptible to contemporary marketing communications and service design. The regional characteristics of the marketer are thus a mythology constructed for that purpose and that purpose alone, obliterating alternative accounts and unauthorised versions (Hollinshead, 1999). These in turn occupy and fill the media with official representations based on the kind of marketable products that Dicks identified as a source of tension in her analysis of theme park development in South Wales (Dicks, 2000).

The establishment of the Yorkshire Church Tourism Initiative (YCTI) by the Yorkshire Tourist Board has perhaps done more than most to include churches in the representation of touristic space and the development and definition of a regional tourist product. This is a partnership set up between the Board and the Churches Regional Commission, under the aegis of the Regional Development Agency to 'promote and enhance the County's churches as spiritual, cultural and heritage assets' (YCTI, 2003). In this initiative was found one of the clearest attempts to express the benefits of tourism for the ministry of the Church and its realisation in operational terms:

- To increase visitors' understanding and enjoyment of churches and church communities through improved access and interpretation.
- To provide opportunities for churches to build links with the wider community.
- To increase the contribution that churches can make to sustainable tourism, especially in rural areas
- To encourage churches to provide a more effective ministry to visitors (YCTI, 2003)

As with the higher levels of Church government discussed in Chapter 4, there was no underlying theory to support the idea that churches could be represented in this way and the production of promotional leaflets and a website owed more to the desire to develop a new tourism product than to achieve a representational basis for the convergence of mission and tourism. The initiative was represented to the Church as a means of access to marketing and promotional activities and a supportive local network. It is unclear how the benefits to churches in financial or missionary terms would be measured and evaluated.

There is little doubt, however, that the initiative achieved its own marketing objectives. An emphasis was placed on the link between interpretation and marketing, the former effectively constructing the product for consumers, and the latter linking it to promotional packages such as the 'Short Break', the extended weekend and the visits to family and friends. It was also possible to align it to other campaigns based on 'cultural heritage', 'hidden treasures' and 'local distinctiveness'. (Director of the Yorkshire Tourist Board and other speakers at the Initiative's Annual Conference in March, 2004 , based on notes taken at the event). Now the treasure is hidden, evoking a sense of discovery of things previously unknown, and a new manifestation of the authorised heritage. A triadic representation was thus described, that linked culture and heritage, faith and ministry and the social and economic benefits that would accrue from touristic development (see Figure 9 below). In order to be successful, however, church tourism would have to be integrated with the 'mainstream tourism product' so that accommodation and other guides would make reference to churches as a part of the touristic representation of the area (from notes taken at the event and interviews with participants).

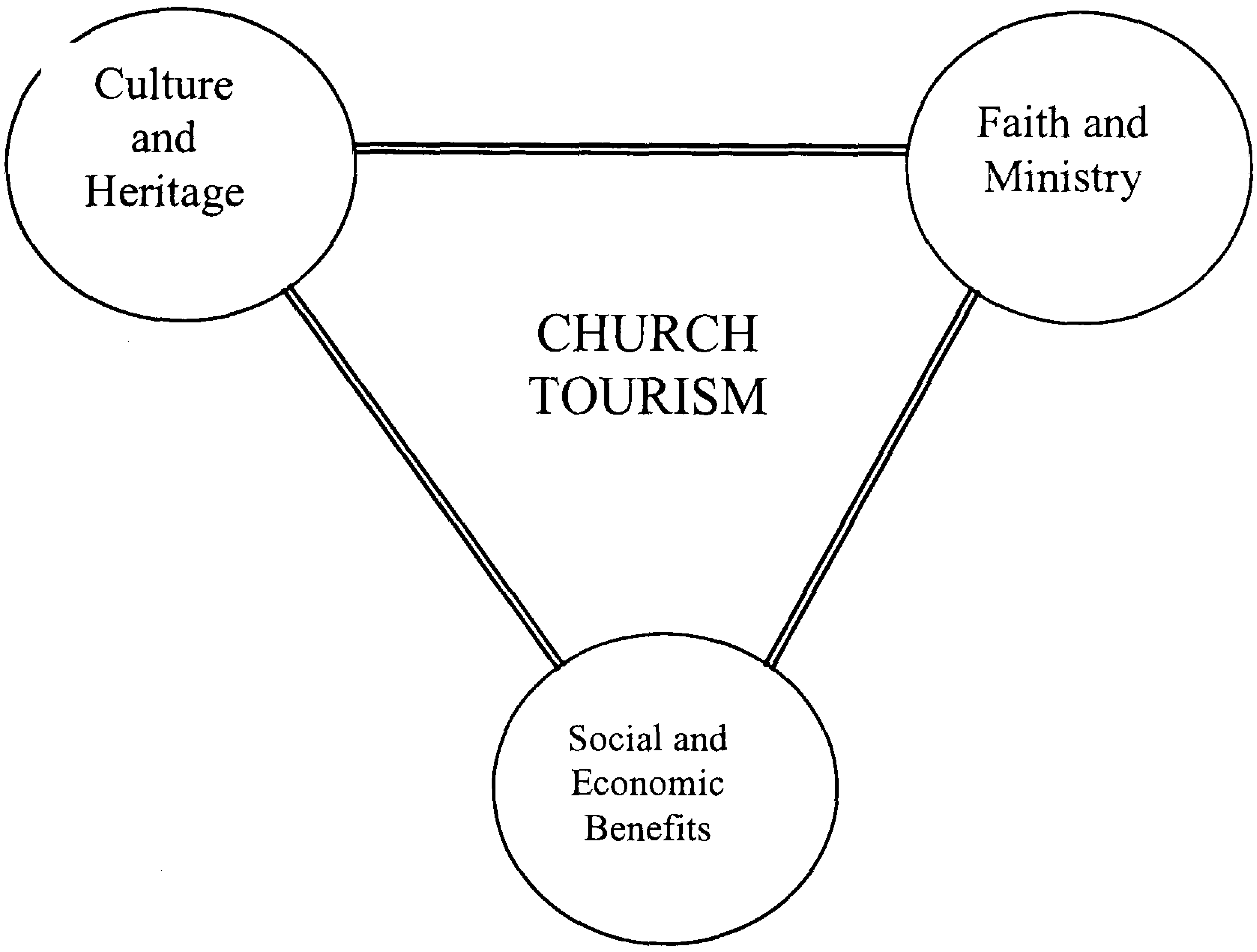

Figure 9: A Triadic Representation of Church Tourism as Described by the Yorkshire Tourist Board

It was clear that these were not churches represented *as* touristic space, but rather as attractions *within* it. North Yorkshire is an established but developing destination which has drawn successfully on its rural character, literary associations and its use as a location in film and television productions (Yorkshire Tourist Board, 2006b). The Church Tourism Initiative was clearly presented as an attempt to weave another strand into the attraction complex that the area represented. Inevitably, however, the process of representation was characterised by a certain amount of selectivity, both on the part of the Initiative and on the part of local church groups who entered the scheme on a voluntaristic basis:

> A lot depended on the amount of local interest in the idea. This has tended to be in the rural areas of North Yorkshire, the Dales and the Vale of York. It also depends very much on the willingness of local groups to be involved, and how organised they are. The initiative could be extended but for the moment it is concerned with the rural areas of North Yorkshire, where there is

already an interest and where tourism already exists (Regional Official #1, Yorkshire).

In this representation we see once again a reference to the church in its rural context, with the most typically attractive locations on display. The initiative was also a somewhat laboured compromise between two essentially dissonant ideas about what churches are in contemporary society, cultural capital or cultural capital that are, first of all, places of worship. The rural-historic axis is, in this sense, at the heart of that compromise. In linking with the semiotics of authorised heritage tourism it also reflects the aspects of the church that seem most attractive, its visuality and setting, its association with 'timeless' place, its continuity and its attachment to a mythic sense of rural community. It is significant in the context of this discussion, that the initiative was not extended into Yorkshire's more culturally challenging urban areas such as Bradford or Leeds. This dissonance is explored further in relation to the activities of local authorities in assembling and defining their attractions.

Local authorities

The *Development of Tourism Act, 1969* was the major impetus for local authorities to operate discretionary services (services for which there is no legislative provision) in support of tourism in their area of jurisdiction. Despite budgetary pressure and the tendency to move funds away from discretionary services and towards statutory responsibilities, local authorities in the UK still have a primary role in the promotion of tourism (Dicks, 2000, 55). It is apparent from even a cursory glance at local authority representations of the spaces within their jurisdiction that tourism, based on notions of cultural capital, is of major importance to them and that part of their role is to identify and represent such resources for touristic consumption. The use of culture as a tool for urban regeneration has been well documented (Craik, 1997; Richards, 2007) and its progress has been charted by Bianchini and Schwengel (1991) and Bianchini (1993).

An attempt was made, therefore, to evaluate the nature and extent of the representation of churches as tourist attractions by local authorities. This analysis has taken place, however, at a time of considerable change, with new structures based on public-private sector partnerships replacing the destination marketing activities of single authorities. These Destination Management Organisations (DMOs) are normally set up as limited companies with a primary responsibility to develop and market tourism products and to co-ordinate the representation of touristic space at a sub-regional level. Such developments have taken place in the latter part of the present research and had not impacted greatly on the findings. It is anticipated, however, that the representational practices of these new organisations will continue those of local authorities where these have been supplanted. It remains the case, however, that the 'political and strategic' role of representation has been taken a step further away from the local democratic influence of local authorities as representational practice is effectively privatised.

A total of 388 local authorities were identified from the *Tagish Directory* of public sector organisations (Tagish, 2004). Of these, 324 local authority websites were investigated for the representation of church tourism within their tourism services websites. Of the remainder many were either under construction or not available at the time the research was carried out, and in a small number of cases technical difficulties prevented access to the sites. In addition, six local authority tourism, officers were interviewed, one each in the Norfolk and Cotswold case study areas and four from other areas. There was no named tourism officer post in Bradford at the time of the interviews. The question schedule used for these interviews is provided at Appendix 1.

Reference to churches on local authority websites was normally made within the context of tourism, leisure or culture, and the very fact that these are contextualised together is itself an indicator of the significance of the link between them that has been explored in Chapters 1 and 2. Of the 324 websites investigated just over a third (116) made explicit references to churches either as attractions or as aspects of local cultural capital. At first sight it was difficult to find any correlates associated with the touristic representation of churches and many destinations, such as York, made surprisingly little reference to them.

However, on closer scrutiny, it became evident that the majority of local authorities representing churches on their websites were in predominantly rural locations: a total of 79 (68%) of the 116 authorities that referred to churches were representing them in rural contexts. Again, as with the parish websites investigated in the last chapter, there appears to be a central cultural concern here with the rural historic. Even local authorities in large urban centres would often confine their representation of attraction value to the churches in their rural constituency rather than their 'built-up' areas, and others would seek either to represent only the cathedrals or greater churches within their urban space. This was certainly the case at Bradford, where there was no consideration given to the tourism potential of churches other than the Cathedral, because the urban space was thought too challenging for touristic representation (information from diocesan tourism officer #2). This was despite the fact that the City's highly regarded Victorian architecture was considered to be a major strength (Bradford Metropolitan District Council, 2002, 8).

It is clear, however, that regeneration is at the heart of efforts to re-represent urban areas as cultural space, and that cultural capital of all sorts is drawn into the equation to attract investment. This includes whatever is available from the urban context, and in addition, what can be drawn from the more readily comprehended values of rurality, with its strongly mythologised social and cultural content. This is often expressed within the context of a cultural strategy. For example in Burnley, a central objective was to:

> Develop and promote our built heritage – need for a careful and dynamic balance between new and old – Burnley's image should be 'proud of our heritage, not stuck in our past (Borough of Burnley, 2002, 13).

Occasionally an accident of history has endowed an otherwise unremarkable location with an outstanding piece of church architecture and something for the urban local authority to celebrate. Thus in 1905 the architect Edward Prior presented urban industrial Sunderland with one of the finest 'arts and crafts' churches in the country (Garnham, 1996, 43). Similarly, further down the coast at Hartlepool a large Early English gothic church forms the focal point of a regeneration plan:

> The plan is to redesign the area in front of the Borough Buildings between Middlegate, the promenade, St Hilda's Church and Northgate to create a town square which will give the Headland a strong 'central heart' (Hartlepool Borough Council, November, 2005).

Yet despite the possibilities for urban regeneration, it is to the countryside that representational practice constantly returns. Local authorities are representing churches as a part of their rural attraction value, even where there is a major urban area within the jurisdiction. Of the 116 authorities that were researched, 79 (68%) were representing an essentially rural context for the representation of churches in touristic space.

Thus an authorised version of spatial representation develops, one that will only admit selections based on culturally conditioned notions of attractiveness that are of long standing, and related to mythologised concepts of English rurality: the historic building, the picturesque scene and the landscape setting. Here is Hollinshead's (1999) version of the eye of power in operation, choosing and selecting what to include and, by the same equation, what to exclude. Dicks contextualises the process in terms of its organisational setting and objectives: the management and marketing of local qualities for the purposes of inward investment:

> Increasingly, the particular resources and attractions that local areas can offer capital are configured as *representational* challenges. Each locality is catapulted into a competition to market those qualities that will allow it to gain a competitive edge over its rivals (2000, 55, original emphasis).

Whilst this motive factor was found in both urban and predominantly rural locations, it was the latter that found the greatest celebration of the church in its physical setting, in this case as an essential component of English rurality and the growing interest in rural tourism as a substituting form of economic activity (Butler, 1998). There was evidence in the study of the ways in which this was impacting on economic development and regeneration policies in the countryside. For example, Kent County Council had commissioned a study of the ways in which tourism could contribute more to the rural economy:

> With decline in agriculture and other sectors of employment many rural areas are looking to tourism to make an even greater contribution to rural local economies in the future.
>
> This study aims to describe the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of rural tourism in the Canterbury area, so as to inform Canterbury City Council's investment and marketing strategies for rural areas (Canterbury City Council, 2004).

At North Lincolnshire, church tourism is represented as a tranquil resort from the stresses of everyday life:

> We will develop and celebrate the cultural diversity of North Lincolnshire through initiatives such as vibrant local events and church tourism. We will work with attractors to develop quality leisure breaks, positioning North Lincolnshire as a destination to escape the stresses of everyday life (North Lincolnshire Council, 2003, 11).

Perhaps the most developed form of this representation was where churches were represented not just as components, albeit essential components, of rurality and landscape as a cultural artefact, but were further represented as essentially characteristic of it. Thus, they are represented as symbols, in a sense, of the very landscape that they have helped to create. Evidence of this 'symbolic' representation was found in 13% of the local authorities that referred to churches, and it was typical of areas that possessed a particular type of building. For example, the limestone or flint that characterizes buildings in some areas, or the style of building, such as the Cotswold 'wool churches', the spires of Northamptonshire, or the round towers of Norfolk and Suffolk. The information provided by Wycombe District Council is typical of such practices:

> The District's churches are one of the key features of the landscape. Most of the Chiltern villages are centred around a centuries old church, built of stone and flint. The towns have large parish churches and other smaller ones to cater for different denominations (Wycombe District Council, 2004).

These are old formulations, and the abiding influence of the rural-historic as a cultural construct has been explored in Chapter 2. What can be seen here then, is the use of a construction of the English countryside with churches as an essential component, as a cultural artefact with an iconic quality.

Such mythologies, are central to the touristic representation or rural tourism and with at least two hundred years of cultural practice to build on, it is hardly surprising to see churches represented as part of an English rural iconography that is amply demonstrated in both Constable's painting of 1800 and a more a contemporary example (See Figures 10 and 11). Here the countryside is represented as an aestheticised space, cultural capital worthy of inclusion in the attraction portfolio, and of the attentions of the intending tourist. Apart from the wide vista, the photograph thus includes the same visual elements as Constable's painting of 200 years earlier: trees, fields, farm animals and church, neatly arranged to refer to a well-established semiotic of timeless tradition and tranquillity. It could be argued that Constable's painting is at least an attempt at realism, the representation of the countryside as it was at the time, cluttered with people, animals, carts and ramshackle buildings, whereas the photograph in Figure 11 is an idealised version, the very thing that Constable was moving away from (Prince, 1988). Yet now the two images occupy and represent the same cultural space, that of the rural idyll that is mythologised by the purveyors of rural tourism, the cult of the country house and the deracinated view of rural life that symbolises an established concept of heritage as a kind of cultural constant.

Figure 10: Denham Church and Vale by John Constable., 1800. Pen, ink and watercolour on paper. Whitworth Art Gallery, University of Manchester.

Figure 11: Clun village: image from promotional website for South Shropshire District Council (2006)

This set of cultural referents continues to support the imagery of 'towns and villages' as a basis for attraction value and as an important context for representational practice. Thus, 24% of the authorities surveyed were employing this representative context in relation to churches. Some of these constructions seem rather laboured. Visitors to East Northamptonshire, for example, are offered the 'Home of Spires and Squires' (East Northamptonshire District Council, 2004). Similar examples are plentiful:

> The villages of Hart are perfect examples of all that is typically English (Hart District Council, 2004).

Alfriston in East Sussex is made irresistible with the addition of afternoon tea, just to make sure that every possible aspect of the authorised rural image is conveyed:

> With its narrow streets and quaint cottages ... it is everything an English Village should be. St Peter's Church and the Clergy House are popular attractions, as are the numerous cafes serving traditional cream teas (East Sussex District Council, 2004).

Broadlands District Council in North Norfolk:

> Most of Broadland's towns and villages have a beautiful church and many interesting streets of quaint houses and cottages that give each its own character and charm. There are leafy lanes that are delightful to explore, where you will find secluded country pubs and ancient churches (Broadland District Council, 2004).

At Horsham in West Sussex the churches constitute a 'fine collection', as if assembled by some connoisseur of medieval buildings for the benefit of discerning visitors, 'their towers and spires forming a distinctive feature of the landscape' (Horsham District Council, 2004). The following examples point to similar forms of representational practice:

> At Adur, the parish churches are amongst the District's most striking features (Adur District Council, 2004).

> The District's landscape is breathtaking and rich in heritage, including numerous examples of outstanding historic buildings, castles and ancient churches (South Shropshire District Council, 2004).

> The District of Ashfield has a fine selection of churches well worth a visit. Dating from 11th Century Norman architecture to the modern day, each church has its own unique attraction to offer (Ashfield District Council, 2004).

Occasionally such practices were motivated not only by a perception that the churches were somehow characteristic of the place, or one of its major strengths, but also by evidence from visitor research commissioned by the local authority. For example, at Shrewsbury, focus group research indicated that the facet of the town that was most significant to visitors was its 'churches, architecture and historic buildings' (Shrewsbury and Atcham Borough Council, 2003).

Perhaps the church as a semiotic of place, as a representation of the space it occupies and not merely a feature of it, is the most developed form of representational practice in church tourism. For the most part, however, churches are being selected, on some received notion of their relative merits, to be included in the authorised version of an area's heritage. One way in which this process is manifested very strongly is in the use of a 'best of' approach as a determinant of what is included and what is not. Thus, of the 116 authorities investigated, over a third were adopting this selective approach *explicitly*, in other words they used formulations such as 'selected churches' 'the most interesting' or similar formulations. It is clear, however, that many more authorities were adopting the same approach implicitly, in the presentation of trails, towns and villages, interactive mapping and so forth. Only 12% of authorities were offering a less selective and more comprehensive account, and something akin to the kind of gazetteer that might be found in a traditional printed guidebook for those who might be genuinely interested in the churches *as* churches rather than components of the attraction system.

Once a church is fully achieved as touristic space representational practices are initiated in which every scrap of attraction value is wrung from whatever resource is available, however, obscure or eclectic:

> The twelfth century Church of St Thomas, Stanhope is described by many as the little Cathedral of the Dale and even has a 250 million year old fossilised tree stump in the church yard (Wear Valley District Council, 2005).

Elsewhere words referring to particular styles such as *perpendicular*, or periods such as *Saxon* or *Norman* are employed without comment, explanation or expansion as though something in the symbolic value of the word itself is sufficient to confer heritage attraction value:

> The church of St Bartholomew has some Norman work in the building (Mid Sussex District Council, 2004).

For representational practice to be fully achieved, however, it has to engage the processes of what marketers would describe as product development (Lovelock and Wirtz, 2004, 115-122; Hill, et al., 2003). In Tourism, this involves linking the various components of attraction value together in the kinds of systematic ways previously described. The rural-historic figures largely in this process, and this in turn leads to the production and representation of a broad portfolio of attractions. Of the six officers interviewed all were convinced of the need to have the widest possible portfolio of attractions. 'Almost anything will do', one of them commented before relating a list of current attractions, and others, that he thought could justifiably be added to it (Tourism Official #1).

Evidence of the kind of systemic representation described above was found in 39% of the local authorities, and of these 15% either represented their church tourism within the context of 'church trails' or 'Christian heritage'. In south Staffordshire, a Historic Churches Trail is supported by a downloadable leaflet and the invitation to 'enjoy the buildings', because 'they represent the richness of our heritage and something for current and future generations to protect' (South Staffordshire District Council, 2004). This kind of florid, gushing prose, as Nadel-Klein (2003, 188) has described it, has become a leitmotif of the authorised view of heritage and occurs frequently in local authority websites. Chester City Council's website celebrates a heritage trail with typical hyperbole:

> Welcome to the Chester Millennium Festival Trail, laid down in 2000 as part of the city's '2000 Years of Building' Millennium Festival. All 40 buildings on this Trail were selected by local people as outstanding examples of Chester's architectural development over two millennia. From Roman times to the present day. They include many well known and much-loved buildings. Others are less familiar and some may surprise! They all contribute to the rich architectural heritage which makes Chester so special among Britain's historic cities (Chester City Council, 2006).

The *authority,* of course, is carefully obscured by the language of heritage tourism, a self-fulfilling discourse that meets the needs of the market, and as such it is given the appearance of ideological neutrality. Represented as heritage and meeting peoples' needs as tourists, it masquerades as a given thing when in fact it is heavily mediated, selected and represented. It is inconceivable, as Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1998, 172) reminds us, that such 'display techniques' can ever be neutral, when the purpose they serve is so focussed on capital accumulation and a suitably authorised account of the past.

Added to one of the leaflets from South Staffordshire, however, was the warning that not all the churches were open. Here is further evidence of dissonance in the representative practices of the church and local authority that is a feature common in other locations and certainly in the Norfolk case study area. Despite the power and authority of the agencies responsible for touristic representation, there remains a resistance to it in the spatial practices of those concerned with the primary function of the churches: they kept the doors locked.

The process, however, is relentless, with every cultural referent that can be introduced carefully marshalled for representational purposes. In South Norfolk a variety of trails are offered including one which is devoted to churches with round towers, a legacy, apparently, of the Vikings, those well known supporters of the tourism industry and an obvious source of attraction value, if only because children have heard about them (South Norfolk District Council, 2004). It was, it seems, for the local authorities to finally bring God and mammon together. At Selby, in North Yorkshire, a series of church trails was identified and promoted (see Figure 12) with the additional challenge of an area that was not a recognised tourist destination. A District Councillor made the point in almost MacCannellian language:

> The Selby district is marking itself out as a tourist destination. These trails will bring more people into the area, which means more business for local hotels, restaurants and shops (Selby District Council, 2004).

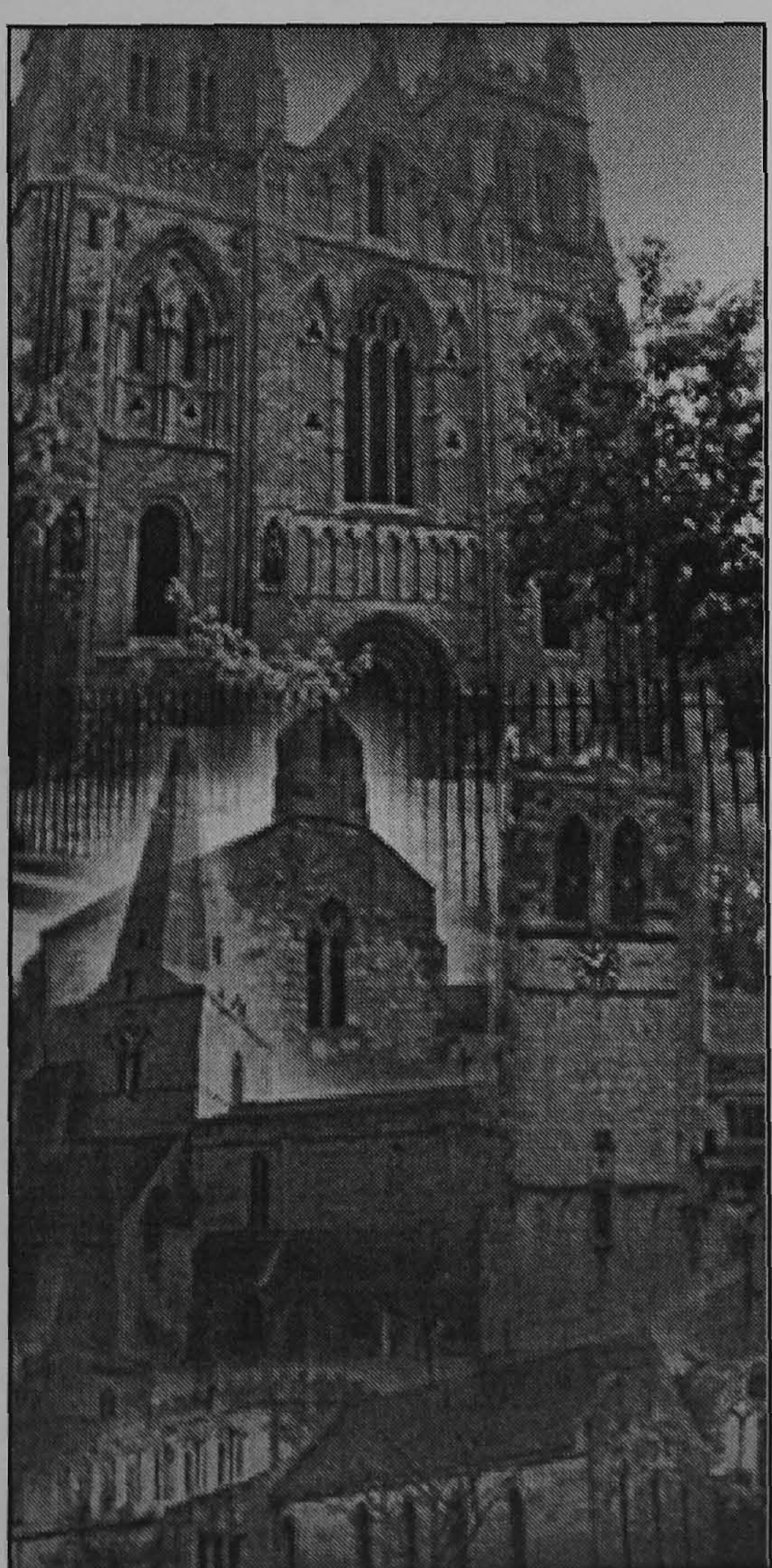

Figure 12: Promotional montage used in Selby District Council's Church Trails Initiative

At South Shropshire District Council (in partnership with the South Shropshire Tourism Association) church trails are linked to cycling activity holidays with the strap line 'Spires and Cycles' on a series of promotional leaflets with alternative shorter routes for the less energetic. The trails are linked to the rest of the attraction complex not only through the association with cycling, but through the active promotion of other tourism services such as parking facilities and refreshment stops (South Shropshire Tourism Association, 2004). As one official pointed out:

> It has to be embedded in the destination if it is to work. Nobody is going to come here to look at churches, well some people might, but we can't depend on them; but people might see the churches as part of the bigger picture – something else to see and do, and it might attract a few more people (Tourism Official #2).

Whilst churches are not unique in being propelled into touristic space by the representational practices of local authorities, here is a unique and problematic convergence of the needs of touristic space with the primary function of churches and their passivity in the face of tourism. For the latter to participate there is thus implied a belief in the additional benefits that will be brought in terms either of finance and/or mission. The passivity of many of the churches was borne out by a tourism official in North Norfolk:

> It's very difficult, because we might put a church in one of our leaflets only to find that it is no longer open to the public and we don't know until someone phones to say that they went there and it was closed (Tourism Official #3).

This survey of local authority representational practices revealed something of an inversion of some of the received wisdom on the relationship between the representation of tourist space and the core resources that are used for this purpose. For example, Crouch and Ritchie acknowledge that a destination's culture and history 'furnishes a basic and powerful force for the prospective visitor', but claim that the resource is determined 'well outside the scope of tourism' (1999, 146). It is apparent from these findings, however, that it is tourism itself that is defining the resource and that the resource itself is resolutely indifferent to its representation as culture, history or tourism. It was clear, however, that for tourism officials it was not the churches that were the important partners in the development of church tourism, but rather the local operators and service providers, particularly tour operators and the accommodation sector.

> Nothing will happen unless there is an active tourism network built around it. If people aren't physically bringing tourists here and giving them bed and breakfast and an evening meal it doesn't matter how wonderful the churches are (Tourism Official #4).

> I don't think that we can suddenly expect churches to transform themselves into tourist attractions. That's not why they were built. It's the quality of the local [tourism] product that's important. Why come here? (Tourism Official #2).

Churches *within* touristic space, not *as* touristic space appear to be the principal characteristic of local authority representational practice. Thus it draws on an existing resource, but not without difficulties. It relies on a local perception on the part of the churches, of the value of tourism, perhaps as a way of generating income, or as a way of fulfilling its mission. In some cases it may be happy simply to be involved and to be participating in the wide community, after years of apparent neglect.

The primary motive of local authorities is to create touristic space, to create a tourist portfolio from whatever resources are available. Churches are relatively easy targets in this context, because they are already linked to an authorised account of the national heritage through the axis of the rural-historic cultural construct. The authorities, however, can take none of this for granted, and nor can the tourist, when confronted by locked church, lavishly illustrated in the local council's glossy leaflet. There again, the churches are already doing their cultural work, whether the door is locked or not, because they represent an aestheticised, and therefore politically neutral landscape that beneath this surface represents long-standing patterns of power and ownership. Whilst local authorities have a primary role in the creation of touristic space, because of they possess representational powers which are created by the need to facilitate new forms of capital accumulation, much depends on the activities of private individuals and organisations who, through their conservation and business activities, animate the processes outlined above.

Other organisations

A range of organisations in the voluntary and private sectors involve themselves either wholly or in part with the representation of churches as tourist attractions. Those which belong to the former are often venerable societies with arcane interests. Some have a particular agenda, such as the potential of church tourism or the importance of keeping churches open. A small number are concerned primarily with tourism, but most are focused on conservation or the scholarly pursuit of a particular aspect, such as church monuments or monumental brasses. Evidence of private sector activity is also included here where it is particularly focused on group organised tours. This is hardly big business, but it is concerned with the representation of churches as tourist attractions.

Perhaps the most significant independent organisation is the Churches Tourism Association (CTA), which was established originally as the National Churches Tourism Group under the auspices of the Church of England, to express its concern for rural issues. The Association's Objectives are 'to promote among churches and others the need to welcome tourists'; and to 'educate churches and others about the benefits to individuals and communities which can arise from such a welcome' (CTA, 2004). A quarterly newsletter is produced and published on the organisation's website. This provides information about issues affecting church tourism – such as the restructuring of the regional tourism bodies, news about recent developments, initiatives and best practice in church tourism as well as advice about visitor management issues. For example, the following 'Top Tip' is offered:

> Have a welcome table where people can see it as they enter your church. A few feet in from the open door is best – not hidden behind it, or where visitors will block entry for others when they stop to look. On your welcome table include:
>
> - A large "Welcome" notice;
> - A ground plan of the church, indicating where the table is and where there is an area set aside for quiet and prayer, plus other important features such as toilets (or the location of the nearest available!) and any refreshments;
> - Copies of a simple free walkround guide to the church;
> - Visitors book (with pen).
>
> (CTA, 2004b)

The purpose of the CTA's documentation and website is to propel churches from passivity into additionality through the facilitation of effective visitor management and to promulgate best practice. However, the issue of mission is never far from the surface and clearly reflects the priorities of the likely audience of church officials and activists. For example, a page on the website offers advice on interpretation for children, and draws a clear distinction between churches as tourist attractions and other types of attraction symbolised by Disneyland. Children should thus feel a sense of wonder in churches and the messages they receive from the interpretative practice are that 'this is my kind of place', 'it makes me feel good', 'it tells me something important'. 'It's hard work,' the author states, 'but an investment for the future' (CTA, 2004c).

The message content in marketing terms is somewhat at variance from what might normally be expected in a tourist attraction, even a heritage attraction, where the benefits of the visit would be expressed in terms of the attraction itself, the offering and the value that the visitor might derive from the experience. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that what is being marketed here is the 'Church' rather than the 'church', and that the 'investment in the future' is a clear expression of evangelism. This impression is supported by the focus mentioned earlier of marketing church tourism as much to the churches themselves as to the general public.

The Open Churches Trust was established in the mid-1990s by an impresario with a passion for churches (Open Churches Trust, 2004). An initial donation with supplementary fundraising has enabled churches to kept open and, where there are problems of burglary and vandalism, to ensure that they are staffed for specific open days. The Trust now has nearly 200 churches on its register and provides support for all denominations. The Trust's website provides a gazetteer of the churches it has helped and a page for each one that provides brief details of its history, the times it is open and the times of services. Whilst the objectives of the Trust are very clear, to keep churches open for visitors, there is no sense in which this is meant to provide attractions as such, but rather to provide 'places of pilgrimage for users and visitors' (Open Churches Trust, 2004). The spiritual dimension is also clearly articulated:

> None of our work would be worthwhile if we failed to recognise that every church we opened was another place available for anyone of any faith to seek peace, solitude and an opportunity for prayer. This unique haven is needed by an increasing number of people on a daily basis (Open Churches Trust, 2004).

The focus is very much on individual churches, but if the Open Churches Trust is representing churches as tourist attractions it is doing so as an adjunct to a higher purpose enshrined in the notion of the church being 'open'. This appears to be ascribed to a generalised spiritual need that is not affiliated to a particular religion. This emphasises the value of the church as a spiritual resort imbued with a combination of nameless qualities that form the basis of its attraction. This particular sense of spirituality was one that was shared by a number of the individual respondents interviewed in churches (see Chapter 7). Any sense of compromising the religious function of the church through making it available for tourism is effectively mitigated by an appeal to spirituality within the tourism function. This is additionality with a gentle nudge, a suggestion that passivity in relation to visitors is something of a negation of the Church's real purpose in the world and that tourism is an aid to this mission.

The Churches Conservation Trust was set up in 1969 to care for architecturally and historically 'important' churches that have become redundant. The focus here is on conservatiion and preservation, and on individual churches. To this extent there are broad similarities with the representational approach taken by the Open Churches Trust, but it does appear to articulate a stake in tourism. Its website contains a gazetteer of its 330 churches categorised by region as a well as 50 'featured' churches for which additional information is provided. The featured churches are further categorised by period – Norman, medieval, renaissance, Georgian and Victorian, as well as other categories based special features such as monuments, stained glass, carvings and wall paintings. Further categories relate to the context of the church, urban or rural, and whether the church has an especially 'good setting' (Churches Conservation Trust, 2005b).

For each church a separate web page provides details of architectural and historic features and visitor information including opening times, a map reference and a link to a road map showing the exact location. The trust has also developed a series of educational tools in association with English Heritage, including lesson plans and curriculum support units for history, art and design and Religious Education Key Stage 1. A children's book has been published which is intended for use by parents and teachers (Churches Conservation Trust, 2005b). More recently the Trust has developed a series of guided church tours in Essex and Kent. These involve an all-day coach tour with a pub lunch and afternoon tea included. Each tour has two pick up points, one at a local school and the other at a local railway station to meet people from the London Train. No figures area available on the numbers taking part (Churches Conservation Trust, 2005c).

A distinguishing feature of the Churches Conservation Trust when compared to other organisations is the absence of any kind of religious function in its representational practices. Churches managed by the Trust are perceived to have left the religious domain and are propelled into touristic space on the basis, it seems, that there is no other space for them to occupy. They are thus, nothing more than their additional touristic function linked to the Authorised Heritage Discourse with language such as 'A Thousand Years of English Churches' and its rationale:

> For the delight and interest of all of us – visitors to this country, people whose roots are in England and future generations. Our 330-plus churches – a stunning collection – represent 1000 years of history, craftsmanship, human aspiration, triumph and tragedy, in which the story of this island is written. They are the rightful heritage of us all. Scattered throughout the country, their doors are open regularly or there are keyholders nearby. Entry is free to all.

For Smith (2006) this would be the Authorised Heritage Discourse writ large. Clear connections are being made between churches, touristic resources and national myths that concern the rural-historic axis. The words 'this island ...' even consciously or otherwise evokes one of the most intensely nationalistic and nation-forming passages from Shakespeare:

This royal throne of kings, this sceptred isle,
This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars,
This other Eden, demi-paradise,
This fortress built by Nature for herself
Against infection and the hand of war,
This happy breed of men, this little world,
This precious stone set in the silver sea,
Which serves it in the office of a wall
Or as a moat defensive to a house,
Against the envy of less happier lands,
This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England.

William Shakespeare, 'King Richard II', Act 2 scene 1

Apart from evoking Arthur Mee and *The Kings England* (see Chapter 2), such practices perform important cultural work in linking the church with the state and with tourism, an important means by which people are now drawn to representations of national identity (Palmer, 2000, 2005). Thus released from its primary religious function, it is as if the church is freed as a signifier and floats patriotically into the service of comfortable national myths. Here with the aid of marketers and those with representational authority it merrily reproduces them in the realm of tourism, where, after the decline of religion such myths now find their largest audience.

The Historic Churches Preservation Trust was founded in 1953, primarily to help restore churches that were damaged or neglected during the Second World War (Historic Churches Preservation Trust, 2005). Its objective is to raise funds from the general public through donations and bequests in order to make grants to churches for the purposes of structural and fabric repair. As part of its fundraising activities, however, it organises tours for which a fee is charged. One of its tours in the North Norfolk case study area promises links with Lord Nelson and even a ride on a steam railway train as part of what promised to be a good day out:

> We will meet at Kings Lynn Station at 10.30am for a coach tour that will include villages known more to Admiral Nelson's family than himself. The 'Mecca' of the day will in some eyes be Burnham Thorpe where he was born and where his father was Rector for forty odd years... Other churches in the area abound with interest; indeed the Burnhams themselves make a very varied and interesting group of churches and hamlets. As the area includes Wells and Walsingham, there is a strong likelihood that a certain railway that runs between the two may also get a visit. Lunch will as usual be included and return to Lynn Station by 6pm is intended (although it is a marvellous town to stay in if you have the time). The charge is £18 per person and cheques should be made payable to 'H.C.P.T.' (Historic Churches Preservation Trust, 2005).

This is church Tourism in the service of preservation, with a focus on the future of the building rather than that of the faith, and is laced with the prospect of a good lunch rather than a spiritual experience. The national heritage content is still in evidence, however, and is here provided by the link with Nelson, a national hero being a useful component of myth-making. It is also church tourism for those who seek it out, for aficionados more than sightseers, and for those whose day might only be completed by the sight of the Norman font at Burnham Deepdale.

For even more committed enthusiasts and scholars there are a number of learned societies with their roots in Victorian medievalism and antiquarianism. The Camden Society was founded in 1839 and later, having moved from Cambridge to London, changed its name to the Ecclesiological Society. Instrumental in recasting the gothic revival, its famous journal, the *Ecclesiologist* was a major influence not only on church architecture but on all things medieval in the world of design and décor and promoted the study of 'all the physical appurtenances of worship, such as church buildings, furnishings, artistic embellishments, liturgy and music' (Cooper, 2005). Whilst its history has been undramatic (apart from debates about the admission of women in 1905), its commitment to the study of churches in every particular remains an undiminished if somewhat recherché pastime for those with the relevant interests. Its present day website contains much pictorial material dealing with everything from misericords to sundials scratched on external masonry to indicate the time of the next service. It includes such features as 'image of the month', 'site of the month' and news and gossip (Ecclesiological Society, 2004). This is church tourism as a hobby for an enthusiastic few and hardly a motive force for the extension of touristic space. Here are churches in the realm of train spotters, objects of reification in the sense in which Lukács conceives it where human relations are masked by the formation of a commodity, in this case a church:

> The essence of commodity-structure has often been pointed out. Its basis is that a relation between people takes on the character of a thing and thus acquires a 'phantom objectivity', an autonomy that seems so strictly rational and all-embracing as to conceal every trace of its fundamental nature: the relation between people (Lukács, 1923, reprinted 1975, 83).

In a similar vein the Church Monuments Society was established in 1979 to provide a focus of activity for all those whose interests are more specialised than the buildings themselves, and is directed more towards the monuments with which many churches are replete. Its touristic activity, organised on behalf of its members, involves monthly excursions, study days and a biennial symposium (Church Monuments Society, 2005). There is even a society dedicated to the further specialism of church brasses. These are the ornate and figurative brass plaques that were applied to tombs in the middle ages and which have given rise to the uniquely English pastime of 'brass rubbing', the making of copies by placing paper over the original and rubbing it vigorously with a wax crayon. The Monumental Brass Society was set up in 1887 by a group of undergraduates and now consists of 500 members, who have recently widened the scope of their interest to include 'incised slabs' (Monumental Brass Society, 2005). Again, an interest in the minutiae and an attendant desire to taxonomies and 'collect' creates a reified object and obscures the fact that those to whom these monuments are dedicated are likely to be related through lineage to the very people who continue to own the surrounding countryside (Cahill, 2002).

Somewhat more visits to churches might be generated by the activities of family genealogists and genealogical societies. The largest of the latter is GENUKI, which is a virtual reference library set up under the auspices of the Federation of Family History Societies. Its website provides a comprehensive photographic library of parish churches, and there is little doubt that this movement has impelled many churches to make provision for genealogical study by providing indexes and maps of gravestones on their websites. The actual amount of church tourism generated by genealogy is, however, unknown, although at least one travel company caters for international tourists seeking their ancestors in the UK and Ireland (www.ancestortravel.com).

The kind of enthusiast reported here, the *tourist-as-expert,* is unobtrusive, respectful and, perhaps, a practising Christian. There is thus no threat to the integrity of the liturgical purpose and the visitor is likely to belong to a social group that would recognise the liturgical, architectural and historical value that a church represents, without the need for much elaboration beyond Pevsner's cataloguing activities. The main achievement of such organisations, however, is the reification of the church as an object of the expert and the aficionado. At this level the 'consumption' of the *church-as-artefact* hardly disturbs the passivity of the church in relation to conventional tourism, and its proponents may even find the additional role associated with the latter a threat to their own enthusiasms and interests. As such it extracted not only from its liturgical functions but also its social construction. It is 'reduced' to an object of art, the history of which is fully achieved. Any reflection of the social and economic conditions that created it and which sustain it are substituted by its appearance as material culture. The past is merely a creative crucible in which these auratic objects were created and in appreciating its art the tourist is involved in an act of condonement. The past is momentarily free of all conflict and contestation. The slate is wiped clean. The church, in the moment of its appreciation, creates a myth.

Private tour operators

The final group involved in the representation of churches as tourist attractions were the small groups of private tour organisers who arrange a package of visits combined with transport and hospitality services, usually in a small area. Following the strategy of emergent theory or theoretical sampling, two such operators were asked to comment on some of the findings that had emerged from the research up to that point. They were each presented with a series of statements that reflected some of the main themes to emerge from the research and were asked to comment on them. This process was carried out by email and it enabled the respondents to 'annotate' the list that was presented to them (see Appendix 7). The statements were as follows:

1. Church tourism is now an important part of the heritage industry
2. Its appeal is quite narrow and of interest to older people who might also be interested in visiting country houses and museums
3. The church itself is quite ambivalent about tourism at the local level although at a national level it is more positive
4. The Church's interest in tourism is largely connected to its sense of mission and need to evangelise
5. Churches need to be better interpreted and presented for tourism purposes
6. Medieval country churches will always have a broader appeal than urban, Victorian or modern churches

7. Most churches, whatever their age, will be of limited interest to tourists

Both respondents expressed a marked ambivalence about the position of church tourism within the heritage and tourism industries and yet both were convinced of its potential to attract larger numbers of people if taken more seriously and managed more effectively:

Statement 1: Church tourism is now an important part of the tourism industry:
This was perceived for the most part as a lost opportunity:

> It could be much more so – there are some stunning examples of how to do it but sadly so many more of complete disinterest (Tour operator #1).

Statement 2: Its appeal is quite narrow and of interest to older people who might also be interested in visiting country houses and museums

There was an acknowledgement on the part of one operator that the appeal was rather narrow and confined to the same older segments who might also visit country houses and gardens and this was blamed on poor marketing. The other respondent disagreed and claimed that 30% of his clients were under 35, the result partly of an increased interest in genealogy.

In terms of the variability of representational practice with the Church as an organisation, the following statement, derived from the survey of church organisations, was put to the respondents:

Statement 3: the Church is quite ambivalent about tourism at the local level although at a national level it is more positive:
The variation within different parts of the church was understood and articulated:

> It would depend on the Diocese. Certainly more seem less enthusiastic rather than fully embracing (Tour operator #1).

> I think the regional level is where church tourism should be organised ... National has no real enthusiasm and local doesn't have the resources'(Tour operator #2).

One of them was at pains to point out the lack of interest at local level which he found bewildering and offered the following anecdote quoted here in full:

> An example of this came from my last visit to Scarborough ... St Mary's church stands next to the Castle, and is one of the two chief surviving medieval buildings ... in the town. English Heritage at the Castle were doing a roaring trade despite the sea mist and the cold wind at the Castle. Part of their tour talks about the church below. Before and after their visit many people walked down the path to the main church door to try the handle and discover it locked. The more determined tried every door, me (in disbelief) included. I counted at least thirty people in half an hour do this ... Others didn't bother because they met people coming back up the path. A few looked disappointed. I was furious! (Tour operator #1).

Here, then was a church that was passive even in the face of tourism going on around it, and tourists actively trying to gain access to it; here was a church that had the potential to complete a narrative begun at the castle, but which appeared to have no appetite to engage with the additional functions required of it to enter touristic space. Thus it resolutely refuses to be projected into touristic space despite the best efforts of a neighbouring English Heritage site that even mentions it in its own interpretative material. This is stark evidence of a dissonance between the representative practices of two major organisations, both centrally concerned albeit in different ways, with ancient buildings as cultural resources. In this case the dissonance was brought to light by tourists themselves, who unexpectedly found themselves leaving touristic space as they approached the church. A peculiar irony of this situation is the fact that the church *is* a focus of tourists for quite another reason: in the churchyard is the grave of Anne Bronte, which has received a steady stream of devoted visitors since the late nineteenth century (Armitage, 2006). Touristic representation is perhaps easier to resist than most authorities have cared to admit.

In terms of additionality, both operators were wary of the missionary aspect and were critical of the potential for alienation.

Statement 4: The Church's interest in tourism is largely connected to its sense of mission and its need to evangelise:

> Yes I do meet many churches that think that all old buildings should be flattened for the erection of a purpose built 'worship centre'! But some do see that tourists are potential pilgrims and will be frightened away if hit over the head with a bible the moment they walk in, but if warmly welcomed may look for something extra (Tour operator #2).

More trenchantly:

> There are some individual churches where you may have to experience a religious approach before you get to see the interior! Then what does a locked church say to those who try to visit? It is as if the congregation wish to keep everything private and safe and do not welcome visitors, and suggests to those who maybe wanted a more religious visit that God has already forsaken the place (Tour operator #1).

The Church's passivity about tourism was translated into its visitor management practices, and interpretation was also the subject of criticism.

Statement 5: To be effectively represented as tourist attractions churches need to be better interpreted and presented as such.

> A good information sheet/board, a guidebook or tourist trail leaflet can work wonders, but too many notices/prompts can spoil the experience (Tourism Operator #1).

> If a church being inlocked is considered presentation, then so many need to be better presented for tourism purposes! (Tourism Operator #1).

> Interpretation? Just shout more loudly in English! This is an area that is crucial to any tourism initiative being successful, but is often badly handled. My own pet area, but I don't want to overdo it ... (Tourism Operator #2).

If interpretation might seen as the 'first base' in terms of touristic representation, a lack of interpretation associated with passivity might be seen as the wilful neglect of an essential element in the construction of a tourist attraction, the others being the tourist and the sight itself. With locked churches barring the entry of tourists and a lack of markers, there is little to indicate touristic space (MacCannell, 1999).

Statement 6: Medieval country churches will always have a broader appeal than urban, Victorian or modern churches

For the purposes of representational practices and both operators agreed that the rural context is more significant for cultural reasons, and that the countryside in general is part of the attraction value:

> Country churches are part of the image of England. The countryside wouldn't be complete without them. It's like tea shops and village greens, it's part of the package (tour Operator #1).

Statement 7: Most churches, whatever their age, will be of limited interest to tourists

Finally it was put to them that from the tourists' point of view very few churches would be of interest. This was based on the preliminary findings from the interviews that had been carried out with tourists in churches (see chapter 7).

> There will always be some people who would never consider visiting a church under any circumstances. There are also people who would visit every one. The majority, however, I would say, would visit a church if it was open (Tour Operator #1).

> Limited interest? – most certainly. I would guess that few churches could make a significant financial gain from tourism, for the rest it is a case of creating a workable group practice, but little attempt has been made to understand the mechanics of such a set up (Tour operator #2).

The perceptions of these two operators place the representation of churches back within its touristic context, where processes of selection form the basis of representational practice. Their selection and representation is mediated, however, by the reluctance of some churches to be placed in that arena and by the passivity that stems from their primary use as places of worship, and the existing cultural work they do in connecting visitors with an authorised past, the 'image of England' as one of the operators put it. They are thus effectively limited in what they can do by the fact that churches are for the most part unachieved as tourist attractions, yet functional as places where culture is performed. Without effective interpretation and touristic marking and packaging, these tour operators might be seen as the vanguard of touristic representation, testing the possibilities and the exploring the boundaries of creating touristic space through representational practice and activity. The experience of the two operators quoted here reflects and re-emphasises the diverse, contested and dissonant nature of churches *as* and *within* touristic space, and the challenges faced by those who would attempt to shift them from their traditional passivity into an additional role as tourist attractions.

Conclusion

The findings presented in this chapter do not deal in certainties and generalisations. Rather, they provide a situational insight at a moment of change from the varying perspectives of those involved. The activities of local authorities support Rojek's notion of indexing and dragging of cultural resources into touristic representation by those with the power to do so (see Chapter 2). Here, for example can be seen the variety of representational practices, 'files of indexes' to use Rojek's terms (1997, 53-55), and the ways in which these are employed to create a portfolio of attraction value within which churches are given a part to play, particularly where their representation corresponds with established notions and discourse about what heritage is and means. This is only possible, however, where churches can be propelled in touristic space, either on their own account or as a group, presented perhaps as a trail or reflecting some significant feature such as the round towers of Norfolk or the 'wool churches' of the Cotswolds. This in turn depends on whether the churches are able or willing to be sprung from their passive representational practices into the additionality that tourism demands, with all the related processes of visitor management and interpretation.

The practices and dissonances within the church hierarchy were discussed in chapters 4 and 5, and in this chapter there is evidence of dissonance between the Church and the representational practices of other agencies involved in the creation of touristic space. This is significant because it is with these agencies that most of the power of representational practice resides: government agencies and local authorities with an agenda for economic regeneration and development and with an imperative to create new forms of capital accumulation.

The objectives of economic development and tourism are convergent with those of the church through additionality, but in practice there is dissonance over the true cultural meaning of the space involved and its most apposite forms of representation. The locked church is as much a repudiation as an obstacle and a statement that refutes authorised claims and representational practices. The officially sanctioned *representations of space*, of churches as tourist attractions, the *authorised version*, that version created under the eye of power to which Hollinshead (1999) has drawn attention in the sphere of tourism, and which is represented by government and its agencies is thus thwarted by the *spatial practices* of the church, in retaining its hold on these buildings as primarily places of worship. Passivity in this sense operates at both the beginning and end of the process by which churches enter touristic spatial practices: it represents the beginning state, before tourism is engaged, and an end point, where additionality is rejected.

In accordance with the methodological principles set out in Chapter 3, no attempt is made to generalise from the findings presented here or to make statistically validated inferences about the use of churches as tourist attractions. Nonetheless, there are some insights about the way that agencies of tourism, official and otherwise and at various operational levels use churches and their rural settings to connect with a cultural construct that I have referred to as the 'rural-historic'. This construct is part of a wider discourse that authorises the production of heritage values that support national identity and an authorised view of the past. In this sense tourism is simply introducing a new route to comfortable national myths that were once provided by the church. The link between church and state is manifest in government, but it is also apparent in the historic hegemonic role of the church in legitimizing existing relations of power and ownership. Church tourism in this light may be seen not as the search for 'otherness' that is the often quoted rationale for tourism, but rather, a representation of familiarity and continuity, and of cultural construction that was once the province of the liturgy, but which is now the cultural work of the heritage industry.

With churches, however, there is a level of dissonance in the spatial and representational practices associated with tourism that reflects Lefebvre's (1991) concerns with variations and changes in the production of space. The problem is that churches already represent a version of that authorised discourse for which heritage tourism has latterly provided cultural and representational space. To achieve this churches have to do nothing more than they do already: their very passivity contains spatial and representational practices that express continuity, identity and power. They are in this way the repositories of objects and a cultural role that embodies this authorised past. It is as if tourism, however, is filling a void left by the decline of the church as an active cultural force, and using the same spaces, if not the same practices to do this.

The dissonance is created where the actors involved are reacting in diverse ways to the changes outlined above: the desire to continue to use churches primarily for worship; the desire to abandon them for better equipped, easier to maintain and more comfortable buildings; the urge to employ the cultural capital they represent to attract tourists and thus to invest churches with this additional role. Ultimately it remains to be seen whether tourism will supersede the passivity of churches as a way of representing an authorised past, or indeed whether other interventions are possible that reflect the interest of the communities within which these buildings exist, though perhaps no longer reflect. The analysis is not complete, however, without the final element, the engagement of people as tourists with both the physicality and cultural meaning of churches and their contents. It is to that element that the analysis now turns, in addressing the perspectives of church tourists.

Chapter 7

Church Tourists

Introduction

Theories of touristic motivation were explored in Chapter 2, where it was suggested, on the basis of existing literature, that a number of transformations had taken place in the demand for tourism and, consequently, the very content of touristic space. Among these was an increased differentiation in touristic motivation, the development of niche segments in the tourism market, and the inclusion of a greater variety in the objects and nature of touristic space. It was also suggested that research on the 'demand' side of tourism has not been well developed, much of it being concerned with large scale MORI-type surveys in destinations and other attractions so that available data tends towards the numeric and statistical. In Chapter 3 it was suggested that apart from some basic numerical data a qualitative approach to accessing the opinions and perceptions was to be adopted in the present research. This focused on the meanings that tourists themselves attach to their activities rather than understandings imputed to them. The main purpose of this chapter, therefore, is to relate behavioural and motivational factors to the representational practices discussed in earlier chapters. Thus, it was important to establish the extent to which churches were perceived by visitors as viable touristic space and the extent to which representational practices supported this, or alternatively discouraged it. By this means it would be possible to examine and evaluate the congruence between representational practice, and touristic activity and perceptions.

Three types of data are presented here all of which was gathered in the three case study areas: a simple numeric analysis of visitor numbers in churches; an analysis of data based on the observation of tourists in churches, and finally the findings from interviews with church tourists.

Visitor numbers

As was stated in Chapter 3, visitor books provide a gross indicator of the level of church tourism in particular churches. It is likely that churches are visited by many more people than those who sign the visitor book, however, and a ration of between five and ten to one is perhaps a reasonable estimate (Samouelle, 1996, 25-26). Visitor books were examined in a number of churches in each case study area and the numbers counted for the first quarter and for the month of August, 2001. By this means it was hoped to identify seasonal effects as well as activity in the month that is traditionally the busiest in the holiday calendar. It was therefore assumed that church tourism was subject to similar seasonal variations as any other sector in the pattern of UK tourism and that an annual figure could not achieved by the simple extrapolation of any particular month's figures.

Table 8: Norfolk Case Study: Visitor Numbers.

Church	First quarter 2001	August 2001	Comments
Church N #1 Small rural village	6	15	Medieval church with a number of features including medieval woodwork and wall paintings. No signposting. Located close to busy main roads. Limited roadside car parking. No embedded interpretation, but guide leaflets pointing out the various features of the church
Church N #2 Large village location an established tourist destination with English Heritage site close by	113	312	Large, attractive medieval church with many notable features. Plenty of parking, leaflets and embedded interpretation
Church N #3 Remote rural village, several miles from majoı roads and nearest towns	N/A	N/A	Anglo-Saxon round tower. Mentioned in local authority guide. Closed, however, at the time of visit. Directional signage from main road. Limited parking. Surroundings have the feeling of private rather than public space. Sense of being located in the centre of a working farm.
Church N #4	74	125	Interesting and attractive building

Separate from village and a mile from main ro but close to market town Fakenham and route to coastal resorts			much pictured in local guides. No directional signage. Small car park. Well produced guidebook ar postcards
Church N #5 Beside main road betwe market towns of Swaffh and Fakenham	3	30	Small Saxon church in typically "quaint" rural Norfolk setting. Close to and clearly visible from main road. Small parking area. No signage. No embedded interpretation. Small leaflet with line drawings
Church N #6 Remote and adjacent to "shrunken" village.	115	171	Medieval church on a grand scale and one of the best known to experts and informed enthusiasts nationally. Fine perpendicular architecture and many notable features. No special signage to the church. Plenty of verge parking around village green. Well produced guides and postcards for sale. Very little embedded interpretation.
Church N #7 Located within remote coastal village	N/A	N/A	Important architecturally and impressive coastal location. Notable features within including "galleon graffiti".No directional signage and difficult to access for motorists. No embedded interpretation. Good quality guidebook and postcards for sale. Visitor book withdrawn due to "vandalism".
Church N #8 Isolated rural location.	11	13	No directional signage. No obviou parking places. No embedded interpretation. Small leaflet.
Church N #9 Isolated rural location.	7	23	Typical small medieval church with large collection of monuments dedicated to the Coke family (Sir Edward being an important member of Elizabeth 1's court. No signage. Difficult to find. No embedded interpretation. Basic leaflet
Church N #10 Close to well known seaside resort of Sheringham	41	103	Large medieval church. Notable internal features. No signage. Very poor parking along busy main road. No embedded interpretation. Small guidebook and postcards for sale.

Church N #11 Large village location or main coast road	52	89	Attractive building set within the ruins of a former priory. Extensive churchyard. Notable internal features including carved woodwork.No directional signage Abundant parking in the village. Children's books and toys. Tea and coffee making facilities. No embedded interpretation
Church N #12 Small isolated village bu a well-visited area	95	113	An important, large church with notable architectural features and internal features. Promoted as part of the Glaven Valley Church Trails.
Mean	**51.7**	**99.4**	

Table 8 suggests, first of all, that even the most 'popular' of the buildings listed above are not attracting large numbers of people, even at the height of summer. It also indicates considerable variety in patterns of church visiting, both between churches and seasons of the year. Whilst the average First Quarter visitor figure is 52, the range is from only 3 to 115. Similarly, the average for August is just under 100, but the range is vast, from 13, to 312. The ratio of First Quarter to August figures is, on average around 1:2, in other words twice as many people on average visited in August than in the whole of the first quarter. This is not surprising in a country where seasonality is a major conditioning factor in the pattern of tourist activity (Baum & Lundtorp, 2001), but it does indicate that churches are visited in the winter months, though in much reduced numbers. The wide variety in the numbers between churches appears to be related to two factors: the extent to which the church is a component part of an existing attraction system, and whether the church is notable in some other way, perhaps to informed enthusiasts who might include it in their itinerary for a visit or tour.

Thus, churches N #4 and N #6 with visitor numbers well over the average for the sample are well known in their own right; and churches N #2 and N12, again with figures above average for the sample, benefit from their proximity to, and context within, established touristic space. Even church N #10, though below average in its winter figures, clearly benefits from its proximity to the coastal resort of Sheringham in the summer.

Another finding that was not predicted was that with one exception all of the churches with higher than average (for the sample) visitor numbers had a lower than average seasonality ratio, ranging from 1:1.2 to 1:1.7. This suggests that the popular churches in this sample suffered less from seasonal effects than the less popular churches, in other words that the people who visited them would be inclined to do so regardless of the season or the weather.

Churches with lower visitor numbers were not lacking in historical or architectural interest. For example church N #5 is largely Saxon in origin and is relatively accessible. What they do lack, however, is a representational context either within existing touristic space or in their own right as attractions, largely because the region, apart from the coastal strip, is largely undeveloped for tourism, despite the best efforts of the local authorities. This suggests that representational contexts are a key driver of church tourism: it matters where the church is.

The findings from the sample of churches in the Cotswold case study area and the analysis are presented in Table 9, below:

Table 9: Cotswold Case Study: Visitor Numbers

Church	First quarter 2001	August 2001	Comments
Church C #1 Rural village setting near to main roads	9	10	Medieval church. Attractive rural setting. Easy road access and car park. No directional signage. Very little labelling or other interpretation. No guide book or leaflet
Church C #2 Rural village setting clo to main trunk road and market towns	9	18	Norman details and monuments from later periods. Roadside parking (on busy main road). No signage. Some interpretation. Guide leaflet.
Church C #3 Located within "National Trust" village established destination	403	411	Large Saxon and later church, attractive in itself and located in well established honey-pot destination with National Trust property nearby.
Church C #4 Isolated village setting	30	42	Typical rural Cotswold setting, but very isolated. Mostly Norman remains. Limited roadside parking in nearby village. "Unofficial" signage from main road. No embedded interpretation. Guide leaflet.
Church C #5 Large town centre settin in established tourist destination.	850	751	Very large cathedral-like church with much of interest architecturally and in terms of monuments, stained glass, etc Town centre location in established tourist destination. Volunteer staff, shop and good embedded interpretation. Leaflets in several languages
Church C #6 Isolated village setting	26	44	Typical Cotswold rural setting. No signage and difficult to find along narrow country lanes. Road side parking for one or two cars. No embedded interpretation. Postcard sales
Church C #7 Rural location with easy access and close to main Cotswold routes	74	100	Well-known medieval Cotswold church. No signage. Limited roadside parking. Little embedded interpretation. Leaflet
Church C #8 Market town location	432	576	Large "wool church" in established destination. Exceptional stained glass sculpture, woodwork and

			furnishings. Street parking and free car park nearby. Some interpretation of the stained glass but other features barely remarked. Guide book.
Church C #9 Rural village setting clo to main roads	38	65	Small Norman church with interesting Victorian wall paintings. No signage, little parking. Some attempt at interpretation. Promoted as part of the Northleach Group of Churches – a church trail.
Church C #10 Rural village setting accessible from main routes	29	31	Substantial Norman church with extensive church yard. Some directional signage. Parking on roadside and drive. Little embedded interpretation. Informative but poorly produced leaflet. Postcards
Church C#11 Small market town cent location, established destination	116	199	Typical Cotswold "Wool" church. Parking available in Town centre. Extensive embedded interpretation. Detailed and well produced leaflets.
Church C#12 Market town location in established destination	328	436	One of the great Cotswold "wool churches". Large medieval building; collection of rare brasses. Brown sign in market square. Some parking in town centre; easily accessible. Some embedded interpretation. Guide leaflet in several languages. Separate leaflet for brasses. Short and longer guides and a leaflet for children.
Church C#13 Isolated rural location	29	36	Large church with many remarkable features from a number of periods. Secluded site away from village centre and poorly signed from main road. Roadside parking in village. No embedded interpretation. No embedded interpretation. No leaflets available. Children's play space
Church C#14 Large village location	20	35	Much Norman work and remarkabl Norman font. Some roadside parkin No signage. Path from main road pa manor house. Some embedded interpretation within the church. Leaflet for font
Church C#15 Isolated rural setting	31	38	Limited roadside parking. No signage. Much Norman work v isible on the outside of this church -

			15th century tower & traces of wall paintings.
Mean	**73.1**	**101.1**	

Compared with North Norfolk, the Cotswolds exhibits similar levels of summer visiting but much higher levels in the winter. It also contains a higher proportion of churches in established destinations, something that reflects its greater degree of overall development as a tourist destination area. Similar variations between churches are also evident in the Cotswolds and the ranges are even greater, from 9 to 850 for winter visits and from 10 to 751 in August. This reflects the importance of the market towns as destinations in themselves, a characteristic that is not so evident in Norfolk. The more isolated rural churches with lower than average (for the sample) visiting rates exhibit similar levels and ranges to those in North Norfolk, although winter visiting is more frequent, even for these. As already implied the ratio of winter to summer visiting is much lower at 1: 1.4 on average, though as with North Norfolk the ratio is lower for established destinations, in this case market towns and the 'National Trust' village of Bibury.

Some churches in the sample have achieved a level of representation as touristic space in themselves. For example, Church C #7, with winter and summer visiting levels equal to the sample average, is both well regarded with two pages in Verey (1970), and relatively well visited even though it is quite distant from any established destinations. Other than this the most highly visited churches exist within established touristic space and experience relatively low levels of seasonality because they are associated with busy market towns that can attract visitors throughout the year. Once again, the church appears primarily *within,* and as a component of, touristic space and the representational practices that surround it. In this case its context is an established destination with an easily recognisable image and associated marketing on the part of operators and local authorities.

The Bradford case study was never expected to yield a comprehensive set of findings, not least because of the lack of touristic representation of the urban churches, most of which are Victorian. All of those surveyed in the urban area were closed at the time they were visited and the visitor books were therefore not accessible. This situation confirms the remarks made by the Diocesan tourist official who indicated that the focus of attention within the City was Bradford Cathedral, which had been restored and refurbished as an important part of the City's built environment and that it was difficult to represent other areas of the city as touristic space because of the social problems associated with them (Diocesan Official #1). The rural areas by contrast are associated with the established destination areas of the southern Dales, the A59 corridor towards Lancashire and the Forest of Bowland. There are also a number of market towns of various sizes which are to varying degrees tourist destinations and clearly represented as such. The findings are presented in Table 10 below.

Table 10: Bradford Case Study: Visitor Numbers

Church	First quarte	August	Comments
B #1 Attractive village locatio	17	38	Large medieval church in attractive village location near established tourist destination of Skipton and a well-known landmark. Notable medieval internal features. Easily accessible. Little embedded interpretation.
B #2 Urban – City Centre location	closed	closed	Large Victorian church with imposing spire. Something of a landmark in its urban setting. Not located in an area frequented by tourists and indeed one with something of a reputation for urban social problems.
B #3 Urban/suburban locatior	closed	closed	Large early Victorian church
B #4 Dales location in tourist honey-pot village	83	156	Eighteenth and nineteenth century building otherwise unremarkable but for its location. Accessible from village. No interpretation
B #5 Dales location	22	43	Perpendicular tower, the rest remodelled in nineteenth century otherwise unremarkable. Accessible from nearby road with parking.
B #6 Substantial rural village close to forest of Bowlai and main a59 route	34	54	Medieval church rebuilt in 19C. Internal features including medieval monumental effigies and brasses. Village location but difficult access due to lack of safe on street parking.

			Associated with Forest of Bowland and Pendle areas, countryside recreation, walking etc. Guidebook but little interpretation
B #7 Rural village location	13	42	Large medieval building with many internal features including high quality monuments, rood screen and other medieval woodwork. Small guidebook, little interpretation
B #8 Isolated rural location separate from villages it serves	24	56	Isolated position but accessible from main A59 road, from which it is signed. Medieval building with sculpture, monuments and unusual carved screen. Small guidebook. No interpretation otherwise
B #9 Rural location. Close to main road and clearly visible from it	11	29	Separate from village, but accessible Attractive churchyard in rolling countryside. Medieval building with screens and other early woodwork. Very little interpretation
B #10 Rural village location	13	23	Norman church with some internal features including Jacobean pulpit. Accessible, parking. Very little interpretation
B #11 Small town centre location on main A59 route	43	68	A large church in the centre of a town that straddles the main road from east to west across the southern Dales. Substantial Norman remains and a number of medieval internal features. Some embedded interpretation and good guide book
B #12 Isolated rural location away from village and secluded	12	38	Victorian church incorporating masonry an other artefacts from an earlier building. Signed from main road and accessible from it. Good parking. No interpretation.
B #13 Large Market town location. Established tourist destination	123	206	Large medieval church associated with Castle – an established tourist attraction in an established tourist town. Many internal features including sculpture, monuments associated with occupants of the castle and medieval architectural features. Good guide books and embedded interpretation
Mean	**36**	**78**	

The seasonal patterns discovered elsewhere were also apparent in the Bradford case study, but the generally lower levels of visitation were surprising given the established nature of the area (the Dales etc) as a tourist destination. Once again, however, the influence of established touristic space was apparent, especially with churches such as B #11 and B #13, and to some extent B #4. The latter is in a small village that is a centre for countryside pursuits such as walking, caving and climbing. The area's lower visitor numbers in winter also indicates a generally greater level of seasonality, and the pattern of tourism being related more strongly to activities associated with better weather.

In overall terms, and taken into consideration with notes made on interpretation and other visitor management issues, this survey has indicated a lower level of use of churches as attractions than might be hoped by those who enthusiastically adopt the additionality thesis. For this reason it rather supports the notion that there is another agenda for these buildings and that primary uses and traditional narratives about their role in society remain dominant. Churches clearly benefit from their context *within* established tourist destinations and it is rare to find evidence of churches *as* tourist destinations in themselves. Even within this context, however, it is hard to find evidence that churches are embedded within existing attraction systems. Very few of them represent themselves in this way and the apparent lack of interpretation in most churches is an indicator of their lack of involvement in the process of touristic representation. It would appear that rather than being proactive components of the attraction system they are passive beneficiaries of it where touristic representation by other agencies is sufficient to draw them in. The survey of visitor numbers has indicated a relatively low level of visiting despite the opportunities presented by the tourism. It is time now, to consider the actions, behaviour and attitudes of church visitors in completing an understanding of the role churches play as and within destinations.

Observation

The strengths and weaknesses of observation as a method of research have already been discussed but its value in elaborating and enhancing other approaches within the context of a methodological bricolage has been identified (see Chapter 3). The observation in the present study was focused on the activities of tourists themselves, using a structured checklist, a copy of which is provided in Appendix 4. Thus, the various movements and actions of visitors around the setting were noted, and from these notes an attempt was made to interpret the actions and behaviour of the visitors. The observations provided information about tourist behaviour in terms of visitor characteristics, time spent in and around the church, points of interest, movement, interaction with other group members. Activity and behaviour were monitored in a notebook by the observer, who contrived to be at the church at the same time as the visitor and observing discreetly.

A church was chosen in each of the case study areas that was perceived to have some attraction value in terms of location and historical and architectural qualities and thought, as a result, to have a relatively higher number of visitors than others in the area. The churches were of approximately equal size and contained roughly similar types of objects and levels of embedded interpretation. Each had a guidebook and visitor guide. One weekday was spent in each church. Saturdays would risk the possibility of a wedding and observation on Sundays would be affected by the presence of worshippers. This was considered the right balance as although there were inevitable more visitors at weekends, those observed during the week were more likely to be on holiday. In total twenty three observations were made over the three days of the study and forty-eight individuals were involved. Since no differences related to the case study areas was hypothesised (and none observed) no attempt has been made to discriminate between locations. All the observation took place in the summer of 2003.

Basic data

The basic data derived from the observational study is summarised below in Table 8. This includes information on the size of the group, demographic data and time spent in the church. The age of visitors was estimated and categorised as under sixteen; sixteen to twenty, twenty-one to forty, forty to sixty and over sixty. Clearly more precise categories were not possible from simple observational estimates because of the problem of boundaries. Whilst it was easy to differentiate someone in their fifties from someone in their seventies, it would not be so easy to distinguish say, a fifty-nine year old from a 61 year old. There was a necessity therefore to minimise such boundary uncertainties. These findings were broadly confirmed by the profile of respondents interviewed (see below).

Table 11: Visitor Characteristics

Variable	Frequency
Group size	
One	8
Two	9
Three – five	6
Age ranges	
Under sixteen	5
Sixteen to twenty	3
Twenty to forty	14
Forty to sixty	10
Over sixty	11
Most frequent group types	
Pair over forty	6
Group over 50	5
Least frequent group types	
Single under sixteen	0

As Table 11 indicates, the visitor group was dominated by the older age ranges either as singles or pairs. Groups of three – five were thought to be family groups and this is where the under-sixteens were located. As a set of visitor characteristics these patterns were also detected in the interview sample (see below).

Time spent in the church

Firstly, the time spent in the church by each visitor/group was measured. The average time spent, rounded up to the nearest minute, was twenty-two minutes. Where one or more visitors left before others (which tended to happen with the larger groups), the time was measured on the basis of the last person to leave. The purpose here was to examine any variations in the time spent as a whole and therefore the level of engagement as a whole with the experience.

One very clear finding was that the range of the data was unexpectedly small. The shortest period spent was seventeen minutes and the longest twenty-eight minutes (see Figure 13, below).

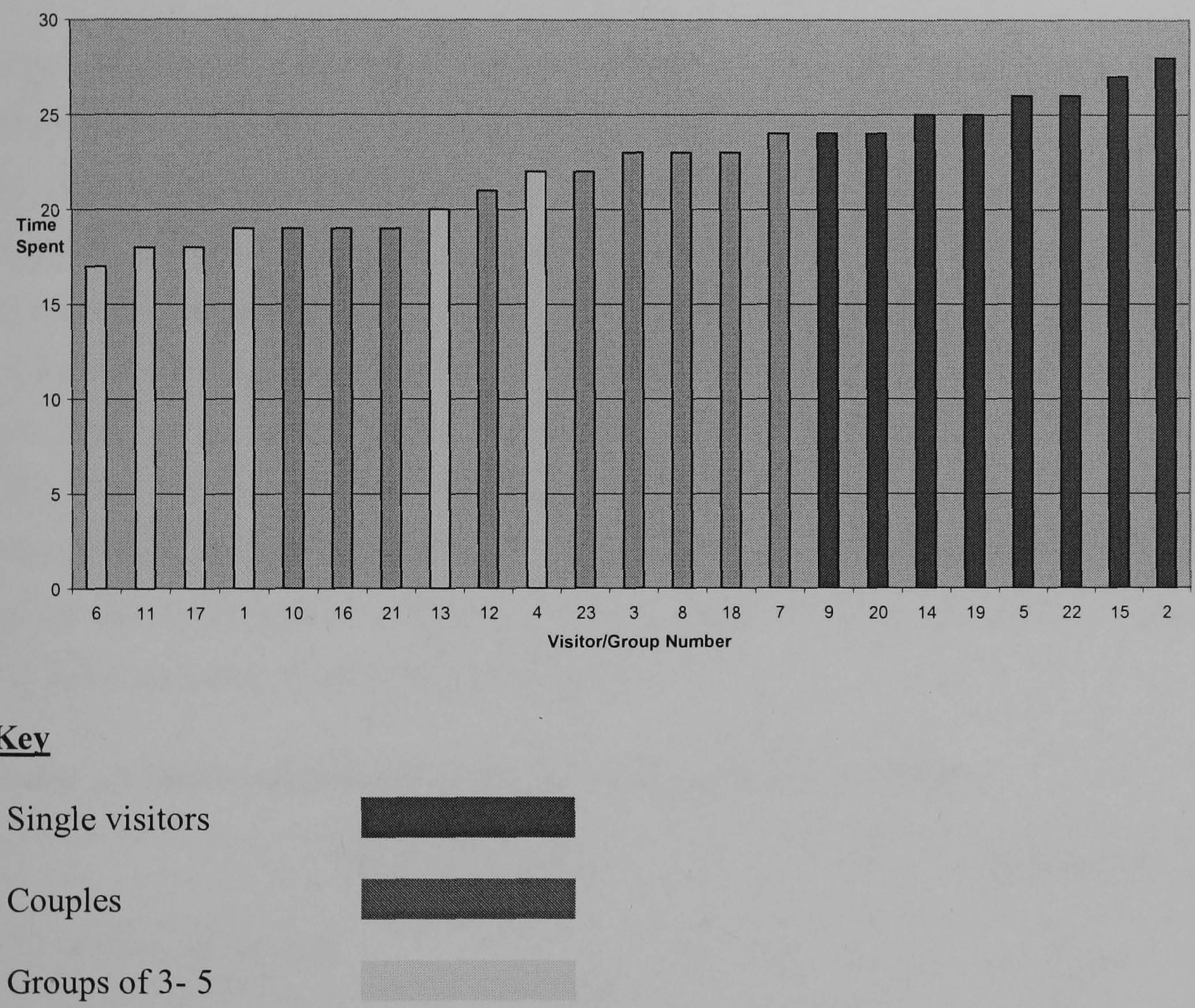

Figure 13: Time Spent by Visitors/Groups in Churches

The length of time spent also seems to be related to the size of the group: the smaller the group the longer time was spent, with each of the singleton visitors spending more time in the church than any other group. The larger groups of 3 or more spent least time in the church. This finding is somewhat counter intuitive since it might be expected that the larger the group the more opportunities there might be for attracting and holding the visitor's attention, the compound effect of which in a group context might considered to lengthen the time spent as a whole. The presence of children may well be a factor here, as these were associated with the larger groups and given that there was nothing specially designed to engage them. If parents are consciously or subliminally aware of this the visit time might be thus curtailed. All of the children present were estimated to be less than twelve years old.

Movement and engagement

It proved difficult to categorise the actions and behaviours of visitors as they were often random and difficult to interpret. The original checklist was designed around the objects in the church that were likely to attract visitors' attention: monuments, windows, sculpture and any embedded interpretation. In the event this proved futile as broader categories were needed to encompass the observations. For example 'wandering and gazing' was the most accurate way of describing a behaviour that involved pacing slowly around the building with no apparent object and gazing around, as if trying to 'take in' the whole thing or feel something of the atmosphere. Descriptors of activity and behaviour were thus defined and their incidence recorded on the basis of individual visitors as observed events. These are presented in Table 12, below, in order of diminishing frequency.

Table 12: Observed Behaviour Within Groups of Church Visitors

Observed event	Frequency
Wandering and gazing	36
Looking at particular monuments and objects	26
Making a donation	21
Looking at the visitor book	19
Reading/looking at memorial inscriptions	13
Looking up at the roof	13
Approaching the altar	12
Reading/looking at embedded interpretation/labels	9
Looking at book stand/display	7
Reading the guidebook whilst walking and gazing	4
Act of worship/prayer / standing respectfully before the altar	4

Whilst 'wandering and gazing' was the most easily discernable form of behaviour it was not possible, from observation, to establish what the visitor was thinking or feeling. Looking at particular monuments and objects was also noted as a frequent event, but it should be added that engagement with these, in most cases, was minimal and certainly not long enough to read the written material provided by way of interpretation. Only nine visitors were observed apparently reading these materials in detail, although whether they completed them or not could not be discerned. More often people would glance at the object whilst passing or stop for a brief look, especially where these were tomb effigies or brasses which can be visually arresting, and often were, in the churches concerned. Memorial inscriptions on tablets or plaques seemed to capture the attention of member of visitors, although the reasons for this can only be guessed at: they are often interesting, expressed in archaic terms and tell a story of sorts. They are also, of course, concerned with people, and that seemed to make a difference in terms of engagement.

Looking up at the roof was a fairly common behaviour and associated with wandering and gazing especially on first entering the church. The buildings are intended to inspire wonder and do have a distinctly vertical emphasis, with height and pointed arches that draw the eye upwards along, it is supposed, with the thoughts of the viewer.

Visitors were frequently observed walking slowly down the central aisle of the nave (the larger part of the church) and hesitating at the chancel arch (the archway that separates the nave from the smaller chancel, which contains the altar). Some would turn to one side or the other at this point, appearing reluctant to enter what they may have considered to be the most sacred part of the church. An equal number (twelve were counted) would enter the chancel area and walk up to the altar where three were seen to make some gesture of worship (a fourth did this in one of the pews in the nave). Most, however, were content to stop at the altar rail, look around and then return towards the chancel arch (see Figure 14).

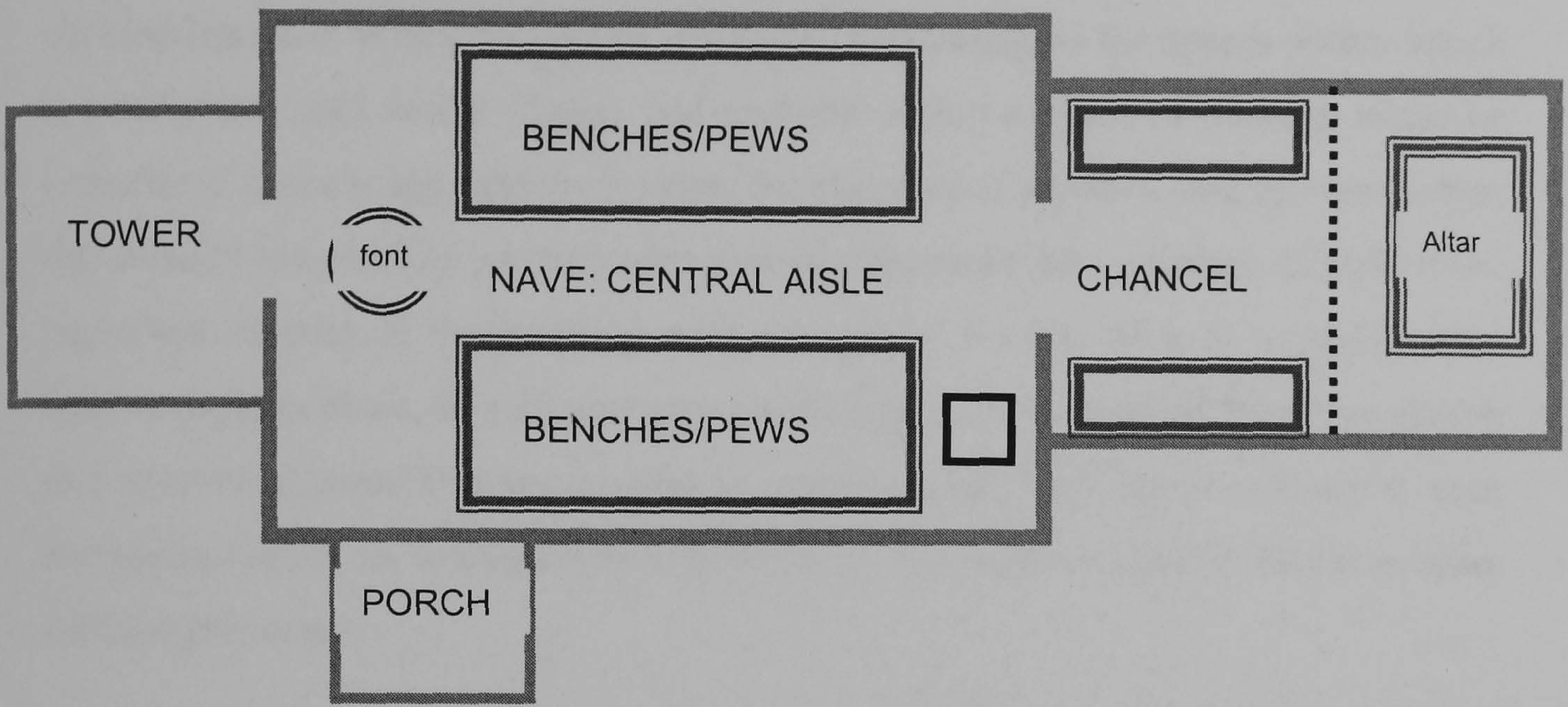

Figure 14: Simplified Church Plan Showing Main Features of the Building

A surprising number of visitors (eight) spent several minutes looking through the visitor book, which is usually located on a table near the entrance. It was clearly a matter of interest where people had travelled from and what they had written about the church, and this prompted them two of them to record their own visit similarly. Bookstands and displays of various kinds held the attention of visitors momentarily, but rarely did they pick anything up to read or look at more closely. Typically such displays are concerned with religious matters.

Very few visitors picked up either a guidebook or leaflet, although in all three churches a small fee was expected for this on an 'honesty' basis. There was little evidence that even these few visitors were very engaged by what they were reading, or were actively relating it to what they were seeing.

In terms of contact and interpersonal behaviour whilst in the church there was a surprising lack of it. Most visits, even with the larger groups were either conducted in total and presumably respectful silence, and where conversation did take place this was in hushed tones or whispers. Wandering and gazing in churches is clearly an activity best accomplished alone. Only children felt uninhibited by their surroundings and were often admonished for this. The extent of this behaviour was unexpected, and is assumed to be conditioned by cultural mores related to the need to show respect and restraint whilst in a church. It could be argued, of course, that people have been 'taught' to behave like this in churches and cathedrals. The implications for the perception of churches as touristic space are, however, worth considering here. Whilst behaviour is always conditioned by the spaces within which it takes place, and whilst respect and restraint within a place of worship might be considered entirely appropriate, it raises the question of whether, and to what extent, the sense of the place as a visitor attraction is affected by this response. Clearly if the perceived sanctity of the building militates against a sense of it as anything other than a religious place, or perhaps more significantly, the cultural effect of the church as a symbol of something meaningful in creating a sense of history or identity, then its representation as touristic space is likely to be highly mediated by these other cultural processes.

The observation of church visitors raised perhaps as many questions as it addressed, and the limitations of the method were clearly apparent in terms of what could be understood from the behaviour observed. Nonetheless, as the discussion in Chapter 3 suggested there was value in this method in identifying the interactions of visitors with the physical environment of the church and with each other in that setting. Thus some behaviours became apparent, including a very superficial engagement with the objects and artefacts of the church interior that are the concern of most guidebooks and embedded interpretation. Whether this is due to the casual nature of the visit or with the quality of the interpretation was unclear from observation, although more insights were available from interviews with visitors (see below). Certainly, the interpretative material that was available did not appear to engage the majority of visitors although the casual nature of the visits might be apparent from the relatively short period of time spent within the churches.

More surprising perhaps was the nature of the observed behaviour in relation to what might be best described as the essential *nature* of the building. A sense of respectful observance was apparent even when overt acts of worship were not. A generalised engagement was more evident than any specific focus and it was clear the building exerted some influence on visitor behaviour: a restraint in respect of communication and conversation was apparent and wandering and gazing seemed to be predominant. How this translates into the visitors' expressed feelings about the experience is analysed and discussed in the following section.

Perceptions of church tourists

The aim in this section is to identify and to analyse key variables associated with the nature, behaviour and attitudes of people visiting churches as tourists. As described in Chapter 3, ten visitors were interviewed in each of the case study areas. A further thirty visitors were interviewed in North Yorkshire sometime later, and in the wake of the North Yorkshire Church Tourism Initiative (Yorkshire Tourist Board, 2004). The purpose of this extra sample was to validate the findings from the case study areas and to identify any effects that might have been derived from a full scale tourism initiative. A question schedule was used as the basis for structured conversations which covered the key issues that had emerged from earlier phases of the research and within the overall strategy of theoretical sampling and emergent theory (see Appendix 2).
After piloting at various locations it became apparent that quiet country churches generated so few visitors that much time could be spent simply waiting for one to arrive, if indeed anyone did. For this reason the interviews were carried out both at weekends and in the midweek, and in churches that were known from the observation phase to have a reasonable number of visitors. All of the interviews were carried out in the spring or summer months as the prospect of finding respondents out of season was not thought to be high.

The survey of church visitors was qualitative rather than quantitative and in no sense could be described as a sample or probability-based analysis from which inferences or generalisations could be drawn about a wider population of church visitors. Nonetheless, some broad groupings and trends did emerge that have some resonance with previous research in the field of heritage tourism and from which some useful conclusions could be drawn. Primarily, however, the survey explored the deeper perceptions and attitudes of those interviewed and the meaning that they attached to what they were doing in the church. This analysis enabled a number of groups or segments to be identified and categorised on the basis of behavioural, motivation and attitudinal characteristics as well as the standard socio-demographic variables which are discussed first.

Socio-demographic dimensions.

The qualitative nature of the survey precluded the kind of statistical profiling of key variables that is associated with large sample surveys. In the latter, for example, it would be possible to identify significant sub-samples based on age, gender, geographical origins, and income and to test the extent to which these were associated or correlated with behavioural and attitudinal variables using non-parametric statistical tests. Whilst the small sample size prevented this kind of analysis, it was nonetheless possible to identify some broad characteristics associated with age, family type and group configuration, and to combine the two to identify life stage segments, see Table 13 below.

Table 13: Visitor Type/Lifestage Segments

Visitor type/Lifestage segment*	Description	Numbers in samp
Older singles	Older people (60+) visiting alone	1
Older couples	Older couples (60+) not accompanied friends or family	9
Older groups	Groups of 3 or more predominantly old people (60+)	2
Midlife singles	People aged 41-60 visiting alone	3
Midlife couples	Couples aged 41-60 not accompanied friends or family	16
Midlife groups	Groups of 3 or more people who a predominantly aged 41-60	8
Midlife families	Families with children where the parents a aged 41-60.	6
Twenty – thirty-something singles	People aged 20 – 40 visiting alone	3
Twenty – thirty-something couples	Couples aged 20-40 not accompanied children, other family or friends	3
Twenty – thirty-something groups	Groups of 3 or more people who a predominantly aged 20-40	0
Twenty – thirt something families	Families with children where the parents a aged 2-40.	4
Younger singles	People aged under 20 visiting alone	1
Younger couples	Couples aged under 20 not accompanied children, other family or friends	0
Younger groups	Groups of 3 or more people aged between and 20**	0
Three generation families	Family groups where one or more interv are present from each of three generations	4

* Where two or more people were present only one was interviewed – usually the one who was most willing to be. In family groups this was always a parent.
** Children under 16 alone or in groups would not have been approached, but none were encountered

The single most frequent visitor type in all three case study areas and in the North Yorkshire sample is the midlife couple. Of the sixty people interviewed 27% fell into this category, and for the most part, into the older end of this range. Older couples, midlife groups and midlife families were the only other substantial groups and together these constituted 38% of the sample.

One clear feature to emerge at this stage, therefore, was that the dominant age group in the sample was the over-forties, predominantly in couples or in groups, a finding which is broadly consonant with those of the (less precise) observational studies described above. Only eleven respondents could be allocated to younger groups and there was a clear diminution towards the younger age ranges, with only one respondent under twenty years of age. Three families with young children were represented by respondents in their twenties or thirties. Other younger people did appear, however, in the context of midlife families (a mixture of younger, older and adult children), and with three generation families where the children were all under the age of ten. There is, perhaps, little that is surprising about this finding, given existing knowledge about the profile of heritage tourists (see Chapter 2). Whilst information on the age ranges of heritage tourists is not conclusive, Prentice (1989) found that younger people and children were well represented among visitors to ruined castles, where a good day out might be had and where 'generalist recreation' might be sought (Johnson & Thomas, 1995, 181). Children were less well represented, however, in National Trust properties which tended to be patronised by older visitors (Prentice, 1989, 26-29). Hanna's (1984) survey made no reference to the age of church visitors. It should be emphasised, however, that this data is not intended to be statistically representative, the primary purpose being to describe the characteristics of the visitors concerned.

It is perhaps sufficient to observe that the typical English Heritage property, a ruined castle or monastic site, provides opportunities beyond the appreciation of its history and architecture. The kinds of open spaces associated with such monuments facilitate family activity and play, perhaps centred on a picnic, with a shop selling toys, and interpretive media that is often interactive and designed to address school-age children. Historic theme parks, and even traditional and well established museums, are similarly focused on the possibilities for a family day out and the entertainment and occupation of children. Churches, however, even the larger buildings and cathedrals, offer few distractions of this kind preferring the spectacle, such as it is, to be connected with expressions of the Christian message. Churches that do offer facilities for families and children have been very few in number in the present study: perhaps some dedicated space or a leaflet designed with children in mind (see Chapter 5). Even the history and architectural features of churches are deeply encoded and lacking in interpretation, save for the leaflets which are traditionally arcane, scholarly and frequently religious in tone (see above).

Again, these findings are supportive of those from the observational studies. The predominance of couples amongst the older group of visitors was apparent, as it was with the midlife group. Other group configurations in these age ranges were represented by groups of three or more (most commonly four), representing the presence of elderly parents, other relatives and friends. Older people were also present in the three generation families. Midlife groups mostly comprised two or more families (three) or represented the presence of older relatives (five), the taking of a parent or elderly relative out for the day being clearly manifested. The predominant configurations of respondents between the ages of twenty and forty were twenty-thirty-something families, couples and three people visiting alone. Only one person under the age of twenty was encountered, a female undergraduate student on holiday with her parents who had not accompanied her on the visit. The church, in this case, was simply a regular feature of walks from the nearby holiday home.

People visiting alone were something of a rarity across the sample as a whole. On the face of it this may seem surprising, the image of the lone enthusiast armed with a Pevsner guide might seem on first consideration a typical one for the church tourist. If this is a target group for the organisers of church tourism, then their numbers in this sample would not be encouraging. Apart from the younger woman mentioned above, there were three more under forty, all of them male, a further three between forty and sixty, two of whom were female and one male in the older category.

The final category of note from a touristic point of view was the 'group tour'. Group specialist tourism has been a characteristic of the fragmentation of tourist markets over the last twenty years, as 'communities of interest' have grown up around particular activities and interests related to sports and other cultural activities. Typically such groups are small and self-organised, or they may employ a specialist guide. Alternatively an 'expert' might seek to organise group events and tours, and evidence of this has been found in two of the case study areas as suggested in the last chapter. Within this survey, however, none of the respondents were members of organised groups or parties assembled for the purpose of visiting a church or churches as a planned tour. All of the groups encountered were composed of friends and relatives who were out for the day together or, less frequently, on holiday together.

In common with other visitor configurations, groups belonged exclusively to the over forties age ranges, with eight represented in the midlife category and two in the over-sixties. There is some blurring of these categories, however, where older friends or relatives were part of the group, as discussed above. The mean group size was 4.4 and the modal average was four.

Very few geographic variations were found in relation to socio-demographic characteristics, nor were there any significant differences between the findings from the case study area and the North Yorkshire validation sample. The only apparent variations were that the fourteen family groups with children tended to be over-represented in established tourist destinations such as the Yorkshire Dales part of the Bradford Diocese and the Cotswolds (five in each). At the same time, single visitors tended to be under-represented here, with none in the Yorkshire Dales and five in North Norfolk which is less well developed as a tourist destination. It should be repeated that this is not a sample survey and that findings such as these are purely indicative. Nonetheless, it does seem apparent that churches *within* established touristic space might share in the types of family-orientated tourism that might be expected there.

In common with evidence previously recorded from visitor books, the majority of church tourists in this sample were excursionists, technically not tourists all, as the latter are normally associated with overnight stays (World Tourism Organisation, 1995). Only a small minority within the samples were on holiday in the area and there was no difference between the regions in this respect. Only sixteen respondents (27%) reported that they were tourists from other parts of the country. None were from overseas, which might be considered surprising given the appearance of such tourists in church visitor books, and it may be that visitors from more distant parts feel a greater compulsion to sign the visitors book. Twelve of the 'distant' visitors represented couples, eight in midlife and four older. Three respondents represented midlife families. Of the couples, seven were in self-catering (cottage) accommodation, three were staying hotels or guest houses and two were touring, staying in residential inns on a bed and breakfast basis. Two of the three midlife families with children were staying in self-catering accommodation and one had a holiday home in the area (North Norfolk). Three of the respondents had holiday homes in the area. The final distant visitor was the young woman visiting the church alone and who belonged to a family with a holiday home in the area, again, in North Norfolk.

Few of the sixteen distant visitors had actually travelled very far from the locations in which they were interviewed. None was from abroad and ten were from London and the South East. Of these, four were interviewed in Yorkshire, four in North Norfolk (a two-three hour drive from London) and two in the Cotswolds. Both Norfolk and the Cotswolds are regarded as weekend retreats from London. Of the remaining six, two were on holiday in North Norfolk from the West Midlands (no more than a two hour drive), three were on holiday in the Cotswolds from the North Midlands and North and one was visiting North Yorkshire from the Manchester area. This was clearly not a group for whom exotic travel was always a priority.

The vast majority of the respondents were, therefore, day trippers or excursionists who began and ended their journey in the same day and had come out in the car from a nearby town or City. Where individuals were encountered who had not travelled, ie they were locals, the interview did not proceed. A small number of respondents (six) were on cycle tours from nearby towns. Cycling is a growth area in tourism and is actively promoted in some rural settings such as Yorkshire and North Norfolk. Two of these respondents were encountered in North Norfolk, the remaining four in North Yorkshire.

As stated earlier, the purpose here is not to profile church tourists in the areas concerned, but simply to describe the characteristics of the sample. It is significant, nonetheless, that those tourists and visitors thus encountered were largely representative of older people, and people in midlife enjoying a day out in the countryside. Having described the sample, the next stage is to ascribe to it some behavioural and motivational characteristics, the possibility of which is implied by the review of research on touristic motivation presented in chapter 2.

Behavioural and motivational dimensions

No evidence was found in the sample of dedicated, enthusiastic church tourism. Nor was there any indication that any of the visitors had any kind of specialist knowledge or interest in church history or architecture. Whatever these people were doing in the church where they were interviewed, it apparently had little to do with anything they might read in a Pevsner volume. Earlier it was indicated that none of the groups represented in the sample had been formed for the specific purpose of church tourism. Indeed, from an analysis of the findings as a whole, there was no evidence amongst the sixty people interviewed that any of them had more than a passing interest in the building or its history.

If the informed enthusiast, absent here, forms one end of the behavioural or motivational dimension, what other points between this and the entirely casual visitor might be identified? McKercher has already elevated this dimension into a fully fledged taxonomy of cultural tourists (2002), but there was no evidence from the present study to support such a venture as anything more than a crudely descriptive exercise. All that could be detected was a fragile continuum from informed enthusiasts (whose existence can only be inferred from the availability of texts that reflect and support such interests), to the most casual and fleeting of visits. Neither was there evidence that responses could be clearly fixed on the continuum making the possibility of classification even more problematic. For example, a female respondent (mid-thirties) representing a young family, stated quite clearly that they very rarely, if ever, visited churches, and that they were here on this occasion because they had heard that it was a beautiful church and worthy of a visit. They had therefore decided to include it in their day out; although there was little prospect that they would make a habit of such visits:

> The children aren't interested for a start and there isn't really much here to occupy people (female, 30s, North Yorkshire Validation Sample).

The reasons for this apparent lack of engagement are explored later, but for the moment it is sufficient to note that the response of individuals to an historic building or other context may be momentary, transient and entirely situational.

Further insight on this issue was elicited in conversations that followed the question *'how would you describe the purpose of your visit here today?'* The most frequent response was one of surprise (to be asked the question) indicating perhaps that the issue was of far more interest to the researcher than to the researched. In many cases, where the respondent was accompanied by others a general bemusement would be expressed by a repetition of the question to the others present, something in the nature of, 'Phew, how would we describe our purpose?' I then was compelled to rephrase the question as 'Why have you come here today?' or 'Why have you come here particularly?' In no cases was it apparent that the church was the sole object of the excursion, or that there was a single compelling reason; nor was it evident anywhere that a group of churches was being visited or that a trail was being followed. The responses to this question have been grouped as shown in Table 14 in declining order of frequency. It should be noted that the categories are not mutually exclusive and these are not verbatim responses, but paraphrases of the original conversation:

Table 14: Purposes of Visit*

Purposes of visit	No. of responses
Part of an outing or day trip to the area	34
Part of a walk	16
Just passing and decided to stop	13
It was open so we came in	9
It looked impressive from the outside so I/we came in	8
Looked interesting	5

*Categories are not mutually exclusive

None of the respondents had set off that day with the intention of visiting a particular church or any other, and none of them evinced a particular interest in old churches or indeed any old building as such. This, however, is not say that they were entirely without interest, and when asked the question *'what is it about churches that people might find interesting or attractive?'* a majority of the respondents were content to use words like 'interesting', 'beautiful', 'historic', 'charming' and 'lovely' in their response. It was in the matter of history, however, that was brought forth the clearest sign of real engagement with the church. History in this sense, however, must be understood as a cipher for the respondents' concepts of 'pastness' rather than scholarship or well-founded historical knowledge. The concept of history expressed here was perhaps closest to Brett's (1996) notion of popular history. This is not to diminish what was being expressed. There was nothing superficial about this interest, nor was there a contentment to receive superficial messages or Disneyfied 'distory' (Hollinshead, 1998). Rather, it seemed to stir some deeper feeling about the past that respondents sometimes found difficult to rationalise. Some of the richer comments express this as an almost emotional experience:

> It's a feeling of where we are from, the past, it's our history a place like this (mid-life man, Cotswolds, transcribed from tape).

> Places like this are full of history. You can almost imagine the people who have been here (mid-life woman, North Yorkshire, from notes).

> It makes you think about all the people who have been here in this actual place, and it's part of our history (older woman, Cotswolds, transcribed from tape).

> You just get this amazing, intense feeling of history going back hundreds of years and it's so atmospheric. It's a bit spooky really (woman, 30s, Norfolk, transcribed from tape).

> History is somehow more real in a place like this because it is more to do with ordinary people and their lives – birth, deaths and marriages! It's like history on a human scale (woman, 30s-40s, Norfolk, transcribed from tape).

Here perhaps is some evidence of desire to find continuities and connections with the past in a place, as suggested by Walsh (1992). It may even suggest an embryonic form of the *narrative topology* proposed by Brett (1996, 88), whereby the spatial arrangements and interrelation of objects in a building or purposive display can be either de facto or deliberate representations of social relations and activity. The people interviewed here were clearly thinking about the use of the church as an historical fact. They appeared to be trying to find ways of interpreting this feeling through what they knew and what they did there, which, in turn, suggests that there was a missed opportunity to *provide* some interpretation to complete the process.

Some visitors were even more explicit about the notions of connectivity and interrelation that seemed to underpin their response to the church. There was thus a search for connections with the past as part in a collective sense:

> This is where the community has always come together; not so much now because people don't go to church so much, at least not for the same reasons. But even so it's a place that connects people today with the people who lived here in the past (man, mid-30s, North Yorkshire, validation sample, transcribed from tape).

And:

> #1: People still come here don't they? So it must mean something to them even if they aren't religious. I suppose if you were married here you'd want to come back.
>
> #2: Would you? (Laughs)
>
> #1: To visit the scene of the crime! (Laughs) No but it's true, if a place harbours memories and has connections with friends and family people might enjoy coming back and reminiscing about it (older couple, North Norfolk, transcribed from tape).

These expressions of feeling are also close to the findings of recent research by Palmer (2005) who has explored the mechanisms whereby identity is experienced through tourism and the construction of personal history through imagination, memory and emotion. It also reflects Connor's (1993) discussion of the non-rational, psycho-emotional bonds that are triggered on the basis of 'felt' rather than formal, chronological history.

It seems apparent from these respondents that there was some attempt to engage in an identification with place and *place in time*. It relies on personal meanings and personal connections, but also with less well-defined notions of community, or *historical community*, with which people appear to be seeking a linkage. Clearly this community could be interpreted in a number of ways: it could be the 'local' community and the linkage could either be through family connections and personal history, or it could be the local community as a construct of place and time that expresses an emotional link with the past at a personal level, even though no actual link may exist for that person. This latter version is the one that facilitates the link between 'people today with the people who lived here in the past'. There is another version of this kind of identity work, however, which is where the representational practices of local authorities, the church and other agencies, as discussed in previous chapters, seek to use heritage tourism to make links with authorised notions of national past. It is interesting, therefore, that the people interviewed here were at least able to construct their own identity without such interventions and furthermore, that they were able to do so without the furniture of the tourist attraction: the embedded interpretation and the guide book.

This is not to say that the authorised version of the national past is missing here. There was plenty of 'Arthur Mee' language used, and this was often related to the rural-historic construct to which reference has been made throughout this study. Such responses were often expressed in aesthetic terms, not those of the knowing church aesthete, but of the standard language of the rural-historic construct that was detected in the promotional activities of local authorities.

Twenty-three respondents (38%) made explicit reference to the beauty of the buildings they were visiting. A further twelve (20%) of respondents used other words to express a similar response: 'wonderful' (six respondents), 'attractive' (four respondents), 'stunning' and 'amazing' (one each). When prompted to explain what it was about the building that provoked these thoughts there was very little evidence of an *informed* appreciation of the aesthetic qualities of either the building or the aesthetic system or framework against which the building might be judged in artistic or architectural terms. This is despite the fact that the various styles of English medieval architecture are easily differentiated and more clearly visible in churches than any other type of building apart from cathedrals. There was evidence, therefore, that the response evoked from tourists was on a different plane than the one that is manifest in much of the 'knowledge' about churches that might form the content of a guide book or interpretation panel. This response was a cultural artefact of the fact that churches act as a semiotic of national identity with the rural-historic as the key to a level of cultural meaning that goes well beyond the classification of arches and gargoyles.

This view is supported by the response of visitors to other acknowledged aesthetic components: stained glass, stonework and woodwork were all mentioned, but not to any great extent. Rather, there was another aspect that was more commonly expressed than these particular items and which had not been so easy to predict. This was expressed in terms of an ensemble effect, 'the whole thing', the 'atmosphere', the 'look of age'. Here again, is feeling rather than knowledge, a response that the visitor interprets in either their own way or in a way prescribed by authorised notions of what a Cotswold church should be, and what it should do to you when you see it. This is thus evocative of a personal, communal or national past, and perhaps all three, rather than the specific artefacts to which a curatorial or interpretive position might draw attention.

> These buildings are wonderful, it's just the way they look, they have a look of age about them, in the stone and everything. Do you know what I mean? It's a kind of mellowness; beautiful (man, over 60, Cotswolds, transcribed from tape).

> It's the whole thing really, the atmosphere, the way it looks and the way it blends into its surroundings. It has a feeling of age as if it has always been here and a part of the landscape (woman, 30s, Bradford rural, transcribed from tape).

> It's just a beautiful place. I don't know really. There's just something about it that feels really old (woman, 20s-30s, Cotswolds, transcribed from tape).

These responses are consistent with the rural-historic construct and even the very roots of it in the picturesque or romantic aesthetic embodied by Gray's 'Far from the madding crowd', or even Wordsworth exploring the sublime at Tintern Abbey (1798). Of the specific features mentioned, perhaps the landscape setting is closest to this semiotic of national identity. The setting of the church was thus expressed as an integral and essential aspect of its physical beauty, underling perhaps the particular value placed on the parish church as an essential component of the English rural landscape, and the nation itself. This was clearly an ensemble with a purpose. Setting was mentioned particularly in areas where the landscape was a feature of the local attraction system: notably the Cotswolds and the Yorkshire Dales, rather than in Norfolk which although similarly rural in character did not seem to be regarded as 'landscape', but merely 'countryside'.

Stonework and stained glass windows were the only other specific features mentioned by respondents, the latter perhaps surprisingly, given that so much of it is Victorian and not always well-liked by experts such as Pevsner who, in the absence of original medieval glass would seem to prefer clear glass windows. Stained glass, however, is a *characteristic* feature of churches and in a sense, therefore, symbolic of them. It may be then that it was mentioned because it symbolised the 'churchiness' of churches and an important part of the ensemble effect:

> The stained glass in this church is exceptionally beautiful. You can even see the colours projected onto the floor' (North Yorkshire validation sample, transcribed from tape).

Stonework was mentioned particularly by respondents in the Cotswolds, where the mellow honey-coloured stone that is characteristic of churches and other old buildings in the area, was readily recognised as a feature, in this case, perhaps a symbol of the Cotswolds. In Norfolk, the only significant individual component of respondents' aesthetic appreciation was the woodcarving associated with churches in the area: 'angel roofs', pews and benches with elaborate carving dating back often to the fifteenth century was remarked upon by two respondents.

Generally speaking, however, their was little knowledge or informed appreciation of the specifics of the buildings, the kinds of things that would be pointed out in guidebooks, but rather a generalised appreciation that relates more closely to the aesthetics of the rural-historic. The following examples are representative of this response:

> This is such a beautiful building, everything about it is wonderful. It even smells nice! (woman, 30s, North Norfolk, from interview notes).

> Look at this place. It's like a cathedral never mind a church, it is utterly stunning (man, 50s, North Norfolk, from interview notes).

> It's just a lovely place and a lovely setting, very peaceful and beautiful

Prompt: What about the church itself?

> It's just part of the whole thing really, the countryside and everything around. It's what you expect to see in the English Countryside, a lovely little church like this (woman, 50s, Cotswolds, transcribed from tape).

Again, it is the ensemble effect to which reference is made, in this case within the context of the rural-historic. Another theme amongst these responses was that a church was in some way 'interesting', although what specifically it was that was interesting was not always clear, and in common with the previous area of analysis it seemed that to be interesting did not depend on the presence of any specific or particular features associated with the church. Thus, even if a church had, for example an interesting screen or font (as indicated by Pevsner or another authority), it was never the case that a visitor was aware of this and found it interesting. Even after prompting, it was difficult to elicit from respondents what it was that that they found interesting beyond the ensemble effect. Reference was made, once again, however, to history and the age of the building, and there was a vagueness that respondents found difficult to resolve into anything more concrete:

> I don't know what it is, it's just something about the architecture I suppose, something different from what you normally experience (man, over 60, North Yorkshire validation sample, transcribed from tape).

> It's just different, isn't it? It's not like anything else and then you think about how old it is, and ....

Prompt: Can you say what it is that's different? If I asked you what's the main thing, or two things?

> Erm, no. I mean churches are different anyway aren't they? They're not part of everyday life, not the way people live now, so I suppose it reflects a different time and different priorities (woman, 30s-40s, Cotswolds, transcribed from tape).

Churches are certainly distinctive buildings and their sources of attraction have already been discussed (Chapter 2). The source of interest beyond this simple touristic interpretation is difficult to discern, except that it once again points to an ensemble expressed in elegiac language rather than the fascination with the fixtures and fittings that is apparent in the modern guidebook. It was almost as if the church was *meant* to be interesting, because that is what churches are. The visitor complied with this received wisdom and was happy to leave it at that. It was as if a cultural emblem or sign was being touched and the behaviour veered a little uncertainly between the quiet respect accorded to such objects and the feeling of being a visitor to something in a way that was *like* being a tourist, but not quite the same.

The was no evidence in this study of church visitors as informed enthusiasts busily noting or ticking off the features that were identified in a Pevsner guide or other guidebook. Nor was it possible to 'grade' different levels of interest or engagement in the way that McKercher (2002) has suggested. The visitors might be described in general terms as casual, and none appeared to visit churches on a regular basis. This is not to say that there was a lack of engagement between the visitors and the churches, but there was evidence that this operated at either a deeper, or a more general level than might be expected with an informed visitor. There was evidence of a history 'felt' rather than articulated or clearly understood and a search for linkage or continuity through this feeling. Where an aesthetic sense was apparent, this was articulated in terms of an elegiac impulse that had more to do with an ensemble effect linked with the rural historic than those associated with the cataloguists of architectural style.

This elegiac impulse touches on the hegemonic ideals of the national past largely through the myths of picturesque England and of a national identity centred there rather than in the urban and industrial country that England became. It also, however, provides opportunities for personal contact with pastness and that might provide a basis for receiving the past through a heritage that is neither commercial nor hegemonic. Thus the church in its local setting and as a medium for the reception of the past as a continuity with the present seems to form the basis of these casual visitors' responses to the churches in which they were interviewed. A sense of the age of the building and a romantic concept of how this linked the subject with the past and with other people was clearly part of the attraction value, but it seems unlikely that any of the respondents went to the churches self-consciously searching for this meaning within them. Either way, the response was not centred on a concept of the church as a tourist attraction.

Attitudinal dimensions

Having explored and elucidated the behavioural and motivational dimensions of the visitor response, it remained to identify any variation related to their attitudes towards churches and their use as tourist attractions. Visitors were therefore asked to what extent they thought the church was or could be a tourist attraction. The responses are categorised in Table 15, below:

Table 15: Visitor Perceptions of Churches as Tourist Attractions

	No.	%
Churches are tourist attractions	8	13
Some churches can be tourist attractions	19	32
Very few churches can be tourist attractions	26	43
Churches cannot be tourist attractions	7	12

Table 15 suggests that only a relatively small minority of respondents thought, unequivocally, that churches either were or were not tourist attractions. Those who did so were interviewed in Yorkshire (two respondents) and the Cotswolds (six), which are the two most developed of the case study areas in tourist terms. These respondents in every case drew attention to the context of the church within an attractive rural environment, and it was this context, rather than building itself, that seemed to motivate their response. Even those who had eulogised on the inherent beauty, interest or historic value of churches did not seem able to separate them from their context represented in terms of attraction value:

> I think churches are tourist attractions. They are part of the countryside and in a place like the Cotswolds they are an essential part of it. To imagine the Cotswolds without all these churches would be unthinkable (woman, 40s, Cotswolds, transcribed from tape).

> They [churches] help to make the landscape what it is. It's what you expect to see in the English countryside. The village church and that... makes it what it is (man , over 60, Cotswolds, transcribed from tape).

Again, there was a tendency to Eulogise, and to connect with the rural historic, and it was clear that even those respondents who did regard churches, unequivocally as tourist attractions did so as components *within* rather than *as* touristic space in themselves.

Churches were seen, therefore as a part, albeit an important part of the countryside, and what made the countryside attractive to visitors. For a significant group of respondents churches *could* be tourist attractions, but this was largely dependent upon their location and setting. It may be that the first group analysed above may have taken a similar view had it occurred to them to consider location and setting as a factor. For this latter group, however, these were key sources of attraction value:

> It depends on where they are really. I mean out here [in the dales outside Bradford] they are places that tourists will visit, but not in the middle of town

Prompt: Why – why not in Bradford?

> [Laughs] well they're most probably locked anyway because of theft and vandalism, but you wouldn't be wandering around Bradford looking at churches unless you were really interested in them.

Prompt: But you would visit them in York or Norwich …

> Well yes but obviously they're tourist places already and the churches are part of it.

Prompt: Places like Bradford Leeds might see themselves as tourist places.

> Well if they're done up a bit. If it's a part of the city that's been regenerated and visitors are going there, but even then it's usually to shop. I don't think they'd go round looking at churches unless they were really interested (man, 30s, Bradford rural, transcribed from tape).

Thus it is not the church per se that is the centre of attraction. Attraction value is either centred somewhere else or dispersed across the destination, especially where the place in question is an established destination area with a rural-historic appeal that can be represented and reinforced in promotional media or cultural production, areas such as the Cotswolds or the Yorkshire Dales.

This perception was further underlined by some of the respondents in Norfolk who suggested that although the churches there were very attractive, the area itself was not sufficiently developed as a tourist destination for the churches to develop as part of the attraction value. This was despite the efforts of local authorities in promoting their destinations and including churches within their attraction portfolio (see Chapter 6).

> The churches here are very nice, but you wouldn't come to Norfolk just to look at churches, unless it was a hobby or something. There needs to be more here if they want to attract tourists (woman, 30s-40s, Norfolk, from notes).

Prompt: such as ..?

> I don't know, you know, it's not really a tourist area. There's nothing here [laughs]. The tourists all go to the Broads [Norfolk Broads: inland waterways and recreation], or up the coast to Cromer or Sheringham, not that they're much good either! [laughs] (male, 60s, North Norfolk, transcribed from tape).

There was a general perception amongst this group that churches might contribute something to the touristic whole, but in themselves they were of little significance. In the Cotswolds and North Yorkshire there is much that is already considered attractive to tourists. The landscape and the general image of the destination have the clarity that might be expected of an established brand. This makes it easy to represent and to communicate, but this is largely absent from the countryside of North Norfolk. Norfolk is held to be flat and uninteresting, because it includes large areas of fenland. It has not achieved the rural-historic characteristics of a landscape with churches.

Of the 26 (43%) respondents who did not see churches as tourist attractions there were two basic reasons expressed. The first, was surprise that they ever could be, and that, indeed, there was no reason for them to be represented in this way. The second, was concerned with a lack of those features that might be expected of a tourist attraction. The first group contained the only six people interviewed who claimed to be active believers (see below). For them tourism seemed entirely inappropriate, a view that they expressed with a vehemence not detected amongst clergy or the higher levels of church government. There simply was no room for the additionality of function that tourism offered. This was not to say that visitors were unwelcome. It was simply that the role of the church was distinct from tourism and unrelated to it. Furthermore, for them, tourism represented a kind of dilution of this role and a threat to it:

> I'm a catholic myself, but I don't think any church should be seen as just another tourist attraction. That's not what they're there for. It seems a shame if they just become places that people visit on a day out, with an ice cream in their hands! (man, 60s, North Yorkshire, transcribed from tape).

> No, I don't think churches can be tourist attractions. They're places of worship, primarily …

Prompt: but obviously they're also very historic, very beautiful buildings. Don't you think they are like other heritage attractions?

> Well yes I suppose so, but they're not museums, or even cathedrals for that matter. I can see why cathedrals are famous, but most churches aren't, are they? It's not really appropriate I don't think anyway … [inaudible] (male 50s-60s, North Yorkshire, transcribed from tape)

Of the remainder of the group who thought that churches were not and could not be tourist attractions the responses were difficult to interpret in a coherent way, but seemed to be centred on the perception that churches lacked the essential qualities of tourist attractions. There was something missing that prevented them being seen and used in this way and, furthermore, they did not see themselves, particularly, as tourists. They were simply visitors 'having a look round', because the church was 'interesting'. Some quotes from North Norfolk are representative of this view:

> You don't visit churches for a fun day out [laughs]

Prompt: why do you visit them then:

> Well it's just . . . I don't know, they're part of the countryside and they're nice really. They *are* nice. You can just walk around them and it's quiet and peaceful. Except when we arrive [laughs] (woman, 30s with family, North Norfolk, transcribed from tape).

> #1: You don't see many Americans round here [laughs]
> #2: You do in Aylsham
> #1: Do you? Well you know more than me then …

Prompt: does that mean that churches are not really on the tourist circuit?

> #1: No, not round here. Maybe at Aylsham and Swaffham, Norwich certainly but not out here unless you were a dedicated enthusiast.

> #2: There's nothing round here for people really …

Prompt: the churches aren't enough then?

> #2: No, well I don't think so (Couple, 60s-70s, North Norfolk, transcribed from tape).

A related issue in the representation of churches as tourist attractions by the church itself is that of 'welcome', the idea that the church in some way reaches out to people by representing its buildings as a friendly and welcoming place, a retreat from the travails of everyday life and, in the vaguest terms, a place of spiritual association. For people who are active as believers and as Christians it may be that such perceptions are already there and that the concept of welcome is a taken-for-granted aspect of the church's work in the world. For others, however, it might have different associations and they might look for other evidence to support or encourage their entry into, and presence within, the church. Three questions were used to elicit this kind of information and to explore the response of individuals to the idea of church as a welcoming environment the essence was or not people felt able to regard the church comfortably as touristic space, or whether the primary use of the church, or a lack of supporting semiotics or markers, to use MacCannell's model, actually prevent visitors from treating the church as such.

Respondents were asked firstly whether or not they were active believers, not necessarily that they attended church regularly, but whether they considered themselves to be religiously active. This was to accommodate the widely held belief that a significant group of people 'believe without belonging', or evince religious faith without exercising it at a weekly church service. Whilst recent research has tended not to support this belief, and to suggest that there is a general decline in belief that results from a lack 'transmission' from one generation to the next (Voas and Crockett, 2005), it was still thought significant enough to test within the context of this survey because of the effect this might have on individual perceptions. Respondents were asked whether they felt 'welcome' as a visitor to the church and what if anything would make them feel more welcome. A prompt question, asked when necessary, was the extent to which they felt unwelcome and why this was so.

Only a small minority of the visitor group (six people) claimed to be active believers whether or not they attended church, and they represented a variety of midlife to older groupings. Two were at pains to state that they were Catholics rather than Church of England in their affiliation. Another twenty-two said that whilst they were believers, they we not active in any way. There appeared to be no age influence on this group. The remaining thirty-two respondents claimed to have no religious beliefs at all, though some pointed out that they were born, brought up, or otherwise nominally affiliated with the Church of England. This group was slightly over-represented amongst the younger groups. There were no regional differences in respect of this question.

There was a roughly even split within the overall sample in relation to the extent to which they felt that the church provided them, as visitors, with a sense of welcome. There was also a substantial group in between these categories of response for whom the question seemed meaningless. The responses are categorised in Table 16, below:

Table 16: The Extent to which Visitors Felt Welcome in the Church

	No.	%
Felt welcome	20	33
Felt neither welcome nor unwelcome	17	28
Felt unwelcome	23	38

Perhaps the most revealing finding, however, was that only a third of the respondents (including the six active believers) felt welcome in the church, whilst the remaining two thirds felt varying degrees of alienation. The only geographical variation was that those who felt welcomed were slightly over-represented in the North Yorkshire validation sample, which being associated with the implementation of the Yorkshire Church Tourism Initiative, might not be surprising. It may also be unsurprising to find that most of the respondents who were vocal about their sense of history, wonder and fascination in the church were also those who felt most welcome. Here again, there is little articulation about what precisely it is that creates or conditions the sense of welcome, beyond the religious sentiments of those who were active Christians, and the general feelings of other respondents:

> Of course it's welcoming it's God's house, it's supposed to be welcoming. Everyone is welcome. Everyone is welcome in a church, that's what churches are for …

Prompt: Welcome as worshippers or tourists?

> Both. Yes because they hopefully will experience God's love and the message of Jesus Christ while they are here (North Norfolk, from interview notes).

> Even if people don't believe in God, there is still a strong sense that people are welcome here. That's the whole point of churches.

Prompt: To convert people?

> Not necessarily, but they are places of welcome, where everyone should feel comfortable being (man, 50s, Cotswolds, transcribed from tape).

> Yes I think it has a welcoming atmosphere. It was open and it's nicely looked after with flowers and everything and lots of information about what's going on. I mean they'll be wanting a donation so they'll be keen for people to come in. I suppose they worry about things being stolen (woman, 50s, North Yorkshire validation sample, transcribed from tape).

> It's such a beautiful place of course it's welcoming. It's lovely (woman, 30s-40s, Norfolk, from interview notes).

Of the group who felt neither welcome nor unwelcome, it was difficult to identify any particular factors that might have influenced their perception, and it did not seem important to them whether they were made to feel welcome or not:

> It's just a church, it's not like it's meant to be attracting all and sundry. It's just a nice place to be so if you're passing you might come in.

Prompt: why?

> Well just because it's a nice quiet place, a lovely old building. It's not like they're selling cakes or something. It's just open if you want to come in.

Prompt: but you feel comfortable being here?

> Yes, why not? It's obviously open so they're not trying to stop you coming in. They don't have to greet you with open arms either (man, 40s, North Yorkshire validation sample, transcribed from tape).

Of those who experienced a lack of welcome (over a third of the respondents) there was more ambivalence about whether or not they ought to be there. There were three categories of response: those who felt that nothing (or not enough) was provided for visitors; those who found the church uncomfortable to be in, and those who shared the ambivalence of the previous group, but were clearer about not feeling welcome. These groups were represented by roughly equal numbers of respondents.

Those who felt that not enough was provided tended to draw attention to a lack of interpretation and although this was not expressed as such, there was a sense that the church could do more to engage with them as visitors:

> You have no real sense of what it all means. Even though you get a feeling about age and history you don't know what you should be looking at or why it's important (man, 30s, North Norfolk, transcribed from tape).

> There's a leaflet and some labelling but there is no effort to tell you what's here in an interesting way. You don't get the feeling that they want to tell you about it even though it's a wonderful building (man 40s-50s, Cotswolds, transcribed from tape).

> It's a missed opportunity really. They should be trying to explain about the architecture and the history. Especially if people are coming into the church anyway (man, 20s, Bradford rural, from interview notes).

The 'missed opportunity' seems to relate to the translation of feeling into knowledge and that the feelings that respondents had about the building made them susceptible, therefore, to the processes of interpretation. This is especially significant when considered in the light of Tilden's principles of interpretation, which emphasise the importance of presenting information within a holistic framework rather than in the fragmentary way that churches tend towards in the labelling of individual objects and artefacts (Tilden, 1977). A story which places the church and its history within a broader social context, and which relates this to the locality and its history might seem a worthwhile advance on what is currently provided. Table 17, below shows how these missed opportunities relate to Tilden's 'Principles' and demonstrate the extent of the 'gap' between what might be expected by a tourist from other experiences of heritage and what they might (or might not) encounter in a church.

Table 17: Missed Opportunities: Applying Tilden's Principles to Church Interpretation (Adapted from Tilden, 1957)

Tilden 'Principle'	Missed Opportunity in Church Tourisr
1. Interpretation should relate to something within the personality or experience of the visitor.	The church is not sufficiently responsive to the range of responses that visitors might experience on entering a church: it treats them as an homogenous group or a potential convert
2. Whilst all interpretation includes information, information on its own is insufficient. Interpretation is revelation based upon information.	Churches tend to rely on 'informative' guides often written long ago that make no allowance for different levels of knowledge or interest. Much is assumed about what tourists might know about liturgical issues and history.
3. Interpretation is an art, which combines many arts, whether the materials presented are scientific, historica or architectural. Any art is in some degree teachable.	The types of art present in churches from architecture to stone carving, monuments, woodwork, stained glass, paintings and folk art tend to be gazed on by tourists but are rarely presented as art, but rather as things of the church
4. The chief aim of Interpretation is not instruction, but provocation.	Tourists are not challenged by the social and historical contexts in which churches were created or led to question their relationship with the state and landowners
5. Interpretation should aim to present a whole rather tl a part of a narrative	Relates to the above. Buildings and features tend to be dealt with in abstraction, reified by their context and monumentality rather than present as artifacts of a particular social and cultural nexus.
6. Interpretation addressed to children should not be a dilution of the presentation to adults, but should follow fundamentally different approach. To be at its best it would require a separate programme.	Some, but very few churches provide interpretation directed at children. Aylsham in Norfolk provided the only example in this study.

For those who felt uncomfortable within the church there was evidence, though not well-articulated, of sense of alienation imposed by a lack of understanding and a form of cultural distance or dislocation.

> It's a lovely building but I always feel a bit strange about coming into churches. You wonder whether you should be here or not

Prompt: but the door's open isn't it?

> Yes but if the vicar came in he'd probably wonder what you're doing here. It's not like with the National Trust where they want you to go in. It might just be open for people who want to come in for a quick prayer [laughs] (woman, 40s, Bradford rural, transcribed from tape)
>
> Yes I always feel a bit as though I shouldn't be here unless I've come to worship or pray or something like that. If you just wander in off the street you feel as though you are trespassing or that you are there under false pretences.

Prompt: but the door's open ...

> I know but it still doesn't feel quite right to me. Maybe it's just me but I would prefer to feel as though I could just come in ... (man, 30s, Cotswolds, from notes).

A respondent made another point that was not so much related to a lack of interpretation or whether the church was private or public space, but rather to her own interpretation of the building, on which basis she expressed some alienation from it:

> I know it's a nice old building and everything, but it is a bit spooky and I find the religious aspect a bit off-putting. I can't say I noticed it when I got married, but it's different when you are just wandering around.

[Prompt] Did you get married in this church?

> No, no, not here, what I mean is that when you start looking at all this stuff you're thinking, well what's it all for and it doesn't really mean anything to me. It's just religion (woman, 30s, Cotswolds, transcribed from tape).

Whether better interpretive practice would overcome these feelings and create opportunities for positive engagement, not just with the building but with the building in its local and social context is difficult to say on the basis of the evidence presented here. It is clear, however, that churches are not unequivocally touristic space for any of the respondents interviewed in the survey, and the 'objections' are centred on three basic themes: first, that churches are not meant to be touristic because their primary function is, or should, prevent this from happening. Second, churches are not actually 'equipped' to be touristic space; they lack the paraphernalia of tourism such as engaging communications, interpretation and visitor services. Third, and related to the first two points, there is a sense in which churches present a space that is at once familiar and alienating. It is familiar because people are aware of its elements, its components and how the space is used, but it is alien for them as visitors because the significance has all but 'floated away' from the objects they are looking at and they have become obscure. The tourism authorities, however, would have these objects signify the authorised past, just as the turrets of a medieval castle or a country house do cultural work in presenting people, as consumers of heritage, with their national myths.

There is perhaps an irony here, however, which is that churches already represent those myths through their primary religious function, and it is possible that is a reason why even some vicars appear not to like the buildings they have been bequeathed and would rather conduct their services in more congenial surroundings. Visitors receive those myths through both a sense of wonder and connection with pastness and informal history on the one hand, and on the other through the traditional authority of the church. The latter engenders a sense of discomfort expressed by some of the respondents about whether they should be there, because they find it difficult to relate to that authority as the social and cultural redundancy of the Church as an institution becomes more keenly felt. This may also be why it has some of the attributes of private rather than public space. It would seem that to some extent the religious and touristic functions are connecting with the same myths, and drawing on the same emotional response to the sense of pastness that contain. The residual institutional authority on the other hand may actually have begun to be replaced by tourism, with the latter filling a cultural space left by the redundancy of the former. Either way churches as touristic, rather than religious, space are connecting people with the authorised past. The question remains, however, as to whether they might also present alternative or subaltern discourses as

Smith (2006, 35) has described them, in those instances where an engagement is created by individuals and communities themselves, without the mediating and hegemonic effects of the either the church or the local tourism authorities.

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter has been to evaluate the congruence between representational practice and the activity, behaviour and perceptions of church tourists. Previous chapters have indicated that the church often clings to a passive role in relation to tourism, although there is some evidence of dissonance between the government of the Church, the Dioceses and the parishes in terms of the perceived benefits that might accrue from tourism as an additional function for churches. The activities of local authorities and operators on the other hand, have been focussed on representational practices in which churches are seen as part of the attraction values associated with a destination as a whole and part of the attraction portfolio of a destination and a components of touristic space within it. The way that church tourists respond to this wide range of representational practice is therefore key to an understanding of the way that churches are and might become tourist attractions and the cultural meaning of this transformation.

As with previous chapters there is no attempt to generalise these findings, but rather to identify the various facets of the phenomena in situ. At first sight the caution of churches at the local level seems well justified. The visitors surveyed here were characterised, typically, by low numbers, and there was no evidence of informed and enthusiastic church tourists clutching Pevsner's guides. On the contrary the only churches that achieved anything like touristic representation were either attractions in themselves (very rare) or, more commonly, they existed within established touristic space and 'benefited' from the effects of this.

Whilst the use of churches as attractions in the established sense has been hard to detect, there is evidence of other, perhaps more subtle processes at work, processes that connect with established notions of what the past is, but which also open up new connectivities with the personal, the local and the local past. The evidence of *wandering and gazing* that was so evident in the observation study, and the emotional response that was evident in the interviews, suggests a different kind of engagement than might be expected from other types of heritage attractions. There was little of the fascination with architectural detail, fixtures and fittings that guidebooks might imply, but rather, the perception of an ensemble effect, that enabled visitors to take in the 'whole thing' and to respond to it in the ways mentioned above. At the same time there was evidence that this response, perhaps as a reaction to the traditional role of the church and the need to be respectful and silent disrupted the expected processes of attraction formation. There was certainly a lack of what might be called 'standard provision' in terms of proactive engagement with *visitors as tourists,* which was evidenced in a lack of embedded interpretation and other types of communication and visitor services. Are churches actually viable as touristic space? There was some evidence of confusion on the part of visitors. Why would anyone want to visit a church? And yet the people who raised this kind of question were doing so as visitors in the church! The response, mentioned above implies the need for further research to identify the motives for visiting churches and the ways that any future marketing of them as attractions might respond to these.

Hitherto marketing activity has focused on what I have described as the rural-historic as a cultural construction and a recurring motif in the touristic representation of churches, largely by local authorities and other agencies, but also by the church itself when it has engaged with additionality. The church is thus represented as a symbol of the National past: a 'landscape with churches and grazing cows'. The motif appears in everything from paintings to promotional leaflets, tourist guides to personal memoirs, classical music to modern-day websites. This rural-historic construct is a crucial route to the authorised version of a national past which is essentially pastoral. It is interesting, however, that the church already does this work in its traditional role and without the need for touristic representation. This may well be the source of some of the confusion expressed by tourists and the passivity of many in the church towards tourism.

The second form of engagement is a personal one, as yet little understood, in which people construct their own sense of pastness from what they have at hand. This could be a museum display, personal documents and family history or a church in a place with which they are connected. It may also be possible that they can connect more intimately with the past even if they have no personal connection with it simply because it evokes an emotional response that makes them feel the past through the place they are in: an elegiac appreciation that, again, requires no touristic intervention. It may be that a link between churches as essentially local sources of cultural capital may provide the possibility of an engagement beyond the activities of destination managers and tourism officials. In the concluding chapter these threads are drawn together and the meanings and implications of representational practice discussed in the light of the findings as a whole.

Chapter 8

Discussion and Conclusions

Introduction

People *act* as tourists, but they do so in a special world of representations and cultural influences that creates the space within which such performances are viable. This research has been concerned with how English parish churches are represented as tourist attractions, the cultural referents, corollaries and processes that are engaged in this process and ultimately, the social, cultural and economic context of church tourism.

The heritage 'industry', as it has emerged over the last three decades, is one such context. It has been challenged and deconstructed, somewhat energetically, by social scientists since it began to develop in the 1980s, as a major feature of both cultural production in general, and tourism in particular. An engagement with the 'heritage debate' has therefore been an early concern of this study. In particular, exploring the possibility that an alternative or subaltern concept of heritage (Smith, 2006) can exist outside the industrial/commercial nexus that energised the critique of heritage, and the 'anti-heritage animus' as Lowenthal (1998, 88-104) described it.

In broader terms, much of the literature on tourism is concerned with what makes attractions and destinations appeal to people in the first place, and identifies the various components of attraction systems. There are new patterns of consumption, which have broadened the category of what constitutes an attraction and indeed touristic activity, a development that has encouraged the powerful agents of touristic representation to seek to include more and more in their destination portfolios. The performance of tourism is thus possible in a wider variety of contexts than ever before, and it becomes interesting and revealing, therefore, to examine these new boundaries between touristic and non-touristic space. The heritage industry provides one such category of tourism that in some aspects has a long antecedence in the activities of travellers and antiquaries (Adler, 1989). This also expanded dramatically in the latter part of the twentieth century with an explosion of interest in museums, old buildings and industrial archaeology that very much explored the margins of touristic and heritage space in terms of the objects that might become part of it (Mellor, 1991). In this way the redundant capital of old industries provided the objects and artefacts of new types of capital accumulation based on culture, cultural tourism and the things of the past, 'the heritage', in short.

The spatial issues that have been generated by these changes are also a context for this research, as outlined and theorised by Lefebvre (1991). Thus, the production of space changes over time and as a result of changes in economic conditions and capital accumulation. Space thus becomes a fluid product of economic forces and powerful interests. It attracts meaning to itself (Shields, 1991) and is created and recreated for new purposes over time. Redundant industrial sites become leisure and retail spaces. Factories and mines become museums of themselves in a new realm of consumption (Dicks, 2000; Meethan, 2001). New forms of tourism become available, breaking down old mass markets into niches with their own devotees, a new serive class in search of new customised experiences (Urry, 1990; Munt, 1994).

Churches have experienced and continue to experience such changes. They also have redundant, or at least underutilised, capital in the form of several thousand largely medieval buildings of varying historic and architectural interest. Congregations have diminished and the buildings are unsuitable for the needs of small groups of worshippers. At the same time, the church is often the oldest building in a community and a focus of community life in terms of the threshold events in people's lives. The Church authorities have been impelled, therefore, to add to their religious and traditional social function a new layer of cultural meaning that exploits links with heritage tourism, a significant sector of the new tourist economy. On the surface this seems an attractive opportunity. It could encourage a renewed interest in faith; it might even bring much need income. Yet there is a passivity in the response of churches to these apparent opportunities, a passivity that stem form its other uses: its religious function, its existing cultural role in representing a certain view of the past of the place of people within it.

The Church in the new tourist economy

In 1978, the Church of England's Council for Places of Worship set up an informal working group to examine the possibilities and potential for encouraging tourists to visit churches. In doing so it took the first tentative steps towards developing an additional role for its vast (and crumbling) portfolio of ancient buildings. At this time churches were noticeably absent from the package of attractions that constituted the tourist industry which was now being actively promoted by the regional tourist boards set up by an act of parliament in 1969 (United Kingdom, 1969). After its initial investigations the working group was formally established as a committee of the Council and it saw as its first challenge the placing of churches on the agenda of these agencies (Burman, 1978).

Much has changed. Now it is far more likely that a regional tourism development agency or local authority would be canvassing to place tourism on the agenda of a diocese rather than the other way around. Similarly, a local authority might be lobbying local parishes to arrange for churches to be kept open so that they could be included in a 'church trail', or join as partners in a marketing initiative to promote the churches of the area as attractions. In this way local and regional government seeks to include the perceived cultural value of churches within their tourism portfolio, their attraction complex and their destination 'product'.

This research has tentatively suggested that a central feature of this process, however, has been a dissonance in the representation of churches as tourist attractions despite their long history as objects of historical and antiquarian interest. The term dissonance has a long antecedence in heritage studies, coined to express the way that different groups may perceive and construct different and contested meanings from the objects of the past (Tunbridge and Ashworth, 1996). In this case the dissonance may be related to the remaining religious function of churches and the rites of passage over which it officiates. It also has a traditional role in representing a past, one that is constructed around identity and continuity and which has developed around a particular construction that I have termed the 'rural-historic' part of the Authorised Heritage Discourse to which Smith (2006) has drawn attention. Thus, the Church itself may be divided, between its highest levels of its government and the dioceses and parishes, as to how tourism should be regarded, as an additional function, or as a threat to its primary function of religious ritual and its passive representations of the past. Local authorities, regional tourism authorities and operators encounter these problems when they attempt to realise, through tourism, the cultural capital that churches represent. Leaflets and websites do not necessarily unlock church doors and if tourism is seen as only marginally beneficial churches are likely to remain passive in their response to it. The behaviour of tourists is influenced by this dissonance so that churches become 'difficult' attractions too much concerned with their primary and traditional purposes to be able to engage with tourists as such.

The dissonance suggested by this research, as an aspect of representational and spatial practice is ultimately felt as a contradictory experience of both familiarity and alienation on the part of the visitor: a familiarity born of the residual religious practices associated with birth, marriage and death; and an alienation that relates to the feeling that churches, in a way that is analogous to country houses, are essentially private rather than public spaces. They *reserve* something, a residual social authority, both in their current practice and their past affiliations, particularly with those both rich and powerful enough to adorn the church with their tombs and memorials. The tourist is thus at times uncomfortable, in a space that is not always clearly signified as *open* or *viable* as a place to visit for a contemporary tourist. This, of course, is assuming that the church is physically open in the first place, and many in the present research were not, particularly in areas such as urban Bradford, which was not within marked touristic space.

The tourists, however, and indeed the church, already have an engagement, one that is circumscribed by an authorised construction of the past and a concept of it that is signified by ancient buildings, particularly in the countryside. This is a powerful embodiment of identity that is reproduced continually in the promotional material of tourism agencies and, indeed, the Church itself, when it is active in tourism. It has roots in the emergence of a rural-historic cultural construct since at least the eighteenth century, but which is more significant now because of the transformation of the landscape into a space for leisure (Aitcheson, et al., 2000). It is apparent from the research, that people visiting churches find some reconnection with events in the past. There was evidence that almost despite itself, the Church facilitated a conscious sense of reflection that seemed to relate to the age of the building, a sense of 'pastness' associated with it, and something of the place it occupied.

Whether this leaves room for other readings of the past, unmediated by official and authorised versions, is the final question addressed in this research. The question derives from those approaches that suggest the possibility of a reconnection between geographical communities and the places they occupy, and the use of the past to facilitate that connection (see particularly Walsh, 1992).

Churches and touristic space

The issues outlined above can be understood in the light of the developments that took place within the tourism industry and in the explosion of interest in heritage and cultural tourism that took place during the 1980s. This was the decade that was most closely associated with the development of the heritage industry (Hewison, 1987; Merriman, 1991). It was a decade that also witnessed some of the last gasps of mining and heavy industry, a process of decline that has spread through most of the manufacturing sector over the past two decades as the economy came to be dominated by the service sector, one of the most important sectors of which was the burgeoning tourism industry. Thus, the coalfields were unceremoniously dismantled after the miners' strike of 1984-85, leaving a small number of pits as museums with former miners curating them.

Touristic space expanded well beyond its original boundaries as local authority economic development officers searched for new cultural capital to underpin the distinctive and attractive character of their jurisdiction. Cultural capital came to be sought in objects that corresponded with existing cultural conventions about the national past and national heritage as the reproduction of national identity. A process of selection thus took place, authorised by the power of governmental agencies to define objects that were linked to these various cultural-historic constructions, the medieval castle, the country house, the engaging, the quaint, industrial artefacts, and of particular interest here, the rural-historic.

This became a lifeline, real or imagined, for communities that only seemed to possess the redundant capital of industrial decline. With their marketing professionals and hired consultants all manner of assets were identified, a grasping of straws as Lippard put it (1999, x), and the 'indexing and dragging' of cultural resources into categories of touristic representation, as Rojek described it (1997, 53-55). Much evidence of this was found in the websites and promotional leaflets produced by local authorities. An obvious motive factor for local authorities keen to add churches to their attraction portfolio is that they are not responsible for their upkeep and management. Here then is a relatively inexpensive way of adding attraction value to their destination: it requires no financial commitment beyond the costs of promotional material and the existing fixed costs of staffing their tourism office. With much of this increasingly devolved to tourism partnerships and destination management organisations funded regionally there is even less commitment, but much to be gained, potentially, in terms of attraction value.

Something else needs to be in place, however, to animate these new tourist attractions: they have to be meaningful as such, and not just for the dogged enthusiasts of the decorated and perpendicular, waterleaf capitals and poppy head bench ends. Most tourists will not even be aware of the existence of the Pevsner guides, or be regular visitors to the website known as *Other Medieval Bench-ends in South Somerset* (South Somerset Museums, 2006). The meaning that is required has to be more enduring even than the cataloguists of English architecture. It must refer, ultimately, to an authorised and well established representation of England itself.

Thus, where churches could be represented in their rural context, attraction value could be derived from linking them with what I have termed the rural-historic construct, a bundle of signifiers of an imagined rural Englishness, that has roots in Gray's *Elegy*, Brooke's *Grantchester*, the music of Vaughan Williams and Elgar, and a thousand paintings containing trees, fields and cows. Nowadays, it can be found in popular cultural production, in television drama serials that represent a bucolic England populated by police constables, district nurses, country doctors and colourful 'characters'. Here is a 'real' England where authenticity can be neatly contrived with 'everything an English village should be'. At its most developed, the church in its rural setting reproduces a symbolic representation, a signifier of the rural credentials of a place, its linkage to the rural historic and its essential qualifications as touristic space, an ensemble effect. In strategy documents the language becomes even more florid as reference is made to 'initiatives', 'market positioning', 'quality leisure opportunities' and 'culture', the catch all category that represents a more desirable up-market approach to tourism. The word 'vibrant' is a particular favourite. Tourism, therefore, at once exploits and reproduces the rural-historic, with churches providing a physical and, indeed, a cultural focal point for the powerful representational practices that are employed by the agencies concerned.

The Church might be expected to be fully complicit in such representations of churches, if there was something to be gained in terms of financial support and missionary possibilities. The latter are obviously a way of finding something of the primary function in the additional role, and therefore a good way to justify tourism to those church officials, clergy and parishioners who might be ambivalent or hostile to it. Tourism is also a pragmatic way of dealing with redundant capital, in the form of churches that are no longer required, by congregations that no longer exist, or which are so diminished that they would represent underused capital in any other organisation. Typically, these would be Victorian buildings in urban areas, the Congregational churches built in exuberant gothic styles to service the social and religious requirements of a newly urbanised and potentially dangerous working class. Now they house carpet warehouses, auction rooms, offices, homes, entertainment venues and occasionally other, more resilient faiths. The problem, however, came to run deeper than the disposal of a few churches built in an excess of Victorian zeal. The decline in religious observance that followed the Second World War has also left churches in rural areas without the kind of support in the community that sustained them in the past, and no lord of the manor to pay for a new roof. The net result is that almost any church is at risk of redundancy, including some of the most significant in historical and architectural terms, and yet they still have that primary religious function that makes any other, including tourism, additional, and therefore potentially contentious.

The Church, however, is *not* unequivocal in its support for tourism and the passivity to which reference has been frequently made in this research, seems to remain a dominant response in many parishes. The findings of this research suggest that there are differences in representational practice at each level of Church administration and considerable 'horizontal' variation between different dioceses and parishes. At its highest levels the Church has been active in extolling the virtues of tourism in terms of the value it would gain in being seen to possess a large portfolio of important cultural assets. A place at the table of economic development and regeneration might be assured in such circumstances, especially where the *new* tourism plays such a large part in creating economic opportunities. The Churches Regional Commission for Yorkshire and the Humber (Churches Regional Commission, 2004) is at the vanguard of such a movement, seeking regional partners in both urban and rural regeneration, and is a keen advocate, therefore, of additionality.

The research also suggests that tourism has had to be *sold* to the dioceses and the parishes, however, in terms they could readily understand and to which they might be expected to respond positively. The possibility of generating income and the possibilities for extending the mission to the heathen tourists were, therefore, much vaunted. The evidence that such benefits were real, however, has always been somewhat lacking. There is no real evidence, for example, that tourism brings in significant amounts of money through donations or the sale of merchandise unless the church is a major attraction in itself, or better still a major attraction in a major destination area. Bibury, in a 'National Trust' village in Gloucestershire and nearby Cirencester are the only real contenders in the Cotswolds case study area; Bolton Abbey, a 'honey pot' destination in the Bradford Diocese and none in Norfolk. Tourism is hardly, therefore, a recipe for financial success or a convincing economic lifeline for beleaguered congregations faced with expensive building repairs.

Mission is more difficult to pin down, but from the findings of this research, people if anything bring their own construction of spirituality which may to varying degrees correspond with the Church's official version. People were certainly engaged at some level by the spatial opportunities that churches afforded, more often than not as a place of quietness and reflection, particularly where this connected them in some ill-defined way with the past and those who peopled it in a particular location.

The variation between diocese and between individual parishes, seems then to be related to the extent to which they can readily assimilate the benefits of tourism in terms of economic gain or missionary purpose. This in turn seems to be related to the extent to which churches are already a part of the tourism infrastructure and connected to other attractions and services. Where such linkages are not apparent, the *spatial practices* of the church, in relation to its primary religious function and its mission in its own community are likely to remain paramount. Even where representations of churches, on the internet for example, appear to favour church tourism there is often a reminder of the primary function along the lines that churches are primarily places of worship and not museums. Thus 'it is important to remember that the beautiful church is not a museum but a house of prayer', proclaims the website of a small medieval church near Peterborough (Collingtree Parish Church, 2005).

The Church, therefore, has its *own anti-heritage animus,* that is perhaps most clearly manifest in its passivity in relation to tourism and it was an ever present theme in the research. From the diocesan level down to the parishes there was even the possibility of antipathy, not only to tourism, but also to the very buildings in which the faith was practiced. This was never a problem in the early days of church tourism. Those who toured were more than likely to have been practicing believers for whom the church had no qualms about opening its doors. For them a tour of churches was simply an opportunity to sample in other places the glory of God and the works of 'man' to celebrate it. Here was raw material for the early guidebooks, learned in tone and utterly deferential to the powers of the church and the great landowners whose monuments adorned the buildings. The antipathy of the church is largely based on a desire to keep the religious and traditional social role in the community separate from and unsullied by the exigencies of contemporary tourism. A few harmless anitiquaries and academics could easily be indulged, particularly if their wealth and influence could be used for the benefit of individual churches. Contemporary tourists, however, whose image is hardly positive, would not seem appropriate, unless they too could be seen to benefit the church, either as an income stream or as potential converts or returners to the faith. As suggested above, however, there is very little evidence, and much less thought about how this might happen. Whilst in a few exceptional cases individual churches might achieve the status of touristic space *par excellence*, this is not typical.

Churches seem to be affected by the tourism that takes place around them, and the accompanying representational and spatial practices; but even those in established tourist destinations such as the Cotswolds or the Yorkshire Dales are not guaranteed to achieve touristic status in themselves. If they exist in less well developed tourist areas such as rural North Norfolk and urban areas such as Bradford, they are extremely unlikely to develop as touristic space. The context thus has a strong modulating effect on the representation of churches as tourist attractions, but within this are two motive forces. The first is the age old presence of the church in peoples' lives as a cultural construct inextricably linked to a national past. This church requires no interpretation, it stands for what it is and its attraction value is strong enough to draw people to it so that they wander around and gaze in respectful silence. Whether or not they understand the liturgical or architectural significance of the building and its contents is less significant than the ensemble effect to which reference was made. Thus they would express wonder at its beauty and reflect upon the generations who have used that space before them. The church links them to a national past that finds its apotheosis in the England of landscape, hedgerows, narrow country lanes and, ultimately, parish churches as focal points, literally and metaphorically, in the landscape.

The second force is new, and as described earlier it can be found in the representational practices of tourism agencies, local authorities, the Church itself and interested parishes and dioceses. This is the church as new touristic space, featured on a local authority website, and in the brochure and guidebook; this is the church masquerading as a tourist attraction in the contemporary sense of it, elevated as an object of heritage to the level of cultural capital and a resource, therefore, to add to the attraction portfolio of the destination as a whole. This is the church as an adjunct to the new forms of capital accumulation that the service economy requires. Ironically it is the same 'Olde England' imagery and identity work described above and which the church represents quite effortlessly in simply being there, that the powerful agents of touristic representation refer to in their promotional materials. In doing so, they simply offer another route to the authorised national heritage, but this time it is inextricably linked with the demands of an economy in which other rural industries, including agriculture, are in decline. This is also a highly developed process of representation so that what the church achieves simply by being there the new tourist economy must enhance, add to, and develop, as a product for consumption. This requires additional representational and spatial practices: interpretation, information, visitor services and infrastructure. It requires a brand, 'Squires and Spires' will do, or a link to walking and cycling, teashops and trails, all of which draw meaning from a rural-historic construction of national identity and the national past. Moreover, it requires that churches themselves be sprung from a traditionally passive role in relation to tourism and propelled towards the additionality that tourism implies.

In creating its new attractions the local authority links its representational practices to cultural meanings that already exist, and exist with sufficient force to create a well understood semiotic in which churches are a component. The churches, it has been argued are already doing this cultural work and that indeed, is their essential function, wrapped up as it is in religious practice. However, just as the churches have become the redundant capital of religion in decline, the religion and the traditional authority of the church itself has become a kind of redundant cultural capital, leaving a gap which tourism has filled as the means by which people can gain access to churches, and link again with national, cultural meanings. The 'cultural logic' of church tourism might be seen, therefore, as replacing an increasingly redundant religion as the means by which the appropriate connections are made to important cultural constructs.

If this is a bold statement, it is one that is qualified by the observation, based on the findings of this research, that the process of transformation has not been fully achieved. Even without tourism and its attended interpretative and representational practices churches continue to do their cultural work and even without religion, their primary function, they continue to do so because of the semiotics they contain. So whilst at first sight it might be apparent that churches do not 'qualify' as tourist attractions because they do not contain the mechanics of touristic space, in fact, it is the attempt to invest them with this quality, to make them overtly touristic, that disrupts their existing cultural role and creates a certain amount of confusion on the part of the visitor. A visitor may thus be led to expect touristic space, from the promotional information to which they have already been exposed, but they rarely find it in the way they have come to expect. What they do find is simply the church being the church, so should they be there as a tourist? The semiotics of the space suggest otherwise, and it is almost as if the church, like Lefebvre's city, has become 'over-inscribed' with a variety of meanings (1991, 142). So what should they be doing there? Wandering and gazing in respectful silence, regardless of their own religious convictions, seems to be the answer, and connecting with a past that tourism simply provides another route towards. These issues are explored further below.

The construction of church tourists

Much has been said above about the construction of touristic space, but of equal importance is the construction of the tourist by the agencies involved and through the self-consciousness of the tourists themselves. Churches construct a concept of their visitors, and visitors themselves have some options about how they construct themselves in that space, and the spatial practices they adopt whilst there. The research indicated that a range of behaviours was adopted. The primary function of the church enabled some visitors to adopt the customary spatial practice of prayer. The altar and pews enabled them to act in this way and their knowledge of the church and the liturgical functions of the space and objects within it enabled them to practice their faith. For others, there was a graduated range of constructions available, moving away from the primary function towards the an accepted concept of tourism and what that means in a church setting in terms of additionality. It may be that this suggests additionality as a fluid concept that might vary from the fully achieved tourism of the major churches to small matters of detail and interpretation, even, simply an unlocked door in the smaller churches

The majority of tourists interviewed were ambivalent about the role of churches as tourist attractions. Churches thus *could* be tourist attractions, to some extent, depending on where they were. Few articulated a sense of being welcome as tourists. A considerable number felt unwelcome precisely because they were not engaged as tourists, they were not constructed as such by the space they were in, and they felt unable or unwilling to construct themselves as tourists in the absence of signifiers and cues, such as notices and interpretative media. These are things, of course, that would require a movement through additionality from the passivity of their established position. Clearly, in its most extreme form, a lack of additionality is expressed with a locked door, but the tourists that were interviewed had at least gained admittance to the church. At the same time, however, there was evidence of engagement, not necessarily religious in content, that enabled people to visit the building and look around. They might have sought some touristic signification to help them rationalise their presence. Indeed, it is possible that the interviews were effectively leading them into that domain, when it was not strictly necessary for their visit. It was not, after all, tourism that had brought them there in the first place, it was the feeling that churches are an embodiment of something important to them culturally, a microcosmic version of national pastness wrapped up with the rural and the historic signified in the location, the setting and the 'old-fashioned' architecture.

This suggestion is supported by the behaviour of the respondents and those who were observed. They spent little time in the building and appeared not to interact with each other when they visited in groups. It was often unclear how or in what way they were interacting with the building or why they were there. It was almost as if some extrinsic cultural practice was at work so that people expressed the meaning of their presence in vague and poorly articulated ways and they often seemed unwilling to be pressed on the matter, suggesting again an almost emotional response to an ensemble, rather than an interest in specific features. There was, to be sure, a sense in which people were connecting with the cultural artefacts associated with a historicist and heritage-orientated view of the countryside – the country church and its elegiac qualities and some other similarly linked features such as stained glass and stonework: the 'churchiness' of churches and their traditional associations was one expression of this. Tourism as an industry was not necessary for them to do this; they did it anyway because of the semiotic ensemble that the church represented to them. Talk of tourism either caused confusion or caused them to complain that it was not sufficiently imbued with touristic signifiers. It also enabled them to explain why the church was important, by providing an opportunity to link it an authorised national past, 'our heritage', and in this sense they were referring the authorised heritage discourse and therefore applying the same meanings as the promotional agencies and tourism authorities.

A sense of something intangibly linked with their past or the pastness of the place seemed to be part of it and even where they felt some alienation it appeared that the church was confronting them with certain 'truths' about the social and cultural construction of the church, its practices in their lives and what this says about their own place in relation to it. A more positive view of this engagement would make much of the connectivity with the past, and the reconnections with place to which Walsh (1992) refers as function of contemporary heritage. For the most part, however, visitors appeared to be 'doing what is done' by visitors to churches: quickly looking around and experiencing a range of emotions from religious identification to alienation, but mostly experiencing what they are meant to experience in a church, or a country house, or the countryside in general, an identification with an authorised discourse of pastness, something that the tourism industry has sought to evoke through its own representational practices and to package and present for the purposes of capital accumulation. The visitors themselves might therefore be facilitated by these latter-day interventions, but the cultural process is immutable. To that extent it could be argued that the industry depends as much on the tourist's existing cultural baggage of Englishness, metaphors, images and 'popular etymologies' as Shields (1991) has expressed it, as does the tourist on the industry's representational practices, product development and marketing.

Conclusion

Churches have always been attractions. It was part of their original purpose to attract worshippers and to impress them with their treasures, the paraphernalia of religious practice, the grandiose tombs of ancestors and with sanctified space. This space is represented as such in the very fabric of the building, much of which is dedicated to the commemoration of the rich and powerful people who have lived in and owned much of the neighbourhood. Their residence, a 'country house', will be located nearby and their ancestors will be buried within the church in 'privileged' places that was also reflected in the seating arrangements that ensured that they were the closest to the vicar and the altar during services. The tombs of the local gentry thus express an unequivocal semiotic of power and wealth and in that sense they act as a metaphor for the church as a whole in authorising a particular view of the past.

It is a suggestion of this research that the cultural work that churches already do in connecting visitors with an authorised past is at least as significant as their religious function. It could be argued, indeed that it is this cultural work that is the primary function, representing and reproducing the social structures of English society as it has done for centuries. If churches are monuments to the god that people worship in them, they are also shrines to the powerful land owning families that originally sponsored them, and whose descendents are still with us. Thus, in their quaintness and setting, their ancient buildings and ornaments they present familiar images of the past and of apparent continuities and congruencies with the present. The 'unchanging' quality of the countryside and its air of permanence, illusory though these qualities are, are seen as positive benefits for the present. The tombs of the rich and powerful are aestheticised like the buildings themselves, and taxonomised by experts and authoritative commentators who write 'coffee table' books and 'pocket guides' that engage the erudite, and provide the authors of promotional leaflets and websites with handy historical facts.

The question remains, however, as to why churches have not been fully achieved as touristic space. As things of the past, churches can be categorised, through the processes associated with heritage tourism, with other buildings and objects that are prized as heritage attractions, the great houses and ruined castles that also fill the landscape. The traditional religious aspect can either engage the visitor or alienate them according to the way they construct themselves in that space. The church at a local level constructs them largely as recipients of its social and religious messages, and additionally and fortuitously, as paying guests, contributing to the upkeep of its primary functions. This is the version of additionality that has been conveyed to them by the Church authorities, who are keen to be seen as players in the wider arena of regional government and economic regeneration. At a time when the primary function of the Church as an institution is in decline, this provides it with an additional way of maintaining its traditional influence. There is a tension, therefore, between representation and practice, and this can be felt by the visitor in the church who may have been led to believe by the marketing communications of local authorities and other tourism agencies that this was a viable touristic space.

In practice, the tourist is confronted with a variety of representations and practices. It is important to recognise, however, that there is already some degree of tension in the visitor's mind, if they are not practicing believers. Churches are both familiar and alien. They are places where the most intimate and significant rituals of life are still performed by many more people than attend for weekly services. They are a locus of social solidarities (Crow, 2002), where people come together and act out and symbolise their familial and communal relationships in a space that may have been used for such purposes for hundreds of years and on a site that may well have been sacred in pre-Christian times. They will hear familiar words, and familiar rituals will be acted out in a familiar sequence. Much effort will be expended on dress and decoration, as well as a considerable amount of money in the case of weddings and funerals. At the same time, amidst the familiarities of church rituals, there are things which are not well understood, from the style of the building and its appearance, to the decorative features and symbolism. Yet even in this lack of understanding there is a more subtle familiarity, with the church as an institutional context for the performance of national identity, power relations and the impression of continuity. The ensemble effect of the church, its building style, its ornaments, monuments and its landscape setting create a sense of place and of the past that reassures the visitor that all is well, as it always has been.

Whilst, in accordance with the principles outlined in the methodology (see Chapter 3) there is no attempt to generalise from these findings some overall impressions can be formed: first, that it is possible, despite the strength and authority of the processes and agencies responsible for touristic representation, for some objects to be resistant to inclusion with touristic space. In the case of churches this is a general passivity towards tourism, it can be tolerated, perhaps, as long as it is not too intrusive. Such passivity, and occasionally resistance, is closely related to variations or indeed, dissonance, in representational practices. In Lefebvre's terms this would constitute a dissonance within and between representations of churches as touristic space by the various agencies involved, for example local authorities with plans to include churches in their attraction portfolio, and local diocese and parishes who might not see this as a priority. There is also evidence of dissonance between the government of the Church and some of its diocese and parishes. It embodies a tension between churches as representations of touristic space and churches, again to use Lefebvre's term, representational spaces, where people act out and practice activities in relation to 'associated images and symbols', (1991, 39), in this case the church as a place of worship and as medium for the cultural work of presenting and reproducing a given version of the past. Tourism does not in effect add to this cultural work, it simply provides another route to it, and indeed relies upon it for its own 'message content'.

Secondly, the dissonance itself is a function of organisational goals that are strongly related to restructuring in the economy in general. This is very important in that it provides a demonstration of Lefebvre's central contention that social space contains and relates to the broader social relations of production. These relations do not, therefore, exist simply in relation to objects in space, they create those spaces as artefacts of the relations of production. Churches, and church tourism can then be seen as socially created space that relates to a need for new forms of capital accumulation, instanced by tourism, that have replaced older forms. Local authorities, regional tourism agencies and the upper echelons of the Church have thus colluded to re-represent churches with an additional touristic function. Meethan amplifies the point, in ascribing spatial practices to the realm of the economic and describing the processes which are thus created:

> Policies and marketing strategies assign symbolic and aesthetic value to the material attributes of space. In turn, these representations of narratives of people and place assume an exchange value as the objects of consumption becoming commodities to be traded and consumed in the same way as the material services and goods which are associated with them (2001, 37).

The Church, however, has other organisational goals, a primary goal, in fact, that rather precludes such representations or seeks to contain and represent *them* in turn as appendages to the central purpose of the mission, or perhaps, generating income to enable the church to continue. In fact, the Church, through its churches is already doing the cultural work that tourism would assign to them through its use of rural-historic symbolism and the semiotics of Englishness. It would also have them present themselves more overtly as touristic, but this is disrupted by the residual meanings they already carry and convey to people and have done for centuries past. In time, tourism may take over completely from the cultural meanings the church already conveys, certainly those that are related to the institutional authority of the church. Tourism may eventually fill the gaps left by these receding meanings, or take over from them, changing both the use of the space and the meanings attached to it. For the time being, however, people visit churches, silent and respectful, alone and with others, as they wander and gaze at their own past, set in stone.

At the same time, the effect of all of this is that the normal processes of attraction formation outlined in touristic terms by MacCannell, (1999), Gunn (1980), Leiper (1990) and in heritage terms by Dicks (2000) and Meethan (2001), have been disrupted or prevented from being fully formed in the passivity that is characteristic of the response of churches to tourism. This is best demonstrated in the limited extent to which churches have engaged with the additional demands of tourist representation and spatial practice: the lack of embedded interpretation or other visitor services in and around churches, and the ambivalence and confusion experienced by visitors. In marketing parlance this could be conceived as a lack of product or product development, and therefore a very significant shortcoming in the process of realising them as capital assets in the visitor economy. This is despite the power of the representational practices associated with officialdom. As to why the official representation of churches has not been able to *force* the issue in respect of the parishes and the clergy, well to some extent it has, in so-called honey pot destinations where there is a highly developed attraction system in the immediate context – such as the Dales area in Bradford, or the better known Cotswold villages such as Bibury. Elsewhere, however the project has failed, in poorly developed destinations such as rural North Norfolk and urban Bradford.

Tourists are left unable to construct themselves fully in churches. Socially and culturally they do not need to, and the attempts of the tourist authorities to present churches as touristic space simply create confusion and ambivalence. The churches are already performing the cultural role in connecting people with an authorised past, and people visit them, because that is what people do. Obviously in some buildings that are better achieved as attractions, where additionality has been egaged, there is a clearer sense that this is touristic space, and significantly, these places are well provided with touristic infrastructures and services. Tourism in a sense, has replaced everything in these places, including the social and religious function, and provided a new route to the myths of the national past. Cirencester and Bolton Abbey were examples from the present research, of churches that were in a very real sense 'part of the attraction'.

Yet even at Bibury in the Cotswolds, and certainly in the larger and most 'attractive' churches in Norfolk, such as Salle and Wiveton, churches where the representational practices of the tourism industry might be making inroads for the sake of economic development, the older cultural performances seemed to remain predominant. In most cases, therefore, tourists are left to wander and gaze in a space that lacks the appropriate additional significations of public and touristic space. They spend only a little time there, they rarely speak. Their status as visitors is difficult for them to determine, but the sense of place, and of the past, offers a structured meaning that connects them with well established cultural constructs.

Beyond this, however, they might yet seek to make something of their own there. It may yet be possible for people to construct their own meanings without the tourism industry's officially selected and sanctioned interventions. For them, if anything, the church is a means of connecting with their own past, or that of the place, or both. However fleeting the visit, these tourists might be creating their own cultural space within the church, something which stands outside the authorised heritage discourse (Smith 2006), and is thus separate from the primary social and religious functions and certainly from any additional touristic interventions. Here, perhaps, is a third level of meaning, where connections are explored with place and past in a way that represents a real and personal engagement. This would certainly require consciousness, on the visitor's part, of the traditional cultural nexus of the church, but with such awareness, and without the intrusions of the heritage and tourism industries, the church tourist might finally be found.

A Reflective Postscript

The need for a reflective approach to this study was suggested in the methodological considerations discussed in Chapter 3. Following Kinicheloe's (2003) example, there is an opportunity for the researcher to examine their own thoughts and position in relation to the subject matter as understandings of its underlying processes are revealed, to the extent that they can be revealed in the act of research. In adopting this approach I was somewhat daunted by the complexities involved, the range of actors, their 'real cultural world' as Hollinshead (2004c, 85) has put it, and fact that this seemed to be changing even as I began the research. Initially my objective was in some way to capture these events and impressions and to use the established methods of social science to make 'snapshots' from a variety of angles – the much-vaunted triangulation of so many studies. But after a while, and certainly since those first methodological thoughts, it became apparent that there were other ways of looking at the phenomena in question, and that their complexity demanded something more than a traditional attempt to use the constructs of positivism to enumerate, taxonomise and ultimately generalise.

Recent developments in qualitative research have provided a basis for a more considered approach that does not begin with methods, but with an ontological approach to the application of these methods in research contexts and as prelude to their description. Hollinshead's (2004b, 64) guidance on such matters is central to a belief that an 'unexamined methodology', (to adapt Socrates) 'is not worth doing' (Plato, trans. Fowler, 1966). With this in mind the idea of the *bricolage* adapted by Kincheloe (2001, 2005) provided an approach to research that seemed more appropriate to the variety and of sources and impressions that the research seemed to demand. Furthermore, it responds effectively to the variability in the nature of the material from relatively hard data in some cases, to the evanescent impressions of a visitor faced with a series of questions in a quiet country church. The idea of capturing data was therefore superseded by the idea of assembling it, and the metaphors here are endless, with the facets and internal refractions of a crystal and the more prosaic patchwork quilt offered variously to account for the process.

From the advantageous position offered by a postscript it is easy to see how such considerations have moulded these final impressions. Freed from the constraints of positivism, it is possible to offer impressions, moments and situational and provisional evidence. The range of material examined in the research does not correspond to a neat and ordered structure, but rather to a series of impressions that I have been able to synthesise with the literature that was examined at length in Chapters 1 and 2. By assembling my bricolage and marshalling the evidence it contains, I have offered a tentative account of the offer some suggestions for future research and highlight some operational issues that can be examined by a future researcher who may wish to consider how churches could be marketed as heritage attractions. It is important, however, in the light of the findings presented here to do this in ways that respond to the needs and sensitivities of local people who use churches to animate and explore their own pasts and reveal these to visitors.

Passivity and Additionality

The church, I have argued, is an *unachieved* tourist attraction, a place where the spatial and representational practices associated with tourism are markedly absent. In order to explain this in terms of the attitude and perceptions of churches the duality of passivity and additionality emerged during the course of the research. Passivity describes the church *as a church*, going about its centuries old business in its structure of dioceses and parishes. When churches became the objects of antiquarian interest in the nineteenth century the church remained passive in relation to these new visitors, and even when the guidebooks of the early tourists by rail and motor car appeared, the churches were serenely consumed in their traditional role as purveyors of both faith and social life, a cornerstone of society and context for its rites of passage.

In the post-war period things began to change. The church began to decline as a feature of peoples' lives even if faith has continued in less organised forms. Churches became underused or redundant except, perhaps, as cultural capital, as the church itself recognised in late 1960s and 1970s (Burman, 1978). The traditional passivity of the church was challenged. They would have to respond in new ways in order to grasp the opportunities presented by economic regeneration and by new forms of tourism focussed in culture and heritage. Much of this momentum was generated by local authorities and regional tourism boards who were actively seeking new objects and activities to add to their attraction portfolios. Churches were contenders, because they appeared to contain much of cultural and historic value, and yet these same agencies would not be responsible for their increasingly costly upkeep and maintenance.

Moreover, they could be linked to the same representative practices and cultural constructs that already characterised an established heritage industry that had been given a new impetus in the 1980s. This *Authorised Heritage Discourse* (AHD) as Smith has (2006) has described it provided the context and, literally, the authority to add churches to the eclectic mix of places and buildings that made up the objects of heritage. What this underlines, however, as Smith has also made clear, is that heritage is a process, as much as a collection of things. The process with churches, therefore, was concerned with representational and spatial practices that linked them with the AHD. In this research it is suggested that this linkage is achieved by a specific cultural construct that I have called the rural-historic, an ensemble of characteristics that concern location and setting, the look of age and traditional images of the English countryside as key feature of national identity.

However, in order to meet this expectation and join the other attractions associated with the heritage industry, churches would have to engage with these additional spatial and representational practices. Additionality thus emerged as a key concept in describing the ways in which churches might engage with the opportunities presented by tourism. For the higher echelons of the church this could be seen as an ideal mechanism for gaining access to the new regional agendas for economic development and regeneration. It could after all throw several thousand historic buildings into process in which the built environment and the production of space were central. For the parishes, however, and some of the dioceses, there was some convincing to do. Additionality was 'sold' to them therefore on the basis of dubious financial benefits and even more doubtful opportunities for extending a missionary welcome to the lapsed.

Additionality, however, came at a price, at least in terms of effort and commitment. Churches would have to be kept open and in some cases it might be desirable to have them 'staffed'. Security would be compromised, objects might be stolen. Moreover, the churches themselves would have to contain at least some of the features of a heritage attraction. Interpretation is notoriously sparse in churches and often rather academic in content. Little provision is made for visitors in terms of signing, parking, access and associated services. Churches are not often represented as an agreeable tour or trail and are rarely linked with other nearby attractions or the surrounding attraction 'system'. Additionality was clearly going to be something of a challenge for all but the most popular sites, that were more then likely already involved in tourism, places like Cirencester, Bibury, Bolton Abbey or Cley-next-the-Sea. The results were often a dissonance with the Church itself about the scope for additionality and between the Church and other authorities and agencies that were confronted with the residual passivity of churches and congregations that were consumed by their traditional spatial practices.

There was another problem, however, which was the cultural 'baggage' associated with churches often in the minds of visitors. Once again, no claim is made for generalising these findings. They are situational, faceted and located in moments of reflection and thought. They do, however, convey something of the response that might be evoked in tourists when they are confronted with the dissonances associated with additionality. Without the paraphernalia of heritage attractions tourists found it difficult to 'read' the spaces they were in, except by reference to their own sense of what churches were. Despite the best efforts of even contemporary guide book writers the visitors in this survey were not immediately engaged by those features of the church that would excite the antiquary or the enthusiast. Rather, they referred to the overall *sense* of the place, the atmosphere and what I have called the 'ensemble effect' which they absorb by 'wandering and gazing', in the respectful silence due to a place of worship.

All of this seems a long way from additionality and, indeed, seems to support churches in their traditional passivity. Why? I have argued here that churches are already doing the cultural work that tourism would do in representing them as heritage attractions: linking them with an authorised past. It may be, however, in the fluidity of representations that might be associated with changes in the use of space that tourism is replacing these residual cultural practices, but this must be a matter for future research. The point is however, that additionality as it is conceived as demand of the heritage tourism industry is interrupted by the traditional spatial and representational practices of the church, and as an attraction it remains unachieved, or perhaps not fully achieved. This suggests that additionality may in fact be a more fluid concept than originally envisioned. It is clearly more fully developed in 'honey pot' attractions of the sort mentioned above. In other churches, however, there might be allowed a *range* of additionalities, from the simple opening of a church, through various forms of embedded interpretation, to the use of web resources and supporting printed matter to facilitate levels of touristic activity that are appropriate to the scale and historic interest associated with a particular church.

One question remains, however, which is whether there is a synthesis of passivity and additionality outside the realm of what is currently perceived as touristic space, and whether a subaltern or alternative form of additionality might represent other interests beyond those of the obviously touristic.

Making Minor Places?

The title of MacCannell's (1998) essay provides a useful moment of reflection and a point of departure for further research. The duality of passivity and additionality occupies a cultural space where the meanings and power relations of tourism are fought out, or at least contested. The church as the passive recipient, or witness of tourism, hardly engages with it in any obvious operational sense. The paraphernalia of the attraction is missing and the locked door is almost an act of resistance. Additionality, on the other hand, is a Faustian deal, one which the cathedrals and honey pot churches have already made. It implies the need to respond to people as visitors and to provide for their needs as such to the extent that the fluidity of the concept allows.

For MacCannell this contestation, this dissonance, was welcome:

> I regard current controversies over 'whose heritage' as a blessed gift. Otherwise what we call heritage could not be distinguished from anything else: all of life and culture would be unresisted self-congratulation; undifferentiated time-space (1998, 351).

The question that arises is the extent to which an object of heritage can be an attraction in some unmediated way and what this means in terms of interpretation and the representational practices that are typical of heritage attractions. What would be the implications for the marketing of heritage that was not part of some destination portfolio, but rather an expression of a communal will to celebrate place and the past, outside the machine of contemporary tourist representations? For MacCannell this is the basis of a manifesto for a militant disconnection with the global sweep of capitalism that has constructed tourist destinations in every corner from every scrap of cultural capital available to it, from an English country church to an adventure holiday location: 'When every destination is just another pastiche of displaced cultural elements why leave home?' (1998, 359).

From the visitors' point of view some of the omens were good. There was some attempt to engage and construct personal meanings and personal connections, within a communal historical context: a version that facilitates the link between 'people today with the people who lived here in the past', and an understanding of the social condition and process that created the present. This would represent, in Walsh's (1994) terms, an *unfreezing* of the past and a recognition of its relevance to the present. If this was achieved then the rural historic and the Authorised Heritage Discourse might be made transparent by people and communities representing their own past in their own place. This implies a level of *subalternity* that is difficult to conceive at present, but could form the basis for much future research.

For tourists themselves it requires a similar act of consciousness and a move away from what Horne described as tourist-collaboration (1992, 251). Horne's self-conscious *intelligent tourist* might become a new agent of discovery to see through the gloss, selectivity and eclectic display modes of contemporary representational practices. Hollinshead amplifies these possibilities in also referring to the possibilities for transparency in Horne's construction of the tourist, the lack of which:

> creates a trifling illusion that offers little reflexive insight into the ways in which progressivist/developmentalist forms of tourism themselves continue to repress certain appreciations of nature and suppress the inheritances of particular human populations (1999b, 272).

MacCannell's *Manifesto for Minor Places*, may seem a long way from the mainstream of heritage tourism and what has been understood about it in the past, but it does at least hint at an agenda for both action and research and eschewing authorised representations it casts them as potentially political acts. It also seems to imply the need for a re-socialisation of the space that churches represent, so that visitors no longer engage them in respectful silence but as resources for *their* use, as communal places where they can be active in a variety of ways, not least in engaging with the past, not as an artefact of the tourism industry, but as an active constituent of their own world. Here then is a possible synthesis of the passive and the additional: churches may thus resist the additionality of contemporary tourism representations and find a role beyond the authorised cultural symbolism these contain. Additionality as a more fluid concept, pitched at a level that was appropriate to their circumstances, would enable them to represent what they are in their own terms. Passivity and additionality could then be conceived as continuum rather than a polar duality and the location of church on that continuum would be a matter of local concern and a factor in determining the nature of those additional practices, from simply keeping a church open, to developing a church trail with supporting material on the internet. Whatever the decision it would be a matter of local discretion.

This, however, is beyond the scope of the present study, but if the latter has provided a basis for considering these matters it will have achieved something of its original goal as well as an acknowledgement of its own limitations. Further research will help to elucidate the issues outlined above and will hopefully acknowledge what is suggested here: that heritage is an active process of representational practice and spatial production and that understanding these processes can potentially make a difference to the way that heritage is used by people.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Interview Schedules for Key Informants

Interview Schedule for Vicars

Respondent number # ......   Case Study Area ....

Date.............

1). How interested are you, as a vicar, in the idea of church tourism?

2). Is it something that you think you should be encouraging or facilitating in your church(es)?

3). Who should be responsible for promoting churches as attractions?

4). To what extent do you think church tourism can be used as a basis for mission, and how does that work?

5). Do you think that tourism in churches helps to generate income for them?

6). Do you think that churches have a part to play in the tourism industry in this area?

7). What is it about churches that make them potentially attractive to tourists and the tourist industry?

8). Do you think that people visiting churches as tourists might feel any discomfort about being there in that capacity?

9). Do you think they might find the religious aspect off-putting these days?

10). Is there anything else you would like to say about Churches and tourism?

Interview Schedule for Diocesan Officials

Respondent number # ......   Case Study Area ....

Date............

1). Why would the diocese want to be involved in tourism and why would it want to represent its churches in this way?

2). Do you think churches are actually heritage attractions?

3). What are the benefits to the Church of being involved in tourism?
[prompt mission and income]

4). What role do you think churches might play in the tourism of this area?

5). What kinds of activities and practices should the church be involved with to facilitate tourism?

6). Are the parishes themselves willing to be involved?

7). Do you think there is a conflict between the religious and touristic roles of churches?

8). How has the Diocese organised its tourism role?

9). Have you worked with other organisations to develop tourism here?

Interview Schedule for Local Authority Officials

Respondent number # ......   Case Study Area ....

Date.............

1). Why would the local authority want to be involved in tourism and why would it want to represent churches in its portfolio of attractions?

2). Do you think churches are actually heritage attractions?

3). What role do you think churches might play in the tourism of this area?

4). What kinds of activities and practices is the Council involved with to facilitate tourism?

5). Are the churches themselves willing to be involved?

6). Do you think there is a conflict between the religious and touristic roles of churches?

7). How has the local authority organised its tourism role?

8). Have you worked with other organisations to develop tourism here?

Interview Schedule for Tour Operators by e-mail

Could I ask you to have a look at the following list of issues and statements that have sprung from the research hitherto and ask you to comment on any that you think are significant. I would welcome your views and the benefit of your experience:

1. Church tourism is now an important part of the heritage industry
2. Its appeal is quite narrow and of interest to older people who might also be interested in visiting country houses and museums
3. The church itself is quite ambivalent about tourism at the local level although at a national level it is more positive
4. The Church's interest in tourism is largely connected to its sense of mission and need to evangelise
5. Churches need to be better interpreted and presented for tourism purposes
6. Medieval country churches will always have a broader appeal than urban, Victorian or modern churches
7. Most churches, whatever their age, will be of limited interest to tourists

I do hope that you will have time to share some thoughts on these issues and I would be very grateful to receive them.

Best Wishes

Steve Watson

Appendix 2

Interview Schedule for Church Tourists

Respondent number # .... Location ....

Date ....

STATEMENT: Hello. Good morning/afternoon. My name is Steve Watson. I'm from the Archaeology Department at the University of York and I'm doing some research for my Ph.D. I'm interested in what people think about churches and tourism. Can I ask you some questions?

1). Can I ask you first of all if you are from the village or nearby? YES / NO

And is this your local church? YES / NO

If YES, close interview.
If NO, continue:

Thank you. The interview will take about ten minutes. Your replies will be treated as confidential and you will not be identified in the research. Is that OK?

[If relevant] Do you have any objection if I record your answers?

Visit type

2). Are you

on a day trip? ❑
[Go to Q.3]

or are you on holiday the area ? ❑
[Go to Q.4]

3). How did you get here today?

Day trip by car ❑
Walked from home ❑
Cycled from home ❑
Organised excursion from home ❑
Other ....
[Go to Q.7]

4). Whereabouts are you from? ....

5). What kind of accommodation are you staying in?

- VFR ❑
- Self catering ❑
- B&B/guesthouse ❑
- Hotel ❑
- Other ....

6). How did you get here today?

- Day trip by car from accommodation ❑
- Walked from accommodation ❑
- Cycled from accommodation ❑
- Organised excursion from accommodation ❑
- Other ....

7). How would you describe the purpose of your visit here today?

8). What is it about churches that people might find interesting or attractive?
Prompt if necessary: the building, the setting etc

9). To what extent do you think churches are, or can be, or should be, tourist attractions?

10). Would you describe yourself as an active believer (whether or not a regular church worshipper)?

11). Do you feel as if the church welcomes you as a visitor? Do you feel welcome here?

Prompts: what would make you feel more welcome?

Why do you feel unwelcome?

Is there anything else that you would want to add?

Thank you very much for your time.

Visitor characteristics (complete after close of interview)

Group type:

single ❑
couple ❑
families with children ❑
Three generation family ❑
Group

Age range:

Young ❑
twenty-thirty something ❑
mid-life ❑
older ❑

Appendix 3

Observation Pro-Forma for Churches

Church no # ......

Date ......

Case study area ....

Open or key easily available YES / NO

Visitor Numbers:

First Quarter 2001 [ ]

August 2001 [ ]

General Description of the church and setting

[ ]

Summary of historical and architectural features and their importance (From Pevsner)

[ ]

Leaflets, Guides and other printed matter (quality, condition and layering)

[ ]

Directional signage

Accessibility (include closeness to road and parking)

Embedded interpretation (quality, age and condition)

Linkages with other churches (promotion of trails, groups etc

Any special facilities for visitors

Photographed? YES / NO

Appendix 4

Tourist Observation Checklist

Case number # ......

Location ....

Date.......

Time of entry ......

Notes:

Visitor characteristics

Group size:

1 ❑ 2 ❑ 3-5 ❑

Number of people:

Under 16 .....

16-20 .....

20-40 .....

40-60 .....

Over 60 .....

Observed behaviours:

Observed event	No. of persons observed
Wandering and gazing	
Looking at particular monuments and objects	
Making a donation	
Looking at the visitor book	
Reading/looking at memorial inscriptions	
Looking up at the roof	
Approaching the altar	
Reading/looking at embedded interpretation/labels	
Looking at book stand/display	
Reading the guidebook whilst walking and gazing	
Act of worship/prayer / standing respectfully before the altar	

Appendix 5

List of respondents

Clergy

#1	Vicar Rural Norfolk
#2	Vicar rural Norfolk
#3	Vicar rural Norfolk
#4	Vicar Rural Norfolk
#5	Cotswolds
#6	Cotswolds
#7	Cotswolds
#8	Cotswolds
#9	Urban Bradford
#10	Rural Bradford
#11	Rural Bradford
#12	Rural Bradford

Local authority tourism officials

#1	North Yorkshire
#2	North Yorkshire
#3	North Norfolk
#4	North Norfolk
#5	Gloucestershire

Diocesan officials

#1	Diocese of Lincoln
#2	Diocese of Bradford
#3	Diocese of Gloucester
#3b	Diocese of Gloucester

#4	Diocese of Norfolk
#5	Diocese of Carlisle
#6	Diocese of Southwell

Regional Agencies

#1	Yorkshire Tourist Board
#2	Yorkshire Tourist Board

Operators

#1	Operating in the South of England
#2	Operating in Norfolk and the North of England