An Exploration into the Appeal of Outdoor Film Screenings in England: community, space and experience

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Arts and Creative Technologies

November 2022

Abstract

Outdoor film screenings have been a fixture on the summer entertainment calendar for many years. Screening films outdoors is not a new concept. Filmic history provides evidence of early films which were screened outdoors before the advent of a fixed auditorium space (the cinema). The rebirth of outdoor film screenings is, in part, about the development of an audience who are looking for a new experience away from the traditional auditorium space, but also the producers who, as part of the rich tradition of cinema, are looking to innovate. The temporary and flexible nature of an outdoor film screening allows for the medium to animate spaces and draw audiences into places that were once unknown. The many variables that make screening a film outdoors distinct from a screening in a traditional auditorium environment create an experience, which adds to the appeal of outdoor film screening.

Over a two-year period, I collaborated with Quad in Derby to conduct field research at different heritage locations across England. I attended screening at twelve venues in 2018-2019, collected 1,123 survey cards, and had email and online conversation with the lead contacts at many of the venues I attended. At the onset of the Covid 19 Pandemic in 2020, I pivoted my research to focus on drive-in cinemas. I attended three drive-in screenings and collected thirteen responses from a nationwide online survey.

My empirical research suggests that outdoor film screenings are not just about engaging in film. Rather, outdoor film screenings create a place for temporary communities, for the personalisation of a shared experience and for engaging in spaces, both known and unknown. This work adds to the academy by providing a unique insight into audiences that attend outdoor film screenings and adds original content to an area of the academy in which there is very little existing work.

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Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Dr Jenna Ng and the team at the University of York who have supported me through the duration of my research. I would also like to thank the team at Quad, Derby and all the technical staff at Summer Nights with whom I conducted my field research in 2018 and 2019. My sincerest thanks to Dr Dominic Aubrey-Jones, Rachel Barrett, Kurt Bedell, Anne Clarke, Tracey Cullen, Helena Trenner, Catherine Hays, Michael Hoyle, Valerie Hoyle, Niall Ryan, Ruth Margolis, Menear and Dr Gemma Moore who made me laugh and fed me tea. Above all, I would like to thank all the people who contributed to my research, by filling in survey cards when they could have been tucking into their sandwiches.

Declaration

I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work, and I am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other University. All sources are acknowledged as References.

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Aims and Objectives

The aim of my research was to answer the following question: "What is the appeal of outdoor film screenings in relation to community, space and experience?"

This research aim emerged from two motivations. The first motivation to answer this research question began during the completion of my Masters dissertation. For my Masters degree, I documented three auditorium spaces in London which screened films in a non-traditional cinematic environment. These screening spaces were all very different: screenings in parks, under a motorway and in a purpose-built amphitheatre. Collectively, these spaces achieved the same outcome of bringing people together in a shared experience.

The second motivation was drawn from the experience at Live Cinema Conference at King's College London in December 2017, which discussed the impact of these novel cultures of reception and practice and the new experiential aesthetics and emergent economies of engagement." In break-out groups, I met with industry professionals and discussed the contemporary outdoor film screening context at the time. Bringing together industry professionals provided space to consider the impact of outdoor film screenings and reaffirm the need for research into this area.

Having spoken to the people who worked in non-traditional cinema environment and building on the research that I had undertaken for my Masters, my initial objective was to show that the pop-up screenings in temporary, ad-hoc environments were an important part of culture in Britain. I proposed that the experience of watching a film outdoors was valuable to the thousands of people who attended such events in Britain each year, a value which arose from a form of collective experience, intertwined with a connection to a new and alternative space.

Hence, my hypothesis was that outdoor film screenings brought people together, as an audience, to explore and interact with different locations and screening settings. My objectives were to explore the cultural value and appeal of outdoor film screenings. This study of outdoor spaces intersects with a number of different academic fields. Analysis of

where people watch films and why they watch films sits somewhere between audience and reception studies and film studies. In this respect, I was also committed to Martin Barker's adage: 'listen to your audience' and was determined to conduct field work as well.[1] To deepen understanding of my findings, I also referenced other disciplines, including sociology, human geography, philosophy, linguistics and psychology.

In this research, I was intent on creating a framework which would produce both a tangible structure and would withstand any adaptations that could answer my research question of the appeal of outdoor film screenings. Towards this intent, my research objectives were as follows:

Objective One

The first objective was to create an interdisciplinary discussion about the way in which people interact with outdoor film screenings. Using the themes of film, space, community and experience, the literature review brings together ideas from human geography, anthropology, philosophy, sociology, political thinking and cultural studies in order to create a platform for discussing the core data that I collected.

Objective Two

The second objective was to create a system whereby I could collect core data from audiences who attended outdoor film screenings in England. My initial approach was to use survey cards, which I handed to the audience at the screenings I attended. With the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic in early 2020 and the resulting lockdowns, I was required to change my data collection model, which provided another angle to my research and added to the contemporary narrative that I was aiming to achieve.

Objective Three

The third objective of my research was to effectively document the themes around value and appeal that emerged from the core data I collected. Three dominant themes emerged: community, space and experience. Other themes also emerge, such as fandom,

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[1] Barker, Martin (2012) "Crossing Out the Audience' from 'Audiences Defining and Researching Screen Entertainment Reception (The Key Debates - Mutations and Appropriations in European Film Studies) Amsterdam University Press.

membership, nostalgia and notions of tradition. Wherever possible, I set the themes as drawn from my data to the multi-disciplinary references found in the literature review.

Objective Four

The fourth and final objective was to produce a piece of research which was unique, added value to the academy, and was useful to the industry professionals working within the outdoor film screening space. To achieve this objective, I collaborated with Quad in Derby, who allowed me access to outdoor film screenings produced by Summer Nights. Throughout this research, I had informal conversations with producers working within the outdoor film screening industry. These ad hoc conversations were useful in enabling me to place my research with relevance both for the academy and for the arts and culture sector.

1.2 Chapter Outline

This thesis starts with a literature review covering the history of the development of film (Chapter Two), presenting a cultural chronology of the technological and sociological changes that have taken place over the last 130 years which have impacted on the filmic culture that is experienced in 2022. The literature review consists of three parts. In the first part, I present the truism that outdoor film screenings were the first type of screenings, predating traditional auditorium spaces. These spaces were pop-up and temporary, much like the screenings that have developed in the 2010s and 2020s. In the second part, I discuss how stationary cinemas develop, and the fixed space that the cinema offers becomes a place for connection especially during the Second World War. In the pre-war period, society moved at a quicker pace than cinematic technology, causing a hiatus in engagement with the cinema. I also discuss the impact of suburbs via Klaus Nathaus, Sam Griffiths and Scott McQuire, who suggest that the suburb provided a physical and metaphorical distance from the cinemas, which in part added to their post war decline. Finally, I discuss works by Michael Clarke and Emma Pett to provide a definition of choice and an example of how choice has been used by audiences. This work intersects with a government report on the impact of rural cinema, which highlights the importance in this area and lack of academic literature on outdoor and rural cinema. I also discuss the issue of experience, particularly via Sarah Atkinson and Helen Kennedy in relation to their work on immersive screenings and pre-screening experiences. I also use the work of geographers,

such as Jan Gehl and Doreen Massey to consider the experience of space and place framed with opportunities for outdoor film screenings to animate public spaces.

Chapter Three outlines the methodology and research methods used within the thesis. It provides details of the pre-research phase (Sept 2016 – June 2018); the formal research phase (July 2018 - September 2020) and additional research work (email correspondence with lead contacts) August 2019 until July 2021. The methodology chapter outlines the research design, methods selected and how I implemented the data collection and analysis. Across the first two years of formal research, 1,023 people completed survey cards that I handed out at the screenings I attended. This resulted in over 5,000 pieces of distinct data. The final part of my methodology focuses on adaptation in terms of my methods. Along with details about cancellations due to low attendance and bad weather, I reflect on the importance of the Covid-19 pandemic in my research.

My fourth chapter is the first of four chapters in which I interrogate the results of my empirical findings. It seeks to provide a basis for understanding outdoor cinema audiences, and establishes a starting point and platform, which is then developed throughout the thesis. In this chapter, I frame the first part of my data analysis around the themes of 'value' and 'appeal'. This framing correlates directly with a question I asked the audience in 2018, which was subsequently adapted in 2019. This section also addresses the question: "Is this event value for money?" This was a question that was included in the 2019 survey card at the request of the team from Quad. The responses fuel a discussion about outdoor film screenings and whether screenings in non-traditional auditorium spaces can add value. This linked with a discussion by Radbourne et al on the 'self-actualisation' of the audiences who want to "shape their own experience", suggesting that marketing strategies should be refocused on empowering audience.The second part of "Chapter Four: Value and Appeal" considers the words used by the audiences to describe appeal, or what I term the 'appeal factors'. The analysis of the words used by the audience becomes a core theme of my work, and a practice that intersects all the chapters in this thesis. The words chosen by the audiences are knitted together with responses to the question 'Have you been to an outdoor screening before?' Combined with other data regarding the age of the audience and how far the audience were prepared to travel to get to the screenings, this part of the chapter seeks to understand the motivation of the audience members I surveyed during my formal research period.

"Chapter Five: Alternative Auditoriums" seeks to push the boundaries of Emma Pett's description of the non-traditional auditorium space. As with Chapter Four, this chapter intertwined theoretical ideas with survey responses from the audience. The starting point is a definition of terms: the idea of space vs place is examined by Doreen Massey and forms a starting point which enables the reader to question how the respondents have used the term 'space' throughout this chapter. Massey's work is the starting point for considering space as both volume (e.g. the size of the screening space) and location. The second part of this chapter considers private spaces and public spaces. A discussion around what makes a public space or a private space is considered within the context of heritage location. I refer to conversations conducted over email and Zoom with the lead contacts I met at the heritage locations I attended.

The third results chapter ("Chapter Six: 'Experience'") focuses on the experience of attending outdoor film screenings. This chapter is filled with numerical data, written responses, photos taken at the screenings and online responses to the screenings. Here I consider the pre-screening experience of the audiences at the screenings I attended in 2018, 2019 and 2020. In particular, I reference the work of Helen Kennedy and Sarah Atkinson, particularly their analysis of Secret Cinema's *Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back,* which provides a telling example of what happens when the pre-screening experience is overproduced and not owned by the audience.[2] This chapter is split into four sections. The first section, 'experience', draws on data concerning the importance of the film that is shown at the outdoor film screenings attended by the audiences.

The second section of chapter six, 'comfort factors', is, at its core, about comfort. It focuses on the different ways in which the audiences describe and document their experiences of attending an outdoor film screening and the comfort elements of the experience, including what the audience brings with them to enhance the event. The final part of "Chapter Six: 'Experience'" reflects on how the audience documents their experience through social media. Reflecting on the use of social media helps to expand the conversation regarding outdoor film screenings and provides a voice for people who may not have filled in one of the survey cards I distributed.

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[2] Atkinson, SA and Kennedy H.W (2015) "Where We're Going, We Don't need and Effective Online Audience Engagement Strategy.":
The case of the Secret Cinema Viral Backlash' Frames Cinema Journal

Chapter Seven, as my fourth results chapter, focuses on community and fandom. The first part of this chapter reflects on the question: "Who are you here with?". I use the term 'imagined community', as borrowed from the political academic Benedict Anderson, to describe the collegiate relationship between strangers that watch a film outdoors together. This resonates with Iris Youngs' work on communities as a construct. The second part of "Chapter Seven: 'Community and Fandom'" looks at fandom, which I argue is an example of an imagined community. Fandom suggests a loyalty or understanding of a text, a subject which seamlessly converges into how and why people understand the filmic text. Loyalty to the filmic text is demonstrated in what the audience wears and the semiotics behind the message they seek to translate through clothes and props. In this respect, I refer to Roland Barthes in understanding how people connect through signs and signifiers. This section also covers understanding on how to interact with non-traditional auditorium spaces. My final results chapter is titled "Chapter Eight: '130 years in the making'". Although this feels somewhat like a conclusion, it is not. Rather, it seeks to assess where the outdoor film screening genre culture currently sits, its challenges and opportunities. The chapter begins by looping back to the development of film technology to argue that the industry has always needed innovators and pioneers to drive the cinematic experience forward. Here, I cite new technological practices that were used to adhere to the Covid-19 restrictions. Audience feedback provides evidence of the successes and failures of these innovative practices. This chapter also provides space to consider the contemporary culture of outdoor film screenings. Here, I cite current thinking around how outdoor film screenings can animate spaces and have social value in addition to the financial value that operations, such as Summer Nights, provide Quad in terms of supplementing core income. This final results chapter also provides a space to consider that my research can be expanded and developed .

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

> Never has there been so much choice or opportunity to enjoy cinema as there
> is today and in the last five years (and despite the unpredictability of British
> weather!) there has been an increasing appetite for outdoor or open air
> screenings across the UK.[3]

Outdoor film screenings come in many different shapes and sizes. A screening
outdoors may take the form of a rudimentary set-up; a sheet hung between two trees
and a home projector used to screen the film for a small group of friends. At the other
end of the spectrum are large scale commercial screenings where several hundred
people make up an audience of strangers, who share the experience of watching a film
together. Both of these experiences hold a value, as they provide a platform for the
audience to engage with a film outside of the traditional screening environment of the
cinema. Without the traditional confines of the cinema, the screening embraces the
character of spaces where the film is shown. Whether the space is a domestic garden,
a commercial district, the grounds of an historic house or the country park, the
environment in which a film is screened outdoors adds to the experience of watching
the film. Moreover, the context in which the film is being watched adds to the narrative
of the film. Examples of this 'mis-en-scene' effect are particularly powerful when the
film is screened 'on location'.[4]

Watching a film within a context rich location is enjoyable for some, though for others
diminishes the experience of the film. It is important to add that the traditional cinema
environment is built to reduce the external stimulation of an outdoor environment. In a
traditional cinematic environment there is no birdsong, wind blowing in the trees or
overhead aeroplanes.

The diversity of the places in which films are screened outside adds to the richness of
this form of exhibition. Whereas there are numerous examples in the research into the
experience of watching a film in a traditional cinema, there is very little research into
the appeal and impact of films screened outdoors. Attempts to define this way of

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[3] Independent Cinema Office 2019 https://www.independentcinemaoffice.org.uk/advice-support/outdoor-screenings/ = accessed June 2023
[4] Picnic Cinemas screening of Withnail and I at Skeddale Hall is a good example of a film being shown 'on location' http://picniccinema.co.uk/events-2/withnail/ - accessed July 2023

exhibition reaffirms that research into the appeal of outdoor film screenings is a new and burgeoning area within the audience and reception studies canon.

To navigate across this new landscape, this literature review consists of three parts. In the first part I retrace the steps of film history, arguing that outdoor film screenings were the first type of screenings, predating traditional cinematic auditorium spaces. I suggest that the early film pioneers set the modus operandi for filmic culture by demonstrating enthusiast levels of entrepreneurship and enterprises, two ways of thinking which are found in contemporary outdoor film screenings. Following on from this I consider engagement; how and where people visit outdoor film screenings notably how and why people choose to watch a film in a non-traditional screening environment.

The third part of the literature review considers the impact of experience as a contributing factor to appeal. Examples are provided in this chapter of the process in which the outdoor screening experience is stretched by encouraging the audiences to engage in the filmic text before and after the screenings. This extension may range from being involved in a conversation about the screening on social media or the more tangible practise of dressing different ways for the screenings. Social media is often used after the film screening to record the experience and share with others. The audience therefore creates their own narrative of the experience.

The extended experience of the non-traditional screenings is also a trope of immersive screenings. Immersive screenings add depth to the screenings by using actors, props and scenery which play upon the cannon text. Significant moments within the film's narrative are emphasised through set pieces which the audience are asked to engage in. Examples of immersive screening set pieces include a trip to a bar or a dinner that features in the film where the audience are encouraged to eat or drink, as the characters in the film would. This literature review touches upon the immersive screenings as they form an important sub-section to the non-traditional auditorium cinematic environment.

This literature review therefore seeks to provide a platform for understanding the development of the traditional cinematic space and innovations that have led to the reassertion of the outdoor film screenings. As noted, the outdoor film screening is not

just about watching a film in the sterile environment of the cinema, but rather it is an experience which embraces place and space; a theme which also resonates throughout this chapter. By embracing place and space, I suggest that the audiences also embrace each other by forming a temporary screening community. How these connections are established is considered through the concepts of fandom and nostalgia.

Research into outdoor film screenings is currently very limited, so within this literature review, I draw on theorists from the schools of human geography, sociology, cultural studies, linguistics and film, mimicking the collaborative and multi-disciplinary approach of the New Cinema History. New Cinema History reconsiders how the audiences use cinematic spaces. The approach is less concerned with the cinephile experience, rather focusing on the cinema as a community and cultural space."

In summary this chapter provides a navigation tool which the reader can use to consider the research question:

"What is the appeal of outdoor film screenings in relation to community, space and experience" and through this understand the context in which research into outdoor film screenings sit.

2.2 History of a filmic tradition in Britain

Providing a brief history of the development of film and its exhibition in Britain frames an understanding of how audiences adopted, engaged and, latterly, personalised their experiences of watching a film in different spaces. The development of technology and the response of the audience to the development of film provides a foundation for the exploration of contemporary outdoor film screening environments.

2.2.1 Early cinema: social aspirations and technological advancement (1895-1909)

The birth of cinema (i.e. films screened publicly) was motivated by money, not aesthetics. Michael Channon, a theorist in early cinematic history, suggests that early film pioneer, Thomas Edison, was a successful inventor because he was a 'very good businessman, a

fact well known to his contemporarie.[5] Early cinema was about difference and aspiration: the film as a different medium to photography, and, latterly, the cinema as a place to socially and economically differentiate oneself from the audience of the more rowdy music hall. [6] After the world's first commercial movie screening at the Grand Cafe, in Paris on 28th December 1895, the appetite for developing commercial film technology grew ferociously.

Between 1896 and 1901, the main places where early films (also known as 'animated pictures') were exhibited fell into three categories: fairgrounds, music halls and other local halls, and disused shops.[7] Outside of private viewings, where the audience came specifically to see the film, celluloid had to compete with a variety of different forms of entertainment. Films often had to share the bill with other attractions, 'be that seeing lions or performing dogs'.[8] Many early films utilised the performers found in the music halls and put them on film. For example, the Serpentine Dance was a very popular music hall act that transitioned onto film.[9] Patricia Cook suggests that music halls were both popular places for entertainment and a place of decadence for those concerned about the morals of society.[10] The Musical Times suggests that music halls could divide society, proclaiming that, unless music halls appealed to all social grades, they risked intensifying 'the tendency of the nation to become two'.[11] The first free outdoor film screenings took place in King Cross, London, on 17th January 1898. The screening was sponsored by the pharmacy company, Nestle-Lever, who used the film screenings to market baby production.[12]

The early cinematic culture had a level of competition, which, at best, was innovative and, at worst, was lethal. The 1909 Cinematographers Act was designed to regulate public

[5] Channon, Michael, (1996) The Dream that Kicks; The prehistory and early years of cinema in Britain, Routledge (London and New York) P86

[6] Barnes, John (1983) Pioneers of the British Film, Bishopsgate Press, (London) p145

[7] The progression from early photography to film went through many stages, as scientists and hobbyists played around with movement (phenaskistoscope and Zoetrope) and perception (panorama). Following on from this the magic lantern used slides to provide the first front projected image. The term 'animate picture' may apply to the transition from still to moving picture, a description which resonated with audiences of the time

[8] Barnes, John (1983) 'Pioneers of the British Film' Bishopsgate Press, (London) p85

[9] The popularity of the Serpentine Dance is mentioned in Paul Merton's documentary for the BBC titled "Paul Merton's Weird and Wonderful World of Early Cinema". This film can be found on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=87km5sFrIQQ

[10] Cook, Patricia 'Albany Ward and the Development of Cinema Exhibition in England" Film History Vol.20, No.3 Studio Systems (2008) p297

[11] Music Halls and Music Schools, The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular, Vol 24 No.489 (Nov 1st 1883)

[12] Barnes, John (1983) 'Pioneers of the British Film' Bishopsgate Press, London p71

screenings of films and to ensure that cinemas were in a suitable physical state to screen films safely. Before the Act, cinematic spaces were a- hoc and dangerous. The chemicals used for developing film were highly flammable and the process for projecting film required skill and sensitivity.[13] Such was the intensity of the entertainment market of the 1890s-1900s that the press rarely reported on the showing of a film unless there was a fire. One report suggests that during a screening in a large tent in Bliston, near Wolverhampton, a stampede took place after someone had seen a flash and had shouted 'fire!'[14] During the stampede, audience members pushed on the side of the tent, which caused the film to ignite and the tent to go up in flames. The initial flash was caused by the disconnection of the gas pipes, something the exhibitor regarded as a 'trifling incident'.[15]

Initially, regulation was not welcomed by the exhibitors, but it quickly became apparent that there was a financial benefit to creating a better environment that attracted a new audience. The development of cinemas by exhibitors, such as Albany Ward, was, in part, linked to technological developments of the late Victorian era, but also a response to the desire of an aspirational audience to have the choice to elevate oneself and to be with like-minded people.[16] The creation of a dedicated space to watch films, a 'picture house' or cinema, was a method used by some innovative exhibitors to bring a 'better class' of audience to the film screenings.[17] Robert James suggests that while early cinema-going appealed to people from a broad social and economic spectrum,[18] the types of film people went to see, and where they went to see the film, was determined by, and also helped to further determine, their social and cultural identity.[19] Exhibitors were quick to understand their market and the films that would be well received and popular with the general public. The exhibitors, such as Charles Warwick and R. W. Paul, understood what the audience would choose to respond to. James adds: "Film trade personnel expected audience tastes to be predicated on social position, and habitually graded audiences according to their social status,

[13] Ibid Barnes p74

[14] Ibid Barnes p72

[15] Ibid Barnes, p73

[16] Cook, Patricia 'Albany Ward and the Development of Cinema Exhibition in England" Film History Vol.20, No.3 Studio Systems (2008) p298

[17] Low, Rachel (1949) "The History of British Film Volume Two: 1906-1914" George Allen & Urwin London p16

[18] James, Robert, "Cinema-going in a port town, 1914–1951: film booking patterns at the Queens Cinema, Portsmouth" Urban History , Vol. 40, No. 2 (May 2013), p316

[19] Ibid James p316

recommending films for particular social groups, often in specific locations."[20] 'This strategy of social stratification is exemplified in Rachel Low's description of an early cinema as "Red Plush and marble, ferns in brass pots and plenty of electric light were guaranteed to give that "cosy air of refinement." This provides an example of physical design and the use of space to promote class structures, which are embedded and aspirational. Here we see cinema was used to create a symbiotic audience, a trope which resonates throughout cinematic history. The approach of demarking audiences and providing a platform for audiences, for groups of likeminded people to gather, guided the development of cinematic practice. In the early cinematic period (1895-1909), we see the entrepreneurs and technologists responding to the audience's needs by creating an environment by which one could congregate with people whom one felt akin to. It could be argued the new cinema space reproduced social hierarchies or alternatively provided a space in which a sector of society felt comfortable congregating in.

2.2.2 The Golden Age of Cinema: lowering cost and increasing participation (1914 - 1946)

By 1914, Albany Ward, the entrepreneur and protege of Brit Acres, was the owner of the largest cinema circuit in England.[21] Ward's cinema chain developed in the Southwest of England, primarily in seaside towns and tourist destinations, which were opened up by the advent of Victorian railway investment.[22] In 1934, in Britain, 8.5 million people visited the cinema each week (out of a population of 46 million).[23] As a premier form of entertainment, the appeal of watching films at the cinema endured and grew throughout the interwar period, the advent of the Second World War and into post-war Britain.[24] With a nation

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[20] Ibid James p316

[21] Cook, Patricia 'Albany Ward and the Development of Cinema Exhibition in England" Film History Vol.20, No.3 Studio Systems (2008) p294

[22] Ibid Cook p294

[23] In 1949 Mark Abrams published an article called the British Cinema Audience. In the paper, Abrams analyses the cinema going audience of the 1940s based on a study published in 1947 by Hulton Publications. The survey sample consisted of 10,200 people all over the age of 16 who accurately reflected the adult population in terms of age, sex, economic status, religion, size of community and marital status. The survey found that in 1947, 44% of the British people went to the cinema regularly, 43% went occasionally and 13% never went to the cinema. The survey did not see much difference in the cinema habits of men and women, but it did see a sizable difference in economic and class terms; working class and the young marries provide far and away the greater part of money going into the box office.

[24] Watching or playing sports was another popular communal pastime during this period. However, this form of entertainment was heavily gendered towards men, seen as a male pastime rather than an activity for the whole community.

clearly defined by class and work, leisure time during the pre-war and war years were also defined, with spaces for entertainment organised around age and gender. Sport was a largely male affair, while dance halls and cinemas allowed women a place to congregate outside of the home environment, a dynamic which provides early examples of a temporary event-based or situational community.[25] Christine Geraghty describes the cinema as 'a social space where people could get together'.[26] She adds, 'In the 1920 and 1930s, cinema became strongly identified with forms of mass entertainment that were associated with the social and cultural consequences of modern industrialisation.'[27] Going to the pictures, therefore, became a regular event, which fitted into the leisure spaces left by the organisation of the working day.[28] When World War Two broke out in 1939, entertainment and leisure activities in Britain came to grinding halt, as the focus of the nation shifted from having a good time to coming together to fight the enemy. Moreover, congregating in public areas was considered dangerous, so many sports events were cancelled and other venues, such as music halls and dance halls, were closed at the outset of the war. All cinemas in Britain were forced to close at the outbreak of war, in September 1939. Many reopened just weeks later, although most shows were matinées or early evening performances.[29] By the mid-1940s, cinema attendance reached its peak of 30 million weekly attendees.[30] Cinema-going during the war period is described by James Chapman as an 'ingrained social habit', one that had a profound cultural and ideological significance for the British people.[31] The cinema, Chapman argues, is conducted in a public space, whereas the consumption of other media, such as newspapers and radio, in the 1940s took place within the private sphere.[32] 1946 is regarded as the peak year for cinema in Britain, when over 31 million people visited the cinema each week.[33] Here, we see cinema not just as a place to watch

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[25] Chapman, James (1998) The British at War, Cinema State and Propaganda 1939-1945, IB Tauris, London and New York p2

[26] Geraghty, Christine (2000) British Cinema in the fifties; Gender, Genre and the 'New Look' Routledge, London & New York p1

[27] Ibid Geraghty p1

[28] Ibid Geraghty p2

[29] http://www.iwm.org.uk/history/popular-pastimes-and-entertainment-in-the-second-world-war (accessed 16th January 2017)

[30] Chapman, James (1998) The British at War, Cinema State and Propaganda 1939-1945, IB Tauris London and New York p2
[31] Ibid Chapman p3

[32] Street, Sarah (1997) "British National Cinema" Routledge, London and New York p12

[33] Cinema attendances peaked in Britain in 1946, when a third of the adult population attended more than one of the 4,700 cinemas in operation each week. Across the year there were 1.635 billion cinema visits, the highest amount on record.
:https://www.scienceandmediamuseum.org.uk/objects-and-stories/very-short-history-of-cinema - accessed November 2021

films, but also a place of collective wellbeing and support. This is particularly relevant when the domestic sphere was fragmented by the vagaries of war. This period provides an early indication of how the cinema space can be used as a place not just for watching film, but also a place for community gatherings.

2.2.3 The initial decline: urban change and car culture (1947 - 1984)

The filmic culture in America and Britain shared similar traits with each other up until the Second World War. Cinema during this period was dominated by Hollywood and vertical integration, which gave film studios considerable power.[34] The Hollywood studio system (the production, distribution, and exhibition all managed by the same company) flourished until 1948, when the Paramount decision forced the divestiture of theatre chains and the abandonment of several vertical practices which led to the closure of cinemas and the end of the Hollywood Golden Age.[35]

The number of cinemas in operation began to decline after 1946, as cinemas, like many buildings in towns and cities throughout Britain, were affected by bombing. It is estimated that, in London, 116,000 buildings were damaged beyond repair by more than 20,000 bombs dropped on the Capital.[36] Other British cities that suffered extensive bomb damage included Coventry, Liverpool, Portsmouth and Glasgow. At the end of the war, it was estimated 750,000 new homes were needed.

Britain was much slower to recover from the Second World War than America. This was partly due to the scale of destruction and the fragility of the economy. Alec Cairncross writer:

> "Episodes such as the coal and convertibility crisis of 1947, devaluation in 1949 and rearmament in 1951, had not only a dramatic interest of their own but lit up the dilemmas of policy, the underlying economic trends and pressures and the problems

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[34] Hannsen, F. Andrew "Vertical Integration during the Hollywood Studio Era" The Journal of Law & Economics, Vol. 53, No. 3 (August 2010), pp. 519-543

[35] On the 4th May 1948 the Supreme Court in America ruled in _United States v. Paramount_ that film studios had violated antitrust laws. The major studios had a near-monopoly on the movie business in the United States. Each studio had exclusive contracts with actors and directors; owned the theatres where their movies played; worked with each other to control how movies were shown in independent theatres; and, in some cases, owned the companies that processed the film.

[36] https://www.britishlegion.org.uk/stories/why-the-world-needed-rebuilding-after-ww2 - Accessed November 2021

these posed for economic management in a country unaware that it was virtually bankrupt."[37]

The rebuilding of British urban spaces was slow, complicated, in part, by the extent of the devastation and the capacity in which to rebuild. However, Peter Shapley argues that, once in motion, the regeneration of public space and the choice of modern public sculpture and modern architecture reflected "the new ambitions of the technocrats, shared by councillors and promoted by developers, whilst reflecting the same civic pride of the late Victorian period, the same self-belief in the status of their city".[38] Urban regeneration after the Second World War echoed the grand vision of the Victorian era, with ambition to build beautiful and functional places for residents to live. These spaces emphasised the ideals of community: a collection of people with shared ideals and goals A core part of the post-war redevelopment landscape was the New Towns housing strategy.[39] The New Towns Act formalised the creation of suburbs in Britain. The suburbs brought a new approach to status and respectability, which produced a different type of community, Residents where motivated by opportunity rather than established affluence. Owning a larger, more spacious house and a nice car reflected a status that was one of choice and not one of birth, as had been the case before 1939.[40] Between 1945 and 1955, one million new homes were built, many of which were in new towns, such as Stevenage.[48] The first post-war suburb in London was called Thamesmead.[41] This new community of 60,000 people from inner London would come under the authority of the Greater London Council and the two local boroughs, Greenwich and Bexley. The area was developed using a number of core principles: traffic would be separated from housing, the architecture would be based on an industrial system (with lakes, waterways, and walkways to give a distinctive character) and higher standards would be set for public housing.

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[37] Cairncross, Alec (1985) Years of Recovery Economic Policy 1945-51 Routledge , London p XII [45] Shapley, Peter "Civic pride and redevelopment in the post-war British city Urban History" , Vol. 39, No. 2 (May 2012), p311

[38] Shapley, Peter "Civic pride and redevelopment in the post-war British city Urban History" , Vol. 39, No. 2 (May 2012), p311

[39] Mark Clapson suggests that the New Towns Act 1946 was "a keystone in the reconstruction of the so-called 'New Jerusalem' promised by the Labour Party in its general election campaign towards the end of the war."# The idea was to dispersed section of the populations of bombed-out and overcrowded cities into planned new communities. Following the New Towns Act, over 20 new towns were built in Britain, most of them in England. Clapson suggests "among the most famous of them were the eight London new towns: Basildon; Bracknell; Crawley; Hatfield; Harlow; Hemel Hempstead; Stevenage and Welwyn Garden City. All were designated before 1950 and most were intended to eventually house at least 50,000 people."

[40] Hill, John (1986) Sex, Class and Realism: British Cinema 1956- 1963 Bloomsbury Publishing (London) p35

[41] Higgins, P,M "Thamesmead: Dream To Reality" British Medical Journal (Clinical Research Edition), Vol. 285, No. 6354 (Nov. 27, 1982), pp. 1564-1566

The Second World War changed the urban landscape in Britain as a large number of cities and towns were changed irrevocably, which changed the way in which audiences interacted and engaged with cinema. As Klaus Nathaus reflects, "As suburban audiences had to travel to the centrally located theatres the first show started too early for many of them, while attending the second show meant they got back home very late at night"[42] The distance that audiences had to travel to go to the cinema and the development of the domestic sphere are two possible reasons for the decline in cinema attendance in the post-war period. John Hill argues that there can be little doubt that the key to understanding Britain in the 1950s resides in the idea of 'affluence', or a nation moving from post-war austerity and rationing towards credit purchases on the never-never'.[43] The adoption of credit created a culture of choice, as audiences and consumers were not limited by their actual means, but rather the opportunities which arose from the credit culture. This allowed for a culture of aspiration which was not subject to traditional class or finance restraints.

The suburban boom in America was cemented by a similar agenda, that of aspiration to have more space and live the ideal life.[44] The 'American Dream' was, in part, facilitated by the mass production of cars.[45] The car boom led to the development of the drive-in cinema. The first drive-in was established in Camden, New Jersey, on 6th June 1933, predating the Second World War and the development of the suburbs. The founder of the Camden Drive-in was Richard M. Hollingshead Jr., (then a car parts salesman) who had an acute understanding as to what the aspirational audience of the 1930s wanted: "Food, Clothing, Autos and Movies."[46] Michael Kingore suggests the perfect post war marriage of Hollywood glamour and a nation enamoured by automobiles made the drive-ins an almost guaranteed

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[42] Nathaus, Klaus "All Dressed Up and Nowhere to Go" Space and Conventions of Youth in 1950s Britain" Geschichte und Gesellschaft, 41 Jarg,H 1. Gegenwelten (January –March 2015) p49

[43] Hill, John (1986) Sex, Class and Realism: British Cinema 1956- 1963 Bloomsbury Publishing (London) p35

[44] In America, suburbanism was defined around the model of an ideal home and lifestyle as promoted by developers such as Levitt & Sons who built the first American Suburb in 1947.. Levittown was publicisedas a place for the family, with each house having a front and back garden and a place to park the newly acquired car. The development of the railroads made rural land more accessible and appealing to builders including the Levitt Family for whom Levittown is named.

[45] The phrase 'American Dream' was coined by James Truslow Adams in 1931 in his book T*he Epic of America*. https://daily.jstor.org/james-truslow-adams-dreaming-american-dream/ - accessed June 2020

[46] As with the early pioneers of cinema, Hollinghead's design developed through a process of trial and error. Hollingshead experiment created and patented a system to allow the front wheels of a car to tilt slightly, this would allow an unobstructed view of the screen. He also experimented with sound and the position of speakers to provide the best audio quality. Noise pollution was an initial problem as was finding prints to show. Owners had to travel miles to collect a version of the print to screen and were often limited to 'B' movie titles which were less profitable to the large production houses.

success.[47] Located on popular highways, drive-ins were easy to get to and were more relaxed than the more formal cinemas in towns. These drive-ins occupied extensive space and provided an alternative to the traditional cinematic environment. The drive-ins provided a less formal atmosphere which allowed for people to connect and for temporary communities to evolve. Furthermore, this environment blended well for the troops returning from the Second World War, who had become familiar with watching films and listening to music to keep up morale on the battlefield, and were keen to enjoy similar less formal entertainment at home.[48] Kingore suggests "Back then everything lined up in favour of drive-ins. The rapidly growing population increasingly moved to the suburbs, away from traditional downtown theatres, where parking was difficult or expensive."[49] Elizabeth McKeon and Linda Everett described how the drive-ins fitted well with the 'Car Culture' of the post-war period.[50] McKeon and Everett suggest that while most roadside building types evolved gradually, 'the drive-in was deliberately invented took shape from a single prototype and, except for some technical improvements and minor variations in plan, construction and decoration have remained basically unchanged in form and function.

From the outset, the drive-ins became more than just a place to watch films. Knowing the profit that could be made from hungry families, playgrounds were built for children, while live bands entertained adults and food was available to purchase.[51] The intention was to keep people onsite for as long as possible, with some drive-in cinemas opening several hours before the film began. The drive-ins pioneered the pre-screenings experience and the cinema as a community space. McKeon and Everett write "Never mind that the movies were second runs as was the sound quality - it was the 'drive-in experience' that kept movie goers coming back for more and more."[52] Exhibitors like Hollinshghead created an appetite for drive-ins that were adapted by its audience and, therefore, were guaranteed a longevity

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[47] Kilgore, Michael (2019)" Drive ins of Route 66- Yesterday and Today" Neon Jukebox; Illustrated edition

[48] This is also discussed by Don and Janet Saunders who write :"During the World War (WW2), it was common for Hollywood to donate prints of movies to the Armed Forces as part of its contribution to the war time effort. These films, often shown outdoors , allowed personnel to unwind and relax. After the war, veterans of the Armed Forces who were accustomed to watching films in a less formal element That provided by traditional movie palaces wanted to interact with the film. They like to ;whoop and drink and cut loose, a type of behaviour which was not allowed at conventional indoor theatres."- Don and Janet (2013) "The American Drive-In Movie Theatre"

[49] Kilgore, Michael (2019)" Drive ins of Route 66- Yesterday and Today" Neon Jukebox; Illustrated edition

[50] McKeon, Elizabeth and Everett, Linda (1998) Cinema Under the Stars: America's Love Affair with Drive-In Movie Theatres p23

[51] McKeon, Cinema Under the Stars: America's Love Affair with Drive-In Movie Theatres p24

[52] Ibid McKeon, p34

for as long as it adapted to the audience's desires.

The drive-in culture did not flourish in Britain. The adoption of the car was comparatively late, with mass car ownership not taking place until the early 1960s.[53] Simon Gunn notes that in terms of automobility, "Britain in the early 1950s represented something of a paradox".[54] On one hand, Britain was one of the oldest motoring cultures and the world's leading car exporter; on the other, in associated infrastructure, particularly roads, it lagged well behind. Britain had a higher number of vehicles per mile than any other developed country in the 1950s, and fewer miles of motorway. Britain's first official stretch of motorway, the Preston by-pass, was opened by the Conservative Prime Minister Harold Macmillan in December 1958.[55]

The adoption of the car in America had a similar effect to Britain. Gunn cites the sociologist John Urry, who describes the car as a 'transformative agent', which acted to reshape not only the industrial economy and the physical layout of cities, but also the 'quotidian patterns and rhythms of modern urban existence.'[56] The car became an extension of the domestic sphere by encouraging greater mobility and choice, and, in turn, avoiding interaction with other people not known to the family unit. In the aftermath of the Second World War, comfort and the development of the domestic sphere became paramount to British society. The technological domestic advances (the development of home appliances) made the home (the private space) more desirable than the public space. Sam Manning argues that "the simultaneous expansion of television services brought moving images into millions of households", suggesting that it is difficult to argue with Joe Moran's assertion that cinemas 'began seriously to decline in the late 1950s as their mainly working-class audiences acquired TVs on a large scale'.[57] It is therefore of little surprise that UK cinema attendance fell from 1.6 billion in 1946 to 1.2 billion in 1955 and then to 327 million attendances in 1965.[58]

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[53] Gunn, Simon "People and the car: the expansion of automobility in urban Britain, c.1955–70" Social History, Vol. 38, No. 2 (May 2013), pp. 220-237

[54] Ibid Gunn, p223

[55] Ibid Gunn, p223

[56] Ibid Gunn, p. 221

[57] Manning, Sam (2020) Cinemas and Cinema-Going in the United Kingdom: Decades of Decline, 1945–65, University of London Press, Institute of Historical Research p51

[58] Ibid Manning p51

2.2.4 The birth of the multiplex (1985)

From the 1950s onwards, film-watching was dominated by the domestic sphere, a trend that continued until the birth of the multiplex in the mid-1980s. The multiplex offered increased choice of films, state-of-the-art technology, copious free parking space and a vast array of snacks on sale, all imported from the American model. The multiplex made an immediate impact on the stagnant British market with the launch of The Point in Milton Keynes in 1985.[59] The multiplex provided a new level of audience 'choice', which was manifested in spaces to eat and socialise with friends. The audience could arrive at the shopping centre mid-afternoon, having parked in the free carpark, could shop for a few hours, eat food and then catch a movie – all under one roof. The variety of choice the multiplex offered could not be matched by the single screen cinemas.[60] Furthermore, the multiplex continued the method adopted by drive-in exhibitors of creating the space for pre-screening activities. At the drive-in, this may have included playing games or listening to live music.[68] In the 1980s, the pre-screening activity was shopping. In his paper "The K- Mart Audience at the Mall Movies", William Paul argues that the multiplex saved the American film industry,[61] allowing for a change in the distribution methods of the film producers. The multiplex changed the way in which cinema spaces were defined: cinemas began to be defined by the number of screens located at each site. This move starts to fragment the original cinema experience of an optimal space, new and interesting films and audiences which share the same cultural capital. Janet Harbord argues that this model of the elite respectable cinema space is replaced by a large consumer-led narrative. [62] Harbord argues multiplexes do not offer the audience choice, but rather deliberately limits the access to more unique genres. Harbord argues in support of art house and independent cinemas, who she believes add a greater context by providing 'intertextual references' to films.[63] She notes, 'No longer a singular object, the mainstream film is produced as a component of a chain of associated

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[59] https://www.theguardian.com/film/2010/nov/11/multiplex-cinemas-the-point-milton-keynes- Accessed 29th August 2017

[60] Low, Rachel (1949) "The History of British Film Volume Two: 1906-1914" George Allen & Urwin, London p16

[61] Paul, William "The K-Mart Audience at the Mall Movies" Film History, Vol. 6, No. 4, Audiences and Fans (Winter, 1994), pp.487-501

[62] Harbord, Janet (2002) "Film Cultures" Sage Publications London p42

[63] Ibid Harbord p42

products.'[64] The apparently neutral decision of choosing what films we see is conditional upon where we recognise ourselves in the profile of magazines, newspapers and television.[65] Watching a romantic comedy is much more about our sense of identity, rather than a clear choice to watch one type of film over another. Moreover, whether we decide to see a film at a suburban multiplex, or an inner-city art screening, is to Harbord just as important as the film we watch. Janet Harbord's contention is that multiplex cinema creates a monocultural film environment, bereft of variety or individualism. This suggests that multiplexes do little to foster communities, which is in contrast to the drive-in culture that emerged decades earlier.

In 2003, the British Film Institute and the UK Film Council commissioned a study to measure and assess the impact of local cinemas on the social, cultural and economic life of their communities.[66] The report found that there had been an explosion of multiplexes in the period between 1995 and 2004, and, conversely, a decline in the traditional cinema or auditorium spaces.[67] The authors state: 'many smaller communities or areas with low population densities have therefore lost access to cinema through the closure of so many traditional sites and the inability/reluctance of larger operators to take their place.'[68] The dissolution of the localised single-screen model resonated with Phil Hubbard's suggestion that multiplex cinemas are frequented predominantly by 'consumer groups seeking a leisure experience that is predictable and riskless.'[69] Hubbard suggests that audiences continue to frequent city-centre and suburban cinemas because they prefer the less 'predictable ambience of urban' leisure.'[70]

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[64] Ibid Harbord p48

[65] Ibid Harbord p3

[66] The study focused on five venues# varying from the The Savoy in Penzance, Cornwall (popluation 21,000)# to the Rio in Dalston, London (population 9 million).# The report notes that local cinemas "foster a sense of place and provide a focus for the local community, whilst enhancing local cultural life through the provision of mainstream and/or specialised film." https://www2.bfi.org.uk/sites/bfi.org.uk/files/downloads/uk-film-council-impact-of-local-cinema.pdf p3 accessed December 2021

[67] This has resulted in an increase of 232% between 1995-2004 of multiplexes from 730 to 2426 and a decline of 28% in traditional cinemas from 1275 to 916 in the same period. https://www2.bfi.org.uk/sites/bfi.org.uk/files/downloads/uk-film-council-impact-of-local-cinema.pdf

[68] https://www2.bfi.org.uk/sites/bfi.org.uk/files/downloads/uk-film-council-impact-of-local-cinema.pdf p3 accessed December 2021

[69] Phil Hubbard is a Professor of Urban Studies at King's College London: https://www.kcl.ac.uk/people/philip-hubbard

[70] Hubbard, Phil "Screen-shifting: consumption, `riskless risks and the changing geographies of cinema" Environment and Planning A 2002, volume 34, p1239

The generic nature of the multiplexes, therefore, offers a space which could be seen as intentionally bland and uniform, in contrast to the individualism of the art-house cinema. Furthermore, the emphasis for multiplexes is on the screen and the cinematic experience; the multiplex environment is therefore a more tenable platform for cinephiles than audiences who wish to interact with the film and the space in which the film is being screened.

The argument for multiplexes as a community and collective space is conveyed by Gira Viswanath, who documents the birth of the multiplexes in India.[71] Here, the multiplex provided both choice and respectability by offering a new space for Indians Middle Class to appropriate.[72] The emphasis on choice and respectability provides an interesting comparison with the music hall and earliest cinema space. Here we see the importance of entertainment choice that distinguishes one person from another based-on class. Viswanath notes: "Of all the reasons to vote for the multiplex, the hygienic environment they provided featured as the top-most."[73] The notion of the right to clean public spaces is strong among the middle classes.[74] Furthermore: "visibility in a multiplex, some felt, also contributed to increased self-esteem as these structures are the new status symbols."[75] This highly commercialised environment created a valorisation of particular kinds of lifestyles and commodity fetishism.[76] This account contrasts with Harbord's view that multiplexes are bereft of stimulation and choice, and instead provides evidence of the cultural nuances that are relevant when considering choice. Moreover, in following the narrative of Pierre Bourdieu, one could argue that the success of the Indian Multiplex environment may be aligned to commonalities in cultural capital: the ways in which people connect with other based on their knowledge, access and interpretation of arts and arts activities. Cultural capital is the tool that individuals use to respond to everyday situations that involve making choices about the response to culture, including whether to go to a multiplex screening.

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[71] Viswanath, Gita "The Multiplex: Crowd, Audience and the Genre Film" Economic and Political Weekly, Aug. 11-17, 2007, Vol. 42, No.32 p3289-3291+3293-3294

[72] Ibid Viswanath p3298

[73] Ibid Viswanath p3298

[74] Ibid Viswanath p3298

[75] Ibid Viswanath p3298

[76] Ibid Viswanath p3291

2.2.5 From multi to micro: non-traditional cinema spaces (1980s - 2022)

Non-traditional cinema spaces provide a different type of engagement and a new language to cinematic screenings. 'Non-traditional cinematic space' describes almost all screenings that do not take place in a traditional auditorium space: the cinema; the term recognises that screenings that happen outdoors and in pop-up temporary locations are different from traditional auditorium spaces and so is a useful tool in delineating the two vastly different screening environments. Emma Pett also uses the terms 'non-traditional cinema exhibition' and 'non-theatrical rural space' to convey that cinema is not defined to any particular space-related restraint.[77] Here, Pett suggests that cinema is about community over commercialism, and provides examples as to the value of the non-auditorium space to bring together local communities.[78] This is described as appropriating hyper-local spaces for community good. Many of the example that Pett cites are not commercially viable, rather are nuanced to support smaller groups. The movement towards creating a space and place for viewing 'non-mainstream' films is explored by Donna de Ville, who also refers to the term 'microcinema'.[79] De Ville was an artist who worked with 'Total Mobile Home microCINEMA founders Rebecca Barten and David Sherman. De Ville cites the 'Total Mobile Home microCINEMA founders Rebecca Barten and David Sherman coined the term in 'micro cinema 1993, it has, in their words, "come to be a catchall phrase for both 'independent' and quasi-independent practices." Barten and Sherman describe how whilst living in an apartment with an absentee landlord they bought wood and made benches in their basement enough to sit 30 people. They then made a calendar of events, which was copied and distributed in the Mission neighbourhood in San Francisco [80]

Along with highlighting the connectivity and personability of the microcinema movement, De Ville describes the ephemeral nature of the cinemas, which would pop up in her neighbourhood for short periods of time, only to disappear as the program dictates. This experience mirrors the temporary nature of outdoor film screenings. Microcinemas, De Ville

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[77] Pett, Emma (2021) "Experiencing cinema: participatory cultures, immersive media and the experience economy" Bloomsbury p114

[78] Pett provides examples of participatory screenings at the University of Aberystwyth and *Alice in Wonderland'* at Carlton Hall, through to the more low key screenings on the Cine North program for the BFI Love season which took place in village halls in Yorkshire. : Pett, Emma (2018) "Beyond the Metropolis: Immersive Cinema in a Rural Context" in 'Live Cinema, Culture, Economies and Aesthetics'. Bloomsbury London p 36

[79] De Ville, Donna (The Persistent Transience of Microcinema (in the United States and Canada) Film History, Vol. 27, No. 3 (2015), p107

[80] Ibid De Ville p107

suggests, are more than non-commercial screening operations, they are also informal local and global networks of alternative exhibition and distribution. These microcinemas are personal, and foster community and a connection to place, which De Ville argues large multiplexes and the traditional exhibition spaces cannot achieve. Furthermore, these events create a space for counterculture and for challenging how films should be screened in a cinematic environment. De Ville and artists before her created a culture that considered the cinematic space as an extension to the cinematic film. In 1970, Gene Youngblood published a book called *Expanded Cinema*, which presented an argument against the traditional normative view that films should be screened in cinemas.[81] Youngblood argues that cinema could no longer easily be defined as a commodity, characterised by a screen and a line around the block.[82] He wrote:

> When we say expanded cinema, we actually mean expanded consciousness. Expanded cinema does not mean computer films, video phosphors, atomic light, or spherical projections. Expanded cinema isn't a movie at all: like life it's a process of becoming, man's ongoing historical drive to manifest his consciousness outside of his mind, in front of his eyes.[83]

Youngblood suggested that 'Cinema is a way of perceiving the world', which Noë Goldwasser, who reviewed his book, suggests is a 'road map for the future'.[84] Youngblood saw cinema in futuristic terms, pushing the boundaries of where films were shown and what a 'film' was. Youngblood's work creates a symbiotic relationship between community, space and experience, and in doing so elevates the potential of film over and above the, passive relationship which is found in traditional forms of cinema. Rather, the 'experience' of film is fused with the experience of going to the cinema and the experience of the individual. This counterculture view of cinema pushes the narrative of Richard Maltby and the New Cinema History. New Cinema History reconsiders how the audiences use cinematic spaces; the approach is less concerned with the cinephile experience, instead focusing on the cinema

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[81] Youngblood, Gene (1970) Expanded Cinema: Fiftieth Anniversary Edition - Meaning Systems (Paperback) Fordham University Press

[82] Ibid Youngblood p41

[83] Ibid Youngblood p41

[84] Goldwasser, Noe "Reviewed Work(s): Expanded Cinema by Gene Youngblood and Buckminster Fuller" Cinéaste , fall 1970, Vol. 4, No. 2 (fall 1970)

as a community and cultural space." [85] Moreover, the New Cinema History narrative thesis asserts that cinema is a social and cultural exchange.[86] Cinema, within this context, is not just about watching film, but rather about a communal activity which involves film. This description resonates with the use of the cinema spaces in different contexts. During the Second World War, the cinema was used as both a safe meeting space and a place for disseminating information. When war broke out in 1939, entertainment and leisure activities in Britain came to halt, as the collective focus turned towards the war effort. All cinemas in Britain were forced to close at the outbreak of war in September 1939 - though many quickly reopened - as it was determined by the Ministry of Information that the cinemas could play a useful role in raising morale.[87] The Ministry of Information funded many films during this period, including films produced by Ealing Studios, that provided an important part in the war effort, by exemplifying the war spirit. *Went the Day Well?* (1942) talks of rousing and sometimes alarming warnings of the threat of invasion. The *Next of Kin,* (1942) follows the risks of careless talk, and *The Bells Go Down* and *San Demetrio London* (both 1943) share ideas of inspiring celebrations of collective courage.[88] Cinema, within this context, was not just about watching films, but rather about a shared activity which involved film and was designed specifically to embolden community spirit.

2.2.6 The rise of the immersive experience 2007 - 2022

Historically the economic power behind cinema has been through vertical integration, the method by which the Hollywood Studios owned all the elements of production, distribution and exhibition of films.[89] This created substantial power and a means of controlling the global cinematic narrative. The immersive experience culture seeks to dislodge this approach by reinterpreting and reimagining films, drawing upon and interpreting the filmic text by involving the audience in the production. The studios lose power as the audience is

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[85] Maltby, Richard, Bilteryst, Daniel and Meer Phillipe (eds) (2011) "Explorations in New Cinema History- approaches and case studies." Willey Blackwell, West Sussex p3

[86] Maltby, Richard, Bilteryst, Daniel and Meer Phillipe (eds) (2011) "Explorations in New Cinema History- approaches and case studies." Willey Blackwell, West Sussex p10

[87] http://www.iwm.org.uk/history/popular-pastimes-and-entertainment-in-the-second-world-war (accessed 16th January 2017)

[88] http://www.screenonline.org.uk/film/id/456030/ (accessed 1st July 2017)

[89] Hansen, F. Andrew "Vertical Integration during the Hollywood Studio Era" The Journal of Law & Economics , Vol. 53, No. 3 (August 2010), pp. 519-543

given the tools and ability to interpret the text; the audience become part of the narrative and are active, rather than a passive spectator. Secret Cinema founder Fabien Riggall is a key player in the development of the experiential, immersive cinema genre. Rigall's cinematic vision created a new relationship between community, space and experience.[90] Here, the space of the cinema is redefined, the auditorium becomes a prison cell, theme park or high school, depending on the narrative of the film; known tropes within the films become the connection points from which the audience can engage. For example, walking in a chain gang around a prison cell in the Secret Cinema adaptation of *Shawshank Redemption* (Dir Frank Darabont), [91] provided an uncomfortable yet immersive approach to the film or being transported to another world in Secret Cinema presents Star Wars the Empire Strikes Back.[92] Riggall created Secret Cinema in 2007. In 2013, the journalist Corin Douieb wrote a piece for *Aesthetica Magazine* that encapsulates the energy behind Secret Cinema, citing that Riggall "meticulously cornered this market, perfectly crafting a mixture of a well-orchestrated event with a masterful cloak of mystery.[93]

Sarah Atkinson & Helen W. Kennedy write extensively about Secret Cinema, interrogating the value of the immersive experience to the audience. The Secret Cinema events can take hours, as the audiences travel through worlds and scenes in advance of watching the film itself. In addition to this, the audience is encouraged to buy specific merchandise to be worn as part of the cinema attendance.[94] The introduction to the experience includes a prolonged engagement in online spaces where participants receive instructions on how to prepare for the event – which persona they would adopt, what clothes they needed to wear and what props were required to ensure a full and meaningful engagement on the night of the event.[95] The elaborate instructions, sent to all the audience members who attended Secret Cinema screenings, provided a codified means to connect with others during the

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[90] The Secret Cinema biography describes how the company started: "Created in 2007 by Fabien Riggall, Secret Cinema has taken the world of immersive experiences by storm. From grassroots film screenings in abandoned London buildings, to large-scale productions in some of the most spectacular spaces worldwide, we create 360° participatory Secret Worlds where the boundaries between performer and audience, set and reality are constantly shifting." https://www.secretcinema.org/history

[91] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J4rJ3Y6P4h0 - accessed July 2023

[92] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a7bouwv3YME- accessed July 2023

[93] https://aestheticamagazine.com/interview-with-the-director-of-secret-cinema-fabien-riggall/ - accessed September 2022

[94] Atkinson, Sarah and Kennedy, Helen "From conflict to revolution: The secret aesthetic, narrative spatialisation and audience experience in immersive cinema design" Participations Volume 13, Issue 1 May 2016 p256

[95] Ibid Atkinson p256

experience.

Sending pre-event emails, texts and messages to the audience ensures the audience is fully immersed in the film narrative before the event begins. Pre-screening activities, either directed (ie actions suggested by the producers of the screening) or personalised (rituals including baking food and preparing snacks) make the experience of a screening in a non-traditional cinematic environment longer. The 'length' here is determined both in time (getting to the screening early and setting up a base from which to watch the film) and in commitment before the event. (the preritual activities) [96] Atkinson and Kennedy's work considers how the cinematic experience has expanded both in terms of what is shown in traditional auditorium spaces (Live Cinema) and in non-traditional cinema space (experiential cinema).[97] Atkinson and Kennedy describe the level of interaction between the audience and the film in this context as either augmented (based on the location of the screening relevant to the filmic text and elements of non-interactive performance) or participatory (direct involvement from the audience).[98] Augmented performance could include auditory modes of augmentation, such as live scored performance. Participatory performances might utilise sing-along (which has become its own genre with some commercial success) or cult quote-along. Atkinson and Kennedy charter an expanded cinema, which is not necessarily expanded in terms of how the physical space is used (though the speciality of cinema is discussed), but the expansion of the experience: how a film becomes the catalyst for a larger immersive experience.

The 'immersive experiences' grew in popularity in a post-pandemic landscape. These 'experiences' have materialised both as immersive art shows and immersive 'theatre' shows, based on popular television shows or films. The premise of the film and television immersive experiences allows the audience to engage with the narrative by completing tasks and talking to characters while walking through a set. The experience is timed and each group receives significant cues showing them where to go and how to interact with the actors. The website for the Peaky Blinders Immersive Experience (Figure 1) provides a pre-

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[96] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vd9ip-tEBZA - accessed June 2022

[97] Atkinson, Sarah & Kennedy Helen W. "Introduction – Inside-the-scenes: The rise of experiential cinema" Participations Volume 13, Issue 1 May 2016 p139

[98] Ibid Atkinson p139

event experience, not dissimilar to the 'etiquette' of The Rocky Horror Picture Show.[99] (Figure 3)

Figure 1: Explanation of Peaky Blinders

Figure 2: Rocky Horror Show Etiquette

It could be argued that the immersive experience embraces innovation, as it pushes the understanding of the filmic texts both in the minds of the producers and the audience. Patterns of the trope of the immersive experience are hard to define as the industry is in its infancy. Other types of screened based experience include interactive (augmented or participatory cinema) live cinema and cinema in non-traditional auditorium spaces. The variation of experiences available to the audiences demonstrates the needs to conduct further research in this area.

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[99] http://www.timewarp.org.uk/1virgins.htm - accessed November 2022

2.3. Audience engagement

2.3.1 The act of choosing

Choice is an important part of the consumer experience and is also a contributing factor to the decision to where and how to watch films. Michael Clarke suggests that making choices can be complex. Choice is a multi-layered term, interpreted to imply that, firstly, there is choice and, secondly, that humans have the capacity to make choices. It requires an ability to understand and process information: the ability to appraise the world and to understand how to make the right choices.[100] Clarke suggests that humans are not good at choice, although there is an innate suggestion that we are. Rather, the choices we make are standardised. The choices can be differentiated into three distinct categories: enjoyable choices, empowering choices and routinised choices. Clarke differentiates 'choice' from 'picking':[101] Choice requires a cognitive decision about the value, worth and benefit of a decision; picking is instead about deciding on something that is of lesser consequence. It would be reasonable to pick a sandwich from a variety of options, whereas you are likely to choose the house or car you buy or the university you may study at. The multiplex was the saviour of cinema in the 1980s because it offered choice. Cinemas such as The Point in Milton Keynes transformed the cinematic experience by providing the audiences with ten screens to choose from, all under one roof.[102] The multiplexes were easy to get to by car and provided ample parking and refreshments. In the first instance, this was not just a cinema revolution, but a choice revolution. However, perversely, the opening of multiplexes on the outskirts of town redistributed the customers who once attended the city centre and town centre cinemas, forcing them to close and, therefore, reducing choice. Furthermore, the multiplexes gradually moved away from providing the choice of screening different films at different times of the day, opting instead to show popular films in different auditoriums with staggered starting times.[103] The monopolising of the marketplace, which provides a coded and limited choice offer, enables scope for less mainstream exhibitors to screen film.

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[100] Clarke, Michael (2010) "Challenging Choices, Ideology, Consumerism and Policy" Policy Press, Bristol P2

[101] Ibid Clarke p13

[102] http://www.screenonline.org.uk/film/cinemas/sect6.html - accessed January 2022

[103] Whereas multiplexes initially offered a wide choice of mainstream films (most retained for several weeks), a trend from the late 1990s has sharply reduced the range of titles on offer as several prints of major attractions are shown in different auditoria with staggered starting times.

The mainstream makes place i.e. the pop-up and temporal, agile screening. In theory, this provides an opportunity, once more, for an increase in choice.

2.3.2 Accessing choice

The once flourishing cinema circuit in Britain has been in sharp decline since the end of the Second World War. Although this is partially though to be a result of the growing dominance of entertainment within the domestic sphere, it is also a consequence of the reduction in the number of traditional auditorium spaces that show films; this creates something of a chicken-and-egg scenario. Here was see a situation whereby the closure of cinemas and the lack of choice as to the films available at the cinema, divert audiences into watching films in the domestic sphere. The availability of films which can be watched at home provided the choice which was once available in the cinema.

Cognizant of the role of the cinema as more than just a place to show film, there have been several interventions to support regional cinema. In 2010, in partnership with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), UK Film Council launched the rural 'Cinema Pilot Scheme', a project designed to "give more audiences in rural areas the opportunity to see new releases as part of a public audience through a certain standard of presentation, it with high quality sound and pictures."[104] The scheme provided capital equipment to small rural organisations located in Shropshire, Wiltshire and North Yorkshire, funded by £1.2million of lottery profits.[105] Other hyper-local initiatives have been put in place by local authorities, such as Stratford Upon Avon who established Moving Pictures in 2007.[106]

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[104] https://www2.bfi.org.uk/film-industry/lottery-funding-distribution/closed-award-schemes/rural-cinema-pilot-scheme - accessed October 2021

[105] https://www2.bfi.org.uk/film-industry/lottery-funding-distribution/closed-award-schemes/rural-cinema-pilot-scheme- accessed October 2021

[106] The scheme, jointly supported by the District Council, Warwickshire County Council and Screen West Midlands, aimed at bringing an enjoyable cinematic experience to the local community This manifested in a "touring cinema facility that can run in village halls and community centres across the District." In a similar vein to the cinema pilot scheme the community venues could " hire the equipment and hold regular cinema screenings" A small administration fee was established, but it was recommended that communities set their own ticket prices enabling them to use the cinema screenings as a social or fundraising event. Whether in a fixed traditional auditorium space or a non-traditional pop-up space, both propositions require a producer who will manage and run the space or event. Cited from https://www.stratford.gov.uk/news/news.cfm/archive/223/item/344 accessed October 2021

In her essay "Beyond the Metropolis: Immersive Cinema in a Rural Context", Emma Pett presents the 'micro-cinema movement', low budget, non-commercial films in alternative rural venues, such as village halls, community centres and barns.[107] These informal screenings facilitate increased audience mobility and the decentralisation of the film text.[108] Rural environments suffer from lack of investment, poor services and, as suggested by Mike Rossman, a disproportionate increase in mental health issues.[109] Issues around rural access to the arts and culture was discussed in the Arts Council England Rural evidence and data review 2019.[110] The report also showed that people living in rural areas are typically more likely to engage in cultural activity than those in urban areas. Rural residents demonstrated higher engagement levels when it came to spending time doing a creative activity, attending an event or attending a museum or gallery, than their urban equivalents, although library engagement was greater among the latter. This pattern was apparent among both individual and repeat instances of engagement.[111] Pett points to several successful rural 'one-off enhanced screenings', which she categorises as rural participatory cinema, a genre that varies from the elaborate 'Mad Hatters Tea Party and screening of 'Alice in Wonderland' at Carlton Hall, through to the more low-key screenings on the Cine North program for the BFI Love season, which took place in village halls in Yorkshire.[112] The similarity, Pett notes, is that all these films are screened in non-traditional auditorium spaces. The lack of a purpose-built space does not hinder the screening of films, an observation which Pett demonstrates vividly. The process of projecting a film onto a wall or screen is easy, however, as the responsibility of who is going to set up the film, obtaining the rights to screen the film along with the other mechanics of viewing, is a result of the motivation of the exhibitor. From screenings in the garden or domestic sphere to large scale commercial outdoor screening events, it is the exhibitor who provides the access to choose.

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[107] Pett, Emma (2018) "Beyond the Metropolis: Immersive Cinema in a Rural Context" in 'Live Cinema, Culture, Economies and Aesthetics'. Bloomsbury London p36

[108] Ibid Pett p35

[109] https://www.agweek.com/opinion/4890210-How-culture-impacts-our-rural-communities- accessed May 2020

[110] According to the 2011 Census and based on the small-area classification, 17.6 percent of the population of England live in a rural area, while 82.4 percent of the population of England live in an urban area. Proportionately rural communities received slightly less money than urban areas, based on grants applied for. However, funding for touring art forms did increase across the review period 2015-2017. Cited from https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/Rural_Evidence_Review_2019_0.pdf

[111] https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/Rural_Evidence_Review_2019_0.pdf p8

[112] Pett, "Beyond the Metropolis: Immersive Cinema in a Rural Context" p36

2.4 Audience's Experiences

Understanding space is important within the non-traditional auditorium space, where the dimensions and constraints of the traditional auditorium environment do not exist. Within the non-traditional auditorium cannon, screenings can literally take place anywhere. This section draws upon writers and thinkers who consider the space of the cinema, and space more generally. This public space is inhabited physically and online. Some public spaces are defined, others are not. Where spaces are inhabited, a community develops. The second part of this section considers community and nostalgia: the ways in which people understand and interpret the spaces they inhabit.

2.4.1 Experience: Space & Place

Urban planners and human geographers have long considered how people relate to space and the relationships with it. In 2011, Jan Gehl re-published his book *Life Between Buildings*, which examines what people do and how people move within cities and built-up environments.[113] He argues that the way our cities are designed will impact how we move within them. If we see lots of people in a space, we are more likely to use or enter the space as the space becomes animated. Similarly, deserted spaces will stay deserted, unless they become animated by an activity or activities. For cities to work, they need places of animation, which is why the outdoor film screenings in the urban environment, in their temporary form, are important in this context. Temporary screening add flexibility which contrasts with permanent outdoor venues. The flexibility of an outdoor film screening space allows for a test and learn approach which engages local people in a non-committal way. It is easier to make changes to a temporary outdoor film screening space than a permanent outdoor film screening space.   The outdoor film screening has the capacity to both animate a space, enhance cultural value and, in doing so, bring people together. Lucy Hewlett suggests that, in the process of amassing and presenting large volumes of information about towns and cities, the planning profession generated a discourse about the nature of the city and its residents.[114]

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[113] Gehl, Jan (2011) 'Life Between Buildings" 6th edition. Island Press, Washington DC

[114] Lucy Hewitt is an Urban Studies Research Fellow at the University of Glasgow. Her article 'Ordering the urban body: professional planning in early twentieth century Britain' appears in Social History 41, 3, (2016), 304-318. This text was taken from her blog: http://socialhistoryblog.com/the-history-of-planning-and-the-politics-of-history-by-lucy-hewitt/ accessed 17th

In 'The Geographies of Responsibility', Massey speaks of the need to understand the relationship that humans have with space. This relationship mirrors the identities forged with other people as relations that constantly develop. Massey writes: "An understanding of the relational nature of space has been accompanied by arguments about the relational construction of identity and place."[115] Massey suggests a 'geography of identity', which is not a reflection on regionalism and the identity of people who live in a certain location, but rather about the spatiality of identity along intellectual lines. She writes: "It is in this context that we consider place as a meeting place and 'the inevitable hybridities of the constitution of anywhere."[116]

What her ideas point to is the way in which people inhabit different places, particularly in that an appropriation of the location may be temporary and not sustained. The individual may inhabit the place for a short time before moving onto another place. This experience of a temporary connection to a location can also be observed in outdoor film screenings, which provide tangible examples of where Massey's ideas on 'geography of identity' can be realised. Here, people come together to form an audience, to share an experience which is temporary, creating memories in a place. These 'accidental audiences' are, namely, passers-by who inhabit a place temporarily. The Greenwich and Docklands International Festival are such examples of places where accidental audiences form, though there are many other examples.

Massey refers to the place as 'communal shared place', one in which identities are developed and performed. This shared communal place is different from the domestic place (the home), which also has an identity, but is not shared. Outdoor film screenings provide an environment for the personal place and the communal place to merge. The merging of spheres is particularly prevalent when the audience personalises the communal place with items from the personal place. These material items may include rugs, blankets or cushions, which all add comfort to the experience of sharing a place. One could argue that the personalisation of space (customised by props and home comforts) reaffirms this

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[115] Massey, Doreen "Geographies of Responsibility" Georgrafiska Annaler Series B, Human Geography, 2004 Vo. 86 No 1 Special Issue: The Political Challenge of Relational Space (2004) p5-18

[116] Ibid Massey, p6

idea of place and speaks to ideas around how we create memory in place through items which bring nostalgia.[117]

The New Cinema History approach reconsiders what public space is within the cinematic realm, suggesting that traditional cinema spaces can also be sites of public gathering and connection. Sam Manning charts the relationships between cinema and two local neighbourhoods in Sheffield and Belfast between 1945–65 and, in a similar vein to James Chapman, suggests that the cinema was more than just a place to watch films.[118] Manning describes the gendering of the cinema, which became a place for women, in contrast to the male domain of the pub. When the cinemas closed, the women lost a social space.[119] The cinema space is important not just because it offers a place for assembly, but also because the original model of the single-screen cinemas was built in the town centre. The cinemas provided a focal point and a high street destination. In their introduction to the paper "The High Street as a Morphological Event", Sam Griffiths writes:

> "The high street has long been a near ubiquitous feature of British towns, cities and suburbs. The dual role of high streets as signifiers of communal identity and as subsidiary nodes in economic topography means a comprehensive account must contend with both the tangibility of what high streets do in socio-economic terms, as well as the intangibility of *what they mean* to local people."[120]

Outdoor film screenings provide an opportunity for action placemaking within public spaces. Placemaking is the act of creating a destination through the planning of creative or culturally appealing assets within a development site.[121] Placemaking creates a cultural narrative which is locale- specific, embedded in a geography which can be tangibly seen and

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[117] Cross, Garry (2017) Consumed Nostalgia, Memory in the Age of Fast Capitalism, Columbia University Press P13

[118] Manning, Sam (2020) Cinemas and Cinema-Going in the United Kingdom: Decades of Decline, 1945–65, University of London Press, Institute of Historical Research.

[119] Manning writes: "Married women tended to engage in more informal leisure activities as they lacked the financial resources to go to the cinema and there was a greater expectation that any spare money would be spent on the household. Trips to the local cinema were convenient and cheap. But when these cinemas closed, trips to the city centre were more time consuming and often prohibitively expensive." Manning, Sam (2020) Cinemas and Cinema-Going in the United Kingdom: Decades of Decline, 1945–65, University of London Press, Institute of Historical Research. p118

[120] Griffiths, Sam "The High Street as a Morphological Event" from Suburban Urbanities: Suburbs and the Life of the High Street, UCL Press London p32

[121] The development of Forge Island in Rotherham is a good example of place making. https://www.rotherham.gov.uk/news/article/264/the-arc-cinema-signs-up-at-rotherham-s-forge-island -accessed November 2021 Other micro examples of place making can be found in the work of English Heritage within their report "The Changing Face of the High Street Decline and Revival": https://heritagecalling.com/2013/07/23/the-changing-face-of-the-high-street-decline-and-revival/ - accessed June 2021

experienced. Local people, visitors and guests can find connection to a space by exploring and interacting with this space, which anchors the creative value within a community. Scott McQuire draws upon the themes of placemaking in his book *The Media City: Media, Architecture and the Urban Space*.[130] He notes that from cities, such as Tokyo and New York, "'the migration of screens into the cityscape has become one of the most visible and influential tendencies of contemporary urbanism".[131] He continues, adding that the Big Screen has become less of a piece of furniture than an architectural surface resident "not in the home but on the street outside" (see section 8.7) He describes this activity as "public spectating" and questions how public space is used in urban environments, citing the effect of the development of the suburbs in the 1950s.

If placemaking is physical, the question arises as to whether there is an equivalent within the digital world. Scott Rogers suggests that cities are being experienced through an online world of reviews, algorithms and posts that guide the visitor, which creates "Digitally mediated exteriorizations of local experience such as gathering information on named places though search engines."[122] This creates a second- or third-hand account of a physical space. Scott suggests "social media can be seen as one of the more longstanding kinds of platforms that can help produce experience of urban locality. As their name suggests, social media cultivates social relationships and communication."[123] As part of his study, Rogers observed a consultation to discuss a cycling infrastructure scheme in North London. This digital participation space allowed respondents to contribute their local knowledge to the platform and learn from others about the local transport geography.[124] Rogers suggests that what distinguishes social media from most other platforms is their emphasis on the generation, modification of circulation of content data by users."[125] This point towards a highly dynamic curation of ideas and themes, which changes with high frequency. Ruth Page suggests that social media creates a platform for real-time narration.[126] Updates found in the timelines of social network sites, such as Facebook and Twitter, accrue to "form a constellation of breaking news creating an emergent digital life

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[122] Rogers, Scott (2022) "Visualising In Locality Now: Objects, Practises and Environments of Social Media Imagery around urban change." Seeing the City Visually; Processing Urban Space and Time p208

[123] Ibid Rogers p208

[124] Ibid Rogers p208

[125] Rogers, "Visualising In Locality Now: Objects, Practices and Environments of Social Media Imagery around urban change." p210

[126] Page, Ruth "Seriality and Storytelling in Social Media" Storyworlds: A Journal of Narrative Studies , Vol. 5 (2013), p40

history for the narrators." If social media captures a place in time, Kathryn Bowd suggests that the use of social media changes the relationship of the audience and the author from a geographical space, suggesting social media allows for a wider participation in events and issues.[127] Furthermore, Bowd suggests that social media shifts the focus away from the traditional hierarchical nature of print communication. Within social media, participants can communicate with others, known or unknown, and share spontaneous comments, which is not possible within print media.[128] Social media, therefore, compliments the temporary nature of non-traditional screening environments, by providing the audience the space to create their own narrative based on their own cues.

Melis Behlil talks to the importance of online platforms as a way of engaging a cinematic community: "Various sites on the net are not only the source of great (and unfortunately not always correct) information, but they also provide a space for cinephiles to get together and exchange ideas, and fuel their need to discuss the films they have seen, which is a part of the cinephiliac tradition."[129] Being part of an online community is one that is not subject to the parameters of physical geography. Behili notes that "Fellow film buffs may be easy to find in large cities or on university campuses, but cinephiles living in more rural and less culturally diverse areas are frequently on their own when it comes to tastes in film."[130] The connectivity online is therefore just as important as the connectivity in person. The two environments are not mutually exclusive, with people dipping in and out of online and physical communities. However, the considerable difference here is that online communities do not always have appropriate physical space. The physical space of the online community is often found in temporary group spaces, such as conventions or genre-based screenings. A good example of this is the Movie Marathons that take place at the Prince Charles Cinema.[131] Here, movie fans of specific genres can get together and appreciate the genre in a physical space away from the online sphere.[132]

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[127] Bowd, "Social media and news media: Building new publics or fragmenting audiences? p130

[128] Ibid Bowd p130

[129] Behlil, Melis (2005) "Ravenous Cinephiles Cinephilia, Internet, and Online Film Communities" Movies, Love and Memory, Edited by de Valck, Marijke and Hagener, Malte, Amsterdam University Press p113

[130] Ibid Behlil p113

[131] https://princecharlescinema.com/PrinceCharlesCinema.dll/Home accessed June 2023

[132] Ibid Behlil p113

To conclude, whether in a traditional auditorium or a non-traditional auditorium, space is required to show a film. The relationship to the space in which the film is being shown will vary depending on the connection to the space. Physical spaces can add a contextual layer to the screening, whether it connects the audience to a space or gives a space purpose or even allows for the audience to disconnect with a space once the film screenings is over. Disconnecting from a space provides a specific experience of the space at a set time; the audience does not feel indebted to the space.

Within the context of the film screening experience, space is also virtual. Online spaces provide a place for people to connect and express ideas and thoughts about the films being shown. The online space does not adhere to geographical constraints. The online space brings people and ideas together in an environment which is limitless and allows for more invested commentary in the contributors' experience.

2.4.2 Experience: Shared experience and community

The traditional auditorium cinema created not just a space for the geographical community, but it created a space for smaller micro-communities, bound by a sense of belonging sustained across time and space. The term 'community' can manifest in both practical realities and emotive possibilities. Annette Corburn and Sinead Gormally suggest early constructions of community were created at micro or macro levels, around physical spaces or locations (the village or the neighbourhood) or were often grouped around particular interests or specific aspects, such as race, religion or social class.[133]

However, developments in industrial, scientific and technological understanding have created numerous variables in the way people live, thus meaning that "constructing a theory of community is at best, contested and at worst, so fluid it has become meaningless to many."[134] The appropriation and depiction of cinema spaces by niche groups of people is described by Nirmal Puwar as "social cinema scenes".[135] These are "assemblages": part

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[133] Coburn, Annette and Gormally, Sinead Counterpoints, Vol. 483, Communities for Social Change: Practising Equality and Social Justice in Youth and Community Work (2017) p78

[134] Ibid Coburn p78

[135] Puwar, Nirmal, 'Social Cinema Scenes' space and culture vol. 10 no. 2, May 2007 pp 253-270

narrative, part nostalgia piece, which map the place of cinema within different communities. Puwer cites a typical scene of Asian families at a cinema screening, a description which follows the move from a non-traditional screening environment to a traditional screening environment, mirroring the development of cinematic spaces at the turn of the twentieth century. Puwer demonstrates how a (cinematic) "space" becomes a "place" for the community. In this dynamic, the curative process of choosing the films which are screened is far less important than the space in which the film are screened, Puwer succinctly suggests "Audiences did not simply go to watch what was on the big screen; they also went to engage with each other."[136] Communities and groups appropriate spaces to show films and draw the diaspora together in a similar, but more cohesive way than the early film pioneers. Films were shown in makeshift 'cinemas', such as church halls and community spaces, before cinemas dedicated to Indian films were procured. In this sense, the appeal of the cinema was not the technology but the togetherness. This, Puwer suggests, creates a "third space" which is an intimate "social scene" within the public sphere.[137]

Jerry Frug suggests that the term "community" has often been invoked to refer to a group of people who share things in common, "a sense of identity or history or values and who seek to foster the bonds they have with each other".[138] This traditional sense of community is based on stability and consensus, proactively wanting to connect with other people enough to understand shared attributes. Frug suggests that this does not enable, rather we should consider community to be a fluid and spontaneous arrangement, which allows individuals to move in and out of community groups at will. Frug refers to this as "the ideal of city life", a term coined by Iris Young. Young uses the term ''ideal' to portray the difference between what we see a community as, and the reality of the community, predominantly along political terms.[139] She suggests that to have a community may require homogeneity, noting: "The desire for community relies on the same desire for social wholeness and identification that underlies racism and ethnic chauvinism, on the one hand, and political sectarianism on the other."[140] This conception is not helpful, suggests Young, noting that this 'ideal' "totalizes and

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[136] Ibid Puwar p265

[137] Ibid Puwar p254

[138] Frug, Jerry 'The Geography of Community' Stanford Law Review , May, 1996, Vol. 48, No. 5 (May, 1996),p1048

[139] Young, Iris Marion "The Ideal of Community and the Politics of Difference, Social Theory and Practice Vol. 12, No. 1 (Spring 1986), p1

[140] Ibid Young p1

detemporalizes its conception of social life by setting up an opposition between authentic and inauthentic social relations." Young rejects the notion of community, instead suggesting that, within the city environment, people can live together as strangers in a more fluid and transient environment. Young's ideas are interesting as they emphasise the fluidity of the individual within the structure of the city. Frug suggests that the term 'community' is a starting point of commonality that can be built upon.[141] Zygmunt Bauman describes the decline of connectivity in contemporary society as "liquid modernity", suggesting that the community can become a misnomer, as connections are attenuated in a world of increasing diversity and fragmenting order.

Frug and Young's depiction of a temporary shifting community mirrors Doreen Massey's interpretation of space also being a transient entity.[142] Although this provides a form of chaos, rather the writings of Frug, Young and Massey point to the strength of connections made when the individual is aware of their context. Massey suggests that we "recognise space as the product of interrelations; as constituted through interactions, from the immensity of the global to the intimately tiny."[143] Recognising the monuments or interaction is also considered by Frug in his analysis of city life. Frug suggests that: "In the city persons and groups interact within spaces and institutions they all experience themselves as belonging to, but without those interactions dissolving into unity or commonness."[144]

Frug could almost be accused of denying the importance of connection and the role of community. The idea of temporary, transient connection is subject to two challenges. The first is presented by Nirmal Pulwar's belief in the importance of communities and, furthermore, the importance that the cinema environment plays in providing a physical place for connecting communities. Pulwar's work fits within the New Cinema History cannon, a group of theorists who stressed the importance of the cinema as a social space. Here, the position of the cinema as a fixed entity provides stability for the communities who use the space. The other challenge to Frug's assertion is that it speaks only to the urban experience. Within a city, it is easy to be transient and to have temporary relationships with spaces and people. However,

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[141] Frug, Jerry 'The Geography of Community' Stanford Law Review , May, 1996, Vol. 48, No. 5 (May, 1996),p1048

[142] Massey, Doreen "Geographies of Responsibility" Georgrafiska Annaler Series B, Human Geography, 2004 Vo. 86 No 1 Special Issue: The Political Challenge of Relational Space (2004) p5-18

[143] Massey, Doreen (2005) 'For Space', Sage, London

[144] Frug, Jerry "The Geography of Community." Stanford Law Review , May, 1996, Vol. 48, No. 5 (May, 1996), p10449

in a rural environment, these choice options are more limited and are subject to the person or people who have control of the space and the resources within it

2.4.3 Nostalgia and memory

Nostalgia connects a new experience to an old experience by constructing an experience that is imagined. A contemporary example of this is the recent adoption of the 'Keep Calm and Carry On' poster. 'Keep Calm and Carry On' was one of three key messages created by Britain's wartime propaganda department during the Second World War, the Ministry of Information, made famous as the Ministry of Truth in George Orwell's novel, *1984*. The phrase 'Keep Calm and Carry On' was chosen for its clear message of "sober restraint" and was coined by the shadow Ministry of Information at some point between 27 June and 6 July 1939. Just under three million posters displaying it were printed and distributed to homes across Britain, only to be pulped and recycled in 1940 to help the British government deal with a serious paper shortage.[145] Therefore, the messaging was never officially used.[146] Despite the intention of these posters to be used in 'crisis or invasion', when Britain would have been at its lowest, the new reincarnations of the slogan represent a cosier era of a stoic and homely Britain. Owen Hatherly suggests that the Keep Calm and Carry On poster seemed to embody all the contradictions produced by a consumption economy, attempting to adapt itself to thrift, and to normalise surveillance and security through an ironic, depoliticised aesthetic.[147] Here, we see the recreation of the past to better understand the contemporary narrative.

Gabriel Moshenska suggests memory "offers a view into some of the most fascinating aspects of human existence, of ways to understand the creation and evolution of cultures and much much more." Here, Moshenska also refers to the problems of defining 'memory', which is an interdisciplinary subject which covers science and the humanities. The lack of clarity leads to a lack of vigour within the field. Moshenska notes that "Within memory studies, as within heritage studies, this examination of representations of the past, particularly of controversial or painful past has often been characterised by underdeveloped, impressionistic

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[145] https://www.london.ac.uk/about-us/history-university-london/story-behind-keep-calm-and-carry- accessed January 2020

[146] https://www.theguardian.com/books/booksblog/2012/mar/09/keep-calm-and-carry-on-secret-history accessed 21st November 2021

[147] https://www.theguardian.com/books/2016/jan/08/keep-calm-and-carry-on-posters-austerity-ubiquity-sinister-implications -accessed 21st November 2021

research methodologies and a general lack of rigour."[148] Recalling memory, notably 'experience' memory with integrity, is a challenge discussed within the field of nostalgia. Scott Alexander Howard describes nostalgia as an affective experience, rather than simply a fascination with the past.[149] Memories, Howard argues, are about reliving very personal experiences, rather than a connection to a generic by-gone era. These personal memories may be lacking in detail, but this is understandable, as "we can imagine the present as the subject of a future memory".[150]

Memory is an important tool for bridging the divide between history and heritage, cites Vijay Agnew.[151] Agnew suggests that memories establish a connection between our individual past and our collective past (our origins, heritage, and history). Moreover, "The past is always with us, and it defines our present; it resonates in our voices, hovers over our silences, and explains how we came to be ourselves and to inhabit what we call 'our homes'."[152] The past and present, proposes Agnew, are social constructs, which are contested by individual experiences. This relationship between the past and present is complex and dynamic, with meanings and interpretations that shift with time, place and social context. Following this line of thought, what we consider 'heritage' also changes over time. These memories, suggests Mark Freeman, are "suffused with other people's memories" along with "stories we have read and images we have seen, in books and movies and beyond".[153] This created an ideologised memory, which is part actual reality and part imagined reality. The case studies in Camille M Smalley's narrative on Saco Drive in work are a good example of highly personalised 'recollections' of an imagined past.[154] This is what Glifford Geertz presents as a system of meanings embodied in symbols, which provide people with a frame of reference to understand reality and animate behaviours; more succinctly, "stories we tell about

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[148] Moshenska, Gabriel" (2015) Memory- Towards the reclamation of a vital concept." from Heritage Keywords: Rhetoric and Redescription in Cultural Heritage, University Press of Colorado, Boulder p203

[149] Howard, Scott Alexander 'Nostalgia' Analysis , OCTOBER 2012, Vol. 72, No. 4 (OCTOBER 2012), pp.641-650

[150] Ibid Howard p641

[151] Agnew, Vijay (2005) "Introduction" Diaspora, Memory and Identity; A search for a new home." University of Toronto Press

[152] Ibid Agnew p3

[153] Freeman, Mark (2017) "Telling Stories: Memory and Narrative " from Memory; Histories, Theories and Debates' Fordham University Press

[154] Smalley, Camille M, (2014) "The Saco Drive-In: Cinema Under the Maine Sky" Landmark Books

ourselves".[155]

Garry Cross suggests that goods are used to attach value to an experience.[156] Bought things, Cross argues, make memories, and this memory is subjective. A heritage of things is created by attaching a value and a memory to an item. Affluence enables more memory making. Cross frames his argument around the investigation of objects of memory (within the domestic and family sphere) and experiential memories of popular culture (music and TV) and sites of nostalgia (heritage sites and places of fantasy). He suggests that not all elements of nostalgia are open to everyone (heritage nostalgia is for the wealthy), and nostalgia can create the past that wants to be told. Here the value of experience can surpass the accuracy of the story being told. Annette Kuhn also talks around the value of film memories. In writing about New Cinema History, Richard Malby suggests that the "second cinema memory" that Kuhn identifies is more situated, involving the recall of a film or scene within the context of events in the subject's own life. Maltby notes that "The comparative abundance of such recollections has led Kuhn and others to conclude that, in the memories of a vast majority of cinemagoers she interviewed, the essentially *social act* of 'going to the pictures ' is of far greater consequence than the cultural activity of seeing films."[157] Although these accounts may sometimes underestimate the impact of particular movies on individuals or audiences at the time, they surely remind us that, unlike key life events, the vast majority of films do not seek out landmark status for themselves, but are designed to fade back into the overall "field of our cultural experiences."[158] Annette Kuhn writes, "While transitional objects are exactly that—objects, things—the point about them is that they are pressed into the service of the child's inner world. They belong, that is, to the child's fantasy world while at the same time having a physical existence in the outer world of material objects"[159] Physical objects portrayed a different meaning to Karl Marx, who suggested the value in the material object or commodity was its quality and quantity.[160] This approach feeds into the work of

[155] Christie, Ian (2012) "What Do We Really Know about Film Audiences? From "Audiences: Defining and Researching Screen Entertainment Reception." Amsterdam University Press, p227

[156] Cross, Garry (2015) "Consumed Nostalgia: Memory In The Age Of Fast Capitalism," Columbia University Press

[157] Maltby, Richard (2001) "Hollywood Spectatorship: Changing Perceptions of Cinema Audiences "British Film Institute, London p10

[158] Ibid Malby p10

[159] Kuhn, Annette CINEMATIC EXPERIENCE, FILM SPACE, AND THE CHILD'S WORLD Revue Canadienne d'Études cinématographiques / Canadian Journal of Film Studies , fall · automne · 2010, Vol. 19, No. 2 (Fall · automne · 2010), pp.83

[160] https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867-c1/commodity.htm - accessed November 2021

Gary Cross, who suggests that nostalgia is a consumer experience.[161] S. D. Chrostowska agrees, suggesting that nostalgia has been fuelled by the capitalism that developed in the wake of the two World Wars.[162] Nostalgia, suggests Chrostowska, helps us to construct our own identity of the past by creating a symbolic economy, one in which we can create abstract memories, which do not necessarily represent the actualities of the past. Arthur Ripstein concludes that in a capitalist economy, all commodities are exchangeable for each other via what Marx calls the "universal equivalent/ money".[163] Ripstein writes, "this exchangeability is apparent to all, as it is the precondition of purchase and sale. It also seems to be autonomous, resting on nothing but itself, just as mass is a property of objects depending on nothing else." Commodity has relevance to outdoor film screenings in the physicality of the non-traditional auditorium environment. This relates not just to the held value of the goods that are brought to the screenings to add comfort, but to the goods which are bought specifically for the screenings. This could materialise in old worn deckchairs brought out of the shed for a screening, through to the items bought specifically for the screening, both disposable items (food) and comfort items (blankets and cushions). These items add value which would be included within the traditional auditorium environment. Showing nostalgia films provides an opportunity for audience members to add value to their experience by dressing up in character, singing along or bringing props, which enables them to self-immerse into the film in a way that could not be achieved in a traditional environment. A shared understanding of the filmic text allows for unconnected people to connect, forming temporary micro-communities. This is demonstrated through fandom. In addition to this, the non-traditional venues may also evoke a feeling of nostalgia when the screenings take place in a heritage or historical setting. The element of history proved authenticity, which, in turn, supports the validity of nostalgic thinking. Here we see heritage as a tool for an imagined past and a platform for an imagined community of like-minded people who shared experiences together. The emphasis here on a positive recollection often ignores the realities of dysfunction, which is an important narrative for the majority of heritage sites.

2.5 Conclusion

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[161] Cross, Garry (2017) "Consumed Nostalgia, Memory in the Age of Fast Capitalism", Columbia University Press p12

[162] Chrostowska, S. D. , "Consumed by Nostalgia?" SubStance, Vol. 39, No. 2, Issue 122 (2010), pp. 52-70 University of Wisconsin Press p52

[163] Ripstein Arthur, "Commodity Fetishism "Canadian Journal of Philosophy , Dec., 1987, Vol. 17, No. 4 (Dec., 1987), pp734

The early film pioneers were motivated by business and not art or science. They understood their market and, through the race to secure audiences, pushed the boundaries of what was technically possible at the time. One-hundred-and-thirty years later, this process has come full circle. Not only are films shown in temporary, pop-up spaces, as the first films were, but, again, there is a ferocity to innovate.

The considerations of community, space and experience are peppered throughout the development of film screenings, in the UK and across the world. Throughout the history of film exhibition, the order of priority of these concepts has changed depending on commercial needs. Initially, 'experience' was seen as the priority, a bid to get audiences interested in film and away from the music halls. From the turn of the century, space became important, with the creation of cinemas, which provided a community (of wealthier patrons) and more elevated experience. The multiplex drew people away from the private space of their homes, into the public space of the cinema. The multiplex 'experience' was not community led, unlike the drive-in cinemas that emerged decades earlier and blended both the private space of the car with a community, which formed in the hours before the screening started. More recently, immersive cinema has emphasised both the space and experience, resolute that the good use of space through experience would formulate a community. Whereas fixed-location traditional auditorium spaces speak to a stable community group, the non-traditional auditorium space is a place for a mixed variety of groups and individuals.

To present my core question, "What is the appeal of outdoor film screenings in relation to community, space and experience?", I have referenced different literature positions to consider choice, value and experience as attributing factors. These factors provide an opportunity to unpick both the traditional and non-traditional cinematic experience, to understand the motivation behind why the audience engages in outdoor film screenings. I have presented academic texts which suggest the audience's ability to move between these spaces is, in part, down to the physical offering of choice – what films are shown where – but also how people relate to space and the experience of community that these physical and virtual spaces provide. How people understand the experience though the use of memory and nostalgia was also an important part of this discussion.

Chapter Three: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This methodology chapter explains how I conducted my research for this thesis, which took the form of three stages: the pre-research phase (Sept 2016 – June 2018), the formal period of research (July 2018 - September 2020) and additional research (email correspondence with lead contacts) August 2019 until July 2021. Within the chronology of this methodology (section 3.2) I have added a section regarding the impact of the Covid 19 Pandemic on my research. My research was significantly affected in 2020 by the pandemic and references to the changes I made to my research design ripple through this methodology.

3.1.1 The structure of the methodology

I start this chapter by introducing the work I undertook prior to my formal research period: the pre-research phase, which is covered in section 2 of this chapter. Here I make reference to anecdotes I observed during the pre-research phase. In section 2, I also include more information regarding my collaboration with Quad in Derby. The success of my research was, in large part, down to my work with Quad and the access that I was allowed to speak to their audiences (section 2). Section 3 of this chapter introduces different research methods. I mention here that my research plan was an amalgamation of different approaches, which were examined in order to find the best fit for my research aims (see section 1.1). To meet my objective of finding the best methodological fit for my research, I drew upon the research of other contributors to the field of audiences and reception studies. Academics include Linda Levitt, Kirsty Sedgman, Emma Pett, Richard McCullock, Virginia Crisp and Jennifer Radbourne et al. From an ethnographic perspective, these approaches are very useful. Section 4 of this chapter discusses the key control factors of the creation of questions and adaptation. Suggesting that the venue and the film are control factors places the audience's response as the distinct variable. In sections 5 and 6, I discuss how I designed the questions and application documents to collect data, and the challenges I incurred during this process. In section 7, I cover the impact of Covid-19 on my research plans in my final year of field research. Along with details about cancellations due to low attendance and bad weather. I discussed the questions I planned to ask in a third year of field research in 2020. Instead, I pivoted to researching drive-in cinemas, which was an alternative way of 'listening to people'. In 2020, I used new methods of collecting data,

which I had not tried before, this included using Twitter as a platform for both collecting data and creating discussion.

3.2 Listening to Audiences

The development of this methodology underpins two core objectives of my research:
Objective One: To create a system whereby I could collect core data from audiences who attended outdoor film screenings in England.

Objective Two: To effectively document the themes that emerged from the core data I collected Reflecting on the current modes of research in audience and reception studies is important when considering research in a developing field such as outdoor film screening. Audience and reception studies at their core use an ethnographic approach, namely, one which seeks to observe and describe people. The emphasis on observation as a tool to develop an understanding of the appeal and impact of cinema on the audience is a narrative of Martin Barker. Barker suggests the approaches to gathering audience data are varied but should be based on 'empirical investigation'.[164] He talks of the tendency for film scholars to presume an audience acts in a set certain way. He suggests an often-unfounded assumption is that audiences have a 'fixed perspective' as a product of the 'force perspective' which the camerawork constructs. [165]

3.2.1 The Pre-Research Phase (Sept 2016 – June 2018)

Using Barker's mantra as a starting point, I began the pre-research period, in which I attended several outdoor film screenings, alongside interactive screenings (which were all indoors), and a screening at a drive-in. I also met with industry professionals and attended conferences. This period provided a very useful grounding to begin to understand the contemporary landscape of the outdoor film screening genre up until June 2018.

During the pre-research period (Sept 2016 – June 2018), I attended several outdoor film

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[164] Barker, Martin (2012) "Crossing Out the Audience' from 'Audiences Defining and Researching Screen Entertainment Reception (The Key Debates - Mutations and Appropriations in European Film Studies) Amsterdam University Press.

[165] Ibid Barker p188

screenings, as well as interactive screenings (which were all indoors), and a screening at a drive-in. I also met with industry professionals and attended conferences. This period provided a very useful grounding to begin to understand the contemporary landscape of the outdoor film screening genre up until June 2018.

The outdoor screenings I attended were as follows:

	Producer	Location	Notes
Paid for outdoor film screening	Pop-Up Screens	Various locations in West London	Attended 4 Sept 2016 (Bishops Park); 5 Aug 2017 (Ravenscourt Park); 23 Aug 2017 (Dartford). Forged relationships with the local authorities to run events in public parks.
	Somerset House	The Strand, Central London	Attended May 2016. The screening of an arthouse film in a contemporary art setting.
	Summer Nights	Wollaton Park, Derbyshire.	Attended 29th August 2016.
	Rooftop Cinema	Various locations in London	Attended 11 Aug 2017 (Peckham); 13 Aug 2017 (Stratford); 26 Aug 2017 (Peckham). Rooftop cinemas were early adopters of adding comfort items, such as blankets, which were welcome due to the exposed nature of the site, which is on top of a car park.

Free Community Screening	Jester Festival	West Hampstead, North London	Attended July 2017. The evening event of a summer festival, organised by local residents.
	Brindley Place	Birmingham	Attended 17 July 2016. Free screenings that the audience could pop in and out.
	Pop- Up Screens	Dartford, Kent	Attended August 2017. Local authority used the screening to understand more about the needs of the local residents.
	London Borough of Hounslow	Hounslow, West London	Attended May 2017. Held as part of a community event in the wake of community unrest.

The observations proved enlightening and provided insights, which included producers, such as Pop-Up, who used a business model based on the relationship with the local authority who granted permission to run the events. The relationship provided opportunity to run screenings with Fulham Palace (a heritage venue) and Ravenscourt Park, venues were within the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham. The producers of Pop-Up also developed a relationship with the Council Leader of Dartford Borough Council Kent. Together Pop Up and Dartford produced a free community screening, which enabled the council to better understand the cultural needs of local people. Understanding and responding to local needs was also the motivator for the free screening I attended in Hounslow in 2016. This screening was designed to bring a diverse community together, with an afternoon of free activities. Running alongside the screenings were different advice and information stalls. The concept was about bringing the community together and providing an easy way to access advice and guidance. In comparison, my engagement with Brindley Place in early 2016 provided an opportunity to see a screening that animated a commercial space. Brindley Place, a commercial district in Birmingham, used the free community screenings to make use of the plaza space on the weekends when office workers were not

at work. The screenings were supported by the local newspaper, *The Birmingham Mail*, which encouraged local people to vote on their favourite film.[166]

Other observations included the adaptation of the outdoor cinema model into an indoor setting, as delivered by Backyard Cinema.[167] The screening of *Elf* (dir. Jon Favreau) was not interactive, nor were the audience asked to follow rules (e.g. wear a particular type of clothing, respond to a cue). Instead, the environment was made to feel 'Christmassy' with snow machines, lighting and a seasonal cocktail that adult members of the audience could buy. I also attended screenings at the Rooftop cinema in August 2017. These screenings took place on the top of a carpark in Peckham, South London. At the time, the audio was broadcast through speakers, an operation that has since changed to Bluetooth technology, a subject covered in my final results chapter. In the case of all these screenings, I sought permission from the producers before attending the screenings. During the screenings, I talked with the producers, who provided me with valuable industry insight. However, as these conversations took place before the start of my formal research period, I did not obtain full ethics approval. So, while these conversations were very useful, they cannot be comprehensively cited in this work.

The indoor interactive screenings I attended were as follows:

	Producer / Film	Location	Type of interactivity	Notes
Indoor Screening in a non-traditional auditorium	Backyard Cinema – Grinch (Dir Ron Howard(2000	Hackney, East London	Indoor pop up screening; the audience travel through a number of festive rooms before sitting down to watch the film.	Attended 7 Dec 2016. A Christmas-themed screening in a disused theatre.

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[166] Birmingham post: https://www.birminghammail.co.uk/whats-on/film-news/ - Accessed November 2021

[167] https://backyardcinema.co.uk/ accessed November 2022

Interactive Screenings	Alamo Draft House – 9 to 5 (Dir Collin Higgins) 1981	Kansas City, Missouri	Indoor screening Sing-along Movie.	Attended May 2019 . The props that were provided for the screenings included mugs and stationary. There was no host and the audience were a bit flat and did not sing along.
	Prince Charles Cinema - Rocky Horror Show (Dir Jim Sharman) 1975	Soho, London	Indoor screening Sing-a-long Movie.	Attended November 2016. The audience was fully engaged in the film and the tropes around the film.

Finally, the drive-in screening I attended was Baby Boss at the 99W Drive in Newberg, Oregon, in March 2018, one of the last original drive-in movie theatres in the United States of America. This screening provided very useful insight as I had not previously been to a drive-in.

When paring the observations with the academic literature I read during the pre-research phase (Sept 2016 – June 2018), it became evident that there was very little, if indeed any, academic research on outdoor film screenings in England. To meet my objective of creating a system whereby I could collect core data from audiences who attended outdoor film screenings in England, I drew upon the research of other contributors to the field of audiences and reception studies.[168] I found many of these approaches useful, although I soon realised that to meet the overall objective of my research, I would need to bring together different methodological resources.

In addition to the films I watched in at the beginning of my research, in December 2015, I took my first trip to Derby to meet Adam Buss, the then CEO of Quad. Meeting the team at Quad provided an opportunity to find out more about Summer Nights and plan how my

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[168] Academics include Linda Levitt, Kirsty Sedgman, Emma Pett, Richard McCullock and Virginia Crisp and Jennifer Radbourne et al provided valuable insight which formed the initial research period.

research could both be delivered and add value to Summer Nights and Quad. Following my meeting with Adam Buss, I considered my methodology design: the questions I would ask and the screenings I would attend, motivated by both providing unique pieces of research for the academy and providing useful insight for Quad, Derby. Conversations with the Quad were very helpful in constructing the questions I would ask audiences, but these questions were not formulated by the Quad. Rather, I presented the team with a set of questions with which they agreed. The more significant contribution from the Quad team was in providing the details of the screenings and consenting to me surveying the audiences at the screenings.

3.2.2 The Formal Period of Research (July 2018 – September 2020)

I have referred to the second stage of my research as the 'formal period of research'. During this period, I collected data for my thesis which could be tabulated in the form of results. This is contrasted to the pre-research phase, where I collected insight through informal observation and anecdotal conversations with industry professionals.

My field research in 2018 and 2019 could not have taken place without the collaboration with Quad in Derby. Quad is a registered independent charity that receives funding from a variety of sources, including in-house facilities (the cinema, arts space and café). The money that Quad receives from funders and through ancillary projects, such as Summer Nights (the outdoor film screenings arm), is used to create and support exhibition, outreach, education and community work, which provides creative opportunities for people who live in Derby and the Derbyshire region.[169]

I went to see Adam in March 2018, where I was introduced to Dr Alex Rock, the Head of Technical and Commercial Services for Quad, and, at this point, in charge of Summer Nights. These in person catch-ups were, for the most part, informal meetings, used to share preliminary research findings and to consider opportunities for the business. During the meeting, Alex and Adam asked if I could include a question regarding 'Value for money' in my 2019 research, a request I was happy to facilitate.

In 2018 I attended four screenings of one film, *Dirty Dancing (*Dir Emile Ardolino). These

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[169] https://www.derbyquad.co.uk/ accessed October 2021

screenings were produced by Summer Nights, the outdoor film screening arm of Quad, and took place at Bradgate Park in Leicestershire on 21st July, Hardwick Hall in Derbyshire on 18th August, Wentworth Woodhouse in South Yorkshire on 25th August, and Attingham Park in Shropshire on the 31st August. I deliberately saw the same film so as to get comparable data about the importance of the film to the different audiences.

In early March 2019, I returned to Derby for a meeting with Alex and Adam, where we discussed the plans for the summer program for 2019 and which films were likely to be screened. Alongside these meetings, we exchanged emails regarding the screenings I was going to attend, along with questions I had about the program. I met with Alex and Adam again in October 2019. Here, I offered suggestions for the 2020 program, based on insight from my formal research period.

In 2019, I continued to collaborate with Summer Nights and attended six screenings between August 2019 - October 2019. The screenings took place in Battle Abbey in East Sussex on the 24th August (*Bohemian Rhapsody*) and 25th August (*The Rocket Man*). Screenings took place in Ormesby Hall in Middlesbrough on the 28th August (*Bohemian Rhapsody)* and 29th August (*Dirty Dancing*). Two other screenings I attended were at Speke Hall in Liverpool on the 12th September (*Dirty Dancing*) and finally Witley Court in Worcestershire on 19th September. Two screenings that I was due to attend were cancelled: a screening of *Dirty Dancing* at Coughton Court in Warwickshire on the 9th August was called off due to bad weather; a screening of Dirty Dancing at Witney Court on the 20th September was called off due to low ticket sales. The films shown at the screenings in 2019 were varied. The emphasis in 2019 was the location, on attending Summer Nights screenings at the furthest points north, east, west and south England.

The ongoing conversations with Adam Buss and then Alex Rock between 2015 and 2019 proved to be very enlightening and insightful. These conversations provided a framework for my thinking, both in terms of how to approach my core questions (regarding cultural value in 2018 and appeal in 2019) and the logistics of conducting field research in an outdoor film screening environment.

Attending the screenings provided an opportunity to speak to the audiences, to invite them to fill in survey cards, which form the bulk of my research. The screenings also provided an opportunity to meet with the hosts at each of the venues to organise subsequent meetings

where I could ask more detailed questions. In 2018 and 2019, 1,123 survey cards were completed.

However, as the Covid-19 pandemic took hold and arts space furloughed staff, it became harder to liaise with Adam and Alex. Not being able to contact the team at Quad was unfortunate as I had a number of additional questions that I was keen to ask them both.

In 2020 I pivoted my research attended screenings produced by Drive in London, an organisation I did not have any previous relationship with. The depth of correspondence with Drive In London was minimal in comparison with the relationship I had fostered with The Quad. The limitations in creating a working relationship with Drive In London where in large part due to the effects of the Covid 19 Pandemic covered in (section 3.7.2)

In August 2022, I returned to Derby to meet the Quad management team. Changes to the staff team provided an opportunity to again present my methodological process and my findings. The methods and data I presented was very well received, in part because of an ongoing review of Summer Nights, who did not schedule a program of events in 2022. My suggestions (based on my results) were put forward into a plan for delivery of the Summer Nights screenings in 2023

3.2.3 Covid-19 During the Formal Period of Research (summer of 2020)

In 2020, as the impact of Covid-19 rippled through the entertainment industry, the majority of outdoor film screenings scheduled for the summer of 2020 (including those hosted by Summer Nights) were cancelled. My response was to pivot my research and focus on drive-in cinemas. I attended three drive-in screenings in London, produced by Drive in London. The screenings took place in Enfield, North East London. The dates and films were: 16th August: *Footloose* (Dir Herbert Ross); 23rd August: *Grease* (Dir Randal Kleiser) and 30th August: *The Greatest Showman* (Michael Gracey).

At the time, drive-in screenings were deemed 'safe' as the audience watched the film in a 'bubble', which was tangibly manifested in the private space of the car. Governmental restrictions on how and when people interacted with each other meant that it was impossible to conduct research in 2020 using the survey card method, as I had done in 2018 and 2019. As part of the pivoting strategy, I turned to the online space to understand

the appeal of drive-in cinemas to the audiences who attended them. Using Twitter, I connected with people from across England and Wales and invited them to fill in an online survey. The online survey took a longer form than the survey card, and, although it was filled in by a fraction of the people who completed survey cards in 2018 and 2019, provided a very useful insight into the appeal of drive-in cinemas, particularly during the Covid-19 Pandemic.

3.2.4 The Third Phase of Research (August 2019] – July 2021)

The third phase of my research carries on past the point of my field research. The phase called "Additional Research (correspondence with lead contacts) August 2019 until July 2021" covers a period correspondents with the lead contacts I met at the venues I attended. The majority of the contacts were via email. One of the lead contacts I spoke to agreed to a zoom call which was recorded.

Organisation	Name of Venue	Email correspondence on	Date of Zoom or Teams Call
National Trust Contact	Coughton Court and Baddesley	15th August 2019 16th August 2019 27th April 2021 9th May 2021 10th May 2021 1st June 2021 9th June 2021	
English Heritage Contact	Battle Abbey	28th August 2019 11th September 2019 29th April 2021 9th May 2021 1st June 2021 2nd June 2021 9th June 2021	1st July 2021
National Trust	Ormesby Hall	28th August 2019 17th September 2019	
Drive in London	Enfield Site	23rd May 2020 26th May 2020 28th May 2020	

Email correspondence was a very useful form of communication. The emails created a conversation trail that could be referred to at different intervals. This is demonstrated in correspondence with the lead contact at Battle Abbey, which spanned over a two-year period.

3.3 Research Approaches

When starting my research, it was important to find research methods that sat well with my research objective. The objective was both to give the audience the opportunity to share their thoughts and ideas about the outdoor film screenings they were attending, and for this anonymised data to be of use to Quad and others.

There are many ways I could have used this objective in my research. The evaluative researcher, Gemma Moore, refers to the differences between ontology (the study of the nature of being, the nature of existence or nonexistence and the patterns that evolve through this) and epistemology (the means of collecting or procuring knowledge). Moore suggests that within research, "A theoretical paradigm can be described as a framework containing the set of questions underpinning the research (i.e. epistemology), the theory (i.e. ontology) and methodological premise."[170] Therefore, robust research should be a combination of what one finds out and the theory that underpins this work. Moore writes: "It is important that assumptions about ontological and epistemological positions of research are made explicit from the start, as views on the production and construction of knowledge affects the collation and interpretation of data."[171] Moore's approach is useful as it reinforces the importance of epistemological research within ethnographic research. Ethnographies are analytic descriptions or reconstructions of intact cultural scenes and groups. Firstly, these strategies elicit data that are phenomenological: they represent the world view of the participants being investigated. Secondly, ethnographic research strategies are empirical and naturalistic.

Margaret D. LeCompte and Judith Preissle Goetz argue that there is dissatisfaction and limitations of traditional quantitative design: "Constructs and models lacking meaning for participants have been used in evaluation designs; goals assessed often have been

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[170] Moore, G.E.; (2010) The effectiveness of small-scale urban public open space regeneration processes at delivering sustainable communities: UK Case Study - Groundwork North London. Doctoral thesis, UCL (University College London) p99

[171] Ibid Moore, G.E p99

insignificant to program planners; and final reports have addressed few questions important to participants."[172] Ethnography therefore seeks to place the participant at the centre of the research. Audience and reception studies researchers seek to use ethnographic approaches, but data approaches are used more often. A good example of this can be found in studies that are time-limited and are created to study impact based on a clear hypothesis which is outcome orientated.

Ian Christie explains the process of the UK Film Council's (UKFC) study on cultural impact called *Stories We Tell Ourselves*.[173] Christie notes the UKFC study "took a broad, non-instrumental view of the place of film: first by tracing 'cultural impact' beyond the initial cinema release of a films, and second by comparing responses to film with a wide range of other cultural and leisure activities, and sampling responded to self- selected films." Christie cites Clifford Geerz's *Interpretation of Cultures* (1973) in suggesting that culture was a "system of meaning embodied in symbols which provide people with a frame of reference to understand reality and to animate their behaviours". More succinctly, cultures are "stories we tell ourselves about ourselves." *Stories We Tell Ourselves* was, therefore, instigated to create a system for ranking the cultural value of a film rather than collecting personal stories about the impact of film, as the name of the study suggests. The dominant impact of the *Stories We Tell Ourselves* programme was the creation of a database of all British feature-length films released between 1946 - 2006. Audience feedback was not involved in this part of the study. Christie does counter this by outlining the second part of the *Stories We Tell Ourselves* study, which "recruited individuals by telephone and in the street to take part in 'paired depth' interview held in four UK cities".[174] Respondents were asked to complete a self-completion questionnaire, which achieved a response rate of 11.8%, or 2036 respondents.[175] The study uses a number of methods to engage. However, unlike my research design, the *Stories We Tell Ourselves* study does not seek to understand the audiences as a cohesive group. Rather, it collects the views of people responding to an individual experience.

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[172] LeCompte, Margaret D and Preissle Goetz, Judith "Ethnographic Data Collection in Evaluation Research" Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis , Autumn, 1982, Vol. 4, No. 3 (Autumn, 1982), p387

[173] Christie, Ian (2012) "What Do We Really Know about Film Audiences? From "Audiences: Defining and Researching Screen Entertainment Reception." Amsterdam University Press p225

[174] Ibid Christie p228

[175] Ibid Christie p229

In considering other research methods, I reflected on Jennifer Radbourne's book, *The Audience Experience*.[176] Radbourne and her colleagues take a practical approach to understanding the needs of the audience, specifically within the performing arts sector. The introduction states that research into the audience sector is motivated by the idea that "building audiences is the key to survival and wellbeing of the arts sector; and second that many contemporary audiences want to be more thoroughly engaged in the arts sector than is conventionally supposed."[177] Radbourne *et al* provide an example of measuring audience engagement, citing Raajoot, Kol and Jackson, who have developed a scale to measure the quality of service at the museum. Fields of consideration include "Pleasure", "Relaxation", "Learning" and "Solitude".[178] For instance, the engagement pattern at a museum suggests individuals enjoy a solo activity in a public space in which other people are present. The aim of measuring the audience's or visitors' experience of these attributes is in a similar vein to this approach to the methodology of S*tories We Tell Ourselves,* which sought to frame the experience of the individual. This is different to the research design with which I sought to work. The observations that I undertook before the start of my formal research period showed that the audience was a unit of people and not individuals engaging in a solo activity. This meant that my research plan had to veer away from practices demonstrated by Christie and Radbourne *et al*, towards a method that spoke to the audience as a group of people.

The larger group observation approach was used by Linda Levitt, who undertook ethnographic observational studies of outdoor film screenings in Los Angeles, California.[179] Levitt observed and reported on Cinespisa, an exhibitor who projects films onto the exterior wall of the Cathedral Mausoleum. This event saw how "4,000 Angelenos still pack picnic baskets and gather at the cemetery on Saturday".[180] Cinepisa is one of many agencies producing outdoor cinema events in Los Angeles. Founder John Wyatt originally sought a venue for screening art films for his film club, yet the past several seasons at Cinespisa

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[176] Radbourne, Jennifer Glow, Hillary and Johanson, Katya (2013) "The Audience Experience: A critical analysis of audiences in the performing arts." Intellect Bristol UK/ Chicago USA

[177] Ibid Radbourne p4

[178] Ibid Radbourne p6

[179] Levitt, Linda "Hollywood, Nostalgia and outdoor movies." Participations - Journal of Audience and Reception Studies -Volume 13 Issue 1 May 2013

[180] Ibid Levitt p218

featured what will be termed 'cult contemporary' films. Other examples cited by Levitt include Street Food Cinema, which projects movies on large screens in parks across the area and draws in a so-called "foodie" audience to its screenings, and Electric Dusk Drive-In, which operated in a parking lot atop a downtown Los Angeles building.[181]

Levitt documents these screenings and presents the value of community within this reporting. Levitt does not survey the audience, rather uses observation tools in her work. Studies into theatre audiences are a popular choice for researcher within the field of audience and reception studies, far outweighing studies into cinema attendance and experience. There are several factors to this, including the cultural value and financial funding placed on theatre productions and theatre spaces in contrast to the lower value cinema experience.

In her book, *Locating the Audience*, Kirsty Sedgman describes in detail how she gathered theatre audience responses to the inaugural year of the National Theatre Wales, which ran between March 2010 and April 2011.[182] Covering thirteen productions in thirteen locations, Sedgman describes her work as a "theatrical mapping of Wales", which involved gathering over 800 research responses and interviewing more people. John E McGrath, founding Artistic Director of National Theatre Wales, starts the foreword to Sedgman's book with the line: "I have to admit I was initially sceptical of this project." His initial concern over Sedgman's methodology was soon quashed when it became apparent that "we did have something very much in common; the conviction that audience matters".[183] Sedgman embedded herself in the organisation, creating a very distinct ethnographic environment whereby the nuances of the audiences, and those creating experiences for the audiences, could be observed and recorded. McGrath describes how her presence became "a reassuring part of the picture". Connecting a value to audiences is complex and fraught with issues. All audiences are different and never simple. As Sedgman writes: "Audiences" the collective noun tends to go hand in hand with the verb, with audiences called to do many things: to engage, to attend, to co-create, to participate."[184] This suggests Sedgman calls for a unique way to engage with and understand audiences. Sedgman writes:

[181] Ibid Levitt p219

[182] Sedgman, Kirsty (2016) "Locating the audience; How people found value in the National Theatre Wales", Intellect Books Bristol p3

[183] Ibid Sedgman p4

[184] Ibid Sedgman p3

The problem has been that while, on the one hand, extrinsic arguments are increasingly understood to provide a woefully incomplete picture, on the other hand relying on professional commentators to enthuse about intrinsic benefits no longer works either.[185]

The solution for Sedgman echoes that of Martin Barker's with respect to the directive: "listen to your audience." The world of Sedgman and Radbourne *et al* demonstrate the preference of audiences and reception researchers to focus on studies that take place within performing arts or theatre. Moreover, there is a tendency to work within a fixed space, which can include the traditional auditorium environment.

Finally, when writing about an exploration of the fandom and audience in North Wales, Emma Pett draws on the findings of a small-scale audience survey, conducted at a one-off screening of the film, *Back to the Future* (dir. Robert Zemeckis), at Aberystwyth Arts Centre in early February 2012.[186] Pett uses a very simple survey of four core questions (two multiple choices, two open fields) to investigate how the audience connected with the film (appendix one). The majority of Pett's survey sample were members of the University of Aberystwyth's cult film club programme, which aided the engagement in a survey about the film, a known cult classic. The work around cult films and fan nostalgia takes a different slant on the terms 'communal and 'experiential'. Here, the community is personalised and its actions experiential.

Similarly, Richard McCullock and Virginia Crisp explore communal and experiential cinema in their analysis of screenings that took place at the Prince Charles Cinema in London's West End.[187] As with Sedgman, McCullock and Crisp embedded themselves within the culture of the organisation, focusing on the audience experience of the alternative screenings that take place at the cinema. These screenings include sing-alongs, themed events (where the audience dress up), and film noir events, which fit well with the 'dive bar'

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[185] Ibid Sedgman p3

[186] Pett, Emma Hey! Hey! I've seen this one, I've seen this one. It's a classic': Nostalgia, repeat viewing and cult performance in Back to the Future. Participations," Journal of Audience and Reception Studies, Volume 10, Issue 1 May 2013

[187] McCullock, Richard and Crisp, Virgina "Watch like a grown up ... enjoy like a child': Exhibition, authenticity, and film audiences at the Prince Charles Cinema' Participations - the journal of audience studies. Volume 13, Issue 1 May 2016

feeling of the cinema. McCullock and Crisp used questionnaires, which were distributed to regular attendees of the Prince Charles Cinema through the organisation's mailing list. They explain the difficulty in separating themselves from the organisation, as many of the respondents assumed they worked for the organisation and were not independent academic researchers.[188] They write:

> After having sought permission to conduct our research at the cinema, the management kindly agreed to assist us with distributing our survey. They circulated it to their mailing list in conjunction with a survey of their own (exploring audiences' experience of using the PCC website), which eventually led to us receiving 220 unique responses. Conducting a survey in this manner was practically beneficial, enabling us to elicit a high volume of survey responses in a short period of time. However, using the Prince Charles's own mailing list as a recruitment tool also means that our audience sample cannot be seen as representative of the cinema's audiences as a whole. These are self-selected members of the cinema's own mailing list, which means (a) they are more likely to respond to survey questions in the first place (b) they are more likely to be positively predisposed to the cinema, and (c) they may also fall into a narrower demographic range than the venue's audiences as a whole.[189]

This section provides examples of different small-scale interventions and studies which were in large part observational. Where surveys were used, the participants were solidified in being part of a group (Pett) or being part of a membership base (McCullock and Crips). Capturing the views of audiences in situ is complex as audiences are seldom prepared to complete evaluations of the experience, they are currently engaged in.[190]

3.4 The Control Factors: Film and Venue

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[188] Ibid McCullock and Crisp p252

[189] Ibid McCullock and Crisp p252

[190] This was a luxury that I was afforded as at the screenings I attended there was a window between sitting down to watch the film and the film starting.

The process of creating a plan for my research was complex, involving many different factors. Along with the logistical challenges of getting to the venue (including getting time off work), other factors had to be considered. Deciding on which films to watch, and in which locations to watch the films, was based on observations I had made in my pre-research phase. The two biggest considerations, therefore, were film and venue/location

3.4.1 The Films

In 2018, I decided to make film the central variable for the screenings I attended. This is so that I could then understand the impact of the other variables on the value of outdoor cinema, such as space, place and so on. Attending screenings of the same film was also useful in gaining a better understanding of the audience. I thus combined observations in the pre-research period with raw data collected in 2018. This empirical data in 2018 provided insight which reinforced what I had observed at the pre-research phase screenings I attended.

In 2018, I attended screenings of just one film: *Dirty Dancing* (Dir Emile Ardolino), which can be categorised in the genre of a Coming-of-Age film. In 2019, I attended screenings that showed a variety of films, which were both coming-of-age and musical biographies. This section provides more details about the tropes that describe the coming-of-age and musical autobiography.

3.4.1.1 The Coming-of-Age Genre

A popular genre of the outdoor film screening is the 'Coming-of-Age' film. 'Coming-of Age ' is a genre of film that Patricia Meyer Spacks defines as "the time of life when the individual has developed full sexual capacity but has not yet assumed a full adult role in society".[191] This theme is often at the heart of coming-of-age films.[192] The coming-of-age film designates the discovery implicit in any moment of transformation. Indeed, although many of the traditional rites of coming of age have faded from contemporary "Western society, the

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[191] Hardcastle, Morosini and Tarte (eds) (2009) "Coming of Age on Film: Stories of Transformation in World Cinema" Cambridge Scholars p1

[192] Ibid Hardcastle, Morosini and Tarte (eds) p2

idea of transformational moments lingers in both real experience and artistic representation."[193] 'Coming-of-age' was the predominant genre of film I saw at the screenings I attended. As mentioned, I exclusively attended screenings of *Dirty Dancing* (dir Emile Ardolino) in 2018. I also attended a screening of *Dirty Dancing* in 2019. In 2018, I used the film as a control factor. In 2019, I took a different approach and instead focused on the location of the screenings. The films I saw in 2019 and 2020 were still important, even though they were no longer a control factor. This section discusses the popular film genres found at outdoor cinema screenings. *Dirty Dancing* is, at heart, a story about class between the status of an upper middle-class woman and a lower-class man. It is both a love story and a window into privilege during one summer in the Catskills Mountains in 1963 America. The story is simple and pacey, and the music is both evocative and a snapshot of pop-culture. Erin L. McInnis suggests that at its core, "*Dirty Dancing* is about the trials and tribulations that every girl faces while growing up and becoming her own person. It is about what happens when you open yourself up to people and experiences outside yourself. And it is about dance".[194]

Natalie Reilly notes that *Dirty Dancing* is not just about the nostalgic fantasies of summer romance and risqué dancing but being understood as more than an auxiliary on life's great stage.[206] The film critic, Mark Kermode, suggests that coming-of-age movies, such as *Dirty Dancin*g, are the most personal of all genres. They are often a reflection of the writer's personal history, which often mirrors the audience's experience. The best of these films reflects the authentic feeling of growing up, which has universal appeal.[195] When it was released in 1987, *Dirty Dancing* was one of the highest-grossing films of the year, earning $170 million worldwide. The film's popularity continued to grow after its initial release. It was the number one video rental of 1988 and became the first film to sell a million copies on video. The combination of the music, the storyline and the imagined nostalgia of a connected or desired youth makes the film very popular. The endearing affection for the film is one of the reasons that Summer Nights screened the film five times in 2018 and why the

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[193] Ibid Hardcastle, Morosini and Tarte (eds) p2

[194] McInnis, Erin L." Breaking the Frame: Growing Up "Dirty Dancing" Counterpoints, Vol. 486, Screen Lessons: What We Have Learned from Teachers on Television and in the Movies (2017), pp. 209-214

[195] After 30 years, Dirty Dancing feels more relevant to women than ever
 "https://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/celebrity/after-30-years-dirty-dancing-feels-more-relevant-to-women-than-er
 20170816-gxxjls.html

film became a control factor for my field work in 2018 and one of the films I surveyed in 2019.

During my formal research period, I saw other Coming-of-Age films. On 16th August 2020, at a drive-in screening, I saw *Footloose* (Dir Herbert Ross), a film in which a city teenager moves to a small town where rock music and dancing have been banned, and his rebellious spirit shakes up the populace.[196] The film is laden with popular coming-of-age tropes found in *Dirty Dancing,* which was released two years later. The second drive-in film I saw was *Grease* (Dir Randal Kleiser). If coming-of-age films offer a transition between one period and another, *Grease* offers a celebration of a distinct period of teenage life: leaving school. The genre creates a distraction from reality, a by-product of embedding the film in a nostalgic sphere in which young people challenge authority with varying effects of recklessness and rebellion. In summary the films chosen by the production companies were in the main highly visual film which translated well into the non traditional auditorium space which encourages participation.

3.4.1.2 Music Autobiographies

In 2019, the focus of my research moved away from the film as a control factor. I replaced film with venue/ location, which became the new control factor. The shift away from films meant that the genre of the film screenings I attended diversified a little. Two of the films screened in 2019 were new releases and were not 'cult' classics in themselves. Rather, they were autobiographical tales of musicians who were cult heroes in the 1970s and 1980s.

Bohemian Rhapsody is a biography of the musician Freddie Mercury, from his youth until his death in 1991. Steve Rose describes *Bohemian Rhapsody* in the following terms:

> Rami Malek's excellent performance aside, it feels less a pioneering musical odyssey than a really good covers band. Then again, considering the many, well-publicised troubles this movie has been through over the years – Malek stepped in to replace the departed Sacha Baron Cohen, director Dexter Fletcher stepped in to replace the departed Bryan Singer – it is some achievement that it finally got made

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[196] https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0087277/ - accessed August 2021

at all. Maybe the formula was simply "get the damn thing finished.[197]

The second film, *Rocketman*, is a biography of Elton John, another English musician who found fame in the 1980s. Mark Kermode describes *Rocketman* as a "fantastical account of the highs and lows of Elton John's wild-ride rise, told in frantically full-blooded musical form. It's the story of a little boy who became a big star while plaintively pleading 'I want lurrve, but it's impossible." [198]

The third film I saw at Drive in London was *The Greatest Showman* (Dir Michael Gracey), screened on 30th August 2020, which was released in 2017. Like Rocketman and *Bohemian Rhapsody*, the film is a quasi-biography. Unlike *Footloose, Dirty Dancing, Bohemian Rhapsody* or *Rocket Man, The Greatest Showman* does not take its soundtrack from known pop music. Like *Grease*, it has an original score. *The Greatest Showman* is a revisionist story of P. T. Barnum, an American showman who suggests Owen Gleiberman "invented the spirit of modern showbiz by daring to follow his dream".[199] Caspar Salmon suggests the film "goes against all received wisdom and runs blithely counter to all current box-office trends. The movie is an original story with little or no built-in audience, no superheroes, and is a gosh-darn-it musical."[200] The film does, however, follow the popular outdoor film screening trope of a highly visual film.

3.4.2 Choosing Venues

All the venues I visited for my field research in 2018 and 2019 were 'historic locations.' This description is confirmed both in the marketing for Summer Nights (which stressed the value of the location) and in the status of the buildings as recorded on the Heritage List for England. All the venues, bar two, that I attended for my field research were owned or stewarded either by the National Trust or English Heritage. These are the two preeminent

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[197] https://www.theguardian.com/film/2018/oct/23/bohemian-rhapsody-review-freddie-mercury-biopic-bites-the-dust accessed July 2021

[198] https://www.theguardian.com/film/2019/may/26/rocketman-review-right-spectacle-elton-john Accessed July 2021

[199] Soloman writes "The Greatest Showman offers a hagiographic narrative of financial success, individual self-assertion and togetherness, merrily papering over such small difficulties as patriarchal oppression and systemic structural inequality."- https://variety.com/2017/film/reviews/the-greatest-showman-review-hugh-jackman-1202644784/ accessed August 2021

[200] https://www.theguardian.com/film/2018/jan/31/the-greatest-showman-success-film-story-of-the-year-hugh-jackman accessed August 2021

heritage charities in England (the third being the Heritage List for England).[201] English Heritage counts over 10 million visitors a year to its sites and cares for over 400 historic buildings, monuments and sites "from world-famous prehistoric sites to grand mediaeval castles, from Roman forts on the edges of the empire to a Cold War bunker."[202] The National Trust has a large portfolio of natural and cultural-heritage sites; it is one of the largest landowners in the UK. In 2000, English Heritage launched a consultation exercise on the future of the historic environment to engage and facilitate different approaches to heritage practice. This culminated in the publication of 'Power of Place' which became the basis for a formal government guidance note on heritage.[203] A similar process was undertaken by the National Trust, who also sought to implement ideas based on the themes of 'significance'. Following the 2010 strategy, 'Going Local', the National Trust developed the concept, 'Spirit of Place'. This strategy recognised the importance of making connections between local communities and Trust properties, which, in turn, involved understanding how people valued those places. The Trust recognized that understanding the core values of a place was vital, and "Spirit of Place" is the term the Trust uses for what makes a place special.

The Heritage List for England (NHLE) provides legal protection to buildings, which is designed to ensure that the buildings are protected under law.[204] Managed by Historic England (the third non-departmental public body which oversees heritage in England alongside The National Trust and English Heritage), who advises the central government on various matters, including the listing and delisting (designation and de-designation) of buildings and advises local government on heritage applications in the planning system, such as those for listed building consent. All the venues I attended were recorded as either Grade 1, Grade 2 or Grade 2* (appendix two). These gradings refer to the 'significance' of the building.[205]

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[201] https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/ accessed September 2021 https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/ accessed September 2021

[202] https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/about-us/ - accessed September 2021

[203] Clarke, Kate "Values- Based Heritage Management and the Heritage Lottery Fund in the UK" APT Bulletin: The Journal of Preservation Technology, 2014 Vol 45 No 2-3, Special Issue on Values Based Preservation (2014) p65-71

[204] Historic England' principal role is administering and maintaining the register of England's listed buildings, scheduled monuments, registered battlefields, World Heritage Sites and protected parks and gardens. 'The National Heritage List for England was established in 1882, and now lists over 400,000 items ranging from prehistoric monuments to office blocks, battlefields and parks, all of which benefit from legal protection. https://historicengland.org.uk/- accessed November 2022

[205] https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/your-home/owning-historic-property/listed-building/ - accessed August 2022

Critique of the NHLE approach offered by heritage policy consultant, Kate Clark, suggests that heritage is tied to significance.[206] This significance was once the domain of 'experts', who based a personal value beliefs system on the classification of what had heritage value. Values-based heritage management codifies the importance of 'significance' when making heritage decisions. This framework has been adopted by the Heritage Lottery Fund, which was established in 1994 to distribute funding to "historic buildings, archaeology, public parks, landscapes, museums, archives, infrastructure, industrial items and even intangible heritage, such as oral history."[207] As the preeminent funder in the heritage sector, the adoption of the values-based framework and the principles of the Burra Charter by the Heritage Lottery Fund have steered other heritage organisations towards a community-based model hinging on the concept of significance. This has also encouraged heritage organisations to adopt the practises of understanding, listening and tracking the audiences, in order to both tackle impact and secure future funding.

The venues that I attended in 2018 and 2019 that were governed by National Trust were: Attingham Park (2018), Hardwick Hall (2018), Ormesby Hall (2019) and Speke Hall (2019).[208] Two of the venues I attended were governed by English Heritage: Witley Court and Gardens (2019), Battle Abbey (2019).[209] Two venues I attended were independently owned: Bradgate Park (2018) and Wentworth Woodhouse (2018).[210] All of the venues possessed heritage value, either by being governed by English Heritage of The National Trust and/or by having listed heritage status confirmed by Historic England.[211] These

[206] Clarke, Kate "Values- Based Heritage Management and the Heritage Lottery Fund in the UK" APT Bulletin: The Journal of Preservation Technology, 2014 Vol 45 No 2-3, Special Issue on Values Based Preservation (2014) p65-71

[207] Ibid Clarke p67

[208] National Trust venues
Attingham Park https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/shropshire-staffordshire/attingham-park - accessed November 2022
Hardwick Hall https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/peak-district-derbyshire/hardwick - accessed November 2022
Ormesby Hall https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/north-east/ormesby-hall - accessed November 2022
Speke Hall https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/liverpool-lancashire/speke-hall - accessed November 2022

[209] English Heritage venues:
Battle Abbey https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/1066-battle-of-hastings-abbey-and-battlefield/ - accessed November 2022
Witley Court and Gardens https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/witley-court-and-gardens/ accessed Novmber 2022

[210] Independently owned venues:
Bradgate Park https://www.bradgatepark.org/ - accessed November 2022
Wentworth Woodhouse https://wentworthwoodhouse.org.uk/ - accessed November 2022

[211] English Heritage, The National Trust and Historic England are the three preeminent heritage organisations in England

venues add value to their audiences both in the events that they run at the venues and by the membership options that they offer. [212]

3.4.3 Engaging Venues

Following on from my research in 2018, in 2019 I proactively sought to ask the lead contact at each venue for contact details so I could ask them questions about the screening after the evening. In my introduction, I describe this as "Additional Research (email correspondence with lead contacts) August 2019 until July 2021".

Depending on the venue, the lead contact was often the marketing or events coordinator. I did not correspond with the venues before the screenings, so my first conversations with the lead contact was on the day of each screening. Following each screening, I would email a core set of questions to each of the contacts who agreed to provide email feedback.

In the initial phases of my correspondence with the venues, I emailed each contact a set of five identical questions. (appendix three). The email was sent a few days after the screening, when I was back at home at my computer. The initial questions I asked the contacts at the venue were similar to the questions I asked the audiences, as they were designed both to understand more about the venue, and, subsequently, the appeal of screening outdoor films at the venue. The first two questions asked were "When and how were you first introduced to Outdoor Film Screenings?", with a follow up: "When and how were you first involved in Summer Nights and the Derby Quad?" This first question mirrored a question I had asked audiences in 2019: "Have you been to an outdoor screening before and if so when?" For parity and to create a framework from which I could compare responses, for question three I asked the venue contacts to rank the importance of certain elements of the outdoor film screening process using factors which I used for my audience surveys. The last two questions also mirrored questions I asked the audience in 2019: "In your experience what is the appeal of outdoor film screenings?"; and "What are your thoughts regarding outdoor film screenings being value for money?" The mirroring of

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[212] Membership of the National Trust or English Heritage provides free entry to most of the buildings and site in their respective portfolio. Members also get a newsletters which details events taking place across the country and highlights venues by detailing their historical or cultural significance. Membership provides connection and allegiance to both the organisations and the venues themselves. Wentworth Woodhouse (2018) does not have the nationwide scale or budget of the National Trust and English Heritage buildings, but does have 'friends of' schemes. My Wentwoth Scheme https://wentworthwoodhouse.org.uk/community/support-us/my-wentworth/ - accessed September 2022

questions to both the audience and the venues was used to understand whether the audiences shared the same perspective as the producers of the show. In doing so, I was able to consider a new question: "To what extent do venues understand the audiences they are serving?"

I received emails back from three of the five lead contacts at the venues I attended. The venue hosts replied to my emails within two weeks of my initial message. This was gratefully received as the replies were sent during the busy summer period. I followed this email up with another set of questions that I had prepared following the first stage analysis of my results (appendix four). These questions pulled together the themes of placemaking and authenticity, nostalgia, and heritage.

This second round of questions asked about the motivation for screening films outside, the addition of added extras to make the screenings more appealing, additional questions around the audience, the limiting factors of the screenings, and, finally, the social and economic impact of the screenings. These nine questions added more depth to my understanding about why the venues hosted the event.

Two of the three contacts who answered the questions I set via email for my first round of questioning were happy to engage in a Zoom interview. The replies were recorded in audio form as opposed to email form. Whereas in 2018 and 2019, I met with the lead contact for each venue on site, for a number of reasons, this was not feasible in 2020. In the run up to my field research in 2018 and 2019, I had met with the team from Summer Nights on a number of occasions. We had discussed what we both wanted to achieve and, in doing so, the questions were in part a co-creation conversation.

This chart shows the correspondence I had with the lead contacts at the four venues I liaised with post-screening. This chart also appears in the methodology introduction.

Organisation	Name of Venue	Email correspondence on	Date of Zoom or Teams Call
National Trust Contact	Coughton Court and Baddesley	15th August 2019 16th August 2019 27th April 2021 9th May 2021 10th May 2021 1st June 2021 9th June 2021	

English Heritage Contact	Battle Abbey	28th August 2019 11th September 2019 29th April 2021 9th May 2021 1st June 2021 2nd June 2021 9th June 2021	1st July 2021
National Trust	Ormesby Hall	28th August 2019 17th September 2019	
Drive in London	Enfield Site	23rd May 2020 26th May 2020 28th May 2020	

3.5. Question Design

My research aims of ensuring the audience's voices were clearly heard meant that my core question and adjacent questions had to be simple and concise. Over complication of language or approach could be a factor in the audiences disengaging with my study. From the observations I undertook as part of my pre-research phase, I also knew that when I spoke to members of the audience, I would have a window of about 30 seconds to explain my research. This added to the necessity to keep things simple. However, as this section documents, the core question and periphery questions did change through the research process. The most prominent change was to the core question itself. The question was framed in 2018 as "What is the Cultural Value of outdoor film screenings?" This was put to the audiences as the penultimate question on the survey card that I used. The responses to this question were mixed and, on reflection, it was not clear if the audiences understood the concept of "cultural value". So, in 2019 the core question changed to "What is the appeal of outdoor film screens and who do they appeal to?" The term appeal was used as it represented a more universally understood concept than cultural value. This section tracks other small changes that were made to the questions between the first tranche of research in 2018 and the second in 2019. The Covid-19 pandemic meant that the proposed third year of research was curtailed, and the research plan had to be adapted. This is documented in a section called "questions planned in 2020".

To conduct my research, I developed a number of questions that could sit neatly on one side of an A5 card, with space to include responses. The front side of the A5 card was information regarding the broad themes of my research, my contact details and the ethics

protocol. The survey questions were located on the back side. To simplify the categorisation of the cards, the survey cards used in 2018 were coloured green/teal. The survey cards used in 2019 were coloured purple (appendix five).

I chose a variety of different types of questions, reflecting a diluted form of mixed medium approach. Question one used an ordinal scale approach, specifically the 5 point Likert scale which allowed the respondents to rank, on a scale of 1-5, the importance of a number of key factors, all connected to the question: "How important is…" Point one on the scale was "1- Not at All" and point five was "5- A Lot". In 2018, these factors were 1) The film - Dirty Dancing, 2) The venue, 3) The date and time of the screening, 4) How easy it is to get to the screening, 5) The experience-watching a film outdoors, and 6) The chance to hang out with family and friends. This changed in 2019 with the removal of 4) How easy it is to get to the screening, as the option is no longer relevant to the core question. The options for question one are: a) the film, b) the venue, c) the date and time of the screenings, d) the experience, and e) the chance to hang out with family and friends.

Question two, "Who are you watching the screening with?", was an open field, which, as results showed, seeded just four categories of responses: family / friends, a date/relationship, no-one, and other/no answer. This provided such conclusive results, regarding the importance of being with family and friends, that I saw the opportunity to change this question in 2019. In 2019, question two changed to: "Have you been to an outdoor screening before and if so when?" This change was to develop an understanding of who in the audience had attended a screening before, which gave more context regarding the appeal.

Questions three and four are demographic questions that asked the respondent: "What month and year were you born?" (question three) and "what is the first part of your postcode" (question four). These questions remained consistent throughout the pilot and first year of my research. Other questions on my survey card varied depending on my understanding of the results that I was collating. For example, at the end of the pilot phase in 2018, I asked, "How easy is it to get to the screening?", a question I asked from an urban point of lacking an understanding that in a rural context, almost everyone attended the screening by car.

Question five was designed to be a space for respondents to directly answer my core question. In 2018, question five was: "What do you think is the cultural value of outdoor film

screenings?" This was replaced in 2019 by the question: "What is the appeal of outdoor film screenings?" Giving respondents the opportunity to directly answer my research question was important for several reasons. It provided an opportunity for the audience to respond in an unfettered way, avoiding subjective interpretation and challenged the translation of the core question. This is one of the reasons I adapted the question in 2019, from a focus on "cultural value" to "appeal".

The 2018 survey card did provoke a few N/A for Question six:" Is there anything else you'd like to add?", so this question was replaced as it took up valuable space. This was replaced in 2019 with a question about value for money, which had a much higher response rate and, therefore, was more valuable to me. The question regarding value for money was proposed to me by the Quad team when I asked for their feedback, following a discussion about the results from the 2018 pilot study. In 2019 I also added a space for email addresses for those people who wished to be part of a focus group. The consideration of a focus group was curtailed because of the restrictions around the Covid-19 pandemic.

There were several other questions that I changed to reflect my understanding of the audiences, and more clarity as to what data I wanted to collect for my research. I also used several different question types (open / closed and ranked) to collect data from people with varying degrees of engagement in the process. The A5 card I created thus became a data tool, which developed in my pilot and first year of research, with the intention of tuning further in my final year of research in 2020.

3.5.1 Questions planned for 2020

After reviewing my results to Question One, I had originally planned a follow up summer of research in 2002. Given the opportunity in 2020, I would have asked additional questions about the outdoor film experience. The 2020 study was to include different types of questions, such as "What is the make-up of your group; who are you here with?" alongside the more specific, "Who would you like to be here with?" This would have enabled me to better understand the makeup of each group and explore the blurred lines which appear when audience groups are made up of both family and friends. These questions would have probed concepts that started to emerge in my findings in 2018 and 2019. Other themes I considered adding ventured into understanding of how often people attended a 'regular'

type cinema and which types of cinema they attended; a demographic question around gender to formally understand the makeup of the screening; a question around how people connect to the film – a reflection on fandom and a question to expand my work on value.

3.6 Application

At the start of my formal research period in 2018, I spoke to the team from Summer Nights to arrange the Dirty Dancing screenings that I would be attending to survey the audiences in various locations across the UK, during the summer of 2018**.** . The venues would open at around 7pm on the evening of the screening. The audience would use the time between the doors opening and the screening starting (just after dusk) to eat food, relax and drink. To enable me to get the best research I could, I had to speak to the audiences before they had drunk too much and before dusk started and the light faded. This meant I had between 60-90 minutes at each screening to collect my research (dependent on when dusk fell). When I approached the audience, I would start the conversation by saying "Hello, my name is Sarah, and I am a PhD researcher at the University of York. I am studying outdoor film screenings and would love to know why you are here." I would follow this by explaining more about my research, mentioning the ethics process (all responses were anonymous, and they did not have to answer the questions), along with any other questions they might have. I provided the audience with a pen to fill in the survey card. I left the card with the audience and collected both the card and pen later on, before the film started.

It was difficult to approach people in a methodical way, because the audience chose to sit in places which suited them and did not follow any structured pattern. In addition, people entered the screening area at different times and filled in.. Most people I spoke to were female. I made a concerted effort to speak to men, most of whom were reluctantly accompanying women. The nature of a freeform screening environment is that people sit wherever they like. So, although I endeavoured to speak to everyone in a block, new groups of people would pop up and fill empty slots. Following a pattern became tricky. By talking to larger groups of people, the process was much quicker. I was also able to speak to unrelated groups by speaking loudly as I introduced myself and my work. The audience found my work intriguing so were keen to overhear what I was saying and know more. I faced many logistical issues when I started my research in 2018. There were many simple

details that I had to overcome. Getting to the venues via public transport was an issue, as was getting safely home (or to my hotel) after the screening ended at about 11pm. Other learning points included having enough pens for people to complete my survey and having enough copies of the survey to give out. I learnt from my pilot phase the importance of 'having too much of everything' when it came to field research. Despite these challenges, I received a warm and receptive welcome by an audience who were supportive of my research. Of the over 1,000+ people I spoke to across the two years I conducted my field research, no more than 20 people refused to complete my survey. On one occasion, a group of friends did not have time to complete the survey, as they had a three-course meal to get through before the screening. Furthermore, as I had originally hoped, my surveys started informal conversations between groups of people, some of which I was asked to arbitrate on when the debate became heated. There was great interest in my research and, when time limited the number of people I could speak to, I felt a palpable sense that others wanted to know what I was up to.

I spoke to an average of 124 people per screening in 2018, which compares to an average of 66 people per screening in 2019, a lesser number as two screenings were cancelled, and audience numbers varied. The same method of data collection was used at all the screenings in 2018 and 2019, with audience members approached to fill in the survey cards that I produced before the screening. Over time, the process of data collection became more efficient, but as I note in Chapter 5, external factors, including the weather, meant that attendance varied. At Speke Hall, the attendance was low due to rainfall (despite the non-refundable policy on weather). Witney Court and Gardens was a new venue for Summer Nights in 2019. This may have been reflected in the cancellation of a screening and lower audience attendance at the screening I attended. Finally, a logistical issue arose at the second screening at Battle Abbey, on 25th August 2019, following the success of the data collection the day before, I ran out of survey cards. With more survey cards the response could have been much higher.

3.6.1 Notes regarding the referencing survey cards

Once the survey cards were collected, they were numbered. This happened on site, at the screening. The respondent number refers to both the number listed on the survey card and

the venue at which the survey card was collected. For instance, 78SH is respondent 78, who attended a screening at Speke Hall. Where data was collected from two screenings at the same venue, an additional reference is added. For example, 22BABR is Respondent 22, who attended a screening at Battle Abbey and saw the film *Bohemian Rhapsody*. A full list of screening codes can be found in the table below:

Date of Screening	Name of Venue	Film Screened	Number of survey cards completed	Reference Code
21st July 2018	Bradgate Park	Dirty Dancing	97	XXBP
18th August 2018	Hardwick Hall	Dirty Dancing	120	XXHH

Date of Screening	Name of Venue	Film Screened	Number of survey cards completed	Reference Code
25th August 2018	Wentworth Woodhouse	Dirty Dancing	173	XXWW
31st August 2018	Attingham Park	Dirty Dancing	104	XXAP
9th August 2019	Coughton Court	Dirty Dancing – Cancelled due to bad weather	0	N/A
24th August 2019	Battle Abbey	Bohemian Rhapsody	148	XXBABR
25th August 2019	Battle Abbey	The Rocket Man	164	XXBARM
28th August 2019	Ormesby Hall	Bohemian Rhapsody	126	XXOHBR
29th August 2019	Ormesby Hall	Dirty Dancing	69	XXOHDD
12th September	Speke Hall	Dirty Dancing	43	XXSH

2019				
19th September 2019	Witley Court	Dirty Dancing – cancelled due to low ticket sales	0	N/A
20th September 2019	Witley Court	Bohemian Rhapsody	79	XXWC
16th August	Varios Drive in	Various Films	13	XXDI
16th August 2020	Drive in London	Footloose	Online feedback 13	XXDI
23rd August 2020	Drive in London	Grease		Meridian Water
30th August 2020	Drive in London	The Greatest Showman		Meridian Water

3.7 Adaptation

It is probable that an ethnographic study that takes place over a three-year period is likely to be subject to adaptations. As I have mentioned prior, I have made changes to the survey questions. Here I cover the issues which affected my research but over which I had no control.

3.7.1 Cancellations 2019

Two of the screenings I was due to attend and collect data at in 2019 were cancelled. It is rare for screenings to be cancelled, with most producers continuing the screenings regardless of inclement weather. The screening I was due to attend at Coughton Court in Warwickshire on 9th August 2019 was cancelled due to abnormally high winds. A report from the Met Office notes:

> Strong winds and heavy rain caused widespread disruption on the 10th, resulting in sporting event cancellations and flooding to roads and rail lines in many parts of the UK. Lightning caused a railway signal outage at Blackpool North. At Dover some ferries were delayed due to high winds with one ferry stuck at sea, and there were some delays at the London airports due to strong winds. [213]

At the screening I attended in Speke Hall on 12th September 2019, rain started to fall as soon as the doors to the venue opened and only stopped 10 or so minutes from the end of the film. Weather was mentioned in the data I collected, but this did not seem to impact on the overall enjoyment of the film. The screening of *Dirty Dancing* at Witney Court on the 19th September 2019 was cancelled due to low ticket sales. This is an anomaly, as *Dirty Dancing* is a film which is very well received as an outdoor film.

3.7.2 Covid-19 Pandemic in 2020

The final year of my research, 2020, was curtailed by restrictions enforced as part of legal measures put in place during the Covid-19 pandemic. Although, during the summer of 2020, the restrictions were lighter than in the spring and winter period, uncertainty around the cost of cancellations, limited staffing due to furlough, and the audience's response to risk impacted on decisions to produce outdoor film screenings.[214] Decisions by smaller operators as to whether to go ahead with the screenings were governed, in large part, by the dominant players in the market.[215] This was, in part, because government guidelines regarding outdoor events during 2020 were particularly vague.[216] The 2020 Summer Nights program was suspended as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. The impact of Covid-19 on the arts sector forced many organisations to furlough staff. This impaired my ability to check in with Adam Buss and Alex Rock, the lead contacts at Quad Derby. In a posting on the networking platform LinkedIn in July 2020, Alex wrote:

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[213] https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/binaries/content/assets/metofficegovuk/pdf/weather/learn-about/uk-past-events/summaries/uk_monthly_climate_summary_201908.pdf - accessed June 2020

[214] https://www.independentcinemaoffice.org.uk/blog-diy-screenings-the-challenges-the-pandemic-brought-to-pop-up-cinemas/ - accessed November 2021

[215] https://www.theguardian.com/music/2020/mar/18/glastonbury-festival-postponed-due-to-coronavirus - accessed April 2020

[216]https://www.cinemauk.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/DRIVE-IN-AND-OTHER-OUTDOOR-CINEMAS-keeping-workers-and-customers-safe-during-COVID-19-v2.0-June-2020.pdf - accessed August 2020

It's been almost four months now since Derby QUAD closed its doors – the next-longest period of closure over QUAD's 12-year history has been two days. While it has been difficult for staff as we work our way through the post-COVID world in which we'll reopen, and difficult for the wider community of Derby as lives have been transformed, there have been some incredible rays of light. Last week, we received news that our Arts Council emergency fund application of £137,000 has been successful. This is a big relief; it means that, between the furlough scheme and the emergency fund, most of our outgoings over the past few months have been met. What it hasn't done is replace the income we have lost over the past three months, through corporate hires of our spaces, outdoor cinema events, cinema ticket sales and café sales.[217]

In 2020, with Covid-19 restrictions in place, I was unable to attend and survey outdoor film screenings, as I had done in 2018 and 2019. Instead, I developed a two-pronged approach of focusing on drive-in screenings, in particular the experience of the audiences nationwide and the venue hosts. In 2020, my data collection method shifted from distributing and collecting physical pieces of paper to using the online platform, Google Forms. This was a research method that I wanted to avoid as it asked the audience to reflect on their experience after the event rather than in situ, which I had favoured. However, I was able to develop more long form questions in the knowledge that the people filling in the survey were likely to have more time to answer them. By using Tweetdeck to promote my survey, my presumption was that the form would be completed after the screening and, therefore, more time would be available. This is in comparison to the filling in a piece of paper before a film screening, as was the process in 2018 and 2019. The questions I asked were as follows:

1. What was the date and venue of the last drive-in screening you attended, and who did you go with? - open field

2. Did you bring your own food?

3. Did you dress up?

4. Why did you attend the screening?

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[217] https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/thank-you-businesses-your-support-quad-alex-rock/ - accessed November 2021

5. What was the best part of your experience

6. What was the worst part of your experience

7. Anything else you'd like to add?

8. What is your date of birth

9. What is the first part of your postcode, eg NW1 or BS10

For Question One, I did not provide a ranking device as I had done in 2018 and 2019. This was because I used an online survey to collect my data, responses from which came from a number of screenings of different films in a range of places across Britain. Question One therefore became an introductory question so that I could understand more about the context of the respondent. Question Two reflected my observations in 2018 and 2019 that food was important. Here, I wanted to know to what extent people 'picnicked' in their car or whether eating bought food at the drive-in was part of the experience. Question Three was a reflection on fandom. I was interested to know if people would dress up in the private sphere of a car, located in a public environment. Did the car provide a bubble in which people could feel safe acting a certain way? Is fandom about community, and the idea that counters being in a private sphere?

Questions Four to Seven provided a space for the respondents to reflect on why they attended the screenings and an appraisal of the experience. This suite of four open-ended questions was included in my research questions as, compared to completing a survey card in a field, I understood these respondents to have more time to reflect on their experience.

For questions eight and nine, I used the same demographic approach as I did in 2018 and 2019. This was to provide consistency in the demographic approach to my data. In 2020, I attended film screenings at a drive-in in North East London called Drive-In London. The location of Drive-In London was a large unused car park in Meridian Water, a former industrial site in Edmonton.[218] I was not clear how Drive-In London secured use of the site,

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[218] The area is undergoing a major rezoning project which includes the promise of bringing 10,000 homes and 6,000 jobs to the London Borough of Enfield, where the site is located. The vision for the area is to provide "a step-change away from industrial warehousing and logistics type uses which are relatively plentiful in the Borough, offering higher skilled, higher paid employment opportunities for local people.: https://www.meridianwater.co.uk/about/ -accessed December 2021

though I was aware of other pop up projects in London, which were designed to animate space, in development.[219] These screenings were produced by a group of theatre producers whose work had ceased as theatres had been forced to close. I attended the Drive-In London screening not to speak to the audiences, which would have been forbidden. Rather, I wanted to understand what a drive-in experience felt like in a pandemic era and contextualise the responses that I gathered from the online survey I prepared, and the set of questions I sent the Drive-In London producers (appendix six).

Unlike the screenings in 2018 and 2019, I was unable to meet the producers. Instead, I liaised with them via email to ask questions which provided more context to my research. The questions I asked in the email followed a similar tone to the email I sent to the venue contacts that I had met in 2018 and 2019. However, as I have not met the contact at the drive-in, I took a more relaxed and friendlier approach, cognisant that they may be very busy. I concluded that the friendlier I was, the more chance I had of getting a reply from the drive-in producers. The questions covered the curation of the films, the pre-screening activities, the impact of food and drink, the audience demographic and notions of community. These short questions were designed to connect to the person I was emailing, to show an understanding of the product they delivered and to elicit a useful reply, one which would add further context to my work.

3.8 Conclusion

As a part-time researcher, I was afforded a degree of luxury, of having the time and capacity to conduct field research over a three-year period. This process was not without some difficulties, but the elongated time frame provided space to reflect on the questions I asked and the way I asked the questions, a process which would have been limited for a full-time researcher. I was therefore able to work with Adam Buss and Alex Rock, at Quad, to include questions that were able to impact on the way they designed the scheduling. I was also able to pivot in 2020 and ask questions to a new type of audience, attending a new type of

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[219] Examples include:

a) Brent CrossTown in Barnet, a large 'new town' for North West London which has created a pop-up pavilion as a way to

engage local residents and assert marking values: https://www.argentrelated.co.uk/2021/12/02/brent-cross-town-opens-the-visitor-pavilion-and-welcomes-new-retailers-to-the-area accessed Novmeber 2021

b) Wembley Park is a redevelopment site centred around Wembley Stadium in North West London. Smaller in size than Brent Cross West, its offer of high density housing is accompanied by an arts program https://wembleypark.com/ - accessed January 2022

experience, questions which were a direct by-product of questions I had developed and findings I had gathered in my two previous years of research.

My research sought to put immersive ethnographic practices at the heart of my work and, in doing this, I intended to work with audiences and producers and provide a way for venues to engage with audiences and to understand audiences. The ability to manoeuvre in this way has enabled the creation of an unique ethnographic study, which adds informed knowledge to the academy by seeking to answer the core question "What is the appeal of outdoor film screenings in relation to community, space and experience?"

Chapter Four: Value and Appeal

4.1 Introduction

Value and appeal are two clear themes that emerged in the research I undertook on outdoor film screenings. As the first results chapter in this thesis, I present the themes of value and appeal as a basis for understanding the audience and a starting point in answering the core question "What is the appeal of outdoor film screenings and who do they appeal to?" This chapter is divided into two parts. Part one focuses on value; here, I argue that value is an important way of measuring appeal by introducing different categories of value that have emerged from my findings. These categories are:

●   Cultural value (2.1)

●   Nostalgic value (2.2)

●   Environmental value (2.3)

●   Other types of value (2.4)

●   Value for money (2.5)

The first section considers cultural value, a term taken from the first survey card I used in 2018. The idea of cultural value was interpreted in a number of different and interesting ways, some respondents provided a very comprehensive reply, others did not. Value emerges in other ways, too. The responses I collected offered different interpretations of the term "value", drawn from the audience data. These values include the importance of nostalgia and environment, along with the values of mental health and wellbeing, findings which add to the personal nature of the outdoor film screening. Value is also discussed in terms of both "value for money" and adding value. Theorists, such as Ralph Barton Perry, Franz Adler and Susan Himmelweit, provide a guide to interpreting the term "value", a word which offers a variety of meanings. The use of quotations from the respondents, answering the question posed in 2018 "What is the cultural appeal of outdoor film screenings?", provides very personalised accounts of the term "value", a notion that is reflected in the understanding appeal, which is the second part of this chapter.

In the second part of this chapter, the etymology of the term "appeal" is considered: how audiences describe the "appeal factors" of outdoor film screenings. "Appeal factors" include words such as community, social and atmosphere, concepts which are sometimes tangible and sometimes ethereal. The data picks up different geographical variations in appeal

which emphasise different geographical appeals. The words chosen by the audiences are knitted together with responses to the question "Have you been to an outdoor screening before?" Combined with other numerical data regarding the age of the audience and how far the audience were prepared to travel to get to the screenings, this chapter seeks to understand the motivation of the audience members that I surveyed during my formal research period.

The overall objective of this chapter is to provide a basis for understanding the audiences who attended the outdoor film screenings that I attended in 2018 and 2019, along with data collected in 2020. I used unique and original numerical data, open field data and observations from the screenings I attended to illuminate different types of value and appeal, themes which will be unpicked further throughout this thesis.

4.2 Value

Value as a measurement, is a useful tool for understanding how important something is. The 'something' can be any item or experience or cultural convention that has significance to an individual or groups of people.[220] Value within the context of outdoor film screenings is perhaps best understood using Kate Clarke's definition of value within the context of heritage.[221] Clarke provides a case for value as understood relative to significance.[222] Using tools such as the Burra Charter provides a framework to evaluate significance.[223] The Burra Charter provides a consensual understanding of value, something of particular importance within the subjective field of heritage. Value in all forms can be subjective. The first section of this chapter looks at different types of value, as defined by the audiences who completed the survey cards distributed at screenings in 2018 and 2019. Here, value emerges through

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[220] Dictionary definitions will refer to value as a commodity rating. As a noun it refers to 'a fair return or equivalent in goods, services, or money for something exchanged.'# As a verb, 'value' refers to a rating 'to consider or rate highly and as an adjective 'value' can be a description of a lower cost product thttps://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/value - accessed July 2022

[221] Clarke, Kate "Values- Based Heritage Management and the Heritage Lottery Fund in the UK" APT Bulletin: The Journal of Preservation Technology, 2014 Vol 45 No 2-3, Special Issue on Values Based Preservation (2014) p65-71

[222] Guerin Yuan and Lihe Dong alco suggest that value stands for the significance of things, and concepts of value are ideas, opinions and attitudes 'the kinds of things which are significant'.# However Yuan and Dong do bring together the terms 'culture' and 'value', in stating that "Culture and value are interlinked, with each society having different values and culture."

Yuan, G. On value and culture. *Front. Philos. China* 1, 237–244 (2006)

[223] Clarke, Kate "Values- Based Heritage Management and the Heritage Lottery Fund in the UK" APT Bulletin: The Journal of Preservation Technology, 2014 Vol 45 No 2-3, Special Issue on Values Based Preservation (2014 p66

patterns in the data and is, therefore, both obvious and inconspicuous. The section starts with 'cultural value' a term used in 2018 on the first survey card I created.

4.2.1 Cultural value

Cultural value is a key theme in my research; the term was used in a question posed to the audiences I spoke to in 2018. The term "cultural value" is made of two words which have many meanings. The term "culture" is subjective and is used best when applied to the context of a person or persons.

Culture

The term culture may reflect the identity of the individual who takes elements from different social cultures to form their own. Equally, culture can reflect the ways in which people live, according to religions or societal norms. Culture can be both embedded in tradition and can be spontaneous or new (contemporary). Outdoor screenings are used as a way to reflect and embrace culture. A good example of this is the development of the drive-in cinema, which, as Simon Gunn would argue, was a response, in large part, to the car culture of the 1950s.[224] Here the rapid increase in car ownership developed an audience for drive-in cinema. To use a drive-in, a car was required. Therefore, two commodities which represented contemporary culture became dependent on each other.[225]

Value

The singular word "value" is as subjective as the term "cultural value". The scope of definition of the word value varies from very binary numerical calculus to an emotional term that may evaluate a person's worth. In between are nuanced approaches including Ralph Barton Perry's "General Theory of Value", which links value to interest[226] and Franz Adler,

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[224] Gunn, Simon "People and the car: the expansion of automobility in urban Britain, c.1955–70" Social History, Vol. 38, No. 2 (May 2013),

[226] Hart, Samuel L "Axiology--Theory of Values" Philosophy and Phenomenological Research , Sep., 1971, Vol. 32, No. 1 (Sep., 1971), p.30

who connects value to material goods.[227] Susan Himmelweit defines value as a process of exchange between what a product is "worth" – a certain amount of money – and its "value," which is equivalent to all other commodities that can be sold for the same amount.[228] Value can, in summary, be a method of exchange, both in commodity and in skills and social attributes. These ideas demonstrate the range of interpretations of the word value.

The interpretation of value is reflected in the unique responses that I collected in 2018. Question Five of the survey card I created in 2018 asked: "What is the cultural value of outdoor film screenings?" I used the term in a very generic sense, not referring to any theorists or models of social studies. Without explaining what the term may or may not be, I wanted to understand what the term meant to the audiences. The responses were mixed, with the audiences interpreting the cultural value in several different ways, suggesting a scale of engagement in the term. At one end of the scale were the respondents who identified no cultural value in the outdoor film screenings. Examples of this include Respondent 1AP: "Not sure about the cultural value but it is a fun and different evening", and Respondent 45WW: "No significant cultural value other than an opportunity to enjoy a new experience." Two respondents did not know if there was any cultural value in outdoor film screenings (Respondent 15 BP: "Don't Know") and other thought there was no value at all (Respondent 106WW: "No value at all. It's bloody cold!"), though this may be down to a lack of comfort and therefore enjoyment.

Moving along a scale, which begins with the suggestion that there is no cultural value to outdoor film screenings, several recipients introduced the idea of value as a comparison. The suggestion of a comparison is highlighted by Respondent 40BP who wrote: "Outside has a greater value than inside in front of the TV." Other respondents introduced the idea that the outdoor film screenings provided additional value. For Respondent 1AP, the value was in attending something that was "fun and different". Respondent 11AP noted that the value was "pure fun and a different experience." These introduced the idea that outdoor film screenings provided additional value. Their responses did not directly mention cultural value, but did indicate that there was value in the experience. For others, culture was about group activity, which reflects the work of Barton Perry and his suggestion that value is about

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[227] Adler, Franz, The Value Concept in Sociology "American Journal of Sociology , Nov., 1956, Vol. 62, No. 3 (Nov., 1956), p 273

[228] Himmelweit, Susan "Value Relations and Divisions within the Working Class" Source: Science & Society , Fall, 1984, Vol. 48, No. 3 (Fall, 1984), pp.323-343

interest rather than material goods. Respondents from three separate venues mentioned cultural value in social terms:

- Respondent 4HH: "Very cultural everyone gets to meet different people"
- Respondent 21HH: "Socio-economic events bring members of society closer, bring diversity"
- Respondent 47AP: "Socialising with lots of different people with the same interests"

These responses introduce socialising and being social as a value, which resonates across my research findings, thus suggesting that this theme contributes to the appeal of outdoor film screenings. This is explored throughout my research chapters. The last two points on the scale present a direct challenge to the term cultural value. Respondent 11AP asks: "What is 'cultural value; maybe more cultural is it was more educational, a classic film. It is 'pure fun' and a different experience." Respondent 1AP reinforced this: "Not sure about the cultural value but it is a fun and different evening." These responses use the term in their replies, but also challenge its validity. Others sought to define cultural value:

- Respondent 27HH: "High Value, outdoor, culture, time together - all good."
- Respondent 7HH: "High, classical music too & Shakespearean plays"

These responses resonate with different notions of community, space or experience. In particular, comments regarding a 'high value' activity may suggest the way in which the audience feels within the environment they are in, rather than confirming the status of the experience. This suggestion of adding value to the cinematic experience was a method used by people who developed the first cinematic spaces as noted by Rachel Low.[229] Furthermore exhibitors, such as Albany Ward, promoted going to the cinema as a luxury experience, thus reasserting the 'high value' of the experience. The value of the experience in these examples is somewhat self-deterministic, which echoes Radbourne, Glow and Johanson suggestion that "Audiences increasingly want to shape their own experience".[230] The alternative position of an experience produced by the audience is the more traditional

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[229] Low, "The History of British Film Volume Two: 1906-1914" p16

[230] Radbourne, et al "The Audience Experience: Measuring Quality in the Performing Arts Author(s): International Journal of Arts Management , SPRING 2009, Vol. 11, No. 3 (SPRING 2009), pp. 16-29

model of inviting the audience to an event which is tightly produced. Tightly produced events by companies such as Secret Cinema are a good example of experiences that are navigated and controlled by the producers, rather than the audiences.

Therefore, the outdoor film screenings are both a platform for presenting social status and being with others that may identify as part of similar social grounds. However, presenting the idea of "cultural value" to the audiences yielded results that were a mix of interpretations of if culture reflects how a person chooses to live, and the significance of this. Although, for some, the term was confusing. Question Five changed in 2019. This was not to provoke a conversation about cultural value, but rather to ensure that all audiences could respond to the question and that the overall research aim of "listening to people" was achieved.[231]

4.2.2 Nostalgic Value

The term "nostalgia" has gone through many different guises, from its origin as a term of weakness to its reincarnation as a term to describe a much loved "by-gone era".[232] Nostalgia was a strong and surprising narrative that emerged from the results I collected in 2018 and 2019. There were examples wherein the word was used in the manner of a list, without further context: Respondent 64BP: "Fun, Friendship & Nostalgia." Respondent 78HH: "Nostalgia & a chance to share this in a relaxed way with friends." In these responses, a connection is made between friendship and nostalgia, though it is not clear what is meant by the term "nostalgia". Sedikides and Wilde describe that "nostalgia is a social emotion, that links individuals to key figures (e.g. family members, friends, partners) or on meaningful events (e.g., childhood, anniversaries, graduations)".[233] Nostalgic recollections, they argue, are rich in their social repertoire and connect people to places and experiences. Examples of this aspect of nostalgia from the results included:

- Respondent 3AP: "Reminiscent of drive-thru cinema, nostalgia combined with a new experience."

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[231] Barker, Martin (2012) "Crossing Out the Audience' from 'Audiences Defining and Researching Screen Entertainment Reception (The Key Debates - Mutations and Appropriations in European Film Studies) Amsterdam University Press p190

[232] The term 'nostalgia' was initially considered a psychological disorder ever since Swiss army physicians in the 17th Century attributed the fragile mental and physical health of some troops to their longing to return home — nostos in Greek, and algos, the pain that attended thoughts of it. Becker, Tobias, "The meaning of nostalgia: Genealogy and Critique" History and Theory, 57 no 2, June 2018) p 239

[233] Cheung, Sedikides and Wilde "Nostalgia Proneness and reduced prejudice" Personality and Individual Differences 109 (2017) 89–97 p89

- Respondent 23HH: "Always wanted to enjoy an experience like the olden days."

Watching a familiar film in a new setting can not only trigger memories of the past, but can also create new memories and imagined memories. Other examples of this include:

- Respondent 54AP: "For me it creates a nostalgia of watching *Grease* for the first time."
- Respondent 55AP: "The outdoor aspect reminds me of camping as a child."

Nostalgia, according to Gary Cross, is a consumer experience.[234] As previously noted in the literature review, bought things, Cross argues, make memories and this memory is subjective. Cross argues that not all elements of nostalgia are open to everyone (heritage nostalgia is for the wealthy) and nostalgia can create the past that wants to be told. To have an nostalgic feeling about camping is to have all the equipment to go camping, something that Cross would argue is not open to all.

Nostalgia is good for business because nostalgia evokes pleasant memories that are often connected to place. The audience's interpretation of nostalgia can be very different to the producer's interpretation of the term nostalgia. The audience is referring to a *developed* personal connection or understanding of a place of activity, whereas the producers of outdoor film screenings are trying to *create* the atmosphere for a personal connection or understanding. In an email correspondence with the lead contact at Coughton Court, the term "nostalgia" was mentioned. When asked the question: "From your experience what do you think is the most important factor for the audience attending an outdoor film screening?", the lead contact made a comparison between Baddessby Hall and Coughton Court, two venues she co-manages:

> For some people it's definitely not the venue bringing them to the screening. For some I'd say it was the nostalgia of the film, we've had hen parties at Dirty Dancing, there can be quite a lot of singing and even some attempts at the lift at the end.

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[234] Cross, Garry (2017) "Consumed Nostalgia, Memory in the Age of Fast Capitalism," Columbia University Press p12

People generally come in quite large groups so I'd say one of the main reasons is to spend time with family and friends.[235]

Here, the film is seen as the nostalgic hook. Nostalgia provides the platform for audiences to see the film more than once and create a personal connection or understanding of the genre. The idea of personal connection or understanding is used in nostalgic terms to create an imagined past. The imagined past provided a way to anchor and validate the experience. A number of responses made specific reference to Englishness / Britishness:

- Respondent 23OC:"Very British, picnic rain and fun."
- Respondent 38WH: "It's SO English."
- Respondent 20OC: "Quirky, Quaint. A somewhat nostalgic feeling to it."
- Respondent 84BABR: "Warm summer evening, good food and good company. Quintessentially English atmosphere."

These responses describe a 'cultural value' of being English or British. As with many nostalgic tropes, these observations are steeped in an imagined past. Vijay Agnew suggests that memories establish a connection between our individual past and our collective past (our origins, heritage, and history).[236] Moreover, "The past is always with us, and it defines our present; it resonates in our voices, hovers over our silences, and explains how we came to be ourselves and to inhabit what we call 'our homes'."[237] Agnew proposes that the past and present are social constructs, which are contested by individual experiences. Therefore, the respondents' ideas of Englishness or Britishness are not to be disregarded, but rather they can be seen as interesting ways for the audience to describe their experiences. As previously mentioned in the Literature Review, Scott Alexander Howard argues that memories are about reliving very personal experiences, rather than a connection to a generic by-gone era.[238] The use of the term memory suggests the respondents who refer to the appeal of outdoor film screenings in terms of cultural identity

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[235] Excerpt from email correspondence with the lead contact at Coughton Court 9th June 2021

[236] Agnew, Vijay (2005)"Introduction" Diaspora, Memory and Identity; A search for a new home." University of Toronto Press p3

[237] Ibid Agnew p3

[238] Ibid Howard p643

are reinforcing their own ideas as to what it is to be British or English. Furthermore, the way in which Respondents 20OHBR, 38WH and 84BABR have a personal connection or understanding to the film is through the imagined past.

4.2.3 Environmental value

Another interesting finding was the value of the environment on the appeal of outdoor film screenings. For clarity, this was not the value or appeal of the venue, but rather the value of being outside. The contrast between watching a film in the domestic sphere, as opposed to watching a film outdoors, is considered in "Chapter Five: Alternative Auditoriums". Here, value is placed on volume (the amount of space in which the audience watches a film) and location. A pattern that emerged in words used to describe the cultural value (2018) and appeal (2019) was how important the environmental value was to the audiences. Data collected in 2018 and 2019 showed a high frequency of words that relate to being outside. Specifically, the words which occurred several times were "outside" "environment" and "fresh air", a term which was used widely in the responses I gathered. In 2018, the predominant environmental factor was "outside", this was followed by "fresh air" and "environment" (Figure 1).
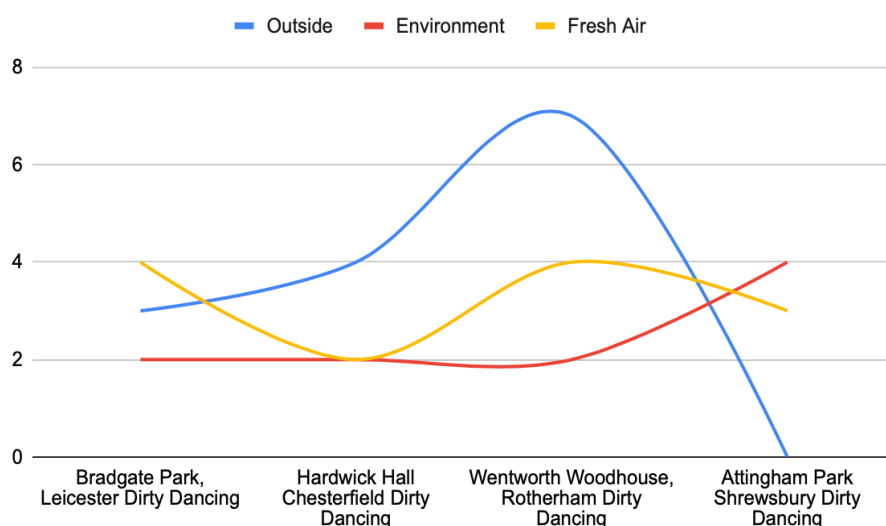

Figure 1: Environmental Factors in 2018

2019 saw a shift in appeal, with "fresh air" being the predominant environmental value. Being outside and the environment were lesser factors (Figure 2.

Environmental Value Factors 2019
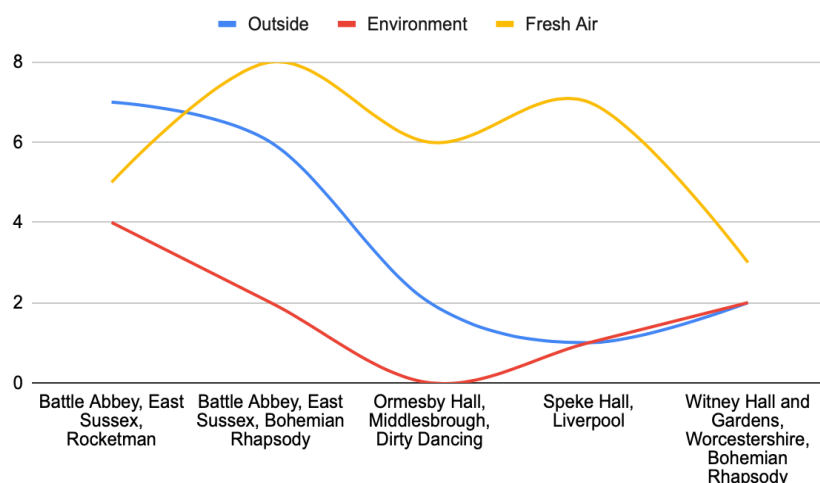
Figure 2: Environmental Value Factors 2019

The data provides a clear indicator of the value of non-traditional auditorium spaces over traditional auditorium spaces. Respondent 37BARM affirms this by suggesting the value of outdoor film screenings was "Far better than being in a stuffy cinema. Plus, it's different." Therefore, environmental value speaks to the importance of viewing a film in a space that is undefined, one that provides the vastness of an open space. The experience of watching a film outdoors contrasts with the traditional auditorium space, which, by its very nature, is defined. The importance of space is a subject covered in "Chapter Five: Alternative Auditoriums", particularly on how space is appropriated for outdoor film screenings and the cultural value, or otherwise, of the buildings used as the backdrop for the screenings I attended.

4.2.4 Other types of value

Like in "cultural value", the term "value" can be conjoined with other words to specify a certain type of value. The commonality of these conjoined words is that they imply a measurement of impact, an idea presented by Susan Himmelweit in her work on working class people and economic value.[239] Often, value is described as a macro measurement. Examples of these are social value and economic value, terms which describe the impact of

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[239] Himmelweit, "Value Relations and Divisions within the Working Class " pp.323-343

actions on the wider society. Value can also be highly personal, a theme that arose in several of the responses I collected.

For one audience member, the "value of being social" was about access to an experience that made them feel comfortable: Respondent 104HH explained "I suffer from anxiety and this is better than being stuck in a cinema". Another talked about better mental health: Respondent 19AP stated "Being away from my children. It's the 6-week summer holiday and I am going insane."

Wellbeing was also mentioned by Respondent 100AP: "The environment makes you feel fresh - impacts on your wellbeing." Furthermore, the idea of wellbeing was mentioned by Respondent 11BP, who saw the cultural value of outdoor film screenings as "To broaden and enlighten your life experiences". The idea of outdoor screenings impacting mental health wellbeing is an interesting finding, which is both an indication of the highly personal appeal, and impact of outdoor film screenings. It also suggests a residual value that may have an impact that lasts beyond the period of the screenings.

Another finding was the value of outdoor film screenings in providing access to something culturally different. Here, we see respondents developing their cultural capital or moving away from the prescribed idea of how they should respond to a situation. Respondent 22HH provides an eloquent example of this: "I am a mathematician, and this makes me feel arty." Here we see the respondent defining themselves and recognizing how the outdoor film screenings adds a personal value to their experience.

An additional value that emerged from my finding was "celebration value". This novel term describes the value that the outdoor film screenings provide for groups of people who are celebrating a special event. Two respondents, who completed survey cards in 2018, alluded to this value. In response to the question "What is the cultural value of outdoor film screenings?", Respondent 120HH replied "This was a birthday gift from my son." and Respondent 58AP: "Best birthday present EVER." Another respondent was attending a birthday celebration at the outdoor screenings at Bradgate Park. Respondent 97BP noted: "Came for a 40th Birthday". Here, we see examples of how the outdoor film screenings provide a platform for another event or another experience. The multilevel approach is distinct to screenings in non-traditional auditorium spaces that allow for personalisation. Equally, as demonstrated in the responses relating to wellbeing, part of the appeal of outdoor film screenings is enabling the audience who may struggle to engage in the

traditional auditorium space or who find outdoor film screenings a creative outlook. Here, value becomes personal and hard to quantify. In these personal examples, one might suggest that value is aligned more to Kate Clarkes idea of the significance within heritage adding value, rather than to Gary Cross' interpretation of nostalgia and commodity adding value. The significance of Respondent 104HH feeling safe and secure at an outdoor film screening is a value that could not be captured in a material item, but has a lasting significance.

4.2.5 Value for money

If the term "cultural value" provided several abstract results, asking the audiences "Is this screening value for money?" provided a binary reply. This question was introduced in 2019 after a review meeting with the team from the Quad in Derby. The question of whether the ticket price of the outdoor film screening was value for money became a key topic. The ticket price for a Summer Night screening in 2021 was £15.50 for adults and £10.50 for under-12s (under 5s are free) and is applicable to all venues.[240] The cost of attending a Summer Nights screening is a little higher than the average cost of a ticket to see a film at Vue Cinemas, which is around £13.00 for a peak (evening) screening.[241]

The results from the data collected in 2019 show that for all venues most of the audience thought that the ticket price of the screenings was good value for money. (Figure 2: "Do you think this experience is good value for money?") When asked the question "Do you think this experience is good value for money?", 18 out of 69 (26%) respondents who attended the *Dirty Dancing* in replied No or Not Sure. The responses from the Ormesby Hall in Middlesbrough mirrored the data from the audience who attended the *Bohemian Rhapsody* screening at Speke Hall in Liverpool: 26% of the audience (20 out of 88) thought the experience was either not good value for money or were unsure.

The percentage and number of people who thought the experience was not good value for money is as follows:

- 18% (23 out of 26) of respondents who attended the screenings *Bohemian Rhapsody* screening at Ormesby Hall.

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[240] https://summernightsfilm.co.uk/about - accessed June 2021

[241] https://www.myvue.com - accessed January 2022

- 10% (15 out of 148) of respondents who attended the screenings of *Rocketman* at Battle Abbey.
- 17% (11 out of 64) *Bohemian Rhapsody* at Battle Abbey.

As mentioned in the methodology, all the data is taken before the screening begins. It is therefore fair to suggest that the consideration of value for money was based on the pre-screening experience.

Do you think this experience is good value for money?
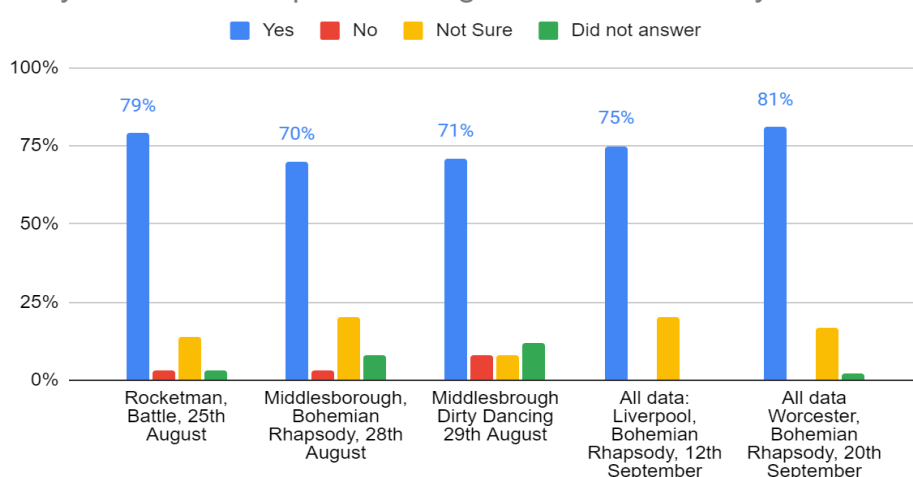
Figure 3: Do you think this experience is good value for money?

As part of the email conversation with the lead contacts with the venues, the question was asked "What are your thoughts regarding outdoor film screenings being value for money?" Three recipients replied. The lead contact from Ormesby Hall replied:

> We did get some comments before the day that people thought it was expensive, that said in our area they don't have a huge amount of disposable income. I think they are great value, as you go for the whole evening, not just a couple of hours for the film (so more expensive than the cinema), and you can take all your own stuff, food and drink without hiding it in your handbag.[242]

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[242] Except from email correspondence with Ormesby Court Friday 16th August 2019

The added value explicitly relates to the permission to bring 'extras' to the screening, something that is not permitted in a traditional auditorium environment. The lead contact for Baddesley Clinton and Coughton Court was asked the same question:

> Personally I think they are very good value for money, they aren't dissimilar in price from going to a normal cinema and especially at Baddesley and Coughton the venue makes it more special and the time to catch up with friends and family beforehand makes it even more value for money.[243]

The lead contact at Baddesley Clinton and Coughton Court also spoke to the importance of value for the venue, in particular the risk. She noted:

> It was a low-risk event which didn't require a lot of staff effort or time. We work on a ticket split with the outdoor cinema company so there is no money paid upfront, we simply get a split of the money that is made, this makes it low risk financially.[244]

The economic value of the screenings is a practical consideration, yet it does not appear to be a financial consideration for the audience. The value of the experience is qualified by several different matrices: space & place, nostalgic, social and heritage values. The response to these values is highly personal. Radbourne, Glow and Johanson suggests "Audiences increasingly want to shape their own experience and marketing strategies should be refocused on empowering the audience".[245]

There is some evidence that the drive-in screenings that took place during 2020 provided value for money. Respondent1DI noted, "I thought the tickets were much more reasonably priced than other drive-ins that I've been to (it cost £20 for a car with two people)." Watching a film at a drive-in is a cheaper option than watching a film outdoors.[246] Moreover, I would argue that the more prominent value was that the screenings provided an opportunity for

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[243] Excerpt from email correspondence with the lead contact at Coughton Court 9th June 2021

[244] Excerpt from email correspondence with the lead contact at Coughton Court 9th June 2021

[245] Jennifer Radbourne, Katya Johanson, Hilary Glow and Tabitha White "The Audience Experience: Measuring Quality in the Performing Arts Author(s): International Journal of Arts Management , SPRING 2009, Vol. 11, No. 3 (SPRING 2009), pp. 16-29

[246] https://summernightsfilm.co.uk/about - accessed June 2021

families and households to watch a film in a safe environment during 2020, the first year of the Covid-19 pandemic.

4.2.6 Adding Value

There are several ways in which outdoor film screenings add value. I argue that adding value to the experience was about enhancing "comfort factors", a subject discussed in "Chapter Six: Experience". Prior to my formal research period, I attended several screenings where the added value came from the provision of interesting or alternative food options. These included food carts, such as champaign trucks, donut carts and other street food. In 2019, Ormesby Hall presented a food offer. The marketing team at the Ormesby worked with local catering companies to offer a bar, a coffee and tea cart and a hot dog stand. In 2019, I observed the offer at Battle Abbey. Here, the staff team provided hot food and hampers, which were provided by the in house catering team. Battle Abbey also provided blankets for sale, which tapped into another idea of the comfort factors of outdoor film screenings.

The dynamic and rapidly changing environment of outdoor film screenings has seen a shift in recent years. A common thread of the screenings I attended prior to my formal research period was the development of partnerships with sponsors. These food-based partnerships have been replaced by relationships that benefit from a brand connection with outdoor film screenings. In 2016, Pop-Up London provided a bar and worked with organisations who specialise in gourmet food.[247] Pop-Up London no longer partners with food or drink companies. However, it has partnered with 'Art Pass', a membership scheme that offers discounts to cultural events.[248] (Figure 4)

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[247] Proper Corn was example of a gourmet food company which partnered with Pop- Up screens. https://proper.co.uk/collections/popcorn

[248] https://www.popupscreens.co.uk/ - accessed October 2022
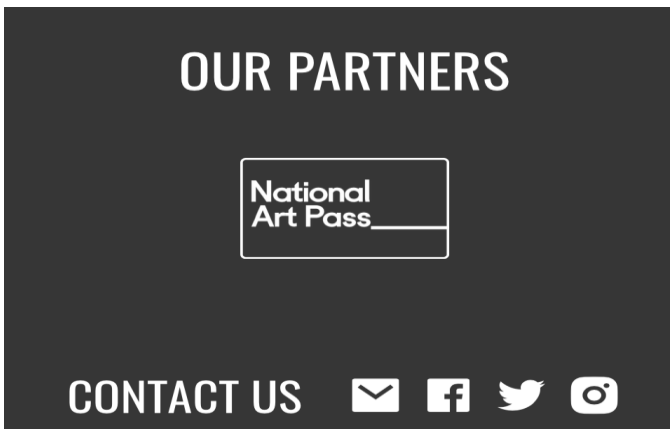
Figure 4: Reference to Art Pass on the Pop-Up London website

Luna Cinema (one of the largest outdoor screenings production companies) now partners with a car company and a brewery.[249] The description of the partnership with the car company makes no reference to the film screening experience. The description of the brewery partnership does make a mention of the screenings, citing that the brewery runs the bar at the screenings. (Figure 5)
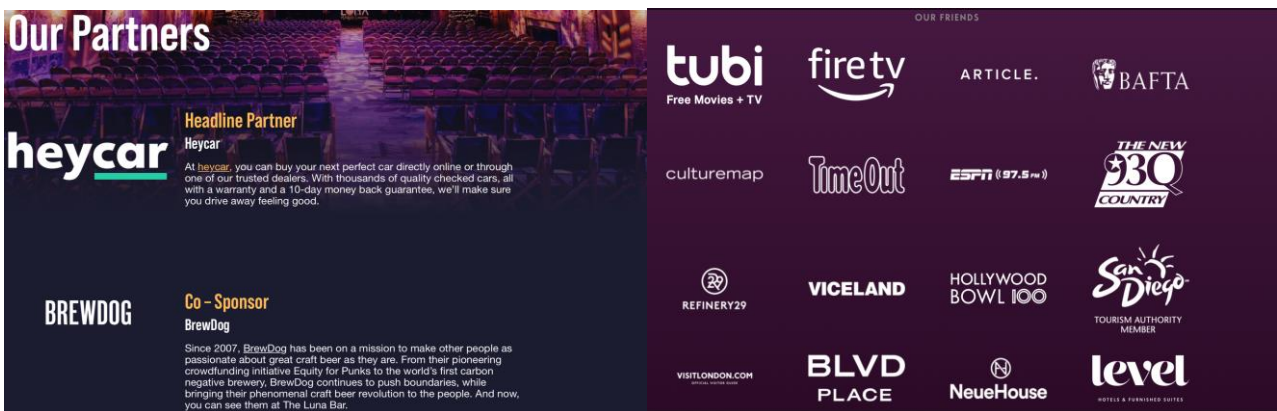
Figure 5: Two screengrabs from the website of Luna Cinema showing corporate partners

RoofTop Cinema, first established in London, has spread internationally.[250] The organisation now has sites in America, in New York, Atlanta and in California. The partnerships reflect the cultural marketing and digital agencies in both the UK and USA, along with localised tourism organisations. Just as with Pop Up screenings, the partnership organisations connected with RoofTop Cinema appear to support their brand identity (Figure 6).

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[249] https://www.thelunacinema.com/our-partners-winter/ - accessed October 2022

[250] https://rooftopcinemaclub.com - accessed November 2022

Figure 6: Roof Top Cinema Brand Partners 2022

Whether these interventions add to the value of the screening is questionable. Sponsorship is financially valuable to the producers and exhibitors, but an assessment of the cultural value of these endorsements needs more clarification. However, endorsements can add value in terms of connection and how the audience is able to connect with the experience though commodities. Radbourne, Glow and Johanson suggest that "Audiences increasingly want to shape their own experience and marketing strategies should be refocused on empowering audience".[251] Radbourne *et al* propose that contemporary audiences need to be more engaged'[252] Radbourne argues that audiences will be fiercely loyal if they can experience fulfilment and realisation in the arts experience. Radbourne would argue that arts organisations should do more to both enhance their offer and secure loyalty. Audiences recognise different values factors in arts and creative experiences they engage with and want to see value in the interactions they engage in. Choice is part of the value intervention. To appeal to audiences' understanding of choice, value and its significance are important.[253] The significance may be practical or theoretical but will always be personal.

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[251] Jennifer Radbourne, Katya Johanson, Hilary Glow and Tabitha White "The Audience Experience: Measuring Quality in the Performing Arts Author(s): International Journal of Arts Management , SPRING 2009, Vol. 11, No. 3 (SPRING 2009), pp. 16-29

[252] Ibid Radbourne p16

[253] With reference to Kate Clarke. Clarke provides a case for value as understood relative to significance Clarke, Kate "Values- Based Heritage Management and the Heritage Lottery Fund in the UK" APT Bulletin: The Journal of Preservation Technology, 2014 Vol 45 No 2-3, Special Issue on Values Based Preservation (2014) p66

4.3. Appeal

4.3.1 Appeal Factors

The appeal factors in watching a film outside or in a non-traditional auditorium are vast and are dependent on several factors over which the audience may, or may not, have control of. Like a traditional auditorium space, the venue and the film are fixed by the producers or exhibitors. However, from my findings, the audience that watches a film outside, or in a non-traditional auditorium space, has a greater capacity to personalise the experience. Ideas about how audiences personalised their screenings were captured in two ways. The first was the audience's response in 2018 to Question Five on my survey card, "What do you think the cultural value of outdoor is?" or in 2019 "What is the appeal of outdoor film screenings?" The second was the behaviours I observed while at the screenings. This section reflects on the appeal as stated in responses taken from the question cards, notably the importance of the film and how far the audience had travelled.

To understand the appeal of outdoor film screenings, I created two word clouds by collating all of the Question Five responses to the survey card collected at Ormesby Hall, in Middlesbrough, and Battle Abbey, in East Sussex, the two screenings that were geographically furthest apart. (See Figure) The common words that were used are as follows:

- "experience" (9 times by the 2019 audiences in Ormesby Hall)
- "atmosphere" (27 times by the Battle Abbey audiences)
- "different" (41 times in Ormesby Hall and 17 times in Battle Abbey).

Other words which were frequently used included "sociable"/ "social", "outside" / "fresh air" and "relaxed".

Word Cloud: Ormsby Hall
Bohemian Rhapsody, 28th August 2019

Word Cloud: Battle Abbey
Bohemian Rhapsody 24th August 2019

Figure 7: High Frequency words in Word Cloud at Ormesby Hall and Battle Abbey,2019

The use of words is important as it shows a distinct regional pattern. The words used in the responses also show that the appeal of outdoor film screenings has many facets. Outdoor film screenings are more than the mechanics of a space and a film. As my research suggests, the full picture is more nuanced. The prominent adjectives used were social, community, atmosphere, experience and together (See Figure 7), which appeared 411 times across 1123 survey cards.

Social: 47	Community: 36	Atmosphere: 94	Experience: 171	Together: 63

Figure 7: High Frequency words in Word Cloud at Ormesby Hall and Battle Abbey,2019

Atmosphere

The use of the word "atmosphere", as supposed to "experience", was also an interesting finding from my research. At Witney Hall in Worcester, comments included Respondent 50's "The atmosphere, being outdoors enjoying a movie", Respondent 5: "Different Experience; The outdoors enhances the experience", and Respondent 2: "Something different. A chilled

atmosphere." In 2019 audiences in Ormsby Hall, the word "experience" was used nine times and, in Battle Abbey audiences, the word "atmosphere" was used 27 times. Similarly, the word "different" was used 41 times in Ormesby Hall and 17 times in Battle Abbey. The use of different words by different audiences may speak to regional differences and the way in which words are used to express value or appeal.

Together

The word "together" frequently appeared in my data sets, in particular the phrase "Bring people together", which appeared 11 times in the data I collected in 2018. The word "together" denotes both how the individuals who responded to the survey feel and their assumptions as to what the screening does for others. It was not uncommon for people who were sitting next to each other to provide similar answers. However, what is interesting here is how the phrase "Bring people together" is repeated across all the venues I attended in 2018, where the audience would have been different.[254]

Social

"Social" is another word frequently used in 2019. Again, much like the term "community", this term was used in several ways, which I have categorised into broad themes. These themes seek to contextualise the word "social" to understand the appeal of outdoor film screenings, according to the relationships with others, the event or experience, and the people participating with the venue. Here there is a repetitive theme that one of the appeals of outdoor film screenings is sharing an experience with strangers.

Novelty

"Novelty" is another word that has frequency and is relevant to the concept of atmosphere. Novelty is a newness or a uniqueness that indicates a specialness or appeal.

- Respondent 20 OHBR: "Novelty"
- Respondent 80 OHBR: "Its novelty'"

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[254] Number of times the phrase 'Bring people together'was mentioned at venues I attended in 2018 Hardwick Hall 2 / Wentworth Woodhouse 1/ Bradgate Park 4/ Attingham Park 4

- Respondent 6 OHBR: "Part novelty, part being outside in a controlled environment"
- Respondent 59 SJ BR: "Novelty Factors"
- A Respondent 44 OHBR: "The Novelty, More relaxed than cinema. Better atmosphere."

"Novelty" also suggests the idea of difference. Watching a film outside will, because of multiple environmental factors, be different. Films may be shown outside at the same venue year after year, but, during each 12-month period, the audience and the venue will have matured and changed a little. As noted earlier, within a traditional auditorium environment these are factors that the audience does not have to consider.

Different

"Different" also refers to the experience, which may, in part, be the design of the event and/or may be the way in which the audience personalised the event. These might be micro differences, for example bringing your own food rather than buying food from the kiosk. Responses collected that mention the word "different" reflect the various ways the respondents use the term. To explore this, I have categorised a few key quotations under the headline "Alternative Auditorium, Social Opportunities and Memory Making" see Figure 8: Categorising interpretations of the term "different".

Theme	Quote
Alternative Auditorium	Respondent 48HH: "A different kind of experience with a great atmosphere." Respondent BABR 54: "Something different, great atmosphere."
Social opportunities	Respondent 107HH: "Very important to share different social experiences & environments." Respondent 58WW: "Social event to do something different and to enjoy the outdoors." Respondent BABR: 63: "Community Event, a bit different, air."

| Memory Making | Respondent: 71WH: "Something different. A pleasant experience."

Respondent: OC39: "Something different. Atmosphere. Memory Making" |

Figure 8: Categorising interpretations of the term 'different'

Within the context of "difference", "Alternative Auditorium" suggests that the appeal of outdoor film screenings connects to the comparison between seeing a film in a traditional auditorium environment (cinema) and seeing a film outdoors or in a non-traditional cinema environment. Many of the respondents mentioned the importance of bringing their own food or drink and personalising the experience:

- Respondent 44WW: "A jolly good atmosphere & great mates. Drinks, good food & just a great time."
- Respondent 55HH: "I'm only here for the food and booze"
- Respondent 119HH: "Fresh air, nice place, good food"

"Social Opportunities" is more abstract, as it first positions the appeal of outdoor film screenings as a social activity and then suggests that outdoor film screenings could be part of a canon of other social activities, which may include going out for lunch, to the pub or golf course. Respondent 5DI, who completed a drive-in survey, related attending an outdoor film screening to other recreational activities: "Doing something with friends that wasn't going to the pub/a restaurant/the park". Here the outdoor film screening takes on a role that is moving away from a cinematic experience and towards a social experience, something that is discussed by the New Cinema History movement.[255] Finally, "Memory Making" is a category that offers the idea of a distinct or different experience, one that is memorable. Memory is a theme that is repeated in this research, copying the themes of "Social Opportunities", which suggest cinema is not just about the film, it's who the film is watched with. Memory is referred to throughout this thesis, frequently in discrete appeal. The audience at outdoor film screenings purposefully create memories in the comfort items they bring to the screenings, such as food, furniture, clothes. The wearing of clothes represents a physical interpretation of the term appeal. The appeal of outdoor film screenings can be categorised using the predominant words, social, community, atmosphere, experience and

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[255] The New Cinema History movement considers how the cinematic space is used for non-cinematic, cultural and social purposes

together. These words are not exclusive; other descriptors are used by the audience. However, what is notable is the repetition of these keywords, used with a high frequency by people who may not know each other but are sharing an experience together.

4.3.2 Been to a Screening Before?

Having developed an understanding that outdoor films could appeal to anyone (with the caveat that there are many factors at play), I was interested in understanding who had been to a screening before. In 2019, I added a new question to the survey cards that I distributed at the screenings I attended. The additional question was "Have you been to an outdoor film screening before and if so, when?" Most respondents, across all the screenings I attended in 2019, had not been to an outdoor film screening (72% or 413 responses out of 574), but (28% or 159 out of 574) replied that they had been to a screening before. (See Figure 9) The yes responses can fall broadly into five categories:

1) Mention of a city or town in the UK, no additional details

2) Mention of a clear place and location in the UK

3) Mention of being abroad

4) Mention of a festival

5) Mention of an alternative artform seen outdoors.

With respect to Category 1, responses that mention a city or town in the UK, no additional details, include examples such as Respondent 107BARM: "Yes Eastbourne", Respondent 56 WH: "Yes- Leeds", Respondent 17SH: "Yes. Chester 3 years ago" and Respondent 31SH "Yes, Cornwall and Southport." These responses provide a clear answer to the question and an indication as to areas where respondents were prepared to travel to. With respect to Category 2, Mention of a clear place and location in the UK, the respondents offer a clearer description of where they had previously watched films. Examples in this category include:

- Respondent 5SH: "Clumba Park 2018 / Dunham Massey 2018 / Dunham Massey 2019"
- Respondent 17BABR: "Ashdown Race Course & Plumpton Race Course 2 years ago."

115

- Respondent 22BARM: "De La Warr Pavilion, Bexhill - two summers ago"

An interesting finding from these responses is the location of the venues listed. The UK venues mentioned by the respondents were in close proximity to the venue where the Summer Nights screenings that I attended took place. Examples of this include De La Warr Pavilion, which is under 10 miles to Battle Abbey, and Speke Hall in Liverpool is around 20 miles from Dunham Massey in Cheshire.

Several respondents who said they had been to an outdoor film screening before had been to a screening at a Summer Nights venue. Examples of this include:

- Respondent 3WH: "Yes, Baddesley Clinton last summer",
- Respondent 60BARM: "Derby Calke Abbey 2017, Whisky Gordon in Surrey 2018, Egham 2018."

It is not clear whether these respondents attended a Summer Nights production, but they did attend a screening at an historic or heritage venue, which is a one of the unique points of the Summer Nights experience.
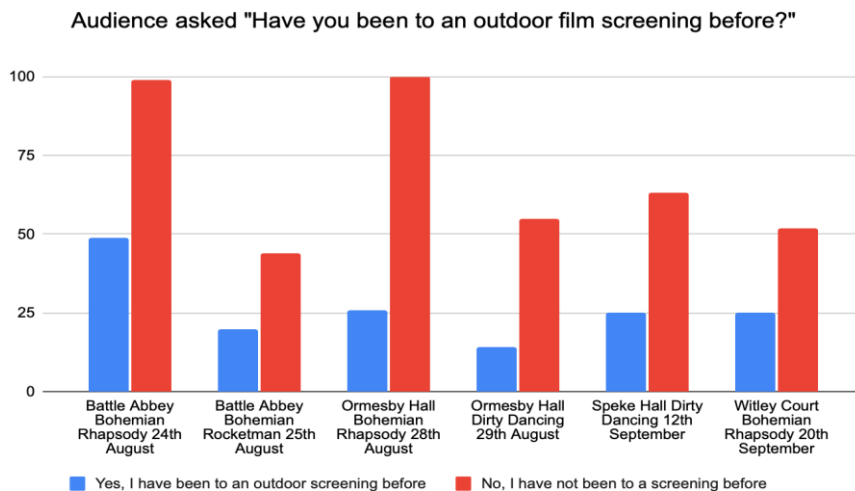

Figure 9: Audiences asked: "Have you been to an outdoor film screening before."

There were a few respondents whose experience of watching a film outdoors were embedded within another experience, covering points 3) Mention of being abroad and 4) Mention of a festival. Respondents 2OC and 113OC had watched a film outdoors on a

cruise ship, as had Respondent 15BABR. Respondent 39BABM, who attended the screenings of *Bohemian Rhapsody* at Battle Abbey, replied "Yes, Flight Deck HMS Bristol in the Caribbean 1986". Three people had seen films outside Gran Canaria in Spain. These were Respondents 40OC and 41OC and Respondent 34WH. The respondents who referenced watching a film outside while abroad also referenced memories. Attending outdoor film screenings at festivals was also mentioned by Respondent 88BABR: "Yes Hastings Beer and Music Festival" and Respondent 60WH: "Yes at a festival." These examples provide the possibility of an accidental experience where a primary experience grows to embrace other parts.

Categories 3) Mention of being abroad and 4) Mention of a festival, are distinct from category 5) Mention of an alternative artform seen outdoors. Here, respondents place watching theatre outside under the same umbrella as watching cinema outside. With respect to category 5 – mention of an alternative artform seen outdoors – responses included:

- Respondent 87SH: "No, I've seen outdoor plays"
- Respondent 77SH: "No, but outdoor plays"
- Respondent 26WH: "Outdoors for Shakespeare Live. This is not a film"
- Respondent 4SH: "No. Only theatre productions."

These recipients had not been to an outdoor film screening before, but had been to see theatre outside. In terms of production, there are crossovers between outdoor theatre and outdoor cinema, which is demonstrated by email feedback from the lead producer at Coughton Court, who noted:

> Originally at Baddesley (Clinton) we had put on outdoor theatre performances which for some reason didn't sell as well as the theatre performances at Packwood (House) just up the road.[256] So, we decided to try something new, they seemed to be getting more and more popular and a few National Trust places had started to put them on so it seemed like it might work for Baddesley. Our first screenings were in 2015 and

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[256] https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/baddesley-clinton accessed June 2022 https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/packwood-house accessed June 2022

we've had the same event at Baddesley every year since, with many screenings selling out.[257]

The audience responses point to the versatility of outdoor film screenings as a method for marking a moment or event that created a memory. The narrative of memory, how the audience first creates memories based on experience, is explored by Gabriel Moshenska, Tobais Becker and Scott Alexander Howard. Moshenska suggests memory "offers a view into some of the most fascinating aspects of human existence."[258] Memory therefore helps human beings to understand. Nostalgia is another way of understanding. Nostalgia is a way of connecting to the past through a connection; Tobias Becker defines nostalgia as a "reconstructed past and imagined experience which reflects the personalised feelings and sentiments of individuals".[259]

Howard continues the discussion by suggesting that there is an assumption that nostalgia depends, in some way, on comparing a present situation with a past one. Rather, Howard concludes that "neither does justice to the full range of recognizably nostalgic experiences available to us." Rather than connecting a memory to a place, space or time, nostalgia can evoke" involuntary autobiographical memories." [260]

4.3.3 Age Demographics

Understanding the age demographics is useful in understanding the appeal of outdoor film screenings. By understanding the audience in this way, we can understand that "appeal" may be different across generations. The age demographic question I asked when conducting my research over 2018 and 2019 was Question Three: "What is the month and year you were born?" (appendix five) The question I asked on my online survey was, simply, "What is your date of birth?" Question Three was answered by around 85% of the respondents who filled in my survey cards, and all the respondents who completed the online survey. This means I have around 700 data points to work from.

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[257] Excerpt from email correspondence with the lead contact at Coughton Court 9th June 2021

[258] Becker, Tobias, "The meaning of nostalgia: Geneology and Critique" History and Theory, 57 no 2, June 2018) p235

[259] Ibid Becker p235

[260] Howard, Scott Alexander 'Nostalgia' Analysis , OCTOBER 2012, Vol. 72, No. 4 (OCTOBER 2012), pp. 642

Dirty Dancing

I analysed results of age demographics from the screenings of *Dirty Dancing* in three outdoor locations: Bradgate Park (21 July 2018); Hardwick Hall (18 August 2018); and Attingham Park (31 August 2018).

The age groups for Bradgate Park are as follows:

- People born in the 1970s (25.2%, and the largest group),
- People born in the 1980s (23%, the second largest group)
- People born in the 1960s (20.8%, the third largest group)
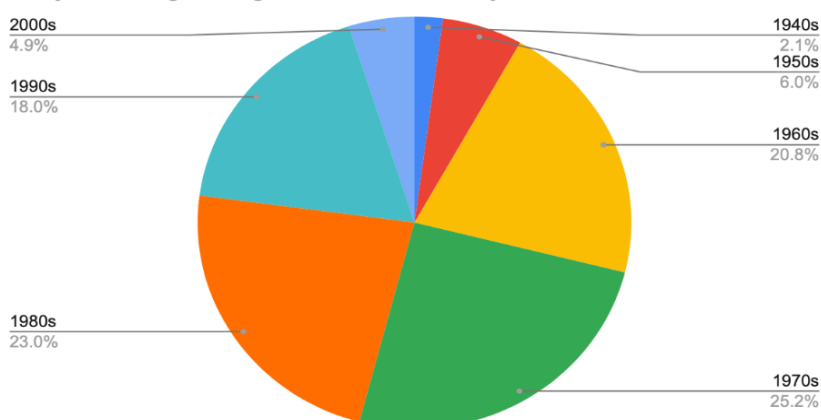
Figure 10: Age profile of the audience who attended the Dirty Dancing screening at Bradgate Park on 21st July 2018

The three-way split runs counter to the idea that people are watching a film for a nostalgic purpose. This is further highlighted by data I collected from the screening of *Dirty Dancing* that I attended at Hardwick Hall on the 18th August 2018. That data shows the following age groups:

- People born in the 1980s (35%, the largest group)
- People born in the 1990s (27%).
- People born in the 1960s was just (13.6%).

See Figure 11: Age profile of the audience who attended the *Dirty Dancing* screening at Hardwick Hall on 18th August 2018
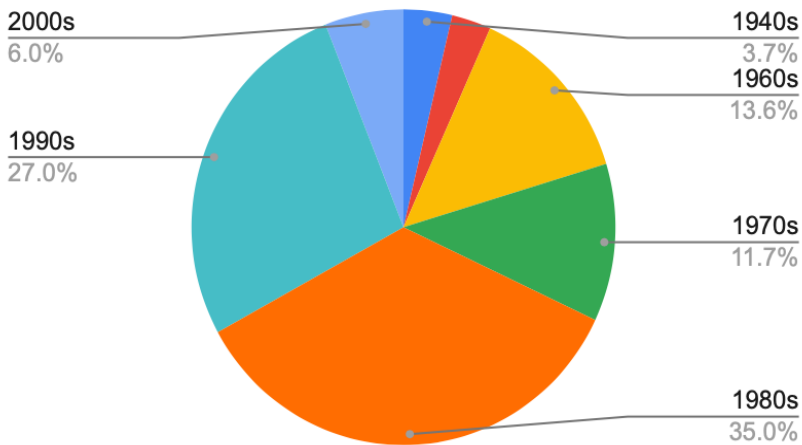
Figure 11: Age profile of the audience who attended the Dirty Dancing screening at Hardwick Hall on 18th August 2018

I would suggest that the appeal here is not necessarily in seeing the film in a different setting from where it was originally seen at the original release date, but rather the narrative of *Dirty Dancing,* which has universal appeal across all ages.

Data from the screening I attended at Attingham Park on 31st August shows a very even distribution of attendees by age:

- People born in the 1950s (15.8%)
- People born in the 1960s (14.8%)
- People born in the 1970s (19.8%)
- People born in the 1980s (17.85)
- People born in the 1990s (23%)
- People born in the 2000s (4.8%)
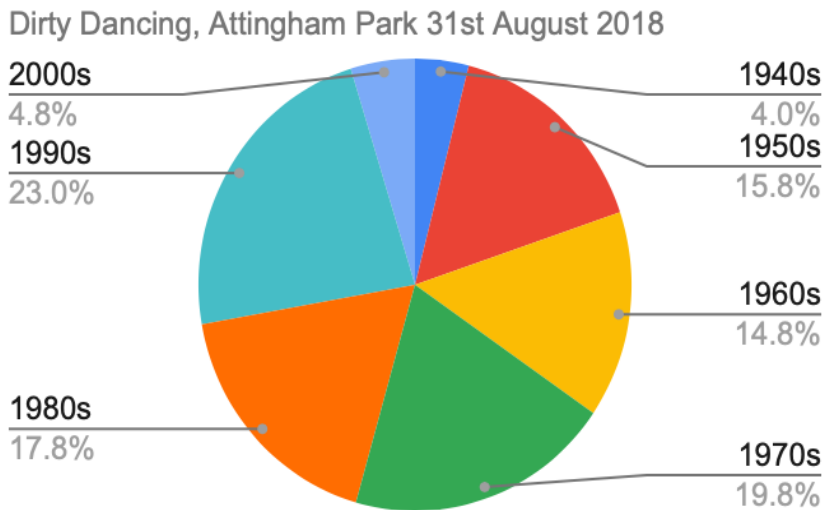
Figure 12: Age profile of the audience who attended the Dirty Dancing screening at Attingham Park on 31st August 2018

The first pattern is therefore about the transgenerational appeal of the film *Dirty Dancing.* The second pattern pushes the idea of mixed family groups further and points to the group of people the film may appeal to. The suggestion here in the data is that screening is an intergenerational event, a space where family groups can converge. In Attingham Park, the largest age demographic was people born in the 1990s. The second largest demographic was people born in the 1970s. The pattern is repeated in data from Wentworth Woodhouse in 2018, which illustrates the suggestion of the 'mature family outing. The Wentworth Woodhouse data shows a full range of ages represented at the screening, with the most populous year of birth being 1992 (people aged 28/29 in 2021) and 1967 (people aged 53/54 in 2021). This data suggests the possibility that parents, and older children attended the screenings together.

Rocketman and Bohemian Rhapsody

The screenings I attended in 2019 were for three different films; *Dirty Dancing* (Dir Emile Ardolino) *Bohemian Rhapsody* (Dir Bryan Singer) and *Rocketman* (Dir Dexter Fletcher). Surveying audiences at three different films added complexity to the analysis and provoked more hypothetical questions: did the films appeal to different age groups, did the films have differing nostalgic value? In data terms the patterns follow a similar lead to the data collected in 2018. The nostalgia concept of watching a film previously seen in a cinema as a teenager did not apply to the screenings in 2019. The only screening of *Dirty Dancing* I

attended in 2019 was at Ormesby Hall in Middlesbrough and the largest demographic group were people born in the 1980s. (See Figure 18) However, (as demonstrated in section 2.2) the content of both *Bohemian Rhapsody* and *Rocketman* are, in large part, nostalgic, which one could argue, is reflected in the large number of people born in the 1960s who attended screenings of these films in Battle Abbey, Ormesby Hall, Speke Hall and Witley Court and Garden.
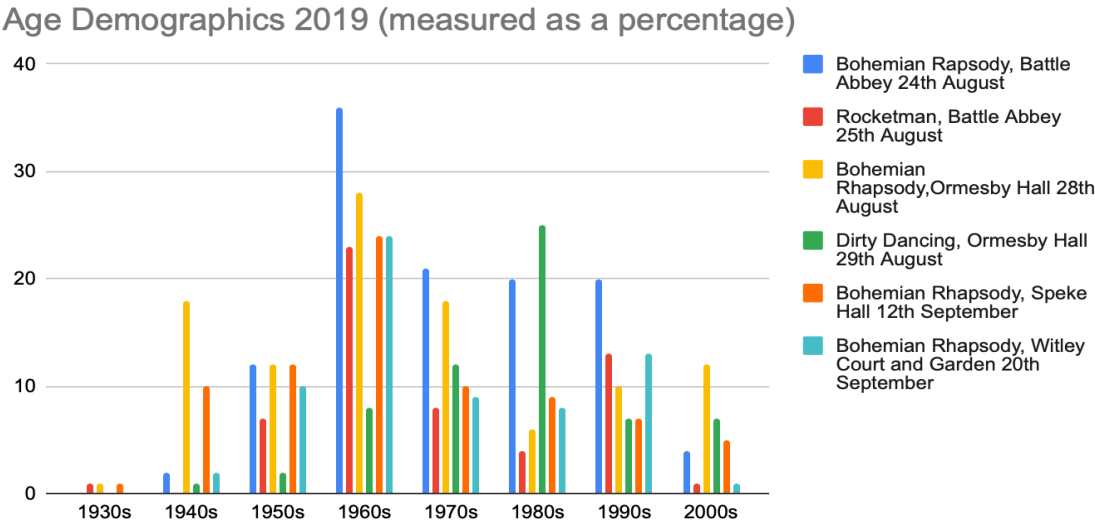
Figure 18: Audience measures according to age 2019

The pattern of transgenerational appeal in 2018 was repeated in 2019, with all films appealing to all ages. The suggestion of an intergenerational event is also evident in 2019. Data collected at the *Bohemian Rhapsody* screening at Battle Abbey speak to the possibility that parents attended with both their parents and children. (Figure14)

Bohemian Rapsody, Battle Abbey 24th August 2019

2000s 3.0%
1990s 17.5%
1940s 1.7%
1950s 10.4%
1980s 17.5%
1960s 31.5%
1970s 18.4%

Bohemian Rhapsody, Speke Hall, 12th September

2000s 6.5%
1990s 8.9%
1930s 1.3%
1940s 12.8%
1980s 11.5%
1950s 15.5%
1970s 12.8%
1960s 30.7%
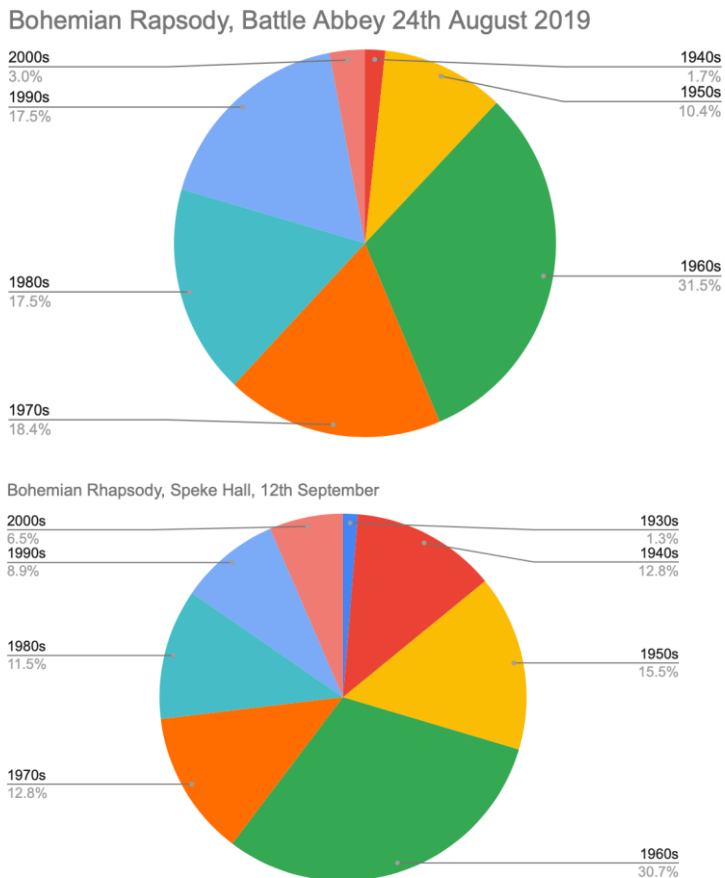
Figure 14: Audience measured according to age Speke Hall and Battle Abbey)

The family outing hypothesis is also evident in data from Speke Hall (See Figure 10), which shows a similar possibility for intergenerational audiences to be present at the screening. The key finding here is that the outdoor film screenings appeal to all audiences. This is reinforced by an open field response to the question "What is the cultural value of an outdoor film screening?" Respondent 60AH commented: "Feels like a wholesome family event (although it is *Dirty Dancing*)", and, in 2019, "What is the appeal of an outdoor film screening?" Respondent 45WC replied "Fun experience to share with family. Having a picnic!". This provides examples of the idea of "family time", an idea explored in Chapter Seven: Community and Fandom.

The online surveys conducted in 2020 were a little different from the surveys completed in 2018 and 2019. The first point of difference was that I did not attend any of the screenings, because the data was taken from an online form, filled in by a self-selecting group of people who had attended a variety of different screenings across Britain. The second difference was that these screenings were drive-in screenings, which involved watching a film from the confines of a car. The notation of intergenerational screening experiences is limited due to

space. However, of the 13 people who responded to my online form, one person was born in the 1960s, five people were born in the 1970s, three people were born in the 1980s and four people were born in the 1990s.

What was not clear in the age data I collected was the ages of the children who attended the drive-in screenings. Attending drive-in screenings with young children is more feasible than attending an outdoor film screening. Research by Camile M Smalley points to the opportunities for parents to have a night out at a drive-in without having to find a babysitter or someone to look after the children.[261]

Age responses from online responders 2020
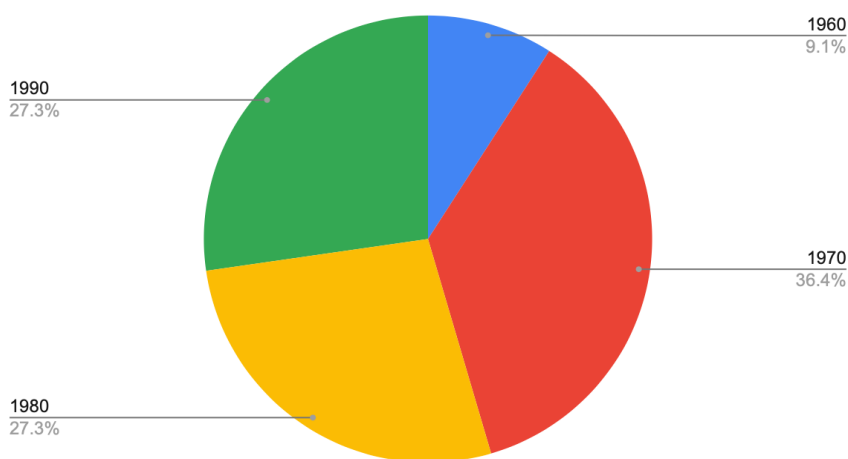
Figure 15: Data from online forms regarding Audience Demographics

The online research provides an indication that the drive-in cinema experience also had the potential to be both transgenerational and intergenerational, though the very small sample size does not provide much more than an indication, an idea which latterly could be developed.

4.3.4 How Far Would You Travel?

To understand the geographic footprint of the audiences I surveyed, in Question Four I asked "What is the first part of your postcode?" At Attingham Park in Shropshire, on the 31st August and 1st September 2018, the distance travelled was up to 79 kilometres or 49 miles

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[261] Smalley, Camille M, (2014) "The Saco Drive-In: Cinema Under the Maine Sky" Landmark Books

(Nuneaton CV10 postcode).[262] Other longer journeys included 61.7 kilometres or 38 miles from Worcester WR2 postcode, and 54 kilometres or 33 miles from Alsager ST7 postcode. Most audience members who attended screenings at Bradgate Park in Leicestershire over the weekend of the 21st and 22nd July lived less than 25 kilometres, or 9 miles, from the venue. The furthest attendees travelled 67.3 kilometres, or 41 miles, from Stone ST15 to Leicester which was in contrast to   an otherwise 'local' audience'.

Wentworth Woodhouse in Rotherham, South Yorkshire was the most northerly screening I attended in 2018. The furthest point of travel for the local audience was 33.5 kilometres, or 20 miles north, in Morley just south of Leeds. The most southern local audience journey was the postcode S17 on the edge of the Peak District which measured 21.3km, or 13 miles, from the venue. There are four other postcodes recorded from the audience data collected across the screenings I attended in 2018 that indicate a journey of over 20 miles. These postcodes are DE21, a distance from Wentworth Woodhouse of approximately 60km or 37 miles; NN4 in Northamptonshire a distance of 145 kilometres or 90 miles; GL51 in Gloucester 183 kilometres or 133 miles and SL6 in Buckinghamshire, a distance from Wentworth Woodhouse of 217 kilometres or 134 miles. The length of journey supports the assertion that the outdoor screening is a social event, and that the audience may be more willing to travel to see friends than to see a film.
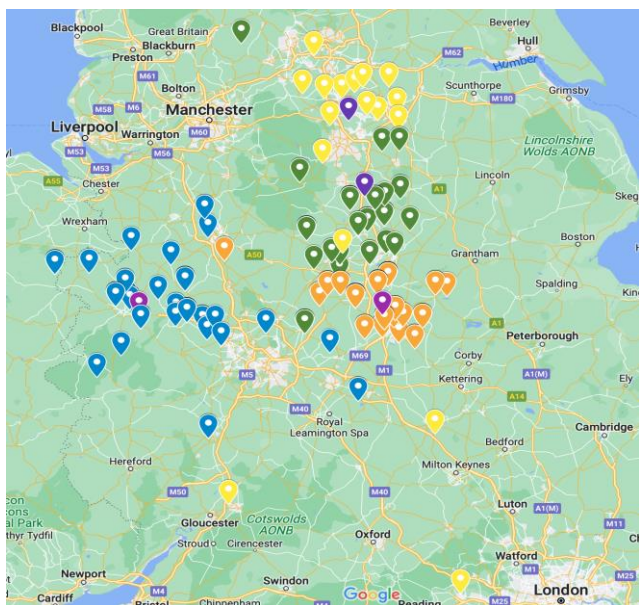
Figure 16: Attendees of all screenings in 2018 mapped according to postcode (purple points indicate venues)

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[262] These measurements were obtained using google maps and are measured point to point, irrespective of road patterns or land obstacles. This means the actual journey is likely to be longer. The HTML code can be found here <iframe src="https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/embed?mid=14Mz5juuuKi0HOSntXJN4Dee_-VwAQZms" width="640" height="480"></iframe>

Similar travel patterns emerged for the screenings I attended in 2019. The audiences who attended the screenings in Battle Abbey over the weekend of the 24th and 25th August 2019 travelled from across the south-east of England. The distances as the crow flies were significantly longer than the screenings in 2018; the furthest recorded postcode was Sunbury on Thames which is 85 kilometres, or 52 miles, from the screening in Battle Abbey. Other journeys included 40 kilometres or 24 miles from Maidstone, and 46 kilometres or 26 miles from Brighton. These long journeys may, in part, be a factor of the timing of the screenings, such as the August Bank Holiday, when traditionally people are inclined to travel.

Witney Court and Gardens was one of the most remote locations I visited for my research in 2019. It is located 10 miles north of Worcester, and the nearest train station is 8.5 miles away.[263] Witney Court and Gardens saw audiences travel from Shrewsbury (postcode SY1: 58.2 kilometres or 36 miles) Gloucester (postcode GL2: 51.5 kilometres or 32 miles), Redditch (postcode B98: 27.6 kilometres or 17 miles) and Ludlow (postcode SY8: 25.5 kilometres or 15 miles), therefore, it brought together more people from small to medium market towns than any of the other screening I attended.[264] One member of the audience came from Nottingham, which is 110 kilometres, or 68 miles, from Witney Court and Gardens. If this is an accurate record, this would have suggested over a three-hour round trip to see a film. I would therefore reasonably suggest that, similar to other venues, this audience member was attending the screenings with someone who lived closer to the venue.

Two of the screenings I chose in 2019 were in more urban areas: Speke House (Liverpool) and Ormesby Hall (Middlesbrough). The most 'local' of all the audiences was in Liverpool, at the screening of *Bohemian Rhapsody* at Speke Hall. Here the furthest point travelled was respondents 8, 17 and 18, who travelled from Banks PR9, which 'as the crow flies' is 37.5 kilometres or 23 miles from Speke Hall. To the east, one person travelled from Leigh, which was a direct distance of 29.4 kilometres or 18 miles. Respondent 20 travelled across the Mersey River from Cheshire, in a journey which maps out at 49 kilometres or 30 miles, despite, on paper,, looking one of the closest postcodes to the venue. When speaking to the

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[263] https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/witley-court-and-gardens/plan-your-visit/directions/ -accessed 11th November 2020

[264] To calculate the distance from venue to the postcode on the map I use the Google Maps measuring tool. The exercise here is to provide an indication of distance of one postcode in comparison to another and not to provide an accurate recording as to how far people travelled to each screening. This would be a near impossible task as I did not ask the audience I spoke with to share their journey route, which could differ based on traffic, personal choice or other factors such as a detour to collect family and friends.

team at Ormesby Hall, there was a question as to whether the audience would cross the River Tees, seemingly the natural dividing line of the area. At first glance, the results show a very even distribution of attendees from postcodes north and south of the River Tees. However, only 37% of local attendees who attended screenings at Ormesby Hall lived in postcodes

Figure 17: Attendees of all screenings in 2019 mapped according to postcode (purple points indicate venues)

north of the River Tees, with most local attendees (63%) living in postcodes on the south of the River Tees. The localised North / South divide does not consider the broader reach of the screenings in the local area. Attendees to the screenings at Ormesby Hall came as far afield as Newcastle (NE28) 58.4 kilometres, or 36 miles, and further south from Northallerton (DL7) which is 28.1 kilometres, or 17 miles. The inclusion of Question Four, "What is the first part of your postcode?", was intended, in part, to understand how far people were willing to travel to outdoor screenings, and to understand whether the screenings provided an opportunity for people to watch films locally. An analysis of where people lived and far they were prepared to travel provides insight into the idea of choice. The question arose as to and whether the attendees who lived in more rural areas had a choice in the cinemas they attended.

In 2018, the audiences who attended the screenings of *Dirty Dancing* attended the nearest Summer Nights screening to the first part of the postcode. The map (Figure 17) shows the

audience attendees tend to be clustered around the venues, with a few outliers.[265] In 2019, the results were similar, however as the map (Figure 17) shows, the screenings I attended were much more widespread and audiences did not bleed into one another, as was the case in 2018. The distance between Hardwick Hall and Wentworth Woodhouse is around 29.6 miles, whereas the distance between Battle Abbey and Ormesby Hall is 337 miles. There is more chance of an audience member attending a screening at Hardwick Hall *and* Wentworth Woodhouse in 2018 than attending Battle Abbey *and* Ormesby Hall in 2019, though results show that this is seldom the case. Except for a few outlying cases, the audience, therefore, does appear to be local, though this is understood in terms of driving to the screenings, something which is necessitated in rural screenings where public transport is limited.[266]

Figure 18: Postcodes of the respondents who completed the online survey in 2020

To understand the relationship between the distance travelled and the drive-in venue location, I plotted the thirteen audience postcodes against the postcodes of each location. (Figure 18). What this showed is that, despite the film screenings requiring a car, most of the respondents stayed relatively local. The finding mirrors the screenings in 2018 and

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[265] These may have been who may have been staying with family or friends overnight to avoid a long journey to or from the venue. I am mindful here that most of the films finished at around 11pm.

[266] Data released from the Department for the Transport shows a number of key trends in the number of people who hold a driving licence - a key indicator of car use One in eight (12%) of those living in urban areas said they did not hold a license, compared to 3% of rural residents. One in five (20%) of those in lower income households said that they did not hold a license compared to 5% of those in the highest income households

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/transport-and-transport-technology-public-attitudes-trackerys. Dft-transport-and-transport-technology-public-attitudes-tracker-wave-7-summary-report.odt December 2021

2019. The only exception to this was Respondent 1, who lived near Manchester, yet went to a screening in Stafford, which was attended with their partner. The Staffordshire screening may have been closer to where the respondent's partner lived rather than where they lived. These responses suggest that the car was shared, though it is not clear who the car is owned by.[267] The data I collected in 2020 appears to be at odds with the opinions of the lead contact for the Drive-in London when asked via email: "Do you have a sense of where your audience come from?" The answer was very definitive, "A lot of our audience was local, but some people travelled cross country. As the biggest drive-in cinema in the UK we pulled in audiences from everywhere!" These responses may reflect limits in entertainment choices made available to audiences following the lockdown protocols put in place in 2020. According to Vincent Ostrom, choice connects to rationality, use of the car to perform rituals, which involved limited interaction between groups, was highly rational.[268]

4.4 Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to unpack the audience's interpretation of the words "value" and "appeal". There were, as expected, many interpretations of these terms, which range from cultural value to nostalgic value into value for money. The term value was very subjective.

In this chapter, I have presented a profile of the audiences who attended the screenings I surveyed and observed and, in doing so, have considered the choices that the audiences make and how this impacts the appeal of outdoor film screenings. This chapter provides a narrative of audience members from across the country, who made individualised choices that mirrored hundreds of other people, the majority of whom did not know each other. What is clear is that the appeal of outdoor film screenings is, in part, the importance of the a collective experience at the event, sharing the experience with "family and friends", alongside feeling part of a community. The audiences I spoke to were, regardless of age, location, film or venue, seeking out a shared endeavour and experience. My findings suggest that these decisions are, in part, about which film to watch, but also how to spend

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[267] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/transport-and-transport-technology-public-attitudes-trackerys.
Dft-transport-and-transport-technology-public-attitudes-tracker-wave-7-summary-report.odt December 2021

[268] Ostrom, Vincent "Epistemic Choice and Public Choice" Public Choice , Sep., 1993, Vol. 77, No. 1, The Next Twenty-Five Years of Public Choice (Sep., 1993), pp163-176

Examples of cars being used to perform rituals can be evidenced in the use of drive ins to perform wedding ceremonies: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-essex-54435275- accessed January 2021

quality time with family and friends. The event is value for money, in part, because of the opportunity to spend time with family and friends.

My results also point to the nature of experience, a recurring theme in my thesis. The value of the experience is charted both in a discussion about whether the audience had been to a screening before and, separately, whether they considered the Summer Nights screenings value for money, which provides an interesting contrast in experiences reflected in different values associated with watching a film outdoors. The environmental value of watching a film outdoors feels more tangible than the nostalgic value. The environmental value represents the physical space in which the audience sits, whereas the nostalgic value is the interpretation of the experience.

This chapter demonstrates the importance to the audience of the terms "value" and "appeal" when describing outdoor film screenings. This chapter also points to the importance of other descriptions, which feel very individual yet are very similar to others. This represents a group of individuals who make intentional choices to share an experience with a group of strangers.

Chapter Five: Alternative Auditoriums

5.1 Introduction

This chapter considers the value of the alternative auditorium. This is the non-traditional auditorium space that the audiences appropriated to watch a film. The term, "non-traditional auditorium space", is a term coined by Emma Pett to describe the different spaces and places where people watch films outside of the domestic sphere.[269] The term includes screenings inside and outside, on top of a building and/or in a basement, anywhere that is not the traditional cinema environment (the traditional auditorium space).

This chapter considers different types of space within the public and private sphere. By considering the importance of volume (the amount of space) and location (where the space is), this chapter reflects on how the outdoor film screening audience connects to space, and how the audience inhabits space. In tangible terms, this is the choice to watch films at home (domestic sphere) or in a communal setting (which may be public or private). Here, size does matter. In terms of volume, the domestic sphere provides less space than the open landscape of outdoor film screenings. Many respondents found the appeal of outdoor film screenings to be the expanse of space in which they watched the film. Equally, for several people who completed the drive-in survey, the intimate space of a car was an appealing factor.

The temporary space in which the audience inhabits to watch a film is important. Part two of this chapter investigates the spaces that were used in the screenings I attended for my formal research in 2018 and 2019. These locations were all heritage sites. Audience data taken from the survey cards, completed in 2018 and 2019, provides several specific references to heritage, a theme explored in this section. Examples of how the audience connects to heritage sites is supported by interviews conducted with the lead contacts at the heritage sites. These took place over Zoom and via email between 2019 and 2020, and form part of the case studies I present within this section. I argue that heritage locations can add value through the space they provide, adding community value, economic values and building connections through membership.

This chapter is an opportunity to unitise Pett's definition to understand the appeal of outdoor film screenings, supported by the empirical data taken from the survey cards that the audiences I spoke to in 2018 and 2019 and the online survey completed in 2020. This

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[269]Pett, Emma (2018) "Beyond the Metropolis: Immersive Cinema in a Rural Context" in 'Live Cinema, Culture, Economies and Aesthetics'. Bloomsbury London

chapter also utilises interviews and correspondence with the lead contacts at the several of the venues I attended. This chapter combines empirical data with theories from human geographers, philosophers, anthropologists, and film scholars to present a unique and original argument that, for the audiences who attend outdoor film screenings in alternative auditoriums, matter.

5.2 Space

The term "space" has several definitions. From describing outer space in astrology to cupboard space in carpentry, the term "space" crosses many domains. Doreen Massey has written extensively about the term space, especially the connection between place and space. She argues that space is abstract, it is meaningless, whereas place is the lived, the everyday.[270] Space may be seen as ethereal, whereas place is concrete. Massey describes this as "the sharp sensation of local places from the space out there".[271] The place provides a connection, "a sentiment to a locality."[272] Space is everyday whereas place is owned. By acknowledging and defining how individuals respond and relate to space, this study can consider the appeal of outdoor film screenings. These screenings take place in a variety of "spaces", which, with familiarity, turn into "places". The nuance in language adds a level of granular detail which clarifies the appeal.

This chapter begins with a consideration of space defined in two ways. The first is volume, also defined as size. Here, I consider the different spaces that audiences occupy to watch films. These spaces vary according to where the films are watched. The smallest volume, I suggest, is the home.[273] The largest space, I argue, is 'outside'; this is a space without boundaries and a space that anyone can occupy. This type of space is what outdoor film screenings are known for. Comparisons between different screening spaces in 2019 seek to clarify the distinction between space, in terms of volume and location. This diagram seeks to understand where people watch films and to define the types of space. The diagram moves

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[270]Massey, Doreen (2005) 'For Space', Sage, London p7

[271]Massey, 'For Space', London p6

[272] Ibid Massey p6

[273] The size of a home is relative; some people live in very big homes and others live in very small homes. However, even if an individual has a 'cinema room' in their home the volume of this space will still be smaller than the volume of space in a traditional auditorium. The number of people in the home cinema will be substantially less that the capacity of a traditional cinema and the people watching the film are likely to know each other.

from the space defined by the smallest volume to the space with the largest volume, highlighting the differences between the exclusive environment of private space and the open environment of the public space. Within the context of my research into outdoor film screenings, private spaces are domestic spaces (the home or the car). The venues of the historic houses which hosted the outdoor film screenings I attended can also be defined at private space; however, these spaces bridge between private and public space. These venues are privately owned, either by the National Trust, English Heritage or by a private charitable organisation. However, their charity object (the core charitable purpose) states the willingness of the organisations to open their spaces up to the public (appendix seven).

Type of space	Audience Size and Volume	Example	Space alignment
Static Domestic Domain	Watching a film may be a solo experience or an experience with a few other people	Home	Private Space
Mobile Domestic Domain	Watching a film is likely to be with other people within the confines of a car	Car	Private Space
Traditional Auditorium Space	Watching a film will be other unknown people in a defined space (a building)	Cinema	Public / Private Space
Non-Traditional Auditorium Space	Watching a film will be other unknown people in an undefined space (outdoors)	Outdoor Film Screening	Public / Private Space
Figure 1: Comparisons between different screening spaces 2019			

5.2.1 Static Domestic Domain

A static domestic domain is a home. It could be the audience members' own home or it could be a friend or family member's home. The space is highly personalised, which allows the audience to add their personal effects to add comfort. This manifests in the use of cushions, blankets, food and other items that may be found at home.[274] The size of the home is almost irrelevant, rather, it is the comfort value that I consider with this term: how the film is watched and with whom.

The domestic environment was mentioned by respondents in 2018 and 2019. Respondent 47WW: "Different from cinema / home viewing" and Respondent 8WW: "It is a bigger experience than watching it in the cinema or at home." This indicates an understanding of the types of places where people watch films and the differences between these spaces. In 2019, respondents pointed to the comparison between watching a film outside, in a non-traditional auditorium, and a traditional cinematic environment: Respondent 55OHDD stated "It's better than being indoors at home- better atmosphere." The respondents also use the term "space" as a way to compare both different domestic and cinematic environments. For example, respondent 1OHBR: "So much space to spread out. It's cramped at home". These examples support both the comfort narrative and speak to the importance of space as volume in the enjoyment of where the audience watches a film. Technology has expanded the spaces where people can watch and engage in film. Streaming platforms, such as Netflix, allow audiences to watch feature films on devices of varying sizes, from mobile phones to static televisions. This allows the audience to move in and out of the domestic domain while watching films. The consumer of the media can move freely between the public and private spaces, experiencing different volumes and locations. This flexibility may enable better engagement, but, as Respondent 53BP noted, "It's important for people to be able to experience entertainment together, especially when new forms of media like Netflix make films a more singular experience." The people with whom an individual watches a film, the audience, were a very important appeal factor for the majority of the audience members that I spoke to.

Size has a correlation with comfort, an idea that both human geographers, such as Massey, and architectural theorists have discussed and played with. The architecture critic, Paul Goldberger, suggests that: "We are innately conservative; we are most comfortable with what we already know".[275] Therefore, suggests Goldberger, architecture and designed spaces should be designed with comfort in mind. He writes: "I much prefer the term "comfort," not because I think comfort is the same as practicality but because it seems to connect much more directly to the needs of people who actually use a building."[276] The comfort narrative can be used both in terms of how people use their domestic spaces to watch films and how they bring comfort to public spaces. "Chapter Six: Experience" documents how audiences bring furniture, food and clothes to outdoor film screenings in

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[275] Goldberger, Paul "Challenge and Comfort" The Kenyon Review , FALL 2009, New Series, Vol. 31, No. 4 (FALL 2009), p25

[276] Ibid Goldberger p25

order to provide comfort in an open outdoor environment. This demonstrated the comfort can be achieved with both small and large spaces that are measured according to volume.

5.2.2 Mobile Domestic Domain

An interesting consideration is the domestication of the car within the context of cinema viewing. The evolution of car manufacturing in Britain echoes the evolution of film technology, which took place around the same time. Car manufacturing started in Britain around 1895, growing in popularity before a slump in production in 1907.[277] Before the 1907 slump, dominant rich customers preferred the higher quality foreign cars, usually French cars, even though the price of domestic cars was lower.[278] Mary Cohen argues the car was not merely a private space, "but was a medium through which people saw their environment in a new way."[279] The car helped create a new spectator whose awareness of street life alternated with the intensely private space of the car's interior.'[280] The car enabled people to take the comfort of the domestic space out on the road, thus creating mobile domestic spaces. Video footage of the opening of Britain's first motorway, the M1, shows how the car was also used for entertainment, as motorists used the motorway to race each other, making domestic car ownership something of a sport.[281]

For a number of the respondents who completed my online survey regarding drive-in theatres, the domestic or personal space that the car offers added to the appeal of going to see a film. Respondent 11DI eloquently reflects this as "Being able to watch a movie even with a toddler with us; food brought to our car; the movie itself; able to sing along without

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[277] Rong Zhao , Broadstock David C. and Peng Yuanyuan "Initial submarket positioning and firm survival: evidence from the British automobile industry, 1895-1970" Small Business Economics, Vol. 51, No. 4 (December 2018), p967

[278] Purchase tax was 100% of the value of consumer items like electric fires, cosmetics and cars in 1951 but was reduced down to 25% by 1963. Any cuts in taxes increased the amount of money that people had to spend. Consumers now considered that goods such as televisions, refrigerators, music systems and cars were a basic requirement. Before the war these had been luxury items available only to the most privileged sections of society. Car ownership rose by 250% between 1951 and 1961, the number of televisions increased 32% just between 1957 and 1959

http://resource.download.wjec.co.uk.s3.amazonaws.com/vtc/2016-17/16-17_2-43/part2-never-had-it-so-good.pdf

[279] The tendency continued after the slump when higher- grade American cars appeared.# Whereas in America car manufacturing 'ended up with an oligopoly of three companies,' Ford, General Motors and Chrysler, in Britain there was a more diverse commercial offer with up to 35 companies producing cars.# This is a very similar trajectory to the diversification of film innovation during the same period. The post war period saw a boom in car use in Britain, in part due to affordability and in part due to the construction of roads which facilitated the experience of driving. : Morley Cohen, Mary "Forgotten Audiences in the Passion Pits: Drive-in Theatres and Changing Spectator Practices in Post-War America" Film History , Winter, 1994, Vol. 6, No. 4, Audiences and Fans (Winter, 1994),p 473

[280] Ibid Morley Cohen p473

[281] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=khZQ4xqQJCM accessed October 2022

feeling of shame" this was echoed by Respondent 10DI, who noted: "It's a great option for young families or can't go to the normal cinema for fear of disturbing the film for others." Respondents 10DI and 11DI demonstrate how the car enabled the families to watch a film in a public space. The drive-in therefore provides an opportunity for public and private spaces to merge. Here, the private space is clear, it is the domestic realm, whether in the car or at home. Yet "public" cinematic spaces can also, technically, be private. In the example of a traditional auditorium environment, the audience is invited in at set times when films are showing. The audience does not have access to the cinema when films are not showing. The blurred understanding and identity of public spaces, and the opportunities to interact with these environments, is a theme which underlies the framing of the traditional and non-traditional screening environments.

5.2.3 Traditional Auditorium Space

The traditional auditorium space, the cinema, was designed to appeal to a refined audience. The space was infused with opulence. Rachel Low's description of "Red Plush and marble, ferns in brass pots and plenty of electric light" was guaranteed to give that "cosy air of refinement: which was wistfully sought by a trade anxious to disclaim its low birth"[282]. Attracting a new audience attracted a more refined audience, one with more class and an appetite to spend more money. Once established, the traditional auditorium environment stayed stable, implementing few changes, which, ultimately, led to its decline. As the first wave of audiences grew up and moved on, the cinema space was appropriated by other distinct subcultures who cared little about the demise of the space.[283]

The traditional auditorium space changed in 1984 with the launch of the Point in Milton Keynes. The traditional auditorium space also provides the audiences with cues as to how to behave in more abstract cinematic space. An example of this is the behaviour observed at a screening I attended in the East Midlands, prior to the start of my formal research period. Here, without instruction, the audience sat in rows, mimicking the experience of the

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[282] Low, Rachael (1949) "The History of British Film Volume Two: 1906-1914" George Allen & Urwin (London) P16

[283] The early 1950s saw the rise of the Teddy Boys, the first dominant subculture of the twentieth century. The Teddy Boys wore distinctive clothes which had first been seen in the Edwardian era. This is where the name Teddy Boys or Teds comes from. Their stylised clothing and slick back hair set them apart from the rest of society and respectability. At the time the Teds uniqueness was dangerous, a break from the norm and evidence of the death of previously held working class kinship and neighbourhood ties, that had declined as affluence had increased.

Hill, John (1986) "Sex, Class and Realism: British Cinema 1956- 1963" British Film Institute, London p14

traditional auditorium space. Notably, there was no instruction to do this, rather it was a learned behaviour, set in place through attendance of a traditional auditorium space. These cues contribute towards the understanding of the filmic text. "Chapter Seven: Communities and Fandom" provides examples of where the filmic text encourages the audience watching a film, within traditional auditorium space, to behave differently than normal convention. Immersive films, such as *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, encourage the audience to behave differently within the traditional auditorium space.[284] Other examples of where the audience cues are perverted is in Live Cinema.[285] Live Cinema is seen as part of the experiential cinema cannon, much like outdoor screenings or participatory screenings. Live Cinema is unique as it is one of the few types of experiential cinema that takes place in a traditional auditorium space.

5.2.4 Non-Traditional Auditorium Spaces

Non-traditional auditorium spaces can be wildly different, depending on the type of film or event that is taking place. The non-traditional auditorium space can vary depending on the type of film that is being shown and the value of the ephemeral environment. A considerable pull for audiences is the undefined space. This suggests a space that is open and not confined by a building or vehicle, either at home, in a car or in a non-traditional auditorium. Outdoor film screenings require four essential components: a film, a method of projection, a place to project and space to watch the film. For public screenings, lighting and toilets are also required to meet legal health and safety requirements. Producers and venue hosts then decide whether to add extra elements.[286] Therefore, outdoor film screenings can take place almost anywhere. Respondents repeatedly mentioned the value of the outdoors:

- Respondent 5BA: "Space, Scenery. Weather."
- Respondent 32BA: "Fresh Air, More Space, Evening out with Family."

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[284] Atkinson, SA and Kennedy H.W (2015) "Where We're Going, We Don't need and Effective Online Audience Engagement Strategy.": The case of the Secret Cinema Viral Backlash' Frames Cinema Journal p12

[285] Live Cinema is the experience of watching an event inside a traditional auditorium environment, the cinema. In this example the audio is shared, the seating is static, and the event is broadcast live, rather than being a film which is pre-recorded. The purpose of live cinema is to increase access to arts events that take place in a singular location but broadcasting the event live to cinemas across the country. Examples of contemporary Live Cinema events include NT LIVE: THE SEAGULL - AT VUE Thursday 3rd November. Attending a Live Cinema event at your local cinema is significantly more affordable than attending the screening in person at the National Theatre and if seen at a local cinema reduces the travel and accommodation costs that may be incurred by travelling to London to see the performance.

[286] These elements often come in the form of hot food trucks, mobile bars, coffee trucks and desert trucks. There may also be a chance to buy relevant merchandise associated with the venue which may include picnic hampers, torches and blankets. This is considered in Chapter Four: Value and Appeal under the subheading "1.6 How outdoor film screenings add value"

- Respondent 1OHDD: "Space."

- Respondent 2OHBR: "Open Air and Space."

- Respondent 29BARM: "Enjoying the setting and space and a different thing to do."

- Respondent 5 WW: "Fun to see your favourite film outside".

Here, space relates to the concept of "outside" and the natural environment. Respondent 38AP: "A shared experience watching a loved film in the great outdoors." The value of the undefined space adds to the appeal of the screening, as does the value of sharing. The concept of sharing and experience is described in spatial terms by a number of the respondents. Example of this include:

- Respondent 27BP: "Everyone comes together to watch the film that they share enjoyment with"

- Respondent 57BP: "A fun bonding exercise & creates a community vibe with shared entertainment activity".

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Further to this, Respondent 6BP uses the signs and signifiers that relate to the concept of "summer" to build a picture of how space is used to add cultural value to an outdoor film screening: "A shared experience with a retro vibe along with the chance to enjoy the summer." This presents an example of how the audience navigates and interprets the space. The space termed as "outdoors" is connected to the concept of "summer" There are several examples of how space is used to help the audience navigate the filmic text. In these examples, the screening takes place on location and provides a spatial context to the film that is being shown. An illustration of films being screened 'on / in location' include the Summer Nights Screening of *Batman: The Dark Knight Rises* (Dir Christopher Nolan) at Wollaton Hall in Nottinghamshire, a location that doubled as Wayne Manor in the 2012 Batman movie. Another example is the screening of *Withnail and I* (Dir Bruce Robinson) at Sleddale Hall in Cumbria, hosted by Picnic Cinema. The venue is so remote that staying overnight is compulsory.[287]

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[287] http://picniccinema.co.uk/events-2/withnail/ accessed August 2022

These responses all refer to a type of participation: . "A shared experience" or a "shared entertainment activity" or "shared enjoyment". This resonates with Sarah Atkinson and Helen Kennedy's hypothesis on participatory and augmented cinema.[288] With reference to Secret Cinema, Atkinson & Kennedy describe the level of interaction between the audience and the film as either augmented (based on the location of the screening relevant to the filmic text and elements of non-interactive performance) or participatory (direct involvement from the audience).[289] Augmented performance could include auditory modes of augmentation, such as live scored performance. Participatory performances include sing-along (which has become its own genre with some commercial success) or cult quote-alongs, opportunities for the audience to contribute structurally towards the experience. Sites for communities can be cinemas, and cinemas can also be sites for communities. Nurmal Puwer suggests that the cinema is more than a social space, it operates as a third space for a particular community group to assemble. What this demonstrates is the desire for audiences to own space. This is not just the case for traditional auditorium spaces, which have long been the location for different groups of people, but also for non-traditional spaces. Puwer talks of "social cinema scenes" that are "assemblages", part narrative, part nostalgia piece, which map the place of cinema within different communities.[290] Screenings that take place outdoors provide volume (in terms of space) that far exceeds the capacity of the domestic sphere. These events provide space for groups of people to congregate and enjoy a leisure activity as a tight group by embracing the wider screening community.

5.3 Historic Spaces

"Heritage" and "Historic" are terms that attract mixed agendas. The heritage consultant, Kate Clark, suggests that heritage is tied to significance.[291] Katheryn Lafrenz Samuels argues that "Heritage is an important lens for seeing culture and society in the present-day."

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[288] Atkinson, Sarah and Kennedy Helen W. K "Introduction – Inside-the-scenes: The rise of experiential cinema." Participations Volume 13, Issue 1 May 2016 p139

[289] Ibid Atkinson & Kennedy p139

[290] Puwar, Nirmal, 'Social Cinema Scenes' Space and Culture vol. 10 no. 2, May 2007 253-270

[291] This significance was once the domain of 'experts' who based a personal value beliefs system on the classification of what had heritage value. This focus has shifted, in part due to the Burra Charter which emphasises the importance of values based heritage management.
Clarke, Kate "Values- Based Heritage Management and the Heritage Lottery Fund in the UK" APT Bulletin: The Journal of Preservation Technology, 2014 Vol 45 No 2-3, Special Issue on Values Based Preservation (2014) p65-71

Lafrenz Samuels suggests that there are certain binding words for heritage, for example: "cultural property, intangible heritage and authenticity." These words can be used in a number of different ways, subject to what is being defined as heritage and why. Heritage that is specific to group identity can be defined as "cultural heritage". Cultural heritage, suggests Lafrenz Samuels, relates to something (some object, site, building, landscape, traditional practice) with historic connection that must be properly tended to.[292] Cultural heritage has a formal term as defined by the The Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society, better known as the Faro Convention, as "a group of resources inherited from the past which people identify, independently of ownership, as a reflection and expression of their constantly evolving beliefs, knowledge and traditions."[293] Historic is a term that is also weighted in meanings. Intertwined with the term heritage, the term historic is used to add value and or differentiate two entities based on age and status.[294] These terms, which appear in statute, also have very personal definitions that are constructed based on an individual's experience or narrative. Items that, to one person, have great cultural heritage, to another person may not to another. Similarly, items that are important to one group of people may mean nothing to another. This provides scope for both interpretation and conflict, depending on how objects, sites, buildings, landscapes, and traditional practice is defined.[295]

Heritage, in the context of my research, concerns two approaches. The first is the sites where the screenings I attended took place. These were all "historic locations", a unique selling point of the Summer Nights experience. The second approach covers how the audience identifies with the term, heritage or history.

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[292] Lanfrenz Samuels, Kathryn and Rico,Trinidad. Eds (2015) Heritage Keywords: Rhetoric and Redescription in Cultural Heritage, University Press of Colorado, Boulder P3

[293] https://www.coe.int/en/web/culture-and-heritage/faro-convention

[294] In England this age clarification is one way to indicate the value of buildings or other cultural assets, as indicated by the Heritage List for England which is managed by Historic England. The HLE designates listed building status on buildings deemed to be of national historic or cultural value.

[295] A recent example of the conflict between 'heritage value' and the redevelopment of a site can be found at Durham University whose student union building, described as a prime example of "brutalist" architecture but was at risk of demolition, has gained listed status.[#] Dunelm House in Durham was built in the 1960s and the concrete structure received a number of design awards. Durham University planned to demolish the building due to the £14.7m cost of repair work, prompting a campaign which led to it gaining Grade II listed status. A previous application for listing was turned down by the culture secretary, but the 20th Century Society successfully appealed against the decision. The new addition of the building to The National Heritage List for England (NHLE) ensures the building is protected from demolition and has characteristics which are "of special interest, warranting every effort to preserve them."

5.3.1 Historic Locations

Historic and heritage locations provide an alternative take on public and private space. Locations need to be "open to the public" to generate revenue, but, like traditional auditorium spaces, the public are allowed through the gates or onto the grounds by invite only. None of the screenings I attended offered 24-hour access to the site. The role of outdoor film screenings in the animation of space is partly discussed in "Chapter Eight: 130 Years in the Making". Here, I use the work of Jan Gehl to suggest that outdoor screenings can be used to bring public spaces alive.[296] In his work on tourism in Stratford upon Avon, the geographer, Phil Hubbard, describes the proliferation of themed museums that meet the consumer's desires to experience the past within a framework of consumption.[297] This way of 'doing' history, is a way for spectators to connect with and understand both space and subsequently place. The narrative of the place can be problematic as it is often biased towards the story that is most appealing to the consumer. In historic places, this is likely to be a tale of chivalry, rather than a description of servitude abuse. Hubbard writes "As such many heritage sites are accused of celebrating 'the great men of history while overlooking the histories of women; likewise, children, ethnic minorities and the disabled are groups that usually only feature supporting the heroes at the centre."[298]

My findings point towards how the audiences engage with historic spaces and how historic spaces seek to engage with audiences. This relationship is important not only in terms of maintaining the legal (charitable) status of the historic buildings (appendix seven) , but in also maintaining the upkeep of the properties with the money that guests bring to the space. My results show that this symbiotic relationship between audiences and venues is mutually beneficial yet should not stagnate. Venues need to continually innovate, and audiences must be offered a reason to commit to engaging with the space. To illuminate how audiences connect to space, this section introduces two case studies. These case studies provide examples of two of the venues I attended, which predominantly had community

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[296] In 2011, Jan Gehl re-published his book 'Life Between Buildings, which examines what people do and how people move within cities and built-up environments. He argues that the way our cities are designed will impact how we move within them. If we see lots of people in a space, we are more likely to use or enter the space as the space becomes animated. Similarly, deserted spaces will stay deserted unless they become animated by an activity or activities: Gehl, Jan (2011) "Life between buildings: Using Public Space Island Press, Washington DC

[297] Hubbard, Phill and Lilley Keith "Heritage-tourism and Place Identity in Stratford-upon-Avon" Geography , July 2000, Vol. 85, No. 3 (July 2000), pp. 221-232

[298] Ibid Hubbard p221

value or economic value, though it's fair to say that characteristics of both terms could be attributed to both venues.

5.3.2 Community Value: Case Study Wentworth Woodhouse

Anecdotally, the group of people with the strongest connection to a venue was the audience at Wentworth Woodhouse. Wentworth Woodhouse is a "privately owned estate of 87 acres of gardens and grounds; it has extensive views over former parkland, including a deer park and lakes, which are vested in the Fitzwilliam Wentworth Amenity Trust."[299] Built in1725, the construction of the historic building continued over four decades, and, then, passed to the Fitzwilliam family. The house is now owned by the Wentworth Woodhouse Preservation Trust, whose sole purpose is regeneration of the site for the benefit of South Yorkshire.[300] Like many houses of its kind, the local community developed to serve the estate. The building takes up a large physical space, which both allows for a connection and affection to the house and grounds and an anticipation to visit and participate in activities on the site. (Figure 2)
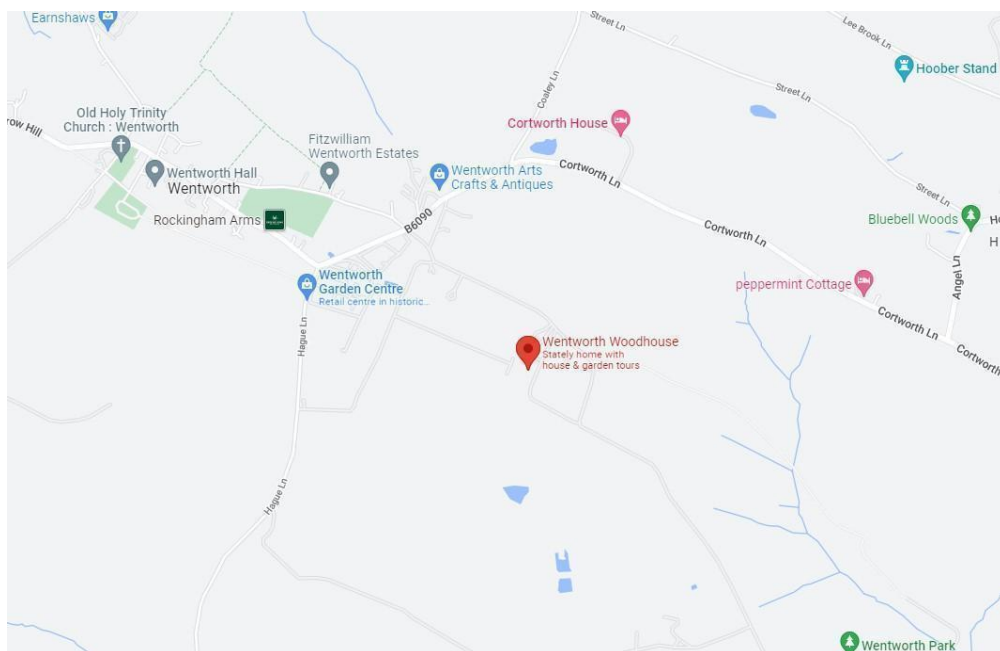

Figure 2: Location of Wentworth Woodhouse

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[299] https://wentworthwoodhouse.org.uk/our-story/the-house/

[300] https://wentworthwoodhouse.org.uk/our-story/the-house/

In 2018, after I visited the house, a master plan was launched that involved a strategy to engage the community through public engagement activities, which took place in advance of the report being published, and the inclusion of community engagement strategies throughout the plan.[301] Anecdotal conversations with the audience at the screening I attended indicated that this was much needed. Local people I talked to expressed the joy at being able to watch a film in the grounds of a local asset that had been closed to the public for a number of years. Comments from the audience included Respondent 34WW: "It's good to see historical places being used to bring people together" and Respondent 66WW "A new experience, taking in a historic building & grounds." Finally, Respondent 43WW mentions the "Ability to visit historic houses but in a different way." This reflects a desire for the space to be more open and accessible to the local community.

Historic and heritage buildings, like many charitable organisations, rely heavily on volunteer support. Across the over 1,000 responses I collected in my field work undertaken in 2018 and 2019, the only venue where staff was mentioned was Wentworth Woodhouse. At Wentworth Woodhouse, the value in the experience was felt across all assets, from the accessing of the grounds to the people who managed and provided support during the screening. Of all venues, Wentworth Woodhouse showed that the community had a deep attachment to the venue. This is an example of values-based heritage management, because the venue is significant to people who use it. In championing the values-based heritage approach, Kate Clarke cites the Burra Charter, which is a "series of steps to be followed when making heritage decisions. These steps include safeguarding the asset, understanding the place and its significance, and developing policies for managing that significance"[302] In describing the approach, relative to securing funding, Clarke suggests that this is a "bottom-up, community-driven approach, rather than an expert-led one." In order to secure Heritage Lottery Funding (the focus of Clarkes article), the applicant had to "actively ensure that it understood the significance of the heritage that it was responsible for. For example, a local community group that wanted funding for a historic building had to make sure that it understood why the building was important." My results show that, for

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[301] "From the start the Trust has endeavoured to engage with the communities of South Yorkshire, to keep them informed and to listen to their views. Over 1,000 members of the public responded to the master planning process either by way of the online questionnaire or by attending one of the many community consultation events and filling in comments cards" https://wentworthwoodhouse.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/WWH-Masterplan-vol1_Compressed.pdf

[302] Clake, Kate "Values-Based Heritage Management and the Heritage Lottery Fund in the UK" APT Bulletin: The Journal of Preservation Technology , 2014, Vol. 45, No. 2/3, Special Issues on Values Based Preservation (2014) p65

Wentworth Woodhouse, the cultural and community value is present and, therefore, if requested, my research could proactively contribute towards raising funds for the venue.

5.3.3 Economic Value: Case study Coughton Court and Battle Abbey

Coughton Court

The lead contacts at Coughton Court and Battle Abbey were very happy to support my research and answer questions, which I sent via email and during conversations held over Zoom.[303] The two sites form an interesting comparison as one of the sites is owned by the National Trust, the other by English Heritage. Coughton Court is a National Trust property located in Warwickshire. It is one of seven National Trust properties in the county, located in a region teeming with National Trust properties.[304] (Figure 3)

Figure 3: National Trust properties as mapped on the National Trust Website

Coughton Court is an imposing Tudor house set in beautiful gardens with a "collection of Catholic treasures."[305] My first question for the lead contact was "When and how were you

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[303] Excerpt from an interview with the lead contact from Battle Abbey on 1st July 2021

[304] https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/- Accessed November 2022

[305] The house was the home to the Trockmorton family, a devoutly religious family who were involved in the Midlands Uprising and the GunPowder Plot. Baddesley Clinton also has a a strong catholic heritage. In 1438 the site was bought by a lawyer, John Brome. Through his grand daughter, the house passed to the Ferrers family. Henry Ferrers the Antiquary, who lived at Baddesley from 1564 to 1633, built

first introduced to Outdoor Film Screenings?" The lead contact at Coughton Court – a screening that was rained off – was also the Marketing and Events Office for Baddesley Clinton, another National Trust property. Her response was:

> Originally at Baddesley we had put on outdoor theatre performances which for some reason didn't sell as well as the theatre performances at Packwood just up the road. So we decided to try something new, they seemed to be getting more and more popular and a few National Trust places had started to put them on so it seemed like it might work for Baddesley. Our first screenings were in 2015 and we've had the same event at Baddesley every year since, with many screenings selling out and we've added extra days too and also put on the event at Coughton.[306]

The quote from the lead contact at Coughton Court / Baddesley provides two interesting points of note. The first consideration is whether or not low sales in outdoor theatre productions at Baddesley was down to a saturation of theatre offers in the region. Baddesley is around 16 miles north of Stratford Upon Avon, the home of the Royal Shakespeare Company, and 15 miles from the centre of Birmingham, home to a number of renowned theatres.[307] Secondly, Baddesley became a place with a good local reputation for screening outdoor films, which offer something different from the traditional theatre model found in Birmingham and Stratford. When asked "Why does your venue host outdoor film screenings?", the lead contact from Coughton Court replied:

> When we started no other historic property, especially within the National Trust were holding them close by so it seemed like a popular thing to start with less competition nearby. Packwood, our sister property, is only 3 miles away with an established outdoor theatre programme which sells well every year. For some reason Baddeley's outdoor theatre didn't sell as well as Packwood's so we decided to give it a go. It was a low risk event which didn't require a lot of staff effort or time. We work on a ticket

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much of the garden range and the great hall. He also added many of the coats of arms to the house – in carved wood and stained glass. Like neighbouring properties Baddesley Clinton and Packwood House, Coughton was set in the once great Forest of Arden.

[306] Excerpt from email correspondence with the lead contact at Coughton Court 9th June 2021

[307] https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/coughton-court - accessed September 2022

split with the outdoor cinema company so there is no money paid upfront, we simply get a split of the money that is made, this makes it low risk financially."[308]

The limited risk of hosting outdoor film screenings was an important consideration for Coughton Court. The ticket sale splitting provides a way to share the burden of risk.

The risk is that there will be low ticket sales and that there will be a financial burden on the exhibitors (Summer Nights) and the screening venue. Core costs for an outdoor film screening include the staffing costs and the hire costs of portable toilets, lighting and other facilities that maintain required health and safety levels.[309] The risk to the audience is a topic considered by Radbourne et all who present a number of risk factors for audiences re-engaging in theatre productions.[310] These include functional risk (the possibility that the product will not "meet the consumer's expectation"), economic risk (in which the cost makes the decision-making process more complicated), psychological risk (in which the product poses a threat to the consumer's desired self-image) and social risk (which is concerned with how the consumer wishes to be perceived, and thus (is not necessarily experienced by all consumers).[311] These risks are concerns that, when considered, may have a detrimental effect on the overall enjoyment of the theatre experience, concerns which align with Michael Clarke's theories around decision making and the individual's ability to make choices. Clarke suggests that individuals are not good at choosing (comparing one factor to another). Attending an outdoor film screening at an unknown venue may be a way to reduce the risk of engaging with the venue, as the screenings provide a familiarity of experience in a venue that is uncharted. This is reflected in an email response from the lead contact at Coughton Court. When asked "What is the social and economic impact of screenings?", the reply was:

"We believe it draws people to visit Baddesley who wouldn't have done so normally and hopefully it will prompt them to return for a visit. The ticket split means that it is

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[308] Excerpt from email correspondence with the lead contact at Coughton Court 9th June 2021

[309] https://www.hse.gov.uk/event-safety/ - accessed September 2022

[310]Radbourne Jennifer, Johanson Katya, Glow Hilary and White Tabitha "The Audience Experience: Measuring Quality in the Performing Arts" International Journal of Arts Management, Spring 2009, Vol. 11, No. 3 (Spring 2009), pp. 16-29

[311] Radbourne "The Audience Experience: Measuring Quality in the Performing Arts"), p20

low risk, we usually sell out or get close to sell out screenings most nights so financially it is a successful event for us."[312]

Bringing people into the venue was a core interest for Battle Abbey and was highlighted in the conversation I had with the lead contact via zoom on the 1st July 2021.

Battle Abbey

A similar question around economic value was asked of the lead contact at Battle Abbey. Battle Abbey in East Sussex was the site of the Battle of Hastings, which was fought on 14 October 1066.[313] In a similar vein to Wentworth Woodhouse, Battle Abbey is in the centre of a village that grew around the Abbey. The connection between the Abbey and the local community was a strong narrative in the conversations I had with the lead contact. I started by asking "Why does your venue host outdoor film screenings?" The lead contact replied, "Battle Abbey is situated in the middle of a town. We are aware that not everybody in the town uses the site, because it's got that 1066 history focus, and if -you are not interested in that why would you come. So the evening activities we put on are always about getting local people to use the site a bit more, and to engage with us."[314] The lead contact at Battle Abbey noted that the first outdoor screening was "to utilise the site after its normal opening hours…appealing to visitors who would not normally come to the site."[315] Specifically, "local people who were not interested in history, who had completely written us off but this was our opportunity to get them in and show them there is more than just history here."[316] She continued "Hosting outdoor events, including cinemas was about utilising the space after hours. Membership is important, but what is more important is getting a new audience to use the venue." This presents a good example of values-based heritage approach

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[312]Except from email correspondence with the lead contact at Coughton Court 9th June 2021

[313] The Battle of Hasting is one of the best-known events in England's history, when William of Normandy defeated the army of King Harold of England.# The battlefield owes its survival to William the Conqueror, who founded Battle Abbey on the exact spot where Harold died as penance for the bloodshed of the Norman Conquest. The abbey thrived as a Benedictine monastery for over 400 years, and after its suppression in 1538 the abbot's lodging was transformed into a grand country house."

https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/1066-battle-of-hastings-abbey-and-battlefield/

[314] Transcribed from an interview with the lead contact at Battle Abbey 1st July 2021. 1.10- 2.14

[315] Direct quote from lead contact at Battle Abbey, Interview on 1st July 2012 1.20

[316] Direct quote from lead contact at Battle Abbey, Interview on 1st July 2012 1.50

championed by Kate Clarke. Making buildings more accessible (opening outside of 'normal opening hours') was a theme that was highlighted by the audiences in replies to the question "What is the cultural value of outdoor film screenings?" (2018) and "What is the appeal of outdoor film screening?" (2019)

5.3.4 Accessing the Venues

Accessing the venues was important to the audiences I spoke to. Two responses collected in 2018 that answered the question "What is the cultural value of outdoor film screenings?" Respondent 5AP noted: "I think it brings attention to historic buildings /sites that some people might not visit otherwise & promotes outdoor activities." Respondent 5AP split the idea of cultural value into two parts. The first is about engaging with the building, and the second is about engaging with an activity. It is unclear here whether the respondent expected the venue to provide additional activities or whether they were commenting on their attendance at one of the extra activities. Respondent 32AP takes the idea even further by suggesting that the cultural value is "Socialising and chance to see historic sites at different times of the day. Bringing together various ages, genders etc in a new venue for a new experience." This response has several parts. Socialising is the first element, followed by seeing historical sites at different times of the day. These ideas can be mutually exclusive but are sequenced to imply that socialising can happen at the venue. The venue in question is Attingham Park in Shrewsbury. Respondent 32AP also mentions bringing people together, which seems distinct from socialising, and ensuring the groups of people are not homogeneous, specifically that there is a mix of ages and genders. Finally, Respondent 32AP talks of a new experience. Respondent 32AP provides a complex answer to the definition of cultural value and outdoor film screenings, but they have hit on a few key ideas which are explored across my results chapters. These ideas include who you watch the film with, where you watch the film and the value of the experience.

The theme of experience, specifically within the context of historical buildings or heritage, was mentioned by several respondents in 2018. Much like the theme of access, these responses vary in complexity. Respondent 48WW notes that the cultural value is "An opportunity to visit the grounds." Something that seemed particularly important to attendees of screenings at Wentworth House, a private venue which had been closed to the public for a period of time. This theme is repeated by Respondent 32WW: "Outdoor experience of

surroundings you would not normally visit", reaffirming the novelty of the visit. Finally, Respondent 56WW: "Opportunity to enjoy our countryside and heritage with family on my doorstep- appreciate what is available locally." Opening outside the normal trading hours was about widening the audience base for the heritage locations. It was also about capitalising on the space and place value, nostalgic value, social value and heritage value of the location. The economic value is manifested in   the box office revenues, but also the knock-on impact to the town of the heritage venues being open late. This provides evidence of historic and heritage venues responding to audience needs with a contemporary approach.

5.3.5 Membership

The success of the screenings at the National Trust and English Heritage properties was, in part, due to marketing amongst its members. Membership is the representation of and allegiance to an organisation. Membership, much like fandom (discussed in "Chapter Seven: Communities and Fandom"), has the capacity to create a community of people who share similar values and attributes[317] The distribution of a quarterly newsletter and monthly emails provided a way for the charities to connect with their members and provide an offering that was different or new. This idea resonated with Respondent 2HH, who attended a screening at Hardwick Hall, and wrote "Doing something different from the norm. Spending time with family and friends, pleasant setting, supporting the National Trust". Membership is important to Battle Abbey, but what is more important is getting a new audience to use the venue. The membership scheme is designed to reinforce the community and, in Bourdeisan terms, the cultural capital of being a member of the National Trust or English Heritage. Ciaran Murphy suggests that pinpointing levels/forms of capital allow us to plot individuals' positions in social space. Through creating a map of social space, we can begin to see patterns and demarcate areas in which large numbers of individuals share a similar position, leading to the formation of social groups based on similar levels of capital and attitudes."[318] This is an idea echoed by Respondent 100WW: "I would not have known Wentworth existed if my friend had not suggested this film. It's a nice white middle class activity."

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[317]Jerry Frug defines a community to refer to a group of people who share things in common, 'a sense of identity or history or values-and who seek to foster the bonds they have with each other': Frug, Jerry 'The Geography of Community' Stanford Law Review , May, 1996, Vol. 48, No. 5 (May, 1996),p1048

[318] Burke, Ciaran (2015) 'Bourdieu's theory of practice; Maintaining the role of capital." Routledge, London p9

Membership is a subject mentioned in research terms by Richard McCullock and Virginia Crisp, who write about how they engaged audiences who attended screenings at the Prince Charles Cinema. To conduct their research, they contacted the 'self-selected' members of the cinema's own mailing list, who responded positively to filing in the survey questions, but fell "into a narrower demographic range than the venue's audiences as a whole."[319] Contacting non-members was an issue in McCulloch and Crisps research and suggests an overall problem with inclusion. This is not to criticise the work of McCullock and Crisp, rather this highlights a problem with using membership to engage audiences. The cost of annual membership to the National Trust is £76.80 a year for an individual, or £133.80 for a family consisting of two children and two adults.[320] The cost of annual membership to English Heritage is £66 a year for an individual, or £115 for a family consisting of two children and two adults.[321] For many people, membership of these organisations is cost prohibitive. Membership, one might argue, is designed to be a form of elitism, because if everyone was a member there would be no need to have a separate scheme.

5.3.6 What is the Value of the Venue?

The New Cinema History narrative that cinema can be about more than just the film is exemplified by results that link the value of the venue to the value of friendship. Here, we see two distinct parts being joined together to describe either cultural value (responded in 2018) or Appeal (responses in 2019). Unlike other replies that mention the words "family", "friend" or "socialising", the reflections from Respondent 17WW, Respondent 172WW, Respondent 88HH, and Respondent 56BP all note the value of the building as a site or space for being social.

By removing reference to the venue, the sentiment of these responses depreciates. The venue as a high factor of importance is counteracted by the data regarding venues captured in Question 1 "How important are the following factors?" (Figure 4) Here the venue was ranked as the fourth most important factor, measured on a Likert scale as a factor of 1-5. The venue was seen as less important than the film, the experience, and hanging out with

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[319] McCulloch Richard and Crisp, Virginia 'Watch like a grown up ... enjoy like a child': Exhibition, authenticity, and film audiences at the Prince Charles Cinema "Participations: Journal of Audience and Reception Studies, Volume 13, Issue 1 May 2016 p 191

[320] https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/membership#family-block-dropdown+ accessed November 2022

[321] https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/join/ - accessed November 2022

family and friends. However, one could argue that the value of the venue is enhanced when categorised with higher ranking factors.

How important are the following factors.

▣ Matters at lot 2018 average   ▣ Matters at lot 2019 average
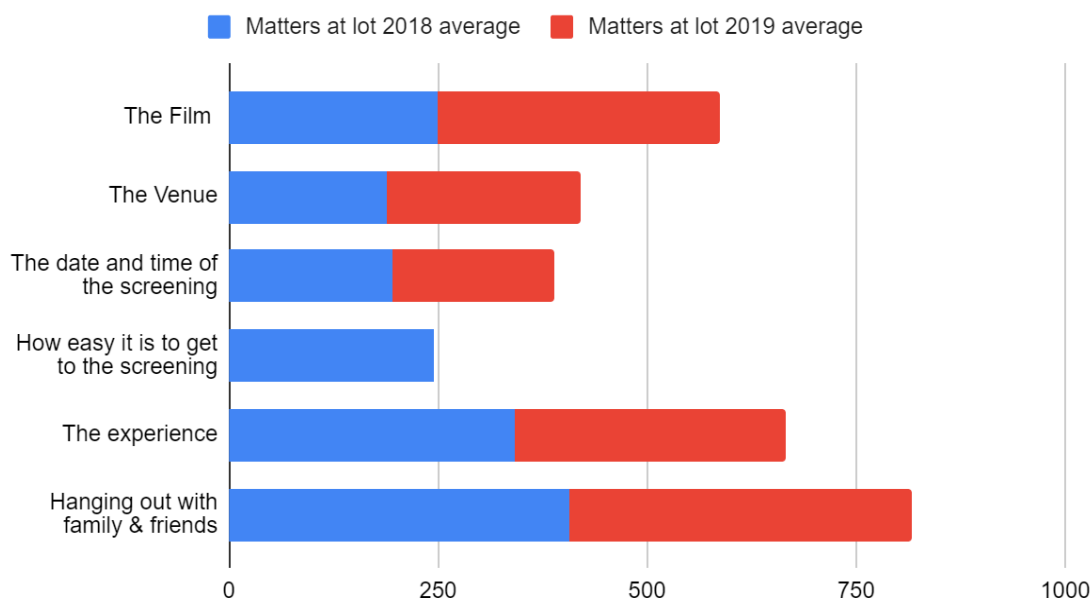
Figure 4:. "How important are the following factors"?

In interviews with the lead contacts at Coughton Court and Battle Abbey, I asked: "From your experience, what do you think is the most important factor for the audience attending an outdoor film screening? The film, The venue, The date and time of the screening, The experience, the chance to hang out with family and friends? What is the evidence (anecdotally or otherwise) to support your answer?"

The lead contact at Battle Abbey replied:

> I think the venue is important as that is what makes the experience special for the audience. It is a unique experience so it's important to make the evening special and it's nice for people to be able to share it with friends. I would imagine that weekends work best for people, going from personal experience, that is the easiest time to organise social events. Feedback from people on the night was that they had done similar experiences elsewhere and really enjoyed. [322]

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[322] Excerpt from an interview with the lead contact from Battle Abbey on 1st July 2021

This points to the value of the venue being a shared public space during the time that it is open. There is an emphasis here on increasing the opening hours of the venue to add value to the local community. In this way, the Abbey becomes a community asset. The lead contact at Baddesley countered this idea when responding to a question about the importance of the venue. They noted:

> We have noticed that we do get a different audience from other events at Baddesley, a lot of the people coming to the screenings hadn't visited Baddesley before and some hadn't heard of Baddesley at all. So, for some people it's definitely not the venue bringing them to the screening.[323]

This quote speaks to considerations of audience diversification. The lead contact at Baddesley noted that the audience who attend the historic house are different to the audience who attend a film screening at a historic house. The question arises whether or not, having been to the screening, the audience would then visit an historic house on its own merit? This suggests that the film audience are driven by experience and not history or heritage, and the opposite could be said of those who attend the historic house as a unique event. The question also arises as to whether historic/heritage locations can provide enough of an 'experience' factor for the film audience.

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter sought to consider the value of the alternative auditorium, which, until recently, was a rarely identified entity within the film studies canon. Emma Pett's differentiation of traditional auditorium spaces and non-traditional auditorium spaces provides a helpful framework in which to identify different spaces. Doreen Massey's evocative suggestion that space is different from place adds to this narrative. To define the non-traditional auditorium space by listening to people, a pledge of my research design. Patterns in the data provided scope to propose two additional different types of screening environment (Static Domestic Domain and Mobile Domestic Domain) to complement the terms traditional auditorium environment and non-traditional auditorium environment. This leads to a consideration of

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[323] Except from email correspondence with the lead contact at Coughton Court 9th June 2021

the volume and location of space. It is no surprise that most audience members enjoyed being outside, but there were also remarks and comparisons regarding the domestic sphere. The idea of the car as an auditorium space formed part of the drive-in storytelling mode in literature before 2020. Examples of this are Camile S Smalley's wistful interpretation of the Saco Drive-in.[324] In 2020, restrictions imposed by the Covid-19 Pandemic meant that the car became one of the only places to see films in a communal setting. Many of the respondents who attended drive-ins appreciated being a domestic space in a public environment, despite the volume of the space (the car) being much more restricted than the space available to the attendees of outdoor film screenings in 2018 and 2019. To illuminate how audiences connect to space, I introduce two case studies. These case studies represented a venue with community value and a venue with economic value. These very binary terms were used to highlight unique differences between the venues, though it's fair to say that characteristics of both terms could be found in both venues.

Towards the end of this chapter, I consider how venues proactively connected with their audiences through membership and external activities. Membership is a useful tool for creating communities, following a similar mode to fandom. Fandom is discussed in Chapter Seven. In hosting additional activities, the venues contribute toward placemaking and the economic sustainability of the business in the communities in which they inhabit. Ideas around placemaking and the value of historic buildings are investigated in "Chapter Eight: 130 Years in the Making".

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[324] Smalley, Camille S (2014) "The Saco Drive-In: Cinema Under the Maine Sky" Landmarks Books / Random House, New York

Chapter Six: Experience

6.1 Introduction

The aim of the chapter is to document the experience of the audiences that attended the outdoor film screenings and drive-ins that form my data set. Namely, it documents how the audiences physically (and digitally) respond to outdoor film screening.

This chapter begins by considering when the cinematic experience begins (section 1). My consideration of how the audience prepares for a screening in a self-directed manner is contrasted with Sarah Atkinson and Helen Kennedy's excellent example of engagement that is encouraged by producers in their analysis of Secret Cinema.[325] This comparison provides valuable insight into how immersive screenings use the pre-screening tool. I offer a further example of pre-screening activity in the correspondences I received from Drive-In London. Here, I share examples of pre-screenings activity in a Covid-19 environment. Within this section, I also draw on data from the survey cards distributed in 2018 and 2019 that asked the audience to score the importance of the film on a Likert scale.

In documenting the audience's experience of an outdoor film screening, I also refer to comfort elements (section 2). Comfort elements are the additional items that the audience brings to enhance the event. I break down this analysis via four themes: food, furnishing, fandom, and uncontrollable elements (weather). These are categories chosen based on initial observations at the outdoor film screenings I attended in 2016 and 2017, before my formal research began.

The last part of this chapter reflects on how the audience documents their experience through social media (section 3). In a section called "memory making", I present examples of where social media has been used by the audiences to expand the experience after the event has taken place. Here the audiences develop their own feedback space — a platform on which they can create a narrative that is guided by their own viewpoint. This pulls out the key elements of appeal in short text and pictorial form, and, therefore, provides a succinct way to understand appeal. Using social media in this way helps to expand the conversation and is a method for the audience to self-report their experience at outdoor film screenings.

Running through this chapter are segments of email conversations with the team from Summer Nights and Drive-In London, the organisations with whom I liaised in 2020. I combined these conversations with the data I collected in field work from online surveys,

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[325] Atkinson, Sarah and Kennedy, Helen "From conflict to revolution: The secret aesthetic, narrative spatialisation and audience experience in immersive cinema design" Participations, Journal of Audience and Reception Studies, volume 13, Issue 1 May 2016

observations and informal anecdotal conversations with the audiences I spoke to, to build up a picture of the audience's experience. Documenting the experience attendees of outdoor film screenings in 2018 and 2019 and drive-in screenings in 2020 is a unique and empirical piece of research, which contributes towards the understanding of audiences who watch film in non-traditional auditorium spaces. The attendee's contribution is in recording the experience of attending an outdoor film screening, in situ, while   at the screening.

6.2 Describing Experience

Within the context of traditional auditorium spaces, the word "experience" is often used in relation to the film. Exhibitors such as Vue Cinema describe their product as the "big screen experience". On their website, they state that:

> …Vue has 91 state of the art cinemas throughout the UK and Ireland, with over 870 screens. This includes 271 3D screens, 11 Extreme Screens, 7 Gold Class screens, 6 Scene Screens and Bars and 3 IMAX screens where Vue project the majority of our films in Sony Digital Cinema 4K for ultra-high-definition pictures with four times more detail. With over 150,000 seats, 98% of which are stadium seating, Vue's innovative development programme has led the way in the UK. Vue Westfield London (February 2010) and Vue Westfield Stratford City (September 2011) remain the first and third highest grossing cinemas in the country.[326]

Vue and other producers in the traditional auditorium industry create an experience in a static environment. The investment in new technology should be applauded. However, the offer is, essentially, limited. The traditional auditorium provides a fixed way to watch a film. At a non-participatory screening, the audience are encouraged to remain still and silent during a film, placing all their attention on the film screened in front of them. Conversely, non-traditional auditorium environments are purposefully informal and place the value of experience on factors other than comfortable seats, optimal sound and visual technology. Thus, the experience of traditional auditorium spaces versus non-traditional auditorium spaces is very different.

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[326] https://www.myvue.com/about-vue/about-us - access November 2022

This chapter considers how experience may be framed. The term "experience" is subjective, so how the audiences define the term will be personal and will reflect individual approaches and interpretations of the term.

6.2.1 When Does the Screening Start: Audiences

The point at which the outdoor film screening experience starts is a unique consideration of this type of film exhibition. Evidence of the pre-screening experience in terms of planning for the 'day of the screening' is found in observations of the comfort factors that the audience brought to the screenings. Anecdotal conversations with audience members across all the screenings I attended in 2018 and 2019 built up a picture of how these pre-screening preparations took shape. Within the domestic sphere, several audience members had made homemade food, such as quiches, sandwiches, and pies. One audience member had created a spreadsheet of different foods and different food types in order to create a picnic that best suited the needs of her and her friends. Other people had ordered picnic hampers especially for the screening. Many people had ordered food online to be delivered to their house. A few people bought food on the way to the screening. Others took a less formal approach to food and ordered pizza.

I further observed several audience members hauling large pieces of garden furniture onto the site. Many people brought portable foldable trolleys.[327] These enhanced items needed to be bought, prepared, cleaned up and transported to the screening, requiring planning in advance of the event. Pre-screening planning may, therefore, have begun many days in advance of the screening itself.

At the screenings in 2018 and 2019, the process for opening each event was highly ritualised, with a similar sequence taking place at every screening. Following technical, security and safety checks, the venues would open at around 7pm. As the audience arrived, they would find a space to their liking, which they would mark out with furniture, blankets and other personal effects. The urgency to own a good spot became a key part of the pre-screening experience. On a number of occasions, I observed people run from the entrance gates to the screening arena in order to secure the optimal place to watch the film. The period between arriving on site and the screening starting was used for conversation, eating

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[327] An example of the foldable trolleys seen at outdoor films screenings I attended in 2018 and 2019:
https://www.parkerbrand.co.uk/foldable-hand-cart-red - accessed November 2022

and drinking. This created a space for the personalisation of the experience. The time between the opening of the screening venue and the screening of the film evoked a purposefully interactive environment that set the atmosphere for the event. This period provides the audience with a chance to find a bespoke personalised comfort, which, for many, started long before the opening of the screening venue.

6.2.2 Pre-screening Activity: Producers

There are several reasons why a producer may choose to engage in pre-screening activity. There are examples found in immersive cinema where the producers provided tasks for the audience to complete as a way of getting into character before the screenings begin. This is, in part, documented by Sarah Atkinson and Helen Kennedy in their analysis of Secret Cinema.[328] Helen Kennedy and Sarah Atkinson documented the pre-screening experience as part of their analysis of Secret Cinema's 2015 rendition of *Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back*.[329] Here, the experience included a prolonged engagement in online spaces where participants received instructions on how to prepare for the event, such as which persona they would adopt, what clothes they needed to wear, and what props were required to ensure a full and meaningful engagement on the night of the event.[330] Atkinson and Kennedy did point out flaws in pre-engagement narrative:

> In 2014, Secret Cinema Presents ... Back to the Future ..., tensions emerged within a section of the audience who were not invested in the rules of engagement of the secret cinema brand. The secret location of the screening, the requirement to surrender mobile devices on entry to the venue, and subsequently to adhere to the explicit instruction to Tell No One confused, and frustrated some, many of whom were core fans of the Back to the Future franchise.[331]

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[328] Atkinson, Sarah and Kennedy, Helen "From conflict to revolution: The secret aesthetic, narrative spatialisation and audience experience in immersive cinema design" Participations Volume 13, Issue 1 May 2016 p256

[329] Atkinson, "From conflict to revolution: The secret aesthetic, narrative spatialisation and audience experience in immersive cinema design" Participations, Journal of Audience and Reception Studies p258

[330] Ibid Atkinson p257

[331] Atkinson, "From conflict to revolution: The secret aesthetic, narrative spatialisation and audience experience in immersive cinema design" p256
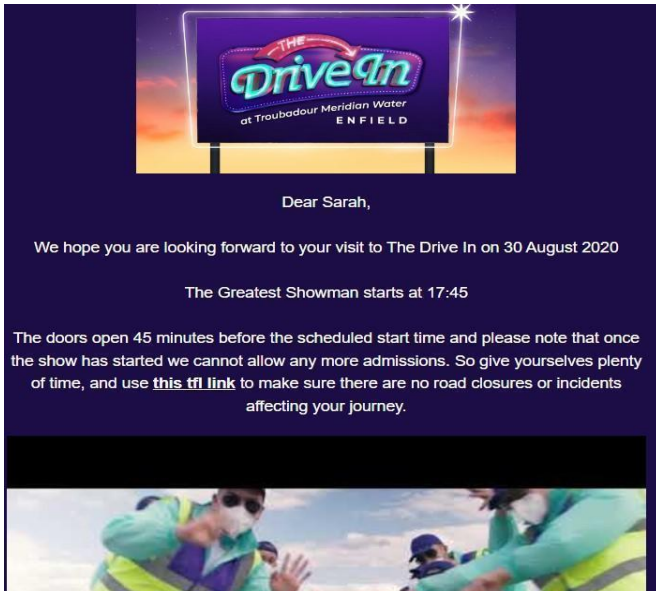
Figure 1: Drive in London website

The pre-screening experience for the Drive-in London screenings I attended was very different from the experience facilitated by Summer Nights. If the outdoor film screening is intentionally simple, the drive-in model is intentionally animated. After I booked the tickets to the Drive-In London screening, I received a confirmation email (Figure 1) with instructions detailing when the show starts, the procedure for entering the arena and how to connect to the audio. There is also the suggestion to bring "blankets with you so you can keep nice n cosy while watching." Also mentioned was the food and drink offer. The email confirmation included a hyperlink whereby audience members could pre-book food.[332] Embedded in the email was a short one-minute clip that provides a taster of the experience. The clip starts with some wide-angle panning shots of the venue. This swiftly moved into a stop motion timelapse showing the screening arena filling up with cars, before cutting to another wide shot, this time of the arena full of cars. The film continues with a montage of the staff members (in Covid safe attire) and groups of friends in cars waving, which is followed by a selection of frames that show the pre-screening entertainment and the preparation and delivery of food. The short clips are full of people smiling and having fun. The staff members wearing facemasks is the only indication that the clip was produced during the first Covid-19 lockdown in 2020.[333] This email and the intersected hyperlinks provide a taster of   what

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[332] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vd9ip-tEBZA

[333] The film was uploaded onto YouTube on 16th July 2020

the screening may look like. This media serves to create anticipation in advance of the screening. What this shows is that the pre-screening event is not just about the creation or procurement of items, but rather an emotive response that creates an excitement to add to the experience.

Another type of pre-screening experience is the pre-show entertainment. An illustrative example of this is the offer provided by the Drive-in London producers. The drive-in screening, I attended capitalised on the pre-screening event with music played by a DJ and games. These games included a "kiss cam" - a camera pointed at members of the audience in their cars, which encouraged them to participate by embracing each other. There was also a quiz, a sing-along, opportunities to honk the car horn and a reminder of the food that was available.

This pre-screening entertainment is designed to add atmosphere and build experience in a formalised manner, which appeals to some, though not others. My guest and I found this entertainment endearing and that it did add to the atmosphere. However, by our third screening, it was clear that the formula was tiring. Although the audiences were, in large part, enjoying the spectacle, the DJ was not able to maintain the energy of previous screenings. The Summer Nights screenings did partake in and manage pre-screening experiences, rather than allowing the audience to create their own atmosphere. In email correspondence with the lead contact for Drive-in London, I asked about the pre-screening activity, specifically where the idea came from and the impact of the offer. The answer was one of differentiation, specifically "an extra thing to differentiate watching a film at a drive in with a full experience around it rather than just watching a film at home." The contact added: "We know a lot of people have access to the films we were showing in their living room, so we wanted to make a visit to the drive in extra special!" What the pre-screening invitation provides is a chance for the audiences to engage with the films before the screening. In "Chapter Seven: Communities and Fandom", I will elaborate on the experience of the drive-in and the cues used to engage and understand the filmic text.

Engaging with a filmic text before the screening is important as it provides the audience with ownership of the event and, therefore, a platform to build their own experience and the scope to respond to the film. This is in comparison to a traditional auditorium environment, which seeks little to no interaction with the audience before the film starts. Interaction begins at the box office, when the popcorn is bought. No food, drink or comfort items are provided,

other than those available from the cinema itself. The traditional auditorium environment is, therefore, a packaged experience that is generic and not intended to be personalised. By allowing food and furnishings and embracing fandom at the events, the audience can create their own pre-screening narrative and personalise their experience. This adds to the appeal of the screenings.

6.2.3 How important is the film?

To understand the importance of the films, I asked the audience to score the film on a Likert scale where the respondents ranked on a scale of 1 -5 the importance of a number of key factors, all connected to the question " how important is…?" Point one on the scale was '1-Not at All' and point five was '5- A Lot'.

How important are the following factors	1 -Not at All	2	3	4	5 - A Lot	No Answer	Totals
Battle, Bohemian Rhapsody, 24th August	2	5	14	40	86	1	148
Rocketman, Battle, 25th August	0	0	10	17	34	4	65
Middlesborough Dirty Dancing 29th August	0	1	5	11	52	0	69
Worcester, Bohemian Rhapsody, 20th September	1	2	23	20	33	0	79

Figure 2: "How important values out of 5*

The results show that, overall, the film, itself, was an important factor in their decision to attend the screenings outdoors, although this percentage was not conclusive. 21% of the total audience responses ranked this factor as 5 out of 5. However, at different venues, the responses were more nuanced. In 2019, *Dirty Dancing* shown at Ormesby Hall in Middlesbrough proved more popular than *Bohemian Rhapsody* screened in Worcester. The results showed that 75% of the audience at the screening in Middlesbrough cited that the film was a very important factor when choosing to watch a film outdoors, as opposed to 41% of the audiences who attended the screening of *Bohemian Rhapsody* at Witney Court in Worcester. Just over half (52%) of the audience who attended *Rocketman* at Battle Abbey gave the film a ranking of 5. A similar result (58%) was collated for the film *Bohemian Rhapsody* at the same venue the night before   (Figure 2).

It is unclear as to why one film would perform better than another. One suggestion may be that *Dirty Dancing* is better known and has a cult following amongst certain groups of

people, as exemplified in the article written by Natalie Riley.[334] *Dirty Dancing* is a film released in the 1980s whereas both *Rocketman* and *Bohemian Rhapsody* are contemporary releases.[335] This may suggest that audiences are less aware of *Rocketman* and *Bohemian Rhapsody*.[336] All three films are very visual in nature with a strong soundtrack. The films I observed in 2020 at Drive-in London also followed the visual/soundtrack-based genre.[337] In email correspondences with Drive- n London, I asked what the most popular films to show were and how choices were made regarding the films that were programmed. The lead contact replied:

> All the classics (*Grease, Dirty Dancing,* etc) did very well, and when new releases came out (e.g., *Godzilla vs Kong, Judas and the Black Messiah)* these became real hits. People just wanted a fun night out, so big blockbuster titles and fun musicals were the most popular.[338]

The films I observed across my research followed certain tropes: visual performances, easy to follow story arcs, and musical references embedded throughout. The conclusion to this section is not about the apparent popularity of the films. Rather, it is about why in all cases in 2019, except for Middlesbrough, only half the audience think the film was a very important factor in the screening. The data provides evidence that outdoor film screenings are about more than just sitting down to watch a film. Films can be watched in the domestic sphere and in traditional auditorium spaces. Moreover, these places may be *better* places to watch films as there is less environmental and atmospheric distraction.

6.3 Comfort Factors

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[334] https://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/celebrity/after-30-years-dirty-dancing-feels-more-relevant-to-women-than-ever-20170816-gxxjls.html - accessed January 2020

[335] *Dirty Dancing* was released in the UK on 16th October 1987. *Rocketman was* released *on* 22nd May 2019 and *Bohemian Rhapsody* was released on the 24 October 2018

[336] As noted in my methodology chapter, both *Rocketman* and *Bohemian Rhapsody were* autobiographical rock operas, a term used by the film critic Mark Kermode. This may have contributed towards the pairing of these films on the same program and the success of these films as very visual productions which suited the outdoor film screening aesthetics.

https://www.theguardian.com/film/2019/may/26/rocketman-review-right-spectacle-elton-john -accessed January 2021

[337] In August 2020 I attended three drive-in screenings hosted by Drive-In London. On Sunday 16th August I attended a screening of *Footloose (*Dir. Herbert Ross), Sunday 23rd August I saw *Grease* (Randal Kleiser) and on 30th August I saw *The Greatest Showman* (Michael Gracey)

[338] Excerpt from email correspondence with the lead contact at Drive in London

In this thesis, I suggest that comfort factors, such as food, furnishing and fandom, contribute towards the experience and, therefore, the appeal of outdoor film screenings. This is in part based on the observations I undertook both before and during my official research period. The observations provided codified expressions of who the audience was and how they added to the appeal of the outdoor film screenings. This, in part, resonates with semiotics and the work of Roland Barthes, who suggested that codes are found in human interaction.[339] What people wear, what they buy, how they interact contributes to understanding the `trivia' of everyday life and it's full of meanings.[340] The theories of Barthes and Bourdieu suggest that the comfort elements I refer to throughout this chapter are more than personalised choices. Rather, these choices are codified and may show stature through the personalised nature of the choices made. A good example here is the difference between cheesy crisps and a cheese board, both of which are designed to give the consumer food pleasure but are codified in the meanings they portray.

6.3.1 Food

Food is both comfort and fuel.[341] The idea of food as comfort is a compelling idea, especially when framed within the concept of appeal. Food and cinema have complemented each other for decades. However, within the traditional screening environment, food offers are limited and provided at the behest of the cinema spaces. In direct comparison, Summer Nights actively encouraged audiences to bring their own food. They specifically state: "Visitors are welcome to bring along their own food and drink, including glass bottles and alcohol."[342] They add: "Some venues will also have catering available on site, please check with the venue directly to find out what will be on offer."[343] The offer is deliberately simple and varies from other outdoor film producers, such the national outdoor screening company Luna and the London-based outdoor screening team at Nomad, both of which provide food options in various guises. Luna cinema offers food which can be pre-ordered through an

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[339] Barthes, Roland (1957) "Mythologies" Vintage UK, Random House, London

[340] https://www.uv.es/~fores/programa/barthes_mythologies.html

[341] https://www.theguardian.com/food/2022/may/21/husband-left-me-headed-for-kitchen-how-comfort-food-can-save-the-soul - accessed August 2021

[342] https://summernightsfilm.co.uk/about - accessed October 2021

[343] https://summernightsfilm.co.uk/about - accessed October 2021

online app, designed, in part, to adhere to social distancing guidelines.[344] These procedures were implemented as part of the Covid-19 pandemic operations and have been permanently adopted.[345] Nomad also offers food provided by preferential suppliers that allows a variety at each screening.[346]

Food as a core part of the experience was a theme which emerged from the data I collected in both 2018 and 2019. In response to the question "What is the cultural value of outdoor film screenings?", answers include:

- Respondent 44WW: "A jolly good atmosphere & great mates. Drinks, good food & just a great time."
- Respondent 55HH: "I'm only here for the food and booze."
- Respondent 119HH: "Fresh air, nice place, good food."

Responses in 2019 echoed the notion that food is a core part of the outdoor film screening experience:

- Respondent 34OHDD: "Fresh Air, different food and drink in the open air"

- Respondent 17OHBR: "Bring your own drink, food, good atmosphere"

Here we see that the audience used food for comfort, a dynamic enabled by the emphasis on the audience to bring their own food.

Figure 3: Picture of food taken at Ormesby Hall screening of Bohemian Rhapsody

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[344]https://www.thelunacinema.com/faqs-1 - accessed November 2021

[345]https://www.thelunacinema.com/faqs-1 - accessed November 2021

[346]http://www.whereisthenomad.com/suppliers - accessed November 2021

Figure 4: Picture of food taken at Ormesby Hall screening of Dirty Dancing

Figure 5: Picture of food taken at Ormesby Hall screening of Dirty Dancing

Figure 3, a photograph taken at the Ormesby Hall screening of *Bohemian Rhapsody* on 28th August 2019, depicts a collection of dips and crisps, and some homemade sandwiches. There are also protein items such as hot dogs and scotch eggs, and sweet items such as chocolate and jam tarts. Drinks include water, fizzy drinks and cider. The variety of food, which includes both savoury and sweet items, may have been procured to provide a structure to the food offer: savoury items followed by sweet items. Delineating savoury food from sweet foods emulates the concept of a split course meal that one may find in the domestic sphere. This provides an example of where comfort from the home (private space) environment can be transported to the public space.

In contrast, Figure 4 is a photograph of items taken at the screening of *Dirty Dancing* at Ormesby Hall on 29th August 2019. It shows 'deli style items', which included olives, Parma Ham and specialty crisps. This photograph also shows outdoor cutlery, and the food is placed on a Pilates or yoga mat. The 'sweet treat' is a pack of donuts. There are no drinks present at this picnic, but there is cutlery, which was not found in Figure 3. Figure 3 and

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Figure 4 thus provide examples of selections of food that have something to suit most people's tastes and are archetypal of a picnic selection.

Figure 5 offers a more stripped back approach. Taken at a screening of *Dirty Dancing* at Ormesby Hall on 29th August 2019, the photograph shows a selection of snacks. Here, there is no indication of a structured meal experience. Rather, there are lots of sugar-based foods. The addition of comfort food adds to the outdoor film screening experience. However, the experience remains the process of watching a film outside. This is in juxtaposition to the audience members who took elaborate picnics to the screening, demonstrating a process where the food was as (or more) important as the film.

The audience attendees at Whitney Court produced some of the most elaborate picnics I observed. There was evidence of items such as a cheese platter, including bespoke items relevant to the cheese eating experience, such as a cheese knife and a cheese board. Other items I observed included homemade quiche.[347] The photos of food taken at Witney Court on 20th September indicate very deliberate decisions around how food and wine will be presented and consumed.

The options of how to eat the food are highly curated. A good example is Figure 6, a photograph taken at Whitney Court of quiche and tomatoes, clearly indicating the food to eat with the quiche. This is different from the food presented in Figure 3 and Figure 4, where the variety of food on offer does not suggest there is a prescriptive way to pair foods, though, as mentioned earlier, there may be a preference to eat savoury food before sweet foods.

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[347] I spoke to the audience member holding the quiche who confirmed it was homemade.

Figure 6: Whitney Court homemade quiche and tomatoes

Figure 7: Whitney Court cheese board

Figure 8: Whitney Court wine and crackers

The decisions on the food brought to the screenings was subject to individual choice. However, food provides an indication of cultural capital.[348] Audience members may use food for personal pleasure and to distinguish themselves from others. There would appear to be a distinction in class between someone who has time and resources to make a homemade quiche as opposed to someone who decides to eat pre-packaged/ready-to-eat sweet foods during a screening. The idea of food reinforcing class tropes is also illustrated   in Figure 7 and Figure 8, where specialist cheese knives can be seen. The cheese knives are a very distinct product and are more formal that the generic cutlery set seen in Figure 4.

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[348] In the 1970s Pierre Bourdieu, a French sociologist, developed the idea of cultural capital as a way to explain how power in society was transferred and social classes maintained. Bourdieu argues that Habitus is the way in which an individual's "domestic" influences, and subsequent experience of "class conditions." define the cultural capital of an individual. Habitus explains the regularities of behaviour that are associated with social structures, such as class, gender, and ethnicity, without making social structures deterministic of behaviour, or losing sight of the individual's own agency. Therefore Bordieu might argues that is the tendency to bring food to a screening is a choice, but one made as a product of social stratification

Goldthorp, John H. "Cultural Capital": Some Critical Observations" Sociologica Fascicolo 2, settembre-ottobre 2007 p5

Figure 9: Pizza at Speke Hall in Liverpool

The picture in Figure 9 was taken at the screening of *Dirty Dancing* at Speke Hall on the 12th September 2019. This image indicated a very different approach to the pre-screening rituals: the participants did not make or curate an evening meal for the screening but ordered pizza. If the pizza was to be warm at the screening, the timings for when the pizza was ordered and collected would have been key. This represents planning but offers a very different approach to the planning seen in Figure 4 and Figure 6. Figure 4 provides an example of pre-screening planning by buying food. In Figure 6, the pre-screening planning is in making food. In Figure 9, the pre-screening planning was in ordering and collecting the food. These examples show differences in the food choices people make, which may reflect the time people have and how they define comfort factors that food generates. There is scope for more research to be undertaken in this area, particularly in the way in which audiences choose prepare food for outdoor screening and what this may inform the academy about local and national approaches to food choices and film screenings.

Food was, likewise, a core part of the provision and business model for Drive-in London, who hosted the drive-in screening I attended in 2022. The food on offer was a combination of hot dogs, burgers and fries, in what seemed to be an international curation of themed food. In email correspondence with Drive-In London, I asked: "I love the food element to your screenings- the hot dogs were epic! What sort of profit do you make on food, and do you think this adds to the authenticity of experience?" Their reply:

As with any cinema, food and drink was our main source of income. For me, it adds to the whole event - it makes it into a proper night out - you have the car karaoke, the movies - the snacks complete the package![349]

The food offer from Drive-in London could be ordered via an app, much like the food offer presented by Luna Cinema. Figure 10 is a photo I took at the Drive-in London screening of *Grease* on 23rd August 2020. At the screening, I ordered a hot dog that was delivered by a member of staff on roller skates. My observation was that the food I ordered was difficult to eat and became a distraction from the film and the pre-screening activities at the film.

Figure 10: Hot Dog bought at a Drive in London screening

Online feedback of the food offer posted on Google Reviews mentions the costs of the food, which many thought were too expensive. (Figures 11 and 12)

Figure 11: Review of food bought at a Drive-in London Screening

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[349] Excerpt taken from an email with Drive in London Producers

Quick and easy check in. Covid compliant and friendly staff. The cars are placed not too close to each other.
Good option to order hot and cold food and drinks using online menu that are brought pretty quick by staff. However a veg hot dog costing £13 is pretty pricey, so maybe consider bringing own food?

👍 Like

Figure 12: Review of food bought at a Drive-in London Screening

Food was also mentioned by the people who responded to the question on my online surveys. Data captured showed that 51.8% of the attendees brought their own food to the screenings. However, for many, buying food at the screening added to the experience. When asked: "What was the best part of your experience?", responses included:

- Respondent 2DI: "The food being delivered on roller skates and as a culinary treat"
- Respondent 1DI: "The view of the screen was great, sound and picture quality were great, and there were wood-fired pizzas and beers served. It was also a really nice romantic atmosphere with cute lighting etc"
- Respondent 8DI: "Watching the film/getting restaurant quality food delivered to the car"
- Respondent 11DI "Being able to watch a movie even with a toddler with us; food brought to our car; the movie itself; able to sing along without feeling of shame"

In the case of the Drive-in offer in 2020, food represents comfort (the food was made by someone else) and convenience (food didn't need to be made or bought). Furthermore, the option of ordering food was a treat factor, an important consideration during the Covid-19 pandemic when, for some people, going to restaurants was prohibited.

6.2.2 Furnishings

Comfort is defined in the dictionary as pleasurable, relaxed, good for wellbeing and enjoyable.[350] Food provides sensual comfort, but furnishings provide physical comfort. This physical comfort manifests in both what people bring to sit on, and the space which they appropriate.

I observed a variety of items brought by the audience as furnishings to add comfort. A popular choice was the camping chair, which is a fold-up fabric chair with a metal frame. These chairs were evident in all the screenings I attended, in part, because the chairs are both lightweight and supportive, so they are convenient and comfortable. At Speke Hall in Liverpool, two members of the audience brought a modest camping table. Another audience member at the same screening brought a wicker hamper, which was repurposed as a mini table. There was also plenty of evidence of storage containers being repurposed as tables.

Figure 13: Garden Furniture at the screening at Whitney Court

At some of the screenings I attended, there was a more planned approach to furniture. At Whitney Court in Worcestershire, one group of friends brought an outdoor coffee table, of the type that one might find on a patio or deck. This was to facilitate a three-course meal, one of the most elaborate approaches to food I witnessed. On entering the site, this collective brought with them three wheeled carriers. This was a good example of bringing comfort to the event and ensuring that the screening was a certain type of experience.

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[350] https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/comfort - accessed July 2022 / https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/comfort accessed July 2022 / https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/comfort accessed July 2022

Another popular item to bring to the screenings was a rug or blanket. These were used in multiple ways that offered comfort and practicality. Audiences I observed during my field research in 2018 and 2019 would sit with their friends in small clusters, often marking their chosen space with rugs or cushions. The rugs and cushions protected the audience from the hard ground and provided a more comfortable place to sit or lie down. The audiences at the outdoor film screenings I attended were very quick to mark out space.

Figure 14: Throws used as rugs, audience members marking out their screening space.

The screening became a patchwork quilt of textures and colour, made from the differing rugs brought by the screening groups. A photo taken in 2018 (Figure 14) shows how blankets were used to demarcate the space of the audience group. Along the outside of the blanketed area are bags and other items, with the picnic selection in the middle.

The appropriation of space in an outdoor film screening is different from a traditional auditorium environment, where fixed uniform seating forms part of the cinematic experience. At an outdoor film screening, the audience chooses the space they appropriate. Subconscious decisions are made about the closeness at which each audience group desires to sit next to another. Choices around proximity to others represents the balancing of personal space versus feeling part of a communal activity.[351] Bringing furniture to an outdoor film screening is about comfort, but it also makes a statement about who you are. These nuances, signs and signals are Barthesian — a way in which we tell stories about

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[351] The architect Jan Gehl argues for proximity, notably the way cities are designed. Gehl suggests that a width of just four metres is all that is needed between one public building and another to animate a space. Furthermore, Gehl argues that people need to be together to understand and feel part of space.: https://gehlpeople.com/ accessed October 2022

who we are through the signs and signals we visually transmit to others. The difference between bringing a rug or garden furniture to an outdoor film screening, in part, makes a statement about how the audience gauge and value comfort. Carrying large items onto a site also sends a signal to others regarding the status or wealth of the different people. Garry Cross suggests that goods are used as a way to attach value to an experience.[352] Cross argues that bought things make subjective memories via a heritage of things created by attaching a value and a memory to an item. Affluence enables more memory making. The more money a person has, the more items they can buy, and the more memories are attached to these items. Therefore, the quantity of items that an individual brings onto site will reflect both wealth and may trigger more memories and nostalgia. Months after the screening, audience members may look at a rug, or cushion or throw bought for and brought to the screenings and connect it with the event, the signal that the audience sends out with the use of large or small items for comfort also resonates with ideas behind cultural capital, and/or how people use status to connect to each other.

6.3.3 Weather

A factor of the screening that could not be controlled by the audience was the weather. The weather added to the experience, particularly when it was good, per Respondent 57BP's reply: "I guess it is not often the weather in the UK allows for an event like this. It's a novelty. I feel like I am abroad." Bad weather was also mentioned by Respondent 40SH: "Dunno, I got dragged along and it's raining so a bit crap; however, the screen looks pretty cool." The screening producer, Summer Nights, rarely cancelled due to weather. The exception was in Coughton Court, where gale-force winds meant the blow-up screen could not be safely tethered to the ground.[353] In being an uncontrollable element of the experience, weather thus becomes both about the pre-screening expectation and contemporary screening reality. A few respondents mentioned their aspirations for the screening in terms of weather:

● Respondent 5SH: "Chance to sit and chat, eat picnic with friends (wishful thinking in the sun)"

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[352] Cross, Garry (2015) Consumed Nostalgia: Memory In The Age Of Fast Capitalism, Columbia University Press

[353] https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2019/aug/09/uk-weather-fears-of-flooding-as-rain-and-wind-cause-disruption - accessed January 2020

- Respondent 39SH "The fun - the whole experience. Summer months would have been better"
- Respondent 2OHDD: "Being outside if the weather is okay"
- Respondent 86OHDD: "Picnic, friends...being prepared for any weather"

These responses provide an indication that weather is factored in to the appeal of the screening, or lack thereof. Respondent 39SH suggests that the weather needs to be warm, a conclusion implied by their referring to the summer months. Respondent 2OHDD wants the weather to be "okay" but doesn't state if that means sunny summer weather. 86OHDD is not phased by the weather, but points to being prepared. This links back to the pre-screening phase of the outdoor film screening, the period in which the audiences organise furniture, items, clothes and food, ready for the screening.

Other responses that mention weather include:

- Respondent 12BP noted: "Making the most of the great British weather."
- Respondent 10HH wrote: "Outdoor films are more group events. The same as indoor cinema but in a pretty location on a nice summer evening."
- Respondent 58BARM: "To be outside and enjoying the weather with a picnic."

These responses suggest that weather adds to the appeal of outdoor film screenings and is therefore a positive factor. In terms of negatives, Respondent 95AP noted: "A contingency plan for bad weather would be good especially in the UK." Respondents also completed the online question for my drive-in study: "What part of the experience did you least enjoy?" In their response, Respondent 8WC noted: "The weather (does that count)?"

Finally, a few respondents were ambiguous about the use of the word "weather", not clarifying if this was a pre-experience expectation or the weather reality at the time of the screening. For instance, Respondent 94OHDD noted: "Weather, unusual & being with friends." Respondents 10 and 11 from Witney Court in Worcester simply wrote "Weather" in response to the question "what is the appeal of outdoor film screenings?"

In a conversation with the team at Quad, Derby, I discussed the importance of the weather in relation to the appeal of outdoor film screening. Screenings were cancelled if the weather

was deemed to be unsafe, but the unanimous opinion was that the weather didn't really matter to the audience. The team suggested that there were very few examples of people leaving the screenings because of rain. Rather, the weather provided a key part of the experience and the pre-event rituals. The process of preparing for the weather expanded the screening experience, as clothes had to be considered, along with blankets and umbrellas. Furthermore, the weather, rather than being a hindrance, added an extra 'adventure factor' to the screenings by providing the unknown element, which good preparation rewarded.

The core difference between the outdoor film screenings I attended in 2018-2019 and the drive-in screening I attended in 2020 was the contrast in atmospheric screening environment. In 2018 and 2019, the audience had to prepare for bad weather. Conversely, in 2020, the audience had to prepare for the eventuality of rain hitting the screen and distorting the pictures. These were two very different screening environments that had the same intrinsic idea: providing an audience the opportunity to watch a film outside.

6.3.4 Cars

During the 2020 Covid pandemic, drive-in cinemas became a legitimised way of watching films outdoors. Rather than sitting on rugs in an organic placement of the audience's choosing, the configuration of the drive-in required order. The process involved buying a ticket online, at which point a parking space was allocated. Once parked, the audience in their cars were asked to tune their car radios to a preset radio position.

At this stage, little else was required. As mentioned, some of the audience brought food and drinks, but this was less visible as the nature of the screening meant that social distancing was suitably enforced. This meant watching other people's screening rituals was limited. The insight I collected in 2020 was a combination of observations at the drive-ins I attended and feedback from online surveys. One of the questions I asked in 2020 was: "What part of the experience did you least enjoy?"[354] Here, most responses related to watching a film in a car. Respondent 6DI: "Being in a car (it was hot)" was the least enjoyable experience, a

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[354] When collecting the data on drive-in screenings I approached the ranking question in a slightly different way, by providing spaces to reflect on the questions: a) why did you attend the screening b) What was the best part of the experience c) What was the worst part of the experience. As respondents were giving feedback via an online form there was an increased likelihood that they had more time to complete open field questions, in comparison to the respondents in 2018 and 2019 who were completing their survey cards just before the screening started.

theme replicated by Respondent 5DI: "Having a toddler in the car". Respondent 3DI replied in detail:

> I went with three others, I was sitting in the back and couldn't see anything at all. way the cars had been parked was really bad, they should have been staggered so that I could have sat on the back of the car or sat outside, but I would have just been blocking someone's view.

Organisational problems concerning the way in which cars were parked at the drive-in was echoed by Respondent 3DI: "I have been to other drive-ins that parked cars properly, so I know it's possible. I actually left this screening five minutes in because I couldn't see anything. V frustrating."

The allocation of space at drive-in screenings is seen by respondents as being both a success and failure of the drive-in model. At an outdoor film screening in a non-traditional environment, the audience can choose where they sit and how much space they appropriate. At a drive-in, the size of the cars pre-determined how much space is required and how many people/cars can attend the screenings. Another respondent, Respondent 4DI, suggested that the pre-film entertainment was the least enjoyable part of the experience: "The karaoke/games before the film. Just thought it was going to be the film I was watching, didn't plan to be there as long as I was". This was contradicted by Respondent 8DI: "Very participative experience." These opposing responses may contrast based on the expectation of the audience and the willingness of the participants to choose to engage. Respondents did mention the film and, in particular, how the best part of the experience was "singing loudly" or "The songs in the film and watching it in my friend's convertible".[355] These experiences contrast with the non-participatory film shown in the traditional auditorium environment, which offers very few additional extras at the point in which the audience settles down to watch the film. Rather, the focus is specifically on the film.

The drive-in experience in 2020 provided the audience with two distinct opportunities which limited interaction during the Covid-19 lockdown.[356] The first was a means to safely engage

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[355] DI13 'Singing Loudly' and DI3 'The songs in the film and watching it in my friends convertible'

[356] https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-8875/ accessed 15th July 2022

with film outside the home environment. The second was an opportunity to publicly socialise within a 'bubble'. Two respondents typified the context of the drive-in experience in 2020. Respondent 2DI: "I'd never been to a drive-in before, and it felt like a small adventure". Respondent 12DI: "Being outdoors watching a movie, the novelty. Being in a field doing this was much better than in a car park [sic]. The sound box they supplied was better than listening through the car stereo."

The drive-ins provided an opportunity for a shared experience at a time when limitations on public movement and interactions were in place. The value of a shared experience was also attributed to the screenings I attended in 2018 and 2019. Respondent 5DI: "Doing something with friends that wasn't going to the pub/a restaurant/the park" provided a good example as to how audiences used the drive-in experience to add a form of normality to the lockdown period. As Respondent 10DI wrote: "It was a rainy day and the children have missed the cinema experience so this was a good option with a twist!"

Watching films at a drive-in cinema became a relatively new experience in Britain in 2020. There had been other drive-in cinemas in the UK that had offered a temporary non-auditorium space, but none that had been created in response to the deficit of other types of entertainment.[357] The culture of drive-in cinemas in the USA is deeply embedded and narratives of these spaces reflect many of the experiences that happened in Britain in 2020. Camille M. Smalley records the experience of Alex Moody, a customer at the Saco Drive-in in Maine. Moody recalls: "To spend those warm nights close together, in laughter and total enjoyment, helped us to give our children a smile each week and for my husband and I to bond despite the stress and struggle we were under."[358] The struggles in this case were financial concerns, but could be applied to the anxiety of the 2020 pandemic period. The impact of drive-in screenings as a place for people to come together is evidence of the enduring appeal of the non-traditional cinematic space, not only in providing choice but by creating a space for community. What the drive-in screenings also show is the versatility of outdoor film screenings, how they are a useful, temporary medium for safely bringing people together and animating spaces. This provides more weight to the suggestion that outdoor film screenings are more than just the act of people watching a film outdoors.

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[357] An example of pre-pandemic drive in cinemas include a drive in cinema in Manchester
https://www.fatsoma.com/e/duc30gwc/manchester-s-iconic-valentine-s-drive-in-cinema-with-key-103 accessed January 2022

[358] Smalley, Camille M, (2014) "The Saco Drive-In: Cinema Under the Maine Sky" Landmark Books   44

6.4 Memory Making

Social media is part of the experience of outdoor film screenings as it provides an immediate tool for engagement and response. There is a wealth of different social media platforms, which appeal to different audiences in different ways. For my research, I focused on Twitter.[359] The posts on Twitter that were tagged with the #summernightsfilm hashtag were light on text but media- rich: the pictures were very descriptive, detailing what people wore, how they arranged themselves within the screening, and the importance of food. These are themes that are repeated across my research findings. Figure 15 is a picture of the audience at an outdoor event taken from the vantage point away from the main screen.

Figure 15: Twitter response found by searching #Summernightsfilm

The caption that accompanies the picture reads: "Picnic before movie! #summernightsfilm". This picture is useful as it provides the context of where the

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[359] https://www.academia.edu/38292088/Social_Media_Engagement_What_Motivates_User_Participation_and_Consumption_on_YouTube?from=cover_page - accessed 9th August 2021

experience is taking place and of the experience itself. The punctuation in Figure 15 implies this is a good or exciting experience.

Figure 16 provides a similar response to Figure 15. Here, the publisher ties a picture of an audience at a screening to the caption. "Excellent evening at #summernightsfilm showing of #TheGreatestShowman at the magnificent @Wentworth_house." As with Figure 15, the picture is taken from the back of the audience, but the weather and audience attire would suggest this image was taken later in the evening, when the weather was turning colder. Figure 17 is more detailed in its description and less generic. The caption reads "Back home after a picnic, an outdoor screening of Dirty Dancing, and accompanying musical fireworks. I have therefore won Friday."

Figure 17: Twitter post found while searching #Summernightsfilm

This post is insightful as it details what the audience member did and how he felt about the experience. Furthermore, the image is of two people from the audience pulling faces. There is every reason to suggest that one of the people in the image is the person who posted the tweet online.

Figure 18: Twitter post found while searching #Summernightsfilm

A similar conclusion can be drawn from Figure 18 where the person who posted the

comment wrote: "The Force Awakens @wollatonhall **#summernightsfilm**". This is a less descriptive tweet, but there are still many clues about experience from the post. The comment points to the film that was screened (*Star Wars: Episode VII - The Force Awakens* (dir. J.J. Abrahams)), where the screen took place (Wollaton Hall) and who produced the film (Summer Nights - Derby Quad). The image included in the post is useful as it provides further evidence of how audiences appropriate the space and add comfort to the experience. Here, we see four people sitting on either a blanket or a camping chair, which would have been brought on site. There is no evidence of food in this image. The picture of the tweet in Figure 18 builds on the narrative that is offered by the tweet in Figure 17.

Here, the tweeter provides details of the film he is watching (*Top Gun* (dir. Tony Scott)), where the screening is (RHS Wisley), and the producers (Summer Nights). In addition, the author provides two photographs. One of the photos is of the space in front of the screen, which reinforces the observation that the audience brought chairs to the screenings. The other photograph is of a picnic set and food. The latter picture provides clues that allude to the experience for which the person tweeting is preparing.

Figure 19: Tweet found while searching #summernightsfilm

Food is also a factor in Figure 19. The author provides a narrative that can be interpreted through the photo. The tweet reads: "We had a great time celebrating mum's bday watching #DirtyDancing @NTBaddesley **#summernightsfilm** @OutdoorFilm"

Figure 20: Tweet found while searching #summernightsfilm

The picture is of two women of different ages, one taking the photo while the other is holding up a glass with fizzy pink liquid. This tweet creates a narrative, suggesting who is in the picture, why both people are in the picture, the film they are going to watch and what the person who posted the tweet thought of the experience.

Social media thus provides a very useful way to understand how the audience interpreted their experience. This is demonstrated in the images they use, the captions that go alongside the images, and who is associated with the images, either through tagging or hashtagging.

Twitter was also used to advertise the events and for the audience to speak directly to the venues. This is evident in Figure 20, where the venue, Wentworth Woodhouse, responded and replied to tweets posted by other parties. In Figure 20, the account @Wentworth_House retweets an original message posted by @OutdoorFilm, the Summer Night's account. The retweet reinforces the original message and adds extra information relevant to the evening's screening. The example in Figure 20 also shows the interaction with the audience. A tweet asks: "Can I ask what the toilet facilities are available for outdoor screening?" The response was a listing of the facilities available: "There will be a Bar, Fish and Chip Vendor, Wood Fired Pizza Vendor, Toilets inc disabled, An allocated smoking area. For info & other FAO please see the link below or call 01226351161 for tickets". The message was in list form and used emojis to add an extra level of playfulness to the message. This form of communication seeks to create a pre-screening narrative with the audience.

Figure 20: Using Twitter to speak and connect to venues

The social media interactions from the audience, both to post statements of experience and to source information, are examples of Atkinson and Kennedy's notion of 'Participatory' or audience-led cinema.[360] Here, participation adds to the value of the experience, making it distinct from augmented production, and is aligned to a non-negotiable understanding of the filmic text, delivered with a non-interactive performance. The participatory model has manifested in a number of ways. As mentioned above, at the Secret Cinema productions of *Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back* (Dir Irvin Kershner), the participatory model included a prolonged engagement in online spaces where participants received instructions on how to prepare for the event, such as their required persona and clothes.[361] The use of social media framed within the participatory model also reflects Ruth Page's assertion that social media creates a platform for real-time narration.[362] Page suggests that updates found in the timelines of social network sites, such as Facebook and Twitter, accrue to "form a constellation of breaking news creating an emergent digital life history for the narrators".[363] Page refers to these as "open-ended qualities of seriality". The development of an undefined story arc is a theme picked up by Katheryn Bowd, who suggests that the use of social media changes the relationship of the audience to the author by allowing the dialogue to expand to cover a wider framework of events and issues.[364] The audience can take a theme and develop it in a way that suits the media consumer, rather than the media producer. Furthermore, Bowd suggests that, within social media, participants can communicate with others, known or unknown, and share spontaneous comments, which is not possible within traditional media.[365]

I argue that the sharing of information evidenced in the 'conversations' cited in Figure 20 is an engagement activity that manifests in asking the audience to use the hashtag

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[360] Atkinson Sarah and Kennedy Helen W " Introduction – Inside-the-scenes: The rise of experiential cinema" Participations Volume 13, Issue 1 May 2016 p139

[361] Atkinson, Sarah and Kennedy, Helen "From conflict to revolution: The secret aesthetic, narrative spatialisation and audience experience in immersive cinema design" Participations, Journal of Audience and Reception Studies, volume 13, Issue 1 May 2016

[362] Page, Ruth "Seriality and Storytelling in Social Media" Story worlds: A Journal of Narrative Studies, Vol. 5 (2013), pp. 40

[363] Ibid Page p40

[364] Bowd, Katheryn (2017) "Social media and news media: Building new publics or fragmenting audiences? in "Making Publics, Making Places" Editor(s): Griffiths, Mary and Barbour, Kim: University of Adelaide Press

[365] Ibid Bowd p130

#Summernightsfilm. Linda Levitt describes the use of social media in her analysis of how the audience interacts at Cinespia screenings in Los Angeles:[366]

Audience members demonstrate their familiarity with these films not only by calling out lines of dialogue during screenings, but also quoting memorable and iconic movie lines in Tweets, Facebook messages, and on Instagram and other social media sites. Social media posts mark significance for users: beyond a declaration of location and activity, a post publicly ties people to events, objects, and other people of value to the person posting the message.[367]

Social media, within this context, fills several roles. Foremost, it is a way to connect to and document the experience. Through posts and hashtags, the authors are part of a community, one which has shared values, even if temporary. In addition, the audience expands their experience into the digital sphere, an experience captured by Sarah Atkison and Helen Kennedy in their review of the Secret Cinema productions of *Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back*.[368]

6.5 Conclusion

Outdoor film screenings provide a different type of filmic experience. Without the parameters of a traditional auditorium environment, the audience can personalise the event to suit their needs. Audience members present this personalisation in several ways. This chapter provides examples of the pre-screening preparation and post-screening presentation, evidence that some audience members wish to elongate the experience. Comfort factors that are used to personalise the event include food and furnishings, which are appropriated in different ways. This is evidenced in the variety of food made in advance of the screenings I attended, and the required action and some degree of planning. The nature of the comfort factors that the audience bring onto the site plays into the ideas behind semiology and the signs and signifiers that individuals use to transmit a narrative about themselves. The posting on Twitter provided a useful, self-directed evaluation of the

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[366]Levitt, Linda "Hollywood, nostalgia, and outdoor movies" Participations: The Journal of Audience and Studies. Volume 13 Issue 1 May 2016 p219

[367] Levitt, Linda "Hollywood, nostalgia, and outdoor movies" Participations: The Journal of Audience and Reception Studies. Volume 13 Issue 1 May 2016 p219

[368] Atkinson, Sarah and Kennedy, Helen "From conflict to revolution: The secret aesthetic, narrative spatialisation and audience experience in immersive cinema design" Participations, Journal of Audience and Reception Studies, volume 13, Issue 1 May 2016

audience's experience. The audiences create a digital narrative that best explains who they are and how they are interpreted attending an outdoor film screening.

By carefully unpicking and sorting these responses from the 1123 responses in my survey, in person and online, this chapter achieved its aim of documenting the experience of audiences that attend outdoor film screenings and drive-ins. However, I also recognise that interpretation of experiences may differ, and producers should therefore strive to create new experiences that appeal to different types of audiences.

Chapter Seven: Communities and Fandom

7.1. Introduction

The traditional auditorium space (the cinema) is conventionally seen as a quiet space in which the film takes the centre stage. My empirical research into outdoor film screenings offers a different slant on how audiences interact with film. This chapter has two parts. The first part considers how the audience is constructed by building on results presented in "Chapter Four: Values and Appeal". Here, both numerical and written data provide evidence of the importance of family and friends in adding to the appeal of the experience. I have divided the term 'family' and 'friends' to consider the difference in experience of watching a film outdoors with a family group, as opposed to watching a film outdoors with a group of friends. There are several examples of where audience groupings are constructed of both family and friends. I then consider the audience outside of the micro family or friends grouping. I suggest that the larger macro audience plays a role in how the individuals in the micro audience enjoy and respond to the film. This develops a sense of the imagined community, a term borrowed from Benedict Anderson.[369] Within this context, I have reframed this idea for a focus on nationalism as a means of self-determinism. This adapts the work of Iris Young, who also uses the term "imagined communities" to consider the construct of communities.[370]

The second part of the chapter discusses fandom as an example of an imagined community. The section reflects on observations collated at the film screenings I attended for my research. Fandom is constructed in many ways, depending on how the fans respond to the canon text and the logistics of forming a physical or virtual community. Within the context of outdoor film screenings, fandom is appreciated in what people wear, the props they bring, and how people connect with others. This congruence is much like the experience of football fans who feel connected to strangers wearing the same colour of clothing as themselves.

As part of the conversation around filmic text, I also consider stewarding or hosting (section 6). Here, a host guides the audience through an experience, whether it is round an exhibit or museum, or, in this case, a drive-in film screening. The use of hosts in drive-in screenings provides instructions that help the audience navigate the technical and social barriers of

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[369] Anderson, Benedict (2006) 'Imagined Communities' Verso / New Left Books, New York / London

[370] Seodu Her, Ranjoo "Politics of Difference and Nationalism: On Iris Young's Global Vision" Hypatia , Jul. - Sep., 2008, Vol. 23, No. 3, In Honor of Iris Marion Young: Theorist and Practitioner of Justice (Jul. - Sep., 2008), pp. 39-59

watching a communal screening from within a hyper-private space -- the car. I present examples of where hosting is used effectively to explore and unpick filmic text, thus providing a way for fans and non-fans alike to understand and appreciate screenings on an even keel.

This chapter uses original data to investigate and evaluate the importance of community on the appeal of outdoor film screenings. Findings point to the importance of the known community (the people who the audience attend with), the imagined community (the other people at the screening) and the fan community (the audience members who identify their allegiance and understanding of the filmic text, signified by what they wear).

7.2 Community

A recurring theme in my research is the value of community. This narrative appears in many forms. There are written comments which use the word "community" to express the cultural value or appeal of outdoor film screenings (depending on whether the survey card was completed in 2018 or 2019). These include:

- Respondent 51BP: "A fun bonding exercise & creates a community vibe with shared entertainment activity"
- Respondent 8HH: "Making it an occasion and great to be part of an event - sense of community & tradition"
- Respondent 23SH: "Being amongst the local community"

There are also inferences that clearly suggest that a part of the appeal of outdoor film screenings is the yearning to be together. Terms such as "shared" and "together" indicate the importance of community. Alongside the written feedback, this topic also benefits from the numerical data I collected in 2018 and in 2019. Within this unique data are themes that indicate the importance of different factors that contribute towards the appeal of outdoor film screenings. "Hanging out with family and friends" is a theme which scored highly within the numerical data I collected. It should be noted that the word "community" is not explicitly used by the respondents who completed the online survey regarding their experience at the drive-in. Instead, the words "friend" and "family" are repeated a number of times. Having said that, the notion of community in relation to the drive-in screening, both seen through

the perspective of the family car unit and within the wider footprint of the venue, is heavily documented in the literature, including works by Elizabeth McKeon and Linda Everett, Don and Janet Saunders and Camile M. Smalley.[371] The authors point to a convergence and transition between the unit in the car (the family) and the individuals and part units in the parking lot (the local community). This work points to a blurring of lines between the domestic sphere (the car) and the community sphere (outside of the car).

In the sub-sections below, I turn to analyse the meanings and implications of "family" and "friends" in this context of audience reception.

7.3 Family

My starting point here is in analysing the appeal factor of attending screenings with family and friends. The screenings observed in the pre-research (Sept 2016 – June 2018) suggested that most people who attend outdoor film screenings do so with someone else. Across the three years of my formal research phase, I only observed one person attending a screening alone. However, to fully clarify this, in my first formal research year, in 2018, I introduced a question asking the audience with whom they were attending the screening (Figure 1). Across the four screenings I attended in 2018, 492 people responded. The majority of respondents replied by stating that they were with a friend. The second most popular option was "family".[372] (Figure 2)

> **Question Two: Who are you attending the screening with? Please feel free to tick more than one option**
> 1) Family
> 2) Friends
> 3) A date/relationship
> 4) No-one
> 5) Other

Figure 1: Question Two options

[371] McKeon, Elizabeth and Everett, Linda (1998) " Cinema under the Stars: America's love affair with the drive-in movie theatre." Cumberland House Publishing, Nashville Tennessee, USA

Sanders, Don and Sanders, Susan (2003) "The American drive-in movie theatre." Motorbooks International, St Paul Minnesota, USA

Smalley, Camille M, (2014) "The Saco Drive-In: Cinema Under the Maine Sky" Landmark Books p44

[372] I did not repeat this question in 2019 as my survey card had limited space and I was keen to explore other questions
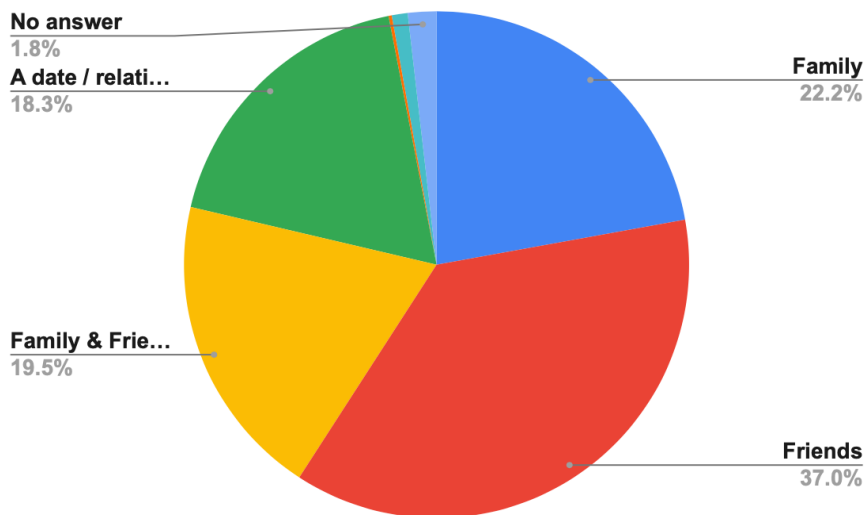
Figure 2: Who are you attending this screening with?

I refer to the ranked scale which I placed at the beginning of the survey cards that I distributed in 2018 and 2019. Question One of my 2018 survey card asked the respondents to rank the importance of different aspects of the outdoor film screening experience against a Likert scale. When the audience were asked to rank the importance of different factors on a scale of 1-5, with 1= not at all and 5= a lot, across all venues, 80% of respondents thought that "hanging out with family and friends" marked an important factor.[373] Overall, 25% of all respondents in 2018 scored "Hanging out with family and friends" with a 5.[374] (Figure 3) Out of 478 survey cards completed in 2018, only 5 people said that the experience and the chance to hang out with family and friends were "not at all" considerations for attending an outdoor film screening. The logistics (accessibility, venue and date and time of the screening) were important to some people, but not as important as "experience" and "the chance to hang out with family and friends".

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[373] The breakdown of these figures is: 89% of the audience at Hardwick Hall scored 'hanging out with family and friends' a rating of 5, 76% of the audience at Bradgate Park scored 'hanging out with family and friends' a rating of 5, 79%of the audience at Wentworth Woodhouse scored 'hanging out with family and friends' a rating of 5, 77% of the audience at Atthingahm Park scored 'hanging out with family and friends' a rating of 5.

[374] This is compared 21% of the audience scoring of 5 for 'the experience' 21%, 15.3 % for 'the film,' 11.6% for 'the venue', 12% for 'date and time of the screening' and 15.1% for 'How easy it is to get to the venue
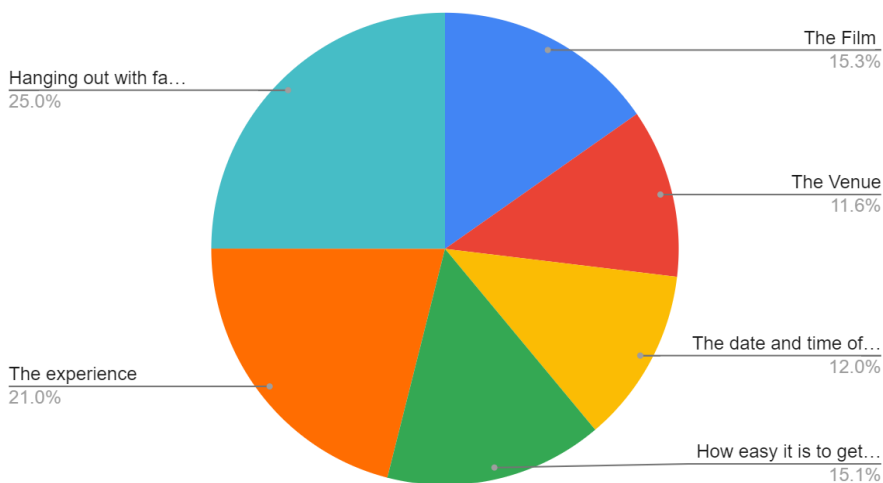
Matters at lot 2018 average

Hanging out with fa…
25.0%

The Film
15.3%

The Venue
11.6%

The date and time of…
12.0%

How easy it is to get…
15.1%

The experience
21.0%

Figure 3: Ranking the importance of different appeal factors (2018)

'Matters at lot' 2019 average

Hanging out with fa…
27.4%

The Film
22.5%

The Venue
15.6%

The date and time of…
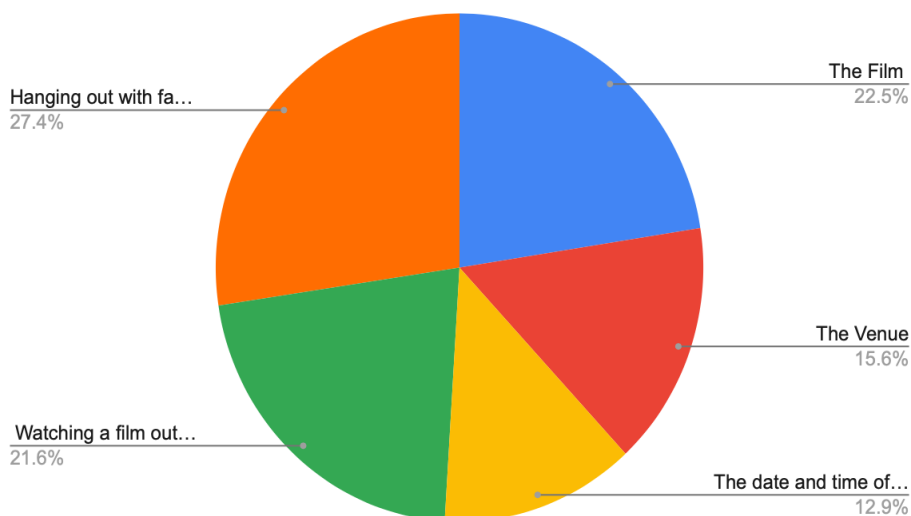12.9%

Watching a film out…
21.6%

Figure 4: Ranking the importance of different appeal factors (2019)

These results demonstrate the appeal of outdoor film screenings as a place for people to come together. Watching a film outdoors is appealing, especially g considering the other options available for communal activity. Respondent 5DI provides examples of other communal activities, which are suggested as "going to the pub/ a restaurant/ the park".

As with 2018, the results from 2019 show that the chance to "hang out with family and friends" was likewise the most important factor in attending an outdoor film screening (Figure 4). Of the 574 survey cards I collected in 2019, 344, or 60%, marked " hanging

out with family and friends" as 5 -- an important factor.[375] This shows a collegiate appeal of the outdoors film screening, though does not explicitly mention the word "community". Rather, this data shows that family and friends are a contributing factor to the appeal of outdoor film screenings. Respondent 5DI, who completed a drive-in survey, related attending an outdoor film screening to other recreational activities: "Doing something with friends that wasn't going to the pub/a restaurant/the park". These results are unable to delineate mixed groups of people, which may consist of children, family members and/or friends. There is also ambiguity around terminology and how groups of people define themselves. The term "family" can be subjective. Wilfredo F. Arce suggests that the term "family" exhibits a great deal of variation.[376] As Acre writes:

> The nuclear family, composed of a married couple and their children, is considered universal in that it is distinguishable as a unit and functions as such. Very often, however, this form is expanded to include two or more of either spouse. In the societies where the latter form is found the family is polygamous.[377]

7.3.1 Family Time

The value and appeal of outdoor film screenings is demonstrated in a number of responses that directly equate cultural value, or the appeal of attending outdoor film screenings, to being with family in terms of time. Responses include:

- Respondent 47SH: "New experience. Family Time"
- Responded 65HH "Family Time"
- Respondent 54OH: "Chance to spend time with the family"
- Respondent 42SH "Something different to spend time with family"

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[375] The breakdown of these figures is: 75% of the audience at Speke Hall scored 'hanging out with family and friends' a rating of 5, 67% of the audience at Battle Abbey, *Bohemian Rhapsody,* 24th August scored 'hanging out with family and friends' a rating of , 59% of the audience at Battle Abbey, *Rocketman,* 25th August scored 'hanging out with family and friends' a rating of 5, 76% of the audience at Ormesby Hall *Bohemian Rhapsody* 28th August scored 'hanging out with family and friends' a rating of 5, 81% of the audience at Ormesby Hall, *Dirty Dancing*, 29th August scored 'hanging out with family and friends' a rating of 5 , 69% of the audience at Witney Court and Gardens scored 'hanging out with family and friends' a rating of 5.

[376] Acre William F "The Family as a social group- an outline for inquiry Philippine Sociological Review Vol. 18, No. 2 (APRIL 1970)_ pp. 87-91

[377] Ibid Acre p 87

These quotations, taken from survey cards completed in both 2018 and 2019, connect the theme of family with the concept of time. The use of the word "time" is interesting as it provides a clear objective for attending the outdoor film screening. The concept suggested clear outcomes: at the outdoor film screenings, we, "the family", will spend two or three hours with each other as a unit. The concept of "family time" is elaborated by Respondent 111HH, who notes: "The whole experience of sharing time with family, having a picnic and watching a film - brilliant". Their quotation provides an indication of what is expected or desired during family time.

From the observations I made before the start of my formal research period and during the formal research period, the concept of "family time" was not necessarily embraced by everyone in the family group. In several cases, there was less enthusiasm from the male audience members than the female audience members. This is demonstrated both in conversations I had with the people in the groups and from comments posted on the survey card. When asked "what was the appeal of outdoor film screenings", a number of respondents alluded to their reluctance to attend the screenings. Respondent 55BARM wrote: "Out with friends. Told to by wife". Another comment in a similar vein was Respondent 55OHDD: "My Girlfriend made me." Respondent 65 SH replied: "Dunno, I got dragged along and its raining so a bit crap; however, the screen looks pretty cool."

The dominant leader in the group is a trope that was observed a number of times at the screenings I attended. When handing out the survey cards, I would often get the comment "Hand this to XXX; she is the organiser." The dominant leader narrative plays into the themes around an individual's ability to make choices, developed by Michael Clark.[378] As noted in "Chapter 5: Alternative Auditoriums", Clarke suggests that individuals are not good at choosing (comparing one factor to another). Clarke differentiates "choice" from "picking" , suggesting that choice requires a cognitive decision about the value, worth and benefit of a decision, whereas picking is instead about deciding on something which is of lesser consequence. The dominant leader hypothesis suggests that, within each group, there may be an individual who takes the control of the choices that are made at the outdoor film screening. These decisions may include the food and other comfort items that are brought to the screenings and, possibly, even the primary decision of what screening to attend.

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[378] Clarke, "Challenging Choices, Ideology, Consumerism and Policy" P13

Two of the respondents who completed the online form regarding drive-in screenings mentioned having a young family and the value of being able to go out with children in tow:

- Respondent 11DI: "Going as a family and not having to worry when the two year old got restless and squealed because she didn't disturb anyone else!"
- Respondent 12DI: "Being able to watch a movie even with a toddler with us; food brought to our car; the movie itself; able to sing along without feeling of shame"

These responses provide an example of appeal in logistical terms. The appeal and value was in access, not just to entertainment during the Covid period, but also for parents who found it difficult to secure childcare for a night out. These responses mirrored the experience collected by Camile M. Smalley in her analysis of drive-in cinemas in Maine. One group of respondents wrote "With two boys, aged three and six, we rarely get the chance to go to the movies since it usually means not only expensive prices, but an expensive sitter bill."[379] The anecdotes that Smalley collected point to a value that also reflects the power of community and being together outside with people. Another contributor, Alex Moody from Scarborough in Maine, writes:

> There is nothing like packing up a cooler, bringing some blankets, the comfortable lawn chairs with the cup holder and watching the movie at the Saco Drive-In. For my family, this is something that happens every summer and multiple times a season. [380]

The examples provided by Smalley point to the importance and value of family time and the fulfilment of this desire that drive-in cinemas facilitate. Some are discrete reflections that infer a connection across the audience grouping. Other responses are far more vivid in their inference. This is demonstrated by Respondent 108HH, who completed a survey card in 2018: "A shared experience with family & likeminded people. A chance to socialise as well as share an unusual experience." What this data shows is twofold: the appeal of attending an outdoor film screening is both universal (all the family can enjoy it) *and* exclusive (one person in the family may make the choice to attend the screenings). Here, we see differing levels of the term "appeal" and a challenge to the suggestion that the definition of appeal is somehow universal. As with all terms cited in this thesis, the term "appeal" is subjective;

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[379]Smalley, Camille M, (2014) "The Saco Drive-In: Cinema Under the Maine Sky" Landmark Books p89

[380] Ibid Smalley p44

What appeals to one person may not appear to another. Moreover, as my data suggests, the appeal of outdoor film screenings may actually be held in different parts, with "hanging out with family and friends" being one such part and fandom as another, as will be seen in section 5 .

7.4. Friends

There was a visible dynamic shift in groups that were dominated by family members, as opposed to friendship groups. Within friendship groups, the ages of the groups were similar (as demonstrated by the dates of birth entered on the survey card), the choice of food was also similar and these groups tended to be gendered, with observations indicating friendship groups formed of females. The value of friendship was a strong theme that was framed by several respondents as a key factor in the cultural value (2018) or appeal (2019) of outdoor film screenings. Here we see the term used, in part, as an equation: XXX plus friendship = cultural value; or XXX plus friends = appeal. This format is seen in several responses:

- Respondent 89BP: "Stunning location, spread & friends"
- Respondent 65BABR: "Fun and Friends"

Other respondents infer that friends enhance an experience. Respondent 55B   P: "Experience of nature whilst having an excuse to spend time with friends" and Respondent 60WC "Being Outdoor in a fab location with friends".

Another narrative is the description of how the outdoor film screenings enable the friendship groups. A clear example is the response by Respondent 85BP: "Bringing friends together". Other respondents provide a more elaborate picture as to what occurs when friends get together. Examples include:

- Respondent 61WC: "Being able to chat/sing, bring your own food/ drink & being with friends for a shared experience"
- Respondent 33WC "Something different, fun event, picnic, meet up with friends"
- Respondent 77WC: "Good Way to relax with friends. Less Formal than indoors"

Moreover, these responses all allude to an action for a "shared experience" or a "   shared entertainment activity" or "shared enjoyment". This resonates with Sarah Atkinson and

Helen Kennedy's hypothesis on participatory and augmented cinema.[381] Sites for communities can be cinemas, and cinemas can also be sites for communities. The concept of the cinema space as a mixed-use space is an idea promoted by the New Cinema History group.[382] Nurmal Puwer suggests that the cinema is more than a social space – it may also operate as a third space for groups of community to assemble. Puwer talks of "social cinema scenes"   which are "assemblages" that are part narrative, part nostalgia pieces, which map the place of cinema within different communities.[383] Connecting with a space is not only relevant to traditional auditorium spaces, which have long been the location for diverse groups of people, but also for non-traditional spaces. Evidence from the Puwar demonstrates the desire for audiences to own space, a finding which is mirrored in the responses that I collected from the outdoor screenings I attended. Responses and anecdotal conversations gathered at Wentworth House show the value that the audience places on connecting with the local space (see "Chapter 5 Alternative Auditoriums"). As such, my findings point towards the value of the outdoor film screenings as a platform in which friends can meet and own space. Here we see evidence of Doreen Massey's distinction of space vs place.[384] Massey suggested that place is "meaningful, lived and everyday", whereas space could be described as "the outside? the abstract? the meaning*less".[385]* Therefore, as audiences own and reappropriate cinematic settings, they are moving from space to place. The move from 'space' to 'place' redefines how people feel and connect to their surroundings and in this context the experience of watching cinema in different settings.

7.4.1 Combining family and friends

[381] Sarah Atkinson & Helen W. Kennedy Introduction – Inside-the-scenes: The rise of experiential cinema Participations Volume 13, Issue 1 May 2016 p139

[382] Evidence of this spans back to the pre-war period when cinemas were used for public gatherings. Consumption of newspapers and radio in the 1940s was consumed within the private sphere. However, the cinema was considered a safe public space. Many sports events were cancelled and other venues such as dance halls were closed at the beginning of the Second World War as public areas were considered dangerous. The Cinema was an indoor shelter where the community could come together, unite and through the newsreels created by the Ministry of Information. This solidified the appeal of the cinema as a place of comfort and community.[#] Sam Manning charts the relationships between cinema and two local neighbourhoods in Sheffield and Belfast between 1945–65 and in a similar vein to James Chapman suggests that the cinema was more than just a place to watch films

Manning, Sam (2020) Cinemas and Cinema-Going in the United Kingdom: Decades of Decline, 1945–65, University of London Press, Institute of Historical Research.

[383] Puwar, Nirmal, 'Social Cinema Scenes' space and culture vol. 10 no. 2, May 2007 253-270

[384] Massey, 'For Space', p6

[385] Ibid Massey, p6

In 2018, I provided the respondents the space to confirm if they were at the screenings with a) Family b) Friends c) A date/relationship d) No-one e) Other. 19.5% of the respondents noted that they were with family and friends (figure 5).
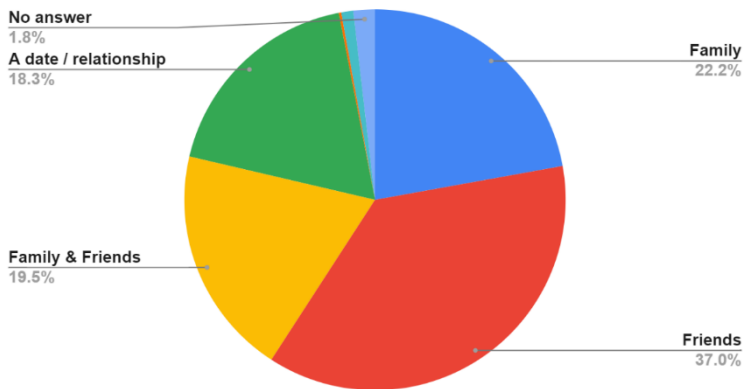
Who are you watching the screening with? 2018

Figure 2: Who are you watching the screening with (2018)

This provides an interesting group dynamic that may merge the concept of "family time" with the idea of the response as an equation. A good example of this is Respondent 3 SH: "Fresh Air! Different Good Family / Friend Experience" and the additional value of being in a unique place with known people as exemplified by Respondent 66HH's reply: "It brings people together and gives a reason to have family & friends time". Other responses:

- Respondent 26BARM: "Weather permitting of course - its pleasant to picnic out together with family and friends. More of a fun event than just a plain old movie"
- Respondent 77BARM: "It adds to the atmosphere when people come together, sing together, and have fun with family & friends"
- Respondent 49SH: "The experience and getting together with friends and family. Less formal than a cinema"

- The theme "together" is repeated here in this context, and is used both in terms of connecting family and friends, but also as a term of action. These responses were collected at screenings in 2019, when the open field question (Question Five) asked: "What is the appeal of outdoor film screenings?" This data shows that attending with family, friends or family and friends is a big part of this appeal.

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7.5 Imagined Communities

The political scientist Benedict Anderson introduced the term "imagined communities" in a book by the same name, published in 1983.[386] This term refers to a political community rooted in ideas of nationalism. Nations, Anderson argues, are socially constructed, and, therefore, imagined. The development of mass media provided a vehicle for people to express opinions and connect with each other. The proliferation of nationalism grew in line with the development of newspaper printing.[387] It also provided an opportunity to reinforce the identity of the state and the social rules that governed membership of the nation. The idea of the "imagined community" has been translated for the modern era. Adeline Koh argues:

> Too often, critics separate technology and people, eliding the fact that the technology helps shape how people imagine their relationships with one another. Such imagined communities, to use Anderson's terminology, are profoundly political spaces. Social media, as part of the networked public sphere, have created new discourses for imagining community. These new imagined communities have a great deal of political potential as well as limits. [388]

Here, Koh adapts the term "imagined community" to fit within the contemporary social media landscape. Koh's use of the term mirrors that of Anderson by applying political thought as a key component of the description.

The concept of "an imagined community" was an underlying theme that resonates throughout the data I have collected. However, within the context of outdoor film screenings, the term was not used in an overly political way, but to reflect the togetherness of strangers, a theme that is also present in Anderson's work. The ways in which the term "community" was used by the respondents who completed the survey cards varied in terms of commitment and participation. Community as an event is an approach taken by two responses in 2019:

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[386] Anderson, Benedict (1983) "Imagined Communities, Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism" Verso Books, New York

[387] Adell Nicolas, Bendix Regina F., Bortolotto Chiara and Tauschek Markus (eds) "Between Imagined Communities and Communities of Practice: Participation, Territory and the Making of Heritage"Universitätsverlag Göttingen 2015

[388] Koh, Adeline "Imagined Communities, Social Media, and the Faculty" Academe, May-June 2016, Vol. 102, No. 3, A Hundred Miles Down the Road , pp. 19-22

- Respondent 62BARM: "Experience of open air and a community event"
- Respondent 63BA: "Community Event, a bit different, air!"

The audience viewed the screening as a communal, rather than individual, experience. Furthermore, the outdoor film screening was seen as an event, which may imply a specific type of experience. Respondent 23WW referred to "Being amongst the local community". This is a similar response to Respondent 53WW who added: "great community feel in a fantastic historical and beautiful setting." These responses point to a self-identified definition of community, one that has a positive impact.

However, there is no formal acknowledgement of what a community is, nor indicators as to what that might be. Other respondents described the impact of the community: Respondent 51BP: "A fun bonding experience & creates a community vibe with shared activity" and makes note of how the event creates community. Respondent 28AP: "Different atmosphere, more sociable if going as a group, more opportunity to interact with the audience around you". These descriptions suggest the audience felt that the community was either something that you are part of or something that you observed. This reflects the need to belong or feel connected to other people.

This connection was also implied by respondents who used the word "   together"   as a way to add greater emphasis to the term "community". Respondent 3HH talks of the screenings being a way to "bring people together, community", implying here that the sense of community is happening to other people rather than an experience the respondent is engaging in. This is mirrored in comments from Respondent 28AP: "Important to bring the community together for a common interest."

The pairing of the word "community" with "event" implies a screening for a defined group of people. This group of people are often defined by geography, nationality or religion. Illustrated examples of this are a street party (geography), a coffee morning for Iranian women (nationality) or a Passover meal (religion). Attending an outdoor film screening is self-selecting, based on a person's desire to engage in the event, rather than having a connection to a distinct grouping. The evidence I collected does not clarify whether the demographics at the screenings were a set group of people or not. The evidence I collected demonstrated that the screenings appealed to an audience of all ages and that people w ere prepared to travel to the screenings. However, there was no evidence to support that

the outdoor film screenings appealed to a pre-defined community. Therefore, the suggestion by the audience that the screenings are a community event does much to support the idea of the "imagined communities". The term imagined community reflects how the audience saw themselves, as a coherent and collegiate group of individuals, despite the evidence not supporting this assumption. Rather, the audience had a shared interest in film and formed a temporary community, which Jerry Frug describes as being pop-up and time-specific.[389] These temporary communities are discrete communities that last the length of the screening. Frug suggests that the traditional term "community" has often been invoked to refer to a group of people who share things in common, "a sense of identity or history or values-and who seek to foster the bonds they have with each other".[390]The use of the term community in this way is not applicable , rather we should consider community to be a fluid and spontaneous arrangement that allows individuals to move in and out of community groups at their will.

In summary, I suggest that there are several approaches to the term "community" that were defined by the audiences who completed my survey cards. In the literature, Natasha Macnab, Gary Thomas and Ian Grosvenor use different words, such as connectedness, strong internal bonds, cohesion, togetherness, social, identity and networking, to describe what a community is and feels like.[391] This approach is helpful in providing a spectrum as to what a community could be and, in doing so, creates a framework for considering different definitions of the term. The unique responses of the audiences I surveyed add   to this canon of work by providing insight directly from the audience. Gaps within the academic canon are, therefore, filled in by the audience responses, particularly when considering how community links to the appeal or cultural value of outdoor film screenings. The known communities are the groups of families and friends who have a shared connection and shared values. The imagined communities are pop-up and temporary, defined by the perception that the audience members have shared values. The manifestation of values is frequently managed by a dominant person in the group who organises the event and makes communal choices. Delegated decision making enables the groups of people to function without too much conflict and creates space to enjoy the experience, which adds to the appeal of the outdoor film screenings.

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[389] Frug, Jerry 'The Geography of Community' Stanford Law Review , May, 1996, Vol. 48, No. 5 (May, 1996),p1048

[390] Ibid Frug p1048

[391] the-changing-nature-of-connectivity-within-and-between-communities - accessed July 2021

7.6 Fandom: Interpretive Communities

Fandom is the extension of an imagined community. However, a more relevant term may be "interpretive community". This term seeks to describe how groups of people coalesce based on how they interpret texts. As Kim Schrøder notes: "In reception research today the concept of interpretive community is mostly used in the plural: when we find multiple readings of media texts we ascribe them to the fact that people belong to different interpretive communities."[392] The suggestion here speaks to a tribal approach to understanding and responding to text, where individuals join groups that best represent their interpretation of a canon. For Stanley Fish, an interpretive community is a social and institutional one (as opposed to a semiotic one), whose club-like character is clear from the statement that the club is inhabited by "certified members". The members adhere to codes and values. This is also an idea developed by Jerry Frug, who suggests that a community refers to a group of people who share things in common, " a sense of identity or history or values-and who seek to foster the bonds they have with each other" .[393]

The codified bonds that individuals have with each other can be visual. This is a common trope of fandom. Semiotics are used to define and connect people through visual clues. An example of this is the football fan who can connect with other football fans they have never met based on the colour of their scarf or hat. The visual clue of the football scarf provides a physical symbol of a distinct community. The age or design of the scarf, hat, t-shirt or other fan clothing offers a further nuanced display of the individual values and allegiance of the fan. The football fan that wears a piece of clothing that honours a successful year for the club or a liked player physically demonstrates a greater commitment to the team based on a detailed knowledge of the club's success (and failures). Schrøder adds:

> A social semiotic is a theory which sees culture itself as being produced from intersecting code systems. Media material, in this view, is read in multiple ways

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[392] Schrøder, K. C. (1994). Audience Semiotics, Interpretive Communities and the 'Ethnographic Turn' in Media Research. *Media, Culture & Society*, *16*(2), 337–347. https://doi.org/10.1177/016344379401600208

[393] Frug, Jerry 'The Geography of Community' Stanford Law Review , May, 1996, Vol. 48, No. 5 (May, 1996),p1048

because each reader viewer's individual and social meaning potential leads to differentiated perceptions of the media text, as well as to shared ones.**[394]**

At the screenings of *Dirty Dancing* I attended in both 2018 and 2019, a number of the audience members wore clothing or had props which were directly linked to the film text:

Figure 6 shows a group of friends who used paper masks depicting   the lead characters of the film, Frances 'Baby' Hausman and Johnny Castle. Erin L. McInnis succinctly describes the two characters: "I found myself glued to the television screen unable to turn away from the story of awkward Frances Houseman (Jennifer Grey), nicknamed Baby, and the swoon-worthy, dance instructor Johnny Castle (Patrick Swayze)." Each lead character has distinct identities and propositions within the story line. To its loyal fans, *Dirty Dancing* is celebrated as a cult classic. It has drawn a loyal online crowd, visible on websites like *fan pop*, *angel fire* and in dedicated Facebook groups.[395] A person who had not seen the film may not recognise who the lead characters are, though to those who have seen the film before it is clear what the masks represent. Here, the audience members show commitment to the film through the codified messages regarding film knowledge. Figures 7 and 8 show items of clothing worn by audience members. The clothing cites the name of the film through the film's logo. The wearing of clothing has a permanence, unlike the paper masks, and, therefore, shows greater allegiance to the film. I also observed audience members wearing tee-shirts saying "I carried a watermelon." This is a seminal line from the film, and

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[394]Schrøder, K. C. (1994). Audience Semiotics, Interpretive Communities and the 'Ethnographic Turn' in Media Research. *Media, Culture & Society*, *16*(2), 337–347. https://doi.org/10.1177/016344379401600208

[395]https://www.fanpop.com/clubs/dirty-dancing/https://www.angelfire.com/movies/thedirtydancingsite/fanclub.html/   https://en-gb.facebook.com/OfficialDirtyDancing/

which people who have seen the film will have know and a quite which has reached popular culture (Figure 9).

Figure 9: Tee-shirt including line from the film

A clear sign of fandom was   the wearing of masksby the audience in Figure 6, with the clothing represented in Figure 7 and Figure 8. Within the fan community, expectations are developed regarding the clothes, props and other items that will allow the fans to have a heightened experience of the event and will connect the fans to each other. The visual cues (what people wear, pops they bring and their styling) provides a visual connection to other people who share the same fan devotion. The visual clues that   are provided within the physical fandom environment play to tropes within semiology. Semiologists, such as Roland Barthes, use the concept of the sign and the signifier to explain how humans interact and navigate each other. John Ellis suggests that, in Barthesian semiology, iconography produces meanings which the individual can either define themselves by or ignore, in the confines of the mainstream or counterculture, depending on the personal and social meaning applied to the context. George Rossolatos builds on this by suggesting that the proliferation of cultural representations or cultural signs, along with advancements in technology and decentralisation from mainstream media, has allowed individuals to propagate their own cultural fads and, therefore, create their own cultural value. In writing about fandom, John C. Lydon suggests that "Fan culture appropriates the commercially made products of popular culture in this way, and in doing so, fans avoid being simply passive consumers of commercial goods".[396] Furthermore, "it can be suggested that fans

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[396] Lydon writes about the film Star Wars, which was a film which Secret Cinema used for an interactive production in Summer 2015. The interpretation of fandom within this context is written and reviewed by Helen Kennedy and Sarah Atkinson. Their work is referred to throughout this volume.

interact with popular culture products to create readings of them which may be subversive to the intents of the commercial manufacturers, or at least at odds with them."[397]

Fans create enhanced experience by being part of a community that was created before the event. The 'rules' that form the community, bonds that cement fandom and the allegiance to a film, TV show, gaming experience or other interactive media, are often created away from the interactive experience that brings the fans together. Hannah Ellison refers to the importance of understanding the canon text as a signifier of fandom, which provides the platform with a means to adapt the canon to meet the desires of the reader.[398] In this approach, fandom is partially about understanding the narrative, tropes and characters of a text and partly about pushing these ideas and developing a new story. This suggests that the presentation and interpretation is individualised, and that although fandom creates communities, these communities are not entirely homogeneous as the way that signs are interpreted are personalised.

Sophie Charlotte van de Goor, whose work focuses on the online community 4Chan, would describe Figures 6-8 as evidence of a "good fan". A "good fan" is someone who possesses authenticity or knowledge within the fandom, based on both an understanding of the canon and active participation in the community.[399] She speaks of how a fan community also operates within its own set of rules and regulations, which "shift continually due to internal arguments over authenticity, taste, and displays of mastery."[400] These imaginary communities, suggests Rosemary Hill, may not necessarily be based on interaction but rather an "imagined idea".[401] How the audience responds to cultural setting resonates with different levels of what Sarah Atkinson & Helen W. Kennedy described as augmented and participatory experiences.[402] Here, we see evidence of participatory engagement in a film by the audience, engaging with the narrative and interpreting it in a way that reasserts

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[397] Lydon, John C "Whose Film Is It, Anyway? Canonicity and Authority in "Star Wars" Fandom" Journal of the American Academy of Religion, September 2012, Vol. 80, No. 3 (SEPTEMBER 2012), p 777

[398] Ellison, Hannah 'Submissive, Nekos and Futanaris: a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the Glee Kink Meme' Participations Volume 10, Issue 1 May 2013

[399] van de Goor, Sophie Charlotte "'You must be new here': Reinforcing the good fan" Participation, Volume 12 Issue 2 November 2015 p281

[400] van de Goor, "'You must be new here': Reinforcing the good fan" p280

[401] van de Goor, "'You must be new here': Reinforcing the good fan" p281

[402] Sarah Atkinson & Helen W. Kennedy Introduction – Inside-the-scenes: The rise of experiential cinema Participations Page 139 Volume 13, Issue 1 May 2016

identity. These audience members are therefore expanding the experiences by showing their allegiance and providing a visual excuse to connect with other like- minded people.

The experience of the *Dirty Dancing* fans I spoke to provided evidence of a preformed community. The community was preformed on the basis of an understanding of the filmic text and, importantly, one in which clothes were worn to demonstrate an understanding and to augment the experience. The individual wearing the *Dirty Dancing* tee-shirt sent a sign to other people in the audience that they were a committed fan. The tee-shirt was purposely worn as it was contextually relevant to the film. A *Dirty Dancing* tee-shirt at a *Star Wars* film would not have had the same impact. The pre-formed community of fans was temporary, one that may never regroup in its current form. However, one could argue that the fandom created a connectivity to other people which added to the appeal of the experience.

7.7 Hosting

For the people that don't understand the filmic text, or who are not 'fans' of the film being shown, there are several ways in which producers seek to connect with the audience.

The role of the host is in participatory cinema. An excellent example is the Solve Along *A Murder She Wrote,* which takes place at the Prince Charles Cinema and several other venues across Britain.[403] (Figure 10) At these screenings, the audience is taken through the film in small parts, navigated by "superfan", Tim Benzie. The audience are given props that they are instructed to use at certain parts of the film. Tim Benzie uses his intricate understanding of the filmic text to enable the audience to travel through the film while understanding the nuances and tropes that make the film particularly enjoyable.
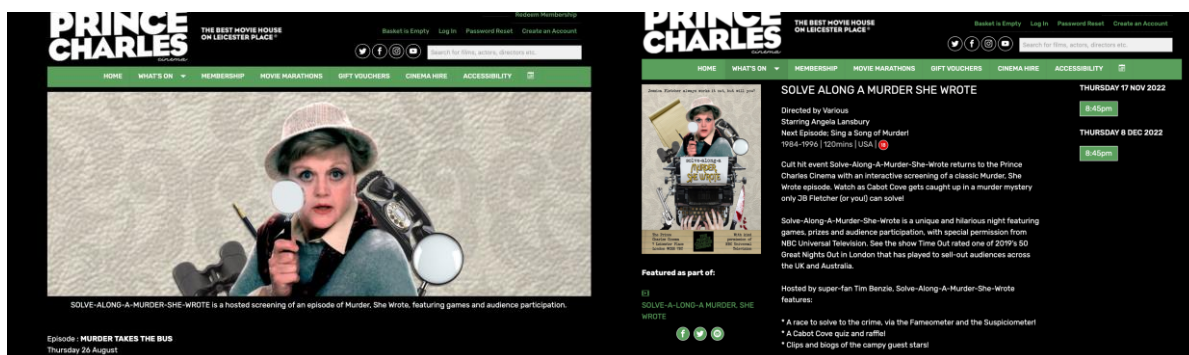

Figure 10: Solve-a-long screening at Prince Charles Cinema

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[403] https://solvealongamurdershewrote.com/ - accessed November 2022

The Drive-in Cinema experience provides several examples. This section considers the ways in which the drive-in uses hosting in order to help the audience understand the cues that are present within drive-in screenings. There has been some discussion of how drive-in screenings provide a pre-screening experience in "Chapter Six : Experience", however this section is not about pre-screening experience, but rather how the hosting is a tool to navigate the drive-in experience. This echoes earlier commentary regarding audiences in non-auditorium spaces mimicking the behaviour found in a traditional auditorium environment. Here, without instruction, the audience sat in rows mimicking the experience of the traditional auditorium space. Notably there was no instruction to do this, rather it was a learned behaviour set in place through attendance at a traditional auditorium space. These cues contribute towards the understanding of the filmic text.[404]

Hosting is important at drive-ins for a number of reasons. Unlike the outdoor film screenings, the space within the drive-in is defined. The audience members are assigned a bay or area and cannot choose from where they see the film. This removes choice, if choice were a problem, but also limits experience. When asked "What part of your experience did you least enjoy?", Respondent 3DI noted:

> I went with three others; I was sat in the back and couldn't see anything at all. The way the cars had been parked was really bad, they should have been staggered so that I could have sat on the back of the car or sat outside, but I would have just been blocking someone's view.

The instructional positioning of the car becomes a key part of the enjoyment, and, therefore, the appeal of the screenings. If this element of the screening fails or is substandard, the enjoyment and appeal diminish rapidly. When asked "Anything else you'd like to add?", Respondent 3DI provided more detail about their experience:

> I have been to other drive-ins that parked cars properly, so I know it's possible. I actually left this screening five minutes in because I couldn't see anything. V frustrating.

In this instance, Respondent 3DI had to decide quickly whether to leave the screening, as there would have been a possibility that they may have been blocked in by a car positioned behind them. The concept of the audience in rows with patrons in front and behind each

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[404] Replicated from Chapter Five: Alternative Auditoriums section 2.4 Traditional auditorium environment

other is a trope of the cinematic experience. A rarer trope is the concept of a host who 'warms up' the audience by encouraging them to complete tasks that create an atmosphere. The three drive-in cinema screenings I attended had a host, and, from the results I collected from the online survey I created, this was something that took place in other venues too.

The host at the drive-in screenings I attended had several purposes. Primarily, it appeared that the host was there to create an atmosphere before the screening began. The host adopted the role of a DJ, playing songs which were positive and uplifting, fitting into the 'party vibe' atmosphere (Figure 11). The DJ encouraged the audience to interact with a series of tasks which included a 'kiss cam', quizzes and a sing-a-long. For the pre-screening entertainment, a professional camera and operator was located on the stage near the DJ. The camera was used to pick out happy faces in the audience and to enable activities like the kiss-cam and other participatory activities to be shared on a big screen for the rest of the audience to see (Figure 12). The operation was not dissimilar to the ways in which cameras are used in sporting events to capture the faces of people in the crowd or to pinpoint individuals who are celebrating unique events, like a birthday.

Figure 11: DJ hosting at Drive in London screening

Figure 12: Audience capture on Drive-in London camera

The second role of the DJ was one of instruction. Here, the DJ became something of a marshal, operating a fine line between being fun and uplifting and having to control the crowd. Once parked, the main point of control was not the behaviour of the audience (who due to Covid19 restrictions were moving in 'bubbled groups'), but technical issues.[405] The technical issues revolved around sound, a point of difference between drive-in cinemas and other types of traditional and non-traditional cinematic spaces. (appendix eight) At a drive-in screening, the sound is received into each car through an FM channel. On arrival, the audience is asked to tune into the radio frequency. The cinema screen and instructions from the DJ clarify how to receive the audio (Figure 13)
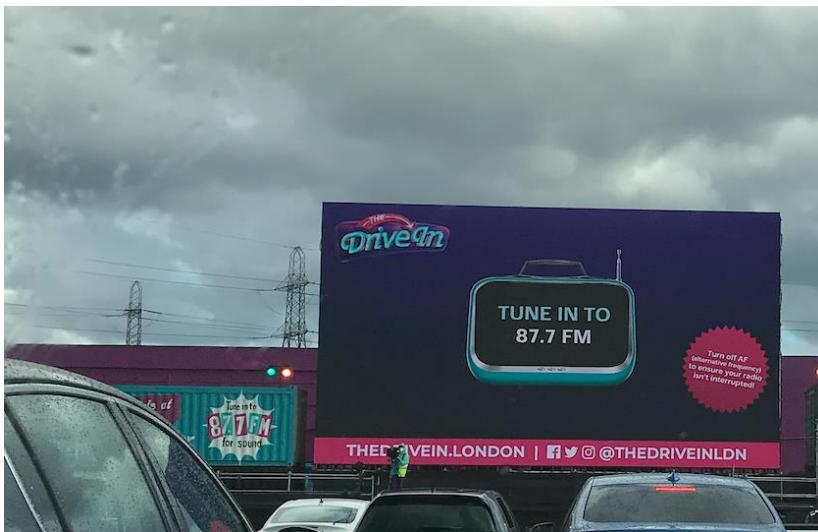

Figure 13: Instructions as to how to receive audio, Drive-In London

If connecting to the FM frequency doesn't work, sound boxes may be provided, which was an outcome for one of the respondents to my online survey: Respondent 12DI "Being outdoors watching a movie, the novelty. Being in a field doing this was much better than on a car park. The sound box they supplied was better than listening through car stereo." In the majority of cases, when the sound works, the experience of watching a film in a car offers a point of difference for the audience. This is summed up in feedback from Respondent 1DI: "The view of the screen was great, sound and picture quality were great, and there were wood-fired pizzas and beers served. It was also a really nice romantic atmosphere with cute lighting etc".

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[405] https://www.gov.uk/guidance/making-a-support-bubble-with-another-household - accessed September 2020

Feedback from the event producers reflect the same. The screenings I went to see in 2020 were produced by Drive-in London. I corresponded with the lead contact from Drive-in London via email. I started by asking "Why did you decide to start up a drive-in? How did it all happen?" The lead contact responded:

> We were all theatre producers and venue operators pre-COVID and when all of our shows and theatres closed, we wanted to find a way to keep providing entertainment in a safe way - hence drive ins, which is completely contact free with people in their own bubble (aka car). Drive in was the perfect solution.[406]

I followed this up by asking: "The outdoor film audience I surveyed in 2018 and 2019 placed heavy emphasis on community. What is your reflection on this in terms of your drive-in cinema?" The lead respondent replied:

> I think in a time when people couldn't see friends/family, drive in was a great way for people to feel part of something with lots of other people, but in a totally safe and contact free way. During COVID, it was the closest we could get to that sense of community which people crave. [407]

What Drive-in London (and other outdoor film screening producers) provided was a curated way to see films during a global crisis. The DJs or hosts provided instructions on how to navigate the experience of attending a drive-in, which for many was one of the few types of non-domestic entertainment available. Two respondents from the online survey I created alluded to this. Respondent 6DI: "I'd never been to a drive-in before and it felt like a small adventure". Respondent 5DI: "Doing something with friends that wasn't going to the pub/a restaurant/the park." Read within the context of Covid-19, these responses describe the restrictions in place during 2020 and the opportunities that the drive-in cinemas gave audiences. Whether the drive-in cinema boom in 2020 was due to government restrictions that forced many other types of entertainment to close, or whether the drive-in concept

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[406] Excerpt from email with lead contact at Drive-In London on Sunday 17th Aug 2021

[407] Excerpt from email with lead contact at Drive-In London on Sunday 17th Aug 2021

could become a feasible model, is unclear. Respondent 3DI speaks to this in writing: "It's good fun but it's expensive so I probably wouldn't go that often".

The role of the DJ/Host sees the return to the idea of a showman and the music hall tradition of the pre-cinematic period. Before cinemas were built, films (via celluloid) were shown initially in touring venues, then formally in music halls.[408] Showmen would bring together all acts and create an exciting atmosphere in the auditorium. Showmanship was the essential component, unifying the diverse types of exhibitions on the fairground.[409] There are echoes of this in the drive-in screenings I attended, where the host navigated the audience through the pre-screening entertainment, which allowed the audience to enjoy the context of the film.

7.8 Conclusion

Community is a key factor in the appeal of outdoor film screenings. The shape, size and knowledge of that community can vary depending on a number of factors, which include with whom individuals attend the screenings, and the extent to which they wish to engage with others. For some, a connection through proximity creates shared or "imagined community". For others, the wearing of clothes showing an explicit understanding of the filmic text is important. My original research shows that understanding the filmic text can be important to some and less important to others. It suggests the appeal of watching a film outdoors is less about the film and more about the context. These empirical findings demonstrate the importance of who people attend the screening with and how they develop personalised experiential events with a community that is often one of strangers. This is a very distinct conversion from one that evaluates the nuances of a film within a cinephiliac context. Instead, understanding the filmic text is about community. It is about connecting with other people and demonstrating a shared interest and shared values. The appeal is,

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[408] Early films were made on short pieces of celluloid measured in lengths of feet.# In 1897, the cost of a foot of film was 6d.# These early films were shot in a single location, recording simple yet recognisable movements a train coming into a station or workers leaving the factory.# As an early adopter of this technology, R.W Paul provides several good examples of these films which depicted significant events such as The Derby in 1896 or the traffic over Blackfriars Bridge, also shot in 1896.# These recordings are described as actualities or non-fiction films. As the films were printed onto celluloid the quality of the projection would depend on how often the films had been used and the environment where the film was screened. Initially just one copy of each film was made which was owned and projected by the inventors who created the projection equipment. This model soon became inefficient, especially when the film was shown several times in one night. Over time the celluloid would get damaged and the impracticality of moving both the projector and the films from one venue to another became unfeasible and inefficient. As demand for film increased many of the early inventors shifted their energies from projector production to film production: Barnes, John (1983) 'Pioneers of the British Film' Bishopsgate Press, (London)

[409] National Fairground and Circus Archive - Showmen Families https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/nfca

therefore, in part, about the experience of being with others that are known and feeling safe with people that are not known.

Chapter Eight: 130 Years in the Making

8.1 Introduction

Early film pioneers were not artists, they were businessmen. The early film pioneers created an environment that fostered healthy competition of entrepreneurship, which led to the development of film, including ways to record film on celluloid, to project celluloid onto surfaces, and distinct places to screen films.

In this chapter, I am going to celebrate the frenetic screening environment of the late 1800s and early 1900s. More importantly, I wish to make the case that this level of enterprise needs to be maintained to ensure audiences are engaged with the cinematic experience, both in traditional auditoriums and in non-traditional auditoriums.

Part One of this chapter starts with a review of the film industry, which exploded between 1895 and the beginning of the regulatory period in 1909. Mindful that this is a results chapter, the summary is brief. However, it is included to provide context to the wider argument about the need for innovation and innovative thinking within the film industry. Innovation is presented, not in terms of the technologies used by Summer Nights (the outdoor film screenings arm of Quad), but, rather, in innovation found at drive-in screenings across the UK. Drive-in cinemas used technology to both enhance the screening experience and to adhere to the social distancing regulations put in place by the UK Government during the Covid-19 pandemic. The people who responded to the online survey I created reflect on the success and failures of this technology. In this section, I will also mention developments in audio and the introduction of Live Cinema.[410]

Part Two considers immersive experiences, examples of where the producers add in extra elements to add value to the core experience. These elements range from the simple addition of food tailored to a screening, through to the elaborate set pieces of Secret Cinema. The extra elements often play on the filmic text, drawing out key narratives, which involves the audience. In this new landscape, the text can be based on films, books, plays and, increasingly, television shows. This section provides examples of   where producers

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[410] Since 2014, Live Cinema UK has grown to become the country's leading organisation dedicated to producing, promoting and researching live cinema events, reaching over 400,000 live audience members, and collaborating with over 60 partners across more than 10 countries. Based in West Yorkshire, we curate innovative programmes and new art works inspired by the moving image. Live Cinema UK produce and support film events which contain a live element or additional activity. These include, but are not limited to:

Live Soundtracks, Interactive Technology, Theatrical Performances, Non-traditional Venues and Archive Film
https://livecinema.org.uk/about/about-live-cinema-uk/

working within the non-traditional auditorium environment have continued to innovate, to produce experiences that appeal to audiences.

The final and third part of my chapter discusses the future of the non-traditional screening environment, notably the potential for using outdoor cinema to animate public space. This discussion shifts the focus from people who intentionally engage in outdoor film screening by buying tickets to people who happen to interact with screenings that take place in public spaces.

Within this chapter, I fuse original research with multiple academic genres, cross-referencing ideas with responses from the audiences to whom I spoke. Here, I argue that outdoor film screenings have the potential to transform public spaces, engage communities and provide an experience that has both cultural value and appeal.

8.2. Designing a better experience

8.2.1 Entrepreneurship

Technology, innovation and entrepreneurship are accurate descriptions of the early film pioneers.[411] Early British cinema exhibitors were not cinephiles; they were, by and large, businessmen or hobby scientists, keen to make opportunities out of invention.[412] In the 19th century, experiments to create a 'moving image' saw the development of a multitude of eccentrically named devices, including the Fantoscope, Zoetrope, Phenakistoscope and praxinoscope, which followed on from the magic lantern, a popular moving images machine developed in the 17th century.[413] The camera obscura is arguably the first moving image instrument, constructed of a combination of mirrors and lenses projecting images onto a blank wall.[414] The birth of the film is pinned on the first paid public screening by the Lumière

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[411] Barnes, John (1983) 'Pioneers of the British Film' Bishopsgate Press, (London)

[412] Ibid Barnes p127

[413] https://www.curzon.com/journal/what-is-cinema-part-1/ - accessed October 2022

[414] Camera obscura have been around for several hundred years, although originally in the form of a pinhole camera. It was only from the early 17th century that lenses of sufficient quality were available to create the more flexible lens-mediated cameras with larger apertures allowing much lighter in to create brighter images.

https://www.curzon.com/journal/what-is-cinema-part-1/ accessed October 2022

brothers on 28 December 1895 at the Salone Indien du Grand Cafe in Paris.[415] The first public screening was a collection of the Lumière brothers' 'actuality' films. These were ten single-shot shorts that captured daily life, with a total running time of less than eight minutes and were screened to a "rapt audience" .[416]

During 1898, the manufacturing of cinematographic equipment continued apace with the launch of the Rateaugraph, the Eragraph and the Vitaphotoscope.[417] Although these designs were patented, and thus stopped them from being copied, the marketplace in Britain became bloated as more modifications to the original cinematograph models were produced.[418] The entrepreneurial zeal advanced the British film industry so that it became a world leader in film production, alongside France and pioneers such as the Lumière brothers.

In this chapter, I present the case for innovation in contemporary cinematic and experiential screening practises. The early cinema pioneers made huge strides in developing film technology, which are commonplace in traditional and non-traditional environments. This chapter seeks to present the case for maintaining the entrepreneurial approach to cinematic presentation to maintain audiences and the appeal of outdoor film screenings.

8.2.2 Technology and Convenience

Contemporary technology has sought to improve cinematic practices. For instance, technology has improved booking systems, aided the way people pay for their tickets online and correspond with the outdoor cinema producers. Drive-in cinemas are particularly

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[415] The date of the recording of film is in dispute. In an interview with Georges Sadoul given in 1948, Louis Lumière claimed that he shot the film in August 1894 - before the arrival of the kinetoscope in France. This is questioned by historians, who consider that a functional Lumière camera did not exist before the beginning of 1895.https://www.curzon.com/journal/what-is-cinema-part-1/ - accessed October 2022

[416] https://www.curzon.com/journal/what-is-cinema-part-1/ - accessed October 2022

[417] Barnes, John (1983) 'Pioneers of the British Film' Bishopsgate Press, (London) p130

[418] Early example of film technology is the Kinetograph. The Kinetograph used the methods developed in stills photography to take pictures on photo-sensitised or cellulose nitrate film which were evenly spaced throughout the duration of the action being captured. A key technology developed to make this happen was the invention of sprockets on the side of the cellulose to hold the film in place and ensure that the images were captured evenly. After the film was developed, it was played on a Kineteoscope. These were often elaborate wooden boxes based on the penny-gaff model where viewers would pay a small fee to see the film through a tiny viewer. The Kinetograph was a means to record film and Kineteoscope was a means to show films.

Barnes, John (1983) 'Pioneers of the British Film' Bishopsgate Press, (London) p130

innovative. Contactless technology was used as a method to adhere to social distancing guidelines and other government protocols put in place during the Covid-19 restrictions.

Technology was mentioned as a good and a bad factor by the respondents who filled in the online survey I created for people who had attended drive-in screenings during the summer of 2020. Ordering food digitally was a good example of how technology was used to make the screening experience more integrated and convenient. Furthermore, using technology enabled the food offer provided at drive-in cinemas in 2020 to adhere to covid-   safe guidelines.   The food on offer at the drive-in screenings I attended in 2020 had to be ordered via a website. The website was accessed via a QR code which was posted on the drive-in website, whose link could be found on the ticket details. Once the food was ordered, payment details were confirmed, along with where the food should be dropped off. The fully contactless process adhered to social distancing guidelines, but had mixed responses from the participants who responded to the online survey I created. Respondent 13DI noted: "The app to order food for my friend was pretty poor." The feedback did not provide any detail about why the app was poor, but, as this was seen as a negative experience, it may have become a distraction from the appeal of attending a drive-in. Similarly, Respondent 13DI had a challenging experience ordering food using the online technology. Other respondents enjoyed embracing the non-contact approach to ordering and receiving food. The respondents saw the practical social distancing measures as fun and unique. Respondent 2DI: "The food being delivered on roller skates". Delivering food this way was fun and practical, and played into the drive-in trope of servers skating around with food.[419] Another respondent, 8DI, mentioned the ease of experience: "Watching the film/getting restaurant quality food delivered to the car." These data demonstrate how technology complements the screening experience.

Technology was also used by drive-ins to enhance the entry process into the drive-in auditorium. As with ordering food via an app or website, the respondents who completed the online survey I created noted the positive and negative sides to using technology in this way to streamline the check-in process. For instance, Respondent 12DI had a good experience, noting that the "ANPR on the entrance made it easy to enter without tickets". However, Respondent 13DI wrote: "Queuing for a while because the number plate recognition had broken. But there were sheep walking past to distract us." Technology is by no means

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[419] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XJYBItyUZR4 : British Pathe Film shows servers delivering food on roller skates in 1962.

flawless, echoing the experience of early film pioneers who engaged in large-scale projects, some of which failed.[420]

It is not clear if it was the restrictions put in place by the Government because of the Covid-19 pandemic, or the approach of the drive-in cinema sector that enabled the use of new technologies during the 2020 screening season. When asked about innovation, in particular the pre-screening activities, the lead contact at Drive in London noted:

> I think it just adds to the whole experience and is an extra thing to differentiate watching a film at a drive-in with a full experience around it rather than just watching a film at home. We know a lot of people have access to the films we were showing in their living room, so we wanted to make a visit to The Drive In extra special![421]

8.2.3 Adding Experience

This offer of added experiences at outdoor film screenings and non-traditional auditoriums is also facilitated with enhanced seating (such as the option of buying VIP seats and packages) and the use of Bluetooth headsets for refined audio. The use of Bluetooth headsets at outdoor film screenings builds on the success of the technology used for Silent Discos.[422] At a Silent Disco, participants choose from several music channels streamed into Bluetooth headphones that they wear. The music tends to be upbeat, thus providing the participants the opportunity to dance, hence the reference to disco. There are people who support and reject the idea of silent disco. In an article in *The Guardian* newspaper, silent discos in Edinburgh were described unflatteringly as "a blood-curdling infection that spreads across the city, carried on the back of headphone-wearing fleas."[423] *The Guardian* also comments:

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[420] Albany Ward, an apprentice to the renowned cinema pioneer Birt Aces reported seeing "Mr Acres making up his own emulsion and the film was wound on to large wooden drums where it was allowed to dry. Needless to say, a great quantity of good material was spoilt not only in the cutting up of the celluloid but sometimes in the perforation, and the perforations were not too good and also at times the emulsion seemed to run out streakily on to the celluloid. I have spent long and weary hours in the dark room"

Cook, Patricia "Albany Ward and the Development of Cinema Exhibition in England" Film History , 2008, Vol. 20, No. 3, Studio Systems (2008), pp. 295

[421] Email with the lead contact at Drive in London on 28th May 2020

[422] https://thesilentdiscocompany.co.uk/ - accessed September 2022

[423] https://www.theguardian.com/music/shortcuts/2019/sep/17/should-silent-discos-be-banned - accessed November 2020

> Being immersed in this way causes people to behave differently from how they would at a conventional disco. They sing along. As loudly as they can. Because they can't hear themselves, they forget themselves. And slipping off your own headphones to hear a couple of thousand people, so wrapped up in the music that they don't realise they are all simultaneously shouting: "I BLESS THE RAINS DOWN IN AFRICA!" is oddly moving.[424]

Rooftop cinema uses Bluetooth technology for its outdoor film screenings. The screenings take place outside, on rooftops, in busy urban environments that have a lot of localised sound from both aeroplanes and loud animals. The use of Bluetooth headphones provides a better audio experience than the use of speakers, and creates less noise pollution for the local neighbourhood. One review on the travel review website, Trip Advisor (Figure 3), points to the success of using Bluetooth headphones at outdoor film screenings:
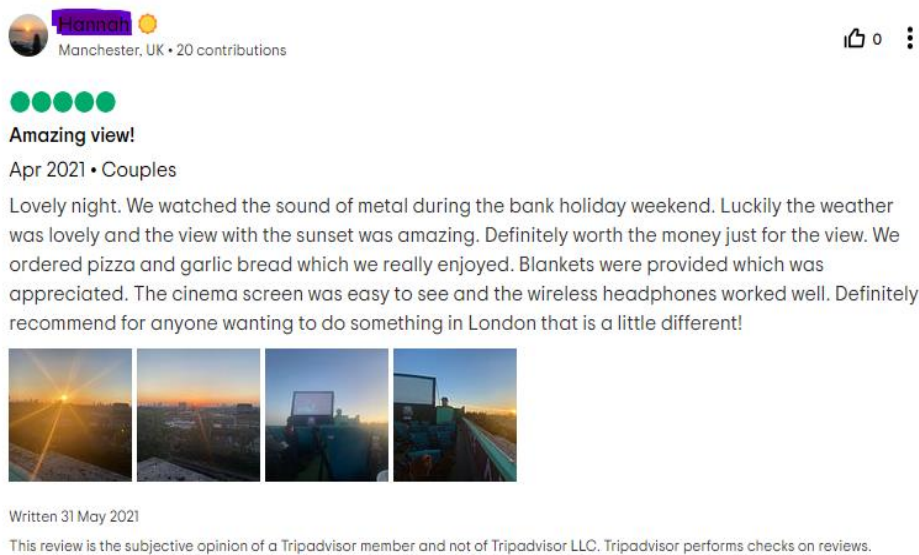

Figure 3: Reviews from a RoofTop Cinema screening found on Trip Advisor

The Bluetooth headphones thus provide a premium experience for Rooftop cinema, the silent discos in Edinburgh, and at other venues across the UK. The technology allows the participants to be alone, yet together, and to experience a collective event with strangers. This description ties into the findings I collected during my formal research period, specifically the idea of collective and imagined communities, as discussed in "Chapter Eight: Communities and Fandom".

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[424] https://www.theguardian.com/music/shortcuts/2019/sep/17/should-silent-discos-be-banned - accessed November 2020

If the use of Bluetooth headphones is to personalise a group experience outside, the opposite is Live Cinema. Live Cinema is the experience of watching an event inside a traditional auditorium environment, the cinema. In this example, the audio is shared. There are no headphones, the seating is static, there is little scope for dancing and the event is broadcast live, rather than being a film which is pre-recorded. The purpose of Live Cinema is to increase access to arts events, typically theatre performances, that take place in a singular location, but are broadcast live to cinemas across the country. Examples of contemporary Live Cinema events at the time of writing include: NT LIVE: THE SEAGULL - AT VUE Thursday 3rd November, NT LIVE: THE CRUCIBLE - AT VUE Thursday 26th January 2023, and NT LIVE: OTHELLO - AT VUE Thursday 23rd February 2023.[425] The tickets to these National Theatre productions, screened at Vue Cinemas around the UK, cost about £20 a seat, depending on the venue.[426] This price is significantly more affordable than attending the performance in person at the National Theatre and, if seen at a local cinema, reduces the travel and accommodation costs that may be incurred by travelling to London to see the performance in situ. Sarah Atkinson and Helen W. Kennedy described *2015 Summer of Live*, a period that saw an increase in the number of outdoor and experiential film screenings in Britain.[427] Live Cinema is seen as part of the experiential cinema canon, much like outdoor screenings or participatory screenings. Live Cinema is unique as it is one of the few types of experiential cinema that takes place in a traditional auditorium space.

8.2.4 Four Different Types of Experience

My data suggest that what audiences want is a different experience. Difference is a high frequency word used to describe the outdoor film experience (both vis-à-vis the question on cultural value in 2018 and the question on appeal in 2019). This word appears numerous times in different contexts throughout my findings. Respondents relate "difference" to the environment. Respondent 107HH uses the term "different" as a statement of behaviour: "Very important to share different social experiences & environments." This suggests that

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[425] https://www.myvue.com/big-screen-events/theatre- accessed November 2022

[426] https://www.myvue.com/book-tickets/summary/10020/218314/347556 - accessed November 2022

[427] Atkinson, Sarah and Kennedy, Helen "Introduction – Inside-the-scenes: The rise of experiential cinema' Participations, Volume 13 Issues 1 May 2016 p140

the appeal of outdoor film screening is more than just watching a film outdoors. Rather, it is a way to operate or function. Respondent 72HH's response of "New experience. Time with friends in the outdoors" also exemplifies this.

Using four examples from the data I collected, I present four different types of experience: a special experience, a shared experience, a new experience, and a different experience (Figure 2).

Quotation	Type of Experience	Description of experience
Respondent 1HH: "It makes the experience special"	A special experience	an experience that celebrated a person or people
Respondent 55WW: "A shared experience in a positive environment	A shared experience	an experience with family and friend
Respondent 7BABR: "A new experience"	A new experience	something that has never been experience before
Respondent 46WH: "Unusual, New Experience".	A different experience	something that is different from previous experience
Figure 2: Examples of where the term " difference" has been defined by audiences		

The use of the term "experience" in this number of different ways reflects the variety of meanings attributed to it as a description of outdoor film screenings. The variety of interpretations also reflects the expectations of the audience, who, in all cases, completed the survey card before the film had started playing. This suggests that, for the audience, " experience" began in advance of the actual film screening. The audience had, therefore, made assumptions about what they wanted from the outdoor film screening. The suggestion of expectation can also be apportioned to respondents who mentioned " atmosphere" . As with "expectation", "atmosphere" is a complex term to define as it is largely subjective. References to atmosphere include:

- Respondent 38AP: "Chance to see a film in a different environment and enjoy a different atmosphere."
- Respondent 51BR: "Experience something different and relaxed atmosphere".
- Respondent 48HH: "A different kind of experience with a great atmosphere."

These responses highlight the importance of "experience" as a factor of appeal for audiences. The process of trying something new, doing something different, is a theme that has driven audiences for many years. Moreover, new experiences can create new audiences. This chapter provides evidence of ways that produces have created new experiences, which are often built on cinematographic and television texts. Examples of experiences built around tropes found in immersive productions of Great Gatsby, City of Spies and Peaky Binders play testament to this.

8.3 Immersive Experiences

The immersive experience is a genre that is rapidly growing and morphing into new and abstract ideas. These experiences tend to be built around a film or TV genre. They may include different types of immersion from the very simple offer of something extra (food or music) to the elaborate production value of Secret Cinema. Secret Cinema has been in operation since 2007.[428] During this time, Secret Cinema has adapted filmic texts to create fully immersive experiences in which the audience become actors within the performance. There is some debate about the authenticity of the company's handling of the filmic text.[429] However, Secret Cinema has pioneered many of the approaches to the immersive experience genre and should be recognised for this.

The aim of this section is not to review production practices, but, rather, to consider the way in which the immersive industry is innovating. In many cases, these immersive experiences are built around a film narrative, but there are also examples of immersive experiences in theatre and television. In describing these events, I will draw on reviews and articles. This is

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[428] https://www.secretcinema.org/history - accessed November 2021

[429] #Atkinson, SA and Kennedy H.W (2015) "Where We're Going, We Don't need and Effective Online Audience Engagement Strategy.": The case of the Secret Cinema Viral Backlash' Frames Cinema Journal

a very new area for the academy and therefore there is minimal amount of research available on this area.

8.3.1 Immersive Food

At the very light-touch end of the immersive screening genre is food. Linda Levitt documents Street Food Cinema in Los Angeles, California.[430] As the name implies, Street Food Cinema enhances the cinema experience with a variety of food trucks, drawing a so-called "foodie" audience to its screenings. Electric Dusk Drive is similar to Street Food Cinema. It operated in a parking lot atop a downtown Los Angeles building, until construction shut down the series in October 2015.[431] Electric Dusk Drive featured nostalgic drive-in food fare.[432] Other iterations of t immersive experiences include Taste Film, which purport to transform "dining rooms into immersive film worlds by screening cult-classic films and providing guests with a timed set-menu, crafted to compliment the film's most memorable moments".[433] This takes place in collaboration with "well-rated restaurants, and independent chefs in unique spaces, we take film loving foodies on a multi-sensory, gastronomic adventure, where the boundaries between spectator and participant are shifted."[434] Another organisation that pairs food with film is Edible Cinema, which describes itself as "a unique way to experience a film: through aroma, texture and taste."[435] Each guest is supplied with a tray of numbered mystery boxes containing a bite-sized tasting menu, tailored to specific moments in the film. These interventions not only provide an innovative and compelling way to watch film, they also align to the filmic text. These types of cinemas provide a sensory experience that increases the possibility of memory making and re-engagement with the experience.

In 2022, a new food-based immersive experience was launched. The Pub in a Park provided an opportunity for audiences to experience food and music in a family-   friendly festival vibe. Its founder, British chef Tom Kerridge, set out to create a vision where each

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[430] Levitt, Linda "Hollywood, nostalgia, and outdoor movies" Participations: The Journal of Audience and Reception Studies. Volume 13 Issue 1 May 2016

[431] Ibid Levitt p218

[432] Ibid Levitt, p218

[433] https://www.tastefilm.co.uk/experience accessed November 2022

[434] https://www.tastefilm.co.uk/experienceaccessed November 2022

[435] https://www.ediblecinema.co.uk/ - accessed November 2022

festival "celebrates everything there is to love about the glorious British pub; delicious food, award-winning chefs, chart-topping music, great drinks but above all else a fantastic time with friends and family."[436] This event is less about cultural curation, and more about spending time with family and friends. Online reviews glow with praise for the event, which had done much to corner every based on the family market. Online blogger Erica wrote:

> There is children's entertainment where they can get hands-on in the kitchen, a cinema tent arts and crafts and lots of things to keep them entertained, an Artizan Market and Shopping Village where you can buy (and taste) foodstuffs and drinks from gin, to jam and cheese. As well as arts and crafts and of course kitchen Implements. There were some fabulous handmade knives that I must look into further. Book Signings by your favourite chefs. You can take your very own recipe book or buy one on the day for them to sign.[437]

The event was firmly targeted at the family market. Targeting this audience type is clever as it reflects the themes of spending time with family and friends, which is also a key narrative in my empirical research. However, much like the cost of membership to the National Trusts and English Heritage, the ticket prices for Pub in a Park may limit a family on a low income (Figure 5). The event bills itself as having everything under one roof. This implies a value for money approach, emphasising that the price of the ticket is the biggest outlay. For many people, this adds to the appeal of the event and the 'value for money'. However, the results collected point to the desire of the audiences to personalise events and add value, not by what the producers of the event provide, but rather by the personalised comfort factors that the audience tailor to their individual desires. Although the example of Pub in the Park has no film screening element, it does provide an example of a new outdoor experience. Pub in a Park brings together many of the elements of the outdoor film screening, the community, space and experience and enhances the offer by adding food and music. This 'experience package' provides the audiences with a very structured participation journey in which the key elements of the experience are clearly defined and navigated. This contrasts with the production approach of Summer Nights with whom I collaborated with on my research.

[436] https://www.pubintheparkuk.com/ - accessed November 2022

[437] https://theincidentalparent.com/travel-and-days-out/days-and-nights-out-in-and-around-sevenoaks/pub-in-the-park-tunbridge-wells-our-review/ - accessed November 2022

Summer Nights offered a very stripped back experience in which the audience where invited and encouraged to bring their own furniture and food in order to personalise the event.
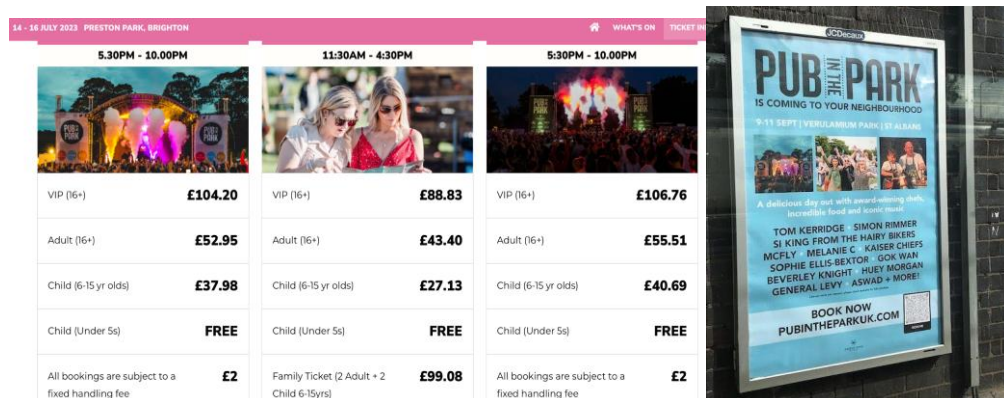

Figure 5: Cost of entry to Pub in the Park 2022

8.3.2 Immersive Theatre

Punchdrunk are seasoned players in the immersive theatre genre.[438] Their current (as of time of writing) show, *Burnt City*, is a promenade show that enacts life in the ancient fallen city of Troy.[439] The three-hour show invites the audience to fall into the narrative through mime, movement and dance. Using Twitter as an open access platform to capture the views of people who attended the *Burnt City*, it is clear to see the uniqueness of the show. Comments include (Figure 6):

> "I went in with high expectations and it delivered. Amazing, surreal, great"

> "This is what I came for and I am still taking in what happened. Amazing would be an understatement and immersive beyond belief."

> "The Burnt City by @PunchdrunkInt is a great show - a beautiful blend of immersive theatre, dance and game design. It is stylish, sensual, violent and frequently surprising."

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[438] https://www.punchdrunk.com - accessed September 2022

[439] https://onecartridgeplace.com/theburntcity/ - accessed September 2022

Figure 6: Twitter posts retweeted by Punchdrunk

Burnt City was located at Punchdrunk's new offices in three Grade II-listed buildings. Locating the immersive production in a fixed location makes the performance partially temporary , a trope often found in immersive theatre production. The cost and complexities of producing an immersive theatre show favours the fixed location model. However, these productions seldom have a run of more than six months. *Burnt City* attracted mixed reviews. For instance, the review from *Time Out* was celebratory: "It feels like a new monument to the power of its creators' vision. After eight years away, Punchdrunk have returned, and they're still awe-inspiring."[440] However, the review from *The Guardian* was more circumspect:

> It is immediately clear that Punchdrunk's new immersive show is a massive endeavour. It resembles a gallery of antiquities on arrival: there are snaking queues, phased entrances for crowd control and a row of ancient vases, libation bowls and headdresses in glass displays…. There is an increasingly exhausting feeling in this three-hour show of moving around the circuit of rooms in search of more performers, more story. Some of the longer and more dynamic scenes, when they come, are enthralling. In the most powerful moment a group of men move towards a desperate huddle of Trojan women, one of whom is strung up, half-naked and bloodied.[441]

Burnt City provides a good example of an immersive experience that seeks to interpret a complex narrative. The *Guardian* review reflects the aesthetic pleasure of the experience,

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[440] https://www.timeout.com/london/theatre/the-burnt-city-review - accessed October 2022

[441] https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2022/apr/21/punchdrunk-the-burnt-city-review - accessed October 2022

which is intersected by concerns about understanding the story. *Burnt City* is a complex story and an immersive experience that needs to be cognisant of the audience's enjoyment. *Burnt City* is an example of where producers interpret the filmic text, which, to be realised, requires the audience to also play a part. This provides a very bespoke experience, which, like Secret Cinema screenings, creates a narrative for the audience to follow. The personalisation of the event via the addition of personalised 'comfort factors' is not appropriate in this type of immersive experience. Conversely, *Great Gatsby* is an example of an immersive experience which is designed to be fun, in part because the narrative of the show is a party. *Great Gatsby* takes cues from the film that are easy to interpret as they reflect the generic tropes of the 1920s prohibition era. *Great Gatsby* is described as "A hedonistic world of red hot rhythms, bootleg liquor and pure jazz age self-indulgence awaits. Dress to the nines and immerse yourself in this heart racing adaptation of F Scott Fitzgerald's seminal tale." [442] There are 68 reviews on Tripadvisor, in which audiences reported on what they liked and didn't like. User GezzandPro enjoyed the experience:

> We had so much fun at this amazing retelling of the Great Gatsby, where you are actually part of the show and guests at Gatsby's parties. The cast are a really talented and gorgeous young bunch of actors and musicians. At key moments they interact with audience members after leading you off to smaller parties in different rooms or a heart to heart with Daisy in her dressing room.[443]

However, Malkhan2021 was less than enthralled:

> Too long, boring, repetitive and amateurish. We felt we were in a university play. We decided, as did other people who attended, to leave after a while. It didn't help that they don't divide the group so that it can attend other angles of the story that take place in other rooms. Also, what is the point of dressing up if you can't take pictures in the mansion? Waste of time and money. We were very disappointed.[444]

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[442] https://www.immersivegatsby.com/london?gclid=CjwKCAiAjs2bBhACEiwALTBWZYnv3jWxy6gt-Nolcy2utyINwIazDWFbNuiBfkNSlKi7b7l1ocbAPRoCYxcQAvD_BwE - accessed September 2022

[443] https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Profile/GezandPho

[444] Malkah N 1 contribution Long, boring, amateurish Nov 2022 • Friends https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/ShowUserReviews-g186338-d18193197-r867731684-Immersive_Gatsby-London_England.html

At the film screenings I attended in 2019 and 2019, food was a big comfort factor. "Chapter Six: Experiences" documents this. The data I collected regarding food was from audiences who attended outdoor film festivals. Despite the context of eating food that was prepared for consumption outside, there are some parallels that can be applied to food at immersive screenings. The *Great Gabsy* invites its audience to come to the venue up to 45 minutes early to "join Mr Gatsby for a prohibition cocktail" (Figure 6).

When does the bar open and does the bar take cash or card?   ✕

Our doors (and bars!) open 45 minutes before the show, please do join Mr Gatsby for a prohibition cocktail prior to the show - but look, go steady, sure we got the best liquor this side of the Hudson but party too hard too soon and I'm afraid you're going to have to leave and no one wants to be walked out of a theatre show before 8pm.
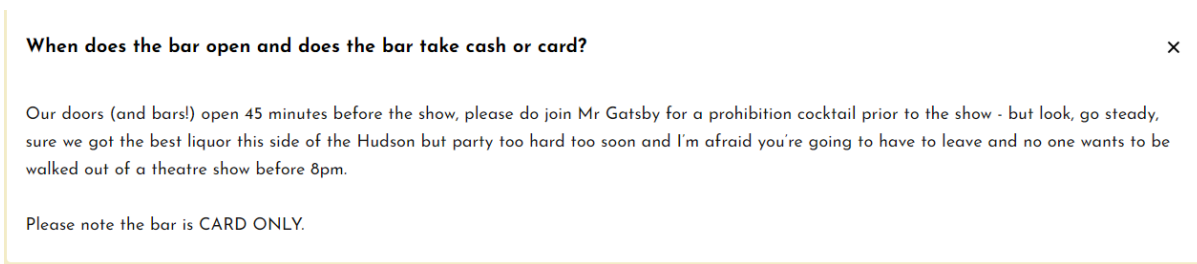
Please note the bar is CARD ONLY.

Figure 6: Screen Grab from the Great Gatsby Experience website

The Great Gatsby Experience invites the audience to have a drink with the cast members, in a narrative that suggests an extra special invite-only experience. Elements of the Great Gatsby experience, drinking and having a good time, are emulated in responses collected at outdoor screenings I surveyed.[1]

- Respondent 44WW: "A jolly good atmosphere & great mates. Drinks, good food & just a great time."
- Respondent 55HH: "I'm only here for the food and booze."

Immersive experiences is a genre that builds on a reappraisal of the canon text through an interpretation in a non-traditional auditorium environment. These experiences are frequently either a theatre production or the adaptation of a popular television program.

8.3.3 Immersive Television

Another example of the immersive genre is television adaptations, such as those of *Stranger Things* (Netflix) and *Peaky Blinders* (BBC). These experiences provide opportunities for the audience to physically interact with the narrative. Here, we see tropes

of fandom in detailed understandings of the text celebrated in a manner that is non-hierarchical in terms of allegiance. The audience is invited to walk through rooms and liaise with actors playing key roles. This creates a modern Instagrammable moment, an event which can be captured on social media in an aesthetic or eye catching way. These experiences are spaces both for the super fan and for the audience member with no knowledge of the genre. Part of this design may be the need to appeal to a wider audience. Nosheen Iqbal, writing in *The Guardian*, suggested that, rather than re-establishing an understanding of the text and allowing people to immerse themselves in the story, immersive experience is instead about commerce.[445] Quoting Andrzej Lukowski, theatre editor for *Time Out*, Iqbal writes:

> For some producers, it's become a licence to print money…It's a party night and infantilised. It's not attempting to be high art or progressive. Theatre as an art form often tries to do something excellent and reaches for the stars even when it fails, but this current crop of immersive shows have to make money. You don't see them striving for brilliance or pushing boundaries or doing anything genuinely meaningful.[446]

There is a question as to whether pushing the boundary really matter to the people who attend immersive experiences, as described by Andrzej Lukowski. My original research showed that the film was less important than the chance to hang out with family and friends. Therefore, what these immersive experiences, outdoor film screenings and screenings in non-traditional auditorium spaces provide is an excuse for people to get together in a collective moment. This may be less about cultural capital and more about a good night out. Iqbal continues quoting from Lukowski:

> The fact that it wants to be called theatre is interesting," he says. "It's light drinks at the bar and a middlebrow party night. But that's fine. If they were taking up a West End theatre you might quibble, but they're often making use of abandoned buildings. It's just disappointing that a lot of shows don't have very high artistic aspirations.[447]

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[445]https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2020/feb/02/high-art-tipsy-night-out-immersive-theatre-lost-its-soul - accessed September 2022

[446]https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2020/feb/02/high-art-tipsy-night-out-immersive-theatre-lost-its-soul - accessed September 2022

[447] https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2020/feb/02/high-art-tipsy-night-out-immersive-theatre-lost-its-soul - accessed September 2022

Lukowski alludes to the importance of atmosphere and cultural capital, two factors that do not necessarily gel together. "Atmosphere" speaks to the individual interpretation of an experience. Conversely, along Bourdesian lines, "cultural capital" is how one responds to the experience along class lines. Regardless, the immersive screenings provide a point of difference for an audience who is keen to try new things, within a sector fuelled by innovation. The point of difference here is very important. If the offer is as simple as watching a film outside, how many times can audiences feasibly do this and feel like they are doing something new? When asked the question, "Have you been to an outdoor film screening before and if so, when?", seventy-two percent of all respondents at all the screenings I attended in 2019 had not been to an outdoor film screening before. Where people had been to screenings, it was either in a city or town in the UK, abroad at a festival or an alternative artform seen outdoors. This would suggest that, for immersive experiences to do well, they need to be on the doorstep of the audience, or as part of a wider experience package. Therefore, although the demand in immersive experiences may be growing, I argue that the sector needs to keep innovating to maintain its audience.

8.4 Opportunities for a New Audience?

One way to innovate is to bring outdoor film screenings to a new audience. The Summer Nights screening in Middlesbrough was an opportunity to trial the outdoor film screening concept on a new audience. Screenings at Ormesby Hall took place in 2019. In that year, I added the question to the survey card: "Have you been to a screening before and if so when?" The answers to this question provided useful insight into the experiences of the audience and whether the outdoor film screening was a new opportunity or not. (Figure 3)

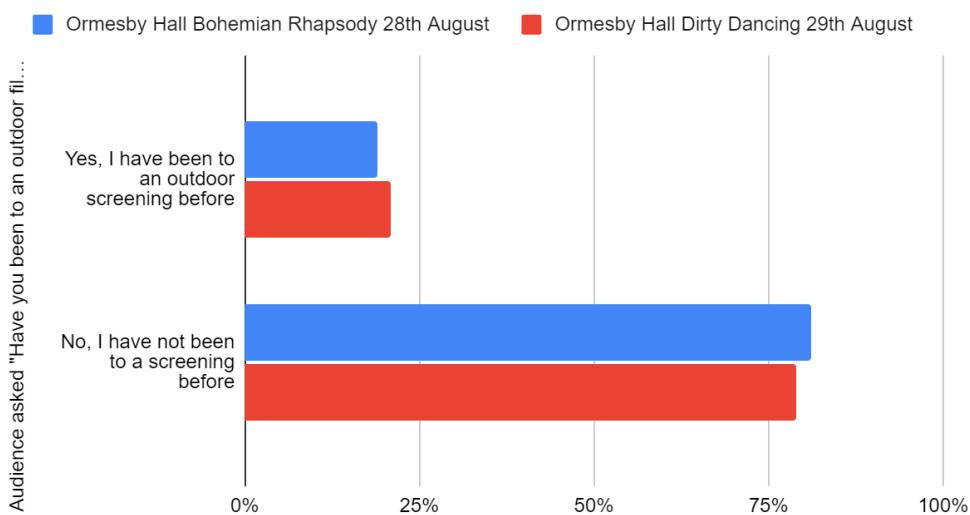Have you been to an outdoor film screening before?

Figure 3: Have you been to an outdoor screening before Ormesby Hall

The results from Ormesby Hall show most of the participants who attended the screenings had not been to an outdoor film screening before.

Where people had been to a screening before, it was either a local screening, screenings in London, or screenings abroad. In answer to the question: "Have you been to an outdoor film screening before and if so when?"

- Respondent 71OHBR replied: "Yes, Riverside Stadium, Middlesbrough".
- Respondent OHBRDD added: "Yes, Wallsend Park North Tyneside".
- Respondent 36OHBR: "Middlesbrough Centre Square, The Proms"

Those travelling to London to watch a film outside responded:

- Respondent 46OHBR: "Yes, Somerset House, London 2009"
- Respondent 62OHDD: "Yes, on the River Thames London."

Those who had travelled further afield to see an outdoor film screening responded:
- Respondent 4OHDD: "Yes, Canada drive thru & New York Bryant Park Hitchcock Season".
- Respondent 124 OHDD: "June 2018 Skiathos".

The audience in Middlesbrough thus represented a new market for Quad and its outdoor film arm, Summer Nights. Most of the audience had yet to experience an outdoor film screening before. Furthermore, the minority of people who had been to an outdoor film screening had done so as part of a larger experience. Identifying new audiences provides capacity that, in turn, may support the sustainability of the screening operations. Feedback from Quad suggested that the screenings in Middlesbrough were beneficial. However, the distance from Derby, the operational hub for Quad, to Ormesby Hall was, in the long run, not sustainable. The costs incurred in travelling to and from Middlesbrough and   Derby, and accommodation for the staff team, cut into the profits that were earned from the screenings.

Ideas of how to maintain and sustain audiences are offered by Joseph Pine II and James Gilmore and Jennifer Radbourne et al. Writing in 1988, Pine and Gilmore suggested that commerce should use experiences to sell "traditional offerings" more effectively.[448] They offered that an experience occurs when a company intentionally uses services as the stage, and goods as props, to engage individual customers in a way that creates a memorable event. Pine and Gilmore suggest commodities are fungible, goods are tangible, services are intangible, and experiences are *memorable.*[449] Therefore, it is suggested that commerce should lean towards the creation of experience to engage and re-engage customers.

This idea of creating an arts experience is also considered by Jennifer Radbourne and colleagues. Radbourne et all refer to self-actualisation, namely, the process of creating an audience-led arts experience. This is a process which generates loyalty to the brand or a loyalty to a type of experience. Radbourne notes: "The construction of meaning, whether personally or collectively, is part of the arts experience that provides consumers with value".[450]

8.5 A Place for Outdoor Cinema

Placemaking forms an important narrative for the question of "what next?" for outdoor film screenings. This section discusses the terms "placemaking", "place shaping", and "place-

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[448] Pine, Joseph and Gilmore James H. (1999) "The Experience Economy: Work is Theatre & Every Business a Stage", Harvard Business Press, Boston

[449] Ibid Pine & Gilmore

[450] Radbourne Jennifer, Johanson Katya, Glow Hillary and White Tabitha "The Audience Experience: Measuring Quality in the Performing Arts" JSource: International Journal of Arts Management , SPRING 2009, Vol. 11, No. 3 (SPRING 2009), p17

based policy". I argue that these terms are used to set a new agenda for how public space is used by communities. Considering placemaking, place shaping and place-based policy, provides context for how outdoor film screenings can be used for community, rather than for commercial good. The impact is both on creating and engaging communities (a key trope of the outdoor film screenings experience) and engaging and animating public spaces (a process that outdoor film screenings can deliver). As part of my discussion in this section, I also highlight the actions and initiatives taken by one of the venues with whom I liaise to support the placemaking agenda in their town.

8.5.1 Placemaking

Sweeney et al suggest that "placemaking is increasingly drawn upon by planners, city authorities and citizens as a means of reclaiming, remaking and regenerating urban space."[451] This complex idea manifests itself in several ways and is subjective. One person, company, or authority's idea of reclaiming, remaking and regenerating may vary considerably depending on the individual context of the urban environment. Sweeney continues:

> Often, planning discourse and placemaking literature conceive of placemaking as a singular material change to a landscape, a project that is complete once installation has finished. In contrast, we see placemaking as an open-ended achievement, constituted through diverse and dynamic assemblages and realised through a multiplicity of post installation labours.[452]

This comment illuminates the complexity of the placemaking agenda, which is defined in a number of varying ways, depending on the context of the placemaking and who it is managed and delivered by.

8.5.2 Place Shaping

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[451] Sweeney, Jill et al "Assembling placemaking: making and remaking place in a regenerating city" Cultural Geographies

Vol. 25, No. 4 (October 2018), p 571

[452] Ibid Sweeney" p571

As a contemporary term, placemaking intersects with "place-shaping" as a term that   was used and defined by the Lyons Inquiry into local government. The Lyons Inquiry was an independent inquiry commissioned by the then-Chancellor of the Exchequer (Gordon Brown) and the then-Deputy Prime Minister (John Prescott) in the summer of 2004. The enquiry considered the form, function and funding of local government in England, culminating in a final report on the future of local government, published alongside the Chancellor's Budget in March 2007.[453] Michael Lyons states that Place-shaping was a shared ambition for the future of local government. He wrote:

> I believe that local government is an essential part of our system of government today. Local government's place-shaping role - using powers and influence creatively to promote the well-being of a community and its citizens - is crucial to help improve satisfaction and prosperity through greater local choice and flexibility.[454]

The Lyons Inquiry summarises the main roles of local government as being to:

1) Provide safe and secure places to live,

2) Foster greater prosperity, considering challenges and opportunities from globalisation,

3) Address the impact on the environment, and

4) Most importantly, address the levels of trust and satisfaction amongst the public.

The report suggested that a number of key challenges needed to be addressed " in order for local government to fulfil its roles effectively."[455] The Inquiry suggests a re-evaluation of the roles of both central and local government, and a reform of the overall funding system for local government.[456] The motivation behind the report was to decentralise government decisions to enable local people to make more local decisions, which would have a better overall impact.

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[453] Northall, Phill "The Lyons Inquiry into Local Government" Centre for Local Economic Strategies

https://cles.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/No.-48-The-Lyons-Inquiry.pdf

[454] http://www.lyonsinquiry.org.uk/ accessed September 2021

[455] Ibid Northall,

[456] Ibid Northall

In this context, the definitions of the term "placemaking" and "place-shaping" are very similar. The difference is nuanced. Place-shaping is widely understood to describe the ways in which local partners collectively use their influence, powers, creativity and abilities to create attractive, prosperous and safe communities, places where people want to live, work and do business. Placemaking is "more than just promoting better urban design, placemaking facilitates creative patterns of use, paying particular attention to the physical, cultural, and social identities that define a place and support its ongoing evolution."[457]

8.5.3 Place based Policy

Another term used in the context of urban spaces is "place-based policy". This is a term that has been adopted by the British Academy, which authored the 'Where We Live Now' project.'[458] This project engaged communities in Manchester, Cornwall, Cardiff and London in a series of roundtable conversations designed to consider the "qualitative analysis of, and creative solutions to, place-based growth".[459] The report makes a case for place-based policy, recommending that place-based elements, such as arts, culture, heritage and environmental attributes, should form a positive part of plans, rather than being regarded as optional extras. Their report highlights that a focus on "place" provides a mechanism for reconnecting people who feel disconnected to those who make decisions. It leads to more sensitive and appropriate policy making and better outcomes, in terms of both individual and societal wellbeing.

8.5.4 Placemaking, Place Shaping and Place Based Policy in Relation to Outdoor Cinema

Place-making, place shaping, place-based policies, in their primacy, enable communities to engage with local spaces for economic and social good. These terms speak to the need for deregulation and allowing individual communities to make decisions for themselves. The onus here was originally on local authorities listening to residents.

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[457] https://www.pps.org/article/what-is-placemaking- accessed November 2022

[458] https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/documents/277/Where-we-live-now-making-case-for-place-based-policy.pdf

[459] thebritishacademy.ac.uk/documents/277/Where-we-live-now-making-case-for-place-based-policy.pdf

However, there is also a narrative about how the owners and curators of local cultural assets listen to the local community. My research focused on outdoor film screenings in rural and semi-rural environments. Most screenings I attended were at sites of large historic houses or venues. These were owned either privately (e.g. Bradgate Park and Wentworth House) or by the National Trust or English Heritage. One of the screenings I attended (Bradgate Park) was in a country park. In a number of locations (Wentworth Woodhouse, Battle Abbey, Speke Hall and Ormesby Hall), dwellings of different sizes had grown around the venue. For Wentworth Woodhouse, this was a small village. For Battle Abbey, it was the town of Battle. For Speke Hall, this was the city of Liverpool. For Ormesby Hall, this was the city of Middlesbrough. Place-making, place shaping, place-based activity would seek to engage historic and heritage locations as part of the cultural assets of the community. As cultural assets, these venues are at the physical centre of their community, and so contribute to the economic development and social sustainability of the community.

The work undertaken at Battle Abbey is a good example of placemaking on a small scale. Historic and heritage locations are centres of placemaking for their communities.[460] In separate interviews, over Zoom, with contacts at Battle Abbey, Ormesby Hall and Coughton Court, the lead contacts alluded to the importance of their venues in localised placemaking as local landmarks, employees and destination places, which drive business into their communities. Hosting outdoor events at Battle, including cinemas, was about utilising the space after hours. The lead contact at Battle Abbey noted that the first outdoor screening was implemented "To utilise the site after its normal opening hours…appealing to visitors who would not normally come to the site."[461] Specifically, "local people who were not interested in history as stuff who had completely written us off but this was our opportunity to get them in and show them there is more than just history here."[462] Other examples of placemaking at Battle Abbey include hosting the local village fete,[463] the annual re-

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[460]The relevance of placemaking on a discussion about venues stems in part from the ownership of the venues, in this case the National Trust and English Heritage which own and manage a substantial proportion of Britain's cultural assets. The National Trusts strategy "For everyone, for ever: our strategy to 2025" aims to commits to "Creating experiences of our places that move, teach and inspire by raising the standard of presentation and interpretation at all the places we look after, making our outdoors experience better for all ages and need and revealing and exploring our cultural heritage through events and exhibitions" #

[461]Direct quote from lead contact at Battle Abbey, Interview on 1st July 2012 1.20

[462]Direct quote from lead contact at Battle Abbey, Interview on 1st July 2012 1.50

[463]https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/events/1d0c679f-9c23-4eff-ab73-accb19c501ed/pages/details - accessed May 2022

enactment of the Battle of Hasting,[464] a motor festival,[465] and various outdoor film screenings in conjunction with TechQuad, the technical team behind Summer Nights.[466] Providing community events adds value to the local economy, a topic I discussed in an interview with the lead contact at Battle Abbey (held over Zoom). The Abbey is the physical and economic centre of the community of Battle. When the Abbey is open, (the lead contact remarked) "anecdotally business picks up. The staff at the Abbey are employed from within the local community and when asked the staff will recommend local business for people to dine at after their time. Businesses value people coming into town, having a few drinks, possibly a meal and going to a screening afterwards. We get a lot of feedback. When the Abbey is open the town is busier."[467]

Several types of value emerged from my conversation with Battle Abbey about the impact of the outdoor film screening upon the local community. These values included social value (bringing local people together, fostering a sense of community), and heritage value (providing access to learn and engage in an historic site) and economic value (supporting local business). The work taking place at Battle Abbey and the other venues I visited produces value by converting the audience's relationship with a space to a place that, in turn, creates an experience and a connection to the location. The value of space and place is, in part, about the audience feeling a geographical connection to the experience. Here, we see the space and place of a screening (even if temporary) adding to the memory of the event, which Gabriel Moshenska argues is different from the "nostalgia" of an event, which may symbolise an imagined past.[468]

The example at Battle shows how a heritage location can be used to enhance and sustain a local community through an arts program, which isa form of placemaking, as it seeks to bring people into an area for economic and social good. Kieran Bonner makes the point about power struggles over 'place-making': namely, "who changes what in alternative representations of any place's present and future and how do these changes selectively

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[464] https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/about-us/search-news/battle-of-hastings-returns/ - accessed May 2022

[465] https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/ormesby-hall - accessed May 2022

[466] https://www.derbyquad.co.uk/TECHSQUAD - accessed May 2022

[467] Direct quote from lead contact at Battle Abbey, Interview on 1st July 2012 1.20

[468] Moshenska, Gabriel" Memory- Towards the reclamation of a vital concept." from   Heritage Keywords: Rhetoric and Redescription in Cultural Heritage, University Press of Colorado, Boulder p203

appropriate or reject particular elements of any place's historical past?"[469] In the example of Battle Abbey, these changes are, in part, motivated by a conversation with local people and acceptance that the building needs to be more accessible to local people. A conversation around accessibility also resonates with Kate Clarke's work on Values Based Heritage Management, which suggests that the significance of a building should be based on the interpretation of the people who use the building and not "experts".[470] There is some value in outdoor film screenings transforming rural or semi-rural environments, as the example in Battle has shown. However, I would suggest that, it is in transforming urban environments where placemaking has the biggest impact; animating space which has become or is a risk of becoming derelict. Examples of the decline in retail high streets in small towns such as Southend in Essex demonstrate the importance of the high street diversification, away from the retail offer.[471] Towns like Battle have cultural capital through its historic assets.

8.6 The Economic Decline of the High Street

Placemaking and animating public spaces becomes increasingly important when urban spaces are in decline. The growth of online activity has reduced the need for engagement with physical spaces. The decline of the high street became a focus for the Coalition Government in 2010. A report published by the Department for Business Innovation and Skills estimated that by 2014, less than 40% of retail spending will be on the high street, and that over the last decade, out of town retail floorspace has risen by 30% while in-town has shrunk by 14%. The Coalition Government commissioned the retailer Mary Portas to look at how to reinvigorate the community space.[472] The Portas recommendations were to stimulate growth in pop-up activities, which would animate town centres across the UK.[473] Mary Portas wrote:

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[469] Bonner, Keiran "Understanding Placemaking: Economics, Politics and Everyday life in the Culture of Cities" Source: Canadian Journal of Urban Research , Summer 2002, Vol. 11, No. 1, Space, Place and the Culture of Cities: Special Issue (Summer 2002), pp. 1-16

[470] Clake, Kate "Values-Based Heritage Management and the Heritage Lottery Fund in the UK"APT Bulletin: The Journal of Preservation Technology , 2014, Vol. 45, No. 2/3, Special Issues on Values Based Preservation (2014) p65

[471] https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-51094109 - accessed July 2023

[472] Portas recommendations: 1) Get town centres running like businesses. 2) Get the basics right to allow businesses to flourish. 3) Level the playing field. 4) Define landlords' roles and responsibilities. 5)Give communities a greater say https://www.gov.uk/government/news/mary-portas-high-street-review - (accessed 3rd January 2020)

[473] https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pop-up-shops-and-entrepreneurs-to-prosper-from-high-street-changes (assessed 3rd January 2020)

I don't want to live in a Britain that doesn't care about community. And I believe that our high streets are a really important part of pulling people together in a way that a supermarket or shopping mall, however convenient, however entertaining and however slick, just never can. Our high streets can be lively, dynamic, exciting and social places that give a sense of belonging and trust to a community.[474]

The Arts and Place Shaping Evidence Review, commissioned by Arts Council England, recognised that "investment in cultural activities and in arts organisations, museums and libraries can help improve lives, regenerate neighbourhoods, support local economies, attract visitors and bring people together".[475] The report also emphasises the role that arts and culture can play in building the identity and prosperity of places, creating stronger communities and inspiring change. Creative and artistic activity help to define, promote and sustain a spirit of place in communities. The review adds to the place making / shaping agenda, but does so from a standpoint that emphasises cultural value.

Public Spaces are always under threat. Infrequently, these threats are by building developers, who exhort their commitment to the public realm. However, more common threats are owners of public spaces who need revenue to maintain the land. The issues around how public space is used was highlighted by the journalist, Myranda Bryant, who noted that "Cash-strapped councils are increasingly hiring out their green spaces to festivals, an expert has warned, blocking them off from residents for weeks at a time, damaging grass and causing congestion."[476] The article suggested that public parks are being used for a variety of different events, including festivals. Byrant cited Andrew Smith, professor of urban experiences at the University of Westminster, who said that "there now seemed to be more festivals in some parts of the country than before the pandemic."[477] In that vein, the theme of "festival" arose a number of times within the data I collected in 2019. Three respondents who attended the screening of *Bohemian Rhapsody* (dir Dexter Fletcher) at Battle Abbey gave the following responses to the question "What is the appeal of outdoor film screenings?"

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[474]https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pop-up-shops-and-entrepreneurs-to-prosper-from-high-street-changes (assessed 3rd January 2020)

[475] Wavehill Ltd (2020) "Arts and Place Shaping Evidence Review" Arts Council England
https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/placemaking%20wavehill.pdf

[476]https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/aug/24/desperate-uk-councils-hiring-out-more-parks-to-festivals-warns-expert accessed august 2022

[477] https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/aug/24/desperate-uk-councils-hiring-out-more-parks-to-festivals-warns-expert accessed august 2022

- Respondent 88BABR: "Being outside, a festival feeling"

- Respondent 134BABR: "Festival Vibe"

- Respondent 139BABR: "Festival Atmosphere"

There are several examples of where placemaking has been used as a vehicle for temporary arts events, designed to engage the whole community. Two examples are the InTransit Festival and Greenwich and Docklands International Festival (GDIF).[478] Both festivals were, in part, funded by their respective local authorities to work with residents in low-income areas.[479] The InTransit Festival was an outdoor arts festival which ran from 2014 to 2017. The aim of the festival was to provide established and emerging artists an opportunity to explore the realm of audience engagement[480]. Alongside a rolling programme of immersive art performances stood the Portobello Pavilion, a temporary fixed space arts centre, which was open every year for the duration of the festival. In this example, public space was created specifically for residents to engage with a free arts program.[481] GDIF provided site-based activity for low-income families and worked with local residents on the festival finale, a promenade through the streets of Greenwich.[482] These artistic interventions are designed to both purposely engage the local audiences and to create accidental audiences, namely, the passers-by who stop and engage in an arts event or production.

Interventions, such as the Portobello Pavilion and the GDIF, bring audiences into a space. This is, in effect, what the heritage locations that I have worked with in this study also do. The heritage locations offer an aesthetically pleasing centre point in both rural and urban areas. Pop up works, such as the Portobello Pavilion and GDIF, seek to create and animate spaces that have less distinction than heritage locations. This shows a comparison between animating a space that is defined by a well-known and well-established building and animating a space that may be a throughfare or have no clear identity. The comparison

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[478] I worked on both of these festival as a community engagement manager and saw first hand the impact of these projects on local communities.

[479] InTransit was located in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea specifically in North Kensington and area with high deprivation , Greenwich and Docklands International Festival was located in the Royal Borough of Greenwich, with work specifically taking place in the low income areas of Woolwich and Thamesmead

[480] http://www.intransitfestival.co.uk/ - accessed August 2021

[481] https://portobellopavilion.london/ - accessed August 2021

[482] https://festival.org/gdif-2022/ accessed September 2022

between a venue such as Hardwick Hall and the area located outside Ladbroke Grove Train Station (a site used by InTransit) highlights this point. Thus, good place making, place shaping and place-based policy is about allowing audiences to connect with a space which may be undefined or generically undefined. I would argue that the connection needs to be organic, and as the case studies presented in "Chapter Five: Alternative Auditoriums" demonstrate that to work, these connections need community value and appeal.

8.7. Animating Spaces - Accidental Audiences

Jan Gehl argues that, if public spaces are welcoming and friendly, the public are more likely to move from doing just necessary activities in the space to participating in optional activities, possibly even social activities.[483] If we see lots of people in a space, we are more likely to use or enter the space. The space becomes animated. Similarly, deserted spaces will stay deserted, unless they become animated by an activity or activities.

I thus argue that outdoor film screenings are a tool to animate space. The research I undertook between 2018-2020 captured the opinions and thoughts of people who intentionally engaged in outdoor film screenings (2018 & 2019) and in drive-in cinema (2020). The responses I gathered were from people who paid money with the direct intention of engaging with films in non-traditional auditorium settings. What I did not capture is the role of the "accidental audience", a term I am using to describe the people who encounter arts experiences in the process of doing something else. Two good examples of the accidental audience engaging in film screenings can be found at Brindley Place in Birmingham and the BBC Big Screens Project. Yet, the temporary one-off screenings as seen in Brindley Place and the installation of semi-permanent screens such as the BBC Big Screen project demonstrate how outdoor screens and outdoor film screenings can animate a space.[484]

Brindley Place in Birmingham is described as "Birmingham's premier business and leisure development". It includes 19 restaurants, shops and bars in Birmingham's first ever

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[483] Gehl, Jan (2011) 'Life Between Buildings" 6th edition Island Press, Washington DC

[484] In Brindley Place, Birmingham marketers have used outdoor film screening to animate the commercial district during the weekends when otherwise the space would be unused.# Bean bags and blow up seats are provided to encourage people to sit down# and relaxed in an otherwise soulless piazza area surrounded by offices. The films are selected based on a poll of readers who read the local newspaper, which also helps create a buzz.# The outdoor film screenings at Brindley Place are designed to create a connectedness between local people and the space, especially for people who would not normally use or visit the area. https://www.brindleyplace.com/ - accessed September2022

purpose- designed leisure venue, overlooking the canals.[485] The outdoor film screenings at Brindley Place have been curated to bring people into the area during the weekends when the commercial traffic is low. The film screenings are designed both to animate the space and to encourage people to stay in the space and is where the term "accidental audience" works as the screenings were designed for people who intentionally wanted to see a film outdoors *and* passers-by who stopped to check out what was going on. To provide an additional layer of engagement, the curation of the film program is developed in collaboration with a local radio station, which asks its listeners to vote for the films they would like to see screened.[486]

A wider initiative that focused on public spaces was The Big Screen Project. The Big Screen Project was developed in order to persuade more people to use public spaces across the UK.[487] In 2003, the first of the twenty-one 'Big Screens' was installed outdoors, in Exchange Square in Manchester. The screen was developed and installed as a collaborative project with the BBC, Manchester City Council and technology firm Phillips.[488] The BBC's Project Director of Live Events in 2003, Bill Morris, said:

> We're excited by this chance to explore a completely new public service of information and entertainment delivered right to the heart of the city. Many other cities around the UK and abroad are already watching to see how the Manchester experiment develops.[489]

In 2013, the BBC pulled out of their partnerships with the local councils who had Big Screens located in their areas. With funding to local councils in decline, many of the Big Screens have been closed in favour of spending on other local services. Moreover, a report by the Communities and Culture think tank suggested that the success of the Big Screens

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[485] https://www.brindleyplace.com/whats-on/ - accessed September 2022

[486] https://www.birminghammail.co.uk/whats-on/whats-on-news/brindleyplace-film-festival-back-you-14639667 accessed September 2020

[487] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BBC_Big_Screen- accessed 3rd September 2014

[488] http://www.bbc.co.uk/pressoffice/pressreleases/stories/2003/03_march/21/manchester_project.shtm - accessed 3rd September 2014

[489] http://www.bbc.co.uk/pressoffice/pressreleases/stories/2003/03_march/21/manchester_project.shtml - accessed 3rd September 2014

was down to the engagement of "gatekeepers" at each local council, whose interest in the project would determine its success.[490]

Screenings of non-fiction activities and events within the public realm is not uncommon. Annual screenings of sports events, such as the Wimbledon Tennis Championships, take place both in open public realm, such as Exchange Square, and in commercial districts such as Brindley Place. Moreover, new commercial developments, such as Merchant Square in Paddington, have embedded a communal Big Screen as part of the design of the public realm.[491] The work taking place at Brindley Place mirrors established cultural public realm design, such as The Scoop in London Bridge, which has hosted a summer-time free film screening program since 2008, and outdoor performances since 2002.[492]

Finally, I argue that outdoor film screenings also provide an opportunity to action placemaking within public spaces. Scott McQuire draws upon the experience of the outdoor screens in his book, *The Media City: Media, Architecture and the Urban Space*.[493] He notes that, for cities such as Tokyo and New York, "the migration of screens into the cityscape has become one of the most visible and influential tendencies of contemporary urbanism".[494] He continues that the Big Screen has become less a piece of furniture than an architectural surface resident, "not in the home but on the street outside." He describes this activity as "public spectating", and questions how public space is used in urban environments, citing the effect of the development of the suburbs in the 1950s.

8.8 Public Screens for Public Good

The value of outdoor screens in public spaces was reaffirmed on the 19th of September 2022, when the BBC broadcast the funeral of HM Queen Elizabeth II. As the nation went into mourning, the experience of watching the funeral in public and community spaces provided an opportunity to reflect and collectively grieve. The screening of the funeral in public spaces was coordinated by The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS),

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[490] http://www.communitiesandculture.org/files/2012/08/ScopingStudySummary_Kent.pdf

[491] https://merchantsquare.co.uk/ -accessed June 2022

[492] https://londonbridgecity.co.uk/events - accessed June 2022

[493] McQuire, Scott (2008)The Media City: Media, Architecture and Urban Space, Sage (London)

[494] McQuire, Scott (2008) 'The Media City, Media Architecture and Urban Space' Sage (London) p130

who arranged for the funeral to be broadcast outdoors in key public spaces. These spaces included Hyde Park in London; Centenary Square in Birmingham; Coleraine Town Hall in County Londonderry; and Holyrood Park in Edinburgh.[495] Sky News reported that the funeral would also be shown in a number of other public and civic spaces, which included Cathedral Square, Sheffield; Centenary Square, Birmingham; Bitts Park, Carlisle; Bradford Cathedral; Northernhay Gardens, Exeter; and Exeter City Football Club.[496] These examples show how outside community space can provide core community good over commercial gain.

The decision by Vue Cinema to broadcast the Queen's funeral live was another example of where cinema contributed to the public collectively during the national period of mourning.[497] Cinemas across the Vue portfolio were open on the day of the funeral and offered complimentary tea and coffee during the free screening. Many local newspapers reported on this gesture, including *The York Post* and *Worcester News.*[498]

8.9 Conclusion

The birth, development and progression of film was built on innovation. Innovation was, and still is, important for the industry to survive. Innovation creates experience, a concept that my data shows appeal to audiences. The history of film technology has demonstrated the need to listen to audiences and the impact of audiences' decisions on the film industry as they vote with their feet. There are numerous examples of films that had hype but did not do well at the box office.[499] There are also examples of themed experiences that failed to appeal to audiences.[500] My research suggests that providing something that is exciting and different for audiences offers a foundational factor of the engagement and appeal of the

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[495]https://news.sky.com/story/queens-funeral-public-to-be-able-to-watch-funeral-on-big-screens-across-uk-12700306 - accessed September 2022

[496] https://news.sky.com/story/queens-funeral-public-to-be-able-to-watch-funeral-on-big-screens-across-uk-12700306 - accessed September 2022

[497] https://www.myvue.com/event/her-majesty-queen-elizabeth-ii-funeral accessed Septemebr 2022

[498] https://www.yorkpress.co.uk/news/21466071.vue-cinema-york-show-queens-funeral-free/ -accessed Septemebr 2022

https://www.worcesternews.co.uk/news/21372794.vue/ - accessed September 2022

[499] The much lauded launch of Blade Runner is a good example of this: https://www.theguardian.com/film/2017/oct/09/blade-runner-2049-us-box-office-result

[500] https://www.theguardian.com/travel/shortcuts/2017/apr/24/tragic-kingdoms-the-disney-lands-that-flopped - Examples of Disney theme parks which have failed to impress audiences

experience. The term "foundational factor" is used here, as providing a different and exciting offer is one layer of the experience. I would argue that the importance of attending screenings with family and friends ("Chapter Seven: Community and Fandom") requires consensus as to what is exciting and different. Thus, the producers of outdoor film screenings, immersive film screenings and participatory screenings need to understand their audiences and be clear about whom their events appeal to. Are these events generic and designed to appeal to a wide audience? An example of this is the Summer Nights screenings. Alternatively, are the screenings aimed at appealing to audiences with a knowledge of the filmic text? *Burnt City* is aesthetically stimulating, a "beautiful blend of immersive theatre, dance and game design" (Figure 6), which is enhanced by attending with an understanding of the myths of the Trojan War. The interpretation of the text became an issue for producers of *Secret Cinema: Empire Strikes Back*, an event that has been noted several times in this thesis.[501] Secret Cinema and Punchdrunk deliver a rich approach to the text through immersive cinema, which involves a producer driven pre-screening experience. Immersive shows such as *The Great Gatsby*, *Peaky Blinders* and *Stranger Things,* are events which offer the audiences a chance to be part of an experience but ask less of the audience at the pre-screening stage. These commercial endeavours are appealing to audiences as they provide a space for people to share an experience, with both known people and the imagined community.[502] I argue that there is a bigger purpose for outdoor film screenings, one that provides public good for urban and rural communities who are struggling. The effect of the Covid-19 pandemic on audiences is still unclear. The Local Government Association argues that local authorities need to be responsive and adaptable in post-Covid environments.[503] The advisory body names several factors that Local Authorities should consider, ensuring that high streets maintain their functions as places for community. These factors include store closures which pre-date the pandemic, and the blight of 'voids' on many high streets. In the wake of the pandemic, high streets clearly need to adapt with new experiential offers to entice visitors back to them, and prepare for the long-term impact of new technologies.[504] The authors of the report on the future of the high street note:

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[501] Atkinson, "From conflict to revolution: The secret aesthetic, narrative spatialisation and audience experience in immersive cinema design", volume 13, Issue 1 May 2016

[502] Young, The Ideal of Community and the Politics of Difference, p1

[503] https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/creating-resilient-and-revitalised-high-streets-new-normal - accessed November 2022

[504] https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/creating-resilient-and-revitalised-high-streets-new-normal - accessed November 2022

Going forward, it is likely that these high streets will have to adapt to continued lower daytime footfall from workers. Providing an engaging cultural and night-time offer could generate alternative visitors to replace lost commuters, proactively planning to serve both visitors interested in quieter engagements and those who visit restaurants, bars, and clubs.[505]

This provides evidence of the potential for outdoor film screenings to transform public spaces, engage communities and provide an experience that has both cultural value and appeal.

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[505] https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/creating-resilient-and-revitalised-high-streets-new-normal - accessed November 2022

Chapter Nine: Conclusion

9.1 A short contextual review

In the six years since I began my research, much has changed about the outdoor film screening culture. In 2015, the industry was on the rise. This was recognised by Sarah Atkinson and Helen Kennedy with their proclamation that *2015* was the *Summer of Live*,[506] "Inside-the-scenes: The rise of experiential cinema" was an industry report, part-funded by Arts Council England, delivered in collaboration with Live Cinema UK, and industry body founded in 2014 [507] The buzz and energy around live cinema at the time is exemplified in the outcomes of the report published by Atkinson and Kennedy:

> We situate live cinema within a wider context of shifts towards an increasingly participatory cultural and creative economy. This wider project will also establish a network of representatives from industry, advocacy groups, exhibitor networks, academics and creative. This network will be the mechanism through which we establish symposia, a regular conference and other events to support the development of the experiential live cinema field.[508]

Six years later, in August 2022 after two years of restrictions on cinema attendance, a major operator in the traditional auditorium sector filed for bankruptcy.[509] Mark Sweeny of the *Guardian* newspaper reports that Cineworld, the London-listed business, has "run up debt of more than $4.8bn (£4bn) after losses soared while cinemas were shut during the global coronavirus crisis, has hired lawyers from Kirkland & Ellis and consultants from restructuring experts AlixPartners to advise on the (bankruptcy) process".[510] This leaves the outdoor film sector in a less buoyant mode, abridged from the energy that sustained the market in 2015.

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[506] Atkinson, Sarah and Kennedy, Helen "Introduction – Inside-the-scenes: The rise of experiential cinema' Participations, Volume 13 Issues 1 May 2016 p140

[507] Since 2014, Live Cinema UK has grown to become the country's leading organisation dedicated to producing, promoting and researching live cinema events, reaching over 400,000 live audience members, and collaborating with over 60 partners across more than 10 countries. Based in West Yorkshire, we curate innovative programmes and new art works inspired by the moving image. Live Cinema UK produce and support film events which contain a live element or additional activity. These include, but are not limited to:

Live Soundtracks, Interactive Technology, Theatrical Performances, Non-traditional Venues and Archive Film
https://livecinema.org.uk/about/about-live-cinema-uk/

[508] Atkinson, Sarah and Kennedy, Helen "Introduction – Inside-the-scenes: The rise of experiential cinema' Participations, Volume 13 Issues 1 May 2016 p139

[509]https://www.theguardian.com/business/2022/aug/19/cineworld-preparing-to-file-for-bankruptcy-following-pandemic-rout

[510]https://www.theguardian.com/business/2022/aug/19/cineworld-preparing-to-file-for-bankruptcy-following-pandemic-rout

After a few years without an outdoor film screening program, Quad in Derby has recently announced the Summer Nights outdoor film schedule for 2023.[511] This program has adopted a similar model to previous years, by showing family friendly-films, such as *The Greatest Showman* (Dir Michael Gracey), *Grease* (Dir Randal Kleiser) and *Elvis* (Dir Baz Luhrman). Films chosen in 2023 by Summer Nights have a greater emphasis on visual rather than verbal narrative, with big screen action replacing text-heavy dialogues. In addition, the majority of the films screened by Summer Nights in 2023 are closely aligned to the musical genre by embedding songs into the story of the film.

The locations of the Summer Nights screenings in 2023 are in Derbyshire and the surrounding areas. This is a departure from the 2019 screening season, in which screenings took place across England. The choice to screen films in the East Midlands points to the aim of the Quad to be a regional arts centre. One could suggest that the geographical condensing of Summer Nights screenings into a tighter frame allows for the Quad to more successfully cross market the events they are producing. As an illustration of this, a customer who visits the arts space at the Quad may be happy to travel 5 miles to an outdoor film screening at Derby Rugby Club, but would be less inclined to travel over 50 miles to a screening in Ormesby Hall, a venue used in 2019.

By reviewing the original aims, this conclusion seeks to summarise key themes that emerged during the research process. The aims as set out in the first chapter of this thesis were designed with Martin Barker's principle of "listening to people" in mind, an approach which was ethnographic and had tangible value outside of academia.

Thus, this conclusion seeks to review some of the key themes that emerged during my research process. These findings will be presented to the team at Quad in Derby and other industry professionals where requested. This original piece of work, created as a way of 'listening to people', provides a unique addition to the academy, both for the research that was gathered and for the findings that have been presented. The core question behind this research was "What is the appeal of outdoor film screenings and in relation to community, space and experience?" This chapter provides answers to this question, by reflecting on the initial I aims of the research as presented in the introduction.

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[511] https://www.derbyquad.co.uk/SummerNights2023

9.2 Reflecting on the objectives

When I started my research in 2015, I did so with four aims in mind. References to these aims appear throughout this thesis, but a conclusion provides the space to reflect on these aims. In this section, I will summarise the outcome of my empirical research aims, providing examples as to where the aims have been met and possible challenges that I incurred.

9.2.1 Create an interdisciplinary discussion about the way in which people interact with outdoor film screenings.

The Literature Review provides a space to bring together academic thinking from across many different genres. The Literature Review began by providing a brief history of film, adding that film was developed as a media before cinema. The pre-cinematic history of film resonates with flexible, pop-up and temporary experience in the non-traditional auditoriums space found in the 2010s   , over 100 years since the film was first developed.

The Literature Review provided examples of how the cinema space was defined in various nuanced forms. The debate between the Multiplex and the Art House cinema experience was played out in the work of Janet Harbord, Sam Griffiths and Scott McQuire, a collection of film theorists and urban geographers. Cinematic spaces were considered both in terms of small spaces to watch films (De Ville), the reappropriation of space (Maltby) and the definition of space (Massey).

The Literature Review also provided a number of examples of how the term "community" was framed in different disciplines. Examples here include the idea of a temporary community (Frug), a fan-based community (Pett) and digital communities (Behil). Another interdisciplinary conversation was presented around memory and nostalgia. Here, the argument is framed by political commentators (Hatherly), sociologists (Cross) and anthropologists (Geertz). These conversations demonstrate the rich textured nature of the study of outdoor film screenings and also highlighted the gaps within this field of research. I offered the reader a patchwork of relevant ideas but was conclusively able to state that my research was unique and there had been no other research of this in focus, specifically on contemporary outdoor film screenings in England.

9.2.2 Create a system whereby I could collect core data from audiences who attended outdoor film screenings in England.

As stated in my methodology, the design of my research had to adapt and change. Other than tweaking a few of the questions on the survey card I gave to audiences, the major pivot in my research- gathering phase was the impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic. The Covid-19 Pandemic forced the entertainment and leisure industry to close. Outdoor films screening in the summer of 2020 were hit particularly hard by the uncertainty that the Covid-19 lockdowns generated. The principal concern to producers such as Quad was whether planned screenings would be able to go ahead or whether additional government restrictions were likely.

To complete my research, I pivoted to looking at Drive-in Screenings. I was very limited in the data that I was able to collect in this phase of my research, however the inclusion of drive-in screenings provided interesting comparisons of how people used and responded to space. During 2020, the concept of staying in a restricted space (one's home) or making sure there was space between you and others (social distancing) added to the narrative around space. This provided a new angle to the core question "What is the appeal of outdoor film screenings in relation to community, space and experience?"

9.2.3 Effectively document the themes that emerged from the core data I collected.

In order to document the themes that emerged from my research, I spent a lot of time analysing and categorising the responses I had gathered. The responses were categorised under a number of headings. This was not to minimise the depth of experience, but, rather, to understand patterns of behaviour, engagement and enjoyment. Three core themes emerged that were useful in navigating the appeal of outdoor film screenings: Space, Community and Experience. Alongside this sat value, a term which was used in a number of ways: value for money and value in terms of space, community and experience.

9.2.3a What is Space?

Combining the work of human geographers Doreen Massey, Jan Gehl and Phill Hubbard allowed for a deeper understanding and appreciation of what space is within the cinematic exhibition context. These theorists provided suggestions for what space is and what space

we may need to flourish. Patterns in the data provided scope to propose different types of screening environments (Static Domestic Domain, Mobile Domestic Domain), which contrasted the idea of watching a film at home (in the domestic sphere) with watching the film in the wide-open space of an outdoor film screen. Clarifying space led to two further ideas of how to define public vs private space, and the potential role of outdoor film screenings in placemaking. I used case studies to illuminate how the audience connected with the public/private space of the heritage locations that provided the backdrop for the screenings I attended. These examples showed the willingness of the audience to connect to a space and the value that outdoor film screenings can provide in terms of animating space.

The Covid-19 pandemic was an important factor when considering space. Covid-19 became prominent in what was to be the final year of my field research. This required my research to pivot from outdoor film screenings to drive-in screenings. Although not an intentional move, this shift in my research plan provided a new insight into space, the mobile domestic space that is the car. Before the Covid-19 Pandemic, the idea of the car as an auditorium space was only found in the romanticised stories about drive-in cinemas in America. Many of the respondents who attended drive-ins appreciated being in a domestic space within a public environment, despite the volume of the space (the car) being much more restricted than the space available to the attendees of outdoor film screenings in 2018 and 2019. My results showed that the volume or size of space is less important than connecting with space. The audience is looking for a connection, and so will enjoy a tiny space or a large vacuous space. What the audience is looking for is a shared experience. The volume of location of space is of little significance. It is what happens in the space that matters.

9.2.3b What is Community?

Community is an important factor in the appeal of outdoor film screenings. The shape, size and knowledge of that community can vary depending on several factors. These factors include who is attending the screenings and the extent to which they wish to engage with others. For some, a connection through proximity creates a shared or "imagined community". Here, there is very little interaction between groups in the audience, but there is a feeling that the audience is involved in a collective experience. For others, community resembles the people they are sharing the event with and how the event becomes a

personalised memory. Fandom provides a structure for a community. What we wear and how we wear it provides signs and signals which allow people with the same values and interests to connect with each other. The simple application of the complex field of semiology is a good demonstration of how the study of outdoor film screenings is multi-textual.

9.2.3c What is Experience?

The word "experience" was used throughout my thesis. The term was used to denote both how the audience defined the outdoor film screening and the challenges in keeping the genre fresh and appealing.

Social: 47	Community: 36	Atmosphere: 94	Experience: 171	Together: 63

Figure 7: High Frequency words in Word Cloud at Ormesby Hall and Battle Abbey,2019

Experience, therefore, became a word that charts both the success of outdoor film screenings and the potential failings. In Chapter Six, I offered a narrative about how the audience interacted with the outdoor film screening they attended. Here, I discussed the idea of the on-the-day pre-screening activities: the making and preparing of food. The experience journey then moved onto the activities and reactions that took place at the venue before the screening started. Here I mentioned the "hosts" at the drive- in cinema who created an atmosphere that offered a sense of community – difficult to achieve when the audience was not allowed to physically interact with one another.

My results pointed to the suggestion that the film was not to be a key part of the experience, but rather sharing the screenings with others was. The results clearly emphasised the importance of being with others and doing something new or novel.

"Chapter Eight: 120 Years in the Making" provided examples of new areas of innovation within the non-traditional auditorium space. By referring to the ideology behind the Experience Economy and the work of Radbourne et al, I suggested that the industry should not stand still, but rather should continue to innovate, as the early pioneers did at the beginning of the twentieth century.

This thesis provides a narrative of audience members from across the country, who made individualised choices that mirrored hundreds of other people, the majority of whom were perfect strangers. What is clear is that the appeal of outdoor film screenings is, in part, the importance of the collectively of the event, sharing the experience with family and friends, alongside feeling part of a community. The homogeneity of the audiences I spoke to were, regardless of age, location, film or venue, seeking out a shared endeavour and experience. My findings suggest these decisions are, in part, about which film to watch, but also how to spend quality time with family and friends.

The appeal is also about experience, doing something a bit different from the traditional entertainment experience. The final results chapter in my thesis points to the importance of innovation in the non-traditional auditorium sector, a need to keep innovating as the early modern pioneers did.

Outdoor Film screenings appeal to people who want to watch a film outside as part of a shared experience. Within this very succinct answer, there are different groups of people who present themselves in different ways. Demographic data suggests that people will travel, though not too far, and that the outdoor film screenings appeal to a broad age range of people. The people watching the film outdoors in the cold are creating an experience with other people who they may know or who could be strangers. It is the attendance at a known experience with many variables that makes outdoor film screening appealing, succinctly put by Respondent 88BABR: "Being outside, a festival feeling."

9.2.3d A reflection on value

The use of the term "value" was important in framing the conversation around space, community and experience. Value was afforded its own chapter (aligned with appeal), as a way to understand what elements of the outdoor film screening experience were most important to the audiences. "Chapter Four: Value and Appeal" was, in large part, built around interpretation. Here, we see interesting reflections on the definition of both the terms value and appeal. Terms such as cultural value to nostalgic value, heritage value, value for money, created a context in which the reader could understand the appeal of outdoor film screenings and why, to many, this form of cultural engagement was important.

9.2.4 Produce a piece of research which was both unique, adding value to the academy and was useful to the industry professionals working within the outdoor film screening space.

This thesis marks the culmination of visiting twelve historic venues over a two-year period, engaging with 1,123 people who filled in survey cards, connecting with 13 people on twitter, and having many hours of conversations with producers and venue hosts. Although my original plan of conducting a three-year field study of outdoor film screenings was not possible, this research provides a credible investigation into this previously unstudied topic. This thesis will provide other researchers working in a multitude of disciplines with a platform to continue an investigation into screenings in non-traditional auditorium spaces. Furthermore, this work provides a space to consider what the value of outdoor film screenings is and, moreover, demonstrates a need to continue the narrative of evolution and experience development within film exhibition.

The two major arts policy making bodies in England are the Arts Council and the Department of Culture, Media and Sport commonly known as the DCMS. These two organisations have developed ongoing strategies with relation to the value of the arts and heritage sector. The Arts and Place Shaping Evidence Review 2020, commissioned by the Arts Council, is considered in "Chapter Eight: 120 Years in the Making". The report emphasises the role that arts and culture can play in building the identity and prosperity of places, creating stronger communities and inspiring change. Anther more contemporary offering from the Arts council is Lets Create, a strategy which has a time-specific objective

> By 2030, we want England to be a country in which the creativity of each of us is valued and given the chance to flourish, and where every one of us has access to a remarkable range of high-quality cultural experiences.[512]

This strategy was launched in 2020 and, although aspirational in its aim, does not take into account the impact of Covid-19 on the arts and heritage sector. However, the DCMS "Culture and heritage capital approach" does acknowledge that the sector is in a post-Covid

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[512] https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/our-strategy-2020-2030

world.[513] The culture and heritage capital approach offers a framework of value, which allows for evaluation that focuses on maximising value. My research taps into the ideas of the DCMS approach, but offers evidence of social value in my description and analysis of communities and outdoor film screenings. My research also seeks to describe nuances in the arts sector. Here, I describe my personal experience of interacting with non-traditional auditorium environments. Furthermore, as a submission to the academy, this research is peer reviewed, another facet of the the culture and heritage capital approach.

The research that I have undertaken and presented offers a new and original manuscript to the academy. This research has a very practical use: it is a springboard for the Quad in Derby to plan future events, as they have done. This research also offers a snap-shot in time, a depiction of the pre-pandemic world of experiential and alternative screening experiences. This will provide a starting place for other researchers who too are fascinated by the question: "What is the appeal of outdoor film screenings in relation to community, space and experience?"

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[513] https://www.gov.uk/guidance/culture-and-heritage-capital-portal

Chapter 10: Appendices

1. When did you first watch *Back to the Future*?

□ At the cinema when it was first released (1985/6) □ At the cinema when it was re-released (2010)

□ On television □ On video or DVD □ Today at the cult screening □ Other

2. How many times have you watched *Back to the Future*?

□ Once □ 2-5 times □ 6-10 times □ More than 10 times

3. Is there one part of the film that most sticks in your mind as a favourite sequence? Which sequence is it and why is it your favourite part of the film?

4. If you have seen *Back to the Future* many times, can you explain why you enjoy re-watching it?

Finally, could you tell us a few things about yourself?

(a) Are you: Male □ Female □

(b) Your age group: Under 18 □ 18-25 □ 26-35 □ 36-45 □ 46-55 □ 56-65 □ Over 65 □

(c) Which of the following statements would you say comes closest to the way you would describe yourself?

□ I am a fan of BTTF and own it on video/DVD

□ I enjoy watching BTTF as part of a general nostalgia for 80s films

□ I'm watching BTTF as a cinephile with an interest in all forms of cult cinema

□ I'm watching BBTF with friends/for social reasons

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Appendix Two: Status of heritage buildings as graded by Heritage List for England

Date of Screening	Name of Venue	Film Screened	Number of survey cards completed	Venue ownership	Listing Status
21st July 2018	Bradgate Park	Dirty Dancing	97	Private Trust	Grade II
18th August 2018	Hardwick Hall	Dirty Dancing	120	National Trust	Grade ii and Grade I- (Hardwick Old Hall)
25th August	Wentworth	Dirty Dancing	173	Private Trust	Grade I

2018	Woodhouse				
31st August 2018	Attingham Park	Dirty Dancing	104	National Trust	Grade I
9th August 2019	Coughton Court	Dirty Dancing – Cancelled due to bad weather	0	National Trust	Grade 1 - Stables Grade II*
24th August 2019	Battle Abbey	Bohemian Rhapsody	148	English Heritage	Grade I
25th August 2019	Battle Abbey	The Rocket Man	164	English Heritage	Grade I
28th August 2019	Ormseby Hall	Bohemian Rhapsody	126	National Trust	Grade I
29th August 2019	Ormseby Hall	Dirty Dancing	69	National Trust	Grade I
12th September 2019	Speke Hall	Dirty Dancing	43	National Trust	Grade I
19th September 2019	Witley Court	Dirty Dancing – cancelled due to low ticket sales	0	English Heritage	Grade II
20th September 2019	Witley Court	Bohemian Rhapsody	79	English Heritage	Grade II
16th August 2020	Drive in London	Footloose		Meridian Water	N/A
23rd August 2020	Drive in London	Grease		Meridian Water	N/A
30th August 2020	Drive in London	The Greatest Showman	Online feedback 13	Meridian Water	N/A

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Appendix Three: Email questions to venues: Questions I asked the venues- first round

- When and how where you first introduced to Outdoor Film Screenings
- When and how where you first involved in Summer Nights and the Derby Quad
- From your experience, what do you think is the most important factor for the audience attending an outdoor film screening? The film, The venue, The date and time of the screening, The experience, the chance to hang out with family and friends. What is the evidence (anecdotally or otherwise) to support your answer.
- In your experience what is the appeal of outdoor film screenings?
- What are your thoughts regarding outdoor film screenings being value for money

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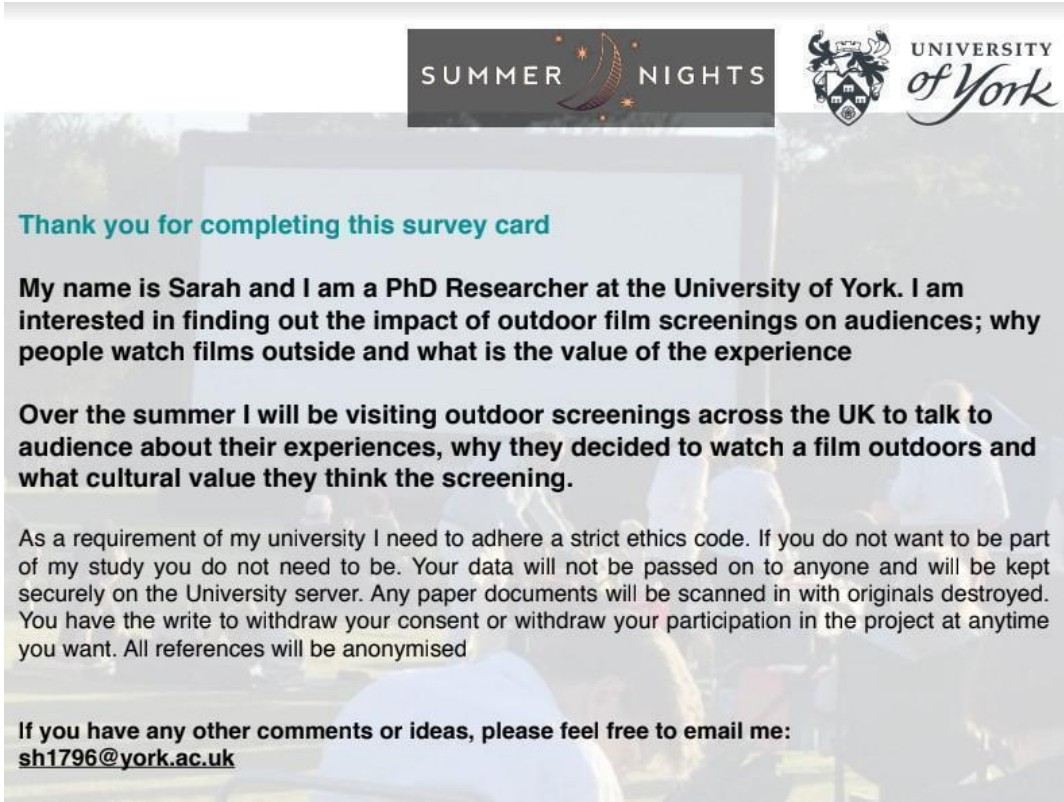## Appendix Four: Second Round Questions for Venues

1. Why does your venue host outdoor film screenings?
2. Can you recall the names of the most popular films you've screened outside?
3. How do you choose the films that are shown?
4. What do you do to make your venue more appealing to an outdoor film audience?
5. Have you considered adding extra elements to the outdoor screening experience?
6. Do you have a sense of where your audience come from?
7. Do you get the impression that groups of people connect with each other at your outdoor film screenings?
8. What are the limiting factors in the production of screenings at your venue

9. What is the social and economic impact of screenings at your venue?

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Appendix Five: Survey Cards used in 2018 and 2019

Survey Card Front 2018

Survey Card Back 2018

Question One: On a scale of 1- 5, where 1 = 'not at all' and 5 = 'a lot', how important are the following factors when choosing to see a film outside:

A) The Film: Dirty Dancing a 1980s classic	1	2	3	4	5
B) The Venue: The historic location and grounds	1	2	3	4	5
C) The date and time of the screening	1	2	3	4	5
D) How easy it was to get to the screening – transport/ parking	1	2	3	4	5
E) The Experience- watching a film outside	1	2	3	4	5
F) The chance to hang out with family and friends	1	2	3	4	5

Question Two: Who are you attending the screening with? Please feel free to tick more than one option
1) Family
2) Friends
3) A date/relationship
4) No-one
5) Other

Question Three: What month and year were you born

....

Question Four : As part of my research I am interested to find out how far people travel to watch films outside.

If you are happy to be part of this research please write down the first part of your postcode down here

..................................and let me know how you travelled to tonight's screening

....

Question Five: What do you think is the cultural value of outdoor film screenings ?

Is there anything else you'd like to add?

Survey Card 2019 Front

SUMMER NIGHTS   UNIVERSITY of York

Thank you for completing this survey card

My name is Sarah and I am a PhD Researcher at the University of York. I am interested in finding out the impact of outdoor film screenings on audiences; why people watch films outside and what is the value of the experience

Over the summer I will be visiting outdoor screenings across the UK to talk to audience about their experiences, why they decided to watch a film outdoors and what cultural value they think the screening.

As a requirement of my university I need to adhere a strict ethics code. If you do not want to be part of my study you do not need to be. Your data will be kept securely on the University server and will only be used by academics working in this field and by Summer Nights the people who organise tonights screening. You have the right to withdraw your participation in the project at anytime you want. Finally All references will be anonymised.

If you have any other comments or ideas, please feel free to email me:
sh1796@york.ac.uk

Survey Card 2019 Back

Question One: On a scale of 1- 5, where 1 = 'not at all' and 5 = 'a lot', how important are the following factors when choosing to see a film outside:

A) The film	1	2	3	4	5
B) The venue	1	2	3	4	5
C) The date and time of the screening	1	2	3	4	5
D) The experience	1	2	3	4	5
E) The chance to hang out with family and friends	1	2	3	4	5

Question Two: Have you been to an outdoor screening before? If so where and when

Question Three: What month and year were you born?

....

Question Four: As part of my research I am interested to find out how far people travel to watch films outside.

If you are happy to be part of this research please write down the first part of your postcode down here

.........................and let me know how you travelled to tonight's screening

....

Question Five: What is the appeal of outdoor film screenings?

Question Six: Do you think this experience is good value for money?

YES   NO   NOT SURE

Please leave your email here if you'd like to be part of a focus group for the project :

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Appendix Six: Questions I asked the drive-in produces

1. Can you recall the names of the most popular films you've screened and how do you choose the films that are shown?
2. Tell me about the importance of having pre-screening activities. Where did this idea come from and what impact do you think it makes?
3. I love the food element to your screenings- the hot dogs were epic! What sort of profit do you make on food and do you think this adds to the authenticity of experience?
4. Do you have a sense of where your audience comes from?
5. The outdoor film audience I surveyed in 2018 and 2019 placed heavy emphasis on community. What is your reflection on this in terms of your drive-in cinema
6.

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Appendix Seven: Charitable Objects

Name of Charity, Charity number and annual income YE21	Charitable Objects	Reference
National Trust Charity Number: 205846	To look after places of historic interest or natural beauty permanently for the benefit of the nation across England, Wales and Northern Ireland	https://register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/charity-search/-/charity-details/205846/charity-overview

£507,661,000		
English Heritage Charity Number 1140351 £99,767,000	The English Heritage Trust is responsible for the conservation and enhancement of the National Heritage Collection of more than 400 unique historic sites and monuments. Through this Collection, and the London Blue Plaques Scheme, English Heritage promotes public knowledge, enjoyment and education of our shared history and heritage	https://register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/charity-search/-/charity-details/5015177
Wentworth Woodhouse Charity Number: 1155374 £3,925,404	THE WENTWORTH WOODHOUSE PRESERVATION TRUST IS A CHARITABLE COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE AND HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED TO SECURE A LONG-TERM FUTURE FOR WENTWORTH WOODHOUSE	https://register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/charity-search/-/charity-details/5043596/charity-overview
Bradgate Park Charity Number: 521476 £1,858,566	To conserve, manage and maintain The Bradgate Park & Swithland Wood Country Park Estate - Leicestershire's Premier Country Park - for the enjoyment, education, recreation and appreciation of visitors.	https://register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/charity-search/-/charity-details/521476

Appendix Eight: Comparing outdoor and drive in cinema though observation

	Outdoor	Drive in

The allocation of space	The space is defined by the placement of objects eg furniture by the audience on arrival at the site. The space will vary dependent on the number of people in each audience group. The audience decide how much space they need	The space is defined by the allotted parking lot space, which is predominantly filled with a car. In good weather the audience may sat outside the car, however this appeared problematic as the sound for the film comes from within the car
How the space is used	Once the area is defined, the audience sit on chairs, rugs or on the floor to sit, chat eat and drink food before and during the film Personalising the space, to create an 'event' is important. This manifests through the accessories taken to the screening. THis includes portable outdoor furniture, soft furnishings - cushions etc, cool boxes, food, cutlery and places to serve and store alcohol	In order to 'get comfortable' and change the key purpose from the car as a vehicle to the car as part of an auditorium, the audience pays with with space inside the car to seeing how the set space can be used in a different way The audience is seen with their feet stretched out of the window or on the dashboard, heads popping up through the sun roof. Getting comfortable is important
Food	People brought their own, in various guises from take away pizza to home cooked buffet spreads. No food on site	The audience ordered from an online menu which required time and patience to fill in. The menu was in keeping with a drive in experience - burgers, hot dogs etc. Servers were seen handing out bags of food to people. It is unclear whether the audience had brought their own food as it was difficult to see other people's screening environment

Community	Community is established through observation, seeing what other people are doing and how they are similar to each other. A community of 'likeminded' people is formed. There is no curation of the event and no formalised group activities. Rather the audience created their own activities by spontaneously singing and dancing together - often uninhibited by alcohol	The group activities at the before the screening created a shared experience. These activities included a sing along, a quiz, the Kiss Cam and lots of opportunities to honk the car horn. An in house DJ who curated pre-screening activities When the film started there was less of a sense of community as it was difficult to see into the cars of other people in the audience. The audience where in effect in bubbles
Production Values	An inhouse technical team check for sound quality before and during the screening. This is to ensure regardless of where the audience members sit they get good sound quality. The film is shown at dusk, projected onto an air filled, temporary screen. This ensures there is not glare and the film quality is high. The screen is well tethered to the ground, but may move slightly in windy conditions	The audio is transmitted onto an FM frequency which is found by tuning into the car radio. The sound quality is dependent on the car audio. The volume can be controlled by those within the car. The screen is fixed and therefore is a better quality than a temporary screen. However films are not always screened in the dark which means screen glare is common and films with darker scenes cannot be seen.

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