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Experiential places or places of experience? Place identity and place attachment as mechanisms for creating festival environment

Abstract

Tourism theory suggests mechanisms of place are critical in the construction of tourism environments. However, contradictory place theory has created confusion as to exactly what these mechanisms are and how they affect perceived environment. Literature identifies place attachment and place identity as primary mechanisms in the construction of tourist relationships with tourist environments. An interpretive methodology is used to explore these mechanisms during a festival experience, and thematically analyzed unstructured interviews show identity and attachment do influence attendees' place-based perceptions. Within the festival context, environments become either creations of the festival or exist independently of them. The latter allows realistic place identity to form, resulting in consonance between environmental expectations and reality. The former creates abstract identities resulting in unrealistic expectations and weak/no immediate attachment to the festival environment. A Model of Festival Place provides continuity-based festival recommendations allowing for clearer theoretical and practical understanding across tourism events.

Keywords: Place Attachment; Place Identity; Tourist Environment; Music Festivals

1. Introduction

Recognized as culturally and economically significant tourism events (Rihova, 2013), European music festivals play a large role in the live music industry; in 2013 over 1,400 festivals generated revenue of £1.5 billion (Intel, 2014). As well as economic gains, these festivals are crucial in promoting tourism by: perpetuating local traditions (Felsenstein & Fleischer, 2003); regenerating areas economically, socially, and culturally (Sorokina, 2015); promoting creativity among entertainers, tourists, and locals (Wilks, 2009); and encouraging interaction and involvement across the entire industry (Smith & Richards, 2013). To capitalize on these benefits, a number of tourism and festival event models (e.g. the Customer Experience Management Framework, the Servicescape Model, and the Festivalscape Model) offer semi-procedural guides for creating and hosting festival events. However, these models are constrained by their objective nature; emphasis on the subjectivities of the event is lost leading to possible commodification of authenticity and erosion of unique cultural identity (MacCannell, 1992). Whilst issues can be addressed independently, problems rarely occur in isolation; festivals face pressures from: increasing international competition, increasing artists' fees, a lack of suitable headliners, declining sponsorship, increasing production costs, and changing safety legislation (IQ Magazine, 2016). With the industry unable to cope with these varied demands, European festivals are losing much of what makes them *special*.

While existing tourism literature advocates a holistic approach to the problem (Lee, Arcodia & Lee, 2012), it is this ambition that is partially responsible for a lack of easily applicable and implementable management solutions. With more detailed research essential in the context of music festival management (Hudson, Roth, Madden & Hudson, 2015) and attendee behaviors (Dolnicar & Ring, 2014; Organ, Koenig-Lewis, Palmer & Probert, 2015) this paper specifically addresses the weak theoretical understanding in the relationship between festival environment and festival attendee. It does so by investigating the role of place at three Scottish music festivals, exploring how attendees interact with the festival environment. With a focus on the subjective relationship between festival attendee, place identity, and place attachment, strong conceptual and practical foundations emerge; it is from these foundations that that the festival industry can rebuild and retain its significant and special cultural heritage.

To achieve this, the paper divides into four sections. First, literature explores and develops the subjective environment as a necessary component of the tourist experience. Specifically contradictions between place identity – a sub-structure of identity consisting of cognitions,

attitudes, values and tendencies belonging to a particular place (Proshansky, Fabian & Kaminoff, 1993) – and place attachment – the affective and emotional relationships that individuals form with specific places (Kyle, Graefe & Manning, 2005) – are addressed as a means to articulate the theoretical gap that currently exists. Following this a detailed overview of the methodological approach is given. Qualitative in-depth interviews within the festival environment are selected. Although unique, exploration and understanding in context are necessary to show idiosyncrasies of the festival environment and attendee experience. Interpretation of data is then offered to understand how festival attendees perceive and interact with the festival environment. The final section draws together all threads of the research, and in doing so confirms academic development whilst providing key practical implications and recommendations for festival and tourism event organizers.

2. Literature Review

The review of literature is structured so as to emphasize the importance of the relationship between festival environment and attendee, whilst simultaneously showing the confusion that exists in extant attempts to apply place theory to events and festivals. To reduce this confusion, current place theory will first be decontextualized – only through understanding root constructs can place theory be accurately adapted to the festival event context.

2.1. The Festival and its Physical Environment

A key asset of any festival is its ability to offer a temporary distinctive environment (Richards & Wilson, 2006). Such versatility provides the individual with an immersive and non-routine event experience (Kirillova, Fu, Lehto & Cai, 2014). Immersion in such an environment allows the individual-environment relationship to develop, and with it meaningful two-way interactions also develop. Individuals therefore become responsible for creating and sustaining the environment, while the environment becomes responsible for influencing thought processes (Urry, 1995), and a unique setting shaped by individual beliefs is created (Murphy, Moscardo & Benckendorff, 2007). Becoming a social construct rather than an objective reality, the festival develops not only physical characteristics, but also affect and meaning (Johnstone, 2012). Adopting this multi-layered approach, the festival environment becomes a contextually relevant factor (Lee, 2001); it creates a location, history, heritage, and reputation supported by brand, authenticity, commitment, and sustainability (Aitken & Campelo, 2011). To best develop and utilize these characteristics, a comprehensive understanding of the wider literature surrounding mechanisms and effects of environmental behavior is needed (Cheng & Kuo,

2015). Problematically however, as a result of different theoretical bases conceptualizing similar observations with different terminology (Hidalgo & Hernandez, 2001), for example Sense of Place (Tuan, 1974), Place Bonding (Relph, 1976), and Place Attachment (Gerson, Stueve & Fischer, 1977), distinctions are nuanced and theoretical clarification is needed (Cui & Ryan, 2011). To achieve clarity, it is necessary to revisit place constructs initiated in psychology and environmental psychology and evaluate them *sans* context. Decontextualizing theory in this manner overcomes problems associated with contradictory and divergent terminology, and allows application of accurate and relevant place theory within the festival context.

2.2. Mechanisms of Place

Breaking down larger place constructs into component mechanisms, it can be seen that place bonding, rootedness to place, place dependence and place identity are regularly shown to contribute to a consumer's relationship with place. Additionally and common to all constructs, is at least one mechanism focusing on an emotional attachment between person and place (Ramkissoon, Smith & Weiler, 2013) – attachment will therefore be the starting point to explore environmental behavior.

Place attachment refers to affective and emotional relationships that individuals form with specific places (Kyle *et al.*, 2005). These relationships endow physical places with emotional meaning and personal experience (Johnstone, 2012) and manifest as a strong tendency to maintain close bonds to specific, decommodified, singular places (Kleine & Menzel-Baker, 2004). These bonds form after interaction and become stronger as more time is spent in the same place (Lewicka, 2011). Developing a strong attachment to a place is thought to be beneficial for development of both individual and group characteristics and is linked to improving: place characteristics and activities (Gross & Brown, 2008), customer loyalty, intention to revisit, and overall destination satisfaction (Hwang, Lee & Chen, 2005; Yuksel, Yuksel & Yasin, 2010). Originally conceived as a dualistic construct, place attachment incorporates the symbolic dimension of identity – “*a sub-structure of the self-identity of the person consisting of broadly conceived cognitions about the physical world*” (Proshansky *et al.*, 1983, pg. 59) including “*beliefs, perceptions or thoughts that the self is invested in a particular spatial setting*” (Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001, pg. 238). Integrated alongside identity is the functional dimension of dependence which “*denotes the suitability of a place to satisfy one's functional needs and aims*” (Suntikul & Jachna, 2016, pg. 276). However despite wide

acceptance, since place attachment's expansion across new disciplines (e.g. natural resource management, environmental education, hospitality and tourism management) a number of theoretical and methodological advancements have questioned this original dualism (Kyle *et al.*, 2005).

Embracing advancements, the original dyad surrounding place attachment (i.e. emotion and function) has been replaced by a multi-faceted approach (Ram, Bjork & Weidenfeld, 2016). Alongside identity and dependence, place affect (Hinds & Sparks, 2008), social bonding (Cheng & Kuo, 2015; Ramkissoon, Weiler & Smith, 2012), and place climate (Jorgensen & Steadman, 2001) have become accepted dimensions of place attachment. With increasing proposed mechanisms, place attachment has adapted to become a more structured construct. Engaging with this structure, theories suggest: place identity is the superior multi-dimensional mechanism, of which attachment is a dimension (Lalli, 1992); place identity and place attachment hold equal order as part of a larger mechanism (Hay, 1998), for example 'place bonding' (Cheng & Kuo, 2015); and place attachment and place identity are synonymous mechanisms (Brown & Werner, 1985). With literary inconsistencies apparent, to treat place attachment as the grandest of all constructs may result in fragmented conceptualizations lacking theoretical and practical value (Ramkissoon *et al.*, 2012). Attempting to add a hierarchy then, dependence, social bonding, and climate are seen to be less related to the initial conceptualization of place. Accordingly, place identity is afforded more prominence in the immediate subjective construction of place (Hernandez, Hidalgo, Salazar-Laplace & Hess, 2007). Place attachment and place identity will therefore be treated as independent primary mechanisms, both of which contribute to the immediate construction of place relationships. This revised role for place identity allows it to develop freely without entering into any kind of conflict with other mechanisms (i.e. attachment). However, although no conflict or overlap between place identity and place attachment is assumed, this is not to say that conflict and overlap cannot not exist.

Harmonious attachment and identity can provide the individual with a contextual sense of belonging (Aitken & Campelo, 2011), purpose and meaning (Tuan, 1976), invert or intensify daily behavior (Osman, Johns & Lugosi, 2014) or characteristics (Lee *et al.*, 2012), and increase intention to revisit a specific place (Murphy *et al.*, 2007). Brennan Horley, Connell and Gibson (2007) acknowledge these links by suggesting that grafting an image onto an environment through the development of an event is an efficient and effective means to manage

attachment and identity. More than just a measure of evaluating behaviors then, identity and attachment can and should be actively incorporated into the planning and design of events (Brennan Horley *et al.*, 2007). However due to the infancy of the concept of place (Skinner, 2008), place-based theories have yet to be fully operationalized across contexts and disciplines (Hauge, 2007) making environmental manipulation at festivals difficult to achieve. Incorrect implementation not only results in a lack of attachment and identity, but may also produce negative outcomes in the form of placelessness (Auge, 1995) or non-places (Relph, 1976).

2.3. *Non-Places*

As traditional communal bonds decline, place-bound communities, place-based ties, and connectivity are also weakened (Shim & Santos, 2014). This brings with it a destruction of unique and authentic environments in favor of post-modern representations of place (Stedman, 2002). A loss of diversity and singularity may lead to psychological or physical displacement (Fullilove, 1996), the extent of which is based on perceived degree of control over the nature and rate of change (Gu & Ryan, 2008). Although extant research is most prominent in geographic and cultural contexts (Goeder & Jacobs, 2002) commodification and commercialization may also destabilize rituals of community-based environments and events (DeBenedetti, Oppewal & Zeynep, 2014). Witnessed within the events industry, many music festivals are now perceived as commercial rather than social ventures (Carver, 2000), with the promise of the *authentic* festival experience nothing more than a ‘commercial ploy’ (Gibson & Conell, 2005). Organizers must therefore reposition the festival event by focusing on the provision of both a perceived and objectively authentic event environment (Ram *et al.*, 2016) that meets the needs and desires of event attendees (Zeynep, Debenedetti & Merigot, 2012).

2.4. *Literature Summary*

The review of literature shows the importance of place attachment and place identity as primary mechanisms in the creation of a relationship between person and environment. Literature also highlights additional themes focusing on the environment, the individual’s relationship with the environment, and outcomes of this relationship (see Table 1). However what the literature review cannot achieve is contextualization of these mechanisms within a festival environment. The relationship between place mechanisms, festival place, and festival attendees will therefore be tested further.

Category/Stage	Theme	Reference(s)
Environment	Distinct Environment	Richards & Wilson, 2006

	Immersive Environment	Kirillova <i>et al.</i> , 2014
	Contextually Relevant Environment	Lee, 2001
	History, Heritage and Reputation of Environment	Aitken & Campelo, 2011
	Planning and Design of Environment	Brennan-Horley <i>et al.</i> , 2007
Individual's Relationship with Environment	Place Attachment	Gerson <i>et al.</i> , 1977; Ramkisoorn <i>et al.</i> , 2013
	• <i>Singular Places</i>	Kleine & Menzel-Baker, 2004
	• <i>Prolonged Time</i>	Lewicka, 2011
	• <i>Emotional Meaning</i>	Johnstone, 2012
	• <i>Personal Experience</i>	Johnstone, 2012
	Place Identity	Altman & Low, 1992; Hernandez <i>et al.</i> , 2007; Proshansky <i>et al.</i> , 1983;
	• <i>Cognition and Perception</i>	Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001
	• <i>Individual Beliefs</i>	Murphy <i>et al.</i> , 2007
	• <i>Affect and Meaning</i>	Johnstone, 2012
Environmental Outcomes	Non-Places	Auge, 1995; Relph, 1976
	• <i>Commercialization</i>	DeBenedetti <i>et al.</i> , 2014; Carver, 2000; Gibson & Conell, 2005
	• <i>Post-modern Places</i>	Stedman, 2002
	• <i>Declining Attachment</i>	Shim and Santos, 2014
	• <i>Displacement</i>	Fullilove, 1996
Individual Outcomes	Sense of Belonging	Aitken and Campelo, 2011
	Purpose and Meaning	Tuan, 1976
	Behavior Intensification	Osman <i>et al.</i> , 2014
	Character Intensification	Lee <i>et al.</i> , 2012
	Individual Development	Gross and Brown, 2008
	Customer Loyalty/ Revisits	Hwang <i>et al.</i> , 2005; Murphy <i>et al.</i> , 2007
	Event Satisfaction	Yuksel <i>et al.</i> , 2010

Table 1: Literary Themes

3. Methodology

Experience consumption, especially the consumer's experience of festival place is an area still not fully understood (Healy, Beverland, Oppewal & Sands, 2007). To approach 'neglected disciplines' Medway, Warnaby and Dharni (2011) advocate an exploratory qualitative approach as most appropriate. Adopting an interpretive paradigm fulfils these criteria, allowing deep exploration of theoretical constructs and an understanding of the subjective nature of attendees' relationships with the festival environment. The intention of the research is therefore not to provide empirically-founded laws, but to address existing weakness so as to provide a fitting dialogue for future place conversation. With this focus, the research does not attempt to live in the realm of the positivist researcher (Jamal & Hollinshead, 2001); it instead celebrates and appreciates the socially constructive, lived, contextual aspects of human subjects (Zavattaro, Daspit & Adams, 2015). To best serve these '*human subjects*' and make their socially acquired and shared patterns of activity explicit, engagement *in situ* is necessary (Silverman, 2010). This is achieved by conducting in-depth unstructured interviews during the

festival event. These allow personal accounts of the phenomenon to be collected and complemented with a researcher-as-participant observation approach. Using multiple data sources provides a degree of credibility, confirmability (Decrop, 1999) and trustworthiness (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005), while also ensuring the subjectivities the data proceeds from and returns to are collective (O’Gorman, 2008).

Research following this more naturalistic path selects samples with a goal to “*maximize the scope and range of information obtained, hence sampling is not representative but contingent and serial*” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, pg. 224). Inclined to follow this process, selection of festivals and individuals uses a purposive sampling technique. This method is influenced by prior knowledge of the universe as a way to draw individuals who possess distinctive qualifications (Honingman, 1982). Adopting ‘prior knowledge’ in no way limits respondents, it merely provides a set of criteria which distinguish good examples from ones less useful (Wengraf, 2001) ensuring samples are relevant to the research questions posed (Guarte & Barrios, 2006). Value is therefore gained not from quantity or generalizability of cases, but from detailed and information-rich samples (Patton, 1990, pg.169). With every individual capable of providing a valuable story, Cresswell (2013) advocates purposive selection of heterogeneous actors within homogenous cultures allowing for maximum variation of similar respondent. Purposive sampling is therefore appropriate and implementable at two levels – to identify the festival and to identify the individual.

Three music festivals with differing physical environments were selected. Other considerations, for example geographic location (Scotland), entertainment genre (mainstream pop music) and duration (3-4 nights) are kept constant (see Table 2).

Festival	Musical Genres	# of Acts (approx.)	Other activities	Location	Camping Facilities	Attendees	Years
Festival A	Popular music and dance, international headliners	155	Comedy stage, fairground rides	Disused airfield, Central Scotland	Tents, campervans, luxury camping, pre-made camping	60,000	21
Festival B	Scottish bands, Celtic bands, local bands, domestic headliners	75	Craft area, outdoor pursuits, wickerman burning, musical workshops	Farmland, Southern Scotland	Tents, mobile homes	20,000	13
Festival C	Scottish bands, Celtic bands, local bands, domestic headliners	50	Poetry stage, debate and conference area, fashion shows, meditation area, dance classes, “flash” performances, craft area, children’s play area	Country Estate, Northern Scotland	Tents, caravans, mobile homes	12,000	11

Table 2: Festival Sample

Fifty-one individuals across the three festivals were selected by the researcher for interview. Respondents were selected to provide intentional variety in terms of age, gender, previous

festival experience, musical preference, home location, and reason for attending the festival, ensuring a range of valuable stories are provided (see Appendix A). Interviews lasting between 30 minutes and 75 minutes were conducted during the festival and recorded using a Dictaphone for transcription purposes after the festival event. Due to the environment, interviews had a conversational temper. Pre-observed behavior of the festival was combined with literary themes to guide interviews. This allowed the level of questioning to be tailored specifically to each individual in order to encourage in-depth discussion. An example transcript highlighting some of these features can be found in Appendix B. Approximately 300 hours were spent within the festival environments and over 41 hours of interview data collected during this time.

Verbatim transcription took place soon after the interview allowing the researcher to make additional and accurate notes and commentary regarding the context of the interview. Carrying out manual transcription in this way replaces the first step of coding (i.e. initial familiarization with data) (Lofland, Snow, Anderson & Lofland, 1995). Transcripts were re-read, this time with marginal notes about significant events, remarks, and observations which help generate a primary index that is used throughout the latter stages of thematic interpretation (Hutchison, Johnston & Breckon, 2010). Adopting thematic analysis maintains a systematic and analytical structure – initial literary themes combine with themes emerging within data (King, 2004). Emphasis is therefore placed on the role of the investigator in creating and interpreting meaning in texts (Wynveen, Kyle & Sutton, 2010) and the subsequent emergence of naturally occurring themes. Executing thematic analysis in this way also allows the subjectivities of place to be better realized, reflected, and interpreted (Parry & Johnson, 2007).

4. Findings and Discussion

Initial findings are structured using the main themes identified in Table 1. However, with a goal of meaning condensation rather than categorization (King, 2004), flexibility during the analysis process also allows for new themes to emerge within data.

4.1. Environment

From the outset it is clear that the environment of the festival does impact festival attendees. This distinction is most noticeable between Festival A and Festival C with each occupying very different physical places – Festival A across a number of large anonymous fields and Festival C in the grounds of a country estate. The effect of this is immediately apparent in initial discussions regarding geographic territory. Despite being held at the same location for over ten

years, the closest Festival A comes to securing an actual location is in national terms: “*it’s the main festival to come to in Scotland*” (Greg, Festival A); “*I haven’t been to Scotland before...it’s nice to come up to a new country and find out what their festivals are like*” (Justin, Festival A); “*so it was more the fact that it was ‘the’ Scottish music festival*” (Phil, Festival A); “*well obviously it’s in Scotland...so yeah, it’s your local festival*” (George, Festival A). This notion of Scotland as a singular location creates an association between Festival A and Scotland which results in a strong, albeit broad identification to place.

On the contrary, perceptions of Festival B and Festival C suggest a more specific association with geographic location. This association is partially responsible for early positive festival interactions, which are strengthened by previous experience of the area: “*I’ve been up this way before on holiday so we know it’s a good area*” (Maureen, Festival B); “*the thing that attracted us to it was the location first of all...it’s in a valley and it’s a really beautiful setting...Colin also has family who live locally so we were kind of familiar with the area so we knew where we were coming*” (Jane, Festival B); “*it makes its name on the area...it’s so nice and people don’t realize until they come to something like this, and then everyone comes back cause they know how nice it is*” (Mary, Festival B). A similar story is told at Festival C: “*for a lot of people here it’s not just about the weekend. There’s a lot of build up to the event which a lot of the local businesses are involved in*” (Gavin, Festival C); “*the spotlight is definitely on the Highlands rather than Scotland*” (Jeremiah, Festival C). Attendees of Festival B and Festival C appear then to associate with the festival location before associating with the actual festival. Comparatively, individuals at Festival A associate primarily with the festival and only loosely with the actual physical location of the festival.

4.2. Attachment at the Festival

Unable to accurately associate Festival A with any distinct town, city, park, or estate, the festival lacks specificity and singularity – essential characteristics of a *place* (Kleine & Menzel-Baker, 2004). With this lack of clarity, individuals approach the festival experience with a more abstract notion of what they may expect to encounter. Although past experiences assist in generating expectations (Lewicka, 2011), even those who have visited previously are unable to immediately relate to the festival place due to changes in layout. This proves a source of irritation as Greg (Festival A) notes; “*they had changed it from the normal way you get into the campsite...there was no indication of where you were supposed to go and people were just joining the queue from all directions*”. Even after accessing the camping area, “*there was a bit*

of discomfort about which fields were open and which weren't – it was all different to last year". These discontinuities are elaborated on by George (Festival A) when talking about his usual camping area; *"well we have a tradition of camping in purple 4...but not anymore as they always change the camping areas around; so where purple was last year is now pink, although we still always try to get a picture with the purple 4 sign"*. A wish for continuity is evident across other areas of Festival A. For example the 'Healthy Zone', which despite appearing in a different location each year, has become the meeting area for Claire and her friends; *"this has come to be our communal point – if we're lost or meeting at random points in the day. I like it up here too – it feels like my chill out bit"*. For Phil and his group continuity is found at the sound tripod – *"we did it the first year, it's like an unwritten rule...meet there"*. Despite being created exclusively by the festival and occupying no significant physical location, individuals imbue these seemingly immaterial areas with enough emotional investment that place attachment does begin to form.

Bound more by its physical setting - a large country estate, the organizers of Festival C also achieve a level of place attachment however, do so in a different manner. Incorporating natural and man-made features of the estate into festival proceedings (including ruins of old buildings, a walled garden area, an amphitheater-esque garden stage, and a grand hall), Gavin comments; *"it's the ruins that really make it special...and you just look around...the hills and trees, even the little features like the old walls really add to the event"*. As well as being aesthetically pleasing, these features are utilized from a functional perspective. Gary, who is attending with his young son explains; *"we were thinking if we sat here we wouldn't see the stage when it gets busy but you can...it's just a cracking arena, especially for families"*. As these features are largely immovable, continuity is ensured year on year allowing individuals to create a clear and accurate image of the festival place. Continuity and clarity are not exclusive to Festival C. Although less restricted in terms of permanent features, the choice to adopt a consistent layout is recognized and appreciated by individuals at Festival B; *"they've got a good formula and they've stuck with it, so they know where best to put everything to make sure it's laid out properly for them and for us"* (Robert, Festival B).

With place attachment evident at all three festivals, there appears to be no restriction on the type, importance, or size of a 'place' that an individual can attach to. So long as there is direct experience and a degree of continuity, an emotional attachment to place can occur. Although essential, experience and continuity are not the only determinants of emotional attachment,

with place identity also influencing an individual's relationship with place.

4.3. Identity at the Festival

Based on comments made across all festivals, a degree of investment in the environment (i.e. place identity) does appear to exist prior to actual attendance and contrary to Kyle *et al.* (2005), independently of attachment. Whereas attachment cannot occur without first-hand experience of a place, identity – either abstract or concrete, does not require prior experience, only a degree of knowledge or expectation. While concrete identities are formed from past experience, sources used by individuals when forming abstract identity are varied and include music forums, websites and social media, opinions of others, and knowledge of other festival events. For example when speaking with Laura at Festival A she repeatedly ends her sentences with the phrase “*you know, like you see at Glastonbury*”; despite never attending Glastonbury – the largest music festival in the UK, it has become her reference point for what a festival should look like. A similar experience is described by John (Festival C) when discussing his favorite festival experience – a festival in Canada celebrating Celtic culture:

John: I think the most memorable one I'd been to was Celtic Colors in Canada, Nova Scotia. We went there for my 60th birthday and that was fantastic.

Researcher: And why that festival in particular?

J: Well I guess it's a once in a lifetime opportunity to visit a place like that. And it was for a special occasion as well. It wasn't all that different to the set up in Scotland, but the people there were a lot more excited. A lot of those I spoke with hadn't visited Scotland before, yet here you have a celebration of all things Celtic, especially the culture and family roots...I think the deep seeded culture...you know the real history of Scotland and Celtic countries is often taken for granted here as we're surrounded by it all the time. Over there it was an annual celebration where they got to embrace their “roots” and enjoy the stereotypical culture much more than they do on a daily basis I guess. It was really nice to see and really nice to be a part.

So although many individuals at the festival had little first-hand experience of Scotland, the stereotypical perception of ‘*Scotland*’ proved sufficient in creating expectations of what Scotland represents. Although abstract, the Celtic festival chose to cater to this overly-stereotypical Celtic culture, thus the festival environment matched the abstract expectations of

those in attendance. More often than not however, an abstract place identity will not match actual place identity – an inconsistency that can become a source of more serious problems.

The more abstract attendee knowledge and expectations are, the greater the dissonance between expectations and reality become. For example, individuals attending Festival A create abstract ideas and expectations prior to attendance which do not always reflect the true environment. Emily, attending for the first time confirms this; *“...if I’m being honest it’s nothing like I expected. I mean I had spoken to people and they had kinda’ told me what to expect and I’ve had a walk round the campsite – I guess there’s only so much you can expect from a campsite. But like the arena area is totally different – you don’t really imagine the size of the place and the amount of people, on TV you only ever see one or two stages, it doesn’t show all the other areas, so yeah nothing like I expected but a very nice surprise now that I’m here”*. In this situation a noted change in Emily’s *“cognitions, beliefs, perceptions or thoughts...regarding a particular spatial setting”* (Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001, p. 238) takes place. This change is not unexpected and should usually occur when there is a difference between expectations of a place and the reality of that place. Although anticipated however changes in perception did not always happen, with some attendees appearing to refute actual place identity in favor of their pre-formed abstract notion of place.

The most conspicuous manifestation of expectation/reality dissonance is witnessed at Festival A with regard to the negative relationships between interviewees and ‘them’. Garth comments: *“they don’t seem to care about anyone or anything. They’re the people who will push kids out the way to get closer to the stage...and for them the weekend isn’t about the excitement of seeing a band; it comes from another source and to be honest I don’t know what that is. I’ve always felt safe at T; there are plenty of security and police around, but you still give those people a wide berth just in case. I think it does spoil it for a lot of other people...they’re just idiots”*. Both Richard and Robert at Festival B had experienced Festival A previously and add to the discussion by saying: *“they didn’t care about anything...there wasn’t much respect. The place was a mess. Not a festival atmosphere; more of a concert atmosphere where you turn up see the band and then go home you know”* (Robert, Festival B); *“...and what I didn’t like about Festival A is that it’s so close to Glasgow that you just get a bunch of young folk going through and getting absolutely pissed, whereas here it’s just more of a festival atmosphere you know”* (Richard, Festival B). Refusing to adopt the communal festival atmosphere and with it, the festival place identity, ‘they’ appear to follow their own

abstract notion of what the place should represent rather than changing their cognitions, beliefs or perceptions; *“I don’t even think it’s always what they want to do, they just think that that’s what they have to do”* (Michelle, Festival B).

In the above examples, when there is no distinct locality and abstract place identity exists, individuals appear not to take ownership of the place; it is a space to be used for the temporal purpose of hosting an event and little consideration is given beyond the open or close of the festival. On the contrary it appears the ability to accurately name a festival place as a locale or community brings with it a degree of pride beyond the opening and closing ceremonies. This is highlighted most often at Festival C; *“aye, it’s the talk of the town in the lead up to it and you hear everyone talking about getting tickets to it and you see on Facebook ‘has anybody got tickets, has anybody got tickets?’”* (Graham, Festival C); *“I think the fact it’s a festival up in the Highlands rather than in one of the big cities people treat it a little more special – as their own festival, and because of that take pride in it. So I definitely think the fact it’s up here makes a huge difference in terms of crowd atmosphere”* (Gary, Festival C); *“...the layout and the organizers are all really good. I think it’s a lot easier as it’s a smaller festival and because it’s a community feel it almost self-polices itself; so no complaints there”* (Mitch, Festival C); *“Well yeah. I do think that everyone, even the folk who are 16 or 17 or 18 are quite proud of the festival and don’t want to drive the family feel away...that’s what makes it so different to the likes of TITP”* (Jeremiah, Festival C).

Internalization of place is not only reserved for permanent members of the community, and is also witnessed in individuals from out with the community. For example Carl who travelled four hours to attend Festival C comments; *“The first time I sat on the gardens there was just something that made it different from all the other festivals I had been to...if it were to move from I don’t think I would be anywhere near as likely to travel so far”*. Gail (Festival C) visiting from England also feels a draw to the festival environment; *“We were just saying that there is no stage like this anywhere...it’s perfect for the music...when you look around and see the setting and all the trees, it’s obviously been a spectacular garden along the way. I mean it’s really been a special place at some point in time, we’ve only been here a few hours and we can already feel that”*. Ownership of, and involvement with the festival place therefore appears to actively prompt adoption of the festival place identity and with it an emotional attachment to place.

Even with an apparent willingness by individuals to adapt to the Festival C place identity, it was rarely the case that any actual change in cognitions, beliefs or perceptions was necessary. Existing as an independent site out with festival time, the festival estate provides a year round location that individuals can interact with. With this, organizers carefully maintain control over how individuals internalize the desired and homogenous place identity. This leads to more accurate expectations of placial features prior to the festival, and a higher level of consonance between expectation and reality of the festival environment. Although not necessary for attachment to occur (Hernandez *et al.*, 2007), a more accurate identity does allow the process of attachment to occur more quickly – an important issue considering the transient nature of festivals and the ease at which festival places can become non-places.

4.4. Non-Places as an Environmental Outcome

Placelessness may occur at festivals because of perceived commoditization or commercialization of the event, a loss of authenticity, or a lack of creativity (Stedman, 2002). However during interviews there is little negative feeling towards the involvement of business at the event, with festival sponsors perceived as something of a necessity. For instance Richard (Festival B) believes; *“they have to finance it somehow, all of them (other festivals) have sponsorship, so I mean that’s ok. Although saying that, it is nice to have festivals that aren’t necessarily controlled just for a monetary end result”*. Alwyn (Festival B) also believes that sponsors are sometimes beneficial for the festival; *“I mean sometimes I think that the sponsorship of festivals is good in that it’s reducing prices or bringing in bigger names...that can only really be a good thing”*. Even when commercialization is perceived to be negative, there is no change in overall attitude towards the festival. For example David, a performer at Festival B believes that commercializing festivals such as Festival A *“kills the atmosphere, affects the cultures, and belittles the music”* yet when asked if that would put him off playing or going replied *“No, not at all. If someone offered me a gig at Festival A I’d take it in a second”*. So although commercialization may cause some negative feeling, this feeling is not strong enough to result in extremes of placelessness or displacement, and is certainly not strong enough to affect identity or attachment. There is however cause for concern in other areas of the festival experience with festival reputation often cited as a potentially negative factor.

Proving important at all festivals, perceived festival reputation appears to relate directly to festival capacity and issues associated with capacity changes. For example Hannah (Festival B) comments; *“I don’t know if it will ever get too big or too much like TITP. I mean I think if*

it gets too big it may ruin it. The way I see it at the moment it's kind of an undiscovered gem". Increases in capacity appear to be the catalyst for further problems, including: pricing "...it would all start getting a little bit mental, that would drive the prices up as well" (Hannah, Festival B); losing touch with their target market "*I mean it's not too big, some festivals just grow too large and that's when they lose touch with what their audience are looking for*" (Ben, Festival C); anti-social behavior "*yeah, there's very rarely any trouble here, which again comes from keeping numbers down*" (Phil, Festival C); "*I don't think the organizers are that way inclined. I think the festival lives more off word of mouth and that attracts the right clientele. If it were heavily promoted, or if they did book a major headliner then there would be a worry that kids would see it as another 'festival' which would mean drinking and drugs*" (Gary, Festival C); loss of identity "*...well I always felt it was a lot more like a community event than, say TITP...so I mean you treat it with a bit more respect because of that local feel...it's like it's your own local festival*" (Mitch, Festival C); and over-burdened facilities "*I don't like it too crowded and there's plenty of space here, I mean TITP is just mobbed all the time. I mean you can't get to the toilets, can't get to the bar...it's just mobbed*" (Richard, Festival B). Capacity increases, or more specifically the problems associated with capacity increases may therefore become severe enough to disrupt attachment and festival attendance.

A second means of displacement comes from demographic factors, with age cited most frequently. Age displacement appears most common at Festival A with older individuals realizing they are on the periphery of the festival. For example, Garth (Festival A) comments; "*...but it's changed a whole lot since back then...I'm too old to come here. I think Festival A...in fact I think all music festivals have become mainly directed at the youth generation...so from maybe 18 to 21 or 22...but don't get me wrong, I enjoy coming back to it every year, but just in a different way than I used to*". Displacement manifests more from the idea of the festival being taken over by others, whether they be younger, less well behaved, or just of a different mind-set. Although not forcing a physical change, the psychological change is sufficient to cause emotional displacement, that is, displacement without placelessness occurring. The result of this is a weakening/loss of attachment and identity and a reduction in intention to revisit the festival place.

4.5. Discussion and Emerging Themes

In line with Hay (1998), Ramkisoorn *et al.* (2012) and Cheng & Kuo (2015), place attachment and place identity are shown to be of similar importance when building relationships with

tourist environments. Although past research (e.g. Lewicka, 2011) emphasizes the need for prolonged interaction with place, this is not possible during temporal tourist events. To overcome this, change should not be seen as an attraction (Gu & Ryan, 2008), it must be built in to all environmental concerns; environments must be distinct, immersive, and contextually relevant, whilst providing a degree of consistency (see Table 3). Reliance on special places assists in creating place attachment, however is not a stand-alone condition for attachment to occur. Of more importance than the significance of the place is the individual's first-hand experience of that place.

Emerging strongly from the data is the difference between, and appropriateness of, abstract and actual experience of festival environments and the effect of this on attachment and identity. In keeping with previous definitions, place attachment only forms with specific places (Kyle *et al.*, 2005). This again shows the need for continuity of environment in order to allow the individual to quickly form and maintain place attachment with any place with which they have familiarity. On the contrary, place identity is based on broadly conceived perceptions (Proshansky *et al.*, 1983) and therefore does not require first-hand experience; even an abstract notion of the environment can assist in a positive identity forming. However, the data shows that an extremely abstract identity may create irrecoverable dissonance between expectations and reality causing lack of harmony between attachment and identity.

In situations where identity and attachment are not compatible, negative places occur. Negative places differ to non-places in that identity and attachment do exist, however in a way that does not allow a positive relationship with a place to form. This is caused by psychological displacement (e.g. a new social atmosphere) or physical displacement (e.g. the entire event moving locations). On its own, commercialization of events (Carver, 2000; Gibson & Conell, 2005; DeBenedetti *et al.*, 2014) is not sufficient to affect identity or attachment. When displacement does occur, place attachment may still exist positively, however the individual no longer identifies with the environment resulting in an overall negative relationship. In the long term this can be more detrimental for attendance; whereas non-place implies a non-existent relationship with a place, negative place implies a negative relationship which can be harder to overcome.

Category	Theme	Sub-Theme
Environment	Continuity*	Distinct Environment
		Immersive Environment
		Contextually Relevant Environment

		History, Heritage and Reputation of Environment
		Planning and Design of Environment
Individual's Relationship with Environment	Place Attachment	<i>Singular Places</i>
		<i>Prolonged, Continuous Time**</i>
		<i>Emotional Meaning – with or without implicit physical importance**</i>
		<i>Actual Personal Experience**</i>
	Place Identity	<i>Actual or Abstract Personal Experience**</i>
		<i>Cognition and Perception</i>
		<i>Individual Beliefs</i>
		<i>Affect and Meaning</i>
Possible Outcomes on Individual Relationship with Environment	Sense of Belonging	<i>Purpose and Meaning</i>
		<i>Group Development</i>
	Customer Loyalty/Revisits	<i>Event Satisfaction</i>
	Displacement	<i>Negative Place Identity**</i>
		<i>Positive or Negative Place Attachment**</i>
		<i>Negative Places**</i>

* New/Modified theme from data; ** New/Modified sub-theme from data

Table 3: Data and Literary Themes

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper assists in clarifying and aligning contradictory thinking in the realm of environment, place and behavior. In doing so, place attachment and place identity are identified as primary mechanisms in creating festival environment. The research demonstrates that identification with a place occurs first, with no first-hand experience necessary for place identity to form. Place attachment happens only when first-hand experience of a specific place has occurred. Although overlap can and does exist, these concepts can also exist independently; place identity can form without place attachment and although less common, place attachment can form without place identity. However when both exist in harmony, an individual's cognitions and perceptions of environment become stronger, instigating other place mechanisms (e.g. bonding, rootedness, dependence, climate, and affect). Utilizing this theoretical contribution, analysis and interpretation of data shows two distinct means of festival environment creation – these will be termed the *Festival Place* and the *Place of Festival* (see Figure 1).

The *Festival Place* occurs when a festival is held in a non-specific location or setting with little geographic relevance – staging the festival is ultimately responsible for creating a notion of place (e.g. Festival A). Resulting place identity is attributed to the festival rather than any geographic location. In such situations individuals tend to use more abstract information sources (e.g. past experiences, stereotypical festivals, and word of mouth) when establishing cognitions, beliefs, and perceptions regarding the festival environment. These beliefs and cognitions become the foundation for place identity and can often cause dissonance between

expectations and reality. This results in lengthier harmonization periods before attachment will occur.

Contrary to this, the *Place of Festival* is a term to describe a festival situated in an established location or setting. Existing independently of the festival means a degree of identification with the place may already exist and individuals begin with a more concrete idea of likely festival environment. For example, Festival C uses various media to emphasize the permanent features that exist at the festival and explicitly demonstrate how they are incorporated within the festival experience. This consonance between expectations and reality allows accurate identity to develop prior to attendance and place attachment to occur more immediately.

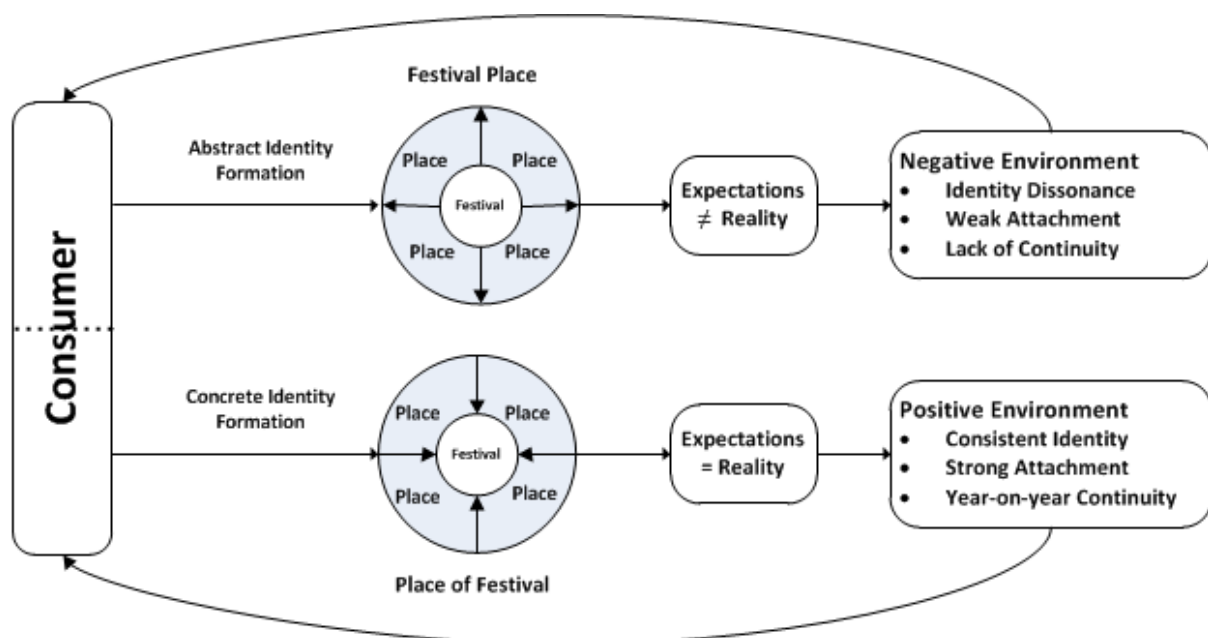


Figure 1: Model of Festival Place

Application of these findings offers a way to optimize the role of environment in the overall festival experience. For example, it lets organizers understand and select between continuity and discontinuity. The former ensures constant and expected placial experiences occur which lead to well defined events, harmonious identity, and rapid attachment. Although discontinuity fails to provide any of these benefits, it can still prove the preferred option when situations of *Festival Place* occur. For example, attempting to relocate a *Place of Festival* event is extremely problematic. In isolation psychological displacement is negative, but when combined with actual physical displacement, identity and attachment that has been created is quickly destroyed. Compared to this, a *Festival Place* can be relocated with few of the negativities

associated with displacement. This is due to the festival itself being sufficiently strong to create a new environment in the new location.

Irrespective of continuous or discontinuous place, event organizers must attempt to portray their environment as realistically as possible. To achieve this, representational practices (Lugosi, 2014) including accurate communications and visuals become vital during the pre-festival build-up. Although not possible to show subjective experiences, modern marketing communications allow past and present media to be used in such a way that individuals can accurately envisage them in that environment, for example through the early release of festival maps and the addition of virtual tours to websites. Managing attendee expectations in this way assists in achieving a realistic and true identity from the outset and reduces the possibility of abstract place identity forming pre-festival. This helps individuals better accept the festival into their personal identity, bringing with it more instantaneous cognitive, affective and emotional bonds with the environment. Achieving this provides many immediate benefits for the organizer, the greatest of which is a consumer that loyally identifies with and actively seeks closeness to the festival and its environment.

5.1. Limitations and Further Research

Current findings overcome weaknesses in existing academic and industry research. By focusing on a specific tourism context – festivals, and a specific stream of literature – environment and place, theoretical and industry developments are provided. Future research should build on these foundations.

Although specific to festivals, this research can be replicated across other event and tourism contexts. However in acknowledging the subjectivities of each context, further exploratory research is necessary before attempting to provide ‘tourism-wide’ solutions. Not only should this allow for different tourism contexts to be explored, it also allows for understanding of how other place mechanisms, for example, bonding, climate, and dependence affect environment. Exploration of these mechanisms is of particular interest when comparing event tourists (those attending from out with the immediate community) compared to event attendees (those attending from within the immediate community).

While immediate research purposely calls for a continued exploratory approach, future research must also consider large scale quantitative studies to address a larger number of recipients, numerous genres of event, and a larger geographical spread. Constrained by the

liminal nature of the festival event, future research should also consider a more longitudinal approach to study evolving environmental behaviors and cognitions. Adopting these changes will further help overcome confusion and inconsistencies in current literature, whilst providing implementable recommendations applicable to the now more clearly defined 'tourism environment'.

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Appendix A: Profile of Interviewees

Given Name	Age	Location	Occupation	Attended Before	Other Festivals	Camping	Attending With
Festival A							
John	22	France/Edinburgh	Student	No	Yes	Yes	Friends
Steven	46	Motherwell	Engineer	Yes, 14 th	Y	Y	Friends, son*
Patrick	18	Motherwell	Student	Y,1	No	Y	Friends, dad*
Emma	22	-	Design Intern	N	Y	Y	Friends
Laura	24	Newcastle	Student	N	Y	Y	Friends
Jane	24	Newcastle	Financial Accountant	N	Y	Y	Friends
Garth	37	Close	Investment Analyst	Y, 6	N	Y, residence	Wife
Esther	19	Edinburgh	Student	N	N	Y	Friends, school and university
Emily	19	Edinburgh	Student	N	N	Y	Friends, school and university
Phil	28	Edinburgh	Investment Management	Y, 10	Y	Y	Friends
Greg	28	Edinburgh	Financial Analyst	Y,8	N	Y	Friends
Claire	21	Edinburgh	Student	Y,1	N	Y	Friends
Lucy	24	-	Trainee Accountant	Y,2	Y	Y	Boyfriend
Caroline	20	Australia	Student	N	Y	Y	Friends
Justin	20	Leeds	Student	Y, 8	N	Y	Brother, girlfriend
George	21	Dunfermline	Retail Manager	Y,10	Y	Y	Friends
Robert	19	Glasgow	Chef	Y,1	N	Y	Colleagues, friends
Festival B							
Tim	21	Dunfermline	Student	N	Y	Y	Friends
Randy	22	Dunfermline	Teacher	N	Y	Y	Friends
Richard	55	Greenock	School Teacher	N	Y	Y	Friends
Maureen	50-60	Newcastle	Market Researcher	Y, 1	N	Y, quiet	Family*
Hayley	50-60	Newcastle	Retired	Y, 1	N	Y, quiet	Family*
Jane	30	Glasgow	Journalist	Y,4	Y	Y	Friends
Mary	36	Musselburgh	Software Engineer	Y,4	Y	Y	Friends
Colin	35	Musselburgh	Post-doc Researcher	Y,4	Y	Y	Friends
Hannah	19	Local	Unemployed	Y,4	N	Y	Friends
Dawn	20	Local	Student	Y,2	N	Y	Friends
Alwyn	22	Glasgow	Student	N	Y	Y	Hen Party
Mandy	23	Glasgow	Graduate	N	Y	Y	Hen Party

Alesha	29	Glasgow	Solicitor	N	Y	Y	Hen Party
Michael	40	Glasgow	Performer	Y,4	Y	Y, artists area	Friends, band
David	25	Glasgow	Performer	Y,4	Y	Y, artists area	Friends, band
Angela	24	Local	Child Care	Y,2	N	Y	Friends
Dean	21	Local	Electrician	Y,2	N	Y	Friends
Stephanie	20	Local	Student Nurse	N	N	Y	Friends
Festival C							
Anne	20	Inverness	Student	Y,2	N	Y	Friends, father*
Harold	48	Inverness	Technical Support	Y,5	Y	Y, quiet	Friends, daughter*
Jill	19	Dingwall	Student	Y,1	Y	Y	Friends
Hilary	20	Dingwall/Edinburgh	Student	Y,2	Y	Y	Friends
Ben	20	Dingwall/Edinburgh	Student	Y,1	Y	Y	Friends
Sam	59	Aberlour	Retired	Y,3	N	No	Wife
Gavin	47	Local	Builder	Y,1	N	N	Family
Andrea	45	Local	-	Y,1	N	N	Family
James	65	England	Retired	N	Y	Y, caravan	Wife
Gail	65	England	Retired	N	Y	Y, caravan	Husband
Gordon	39	Inverness	Engineering Consultant	N	Y	Y	Family
Phil	36	Newton	Consultant	N	Y	N	Family
Rita	33	Newton	F/T Mother	N	Y	N	Family
Charles	3	Newton	-	N	N	N	Family
Mitch	19	Muir of Ord	Student	Y,1	Y	Y	Friends
Jeremiah	19	Muir of Ord	Student	Y,1	Y	Y	Friends
Carl	23	Glasgow	Mechanic	Y,2	Y	Y	Girlfriend

Appendix B: Sample Interview Transcript

A Interview – File A, 1

6.00pm Thursday

Gareth, 37, Investment Analyst

Introduction and Consent Confirmed – Consent Form Signed

R: So is this your first time at A?

G: No, no. I've been here 6 times in the past 12 years. I first came in my last year of university...so it would have been 2000.

R: And can you remember anything from that first year...why you came, what you did?

G: I think the first year I came it was just something different to do. We decided as we were going into our last year we'd all get away together. There was a group of about 15 of us, and not everyone could afford a big holiday so this was our best option. We had quite a crazy weekend...a lot of drink and a lot of music. But it's changed a whole lot since back then. It was a lot smaller...not so much in terms of the area but the amount of people. Or at least it seemed that way. You could buy your tickets a couple of weeks before the event for about half the price they are now, but you were still getting the big bands...Travis and Iggy were definitely what I remember most from that weekend. But it just seemed different. It's hard to explain. I think back then it was reserved as a musical event with the extras as more of a bonus. So the people who came were a lot more similar in that they were here for the music. Now it seems the music is a consolation and the main reason to come is to get as drunk as you can and sleep with as many girls as you can.

R: So could you see it developing over the last 12 years?

G: Definitely. I did 2001 as well but then moved away for a couple of years for a graduate job. Then 2004 was my first year back. It was still nothing compared to what it is now, but I'm pretty sure it's increased year on year in terms of both capacity and price. So I was back and forth over the next 6 years...obviously your priorities change and it became relatively low in my list. But don't get me wrong, I love it and I enjoy coming back to it every year, but just in a different way than I used to.

R: So tell me how your trips have changed over the past decade?

G: Well the first few trips were all with friends. So I was still quite young then...I started coming here

quite late, so for the first few years I was still acting as if I was a kid....drinking far too much, staying up all night, trying to get with as many girls as possible...don't tell the wife that! Compared to this year I can't believe how much we did. We'd probably see 20 or so bands...down at the front for all of them. Then when the music finished we'd be straight to the Boom bus, which was the Beat 106 bus back then, but pretty much exactly the same. As it went on though fewer and fewer friends were coming...married, settling down, kids, jobs...there were so many reasons you couldn't come. So I would always make the effort but when you're only there with one or two friends, I think you're a lot more relaxed about the whole situation. We'd see the same number of bands but the Boom bus was replaced by chatting at the tents and then crashing out. The past two visits I've come with my wife who I managed to rope into it. Well saying that, last year she was actually the one that had mentioned the idea...there were a couple of bands...Eminem and Muse, Shed Seven and Stereophonics...that she really, really wanted to see. We made it through the Friday and Saturday nights, but Sunday was a pretty horrible day and I think Jane had had enough so we left on the Sunday night after all the music. But that was definitely the most relaxed year I've had. This year Jane agreed to come again but only if we paid for the good camping...the Residence they call it, so we bought one of the Yurts with another couple...one of the original guys I came with. 10 years ago I wouldn't even have considered doing that but you know what...I think at the moment that's the only way I can really enjoy it; music during the day and a decent, quiet sleep at night.

R: So tell me about the Residence?

G: It's essentially just a large tent. It sleeps the four of us quite comfortably...has a heater, has private toilets in the area. It's so comfy in there and warm, but really it's just a lot more relaxed...you don't need to worry about carrying huge amounts of bags and tents and stuff. There's security in the area so you get away without the worry of kids stealing from your tent. It's just a lot more hassle-free. You get access to the hospitality area too, although that's not all it's cracked up to be. We just use it mainly for the toilets which are a lot nicer than the main ones.

R: So how did the fact that you could stay in a more luxurious setting influence your decision to come?

G: I think that was the decisive factor. There's no way Jane would have come and camped normally, so we were considering coming just for the day but then that rules out even having a social pint. We'd looked at the Residence but thought it was a bit pricey between 2. I threw the suggestion out there and luckily Mark was keen so we thought why not. So I mean there were other reasons we wanted to come but if that option hadn't been available to us then we wouldn't be here right now.

R: And what were those other motivations for coming?

G: I can imagine this being my last year at A for good. I've a feeling that due to personal changes there will be another priority in our lives next year. So I think it's about putting to rest a certain chapter of my life...which is a bit sad when you think about it like that, but on to bigger and better things I guess. But apart from that, for me it's still about the music, and it's even better to share it with Jane. This year's pretty good because there are a lot of older bands...bands that I listened to when I was a lot younger. So Pulp, the Manics, Cast, and the Foos; I guess it's extra poignant that I'm saying goodbye to that part of my life and get to do so with the bands that I started it with and that made that part of my life so special. On top of that I guess it lets me escape from the job, which is pretty heavy going at the moment. It's amazing how everything else disappears when you're put in this situation.

R: What situation's that?

G: A field...with a beer...and good music....and 100,000 other people. I still find it quite a surreal experience. It's just not quite like normal day-to-day life...in fact it's nothing like normal day-to-day life.

R: Could you expand on that at all?

G: There just seems to be no convention here. Everyone's up early with a beer in hand and that's perfectly acceptable. And then you have the music...hundreds of bands on over the weekend, so you can just walk between stages and there would be another big name band on. There's also always a good contingent of dress up going on, so it may be torrential rain but you have people walking around dressed as batman or some other random creation; and it's not as if the rain bothers people...you just get on with it and it gets to a point when you're wet enough that you just decide enough is enough and you start to embrace the rain. I love seeing the people dancing or jumping about in the mud. It's just a break from normal etiquette...it's as if you resort back to being a kid when you're here regardless of how old you actually are.

R: You included?

G: I won't be taking it to any extremes, but it's probably fair to say that any of my clients saw me this weekend they probably wouldn't be my clients for that much longer.

R: So out with A, do you have experience of any other festivals?

G: I don't. I was always tempted, especially when I was down south. But I almost didn't want to ruin the memories of A...I mean all festivals are good, but you can have bad experiences that put you off forever.

R: Such as?

G: Well I imagine if I went with the wrong group of people or went to the wrong type of festival then I would be left with a bad memory of it. I've always had great times here, so I didn't want to ruin those memories with bad experiences elsewhere. Do you know what I mean?

R: Not entirely?

G: It's like, I don't know, going to the cinema. If you see a bad film, the next time you think about going to the cinema you always remember your most recent trip...and if it was bad you have that memory and if it was good you have a good memory. But even if you have a bad memory it's only a few pounds at the cinema so you go anyway. I imagine if I had had a terrible festival experience down south, when it came to booking my ticket that would play on my mind. Then you couple that with all the other reasons not to go...price, age, other engagements and the decisions made for you.

R: So what is it that makes A 'the one festival' that you're concerned about?

G: It was my first. It's my local festival. I've had so many good experiences here. I met my wife through a friend I met here. Take your pick.

R: So tell me about your best experience of A?

G: I think it has to be the first year. It was a new experience so everything seemed special to me. Just that whole year would stick in my mind, especially when you compare it with here nowadays. Everything's more expensive, there are more idiots here. Like I say it's not just about the music anymore...it's about everything else, but unfortunately A provides very little else. I've never been but when I worked down south I was an hour or so from Glastonbury and a lot of the other guys went. They said it was amazing! They have the best music but they have everything else...you could keep yourself busy all weekend without even hearing a note. That's what A's missing and it was fine when it was about the music, but now there are too many idiots that don't care...there must be somewhere to put them that doesn't annoy everyone else.

R: Who exactly are you referring to when you say 'idiots'?

G: There is a very large contingent at A of kids...in fact not just kids... who are too drunk. They're obnoxious, fighting, throwing bottles around. They don't seem to care about anyone or anything. They're the people who will push kids out the way to get closer to the stage. And for them the weekend isn't about the excitement of seeing a band; it comes from another source and to be honest

I don't know what that is. I've always felt safe here; there are plenty of security and police around, but you still give those people a wide berth just in case. I think it does spoil it for a lot of other people. They're the idiots I mean.

R: So has that ever put you off?

G: More so now that I'm with Jane. But I don't think it would be significant enough to stop me coming. It just acts as an annoyance more than anything and I honestly think gives the festival a bad reputation.

R: So you mentioned certain other factors in your decision? Looking at these...how does the price influence your decision to come?

G: Em...I mean it used to. But back then when I wasn't working it was a lot more reasonable in terms of price. My first year was...don't quote me on this...about £110. Now that was only for 2 days but the bands were top notch. To double in price over 12 years is a bit extreme. But I mean it's done now...no point complaining or even thinking about it...I'll get to do that when I see the bill!

R: So do you mind me asking how much the Residence works out at?

G: Roughly £500 each. So for that you get a Thursday ticket, hospitality, car park pass and your little home. So we were pretty late on the band wagon and a ticket would have cost us around £250 from eBay I reckon. Then add the tent on is another £50 each. Car park is £20. Thursday upgrade £20. So when you add it all up, for the ease of use, I don't think it's such a bad deal we're getting. But we're in a position now that we can afford it. I think if I were like most people here...I mean the same age range I would be a bit peeved paying in excess of £200.

R: And what about the price of food/drink/merchandise?

G: I'm think I'm passed the age when I can get away with buying a festival t-shirt! The food is to be expected, although there seem to be a lot more healthy options in the campsite and I hear the arena has a healthy section too, which is really good. It's still expensive but you feel full in a good way...not in a greasy burger and fries kind of way. Drink is again to be expected. I mean you're on nearly £4 a pint and that's a pint of Tennents, but people just accept it and don't bat an eyelid. I've always thought that Tennents must make enough from all the publicity; they could at least ease up on the drink prices.

R: And you mentioned age a few times as a factor. Can you expand on that?

G: I'm too old to come here (laughs). I think A...in fact I think all music festivals have become mainly directed at the youth generation...so from maybe 18 to 21 or 22. That seems to be the main

population I've seen so far. I think a decade ago the main audience would have been much closer to their mid to late 20s. It's almost a rite of passage now...you come to here when you're a kid and I think many people stop when they hit their mid-20s. So you find most things, apart from the music strangely enough, directed at that specific age group. Then you have people like us who are much older than the average and I don't think it even tries to cater non-musically to our age range. I'm not sure what they could really do to be honest, but I know whatever that thing is they're not doing it.

R: So do you feel out of place here?

G: I wouldn't go that far. Credit where credit's due, most of the kids here are really friendly and they seem to be very indiscriminating about the people here. So you could be in your 60s and I don't think they would look twice. It's more from an organization point of view...the festival has gradually changed and the target has become a lot younger and has to an extent forgotten about other generations. That's why I find it strange that they've put on so many older bands this weekend...I mean bands I was listening to when I was 20 seem to be making a comeback but I honestly don't know if they'll have enough of an audience or enough of a passionate audience to make their set noteworthy. All you need is a little atmosphere, but I can see some of the older bands struggling to get that.

R: And what about the rest of the people at A...tell me what you make of them?

G: Well it's kids isn't it? I would take a guess at an average age around 21. The one thing that I have noticed in the few hours I've been here is the lack of individuality. When I was young...that sounds bad!...but when I was young you tended to follow a band or at least a genre and you dressed like that and mirrored them. Now it just seems to be a generic genre of festival chic. Ten years ago you wouldn't get half the stuff you do now. I mean I felt like a fraud in the yurt, but you see the girls going in to get their hair straightened and styled...what's happening?! Festivals should be about getting muddy and wet and still enjoying yourself. Now it's about being seen and what you're seen in! So yeah, you notice that people are no longer dressing as their favorite bands do or even dressing in old clothes that can be ruined...they're dressing up as if they're on a night out...thank god I don't have to worry about that anymore!

R: So how does that affect the overall atmosphere of the festival?

G: I think it hampers the atmosphere to a certain degree. Like I was saying before, you'll go into the arena at 1 and see against the main stage barrier a group...usually younger girls. Now they'll stand there for 10 hours just to be at the front for the headliner. Now you can't tell me that they enjoy

every band that plays on the stage. I could think of nothing worse than trying to play to a crowd and having the front few rows full of mildly interested kids. And it does take a way a little pizzazz from the performance. And that's what I mean by a very generic genre...the younger generation don't seem to follow bands the same way I did when I was their age. It wasn't about being in the front row for a band, or getting yourself on TV, but it was about seeing that band with others who wanted to see that band...others who cared about the band. But at the same time, it's always nice to see kids getting involved in the older generation of bands...maybe we can get rid of some of this current stuff in favor of the classic bands!

R: Just going back to what you said before, the line-up this year is dotted with the older generation bands...what are your thoughts on a move like that?

G: It's a great move for people like me. I love seeing Cast and Pulp and the Manics. I even appreciate the fact they've got Tom Jones and Blondie. But like I was saying they may all crash and burn. The vast majority of those there will be kids who didn't have these bands first time around so the love I have for them hasn't formed with the kids that will be seeing them. But yeah, I hope they get a good reception.

R: So do you think that's the right route for A or festivals in general?

G: I think it's the new trend to a certain extent. These are the bands that are reforming and doing comeback tours and really are the bands in demand at the moment. I was reading an article on the BBC about festivals dying out mainly because they are becoming too similar. Basically the amount of headline-worthy artists has dropped in the last few years...well not dropped, but there are no new bands breaking through. So all you get are the same bands doing the same festivals year on year. Every year Muse will be headlining a selection of festivals, then the next year it will be rotation 2, then 3, then they're back to the first rotation. So essentially you'll get the same headliners at the same festival every 4 or 5 years. I guess the promoters are trying to look outside the box and they're finding these older bands and reintroducing them in to the mainstream.

R: So how would you go about improving A?

G: I think there are several changes that need to happen. I mean if thingy (*the organizer*) is worried about Glastonbury becoming stagnant, then they must be doubly worried about A. I think musically it works well; it does try to get the new bands and has its breakthrough stage, so come 5 years down the line I reckon it will have a new range of headline bands. It just lacks appeal to me in anything non-musical. There's the cinema area but that is hardly an attraction. I don't know if this year they'll have

anything new, but from the map it looks to be the same Disco bus/disco tent at night. But to be fair I've not been in the arena yet, so I may still be surprised...I hope I'll be surprised. If not it'll just be back to the Yurt extra early.

Thank you and debrief given. Email address provided and agreement to take part in follow up interview.