Towards understandings of visitor experiences and practices that shape new meanings of place at National Trust sites.

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Environment and Technology, in partial fulfilment of the requirement of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

This research programme was carried out in collaboration with the National Trust

December, 2014
Abstract

The National Trust face a new set of challenges in recent years; as one of the most influential heritage bodies in the UK, it is responsible for the preservation and protection of a large number of diverse sites from historic buildings to woodland. Yet this is set against a backdrop of complex set of challenges: creating an active dialogue with those who visit its sites and other stakeholders, such as the local community; ensuring their sites are preserved while, at the same time, encouraging access; on-going climate change and environmental risks; changing cultural, social and economic frameworks. The aim for the National Trust is to better understand how places might be managed differently in the light of these challenges.

This research builds on existing quantitative research conducted by the National Trust by examining how the engagement, embodiment and practice of visitors, staff and volunteers at National Trust sites informs a sense of place. The research employs a mixed method approach using qualitative ethnographic techniques. The methods of video and audio capture were used to explore and engage with the highly complex processes practiced at the sites and capture the non-verbal, pre cognitive and emotive ways in which people engage with site. From this insight, the research makes a conceptual contribution to knowledge by examining how site based practice informs emotional engagement and affect of place and how this experience produces a sense of place for people within National Trust sites.

Traditionally, the National Trust has put the physical aspects of a site at the heart of the visitor experience, whereas my research serves to demonstrate how an individual makes sense of a place through their own experiences, memories, cultural identity and uses these lenses to understand the world and their own identity. Furthermore, the research demonstrates that places are not fixed concepts but formed in an on-going, iterative way where multiple, sometimes competing, memories, emotions and affects are produced and that a place making is messy, interwoven with multiple, sometimes competing rhythms, emotions,
affects and how this sense of place gets carried over time and space. The contribution that this research makes, therefore, is in extending the insights into how place can change people to how people change place within the context of National Trust sites.
Acknowledgements

I have enjoyed both the content and process of this PhD enormously but the challenge of completing it has sometimes been overwhelming. The support from colleagues, friends and family has, for that reason, been invaluable.

I am indebted to the people who helped me with my fieldwork – Edward and Maureen, Barbara, Sylvia, Sally, Karen – and all the volunteers, staff and visitors who talked to me about their experiences at Hidcote, Dyrham, Lacock and Woodchester. Thank you to the National Trust for sponsoring me to undertake such an interesting project and, in particular, to Tony Berry who was an enthusiastic and engaged sponsor of my work.

I would like to thank my supervisors: Nigel Curry for his guidance on structure and for getting me to think analytically and Owain Jones for his creative thinking and input into the shape of my thesis. Taking over the supervision, Avril Maddrell provided extremely insightful and thoughtful feedback on my work that was instrumental in its completion and I would like to thank her for all her advice and support.

To my friends and colleagues at CCRI – thank you for your support, encouragement and humour throughout my PhD.

I would like to thank Karen Gallagher for her friendship and always making sure I was ‘getting on with it’!

Special thanks goes to Celly (Ceris) Bergen for her proof reading and getting me out to the pub when required.

I would like to thank my mother for her encouragement of my studies and for always taking an interest in my work. Special thanks goes to my sister, Jane, who gave me support, reassurance, and provided proof reading at critical times.

Finally, I would like thank D’arcy, Poppy and Tiger for their love and support.
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People and places: an introduction and outline of the thesis

1.1 Introduction

Recent interest within the social sciences in the interaction between people and place has seen developments in the methodological and conceptual debates within the discipline (Morton, 2005; Latham 2003, 2004; Simpson, 2008). This work has served to highlight the significance of practice of everyday life with the focus on how the ‘eventness’ of place (Cresswell, 2003) is made through practice. This focus has been paralleled by the development of innovative methodologies to capture people’s emotional and sensorial engagement with place (Pink, 2005, 2013; Rose, 2012).

The National Trust has also been cognizant of these issues and has fostered attempts to create an active dialogue with those who visit its sites, as well as other stakeholders, such as the local community, in order to promote a sense of belonging in those who support its work. Within these contexts the National Trust has identified its need to develop deeper understandings of the changing relationships between visitors and places (National Trust, 2007) and to better understand how places might be managed differently in the light of that knowledge and the other challenges outlined above. An example of a move towards this situated place approach can be seen in the following excerpt from the National Trust’s Strategy and Organisational Plan 2010-2013:

“We will also view our places as an integral part of the landscape and communities in which they sit. This is about blurring the dividing lines between engagement and conservation and between us, our supporters and our neighbours; seeing the National Trust as a movement of people that everyone can be a part of.”

(Strategy and Organisational Plan, 2010-13:3)
This desire on the part of the National Trust to understand this connection between people and place has led to this PhD and collaboration between the University of the West of England and the Countryside and Community Research Institute (CCRI) and the National Trust. The aim of this joint project has been to add rigour, through academic research, and identify how the National Trust could “focus on ensuring inspiring, enjoyable and memorable experiences in our places” an aim articulated as part of the strategy in the Strategy and Organisational plan 2010-13.

The purpose of this research is to provide an understanding of people and place by examining the subtle emotional and sensorial aspects of how and why people interact with place. In particular, the research builds on previous studies that explore the nature of place (Tuan, 1977; Cresswell, 2004; Wylie, 2007) and how place is constructed. The aim of this thesis is to examine how people engage with place through a variety of physical activities such as walking, gardening, and sitting, in addition to the range of emotional experiences that form a sense of place and are articulated through affects and feelings.

It should be acknowledged that this thesis is exploratory both in terms of the nature of the research and its understanding of landscape. The thesis is also cognizant of, and acknowledges, the different influences on the understanding of landscape, recognising that landscape “is both the phenomenon itself and our perception of it” (Wylie, 2007:7 original emphasis). It should also be stressed that while this thesis sets out how these different aspects of the perception of landscape and place influence the visitor engagement, and how these aspects are interrelated and in some cases have tensions, it does not seek to set these aspects out in a hierarchical manner. Instead it includes these aspects in the fluid, chaotic and muddled nature of people’s individual interaction and relations with place and landscape and describes the overlaps and tensions found within.

Data has been collected by conducting fieldwork at four National Trust sites – Hidcote, Dyrham Park, Lacock Abbey, Fox Talbot Museum and Village and Woodchester Park from 2011 to 2012. The recruitment process of participants for the fieldwork is described in detail in section 3.2.2. In addition, a series of
meetings, workshops and presentations have been made at both the fieldwork sites and at the National Trust’s head office, Heelis, in Swindon to disseminate the findings to a wider audience.

The findings have been analysed through the lens of six themes – memory, rhythm, connection and belonging, escape, material objects, and the senses. In addition to these six themes the concepts of place, space, landscape and heritage have been discussed within this introduction as way of introducing these concepts as they run through the six themes.

In providing the insight into people and place in the context of four National Trust sites the aim of the research is to address some of the challenges that the National Trust faces, as articulated in their strategy document (National Trust, 2010):

“So though the National Trust has always been about places, it has never been about places in isolation to the exclusion of those who enjoy them. What really matters is the delight each place can offer people: locations for inspiration, fun, physical and intellectual challenge, companionship, joy, consolation, and peace.”

(National Trust Strategy document: Going local - fresh tracks down old roads: Our strategy for the next decade, 2010)

The research comes at a time when more people are opting to take their holidays and leisure time within the UK, rather than travelling abroad, as the following excerpt from ONS report identifies:

“During the period of the financial crisis in 2008-9 and beyond there is some evidence to suggest that UK residents changed their travel behaviour and elected to take vacations within the UK rather than abroad. This change in behaviour has been referred to as the rise of the 'staycation’” (Office of National Statistics, 2013)
In addition, tourism day visit expenditure by UK residents has risen steadily from £47 billion in 2009 to £57 billion in 2012 – a 17% increase. Tourism day visit expenditure in 2012 accounted for 44% of all tourism expenditure in the UK (ONS, 2013).

The National Trust is keen to capitalise on this increase in day visits, as well as building lasting relationships with a wider audience. In order to achieve both of these goals it is trying to move away from the ‘look but don’t touch’ visitor experience and ‘bring places to life’ (National Trust, 2010) by actively engaging people emotionally and sensorially in their sites. This has been achieved through some creative thinking by the National Trust which can be seen in initiatives such as encouraging people to play the piano (Dyrham), walking barefoot on lawns (Hidcote) or playing on the rope swings (Woodchester Park). Through this type of participation at National Trust sites visitors are co-producing place and, as part of this process, making places meaningful. The National Trust is facilitating this process by aiming to make places special for people by allowing them to touch, taste, smell, aurally and visually appreciate their sites; they balance this with the challenges of conserving the site and contents for future generations. The National Trust is attempting to nurture places “with those who loved it in the past or will do in the future, with neighbours and local communities, and with visitors for whom this special spot of earth can become like home, a vital part of their lives.” (National Trust, 2010). This echoes the sentiments of the founders of the National Trust - Octavia Hill, Robert Hunter and Hardwicke Rawnsley – who, founded the organisation in 1895 to bring about social change through the acquisition of sites in danger of demolition and although the organisation was originally more interested in open landscapes and medieval buildings in the 1930s they began to focus their resources on country houses and transforming them into a public symbol of national pride (Mandler, 1997) as families could not afford the 40% inheritance tax and were forced to sell off or abandon country estates. The National Trust Act of 1937 and further legislation allowed families to forgo the tax whilst retaining the right to reside, if they donated the property to the National Trust.
The research for this project was carried out at four sites – Hidcote, Lacock, Dyrham and Woodchester – see figures 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4 and 1.5.

Figure 1.1 Map of four fieldwork sites

Figure 1.2 Lacock

Figure 1.3 Hidcote
The remainder of this chapter provides a brief context and outline of the main issues explored in the thesis. In order to introduce and contextualize aspects of the research, I start with a brief discussion of the key concepts that I use throughout the thesis – place, space, landscape and heritage. This is limited in the sense that I only make some general points about these concepts in order to contextualize the research; the arguments outlined here will be discussed in more detail in subsequent chapters of this thesis.

The chapter is divided into five sections. The first section provides an overview of the emerging approaches to people and place, space and landscape. This includes the practices and performances of actors within places, and the affect and emotion produced. Section 1.2 is an examination of the emerging approaches to people, place, space and landscape within the context of this project; section 1.3 examines how the National Trust has responded to a changing understanding of heritage while section 1.4 examines recent approaches to heritage. Sections 1.5 and 1.6 define the project rationale and the aims and objectives. Section 1.7 summarises the structure of the thesis and briefly describes the purpose and content of subsequent chapters.
1.2 Emerging approaches to people and place, space and landscape

The development of the concept of place in human geography can be found in the work of Yi-Fu Tuan whose books *Topophilia* (1974) and *Space and Place* (1977) defined place, among others, in contrast to space. Tuan developed the concept of a sense of space as an open arena of action and movement while place was defined in terms of stopping and resting and becoming involved (Cresswell, 2004). More recently Casey (2001) describes the distinction between place and space in more practical terms:

“taking “space” to be the encompassing volumetric void in which things (including human beings) are positioned and “place” to be the immediate environment of my lived body – an arena of action that is at once physical and historical, social and cultural” (*ibid*, 2001: 683)

The ‘spatial turn’ (Soja, 1996) emphasized, within geography and the humanities, a focus on space and how space becomes place through materially embedded practices and the social production of lived space (Massey et al, 1999). This notion of social space can be considered to comprise of ‘stretched out’ social relations formed of networks and complexities of social interaction and interconnections (Allen and Hammnett, 1995). Inherent in this concept of space and place are power and power relations as Sack (1986) comments:

“…territoriality is a primary geographical expression of social power. It is the means by which society and space are related.” (Sack, 1986:5)

However it should be acknowledged that place can be thought of in different terms – a landscape, a home, a garden, a nation, a region – what links these examples is that they are all spaces that people have made meaningful (Cresswell, 2004) which highlights how place can be a way of “…seeing, knowing and understanding the world…we see attachments and connections between people and place. We see worlds of meanings and experience.” (Cresswell, 2004:11). In this way, place can be dependent on the attachments and connections that we have with actors at that place and the resultant emotional engagement, as well as how we reflexively affect the place based on what we emotionally experience in the place. In this way
a dynamic sense of place is formed from emotions, affect and rhythms through both human and non-human actors. These connections and attachments that people form with place enable us to identify meanings and experiences, as Casey (2001) notes: “place is regarded as constitutive of one’s sense of self.” (Casey, 2001: 684)

Place has also long been recognised as playing a major role in the on-going constitution of identity (Bondi et al, 2002; Cresswell, 2004; Pile and Thrift, 1995) which is grounded in Heidegger’s (1988) concept of ‘being-in-the-world’ and the exploration of perception through phenomenology (Merleu-Ponty, 1962). Casey (2001) takes this further by stating that the relationship between place and human identity is not just one of reciprocal influence but of co-production:

“constitutive coingredience: each is essential to the being of the other. In effect, there is no place without self and no self without place.”
(Casey, 2001: 684)

This idea that place is not just a ‘thing’ but a way of understanding and experiencing the world is extended by Cresswell (2004), who defines how meaning and experience can give rise to attachments and connections between people and place. As such, places are dynamic and never finished but always the result of processes and practices (Pred, 1984) and, in this way, places are performed on a daily basis through our movements in what Seamon (1980) refers to as ‘place-ballet’.

Places, then, are not only a medium but also an outcome of action producing and being produced through human practice (Crouch, 2000). As Tilley (1994) describes, places are “involved in the action and cannot be divorced from it” (1994:10). Additionally, just as places are performed on a daily basis to create something in the present, places can also be vessels for the past. Places can be memory laden at a society and cultural level, for example, war memorials; or they exist at a personal level such as a childhood house. Both public and private memory shape a place and place becomes a “container of experiences” (Casey, 1987: 186-187).
This reciprocity between people and place has become a topic of significant interest to human geographers and social scientists as recognition of how our senses of self are connected to particular places (Conradson and Mackay, 2007) whether through work, friendship or family – these relationships are thought of in spatialized terms. This theory is extended by Cresswell (2004) who describes how locations which people connect with, either physically or emotionally, are bound up in notions of belonging (or not belonging), ownership and consequently, identity. This concept of how identity is tied in with the notion of place and, in particular, how we feel connected and a sense of belonging, to a particular place underlies the way in which part of how we define ourselves is symbolised by certain qualities of that place (Rose, 1995:81).

Cresswell (1997) further examines the use of metaphors that describe people and actions as out of place, focusing on metaphors of displacement as rooted:

"in a belief that place is one of the primary factors in the creation and maintenance of ideological values (what is good, just and appropriate) and thus in the definition of appropriate and inappropriate actions and practices.” (Cresswell, 1997: 33)

The notion that everything ‘has its place’ and that things (e.g. people, actions) can be ‘in place’ or ‘out of place’ is deeply engrained in the way we think and act (Cresswell, 1996). This concept underlies how place, and our perception of how people think they are supposed to act, influences what we do and do not do in place. When groups or individuals ignore this premise they are said to ‘out of place’ and defined as deviant. Cresswell (2004) uses the examples of graffiti artists in New York City, peace campers on Greenham Common (UK) and new age travellers in the British countryside as examples as ‘out of place’; in each case people and practices were considered (by the media and public) to have transgressed the supposedly common-sense link between place and the practices that take place in place. These examples demonstrate that place has multiple and contested meanings and these may not be natural or obvious but ones that are created by some people with more power than others to define what is and is not
appropriate and how people are able to subvert these given meanings of place. As a guardian of heritage places the National Trust has the authority to present a version of a site that, in turn, influences the meaning that a place has for people. In this way ‘places’ constitute significant sites which have been imbued with meaning often representing the ‘heritage’ of a particular individual, group or community (Kuusisto 1999).

Time is another factor in the construction of place; it can engender a feeling of being an ‘insider’ in a place, which Seamon (1980) notes is down to ‘time-space routine’ which describes the habits of a person as they follow a routine path through the day and suggests how places are performed on a daily basis through people living their everyday life. In this way we get to know a place and feel part of it, although it could still be possible to participate in a daily routine and not feel part of it, as shown by Geraldine Pratt’s (1997) work on the lives of Filipina contract workers in Vancouver, Canada who are not ‘at home’ in the homes in which they work. This ties into the National Trust as traditionally being perceived as pursuing a mantra of ‘don’t touch’ at their sites while at the same time aiming towards making their sites feel like a “special spot of earth….like home, a vital part of their lives” (National Trust, 2010).

Place can also be viewed as constantly in a state of becoming (Pred, 1984) and is informed by structuration theory associated with British sociologist Anthony Giddens who describes the overarching structures that influence our lives from capitalism to national and local institutions and even language. Structurationists maintain that our actions depend on structures – not talking to ourselves in public – but that at the same time structures depend on our actions to exist and that at any given moment in time, place provides a geographically specific set of structures.

This concept of structuration can be applied to place seen as a “cultural image a way of representing, structuring or symbolising surroundings” (Cosgrove and Daniels, 1988: 1) and the visual is “central to the cultural construction of life” (Rose, 2001: 6). National Trust places are highly visual and laden with representation and symbols acting as signifiers, with the power to evoke emotional
responses across time, space and cultures. The context of the symbols is inherent in how they are interpreted and a wide range of economic, social and political factors influence how an audience receives a symbol (Rose, 2001). While National Trust audiences are given context – an historical narrative – as a mechanism for interpreting the symbols within a site there is also an individual interpretation as an audience has the power to take meaning (Buckley, 1998) and to “reinvent signs and symbols and read them in different contexts, transforming their meaning” (McDowell, 2008: 40). Heritage site as places are, therefore, open to interpretation, and contestation, and tangible representations of the past and present that are found in visual features of cultural landscape are selective representations of identity, which the heritage body has chosen to present to their audience. These visual features of a landscape are, therefore, selective interpretations of the past and present onto public places; as such they articulate heritage and can be read as icons of identity and spatializations of history (McDowell, 2008).

Finally, in an examination of place it is also necessary to look at the role of emotional geography. During the early 2000s there was a call for more consideration of the emotional dynamics of everyday life and the spatial aspects (Anderson and Smith, 2001; Bondi, 2005; Thien 2005). This was a time when emotion in human geography was only considered in the cultural and often feminist corners of the discipline, which focussed on addressing the silencing or repressing of often gendered emotional experience (Anderson, 2009); instead feminist geographers shared a commitment “situating knowledge, the view that interpretations are context-bound and partial, rather than detached and universal” (Pratt, 2009). Good scholarship was considered to depend on keeping emotions under wraps, and thinking emotionally was deemed to be subjective, clouding vision and judgment.

However this led to difficulties in communicating the affective elements at play in everyday life and meant the study of geography tended to deny, avoid, suppress or downplay its emotional entanglements (Bondi, Davidson and Smith, 2005). The study of emotions gained purchase with authors such as Anderson and Smith’s (2001) work on emotionally heightened spaces, where the space of performativity
such as music or theatre spaces may ‘usefully illustrate the way that social relations are mediated by feeling and sensibility’ (Anderson and Smith, 2001:8). In this way human geography has provided an impetus towards engaging with emotional dimensions of people’s experiences of place and space which marked an ‘emotional turn’ (Bondi, Davidson and Smith, 2005). Rather than the focus being directly on emotions, where emotions are seen as things or objects to be studied and measured, emotional geographies highlight how emotions are produced between and among people as a relational flow and, in this way, become part of the different relations that make up the lived geographies of place (Bondi, Davidson and Smith, 2005).

Furthermore, emotional geography offers an additional perspective on place: by focussing on the dynamic, recursive relation between emotions, place, space, politics (Gregory et al., 2009) and acknowledging different ways in which emotions emerge from, and re-produce, socio-spatial orders. In this way, emotions are a part of all geographies (Anderson and Smith, 2001) and, as such, are key drivers of the practices of everyday life that the social sciences and geography have tended to ignore (Anderson and Smith 2001; Bondi, 2005; and Davidson, Bondi and Smith, 2005). In particular, our emotional lives are shaped by wider relational contexts as the self is understood as emerging within and through its relations to other people and events (Conradson, 2005). In this way there is a significant material exchange between people and their environments and particular affective and emotional outcomes underlie how place is an evolving concept and should not be thought of as an abstract Cartesian space (Urry, 2005). Rather, place can be viewed in what Kevin Hetherington (1997:185-9) alludes to with his notion of ‘place as being like a ship’, where places are about relationships and are not in one location but move around within networks of agents, humans and non-humans that produce ‘an emotion of movement, of bodies, images, information’ (Urry, 2005).

This sense that the individual is understood as a complex relational entity, capable of making and sustaining connections across a range of times and places also serves to underlay the feelings and emotions that individuals sought to keep alive when they returned to their own environments. Examples of this can be seen in physical manifestations such as the plant cuttings that gardeners gave out to
visitors that asked about plants, or items bought in the shop or simply the verbal connections people make by relating an experience they encountered at a site - listening to a piano, for example - and connecting it to a childhood experience. In this way, an individual makes sense of a place through her/his own experiences and relates it back to their understanding of the world. This sense of place is not, then, confined to a physical location but carried over time and space.

A discussion on visitor experience has to acknowledge that tourist gaze is structured around gender, age and ethnicity (Urry, 1990) and while these are not the focus of this research they are concepts that merit discussion here. Shurmer-Smith and Hannham (1994) suggest that inherent in this examination of space is the “emotional” geography (1991:6) that views places such as tourism sites, attractions, landmarks, destinations, and landscapes as spaces through which “power, identity, meaning and behaviour are constructed, negotiated, and renegotiated according to sociocultural dynamics”. Gender is critical to this construction, and indeed spaces and places are “both shaped by, and a shaper of, gender in a gender-space dialectic” (Aitchison and Reeves 1998:51). Similarly, ethnicity affects how we consume sites and objects; referencing museum artefacts, Merriman (1991) proposes that cultural identification is not necessarily attached to the same objects or artifacts, or experienced in the same manner universally. Age can also affect the relation with place or objects Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1981) propose that:

“the young receive meaningful information from interacting with objects that are appropriate to their stage in life as defined in this culture: These are different objects and therefore different selves, from those that their parents and grandparents develop.” (Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton, 1981:46)

Goulding (2000) suggests that this was similar to the way in which various ages have related to the past: they chose mediums which reflected their own age culture. These in turn dictated the degree of engagement on the part of the visitor. As it stands, the lack of representation of relevant histories may act as barriers that serve to exclude, rather than include, vast numbers of the population (Bourdieu, 1968, 1984).
Acknowledging that a sense of place is influenced by individual as well as collective factors I now examine how the National Trust has responded to this challenge in their engagement of visitors to their sites.

1.3 The National Trust moving forward: changing understandings of heritage

The National Trust is one of the largest and most influential landowning environmental/cultural and natural heritage nongovernmental organisations in the UK. According to the 2010 annual report \(^1\) the National Trust is responsible for the preservation and protection of a large number of historic properties and landscapes, including 215 houses and gardens, 40 castles, 76 nature reserves, 6 World Heritage Sites, 12 lighthouses, and 43 pubs and inns, 627,000 acres (254,000 hectares) of countryside, moor land, beach and coastline \(^2\). The National Trust is charged with the complex, intersecting tasks of conserving both cultural and natural heritage, facilitating access to these assets by the public and raising awareness of the value of these assets and a range of associated issues within the public, the private sector, the state and other bodies.

The National Trust is having to deliver this complex set of priorities in unprecedented and highly challenging set of contexts. These include the current economic crisis, climate change and other environmental risks which could well affect both landscapes and built heritage, and the changing cultural, social and economic make-up of post-globalisation society which now exists at local, regional, national and international scales.

As part of their response to these and other challenges in recent years, the National Trust has become increasingly engaged with attempts to create an active dialogue with those who visit its sites, as well as other stakeholders, and to foster

\(^1\) http://www.nationalNational Trust.org.uk/main/w-National Trust/w-thecharity/w-
annualreport2010.htm

\(^2\) Taken from ‘facts about the National Trust’ http://www.nationalNational Trust.org.uk/main/w-National Trust/w-thecharity/w-thecharity_our-present/w-
what_we_do/w-factsaboutNational Trust.htm
a sense of belonging in those who support its work. Within these contexts the National Trust has acknowledged its need to develop yet deeper understandings of the changing relationships between visitors and places (National Trust, 2007) and to better understand how places might be managed differently in the light of that knowledge and the other challenges outlined above. An example of this can be seen in an excerpt from the National Trust’s Strategy and Organisational Plan 2010-2013:

“We will also view our places as an integral part of the landscape and communities in which they sit. This is about blurring the dividing lines between engagement and conservation and between us, our supporters and our neighbours; seeing the National Trust as a movement of people that everyone can be a part of.”

(Strategy and Organisational Plan, 2010-13:3)

The desire on the part of the National Trust to understand this connection between people and place has led to this PhD. The National Trust’s interest in the project came from a collaboration between the University of the West of England and the Countryside and Community Research Institute (CCRI) and the National Trust in which academic research in the form of this PhD was funded to add rigour to finding out how the National Trust could “focus on ensuring inspiring, enjoyable and memorable experiences in our places” an aim articulated as part of the strategy in the Strategy and Organisational plan 2010-13.

However, the National Trust is not without its critics as articulated by Guardian journalist, Jon Henley, who suggest it is “exclusive, elitist, samey, paternalistic, look-but-don’t-touch” in an article from the Guardian website entitled ‘How the National Trust is finding its mojo’ (Henley, 2010). In an attempt to move away from this image, the National Trust has employed a plethora of actions to connect their ‘supporters’ (a term to describe not just National Trust members but non members who visit or volunteer at their site) of their places in order to bring those places alive for people. The National Trust is trying to do this by moving away from this ‘don’t touch’ image and is trying to “strengthen a sense of belonging and
connection” as described in its ‘Going Local’ campaign, which represents a radical shift in the mindset of the National Trust in an effort to “foster a greater sense of shared pride and ownership” (National Trust, 2010: 5).

The National Trust’s ‘Going Local’ campaign can already be seen at Seaton Delaval, a National Trust stately home in Newcastle, the running of which the National Trust has given over to the local community who have been involved in all stages from raising money for its renovation to writing guide books as well as the local community using the site for different needs from parish meetings to school play rehearsals. Furthermore the locals are involved in how the site gets used by the visitors from camping in the grounds to dressing up in period costume in the East wing. This greater autonomy for National Trust sites marks a shift in the relationship between the National Trust and staff and volunteers at the individual sites moving away from a centralised organisation that dictates how sites are run and allowing the community – the staff and volunteers - at the site greater control over how the site is managed.

The National Trust has developed as an organisation, both in how it relates to its own internal communities of volunteers and staff and the broader community of visitors. This relationship between these groups of people and place has also been influenced by how the concept of heritage, in a wider context, has developed. As a result, the National Trust (2006) is exploring new ways of valuing heritage where the “concept of ‘public value' moves beyond simple measures of social and economic impact” (National Trust, 2006:6), and instead looks at the “benefits to people both as consumers of heritage ‘goods’ and as citizens” (ibid). This shift in how heritage is viewed and acted upon can be seen in other heritage stakeholders – English Heritage is attempting to connect heritage to the communities of their sites by outreach programs described under a section of their website entitled ‘people and place’ (English Heritage, 2012). The intention of

3 ‘Going Local – fresh tracks down old roads, our strategy for the next decade’ taken from the National Trust website http://www.nationalNational Trust.org.uk/main/w-strategy-next-decade-17-march.pdf
English Heritage is to help the community groups ‘explore their history and heritage often at a local level’ and, in achieving this aim, make heritage more relevant and accessible to more people.

These new challenges around connecting people marks a recognition on the part of heritage stakeholders of the need to be more cognizant of the community within which their heritage sites sit (Edwards 1987; Davies and Prentice 1995; Markwell, Bennett and Ravenscroft, 1997). It also signifies that by providing a framework “for demonstrating the contribution places rich in history and the processes of looking after them make to our collective quality of life” (National Trust, 2006:6), heritage can help enhance the richness and diversity of peoples’ engagements with different types of site.

Changing attitudes to heritage relies on this understanding of how people interact with, and are affected by, place (Cresswell, 2004). The approaches outlined in this thesis, aim to explore and interpret people’s interaction with place with the focus on embodiment, practice, performativity, and use the larger ‘emotional’, ‘affective’ and ‘non-representational’ themes within geography and related disciplines (Thrift, 2008) to bring more insight and open up new approaches to place.

1.4 Emerging approaches to heritage

Groote and Haartsen (2008) observe how heritage and its communication are in many senses plural concepts with different agents involved, communicating different discourses and using different historical narratives linked to different place identities to achieve different objectives. As such heritage meanings can be socially or culturally constructed and are therefore contestable. On an individual level, remembering the past is tied to the present and our sense of identity and it is the present needs and aspirations that influence how we remember the past which informs the heritage process (Walker, 1996). However this is not without contention as heritage discourse has two sets of views: one which sees heritage
as an essentially conservative and nostalgic process (Lowenthal, 1985; Hewison, 1987) in which a romanticized and idealized view of the past is deployed to reinforce old certainties at times of significant change (Robertson, 2008) and the other view champions the ‘spirit of local places’ (Robertson, 2008) where heritage is made and maintained by local communities. This latter version of heritage most often draws on expressions of resistance or memory of resistance amongst the dominated. There is a tension, therefore, between the past being deployed at a local level versus at national level where supposed values, meanings, beliefs and character of ‘the nation’ are enshrined in ‘iconic’ landscapes (Edensor, 2002).

This duality, between local and national forms of heritage, demonstrates the multi-perceived and multi-consumed nature of heritage. It also serves to demonstrate how we are selective about what we remember and how we create and suppress cultures and traditions in the same way that identities are validated as well as contested. The past, or a version of the past, serves to reinforce a sense of belonging, purpose and place (Lowenthal, 1985) and, in this way, identities and memories, like heritage, are inevitably selective in what purpose they serve.

Whilst acknowledging that issues of class and ethnicity are outside of the remit of this thesis it should be noted that sites are not uniformly read nor passively accepted by visitors; as Urry (1996) comments, “different visitors can gaze upon the same set of objects and read and perform them in different ways” (Urry, 2002: 101). The contestation of ideals of heritage is further highlighted by the following quote from a report commissioned by English Heritage and written by MORI:

“The focus group participants make little or no use of traditional heritage sites, and among BME [black and minority ethnic] groups, this is because they feel that these sites did not adequately represent aspects of their culture and are not relevant to themselves, their children and the way they live their lives.” (MORI, 2003)

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4 'Making Heritage Count' Research Study conducted for English Heritage, Department for Culture, Media and Sport and the Heritage Lottery Fund
This recognition that sites are consumed differently has led to a number of initiatives taken by the National Trust in the management of their sites and how they engage with different groups of user; this is more fully explored in the findings, chapter 4.

Given that heritage is bound up with constructions and deconstruction of memory and identity (Whelan, 2003) then there is a question of power in who decides what is heritage. Notions of power are therefore central to the construction of heritage and give weight to the argument that heritage “is not given; it is made” (Harvey, 2001). The National Trust, as a heritage organisation, decides on how to present a site and what to present not only in terms of the physical area but also in terms of what version of a site’s past to present.

On this aspect, Harvey (2008) challenges the work of the National Trust not as social campaigning but at “meeting and manipulating a public appetite for the ‘olden-time’” (Harvey, 2008: 28), going on to describe how:

“a carefully mediated past needs to be revered and conserved for the good of the nation, the achievement of this carefully mediated heritage product, however, has often meant that some bits have had to be left out of the narrative.” (Harvey, 2008: 29)

This selection of the past for present consumption is something that Urry (1995) explores through the Wigan Pier Heritage Centre as an example of how the industrial past of Wigan has “unashamedly re-presented the industrial and social history of Wigan albeit in a way which is certainly sanitised.” (Urry, 1995: 160). Similarly, Hewison (1987) critiqued Wigan Pier and the way in which “the agenda of heritage promotes a mythical English idyll of harmony and community and a romanticised and glamorised industrial past” (Hewsion: 181). Aside from the question of authenticity, which Herbert (2001) frames as a subjective experience that is a “combination of the developers’ intention, the consumers’ interpretation and the interactions among them” (Herbert, 2001: 317), the effect of this commodification of history systematically distorts attention from the present, from contemporary polarisations and conflicts (Urry, 1995).
As such, visitors can seek some reassurance from a nostalgic view of the past as they use heritage sites as bases for reminiscence. This performance of reminiscing often involves a mutual collaboration between the visitors to the sites and those people at the sites who are there to stimulate memories – an example of this can be found in the findings, chapter 4, when a gardener at Hidcote talks about planting sweet peas and Sweet Williams in response to visitors’ comments on how they remember these flowers from their childhood. Edensor (1998) notes how this performativity of reminiscence is by no means a passive process of visual consumption but is similar to other spatial practices which take place at tourist sites such as walking, talking, sitting and taking photos.

The issue of authenticity is significant in relation to the concept of heritage, as Herbert (2001) notes “memory changes and is historically conditioned” (Herbert, 2001:317). The role of memory is explored in more detail in sections 2.2 and 4.2 but it is worth noting here how, like history, memory is essentially revisionist (Samuel, 1994) and while a reinvented or reconciled past that combines myth and memory may not contain scientific historical evidence, this is not necessarily what visitors to heritage sites are looking for:

“They may even be only partly interested in the historical reality as such. Visitors to historic sites are looking for an experience, a new reality based on the tangible remains of the past. For them, this is the very essence of the heritage experience." (Schouten, 1995:21)

The power of this ‘commodification’ of history into a “packaged heritage, past, dead and safe” (Urry, 1995: 160) is that the protection of the past conceals the destruction of the present. Heritage therefore, as Robertson (2008) notes, is a social and cultural product and that heritage from below, as expression of local identity, is evident in expressions of resistance to dominant discourses. Robertson warns that using the past to form identity in the present generates “disinheritance, if not dissonance, conflict and contestation.” (Robertson, 2008: 156).
1.5 Project rationale

This PhD focuses on the engaging processes with places which stress practice, embodiment and materiality articulated through a range of physical activities such as walking, sitting and doing voluntary work as well as a range of processes not articulated through language, such as affect and emotions.

These emerging approaches to people’s engagement with place (Thrift, 2001; Wylie, 2007; Lorimer, 2006; Crouch, 2000) are set out and linked to National Trust policies and practices in relation to visitor experience and researching visitor experiences and practice in four case study locations – Hidcote, Lacock, Dryham and Woodchester Park.

The aim of the approach to this project is to move away from notions of social construction (Berger and Luckman, 1991) and instead highlight the richness and import of human interaction with place and how this experience is articulated through a range of embodied processes and practices. By so doing I will show how interaction with people and place is a complex co-constitutive process where places are continually made rather than fixed (Pink, 2009). I will also demonstrate how this process enables not just an understanding of the world but plays a role in the on-going constitution of our identity and how this, in turn, acts back on the identity of place.

This ambition is set within changing definitions of heritage, and also the changing contexts of heritage and the work has wider implications for other agencies and academics working in areas of place and heritage. As the heritage sites that the National Trust manage evolve against a backdrop of changing economic conditions and environmental risks such as climate change, so the Trust’s engagement with the visitors and the wider community also evolves. The Trust’s aim is to bring places to life by opening up dialogues with local communities about new uses for properties (National Trust 2011). These changing contexts and institutional ambitions require the Trust to better understand how people engage with the sites for which they are responsible.
1.6 Aims and objectives

The aim of this project is to investigate the meaning that places have for people by using the four fieldwork National Trust sites as a lens on place meaning. This aim has been achieved by examining how people engage with place through the practices and performances of National Trust staff, visitors and volunteers at the four sites. In order to respond to this engagement of place I have used emerging mixed, ethnographic approaches, including visual and audio methods, to explore and capture the emotional, sensorial and pre-cognitive aspects of engagement with place.

More specifically, the project has the following two research objectives:

1. How do the practices and performances conducted at sites affect people’s sense of place?

2. How does the reciprocal relationship between people and place influence people’s behaviour and how the National Trust manages its sites.

I use the term ‘people’ within these objectives to mean National Trust volunteers, staff and visitors and while I make the distinction between these three groups when I refer to specific participants, in general, I reference volunteers and visitors as one group although I make the distinction between volunteers and staff employed by the National Trust.

To put the volunteer commitment at the National Trust into perspective, 70,494 volunteers and groups contribute 3.77 million hours\(^5\). Under the ‘volunteering’ section of the National Trust website it states that a volunteer is typically expected to commit to one shift a week, usually lasting a couple of hours, and this was borne out in the experience of the volunteers who participated in my research. The majority of the volunteers I interviewed had between three and nine years experience and often wore a small badge which they were awarded on completion of five years volunteering, which they work as a totemic emblem.

\(^5\) Board of Trustees report 2012/2013
I have used the term ‘place’ – in a physical sense - to refer to both the four National Trust sites where I undertook my fieldwork and in a cultural/human geography sense as a “subjectively sensed and experienced phenomenon” (Henderson, 2009: 539). This is further expanded by Henderson (2009) describing place:

“not only as the phenomenological ground for geography but also an irreducible component of human experience, without which human experience itself could not be constituted and interpreted” (Henderson, 2009: 539)

This acknowledges that people are affected by, and have an affect on, places and in this way there is an emotional involvement between people and the lived geographies of place (Bondi, Davidson and Smith, 2005). This project has sought to recognise and capture this emotional involvement between people and places within National Trust sites by recognising how people have made place meaningful through practice and performance including gardening, sitting and reading, walking, among others.

1.7 Conclusion

This chapter has introduced the themes of place (and associated concepts of space and landscape) and heritage which are concepts that underpin the literature review and findings for this thesis. This chapter has also provided the overall rationale for the research. It has argued that people’s emotional engagement to place is now a significant aspect of human geography and merges with concepts of visitor studies, psychology and anthropology. The rise in visitor numbers to heritage sites has been influenced by economic conditions that have prompted people to seek out breaks in the UK. Alongside this practice of heritage visits sits economic, environmental, gender and ethnicity agendas which have not been explored in this thesis.
The following chapters of the thesis can be summerised as follows: chapter 2 is an examination of the literature concerning the meaning that place has for people and how people engage with place. The chapter is structured around the theoretical framework using six themes – memory, rhythm, escape, connection and belonging, the senses and material objects.

I then examine the methodological approach – the theory and practice – and how the methods used in this research open up new ways of exploring how people interact and are affected by place through practice, embodiment, emotions, performance and affect.

Following an examination of the methods I then detail the analysis, evaluation and interpretation of the data gathered, using these methods, from the four fieldwork sites. I use a brief outline of some of the main concepts from the literature to introduce each theme in this chapter which reinforces the relation between theory and empirical research (Massey, 2003).

The final chapter provides conclusions and relates the findings back to the aims and objectives set out in this chapter and concludes the thesis by outlining some future direction for geographical research.
2

A review of the literature concerning people’s engagement with place

2.1 Introduction
The structure of themes in this chapter reflects the themes in the findings, chapters 4 and 5. The choice of these themes was determined by the data collected during my fieldwork and involved a systematic formal analysis procedure based upon ideas of grounded theory. This process of data gathering and analysis is described in detail in chapter 3 but, in order to contextualise the themes it is worth noting that in conducting the research from a grounded theory perspective my six themes were not pre-planned and then tested, but rather the themes were ‘discovered’ in the field and were, in turn, informed and validated by further data gathering (Blaikie, 2010). The themes emerged as key ways in which understanding of people’s engagement with place and the sequence of the themes, which mirrors their sequence in chapters 4 and 5, reflects the weighting of the findings although, it should be stressed however that this is not a definitive order but for the sake of imposing an order for the purpose of structure.

The themes – memory, rhythm, escape, connection and belonging, the senses and material objects - have multiple meanings leading to some overlap and, in some cases, tensions among the themes in the literature review. Within this complexity the concepts of emotion and place run through the themes, as the role of emotions is spatially articulated and is key to both the construction and interpretation of place. As such, our being in the world (Thrift, 2001) influences and informs our sense of place and the emotional involvement between people and place.
2.2 Aspects of Memory explored

Memories are complex experiences that are built and affected over time, and memory acts in more ways than just recollecting information encountered at some previous time. It covers not just one process but a whole set of complex, interrelating processes (Foster, 2009) and operates in multiple ways informing different facets of our lives, from being able to speak, read, identify objects to navigating our environment to maintaining personal objects.

One way of interpreting this complex set of processes is to break them down into three main types of interacting memory – short-term, long-term and sensory: long-term can be further divided into episodic and semantic memory, each of which is considered to represent a different type of consciously accessible long-term memory (Foster, 2008). Episodic is believed to deal with specific events such as the time, place and emotions at the time of the event and semantic memory, which is concerned with general knowledge (Foster, 2008).

Memory does not occur in a linear fashion but is spatially and temporally complex and multidimensional. The fluid aspect to memory is emphasised by Foster, who describes how the mechanism underlying memory is best characterized “as a dynamic activity or process rather than as a static entity or thing” (Foster, 2008:8).

Furthermore, while memory is a process that can occur both voluntarily and involuntarily it is overwhelmingly the latter, as memories well up “out of the depths of the unconscious and/or work away as dis/enabling background.” (Jones, 2011: 877)

May and Thrift (2001) expand on this interpretation of involuntary memory as a ‘living past’ that combines ‘the immemorial, the extra-temporal’ and differs from voluntary memory that is a wilful recollection of the past. Foster (2008) aligns involuntary memory with implicit memory which refers to an influence on behaviour, feelings or thoughts as a result of prior experiences but “which is manifested without conscious recollections of the original events” (Foster, 2008: 42). Explicit, or recollective, memory involves conscious awareness at the time or
remembering which aligns this type of memory closely with episodic memory, as defined above. Memory, in all its forms, is a nuanced and uncertain process over which we are not completely in control of (Damasio, 1994). Memory is, therefore, not simply a retrieval system from the past or of the past but, rather, memory can occur involuntarily.

The role of emotions is inherent within the memory process(es) and one way to think of emotional geography is to think of the connections between memory and our geographical imaginations (Jones, 2005). This recognises the role of emotion in our construction and interpretation of the world as well confronting the non-cognitive knowledges of the unconscious (Thrift, 2001).

Having introduced the complexity of memory, I will now examine the literature on memory in and through the following concepts:

- how memory is experienced through objects
- the social and spatial nature of memory
- collective versus individual memory

2.2.1 Memory as experienced through material objects

In this section I examine the nuanced ways that memory is experienced through material objects. The importance of material objects within social science study (Latour 2000) has focussed on the constitution of memory and emotions attached to specific objects (Horton and Kraftl 2012). As such, memories can be built from absent objects and people, but the memories are freely interpreted to an individualistic perspective and the responses often speak of a particularly lived experience, both positive and negative, and can be material manifestations of absence. Through objects and the associations people make with them, they are what Avery Gordon (1997), as noted by DeSilvey (2007), calls ‘complex personhood’ where we make ourselves up as we go along, “with what we are given and what we cannot reach” (Gordon, 1997:4). The objects expose potential
as they are interpreted by people revealing different levels of consumption and meaning. So we encounter other people’s lives through objects in numerous ways – objects that people leave behind or purposely place in certain locations - and we weave our own memories into these objects, as memory and affect merge in place as well as objects, and through this people “encounter their own lives, in places and in moments sensory experience [is] interwoven with memories of past events” (Bull and Leyshon, 2010: 126-127). Philo (2003) referred to the effect of objects on visitors to heritage sites as the ‘lines of connection’ (2003:15), although in this context the author was referring to the impact of material objects from childhood to adulthood, the same concept of the complex way in which objects affect and shape the development of identities across the life course is still relevant.

Furthermore, the relationship between memory and objects can be defined as either the object being the subject of a memory – the memory of the place itself in the form of a souvenir – or an object that acts as a trigger to recall an absent place or person. Different types of memory engender different emotional responses; evidence of this can be found in the careful management of objects at National Trust sites and the response engendered in terms of evocation and nostalgia is explored in the findings section 4.1. The selection of what we see and what we do not see, and thus the memories those objects could engender in us, is created by the National Trust and other heritage bodies which Connerton (1989:1) describes as a “control of a society’s memory [which] largely conditions the hierarchy of power”. In this way recollection of the past is not for its own sake but as a tool to bolster different aims and agendas (Fentress and Wickham, 1992).

The power of the involuntary memories that objects can hold can often have a personal, individual significance and can be powerful as shown in the examples explored in section 4.1. Generating this emotional response enables people to build a connection with a site, either through the memory of the experience they had on the day or a memory that was triggered by something they saw on the day which reminded them of something absent.
2.2.2 The social and spatial nature of memory

Kathleen Stewart in her book *Ordinary Affects* (2007) describes how memories ‘pick up density and texture’. Memories are, therefore, not something that are formed and remain fixed but rather are fluid as Caitlin DeSilvey, making reference to Stewart, describes:

“Memories do not emerge as discrete entities, but as bundles of potential connections, linked by associative pathway.”
(DeSilvey, 2012:55)

Anderson (2004) uses music - playing and listening – to describe how memory is enabled through a set of corporeal skills that incorporate particular practices but do not produce either a representation of the past or a defined memory. Rather it is the ‘habit memory’ (Bergson 1983) where the body experiences what Casey (1987) describes as pre-reflexive, tacit and pre-articulate dimension of experience. It is through such practices that place is generated and the mechanism through which “we invest ourselves in the immediate surroundings that we inhabit” (Hetherington 2003: 1941). While these ‘registers of memory’ (Lorimer 2006) describe memory through different formats and from different triggers, the workings of involuntary memory are obscure and reference what Duff (2010) describes as the “affective atmospheres [that] capture the emotional feel of place, as well as the store of action-potential” (2010: 881).

The literature on how memories are made through social and spatial experiences describe how memories not only enable and inform the performative moment (Jones, 2011) but how there is an interplay between the two as memories come into our conscious, often unprompted, and inform the present performative moment. As memories well up in the present moment they are not static but are reworked in light of the current practice. In her study of Irish music, Frances Morton (2005) describes how spaces are created through the “embodied and expressive ways of knowing, being and communicating” (Morton 2005: 662). This is not a static state of play, but rather the performance acts back on those involved through the spaces of the now, created by and through the music, and thus
constitute a sense of belonging and understanding for many people who participate in their making. This production and reproduction of place (Lefebvre, 1991), through practices such as Irish music playing, produces emotions and affects or, as Thrift frames it, bodies are inevitably affected by place such that place “seems to be a vital element in the constitution of affect” (Thrift, 2004: 60).

Another aspect of social and spatial memory is what psychologist Bartlett (1997) refers to as a ‘reconstructive’ as opposed to a ‘reproductive’ characteristic of memory where something is remembered derived from “our existing presuppositions, expectations and our ‘mental state’” (Foster, 2009). People impose meaning on what they observe and in this social constructionist way this influences a memory of events. There is an inter-relational process where past experiences, including spatial textures and affective registers, inform our being in the present (Jones, 2011):

“the trajectories of the past-into-present which are always in place through various interconnecting ecological, corporeal, material, cultural, economic and memorial flows” (Jones, 2011: 876)

I have stressed the importance of capturing the present, through the taking place of practice and performance, in my methodological approach in chapter 3, as a way of accessing spaces in the ‘now’ (Morton 2010). This approach has given me access to the embodied and expressive ways of knowing, being and communicating within a space; however, this is not at the expense of ignoring and not recognising what makes up this present which carries “syntheses of all the past within itself at various levels of contraction” (Dodgshon 2008: 304).

2.2.3 Collective and individual memory

Memories operate at both a personal and collective level and these two processes overlap and inter-relate. On an individual level memory is rarely, if at all, a veridical copy of the world but rather a constructionist approach describes memory as the combined influences of the world and the person’s own ideas and
expectations (Foster, 2009). Our personal values, thoughts, goals, feelings, expectations, moods and past experiences contribute to how we select and construct our memories of events.

Hoelscher and Alderman (2004) use the example of Robben Island, South Africa, a high-security prison exemplifying the inhumanity of apartheid, turned into a world heritage site as a symbol of peace and reconciliation in the post-apartheid era. The authors note how the transformation from political prison to tourist attraction taps into ‘the shared dimension of remembering and the equally social nature of how space is produced’ (Hoelscher and Alderman, 2006). Robben Island has now become a place of remembrance symbolising reconciliation and forgiveness and, as such, underlies the notion of how a place can be both a material entity and symbolic and, crucially, how the sense of the place can be fluid.

As Schein (2006) notes discussing monuments, memories do not exist in a static state with a fixed and established meaning, but rather they are ‘momentarily realised in a nexus of social relations’ (Schein 2006). This change in the meaning we give to monuments reflects a wider social attitude and also shows how memory raises the question of power as individuals and groups recall the past to bolster different aims and agendas (Fentress and Wickham 1992; Le Goff 1992; Trouillot 1995). Furthermore, this utilization of the past is often an activity anchored to a place; French historian Pierre Nora’s (1989) concept of lieux de memoire gave prominence to the way in which the act of collective memory is attached to sites that are concrete and physical such as burial places, battlefields, prisons – to show how memory is spatially constituted - as well as non-material sites such as celebrations, rituals that ‘provide an aura of the past’ (Hoelscher and Alderman, 2006).

The influence of other academic areas in the study of memory can be seen from French sociologist Halbwarchs who viewed memory as a social activity acting both as an expression and binding force of group identity (Crang and Travlou, 2001). This concept of collective memory references a shared dimension of remembering and the social nature of how space and sense of place is produced (Hoelscher and Alderman, 2004).
2.3 Rhythm

Rhythms exist in multiple forms such as calendrical, diurnal, lunar, lifecycle, seasonal and mechanical. In addition to rhythms there are also pulsing flows and movement of people around place that make up the practice and patterns evident in both the daily round of the urban environment (Natter, 1994), as well as movement of visitors around heritage sites (du Cros, 2008). In this way places evolve through circulation, combination and recombination of people and things (Crang, 2001). This is explored in more detail in section 4.3 which examines the rhythms of people around and within the fieldwork sites.

These different rhythms, flows and movements interconnect and overlap in different ways. Some of the rhythms exist in the form of daily, weekly and yearly cycles and these overlap with linear rhythms of time (Crang, 2001). As with the previous theme, memory, rhythms exist at a collective level such as the days of the week and months of the year, and are accepted as a fixed entity within our society; they also exist at a personal level such as a birthday or anniversary. Lefebvre’s book *rhythmanalysis* is a way of exploring how these everyday temporal structures and processes (re)produce connections between individuals and the social (Edensor, 2010). Within this focus on multiple rhythms there is also power which is “instantiated in unreflexive, normative practices but also side-stepped, resisted and supplemented by other dimensions of everyday experience.” (Edensor, 2010: 2)

Lefebvre’s *rhythmanalysis* focuses on the music made by diverse beats forming the experience of place. It inscribes a sense of localities marked by their own temporalites or conjunction of tempos. In this way rhythms of time suggest activity as defining place; however this attempt to, as Crang describes, “unpack the phenomenology of the place as object, time-geography too often ended up dealing with the measurable and evident – indeed, the mappable” (Crang, 2001: 192). Through this type of mapping the sense of rhythm and repetition connects the routinisation with the suggestion of societal pressures and individual life. However, it is not simply a matter of mapping time on to space where everyday life and places are ‘self-contained and self-present’ activities (Crang, 2001) but rather
the connection of future and past, where the attention to cycles, to flux and repetition in and through places is a more useful view of time-space.

This section begins by examining the literature on rhythm focussing on (but not limited to) Lefebvre’s (2004) seminal book *Rhythmanalysis* as a touchstone for current thinking about timespace, place and everyday life. I then move on to examine two further aspects of rhythm – temporality and mobility - which provide a framework for investigating how rhythm shapes human experience and pervades life and place (Edensor, 2010).

In his book *Rhythmanalysis* (first published in English in 2004) Lefebvre describes rhythm as existing “everywhere there is interaction between a place, a time and an expenditure of energy” (Lefebvre, 2004: 15). Lefebvre expands by describing how the differences within repetition constitutes rhythm, and the two types of rhythm – cyclical and linear - where the former describes repetition of a cosmic origin, as Lefebvre frames it, such as days and nights, hours and months, season and years with each cyclical rhythm having a predetermined period of recurrence. Whereas the linear, by contrast, defines itself through “the consecution and reproduction of the same phenomenon…at regular similar intervals” (*ibid* 90). Additionally, rhythms may be nested within each other: for example, music played from a program on television at regular intervals throughout the day, or week, is an example of a nested rhythm.

Although rhythms exist at different levels in the everyday, and are a production of everyday life, they cannot, as Lefebvre identifies, exist without “repetition in time and space, without reprises, without returns, in short, without measure” (Lefebvre 2004:6). A measure is part of a social order (Cresswell, 2010) and it is the social - this interaction between people in rhythmic conventions - often embedded and embodied, that shape the lives and spaces of individuals and groups. As Ingold describes it, “rhythm, then, is not a movement but a dynamic coupling of movements” (Ingold, 2011: 60). However Ingold also stresses that rhythm is not monotonous but operates in an environment where nothing is quite the same from moment to moment. The result is a series of “diverse beats forming the
experience of place” (Crang, 2010) and I use this dynamic, rather than inert, sense of place throughout this literature review.

Rhythms other than Lefebvre’s cyclical and linear exist, and while I do not intend to list every one of these here exhaustively I will examine those rhythms that are pertinent to my aim of investigating how people engage with place. I start by examining temporality and temporal flows and then examine mobility.

2.3.1 Temporality

Temporality can be described as the “routine, daily flows of people through space and place” (Edensor, 2010) and operates within seasonal and annual rhythms creating a sense of place. Rhythms of people contribute to this sense of place through depicting, performing and sensing rhythm in an ensemble of normative and counter rhythms (Lefebvre, 2004).

Temporality and rhythm are inextricably linked. Crang (2001) describes temporality by examining time and space not simply as containers of action, but as a sense of becoming: “a sense of temporality as action, as performance and practice, of difference as well as repetition” (Crang, 2001: 187). May and Thrift (2001) expand on this definition of temporality by describing how the nature and experience of social time is both multiple and heterogeneous and that the manner of its construction, which they define as “the means by which a particular sense of time comes into being and moves forward to frame our understandings and actions” (Crang, 2001: 45), is both multiple and dynamic. Extending this is the concept of ‘networks of time’ (May and Thrift 2001) which eschews the idea that place is static (Edensor 2010) and views it as part of infinitely complex spatial networks (Massey 1995), in which places are always in a process of becoming, “seething with emergent properties, but usually stabilized by regular patterns of flow that possess particular rhythmic qualities whether steady, intermittent, volatile or surging.” (Simpson, 2012:2). The seasons are an example of such a temporality and are embodied in our practices but, as Ingold (1993) stresses,:
“We do not consult these cycles, as we might consult a wrist-watch, in order to time our own activities, for the cycles are inherent in the rhythmic structure of the activities themselves.” (Ingold, 1993: 68)

In addition, woven within this concept of place-temporality is a “sense of time that results from immediate sensual experiences” (Wunderlich, 2010: 46) and involves feelings that define a relationship to place and is a temporal experience that has sensual values and is affectively remembered. The very act of perception gives meaning to a place, enables us to experience a place and to discover the temporal, sensual and affective qualities of a place. This is supported by Simpson (2012) who notes how time-space can be rethought as produced in practice rather than as a vessel in which practices play out.

Flow, as opposed to rhythm, describes a quality of temporal experience characterised by the “experiential consciousness of order and tempo” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988: 30) and is often tied in with the activity being performed. As such, flow often occurs when people sense and practice time whilst they are engaged and absorbed in their everyday life practices and are not consciously thinking about time but apprehending it as a flow of experience (Wunderlich, 2010). People lose themselves in a sensuous and affective involvement and enjoy being in the flow and enjoy losing a sense of time; this was evident in my fieldwork and detailed in section 4.3. The sense of flow generated through the sites engendered a sense of place-temporality and through the practices of people observed at the fieldwork sites a sense of flow was evident. Although it should be stressed that temporal flow is a certain experience of time for people, but not limited to people as flow can also include a flow of a tidal river which also has a rhythm to it, in the form of tides.

There has been increased interest in practice within the social sciences (Simpson, 2010) where the focus is to take everyday practices seriously and rather than viewing them as static, attention is given to the ways practices are “contextualized and given a frame” (Cresswell, 2003:280). Given this emerging interest in practice, there is a need for new “methodological horizons” (Lorimer, 2010: 244) which has been evidenced in Latham’s (2003) work which uses the diary-interview
technique to imbue traditional research methodologies with “a sense of the
dependent, the practical, and being with practiceness” (Simpson, 2011:344). Also
responding to this need for more innovative methodological techniques to capture
performance and practice, Morton (2005) has developed a performance
ethnography to access the “non-verbal, expressive and emotive, non-cognitive
aspects of social practice and performance” (2005:663). The methods used in this
thesis for accessing these pre-consciousness themes of affect are explored more
fully in the examination of techniques in chapter 3.

2.3.2 Rhythms of mobility

Rhythms of mobility encompasses the mobilities that run through a place, and the
patterns of mobile flow that constitute the spatio-temporal character of a place, as
well as the regular rhythms of mobility (Jones, 2010). This focus on the rhythms of
mobility underlies how places are “ceaselessly (re)constituted by flows and never
reified or bounded” (Edensor, 2010: 5). Edensor (2010) identifies three senses in
which rhythms of mobility constitute place:

1. The mobilities that course through place as in Lefebvre’s (2004)
obervation of the stop-start rhythms of pedestrians and traffic, and
variations over the diurnal cycle and contributing to the spatio-temporal
character of place.

2. Regular rhythms of mobility, such as commuting, produces a mobile sense
of place what Sheller and Urry (2006) refer to as a distinct embodied,
material and social ‘dwelling-in-motion’. While this type of mobility rhythm
has a particular rhythmic shape, I examine the rhythms of mobility not from
a commuting journey perspective, but from visitors’ movement around a site
in chapter 4.

3. The third mobility rhythm is enmeshed within the above two and Edensor
describes it as the rhythm associated with the mechanic pulses laid down
by forms of transport such as the pulse of an engine or the metronomic
swish of windscreen wipers. My interpretation of this mobile vehicle form of rhythm is to consider the mobile rhythm of walking which is discussed by several participants at Woodchester Park in chapter 4. The mobile sense of place is shaped by walking as a mode of travel and highlights the significance of movement as Cresswell (2006:6) notes "movement is rarely just movement; it carries with it the burden of meaning" and in this way movement contributes to the meaningful shaping of social time and space (Cresswell, 2006). Maddrell (2011) highlights how such agency is charged by other factors:

“mobilities being experienced through bodies and sense, inflected by practice, belief, emotion and affect, but also by the constraints and agencies afforded by socio-economic, cultural and political context, as well as physical capacities.” (Maddrell, 2011: 16)

The embodied practices that are referenced by these three types of mobilities are ‘more-than-representational’ (Lorimer, 2006) experiences that engage affective registers. This has been part of both my methodological approach in the ‘walking with video’ as noted in section 3.4.2 as well as part of my findings when participants described their experiences of walking around Woodchester and other forms of embodied engagement such as gardening discussed in chapter 4.

Simpson (2012) identifies that actual embodied experience, and the capacity to affect and be affected by a multitude of other rhythms emphasizes the entangling rhythms that circulate within and outside of the body and contributes to the "corporeal capacity to sense rhythms, sensations that organise the subjective and cultural experience of place." (Edensor, 2010).

2.4 Escape

In the literature reviewed, escape is manifest in many ways from seeking escape through the tourism experience (Ross and Iso-Ahola, 1991; Graburn 1983; Tuan,
1998) to escape found in places as destinations such as a garden (Tilley, 2009) to more dark forms of escape from self through suicide (Baumeister, 1990) and gambling (Blaszczynski and Nower, 1999). To reflect this wide range of escape literature I have structured this section in the following way: escape from outside pressures, escape and nostalgia and escape and place.

For purposes of clarity I have also made the distinction between escape ‘from’ and escape ‘to’ throughout this section, where escape from describes the motivation to get away, either in a physical sense or mentally escaping from a situation. This form of escape could be from the pressure of work or caring for a sick family member, and in the act of getting away the pressure is ameliorated. Escape to is where the destination becomes the motivating force, for example, escaping to the seaside periodically because of the need to experience the sea; in this form of escape the destination becomes the escape.

2.4.1 Escape from outside pressures

In order to achieve this sense of escape we seek, as Urry (1990) frames it: “experiences which are separate from everyday experiences, which exist outside our ‘known communities’ and places.” (Urry, 1990: 23). This type of escape suggests a physical escape from a place but could also reference an escape to an alternative mental state. This dual reading of escape acknowledges the overlap between escape from and escape to and both terms are used interchangeably through this chapter and in chapter 4. However, in order to explore some of the more nuanced meanings of escape I have used the terms escape to and from as a starting point.

This desire to escape from the ordinary, whether by being physically removed or mentally removed, is rooted in a sense of restlessness that Crouch (1994) attributes to the cultural shift towards post-modernity and that Cohen and Taylor (1992) describe as a way of vacating ourselves:
“Relativism and self-awareness will not always solve the problem of being unhappy with our routines and our scripts. And our life scripts will not always make room for our fantasies. We look elsewhere to cope with routine, boredom, lack of individuality, frustration. We want a genuine escape, a flight to an area in which we can temporarily absent ourselves from paramount reality, find ourselves out of play, and assemble our identity in peace or with new and more powerful symbolic resources.”

(Cohen and Taylor 1992: 112)

The concept of escape through an alternative mental state has been explored in the literature on escape ranging from meditation to drink, as Joad (1937: 76) asserted: “hiking has replaced beer as the shortest cut out of Manchester”, or drugs or gambling (Blaszczynski and Nower, 2002) where persistent gambling is pursued as a means of emotional escape through dissociation on mood. Similarly, literature on suicide (Baumeister, 1990) identified escape from self as an often down played but common reason for suicide. Although persistent gambling and suicide are extreme behaviours and manifestations of escape from something, these examples have similarities in how escape ‘from’ is used within this theme as a motivator for visitor engagement. As Baumeister (ibid) describes: “a person responds to this unhappy state by trying to escape from meaningful thought into a relatively numb state of cognitive deconstruction” (Baumeister, 1990: 93).

Although referring to the most extreme form of escape in the form of suicide, the concept of escaping from an unhappy state of mind was also cited as a reason for volunteering at the National Trust by some of the volunteers I interviewed and this is further examined in section 4.4.

2.4.2 Escape and nostalgia

Nostalgia is commonly defined as a longing, or harking back to other places and times and the redemptive, or restorative, powers of such a process, as Rowlands and Tilley (2006) describe it:
“the failures of the present must be apprehended through the acquisition of some redemptive history that promises eventual salvation.” (Rowlands and Tilley, 2006: 501)

Nostalgia is more than simply memory as it often involves a bittersweet longing for an idealised past which no longer exists (Davis, 1979) or as Goulding, (1999) describes it, memory with the pain taken away. However, Rowlands and Tilley (2006) argue that nostalgia is a form of sadness without an object and that it exists only as a narrative “which attaches itself to an impossibly pure belief in the experience of a utopian origin” (Rowlands and Tilley, 2006: 504). As such:

“the point of desire which the nostalgic seeks is in fact the absence that is the very generating mechanism of desire – nostalgia is the desire for desire.” (Stewart, 1984:23)

Nostalgia is also linked with the present and while there is some literature suggesting that nostalgia belongs to a personal experience and a negative appraisal of self in the present (Davis, 1979; Kamptner, 1989). The rise of nostalgia has also been ascribed to feelings of wider societal alienation and fragmentation in the present, resulting from social and moral decline (Laenan, 1989; Haraven and Langenbach, 1981; Kasinitz and Hillyard, 1995; Strauth and Turner, 1985; Kaplan, 1987) and feelings of loss of a golden age (Strauth and Turner, 1985; Chase and Shaw, 1989). Urry analyses the conditions when nostalgia is most keenly felt as:

“times of discontent, anxiety or disappointment and yet the times for which we feel most nostalgia were themselves periods of considerable disturbance.” (Urry, 2002: 99)

Whatever the root of nostalgia the desire for it has been recognised by the National Trust which has made the past accessible and proven that we no longer need to have lived a past in order to feel nostalgic for it (Chase and Shaw, 1989).
Nostalgia not only references escape through the past but also the present and the future. Tuan (1998) uses Disneyland as an example of extreme escape where there is an “erasure of the present in favor of not only a mythic past but also a starry future” through the use of technology to produce “wonder and illusion far beyond that which could be achieved in earlier times” (Tuan, 1998: 27). Tuan sees this type of culture as an escape through the unwillingness to accept the constraints of reality. In her work on heritage transformation in Central and Eastern Europe, Murzyn (2008) examines how the nostalgia for the old regimes has given rise to socialist sites becoming tourist destinations which offer a “somewhat distorted, narrative of the communist past, simplifying the complex socialist experience into one digestible by foreign tourists” (Murzyn, 2008: 337). As Graham and Howard (2008) note “the meaning of the past in the present that unites all heritage lies at the very contested core of who we are and who others want us to be.” (Graham and Howard, 2008: 13)

Although a somewhat esoteric view it does resonate with the motivators for escape by visitors to National Trust sites seeking an escape into a different culture that provides detachment, or as Crouch (1994) describes a cultural shift:

“...of extreme sensations and fleeting movements through space, of experiences which are separated from everyday experiences which exist outside our ‘known communities’ and places.” (Crouch, 1994:93)

The literature on nostalgia and escape also references objects, as can be seen in the work of Horton and Krafl (2012) who give an autoethnographic account of clearing cupboards “sifting through shelves full of life’s materiality” and, in turn, reflecting on personal memories and emotions. Although the process of going through cupboards enables the authors to reflect on the contents and “wallow in nostalgia” they also reference how:

“there is the feeling of suffocation that is caused by sensing that one is drowning in 'stuff' “. (Horton and Krafl, 2012: 40)
However, it is through this cathartic process of clearing out cupboards, of either their own ‘stuff’ and that of recently deceased relatives, that the authors find a ‘kind of distance’ between themselves and the people or events they evoke and a sense of release as new entities clear old objects. Maddrell (2003) describes how the process of donating a deceased person’s objects to a charity shop can be seen as part of the grieving process and an opportunity to:

“reinscribe the meaning of those goods from inalienable and therefore indisposable (because of the personal association) to alienable and disposable because the goods continue their ‘social life’ via an avenue approved by the deceased.” (Horne and Maddrell, 2002: 68)

An objectified form of nostalgia within the National Trust environment can be seen in the form of souvenirs (discussed in this chapter in more detail in objects, section 2.7 and in the findings chapter section 5.4) which represent not only tangible evidence of a visit but also a memory of experiences, often shared with family and friends. Through this mechanism the sense of escape derived from a visit to one of the sites can be extended or re-lived at home either in the simple act of remembering or through re-telling, or through objects bought home from the site. The fact that visits to National Trust sites then become a commodity and can be relived, and possibly embellished in their retelling, does not detract from its escape function, as Cohen and Taylor note:

“we arrange the new landscape according to our fantasies and so what actually takes place there is not so important; the holiday experience can be transformed into something which looks like the cultural message it offers”

(Cohen and Taylor 1992: 135)

The above quote also raises the question of our quest for authenticity – as characterised by Crouch (1994) as something “that is demonstrably grounded in history and is celebrated as such” (p.93) but there is also the non-authentic, something that is not rooted in other associations and pasts (Hewison, 1987), but is enjoyed in its own right as something completely different and unconnected to the everyday. Visitors to National Trust sites thrive on this experience of the non-
authentic but while National Trust visitors are encouraged to “be stimulated by the sites and monuments that shape our history” (Dawe, 2013) this raises the subject of what identity of the site is being presented and to whom? The heritage of a site presented to a visitor may be different from that experienced by those who volunteer and work at the site, and even experienced differently by members of the same group.

2.4.3 Escape and place

In an examination of the literature on escape and place I begin by looking at how place is defined and, in particular, how emotion and affect play a role in the construction of place. Having defined place, I then examine the way in which escape from and to place is evidenced in literature.

Tim Cresswell defines how place is not just a thing but a way of seeing, knowing and understanding the world (Cresswell, 2004). Inherent within this definition are the attachments and connections between people and place that make place a dynamic, constantly changing phenomenon (which somehow retains a knowable form to people), rather than a fixed entity. Hetherington (1997) further explores the notion of place as “a place of movement” (Hetherington, 1997: 185) where places are about relationships between the networks of agents, humans and non-humans (Urry, 2005). Inherent within this network are emotions that are spatially articulated in many obvious and not so obvious ways. The role of emotions in both the construction and interpretation of place is evident in what Thrift (2001) describes as the complexities of being in the world (Thrift, 2001) which influence and inform the sense of place or as Casey (2010) frames it: “there is no place without self and no self without place” (Casey, 2010: 684). This quote suggests how we may seek to manage and care for ourselves through the places we inhabit and the theme of escape is approached against this understanding of emotional involvement between people and the lived geographies of place (Bondi, Davidson and Smith, 2005).
Acknowledging that places are formed on an on-going temporal process “where all manner of things combine in unique unfolding formation which remain interconnected to the wider world in terms of flows and connections in and out” (Jones and Garde-Hansen, 2010: 86), there are many concepts at play. These include memory and affect, and while memory is the focus of section 2.2 within this literature review, I now examine the role of affect within escape and place.

Inherent in the emotional involvement between people and place is the concept of affect described as the:

“unformed and unstructured intensities that, although not necessarily experienced by or possessed by a subject, correspond to the passage from bodily state to another and are therefore analysable in terms of their effects.” (McCormack, 2003)

As bodies are affected by a panoply of other bodies in any particular encounter this change in bodily states can be either positive, where the transfer of power from the affecting body to the affected body results in a positive effect, or negative where encounters involve a decrease in power of the affected body (Deleuze, 1988). In this way, affect is associated with place as affects generated or experienced in a place are dynamically involved in the production and reproduction of place (Lefebvre, 1991), or as Thrift frames it, bodies are inevitably affected by place such that place “seems to be a vital element in the constitution of affect” (Thrift, 2004: 60).

The destination as the focus of escape presents an examination of what is desired in a destination; for example, tourists to France seek out the 'homely, rustic cuisine' (Zukin, 1991), people get away to second homes in log cabins to celebrate 'family', and get together in 'street communities' after a drive through countryside in their caravans (Crouch, 1994). Escape then becomes an escape for home, not just to a new destination; and there is an often confusing mixture of homeliness and reassurance, of surprise and difference in leisure (Crouch, 1992). This can be witnessed in National Trust sites where there is a familiarity in and amongst the identity of sites where the same or similar objects – scones, tea, scarves, cards -
can be found in the shops and cafés between sites; objects that are not alien to us and may already be found in our homes.

Despite this quest for familiarity in escape to a destination, or maybe alongside it, the National Trust still seeks to evoke a sense that ‘something’ could happen as the following quote from a National Trust sponsored advertorial supplement in the Times newspaper demonstrates:

“We might dream of holidaying on a dramatic coast in West Wales, roaming the Yorkshire Dales or exploring an historic building newly open to the public. After a long and protracted winter, we must all long for fresh, and warm, air and for cheering experiences: to be stimulated by the sites and monuments that shape our history; to be swept along cliffs and hilltops; to be enchanted by gardens beginning to show off their seasonal best.”

(Dawe, 2013: 1a)

The emotional and evocative language used in this quote above – ‘dream of’, ‘exploring’, ‘stimulated by’, ‘enchanted by’ – is intended to engender an emotional response to the idea of a visit to a National Trust site, and create a sense of what might be possible on such a visit. This aspirational tone is set up early in the article with the sub title of ‘there are moments in time when treasured memories are made’. What is also of note in the above extract is the reference to the weather – ‘after a long and protracted winter’ – and how it is being used as the reason why we are all ‘long’(ing) for ‘fresh and warm air’ as if our bodies were deprived of the very oxygen that keeps us alive and a visit to a National Trust site would not only physically restore us, but also emotionally revive us. In this way the Trust is attempting to get us to form an emotional connection in the escapes that we make to their sites.

Although escape can be achieved by visiting different physical locations it can also be located in our immediate and more familiar environments that can represent a refuge from the exigencies of everyday life. For example, escape can take the form of gardening in our own gardens which, as Tilley (2009) notes, has not only physical benefits but also represents an escape from others:
“Many gardeners find gardening relaxing and therapeutic precisely because they can escape from others and be on their own. It is an escape from talk and having to be sociable and exchange pleasantries.”

(Tilley, 2009: 182)

There is also a complex interplay between where or what people are seeking to escape from and the place and/or experience they seek to escape to. This also brings into play the qualities of the sites as places to escape to. In this sense the places are sites of refuge for people and research has shown (Ross and Iso-Ahola, 1991) that a significant determinant of the quality of the tourist experience is the individual’s cognitions and feelings and the authors identify escape as a motive for leisure behaviour. Escape is defined both in terms of escape from personal issues such as “personal problems, troubles, difficulties, and failures” (Ross and Iso-Ahola, 1991: 227) and from inter-personal issues such as “co-workers, friends, family members” (ibid).

The authors go on to cite the seeking of psychological (intrinsic) rewards, in addition to escape, as the motivational factors for participation in leisure activities, again dividing the rewards into personal – self-determination, sense of competence, challenge, learning – and the interpersonal reward of social contact. The psychological benefits of recreational travel emanate from the interplay of both the act of escaping the routine or stressful environment and the seeking of opportunities for certain psychological rewards (Iso-Ahola, 1983:55).

Underpinning the concept of escape from is the notion that it is necessary to go away (either physically or mentally) in order to get away. This has been addressed in tourism studies; for example Graburn (1989) notes, regarding the physical sense of escape, that it represents an escape from the acknowledged norms of behaviour in our culture where the environments we are familiar with – work place, daily commute to work, home - represent the drudgery of everyday life. Travelling to another destination constitutes a break from this everyday routine of life and, as such, it provides a counterpoint to ordinary life (Cohen and Taylor, 1992); this is also referred to in bereavement literature as the ‘geographical cure’ (Maddrell,
2012) where a physical, spatial removal from the place associated with loss offers a brief respite from grief.

2.5 Connection and belonging

The notions of belonging and connection are a central aspect of how we define ourselves and construct our sense of social identity (SIROC, 2007). The drive to relate to other people, to places, to social institutions and to self is to forge a sense of belonging which Maslow (1943) defined as a basic human need, ranking it third out of five in his hierarchy (the first two being physiological and safety needs and the fourth and fifth esteem and self-actualization).

Social interaction and harmonious relationships are fundamentally pleasant (Leary, 2010) and people seek to interact even when the encounter has no other purpose than to associate with others. However, it should also be acknowledged that the formation of networks can serve to exclude as well as include, and to consolidate power as well as to share power (Bourdieu 1986). Bourdieu developed a framework which argues that social capital can generate both social cohesion and social conflict.

Another reason people seek connection is to obtain support in a stressful situation (Hill 1987) in the form of sympathy and compassion they receive as part of that connection. However, research (Schachter, 1959) also indicates that it is the mere presence of other people that can reduce fear or stress and this was clearly expressed by volunteer participants seeking escape from a bereavement or loneliness.

2.5.1 Meanings of belonging to place

The need to belong is a powerful human motive in the desire to form and maintain a range of bonds - social, topographical, spiritual bonds (Baumeister and Leary,
1995). Furthermore, people’s sense of self encompasses socially significant others (Aron et al., 2004) and this concept of social support and reciprocity that is attributed to belonging is defined by Anant (1966) as a:

“sense of personal involvement in a social system so that persons feel themselves to be an indispensable and integral part of the system.”

Anant (1966, p. 21):

In this way we are motivated to not only affiliate with others but for others to value and accept us (Leary 2010) and this was evidenced in my findings and described in detail in chapter five.

Belonging can be constructed in relation to place and the significance and meaning of this can alter over time at an individual, group or cultural level. Essentially, place can be described as “a spatial location that is assigned meanings and values by society and individuals” (Halpenny 2010:409) while Lewicka describes place as being a “meaningful location” (2011: 209). Rogers and Bragg (2012) view the term ‘sense of place’ as a more psychological term referring to the meanings, feelings and sense of relationship that people attribute to a particular place.

Inherent in these definitions of belonging to place is the reflexive nature between people and place and the sense of belonging that is established through such relationships. Belonging is linked into another theme – memory (as discussed in the findings, section 4.1 as well as 2.2) – as places are where people return to and remember. Often this is both a literal past and an imagined past projected on to the area and in this way we construct our own identity of place. This reflexive aspect to this relationship underpins how we invest aspects of dimensions of self, such as the mixture of feelings about specific physical settings (Raymond et al., 2010). This investment of self in the form of place belonging can be an attachment that can be both negative and positive (Halpenny, 2010).
2.5.2 Meanings of belonging to people

The level of interaction that people seek out is nuanced and can be as strong as fostering a sense of belonging, but it can also be less emotionally bound as in the form of connection, discussed in the next section, 2.5.3. This underlies the emotional aspect of belonging and how emotional experiences can be seen as affective outcomes (Paterson, 2005) where affect is referred to in the energetic capabilities of a body, in a manner which transcends but nevertheless remains attentive to shifting contours of feeling (McCormack, 2003). As Thrift (2004) frames it:

“emotions form a rich moral array, through which and with which the world is thought and which can sense different things even though they cannot always be named” (Thrift, 2004: 60)

Thrift (2004) describes how, rather than individualized emotions, affect is more attentive to both the embodied and intersubjective dimensions of human feeling (Paterson, 2005). In this way, our emotional lives are shaped by wider contexts of belonging that are, in turn, affected by others but there is a broader spectrum of entities, highlighted by actor-network theory and the significance of other life forms and objects in our everyday world. Importance should also be given to place as way of promoting awareness of non-human others and inanimate objects which shifts the frame of reference beyond humans alone and, instead, focuses on various forms of engagement and belonging between people and their environment (Thrift 1999). The self is understood as emerging within and through its relations to other people and events (Conradson, 2005) or in the “inhuman” or “transhuman” as Thrift (2004) describes:

“in which individuals are generally understood as effects of the events to which their body parts (broadly understood) respond and in which they participate.” (Thrift, 2004: 60)

Baumeister and Leary (1995) maintain that a strong sense of belonging has multiple and strong effects on emotional patterns as well as on cognitive
processes. Specifically, the authors propose that the need to belong has two main features:

“First, people need frequent personal contacts or interaction with the other person. Ideally, these interactions would be affectively positive or pleasant, but it is mainly important that the majority be free from conflict and negative affect. Second, people need to perceive that there is an interpersonal bond or relationship marked by stability, affective concern and continuation into the foreseeable future.” (Baumeister and Leary, 1995:500)

Viewed in this way the need to belong is something other than a need for mere affiliation. Furthermore, key to feeling a sense of belonging is the maintenance of enduring interpersonal bonds through engagement in frequent, positive interactions. This concern with belongingness is a powerful factor in shaping human thought; Baumeister and Leary (1995) highlight the links between the need to belong and cognitive processes, emotional patterns, behavioral responses and health and well-being. Even moderate levels of isolation from other people can increase the incidence of clinical depression and suicide ideation (Heinrich and Gullone, 2006).

2.5.3 Meanings of connection

While belonging can be regarded as an advanced form of social, physical and spiritual interaction in human behaviour, it is more difficult to construct connection as I found that in the literature the two terms were often used interchangeably. For example, Rogers and Bragg writing about the “power of connection: sustainable lifestyles and sense of place” (Rogers and Bragg, 2012:308) refer to connection in an emotional sense:

“Place attachment” specifically refers to people’s bond or connection to a place including a sense of belonging, and forms one aspect of “sense of place”. Rogers and Bragg (2012, 308)
The significant difference between the two terms is that connection can be viewed as a more fleeting sensation while belonging infers a more enduring experience. Raymond et al. (2010) exemplify this point when describing place identity as the ‘symbolic connections to place that define who we are’ (Raymond et al, 2010: 423) but they go on to describe how place dependence refers to ‘functional or goal-directed connections to a setting’ which more accurately describes the term connection as it is a more practical orientation. This is explored in the experiences of volunteers and their expressed sense of connection and belonging, as detailed in section 4.4.

Connection is often referred to in a social constructionist sense, where the level of social connectedness that develops between people over a period of time within a given place results in social bonding (Perkins and Long 2002) or as Raymond (2010) describes it:

“...the feelings of belongingness or membership to a group of people, as well as the emotional connections based on shared history, interests or concerns” Raymond (2010: 423)

This sense of connection at a group level is where cultural and historical belongings are established to mark out ‘ terrains of commonality that delineate the politics and social dynamics of ‘fitting in’ ” (Fortier, 1999:42). This is perhaps nearer to how connection can be described and suggests there are, as Walton et al (2012) describe, degrees of connection with ‘mere’ belonging which constitutes an entryway to a social relationship establishing ‘a minimal, even chance, trivial, or potential, social connection with unfamiliar others’ (Walton et al., 2012: 514) whereas more in depth social belonging has many factors including shared experiences, social norms and social feedback and validation.

Connection can occur through different mechanisms. For example, food can offer what Brown and Mussell (1984: 11) term ‘communities of affiliation’ where people are mobilised through their practice around food be that vegetarianism or anti-consumerism. In different ways food imports a sense of connection – through the practice of shopping for food or sitting down to eat with others, we articulate our
cultural place in the world, expressing a common or shared identity with others (Valentine, 1999) and mobilise a sense of community

It is worth noting in a discussion of connection that those who lack social connection with other humans may try to compensate by creating a sense of human connection with nonhuman agents. This may occur in at least two ways - by anthropomorphizing nonhuman agents such as nonhuman animals and gadgets to make them appear more humanlike and by increasing belief in commonly anthropomorphized religious agents (such as God) (Epley et al 2008).

2.6 The Senses

The role of our five bodily senses in everyday life is not only to provide us with information on the world around us and help orientate ourselves in space, but they also enable us to appreciate and make sense of specific qualities of different places (Rodaway, 1994) and even to understand how places are constituted through our bodies (Deleuze and Harrison 2000; Crouch 2003, Dewsbury, 2003). The everyday performances practiced at National Trust sites by visitors, volunteers and staff – the gardening jobs, taking tea with friends or walking around the site, for example – are embodied acts that demonstrate how subjects are not separate entities situated in place but rather are co-constituted through place (Duffy and Waitt, 2011). Senses play a role in this place-making process as we act and respond according to the information we receive through our senses.

Thinking beyond issues of representation to engage with the more complex “entanglements of practice” (Latham 2003) enables a more detailed examination of the phenomenological registers of the body (Anderson and Smith, 2001; Harrison, 2000; Thrift and Dewbury, 2000). Through our senses we are able to practice what Latham (2003) describes as the “event-ness” of life, or as Amin and Thrift (2002:6) frames it: “we live in a multi-verse, not uni-verse, in which intersection, transfer, emergence and paradox are central to life”.
There is also a non-cognitive and non-linguistic aspect to this being in the world (Duffy and Waitt, 2011) that infers that our understanding of the world through our senses is not wholly culturally constructed. Our interpretation of information we gather through our senses is also spatially and temporally contingent so we do not passively absorb sound or what we see but there is a process of actively attributing meaning to, responding to and interacting with what we hear, see, touch, smell and taste. However, intrinsic in this interpretation are our own values and experiences that inform this understanding as each of our bodily senses gathers information about the world and acts as a medium for a particular type of environmental information which is interpreted by the mind (Tuan 1993). This interpretation process is not only an individual experience but is also dependent on social or shared practice that can contribute to how we perceive what our senses tell us. There is also a degree of overlap between the five bodily senses, evident in my findings, section 5.3, where one sense is often dependent on more than a single dedicated organ and is realised through a number of sensory faculties, such as the intimate relationship between taste and smell (Cowart, 1989).

Senses, like feelings and experiences, are never simply owned by the person but rather they pass through us (Harrison 2000). In this way the body is seen not as an object but the condition and context through which a relation to an object is made (Grosz 1994). The outcome of using our senses is not only to process objects, people or places in the world around us but also to enable us heuristically to build our knowledge and understanding of the world as Tilley (2006) describes it:

“Taking on board the differing sensorial dimensions of things allows us to appreciate more fully the thickly constituted and multidimensional phenomenological experiences of artefacts, with which we always engage with the full range of our human senses, and the manner in which the things themselves become of such significance to our lives that they actively mediate how we think and how we act.” Tilley, 2006: 312

Crouch (2003) describes how sense and emergent sensations and gestures are one way of recognising feeling – the sense of touch enables us to know how a
Paterson (2007) makes the distinction between the manifold meanings of touch: “the immediacy of cutaneous contact with the skin surface” (2007:1) to more metaphorical senses of touch which can “cement an empathic or affective bond” (2007:3). In making this distinction, by the decoupling of ‘touch’ from mere ‘sensation’ touching encompasses the affective, the notion of touching as feeling. Feeling has a broader, wider potentially more vague meaning in which through webs of affect and other cultural frames we can become attuned.

The challenges inherent in an approach to practice-based research that aims to engage with senses arise from looking at a world that is constantly in “process: excessive, shifting and unstable” (Morton, 2005:664). This need to capture this ongoingness has led to the challenge which Thrift (1996) frames as:

> “a radical attempt to wrench the social sciences and humanities out of theory’s current emphasis on representation and interpretation by moving away from a view of the world based on contemplative models of thought and action towards theories of practice which amplify the flow of events.”
> (Thrift, 2000: 556)

Thrift is highlighting how the world unfolds through practice, although social research methods have failed to acknowledge this lived present as intelligible (Harrison, 2000). This focus on practice emphasizes the centrality of the body to experience and the requirement to attend to the ‘sensousness’ of practices (Thrift, 1997). Thrift also stresses the need to “get in touch with the full range of registers of thought by stressing affect and sensation” (Thrift, 2007:12). Simpson (2010) continues this by arguing for more attention to be given to the pre-cognitive aspects of embodied life.

This notion of “bodies-in-formation' steers away from what Dewsbury et al (2002) describe as the “embalming obsession with form and meaning” and instead focus on a “serial logic of the unfinished... an attentiveness to things taking place rather than such a logic which seeks to contain and deny movement” (Dewsbury et al, 2002: 438). Rather than seeking to dispel representation as an illusion, the authors maintain that ‘representations are to be apprehended as performative in
themselves; as doings’ which Lorimer usefully encapsulates in the term ‘more-than-representational’ (Lorimer 2005).

To access this full range of sensory registers and the pre-cognitive aspects of embodied life, I employed methods that enabled me to capture a range of sensorial, affectual and emotional experiences of participants. These methods were video to both record participant observation and as an interview tool for video diary and walking with video, which are described in the methods chapter, chapter 3. The purpose of using such methods was to engage with how people consume places:

“undertaken and executed with a primary concern for the meanings discovered, created and communicated as [they] moved through geographical space” (Adler, 1989: 1368)

How this then gave meaning to that movement is explained in the research (section 4.5) that has suggested that what motivates people to visit different countries, different cultures or go to a National Trust site goes beyond the visual consumption, or ‘collectors of gazes’ (Abram et al., 1997:8), and is rooted in accessing experiences at “emotional, visceral and complex sensual level” (Harrison, 2001:163)

2.6.1 Sight

Sight plays a significant part in the consumption of tourist sites and in a broader context the role of vision also is important in understanding society. The work of Urry (1990) and Rose (1993) has served to bring debates concerning the constitution of the looking subject (Crang, 1997) into the social sciences. Rose (2012) focuses on the way that the representations, the ‘made meanings’ as she refers to them, structure the way we behave in our everyday lives and she argues that the way the world is rendered through visual means – television programmes, advertisements, public culture, moves, newspaper pictures – is never an innocent representation of life. These representations are never a transparent window on
the world but rather they offer an interpretation of the world and, as such, Rose (2012) suggests a distinction can be made between vision and visuality where vision is what the human is physiologically capable of seeing and visuality refers to what is seen and how it is seen is culturally constructed (Rose, 2012).

Thus, the visuality of landscape, as authors such as Cosgrove (1985) have argued, has been shaped by high art, literature and other notions such as familiarity and comfort, and concerns the creation of a distanced vista. This suggests that the world is made visible or into an object of knowledge through the subjects who are doing the ‘knowing’ and observing (Crang, 1995). This concept is extended by Urry (1990) whose study of tourists gazing on a landscape focuses on the practice:

“because of the universalization of the tourist gaze, all sorts of places (indeed almost everywhere) have come to construct themselves as objects of the tourist gaze”

Urry (1990:125)

Urry develops this idea of visual representation as a quest for authentic experience, where visitors are not seeking authenticity so much as seeking to play with the idea of the production of the authentic.

Visual representations enable a particular time-space configuration as the present moment is frozen and made available for a future audience separated in time and space. However it is not just reprinting a place or a landscape, it is seizing a particular moment in a place and communicating this experience in this place at this particular time to an audience or viewer in another place and time.

Moreover Bourdieu (1990) notes how often actual tourists appear in a diminutive way in the foreground of a shot taken to include all the salient hallmarks of a visited sight and often the tourist has turned their back on the site to face the camera – to record that they were there. I found and recorded evidence of this occurring at National Trust sites and further explore this phenomenon in my findings chapters.
Just as the viewing of a photo is an abstraction of the photo, the viewing of the film becomes another form of place and through the ‘virtual intimacy’ (Biella, 2009) the viewer feels, she or he becomes “part of and engaged corporeally, affectively and intellectually in an ethnographic place. This would engage the viewer’s own cultural, biographical and scholarly experience and knowing” (Pink, 2009: 140)

In engaging with existing culturally specific categories as contexts through which to produce meaning, audiences are invited to engage with empathies, intimacies, self-reflexivity and intellectual engagements that enable understanding of others. Although it is not possible to know what audiences will come to know through such encounters, a consideration of audience practices should involve accounting for the memories and knowing that audiences bring to any ethnographic representation (Pink, 2009). I will now examine the relationship between audiences and the interpretation of what they view.

2.6.2 Vision and audiencing

The concept of audiencing within cultural studies traces its lineage to Stuart Hall’s ‘audience studies’ where visual signs can affirm the dominant ideological or institutional structure of a society by offering what Hall (1982) called the text’s preferred meaning. Although referring to television audiences, Hall argues that audiences do not just passively absorb messages contained in the media, but actively make sense of them in a decoding process. Through this process audiences bring their own cultural knowledge and competencies that have been acquired in previous social experiences and which are drawn on in the act of interpretation (Moores, 1993). Moorley (2003) used interviews to understand how television audiences decoded programmes “not simply for the access that it gives to the linguistic terms and categories…through which respondents construct their words and their own understandings of their activities.” (2003: 181). While interviews as a method are discussed more fully in chapter 3, it is worth highlighting how interviews, as part of an ethnographic approach to data gathering, are what Gillespie (2005) describe as a window on to “audiences in their full sociological complexity” (Gillespie, 2005: 152) and what Rose (2012) refers to as a
method ideally suited “for exploring the way the active interpretation of the mass media takes place in the richness of everyday contexts” (Rose, 2012: 279). Although referencing the mass media, this quote and the process of audiencing is relevant to this thesis because the emphasis is on interpretation undertaken by audiences on images. Similarly in this thesis the focus is on material, visual objects that can be seen, watched, touched and carried (Rose, 2012). The art anthropologist Alfred Gell (1998) argues that such objects are “intended to change the world rather than encode symbolic propositions about it” (1998:6) and Rose (2012) comments that Gell is more interested in the practical mediatory role or art objects in the social process, rather than with the interpretation of objects ‘as if’ they were texts. The theme of objects is more fully explored in this chapter – section 2.7 – as well as in the findings, chapter 5, but the purpose of this focus on audience is to draw attention to the way in which audiencing is a useful visual methodology, as it is directly concerned with how visual images can produce and reproduce social power relations.

2.6.3 Sound

The concept of ‘soundscapes’ has been used by geographers and others to bring out the inherently spatial aspects of a range of auditory environments (Anderson et al, 2005). De Nora (2000) takes a sociological perspective in demonstrating how enmeshed music is within everyday life, and clearly draws a direct link between the importance of music and the construction of the self. Indeed, it is through modalities of emotion/affect and the senses that the materialities of music and sound achieve effects (Anderson et al, 2005). The role of memory is also key to the interpretation of sound and can act in different ways as described by DeNora:

“At times, actors may engage in this appropriation process with deliberation, knowing how certain music works on them from past experience. But at other times, music may take actors unaware” (DeNora, 2000:162). This approach counteracts the ‘deadening effects’ of representational modes of
thinking that have long dominated geography (Thrift and Dewsbury 2000). Thrift and Dewsbury draw attention to “the flow and practice of everyday life as embodied, as caught up with and committed to the creation of affect” (Thrift and Dewsbury 2000: 415).

While the work of Paul Simpson (2009) is not seeking to abandon meaning and interpretation, as he goes to some length to point out, rather he is striving to develop an understanding that is more complex than interpretation alone (Gumbrecht, 2004). Drawing on NRT, Simpson refers to the centrality of affect from the “not-already-qualified registers of experience present within everyday practice” (Simpson, 2009:2558). This builds on work that focuses on how listening occurs through our bodies (Smith 2000; Duffy 2011). By focusing on the sound’s materiality “its body, its timbre and about the resonance these produce” (Simpson, 2009:2559) attention is paid to the “creative tension of self and world” and to “the materialities and sensibilities with which we see (Wylie, 2006: 478). This tension between the self and the world moves away from a value that is held outside of experience and pays attention to the singularity of sound itself and the effect of sound each time it is encountered. It is worth noting the distinction between hearing and listening in that listening is not predicated on “the pursuit of meaning or the act of interpretation” (Simpson, 2009: 2558). This approach suggests that we can have a sense of an experience without necessarily having to think about it at all and definitely without having to intentionally interpret that experience.

This approach poses the possibility of being able to listen without necessarily trying to understand or find meaning which lays more emphasis on sensation rather than signification. It also stresses how we listen with our whole bodies, not just our ears as the rhythm and timbre resonates in us and “perpetually makes and unmakes us” (Simpson, 2009:2571). Listening through our bodies is a theme explored by Duffy and Waitt (2011) who examine the experience of sound and music and the way the sensual body is used to understand every day practices. Duffy and Waitt’s methodology at the Four Winds Festival, Bemagui in New South Wales, Australia utilises sound diaries to better understand the role of sound in participants’ understanding of place and how listening is a practice that forges places through bodies (Nast and Pile, 1998, Dewsbury, 2003) and how listening is
always spatially and temporally contingent. Casey (1996) also emphasised the role of the senses and the body in the place making process and argues that place should be seen as an event and stresses the temporality of this process:

“far from being static sites [places] are themselves continually changing in accordance with their own proper dynamism” (1996: 44)

However ‘soundscapes’ are not a passive outcome of simply hearing sounds, rather listening is an active process in which meaning is attributed to sounds acknowledging also that individuals are selective in what they choose to hear (and attribute meaning). Sounds and music become part of collective and individual geographies and histories and can trigger individual expressions of collective histories of power relations. Research in this area reflects how the collection of material is “less driven by the cultural meaning of place and to focus more on place through body” (Duffy and Waitt, 2011: 133).

Sensory perception helps to form our experience of place while at the same time being grounded in cultural knowledge and everyday practice through which place is constructed (Pink, 2008). We relate to and create environments through all of our senses (Howes, 2005:5) and, in so doing, the sensuous interrelationship of body-mind-environment is used to reconceptualise “emplacement” which is typically thought of in terms of visible and tangible surroundings. Harrison aims to valorise this ‘sensate’ as he refers to that “which is felt, experienced and sensed” (Harrison, 2000:498)

This sense of the lived present as an open-ended generative process, as a practice is echoed by Harrison (2000) quoting Raymond Williams (1977) who sees a challenge in valorising that which is excluded by traditional mode of operation of social analysis:

“All the known complexities, the experienced tension, shifts and uncertainties, the intricate forms of unevenness and confusion” (1977: 129-130)
Harrison further emphasises how feeling and sensibility are the “rendering of the emergent surface” (Harrison, 2000: 502) as he describes how feeling and sensibility are in touch with an outside because they “are constantly attaching, weaving and disconnecting; constantly mutating and creating” (Harrison, 200: 502) and through this process the ‘sensate’.

2.7 Material objects

Material objects have rarely been the focus of attention in and of themselves in social or human sciences (Keane, 2003); instead objects have been of interest for the insight they provide into human social and cultural worlds. Early approaches to social theory tended to presuppose an opposition between subject and object with the former signifying agency, meaning and ethical concerns (Keane, 2010). More recently this subject-object opposition has been overcome and two senses of objects, as a material thing and as that toward which an action or consciousness is directed, tend to converge (Bingham 1996; Hinchliffe 1996).

This literature review does not attempt to deal with the breadth of the subject object field but rather examine how the physicality of objects, “the valorization of the cultural ‘object’ over meaning, discourse and language” (Keane, 2010: 141) is addressed.

There have been a number of calls for a geographical return to a grounding in physical materiality (Kearnes, 2010) and Philo (2000) proposes a “re-introduction of the material in human geography” which he claims is currently lost in contemporary social and cultural geography:

“...the preoccupation with immaterial cultural processes, with the constitution of inter-subjective meaning systems, with the play of identity politics through the less-than-tangible, often fleeting spaces to texts, signs, symbols, psyches, desires, fears and imaginings. I am concerned that, in the rush to elevate such spaces in our geographical studies we have ended
up being less attentive to the more ‘thing’, bump-into-able, stubbornly there-in-the-world kinds of ‘matter’ (the material) with which earlier geographers tended to be more familiar.” (Philo, 2000:33)

The role of material objects in social life is wide and varied (Wallendorf and Arnould, 1988; Harré, 2002) providing sustenance, shelter, safety and entertainment. Objects also serve to situate an individual’s character or personality within a context (Goffman, 1959, Turner, 1976) by using objects to denote our character for others, and as markers to extend our own self-concept to others by expressing our sense of self. While objects enable self-expression, they are also inextricably intertwined with connection to a larger group, as Tilley (2006) notes “classes of things in the world reflect pre-existing social groups” (2006:61). Thus material forms, such as the arrangement of houses (Miller, 2009) or the Kula arm shells and necklaces circulated for generations in the New Guinea archipelago (Leach, 1983), are objectifications that serve the self-knowledge of individuals and groups; the idea comes first and becomes realised in the form of a material thing. Instead of objects and subjects viewed as different and opposed entities – human and non-human, active and passive – Tilley proposes that interacting and living with things people make themselves in the process and, as such, the object world is absolutely central to an understanding of the identities of individual persons and societies.

2.7.1 Meaning of material objects through space and time

Material objects are not fixed in their identity at the point of production but throughout their life cycles, in moments of exchange, appropriation and consumption (Miller, 1987). In this way, objects circulate through people’s activities and can contextually produce new types of activities, objects and events (Tilley, 2006).

As objects serve as a personal storehouse for meaning, losing all of one’s material possessions is experienced as a tragedy and a violation of the self (Wallendorf and Arnould, 1988). For example Goffman (1961) describes the ‘stripping
process’ that occurs when individuals enter what Goffman refers to as ‘total institutions’. Prison would be an example, where an individual’s clothing and personal possessions are taken away and replaced with institutional clothing objects that are for the individual’s use but not their total control.

In their study of meaning and histories of favourite personal objects in two cultures – South West America and in the Zinder province of the Niger Republic - Wallendorf and Arnould (1988) found their respondents, in response to the question of why they chose a particular object as their favourite, did not focus on functionally based performance attributes but rather that the object was a reminder of a friend or family member, a holiday or an event in the respondent’s past. For a smaller group the object was a favourite because it was a reminder of the person who had made the object, typically as a gift which, from an anthropological perspective, is how objects have usually been framed in terms of their role in the production process or gift exchange (Levi-Strauss, 1970; Mauss, 1967).

Just as objects change meaning through time, so their placement in space and place opens up fresh meanings. Laurier and Philo (2003), through their research of service sector mobile worker and the unnoticed work of mobilising diverse objects through activities that are spatially reflective, demonstrate how objects are used in practically ordering the space and at the same time the space is used to order the objects for all practical purposes as goods are arranged into the boot of a travelling sales person’s car.

Space and time are in intrinsically linked in formulating the meaning of objects as Laurier and Philo (2003) observe in how the laying of “objects in space formulates the space in terms of its current state while also shaping up future actions.” (Laurier and Philo, 2003:104) In the authors’ study the participants became aware, through this laying out process, of not only displaying and collecting objects for current and later use but also discovering what objects are not present. Furthermore the authors stress the often unnoticed process of how diverse objects are mobilised through activities that are spatially reflexive: “in that just as the objects are used in practically ordering the space so it is that the space is used to order the objects for all practical purposes” (Laurier and Philo, 2003: 103). In a museum and National Trust environment, this ordering of objects is not just about
the mapping out of stories in a display, but rather the curation process of objects in a museum references the ownership of the story (Gurian 1999). In this way objects act almost as a catalyst and in the setting of a museum the essence is not necessarily in the objects themselves but rather in the place that stores memories and presents and organises meanings in some sensory form. It is both the physicality of the place and the memories and stories told therein that are important.

This transformation in meaning and value that objects pass through prompted the social anthropologist Appadurai’s (1988) call for a study of the ‘paths’ or ‘life histories’ of things:

“It is only through the analysis of these trajectories that we can interpret the human transactions and calculation that enliven things. Thus, even though from a theoretical point of view human actors encode things with significance, from a methodological point of view it is the things-in-motion that illuminate their human and social context.” (Appadurai 1988: 5)

This concept of ‘things-in-motion’ is also evident in the social and geographical lives of particular commodities (Jackson 2000) which goes beyond the mechanical tracing of movement and examines the “social relations and material linkages that this movement creates and within which the value of commodities merges” (Foster, 2005:9). Building on this della Dora (2009) refers to ‘travelling landscape-objects’ where images embedded in different material supports physically move through space and time and, in so doing, operate as vehicles for the circulation of places. This moves away from landscape representations to re-animating the missing “matter” of landscape (Whatmore, 2006) where materiality’s own agency is acknowledged and frames landscape objects as “transformers, not [as] causes or outcomes of actions but [as] actions themselves” (Dewsbury et al., 2002:438). In this way objects become dynamic vehicles for the circulation of place through space and time (Mitchell, 2002; Sheller and Urry, 2006). In this movement of objects, places are taken out of their physical or temporal boundaries and serve as ‘circulating references’ (Latour, 1999), crystalizing a moment in time and space and making it eternal (della Dora, 2009). There is also an emotional dimension to
the circulation of objects, as visual artefacts hold a “meaning and value beyond their textual content” (Tolia-Kelly, 2004:676), as the author describes how migrant South Asian women, living in Britain, use landscape paintings of home to act as a mnemonic device that is ‘charged with memories’ (ibid). This raises the issue of gender in relation to objects which has not been explored as part of this thesis although it is acknowledged that these issues are of relevance and interest, and are also symptomatic of wider issues around gender and opportunities (Little and Austin, 1996).

Thus the biographies of inanimate objects interweave with human biographies generating new meanings (della Dora, 2009) and in this way the meaning of objects is not sealed but “exist as an interplay of various individuals and agencies, each weaving intricate plot lines in the unfolding drama of past events” (Lorimer, 2003:204).

2.7.2 Objects and identity

Lifestyle and individuality have emerged as features of contemporary modern mentality and are closely bound up with the material culture of everyday life (Featherstone, 1990; Chaney, 1996). As such, we develop a sense of personal identity, both as an individual and as a member of a group, not only through concepts such as our gender, race and socio-economic, cultural constraints but also through the process of negotiating and creating our own material worlds.

With this focus on the material comes attachment to objects which is a pervasive phenomenon (Wallendorf and Arnould, 1988) and favourite objects reflect personal meanings and enable expression of facts of self-conception such as age, gender and cultural background. In this way objects solidify and represent connections to, and difference from, others. We gain and express our identity through the appropriation and consumption of products as the material of symbolic practices and as mediators of their sense of being in their own time and place in a social and cultural context (Chaney, 1996).
Morgan and Pritchard (2005), in their examination of the role of souvenirs as material objects in tourism, reference Graburn’s (1979) comment’s that despite the passage of time, tourists can gain prestige through the purchase of ‘ethnic’ artefacts since “there is a cachet connected with international travel, exploration, multiculturalism, etc. that these arts symbolise” (Graburn, 1979: 2–3) still has value. The authors note that such symbolic consumption has two roles: one inwardly centred which bolsters our sense of ideal self – how we see ourselves – and one outwardly centred social self – how we present and communicate this to others (Barwise et al., 2000).

While souvenirs are an example of this symbolic consumption, on a personal level they serve to evoke certain memories and past experiences of tourism places. This experience can also be seen ‘as a system of presencing and performance’ (Franklin and Crang, 2001: 17), supporting the concept that the tourist experience and its material manifestations contribute to our narratives and performances of self. In this way, material objects of travel reflect and contribute to the construction of our social identities, serving as symbolic markers both for ourselves and others (Morgan and Pritchard 2006). Such lifestyle markers are integrated into the narratives developed to help define our personal and social identities and as well serving decorative, practical or symbolic functions they have social lives and meanings which go beyond the initial tourism encounter which framed their purchase. ‘The souvenir distinguishes experiences ... [it] speaks to a context of longing, for it is not an object arising out of need or use value; it is an object arising out of the necessarily insatiable demands of nostalgia’ (Stewart, 1993: 135).

While a souvenir can be defined as both a remembrance of a place (Anderson and Littrell, 1995) and a mnemonic device around which to tell stories (Hitchcock and Teague, 2000), at many sacred sites souvenirs are bought both as tangible memory of a spiritual experience (Fleischer, 2000) and to give away to friends. The issue of authenticity, as defined by Littrell et al (1993), includes uniqueness, workmanship, aesthetics, cultural and historical integrity and genuineness – but Shackley (2001) argues that for pilgrims to the Catholic pilgrimage site of Knock in Ireland, the most commonly purchased item was a customised empty plastic bottle.
in which to put holy water and the authenticity is found not in the nature of the object but in the purchase location and the contents of the bottle e.g. the holy water which was perceived to be authentic.

2.8 Conclusion

The themes examined in this literature review have explored how people’s engagement with place happens in a complex and multi layered fashion that does not often follow a linear process but rather they “well up out of the depths of the unconscious” Jones (2011: 877). The discussion has highlighted the interconnectedness of the themes, for example, how memory was experienced through material objects – which can be the subject of the memory or act as a trigger or involuntary recall for an absent place or person – creating a ‘line of connection’ as Philo (2000) frames it. This examination of memory of objects signified how they act as personal storehouse for meaning but at the same time how objects can change this meaning over time. The examination of how objects were used by the service workers as carried out by Philo and Laurier (2003) highlights how objects define space and at the same time, through activities that are spatially reflective, space is used to order objects.

The literature review has addressed the stated aim of investigating the meaning that place have for people by revealing the rich, complex and emotional way people engage with place from seeking refuge in escape and further explored in the theme of connection and belonging. This consumption of place is also relived through memory of place, often constituted through objects or through our senses by looking at photos of place visited. The literature also reveals how places are spatially constituted through multiple rhythms that act upon people and places and influence the embodied acts practiced in places underlying how people are not separate from place but are continually part of the place making process.
This chapter is presented as a conceptual framework to support an exploration of the themes in the findings, chapters 4 and 5. Before an examination of the findings I will now describe my methodological approach used to investigate my two central aims.
3

The methodological approach: the theory and practice

3.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the research methods used to investigate how people engage with National Trust sites through what they do, in the practice and performance carried out at sites, and the sensorial and emotional aspects of engagement with place.

As the value of heritage moves beyond the measures of social and economic benefits, heritage organisations are responding by recognising how stakeholders, such as the community around a site, have an input into a site (Harrison, 2002; Edwards, 1987; Prentice, 2003). The methods employed in this PhD are cognizant of, and seek to explore, these new concepts of heritage, recognizing the need to understand the way people interact with, and are affected by, a sense of place (Cresswell, 2004).

The suite of fieldwork methods described in this chapter - participant observation, fieldnotes and interviewing using both audio and video capture – were methods used at the sites to investigate, and take seriously, the everyday practice at sites (Simpson, 2010). The use of these methods in combination – especially the walking with video and video diary methods of interviewing people – are a recent innovative methodological technique to capture what Morton (2005) describes in her performance ethnography as the “non-verbal, expressive and emotive, non-cognitive aspects of social practice and performance” (2005: 663). These methods access the deeper engagements of how people interact with place and the themes outlined in the literature review chapter, chapter 2, by exploring and engaging in the highly complex processes practiced at the sites (Rose, 2012).

While video enabled me to engage with the practice at sites, intrinsic in this approach is the complexity of social and material relations that led to observations
being taken at a single point in time that could be seen as limited in what they represent. Law and Urry (2004) describe this as the fleeting - “that which is here today and gone tomorrow, only to reappear the day after tomorrow” (2004: 403) – and the challenge inherent in social research and my own fieldwork was recognizing this fleeting practice and performativity at sites as Beckett expresses it:

“the creation of the world did not take place once and for all time, but takes place everyday” (Beckett, 2003: 19)

Furthermore, while the use of video in participant observation and video diary and walking with video met the challenge of engaging with the practices happening at sites, it should also be acknowledged that the world is as Dewsbury et al. describe, “more excessive than we can theorise” (Dewsbury, Harrison et al. 2002: 437) and, as such, the authors seek to contain and deny this movement as a “serial logic of the unfinished”. So rather than representing the world, the emphasis for social research is on presenting or explaining it and, at the same time, acknowledging the temporal nature of landscape and a shift away from “dichotomous realist and idealist approaches to landscape” (Cloke and Jones, 2001: 651) and a recognition of a more fluid, reflexive view where performativity and non representation shape a place.

My approach used these expanded ethnographic methods – video diary and walking with video - to address my central research question of examining the practices and performances that people engage in at National Trust sites and the emotional affect these have on people. The methods I used facilitated a way to “reconnect with those non-verbalised ways of experiencing and knowing that form an integral part of the research encounter” (Pink, 2009:124). Through the use of these methods I have addressed the challenge of what Thrift sees as “the world based on contemplative models of thought and action towards theories of practice which amplify the flow of events.” (Thrift, 2000: 556). My use of ethnographic research methods enabled me to access the social and multisensory experience that visitors had at National Trust sites by:
“understand[ing] parts of the world more or less as they are experienced and understood in the everyday lives of people who live them out.”

(Cook and Crang 2007: 1)

Finally, I analyse and reflect on the methods before moving on to an analysis of the data in the next chapter.

3.2 First step of fieldwork process – National Trust workshop

In this section I describe the series of workshops and meetings I had with key staff at the National Trust to communicate both the findings for this project and the methods used in the generation of these findings. The first step for developing my research process was to communicate my research aims and the methods I would be using in my fieldwork, to a wider audience through a workshop. My contact at the National Trust was Tony Berry, Director of Visitor Engagement, who suggested people within the organisation to whom my research would have most relevance. In February, 2012, I gave a workshop to introduce my project, the research objectives and my use of methods, such as video diary, and how these qualitative methods could build on the quantitative questionnaires that the National Trust uses in order to give insight into the richness of people’s engagement with place.

A member of the workshop audience – John (name changed) - suggested focussing on marketing segments for my audience in my fieldwork. While I understood the National Trust’s use of segments and the focus on defining types of people for the purposes of making targeted service offerings, I felt that this was not in line with the aim of my PhD which is to explore new ways of researching and capturing the richness in people’s experience of place. While John’s point about providing resonance and impact to people within the National Trust was tempting my aim is to inform the National Trust about new ways of discovering how people

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6 This is a UK wide annual survey of visitors to National Trust properties. The survey is intended to address a number of marketing, operational and management issues and uses a sample of approximately 100,000 visitors.
engage with their sites. Also, John’s segments rely on a statistically significant sample size to ensure a representation of all segments however the aim of my PhD is to focus not on the number or representativeness of participants in the research but on the quality and positionality of the information offered (Cook and Crang, 2007).

The purpose of the February 2012 workshop was to introduce a wider audience at the National Trust to my research objectives and methods and part of this process was to understand the work that the National Trust had already done in exploring how people engage with their places through their annual visitor questionnaire. The result of the workshop was an acceptance of my approach and the ideas and novel ways of doing research.

3.2.1 The selection of the fieldwork sites

My supervisors and myself decided on four fieldwork sites which were to be different from each other and would provide a range of visitor types and numbers as well as contrasting physical aspects of the sites. These four sites were to be within a 45 mile radius from my home in Cheltenham to be manageable in terms of making multiple visits to the sites.

Apart from proximity and diversity from one another I had no necessary criteria for site selection so I began by developing a typology of National Trust sites to gain an overview of the sites and compare all the sites against the same set of criteria. I situate the justification for using this type of segmentation while rejecting the visitor segmentation, below.

This process of drawing up my typology has been fed by data from the National Trust visitor insight questionnaire, see figure 3.1:
The data from these results have been analysed in a number of ways by the National Trust. One analysis has been to associate each property with one of four physical categories to indicate the size and type of place; this is then set against the number of visitors. A sample of this data is in appendix 2. Using these data I could select sites with both high and low visitor numbers to give me the opportunity to test my methods in different environments, or environments that created different experiences for people.

Rather than using the visitor segmentation that John suggested, which would have produced a sample of different types of people (and by types I mean the categories that the National Trust use), I chose to develop a methodology that
gave insight into how people engage with place and that the National Trust can use to inform future policy in this area. The existing data that the National Trust has from its visitor survey, that I accessed as a primary source of data, are quantitative in nature with questions about the visit to the property, membership status, interests and National Trust in home area. However, my research examines the experience that people have at a National Trust site and how this engagement, embodiment, practice and performance of their interaction with the site affects and engenders an emotional response. My site selection process enabled me to take the materiality and the specificities of sites seriously and to allow the agencies of the site (in how people engage with them) to play a role by setting criteria that evaluated both the material and visitor interaction aspects of the sites.

The value of the National Trust questionnaire data for my fieldwork, therefore, was to ensure that the selection of sites against practical considerations such as the already stated visitor numbers and other factors concerning the materiality of the site produced a cross section of different environments for different people/place experiences.

From these data I constructed a typology evaluating 30 sites within an approximately 50 mile radius of my home in Cheltenham. The typology captured the materiality of the site by evaluating them using various criteria. The typology is in appendix 3. From the typology, I constructed a long list of between three to four sites for each of the following headings. These four headings were devised by myself and my supervisors to represent a diverse and disparate range of fieldwork sites:

- Open land
- Garden
- House and Garden
- Alternative site

I visited all 14 sites on my short list at least once and used a variety of research methods at each site such as participant observation and interview using audio
and video capture. I also used the visits to these sites as an opportunity to pilot the walking with video and video diary method discussed in more detail in section 3.4.

The purpose of visiting each of the 14 sites was to familiarise myself with the location and to do an initial assessment in terms of the potential of the site for my fieldwork by evaluating both practical and methodological criteria, such as how many people were at the site and what type of activities they performed at the sites. I was not necessarily discounting sites if there were few people there but I wanted to ensure my final selection had a mix of some busy and some quiet sites. I could have obtained some of these data by simply looking up the sites in the visitor handbook\(^7\) but I felt it was important to go to each site and walk around the site and see the extent of the physical layout of the site, how people used the site and what they did there, for myself all of which were aspects of the site I would be evaluating in more detail in my fieldwork.

This gave me an insight into how people would experience the site, a central aim of this project, and by experiencing the site myself I was able to access the “non-verbal, expressive and emotive, non-cognitive aspects of social practice and performance” (Morton, 2005:663). By experiencing these sites I was able to understand the “situated knowledge’ (Haraway, 1988) which was of value for me as a researcher to give a geographical context and to identify the aspects of how people dwell and inhabit these spaces.

The site visits also gave me the opportunity to trial my research methods – participant observation, interview, photography, field notes – as well as the use of video both as a mechanism to film myself interviewing and as a video diary method. These methods are described in section 3.4. An example of a site visit description of Crickley Hill, a site on the long list, is included in appendix 1.

In July, 2012 I met with Tony Berry to talk about the selection of the four final sites. I went through my findings of visits to the short listed 14 sites and we discussed

\(^7\) The National Trust handbook describes each National Trust site that is open to the public with details of opening times, location and facilities.
each site in terms of visitor numbers, profile of visitors, character of the site – there were no formal criteria that we applied to the selection of the sites. This was partly due to the fact that although there were four categories of sites there were still significant differences between the sites even within one category so it was difficult to compare like with like. The following is a summary of our informal site selection criteria:

**Open land** – Rodborough Common was deemed to have too many entry and exit points which would make it difficult to capture a visitor's experience of a circuit of the site. Brean Down was quite far away for me to travel to from my home and, although it had some interesting physical aspects – it was at the end of stretch of coast dominated by static caravan parks and a narrow access road - the activity at the site was very seasonal and was dominated by the weather. Crickley Hill was a strong contender but Tony Berry felt that Woodchester Park would be more suitable as there was a mansion, not National Trust, in the centre of the park which made it an interesting visitor experience - if people visited just the park, or the mansion as well.

**Garden** – Tony Berry pointed out that Prior Park was more of formalised landscaped park rather than a garden; the steep climb to the site and the scale and steepness of the site meant fewer visitors than some of the other gardens in this category. The Courts and Westbury Park were considered quite small and had fewer visitors compared to the fourth site in this category – Hidcote. Hidcote is a popular site and my site visits have shown it was a rich visitor experience due to the different 'rooms' of the garden and variety of other attractions such as a pig, a tennis court.

**House and Garden** – This was a more difficult category to choose as the three sites all had equal, if differing, merits ranging from an eclectic collection of artefacts at Snowshill to a recent restoration at Tynesfield that is still on-going and on display in the mansion. However Tony suggested Dyrham because it was an interesting mix of park land, house and garden which each had strong visitor engagement factors.
**Alternative sites** – Bath Assembly Rooms has already been discussed, see above. Lacock was considered a stronger contender than Chedworth Roman Villa because of the diversity of the site being made up of an Abbey, a garden, a house and a village, and Tony suggested that different types of visitors went to different parts.

The above descriptions show the process of our evaluation of each of the sites on the short list and identify the reasoning and justification for the selection of the final four sites - Hidcote, Lacock, Dyrham, and Woodchester Park.

### 3.2.2 Recruitment of participants

This section describes the start of my fieldwork process with an overview of the initial contact I made at each site and the process of recruitment of participants, while the actual methods used in my fieldwork are described more fully in section 3.5.

Recruitment of participants occurred through various channels: through Visitor Engagement (VE) managers at the sites, people I knew personally who were willing to be participants, to people responding to ads I put up at the sites calling for volunteers. I approached the recruitment of participants in a flexible way, trying different methods of recruitment when I was not successful with one route. I also fully utilised my own personal contacts and contacts I made at the sites, in order to get as many respondents as possible. In this way, the research I was able to do with the participants was as a result of the social relations I made with the participants, as Cook and Crang (2007) frame it:

> “research on social relations is made out of social relations”

(Cook and Crang, 2007: 19, original emphasis)
The exploratory nature of the research necessitated this fluid approach rather than a pre defined and rigid approach, and it enabled me to respond to what recruitment methods were successful.

Tony Berry gave me a contact for each site, the Visitor Engagement (VE) managers, and in the first instance I emailed them individually to introduce myself and my project and explain how I had got their contact details. I also explained that I wanted to interview volunteer, staff and visitors at their sites and I requested that they identify staff and volunteers I could interview. I then met with each VE manager at each of the four sites and while all were open to my work some needed me to explain my research to their managers and I had to provide evidence of work done to date and show the prompt questions I would ask participants. The purpose of the prompt questions was simply to stimulate discussion rather than using a formalised questionnaire; this will be more fully discussed in the next section where I review the methods I used.

Hidcote and Dyrham were two sites where the VE managers gave immediate and positive responses to my proposed work and I was able to start site visits and talking to participants. There was a slower response from the VE managers at Lacock and Woodchester and while I was waiting for a reply from these site I tried other ways to secure interviews – I asked friends, I Googled Woodchester (one of the sites I had the most difficulty in contacting the ranger) and found quite an active parish council, three of the councillors had responsibility for footpaths. I contacted these councillors as possible visitors of the site, although two of them responded they did not visit the site so I did not pursue this.

I also contacted the chair of the volunteer group and the contact person whom I liaised with to do some volunteering I had undertaken earlier in the year; I wanted to talk to him about being interviewed at Woodchester but he did not return my emails. I also put up a poster in the local post office in Woodchester asking for volunteers but got no response. In the end I have met, several times, with the ranger (no VE manger) for Woodchester and have made contact, and interviewed, volunteer groups with whom she put me in contact. I also made contact with Lacock and was able to proceed with interviewing at the site.
The VE manager at Dyrham provided a good mix of staff and volunteers (it was agreed with the VE managers that I could approach visitors directly myself) to interview as well as a room, off the public route of the house, in which to do the interviews. I also carried out participant observation and video recordings as detailed in the section 3.4.

The advantage of going through the managers for the sites was firstly that it was a formalised mechanism and it gave me a legitimate route into the site and to approach volunteers and staff. Secondly, it gave me credibility in the eyes of those that I was interviewing as I had gone through a gatekeeper who was known to them (Cook and Crang, 2007). Also I was able to build contacts from the contacts that had been given to me in a snowball sampling (Biernacki, 1981); for example, while at Dyrham the name Dale Dennehy had been mentioned by several participants as a good person to speak to because he was the outdoor operations manager for the site. Dale was on site on the same day I was doing some interviews with some of the staff and volunteers and I was able to approach him and ask him for an interview which he agreed to. It was also important that I gained credibility in the eyes of the gatekeepers – the VE managers – so the staff and volunteers were comfortable speaking with me.

The following table identifies how the participants were recruited and the methods used to collect data for each individual, as well as the role the individual had at their site:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Profile</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Methods used</th>
<th>How they were recruited</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Edward and Maureen</td>
<td>60s, retired husband and wife</td>
<td>Visitor</td>
<td>Lacock</td>
<td>Video – video diary</td>
<td>Personal contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbara</td>
<td>60s, retired, female</td>
<td>Visitor</td>
<td>Hidcote</td>
<td>Video – video diary</td>
<td>Personal contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sylvia</td>
<td>70s, retired, female</td>
<td>Visitor</td>
<td>Dyrham</td>
<td>Video – walking with video</td>
<td>Personal contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant</td>
<td>Profile</td>
<td>Role</td>
<td>Site</td>
<td>Methods used</td>
<td>How they were recruited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sally</td>
<td>40s, student, female</td>
<td>Visitor</td>
<td>Woodchester</td>
<td>Audio-video</td>
<td>Personal contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karen</td>
<td>30s, nurse, female</td>
<td>Visitor</td>
<td>Woodchester</td>
<td>Poster advert requesting volunteers at Woodchester Park entrance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eric</td>
<td>40s, male</td>
<td>Staff gardener</td>
<td>Hidcote</td>
<td>Audio-video</td>
<td>Recruited through the site’s Visitor Engagement (VE) manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greg</td>
<td>60s, retired, male</td>
<td>Volunteer garden guide</td>
<td>Dyrham</td>
<td>Audio-video</td>
<td>Recruited through the site’s VE manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anne</td>
<td>60s, female, retired</td>
<td>Volunteer garden guide</td>
<td>Hidcote</td>
<td>Audio-video</td>
<td>Recruited through the site’s VE manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah</td>
<td>40s, female</td>
<td>Staff gardener</td>
<td>Dyrham</td>
<td>Audio-video</td>
<td>Recruited through the site’s VE manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dale</td>
<td>40s, male</td>
<td>Outdoor operations manager</td>
<td>Dyrham</td>
<td>Audio-video</td>
<td>Recruited through the site’s VE manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chris</td>
<td>60s, retired, female</td>
<td>House volunteer</td>
<td>Dyrham</td>
<td>Audio-video</td>
<td>Recruited through the site’s VE manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan</td>
<td>60s, retired, female</td>
<td>Garden volunteer</td>
<td>Lacock</td>
<td>Audio-video</td>
<td>Recruited through the site’s VE manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant</td>
<td>Profile</td>
<td>Role</td>
<td>Site</td>
<td>Methods used</td>
<td>How they were recruited</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Di</td>
<td>60s, retired, female</td>
<td>Garden volunteer</td>
<td>Dyrham</td>
<td>Audio - video</td>
<td>Recruited through the site’s VE manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tracey</td>
<td>20s, parent, female</td>
<td>Resident</td>
<td>Lacock</td>
<td>Audio - video</td>
<td>Recruited through the site’s VE manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bryan</td>
<td>40s, male</td>
<td>Staff gardener</td>
<td>Lacock</td>
<td>Audio - video</td>
<td>Recruited through the site’s VE manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liz</td>
<td>60s, female, retired</td>
<td>Volunteer room guide</td>
<td>Lacock</td>
<td>Audio - video</td>
<td>Recruited through the site’s VE manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robin</td>
<td>20s, male</td>
<td>Staff room conservator assistant</td>
<td>Dyrham</td>
<td>Audio - video</td>
<td>Recruited through the site’s VE manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bob</td>
<td>70s, male, retired</td>
<td>Volunteer reception volunteer</td>
<td>Lacock</td>
<td>Audio - video</td>
<td>Recruited through the site’s VE manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roger</td>
<td>50s, male</td>
<td>Curator, Fox Talbot museum</td>
<td>Lacock</td>
<td>Audio - video</td>
<td>Recruited through the site’s VE manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ben</td>
<td>20s, male</td>
<td>Catering manager</td>
<td>Hidcote</td>
<td>Audio - video</td>
<td>Recruited through the site’s VE manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Di V.</td>
<td>40s, female</td>
<td>Retail manager</td>
<td>Lacock</td>
<td>Audio - video</td>
<td>Recruited through the site’s VE manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ann C</td>
<td>50s,</td>
<td>Property</td>
<td>Lacock</td>
<td>Audio -</td>
<td>Recruited</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Having described how I worked with the National Trust to select the sites and make contact with the relevant people at those sites I now move on to discuss the range of research methods I used at the fieldwork site.

### 3.3 Ethnography as a methodological approach

Having described the process of the selection of my fieldwork sites, I now discuss my methodological approach – ethnography – which I adopted for conducting research at these sites. In section 3.4 I will discuss the methods: PO, interviewing - using visual and audio techniques – and how I used them in my ethnographic methodological approach.

Ethnography is most closely associated with the discipline of sociocultural anthropology (Hart, 2009) and is defined as participant observation and long-term in-depth engagement with specific communities or societies. It refers to both a set of research methods and the written product.

Ethnographic research has long been a key strand of human geography (Cook and Crang 2007). Human geography emerged in the 1970s as an ethical and philosophical critique of what Cloke et al (2004) describe as the dominant spatial...
tradition in human geography that was “insensitive to the humanity of both geographers and people under study” (Cloke et al., 1991:67). Subsequent methods of social enquiry developed from the mechanism of simply describing the world to enacting it (Law and Urry, 2004). However, while the range of methods of studying texts, conducting interviews and doing participant observation remains unchanged and the backbone of qualitative research in human geography (Davis and Dwyer, 2007), there were changes in the way these methods were being used to make claims about the world. Although a sociologist, the Giddens (2013) describes the challenge inherent in these new interpretations in human geography as follows:

“Unlike objects in nature, humans are self-aware beings who confer sense and purposes on what they do. We can’t even describe social life accurately unless we first grasp the concepts that people apply in their behaviour.” (Giddens 2013:12-13)

However, ethnography as a social science method came under criticism during the 1980s when Clifford and Marcus (1986) challenged presumptions of ‘ethnographic authority’ where instead of simply discovering cultures the authors argued ethnographers actually wrote or produced it. Recently, sociologists, historians and geographers have joined with anthropologists to focus on how ethnography can be used to forge politically enabling understandings of processes and to illuminate the possibilities for social change (Hart, 2009).

Since the 1990s (Cook and Crang, 2007) researchers have drawn on qualitative methods in their work and developed techniques to respond to the demands set out by those seeking to broaden our understandings of, and engagements with, the practice of everyday life. This approach is cognizant of how social worlds are dynamic and produced through human (and non-human) agency and how knowledge is situated and partial. The purpose of using ethnographic techniques, as set out by Cook and Crang (2007) and that I follow in my research, is to:
“understand parts of the world more or less as they are experienced and understood in the everyday lives of people who ‘live them out’.”

(Cook and Crang, 2007: 1)

The development of ethnographic methodologies to address this goal saw a growing number of anthropologists in the 1990s calling for critical understanding of space, place and culture that went beyond metaphors of travel, flows and deterritorialization (Hart, 2006). This resulted in ethnography being enriched by more explicit attention to a conception of space and place where both concepts were conceived in terms of embodied practices and process of production. Place can then be seen as socially produced space formed through points of connection in wider networks (Massey, 1994). Hart (2009) proposes ethnography as a way of generating new understandings of the possibilities of social change by clarifying these “connections and mutual processes of constitution – as well as slippages, openings and contradictions.” (Hart, 2006: 219)

Ethnography, then, is a way of accessing these ‘slippages, openings and contradictions’ by capturing the “embodied and expressive ways of knowing, being and communicating in situ” (Morton, 2012) as well as providing a way of accessing and engaging with social practice which attends to its taking place, and to emergent geographies of the now in practice (Morton, 2005). Ethnography, then, unearths what people take for granted but, more explicitly, it attempts to “make sense of their making sense of the events and opportunities confronting them in everyday life.” (Ley, 1988:121).

Conventional methods used within geography do not capture the more expressive, non-verbal, emotive aspects of social practice and performance (Latham, 2003; Rose, 2012; Pink, 2013). Morton (2005) notes that:

“geography is at risk of excluding the ways of knowing and sensing the world that exist in practices such as Irish music...if researchers are to remain focused on only verbal, pre-scripted and pre-scribed ways of talking
or accessing space rather than actually knowing it and bringing it about through practice.” (Morton, 2005: 663)

The ethnographic approach I took to my data collection and the methods I used in this approach attempt to recognise and emphasise the centrality of human values in everyday life with the progress of methodologically innovative research (Pink 2005, Morton 2010, Simpson 2010) towards what Latham (2002) describes as framing of the social world:

"based around terms such as enactment, performance, and practice (which) offers a possibility for a range of creative dialogues between already-established forms of human geographic writing"

(Latham, 2002:2012)

To address this challenge of capturing the present which is “brimming with sensibilities and intelligibilities” (Morton, 2010) I have used an ethnographic approach with methods of video diaries (Latham, 2002) and walking with video (Pink, 2007); how I used these methods is described in detail in the next section, 3.4.

As an ethnographic approach the use of video is a sensory technique that is a “reflexive and experiential process through which understanding, knowing and (academic) knowledge are produced.” (Pink, 2009:8). Pink stresses how this creation of knowledge is based on the ethnographer’s own experience of reality and the “context, negotiations and intersubjectiveness” (Pink, 2009: 8) through which the knowledge is produced. However, inherent in an examination of sensory ethnography is the relationship between the sensory perception and culture where different cultures can construct different sensory categories and meanings (Geurts, 2002). In response to this, Ingold (2000) proposes focussing away from “the collective sensory consciousness of society” and towards:

“the creative interweaving of experience in discourse and to the ways in which the resulting discursive constructions in turn affect people’s perception of the world around them.” (Ingold 2003:49)
Ingold also notes how sensory perception is critical to our understanding of everyday practices; drawing on Merleau-Ponty who placed sensation at the centre of human perception, Ingold suggests that:

“the eyes and ears should not be understood as separate keyboards for the registration of sensation but as organs of the body as a whole in whose movement within an environment the activity of perceptions consists.” (Ingold, 2000:268).

My own experiences in my fieldwork - participating, observing, interviewing – corresponded with Ingold’s approach in that sight and sound were not privileged above other senses. Instead, by utilising methods such as walking with video with Sylvia at Dyrham I not only look at the objects she notices, such as the large windows in the Great Hall, but I am able to participate in her experience and perception of the windows and how it affects her, how the proportions of the windows give her a feeling of ‘ah yes, it’s just right’. The walking with video diary enabled me to participate in the emplaced activities of others through my own emplaced and active engagement and through such a method, gain access to the sensory experience of both the participant’s and my own engagement of the site.

3.4 Methods Used

Having examined the ethnographic approach that I took in my research I now look at the qualitative methods I used in this approach. These are: participant observation using both written fieldnotes and visual capture (video and photography) and interviewing using video - walking with video (Pink, 2007) and video diary (Latham, 2003; Simpson, 2011) - and audio capture.

These research methods directly address my research objective of opening up new approaches to examining people’s engagement with places and are intended to capture the rich, dynamic process of dwelling and how emotions are produced.
in the lived geographies of place (Bondi, Davidson and Smith, 2005) and how place is shaped through human being-in-the-world (Wylie, 2007). The methods enabled me to access a range of sensory and emotional registers and the pre-cognitive aspects of embodied life as experienced by participants.

However there is also a recognition that the world is so multi layered as to exceed our capacity to understand, at the same time acknowledging that:

“a person's identity can be understood as an assemblage of thoughts, feelings, memories, ways of doing things, possessions and so forth which does not fit together in a dedicated pattern but is always a compromise, always pragmatic, always in flux and never pure”

(Cook and Crang, 2007: 10)

The methods required to access the embodied, performed and sensuous aspect of life and thus access a richer understanding of the world have required new performative techniques that extend the “range of current work and provide the means of sensing new forms of knowledge” (Thrift and Dewsbury, 2000: 424) and enable different registers, such as affect, to be accessed.

The methods I use in my fieldwork address the research objective of how people engage with place by:

“understand[ing] part of the world more or less as they are experienced and understood in the everyday lives of people who 'live them out'.” (Cook and Crang, 2007: 1)

The methods, described in this section, are fieldnotes, participant observation, interviews and the use of video in both video diary and walking with video as part of the interview process which served as a route into the multi-sensory knowing within the research process, as described in section 3.1.

I will now discuss each of the methods I employed in my ethnographic methodological approach. As I used different methods in multiple ways for the
different data gathering techniques below is a diagrammatical representation of the methods and techniques they were used for:

![Figure 3.2 Methods and techniques]

### 3.4.1 Participant observation

My use of participant observation (PO) at the sites started by simply getting to know the site by what the anthropologist Geertz (1998) refers to as ‘deep hanging out’. This not only enabled me to become familiar with the layout and structure of the site but I was also able to observe how people used the site, which informed my approach to how I would interview visitors. This familiarisation period became participant observation (Cook and Crang 2007) as I noted how people moved about the site, what activities they did on the site, how they interacted with each other, what they looked at, where they sat. I wrote up these observations up in my fieldnotes and took pictures and video footage of site visitors, volunteers and staff in order to have evidence of what I had observed but also to remind me of what I had seen at each site. Cook and Crang (2007) highlight that photos, like
fieldnotes, don’t simply record facts from the field but choices about what to record which are made on the part of the researcher and the researcher’s presence is likely to influence the subject’s behaviour. An excerpt from my fieldnotes from a day I spent with volunteers, and volunteering, at Woodchester Park, underlines how choices are made of what to record and how others interact with me:

There is a lot of familiarity among the group and an ease as they work at their own pace, stop when they feel like a rest. Gary [National Trust ranger] shows me a small brown fungus that he says people used to light and then carry around like a coal. He also shows me orange tipped butterflies and Neil [volunteer] tells me about the damage squirrels can do to trees, gnawing at their bark which creates a wound which kills the tree. All this I didn’t know before the day. Throughout the day the eerie sound of gliders punctuates our work as the soft whistling of the little parachutes that bring the pulley mechanism that the gliders use to take off, falls to the ground. We finish about 3pm and I get a lift back with Deidre [volunteer] again, we talk about plants.

(Excerpt from field diary, volunteering at Woodchester Park, 1st April, 2012)

My transcribed field notes, forming more coherent and detailed notes from my scribbled observations are supplemented further by inserting relevant photos and stills from video that is used to provide a visual reference to the written observations. I will now describe what findings and insights the PO method enabled.

**Participant Observation using video**

Using video as a means to record data in participant observation at sites enabled me to examine the complex micro-dynamics of practices at sites in the same way Eric Laurier’s use of video illustrated the potential of video as a recording tool in the study of practices of everyday tasks in his ethnographic video of a café in Edinburgh (Laurier, 2005). Both Eric Laurier and Paul Simpson’s (2005) use of video ethnography illustrates how it is possible for the video camera to record far
more detail than is possible from observation alone. An example from my own fieldwork is the interaction between a woman and a child in the garden at Dyrham that I filmed as part of my participant observation. Through the use of video capture I was able to review the data multiple times and identify the bodily interactions, the gestures and changing facial expressions. This interaction highlights, as Deleuze (1988) explains, how a human being is not defined by its forms or functions but rather, in realising a thing is never separable from its world, defined by its capacities to affect and be affected. The use of video methods as a research tool enabled me to not only identify how affect was manifest at the fieldwork sites but also to access and engage with social practice in order to write about it in a way which attends to its taking place, and to emergent geographies of the now in practice (Morton, 2005).

My use of video in participant observation also enabled me to observe more subtle forms of expression. In the video clip of a woman playing with a young child in the grounds of Dyrham there are subtle changes of expression as the woman turns away from the child to draw on a cigarette. By capturing it on video I was able to view the clip multiple times and to engage reflexively with elements of the sociality of the interaction. As I review the video I am interpreting the experiences of the people in the video and how the environment and their interaction with one another immerses them in a sensory experience, just as my own emplaced experience in that location gave me an insight into the sensorial experience of being there. In this way neither people nor environment are seen as fixed entities but are continually evolving via interactions. Wylie (2007) makes the point that from the dwelling perspective “nature ceases to be seen as inert matter to be inscribed with meaning” (Wylie, 2007:159) but rather as an active force that is both an agent of change and that which is changed. Through my methods I was seeking to capture this on-going change in a way that gave, with reference to actor network theory, “some room to express themselves such that the investigator can ‘follow the actors’” (Bingham, 2009:6).

In the participant observation video of the woman and child, the emotional experiences of the participants can be interpreted from their facial expressions of joy as the woman plays with the laughing child:
Figure 3.3 woman plays with child (still from video)

and then a more sombre expression as she turns away to draw on her cigarette:

Figure 3.4 woman turns away from child (still from video)
The video of these people allowed me to be close to the non-verbal, tacit, emplaced knowledge that a sensory analysis seeks to identify. The emotional experiences of people as interpreted in the clip of video above can inform people’s connection to place, as discussed in chapter 4, the findings chapter, where place is shaped by people’s experience and interpretation of place rather than just the qualities of the place itself (Cuba and Hummon, 1993).

Another example of how observation of video data enabled an insight was with the video diary participant, Edward, who was able to evoke a memory of his father through the photography camera he had seen, and videoed, at the Fox Talbot museum in Lacock. By watching the video diary of this encounter with Edward afterwards we were able to use the material to evoke the process through which it was produced and the memories of his father and associated emotions triggered by seeing the camera. By re viewing the walking with video interview with the participant, Sylvia, at Dyrham I was able to imagine and feel my way back into the research encounter and the embodied, or situated, knowing that was part of that research encounter.

Video ethnography enabled me to detect themes in people’s practices and the way they represent themselves which revealed how social structures are made real in “the contexts and commotions of daily life” (Herbert, 2000: 553). The interpretation that ethnographers use is indicative of cultural backgrounds and personalities (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983) and while acknowledging this bias it is difficult to identify how my own cultural identity and personality is different or similar to the participants’ and how this impacted the data gathered and the analysis of the data. Given that there is an inherent bias in the data gathering process I used different methods – audio interview, video diary, video participant observation – in order to counteract this bias by providing a range of mechanisms through which people could express themselves and be observed. I now examine the visual method in more detail.
3.4.2 Visual methods

I used video in three ways in my research – for participant observation and for interviewing in the video diary and the walking with video technique. Before I describe these techniques and how they addressed the challenges of practice based research, I begin by contextualising the method with a discussion on how visual representation is used and interpreted.

Film and video create routes to multi-sensory knowing within the research process and acknowledge the interconnectedness of the senses and the embodied, emplaced nature of viewing video or photographs (Pink, 2009). The latter point acknowledges how both photography and video making require interactions of the body within the world and MacDougall (1998) argues that “the world is not apart from, but around and within the filmmaker and viewer” (MacDougall, 1998:50, original italics). Pink (2009) extends this concept by identifying how video recorded research activity can be interpreted as place-making in the first instance through the coming together of social, material and sensorial encounters that constitute the research event but also how place is simultaneously remade as it is recorded in the camera. Furthermore, place can be said to be remade on a third level when viewers of visual recording interpret, through their own personal and/or cultural understandings, the data. This was evidenced in my use of the video diary and follow up interview method used with a participant at Lacock’s photography museum. Specifically, a camera within the museum that prompted a discussion around the personal significance of the object as the participant had the same camera at home his father had given him. This engagement also engendered a discussion with the participant on the role of National Trust sites as places to visit with family members, for example the participant’s grandchildren.

Before an examination of the visual methods it is important to acknowledge what Rose (2012) distinguishes as the framework for exploring the range of visual materials in terms of three sites: the site of production, which is where the image is made; the site of the image itself, which is its visual content; and the site where the image encounters its audience (Rose, 2012):
1. Site of production – all visual representations are made in some way and the circumstances of their production may contribute towards the effect they have.

2. Site of the image – here, the site at which an image’s meanings are made is the image itself. If every image has a number of formal components, some of these components will be caused by the technologies used to make, reproduce or display the image.

3. Site of audiencing – refers to the process by which a visual image has its meaning renegotiated, or even rejected by particular audiences watching in specific circumstances. The social (practices) that structure the viewing of images in a particular place is also an influence on audiences. The concept of audiencing is also discussed in the literature chapter within the section 2.6.1.

Visual representation is central to the cultural construction of social life in contemporary Western societies (Rose, 2007). The different technologies – television, pictures, painting, CCTV footage – offer a view of the world in visual terms. Using visual methods for research purposes, as noted in section 3.4, creates routes to multi-sensory knowing within the research process and acknowledges the embodied, emplaced nature of viewing video or photographs (Pink, 2009). However, this visual rendering is never innocent; there is an interpretation in the images as we conflate the ‘seen’ with the ‘known’ (Jenks, 1995). This is in both the way in which images are presented and the way in which we see them: the video image is exposed to what Bal (1996) describes as a process of double exposure where a critique is made of a video not only as the video is interpreted but the interpretation is also on display.

Gillian Rose (2007) stresses an anthropological approach to the visual that emphasise what happens when something is done with visual materials, the social practices within which photographs, for example, are embedded and the effects of such practices. Although interpreting and making meanings are themselves practices that are done with visual materials this approach focuses on the actions
that an image may provoke. The act of reviewing the video image in the video diary participant’s post filming interview was a practice in itself co-constituted between myself and the participant. By giving the participants a video camera and then discussing the film they took in an interview after filming I enabled interviewees to articulate, what Latham (2003) describes in his photo elicitation technique, as some of the taken-for-granted practical knowledge with which the participants negotiated public space.

I also used both video and photos not just as photo elicitation but also as photo documentation addressing my research question of how people engage with place by showing examples of physical engagement with place through practice such as when Sylvia, the walking with video participant at Dyrham, touches the stone on the building. In this way:

“information within [a photo] can be argued as putative facts that are answers to particular questions” (Suchar, 1997: 37)

Although the photos and videos I gathered at the sites were informed by the aim of this research of how people engage with place and the meaning place has for people, I used this as a guide that provided a direction for capturing images and I reinforced this further by linking the imagery to fieldnotes. However I still wanted the freedom to capture all and any practice and performance at the sites so did not have a preconceived idea of what I was going to capture before I went to the sites. In this way I used the imagery data in a grounded theory approach where detailed field evidence enabled me to build my findings, in the form of themes, iteratively by using the imagery as evidence. The imagery captured is what Rose (2007) refers to as the ‘texture’ of places as well as the emotions that evade verbal or written expression. As Edensor (2005) describes in his photographs of industrial ruins:

“Photographs are never merely visual but in fact conjure up synesthetic and kinaesthetic effect, for the visual provokes other sensory responses. The textures and tactilities, smells, atmospheres and sounds of ruined spaces…can be empathetically conjured up by visual material.” (Edensor, 2005: 16)
Trialling video – PO at Crickley Hill

I used video for both participant observation and as an interview method, in the video diary and walking with video technique. However, I started the research process with no knowledge of how to use a video camera so I began by piloting the technology by using it for participant observation at a National Trust site, Crickley Hill, a wooded parkland near my home in Cheltenham. The purpose of the pilot was to firstly familiarise myself with the technology before using it at one of my final four sites and secondly to validate it as a method by seeing how it could be used.

I positioned my camera on top of my car, in the car park, as I wanted it to be in a fixed spot so it was not obviously trained on people, which might make them feel uncomfortable, instead I focussed the camera on the ticket machine. In this way, I trialled how to use the video to capture people’s engagement with place, and from this insight I was able to understand how people physically and emotionally engaged with a place. Part of this process was deciding on how to use the video – just for participant observation or to capture myself interviewing people? I decided that there was little value in videoing myself and that videoing others, in participant observation, without the influence of a stranger like me asking them questions was of more use to me in answering my research objective of how people engage with place. Note, that the separate use of video in the video diary/walking with video format is discussed later in this chapter.

I filmed a man and a woman returning from a walk and carefully removing the mud from their shoes. I noticed when I reviewed the video that the man continued to bang out the mud from his shoes and his wife’s shoes while we spoke. When I first approached the couple seemed quite shy but then there is a moment when the man seemed to relax and leaned against the van.
My decision to ‘fix’ the camera, in my pilot at Crickley Hill, on top of my car - and record the agency and practice unfolding in the car park at Crickley Hill was influenced by Paul Simpson’s work (2010) looking at rhythm analysis. Simpson apprehends rhythms of everyday practices and performances and uses the camera primarily to record more than would have been possible by observation alone – the fine detail of people using place – but it also allowed me to reflect on what I was doing, my own performance. I was not able to keep detailed notes of what I was doing as I went up to speak to people in my fieldwork sites such as Crickley Hill or as I walked with my participant at another site - Dyrham - on the duration of certain occurrences or how they related to each other or even the specifics of what people said.

**Video diary-interview**

In the video diary interview method (Latham, 2002) I used in my fieldwork at Lacock I give a camera to a pair of participants – Edward and Maureen, a retired couple in their mid 60s - for them to take a visual diary of their visit and then I
interviewed them about this directly afterwards. I purposely gave no directions about talking, although Edward who, unprompted took control of the camera, provided a narrative to the video he took. The video diary became a “kind of performance or reportage…and the interview a reaccounting, or reperformance.” (Latham, 2002: 2002)

I explained to the participants what I was going to do with the video and that I would interview them afterwards about what they have recorded. Prior to their video recording I asked them a few questions about their National Trust visiting habits that I record with a hand held audio recorder. When they returned we reviewed the video jointly. In the botanical garden Edward commented that he thought the sculptures that made music when they were interacted with were for children but he tries each one in turn and there is wonder in his voice when he creates the water vortex, this is further explored in my findings, chapter 4. In the post video interview I ask him what he thought of these musical sculptures and he replies not much although it triggers a conversation about his love of music and how he plays in a band so it makes a connection for him. Similarly when he is in the Fox Talbot museum he finds a camera that he actually has at home, that his father had given him and this triggers a conversation on memories through objects and how the past connects us with the present and gives the present meaning.

I used video in my data gathering in three ways: firstly, to capture what was happening for participant observation secondly, as a video diary in my interviewing where the participant took the video and made a diary themselves and then I did a follow up face to face interview with the participant afterwards and thirdly, in a ‘walk with video’ where I accompanied my participant around a site and captured, on video, what she experienced.

This impact of researcher on the researched raises the question of how issues such as identity - gender, ethnicity, age, social demographic - influence the situation of data capture. I was not a “passive instrument of data collection” (May, 2002) but as a researcher I was influencing what I was examining as Cook and Crang (2007) observe:
“research is an embodied activity that draws in our whole physical person, along with all its inescapable identities. What we bring to the research affects what we get.” (Cook and Crang, 2007:9)

As such there is a need to gain a sense of reference through which an individual encounters her or his world (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995). It also entails acknowledging and accepting that accounts offered by people may appear by their very nature indistinct, self-contradictory and incomplete (Latham, 2002). As Latham notes, this challenge is inherent in the study of places where people are routinely subject to interaction with strangers. The routine, non-cognitive, embodied qualities of this interaction make research challenging but Latham suggests the participant video diary as a:

“sensitively structured technique through which research subjects can find a space for reflecting on these practices.” (Latham, 2002:2001)

The video diary technique enabled the participant – Edward - to reflect on the practices of his site visit in the follow up interview, and enabled a discussion on the meaning of the encounters in the participant’s site visit, such as the camera in the photography museum that was the same make and model as his father had given him and he still had. This prompted a conversation, in the follow up interview, about the role of memory and objects as well as how visits to National Trust sites enabled the participant to share experience and lay down memories with his grandchildren. Rather than presenting an affective relation, the video enabled a reflection on an emotional response that occurred; in this way there is a significant distinction to be made between the video facilitating the reflection on and examination of these contingent affective relations, but, as Simpson frames it “not necessarily constituting the actual presentation of these affects.” (Simpson, 2010: 350).

Inherent in the use of video technique in research is the consideration of the body; within the field of geography this has focussed on social and spatial conceptions, often located in the tension between the body as a social and biological phenomenon (Simonsen, 2009). This interest in the body is not confined to
geography but occurs in social science and humanities and stems from a rise in consumer culture and self-expression (Simonsen, 2009). Moreover the body is seen as lived, active and generative (Merleu-Ponty, 1964) a concept extended by Foucault (1975) who saw the body as acted upon, as historically inscribed from without. This marks a move away from decontextualized, disembodied ‘objective’ knowledge towards a notion of embodied or situated knowledge (Simonsen, 2005).

**Walking with video**

Walking with video is a term used by Sarah Pink (2007) as a “phenomenological research method that attends to sensorial elements of human experience and place making” (Pink, 2007: 240). I used this method at Dyrham with an older participant who felt uncomfortable using the video by herself in a video diary way. Instead I walked with my participant and let her inform where we went and our pace and, in doing so, I was able to learn empathetically about her experiences and gain a ‘sense of place’ (Feld and Basso 1996; Massey, 1993; Tuan, 1977) through my own sensory embodied experience of walking. The walking with video enabled me to share the sensory embodied experience of my participant and gave me access to the emotional responses, even some of the beliefs and values, of my participant.

Reviewing the video footage taken from my walking with video diary at Dyrham reminded me that I was moving at someone else’s rhythm and it was a rhythm that was slower than my own; it enabled us, both of us as participants, to experience the place in a more considered way, noticing details that I am sure I would have missed had I been going at my usual, faster, speed. By using video I am able to not only review the content but to identify nuances in that content. Simpson (2011) notes that lived and remembered experience of temporality are different to the fixed linear temporality presented by the video footage and I notice this as I watch back the Dyrham video time seemed to move slowly for me, particularly in the first room but looking at the video it was not an unreasonable amount of time spent in this room. I had also missed how the room guide in the second room tried
to talk to me when I was filming and I was fairly uncommunicative back because I was trying to listen and film the conversation my participant was having with the other room guide in the room. These factors contribute to the place making aspect of the video research method referenced earlier where place is made and remade in the research process. The walking with video diary approach also enabled my participant to represent her own embodied experience and knowledge as is shown throughout the video as I follow, with the camera, where my participant is looking or pointing to at the site. In this way a more involved and reflexive approach is generated to how place and identities are constituted.

The video also served to help me imagine and feel my way back into the research encounter and, as Pink (2007) describes, back into the embodied knowing and non-verbalised ways of experiencing and knowing that form part of the research encounter and use these as part of the analysis. It allowed me to reflect on these experiences and reach a new level of awareness about them. However, Simpson also warns that the video should be used “in conjunction with researching ‘through the body’” (Simpson, 2011: 345) as self-formed research and that it should not be taken in and of itself as the default answer. Simpson goes on to note, of his own video data:

“this video did not actually show the affective relations that circulated through these encounters; they did not present the affects that occurred.” (original emphasis, Simpson, 2011, p 350)

So the video serves as facilitating the reflection and examination of affective relations, and providing documentation of these.

Walking with video placed the body at the centre of the research experience and enabled me to use my own sensory embodied experience as a basis from which to empathise with my participant at Dyrham. Pink (2007) suggests how researchers who have shared the sensory embodied experiences of their informants in these ways have accessed “heightened understandings of the identities, moralities, values, beliefs and concerns of the people they do their research with.” (Pink, 2007: 244).
While my main aim was to capture the experience of the participant because she was not able to confidently, I acknowledge that I influenced the experience and making of place as the two of us negotiated and experienced the site. While I was interested in capturing my participant’s sensory and emotional experience of the site the method also enabled me the opportunity to use my own sensory embodied experience as a basis from which to empathise with others (Pink, 2007).

The walking with video method was also a place making process in itself just as Gray (2003) notes how shepherds rather than reflecting the place naming in existing maps consider that “meanings are open, established by shepherds in the act of going around the hill” (Gray, 1999: 440). Massey et al (1999) also refer to how place and space “are made: through materially embedded practices, through the social production of lived space, or as the result of a particular version of interrelational performance.” (Massey et al, 1999: 246, original emphasis), so this formation of place through ‘interrelational performance’ occurs during the research method of walking with a participant and using a video camera to capture the experience. This place making concept is further extended by Casey (1996) who argues for places to be seen as events and ‘far from being static sites, [places] are themselves continually changing in accordance with their own proper dynamism” (1996:44). This creation of place through what is practiced and performed in the site is highlighted by Edensor (2000) who cites the relationship between the material character of space and the sensual and temporal contingencies of any walk which mean that the “walker is in experience, feels and thinks in his (sic) movements through space and time” (Robinson, 1989:4). Maddrell (2013) highlights the role of rhythm within the walker’s movement and how it has the power to ‘still the claims of everyday life’ (2013: 6) whilst at the same time recognising how it:

“cannot guarantee but can facilitate the spatial and psychological separation from everyday concerns and occupations, which in turn make space for protracted fellowship and reflection.” (Maddrell, 2013:6)

It is worth noting here the route that myself and the participant took was informed to some degree by the site itself – there is a suggested route around the house
which we followed – but also by other factors such as the weather: when we first arrived we were going to go round the garden but then it started raining so we went to the house. The speed and, to some extent, direction of our path around the site was governed by something other than having a prescribed route and time imposed on us. It was also informed by the way in which my participant talked to people, stopped to stare out of the window at the view, made a detour to view an object in more detail. As such our path around the site was not simply a functional route connecting the start with the finish but the route becomes a “meaningful sensory and imaginative place [in] their own right that interacts with and are contextualised by the sensescapes of which they form a part” (Pink, 2007: 246).

The concept of affect can be described as impersonal or pre-personal as it “is not necessarily experienced by or possessed by a subject” (Anderson, 2009: 8) but it corresponds from one bodily state to another and is therefore analysable in terms of its effects (McCormack, 2003). As bodies are affected by a panoply of other bodies in any particular encounter this change in bodily states can be either positive, where the transfer of power from the affecting body to the affected body results in a positive effect, or negative where encounters involve a decrease in power of the affected body (Deleuze, 1988). In this way, affect is associated with place as affects generated or experienced in a place are dynamically involved in the production and reproduction of place (Lefebvre, 1991), or as Thrift frames it, bodies are inevitably affected by place such that place “seems to be a vital element in the constitution of affect” (Thrift, 2004: 60). In the same way, Kathleen Stewart in her book Ordinary Affects (2007) discusses the “affective subject” as the person or para-conscious self who drifts through scenes and scenery and lets life wash over, embodying “a collection of trajectories and circuits”.

However, this raises the issue of interpretation in how the social practices of participants and researchers structure how data and theory are interrogated (Herbert, 2000). Context is key to how we construct meanings as actions and reactions give meaning that we, as researchers, interpret through a self-conscious and reflexive act through all types of research. Through ethnographic research we are emplaced as individuals and through this emplacement experience we have an embodied engagement with others. This was borne out in my fieldwork as I
walked with one participant to record a video diary of her visit to Dyrham and in another instance where a gardener at Hidcote showed me his favourite place in the garden which then developed into a tour of parts of the garden and an explanation of current issues with the lawn and plants. This technique of walking with video, developed by Sarah Pink (2007), enabled me to empathetically learn about my subjects’ experiences. The technique of using video as part of the ethnographic research process enabled me to have a more shared approach with my subject and understand their experiences of the site by gaining a better perspective of their sensory and emotional responses to the site. The use of sensory ethnographic methods also reflected the real world messiness (Cook and Crang, 2007) of how people experienced National Trust sites. The narrative that people communicate through face-to-face interviews and the video methods described are not simply a way of mirroring what goes on in the world but as “the means through which it is constructed, understood and acted out.” (Cook and Crang, 2007: 14, original emphasis) and the method of walking with video reflects this.

3.4.3 Interviews and the ‘practice of talking to people’

Interviews formed a key method of data collection in my PhD to address the aim of how people engage with place within National Trust sites; the degree of structure for interviews varies. For example, May (1997) identifies four types of interview in social science research: the structured interview, the unstructured interview, the semi-structured interview and the group interview. However, there is grey area between questionnaires and interviews; people delivering face-to-face questionnaires are often labelled as ‘interviewers’, with the resultant questionnaire findings labelled as the product of ‘interviewing’ (Cloke et al. 2004). Typically questionnaires and interviews are ‘pigeon-hole’d (Sayer, 1992) into ‘extensive’ and ‘intensive’ camps where the former focuses on patterns in a large scale representative group of people and the latter concentrates on specific processes with a small number of people using interactive interviews and ethnographies for data construction, and qualitative analysis as a strategy for data interpretation (Cloke et al. 2004).
I used unstructured and semi-structured interviews because of the qualitative nature of the research strategy and, used in conjunction with the visual methods, they were purposely designed to produce rich and detailed analysis of exploring how people interact with place. This involved examining how people dwell, what they do at places, how they are affected by other actors and how this then informs people’s engagement, understanding and emotional attachment to a place.

Interviews, in contrast to questionnaires, are typically unstructured or semi-structured (Valentine, 2005) where a conversational, fluid approach can be taken that forms a dialogue rather than an interrogation or as Eyles (1988) frames it ‘a conversation with a purpose’. This was the approach adopted for this research in order to give an authentic voice and insight into people’s experiences (Cloke et al, 2004). Gill Valentine (2005) argues that this approach is:

“sensitive and people-orientated, allowing interviewees to construct their own accounts of their experiences by describing and explaining in their own words.”

(Valentine, 2005: 111)

As a research method, semi-structured and unstructured interviews have the advantage of allowing a more wide ranging discussion than a questionnaire would allow and enable the interviewer to explore issues thoroughly. Interviewees also have the opportunity to explain the complexities and contradictions of their experiences (Bryman, 1993), and the method allows respondents to raise issues that the interviewer may not have anticipated (Silverman, 1998). The material generated in this way is rich, detailed and multi-layered and produces a deeper picture than a questionnaire survey (Silverman, 1998).

The use of interviews as the preferred method of research raises the question of inter subjectivity in the production of knowledge which goes beyond the intensive and extensive categorisation. Cloke et al (2004) move away from these categorisations by framing the range of questionnaire and interview techniques in terms of reflecting the changes between the researcher and the researched. Cloke et al (2004) identify four types of social situation in which different the
researcher/researched relationships signal different kinds of social construction of data:

1. Robotic relationship: the researcher makes use of other people’s surveys (e.g. opinion polls). Data are effectively pre constructed with no direct interaction between the researcher and researched.

2. Remote relationship: the researcher is involved in the framing of the questions but there is a lack of face to face contact (e.g. postal questionnaires). While this method is objective it relies on how well the questions are worded and interpreted.

3. Interactive relationship: the interviewer and interviewee co-construct the data as interviewer and interviewee work their way through questions which being as the ‘property’ of the researcher but which become co-owned and co-shaped in the unfolding interactivity of questioning, answering, listening and conversing.

4. Involved relationship: the researcher is further immersed in the social situation through the use of reflective interview or discussion groups. In this context the notion of getting ‘true’ answers is replaced by the potential for dialogue.

The judgement of how appropriate a particular approach is to a defined question will depend on the role of the researcher and the researched in constructing data.

For my research purposes I used the interactive relationships for my face-to-face, audio recorded interviews and an involved relationship with the video based diary/interviewing I performed.

For my audio recorded interview I began by giving a brief outline of who I was and what my project was about I then asked if it was OK to record interviews and explained that I needed to transcribe the interviews in order to do the analysis. My interviews began with some prompt questions in order to, firstly, to get some practical information from my interviewees such as how long they had
worked/volunteered at the site. Secondly, they served as ice breakers to put the interviewee more at ease and also the answers served as an opportunity to follow up, in a more unstructured interview method, on a topic raised by the interviewee.

The prompt questions that I used for staff and volunteers were:

- How long have you been working here?
- What are your day to day duties?
- How has your perception of the place changed since you started working here?
- Do you have a special place at the site and why is it special?

The purpose of these questions was to get people talking and also to understand people’s engagement with place and how place affects them by understanding how they used the place and what emotional response they had to the place. I was also able to focus on different aspects with different people; for example, I focused on seasonality and rhythms with the gardeners and more on aspects of visitor engagement with staff based inside the house. In addition to understanding the practice and performances of people in a place, the interviews enabled me to probe how people felt about place, for example by asking them if they had a special place, which then led to a discussion on how place was viewed through this emotional lens.

For visitor interviews – where I approached members of the public visiting the site - I, again, had some stock opening questions around the logistics of their visit – first time here, how long have you been here for, what have you done here - in order to break the ice and then I asked them more about the emotive side of their visit. In terms of technique, I also learnt how to ask questions, when to remain silent, to let people finish their sentences. As I conducted the interviews, particularly with visitors, I was struck by Cook and Crang’s (2007) observation about how we – the researchers – affect the people we are interviewing. As a
white, middle class female in this environment I am more like most people here and, therefore, less threatening. While our identity influences the interview situation it is also the interviewee’s perception of our identity that impacts the situation as Padfield and Proctor (1996), referencing gender, propose:

“…the interviewee is an active participant in the definition of the interview process. Interviews may take account of gender in the conduct of interviews. The same applies to the interviewees who also define the situation in gender. The problem is to know just how the interviewee’s sense of gender is influencing the interview. “

(Padfield and Proctor, 1996:364)

I am particularly struck by how different it would be if I was of different ethnicity and gender when one man I am interviewing tells me he ‘only votes Conservative because there is no BNP candidate in my area’.

Face to face interviews, which were recorded and transcribed, were used in an attempt to give “an authentic insight into people’s experience” (Silverman, 1993:91), as much as ‘authentic’ is possible, and enabled a reflexive approach to the construction of data, as did the video diary and walking with video techniques. I had some prepared questions and based further questions on what the participants discussed during the course of the interview. This enabled the participants creatively to talk about, and be reflexive about, the practices of their engagement with National Trust sites. This method enabled me to interrogate the ‘fleeting’ or the creation of the world as it takes place everyday for people. However, rather than using interviews as a means of detecting truths from willing respondents (Holstein and Gubrium, 1997), Cloke et al (2004) advocate a more critical sensitivity to the interactions and exchanges between interviewer and interviewee. The authors argue that the interviewers are themselves implicated in the construction of meaning with their interviewees, and that such inter-subjectivity is crucial and unavoidable and the data which result are essentially collaborative.

This process is also described in section 3.1 but it was both iterative and constantly responding to the environmental, time and place constraints from when
people were free to talk to me to how many interviews I could fit in during the
course of one site visit to responding to the dynamic environment at the site, such
as people – staff, volunteers and visitors - available for interview at the site on the
day of my visit. The staff and volunteer participants were chosen because they
were “concerned with, and/or involved in living through, the research problem”
(Cook and Crang, 2007: 14); the research problem defined here not as
problematic in nature but as the context of a National Trust site. This enabled
myself, as the researcher, to view the research objective – of how people engage
with place – from the various perspectives of the participants.

Just as I reflexively interpreted my data through my own cultural and personal lens
I was also aware of the form of self I was presenting to my participants. As Agar
(1980) describes the researcher/participant encounter:

“When you are doing ethnography, group members are going to wonder
who you are. They will listen to you and watch your behaviour, and they will
draw on their own repertoire of social categories to find one that fits you.”
(Agar, 1980:105)

In order to address this issue before the interviews with staff, visitors and
volunteers began I explained that I was doing a PhD and that I was examining how
people engaged with place and I also explained how I would be using the research
data within my thesis. This was to give my participants as much information about
myself and my work with which to form their own opinions of who I was and what I
was doing in order to provide a level of comfort and belief in the process. In this
way social research is an embodied experience (Cook and Crang, 2007) that is
made out of social relations which develop within and between the multiple sites of
researchers’ expanded fields (Clifford 1997; Katz 1992) and what we, as
researchers, bring to the research affects what we get (Cook and Crang, 2007). As
people experience the world at multiple points, times and places these
experiences and actions form different biographies and self-identities. As
researchers we have to understand and question where in participants’ life
trajectories they are and where they are going as well as where they have come
from.
I used background questions to put interviewees at ease, which enabled people to talk about their experiences that had led them to visit or volunteer with the National Trust. This was either their own personal past or the past of the site which was their own version of the past, although outside the frame of the research encounter this served to underlie how ethnographic research is not simply a matter of finding out:

“what a spuriously pure subject might think and do but, through tracing these connections and critically engaging with these stories, it is also one of trying to get at both why this has come to be the case and what wider causes and effects this might have.” (Cook and Crang, 2007: 11)

It is worth acknowledging that both researcher and participants are embedded in multiple contexts, and inherent in this is a situated subjectivity rather than a distanced objectivity (Cook and Crang, 2007). In my research this was evident when I volunteered at some of the National Trust sites as a way to become more embedded in the physical sites and the people who engaged with them. I use this experience to demonstrate a method I used in talking to people and although I only volunteered twice – both times at Woodchester Park - the exercise enabled me to become, to some extent, immersed in the site itself and the activities and mind set of the volunteers while not being completely, what Delamont (2004) describes as:

“living with people being studied, watching them work and play, thinking carefully about what is seen, interpreting it and talking to the actors to check the emerging interpretation” (2004: 206)

I was not able to live with people in the all encompassing way that Delamont describes in this approach to ethnography. Deciding what is viable and what is not was part of the challenge of doing the fieldwork; this was dictated by how practical and appropriate it was to spend time with participants to fit in with their schedules and how much time I could be at the site.
It is also worth acknowledging that the challenge of multi site ethnography is not to study the “entire culture and social life” (Hannerz, 2003:208) but to get a snap shot in time of the site and the agency and relationships that exist at that time. This temporal aspect to the sites occurs at many levels where the site has different characters depending on the time of day, week, month, season and this is more fully explored in the rhythm section (5.3.2). Throughout a period of research at a site it is not possible to know the site at all these times but rather my aim at the sites was to understand the experiences of some of the people at the sites. While the staff and volunteer populations at the site tend to remain largely constant visitors tend to be more transient and make the sites themselves ‘translocalities’ (Appadurai, 1996).

3.5 Analysis, synthesis and reflections

Having reviewed the methodological approach and the methods I now examine the analysis of the research data and how the process for synthesis. I end with my own reflections on fieldwork process.

3.5.1 Situating the analysis

Sarah Pink (2009) maintains that no standard method exists for sensory ethnography analysis, so a combination of a systematic approach to a more intuitive form of thinking through the meaning of ethnographic materials was required for my research. In looking at sensoria and emotion there is a need to develop an awareness of how different types of research method might facilitate what Pink (2009) describes as being close to the non-verbal, tacit and emplaced knowledge that a sensory analysis seeks to identify. It also became clear that there was a need to identify how people were experiencing and understanding sites based on their own sensory and emotional categories. In approaching these issues, I found that the analysis was not separate, but rather, implicit in the research process as described by Pink:
“Analysis is both a way of knowing engaged in by the researcher during the research and it is part of the reflexivity of the sensory ethnographer who seeks to understand other people’s ways of being in the world but is simultaneously aware that her or his involvement is part of a process that will eventually abstract those experiences to produce academic knowledge.” (Pink, 2009: 121)

It should also be acknowledged that there is an aspect of embodied and emplaced nature of ethnographic encounters that might be neither visual nor verbal which highlights the interconnectedness of corporeal experiences with the analytical process (Pink, 2009). Watching a video or listening to an audio interview enabled me to revisit and reconnect with the research encounter by prompting the memory and enabling me both to contextualise the analysis and reflect on the sensorial and emotional affects of that research encounter. By watching and listening to the interviews it also enabled me to analyse the actual content as well as allowing me to reflect on how it is being said and how myself or my subject reacted to what the other one was saying. This process allowed me to reflect on the pauses, what makes people laugh or remember certain feelings and how these two pieces – the content of what is said and the thought and feelings around what is said – are connected.

3.5.2 Approach to the analysis

In looking to detect patterns in people’s practices and in the “details of how they discuss and represent themselves and the worlds they live in” (Pink, 2009: 121) I was trying to get insight into the rich experience of visitor interaction. However, I found it difficult to ask people directly about their senses; for example, questions such as what did you smell tended to draw a blank from people. Instead I allowed the information to seep into conversation and picked up on any mention of the senses that tended to focus on sight and sound. In this way, the analysis has not happened at the post fieldwork stage but has emerged throughout the fieldwork process.
My approach to setting out the findings from my research was to interweave the different strands of data that I collected by using, for example, the themes that emerged from the coding process of the audio recorded interviews to inform what I looked for in my video participant observation and video diaries. In this way, I used the themes to inform the discussion as I talked to the participant in the ‘walk with video’ style of diary; this enabled me to move between the different registers of engagement. By using the findings from different forms of data collection to inform each other I was able to organise the recurrent themes and reflect on the process and my role in it; this approach breaks with the “read-then-do-then-write” that Cook and Crang (2007) eschew as a model of qualitative research.

Interweaving data also happened on a practical level when I used the photos I had taken during my fieldwork and stills from the video diary in conjunction with written text in an attempt to bring the textures, surfaces and sensory experiences of the subject matter up close to the reader. The photos served to invoke an embodied reaction and at the same time, through the readers’ own memories and subjectiveness, anticipating what it feels like to be in another place. The following extract from my field diary of a site visit to Brean Down, a site on my short list for landscape sites, demonstrates how the reader can relive my own embodied experience of the site:

There is great agency to the place, through what is present – the dog walkers, the rock climbers, the hikers, the rain that is just starting as I leave – and what is absent – the wind and the tides that have been and gone but left both manmade and natural debris on the shore.
I walk along the sodden sand and the sea seems so far out; it’s left residue on the beach – litter, seaweed, the odd crustacean. A piece of driftwood lies abandoned by the sea and a visual reminder of the forces of nature, the wind that ripped the branch from the tree and the current that carried it here.

3.5.3 The analysis

Having piloted my research method techniques I then collected data from the four sites from July 2012 to August 2013. As similar themes began to emerge within each site and within the sample of participants it became apparent the “range of arguments which can be made concerning a particular matter has been made” (Crang and Cook, 2007:15). My strategy to deal with the ensuing data set was guided by Cook and Crang’s book ‘Doing Ethnographies’ (Crang and Cook, 2007) and involved a systematic formal analysis procedure based upon ideas of grounded theory. This is described in more detail in the next section, 3.6.4 which examines the coding process in more detail.
I reviewed all the material I had collected throughout my fieldwork process – video, transcripts of interviews, participant observation video and fieldnotes and photos. I also reviewed ideas that had occurred to me regarding my fieldwork that were ideas and themes that occurred while I was in the field and that I made a note of during the fieldwork process so I did not lose or forget them. These memos were written in the context of what sparked them, such as the interview, and are what Crang refers to as “theoretical memos” (Crang, 2005: 223). I began the material review process by rereading my primary materials – the transcribed interviews (both audio and video captured) and the fieldnotes. The interviews had been transcribed soon after they were completed and I tried to type my fieldnotes up soon after a site visit. There was more of a delay with the video recorded material as I was dependent on visiting an editing suite at the University which had to be booked in advance. I watched the videos multiple times and transcribed what was being said. In reviewing all the material that came out of my fieldwork I was able to formally identify themes, through a process of loose coding, because of the frequency of how often they were mentioned in different interviews and how people spoke about these themes in terms of the language and emotions expressed. I recognize this last method is somewhat arbitrary in nature; it was intended as a starting point to organize the themes that were emerging (Crang and Cook 2007). I made a note of the themes both as single words and phrases within my fieldnotes which I wrote up post interview and during and after participant observation. Once I had printed the interviews out I was then able to read through them and mark, on the paper (see figure 3.4), where the themes I had already identified, and new ones, occurred. This paper based version of initial analysis allowed me an ease of access to the data and it enabled me to be creative and flexible in identifying the themes and their context.
Figure 3.4 – an example of transcribed interview with themes identified as initial stages of coding

Although the themes were emerging they were still in isolation from one another so in order to identify a connection between them, if connections existed, I started to draw a mind map (Wheeldon and Faubert, 2009). This helped to establish the various connections between the themes and their relationships to each other and enabled me to select important ones that led to theoretical ideas (Cook and Crang, 2007).
The first mind map I created was after transcribing four of the staff and volunteer interviews and reflects those themes from the interviews. The second mind map was drawn up after I watched and transcribed the walking with video diary from my participant at Dyrham.

Figure 3.5 – example of mind map from data from staff and volunteers
3.5.4 The coding process

A code is defined as an abstract representation of an object or phenomenon (Strauss and Corbin, 1998) or more practically, a device used to identify themes in a text (Ryan and Bernard, 2000). Codes can range from purely descriptive – this event occurred in the playground - through to labels or topics for themes – this is about violence between children, to a more interpretive or analytical concept – it is a reflection of cultural stereotyping (Richards, 2005). Raw data, such as interview transcripts, need codes to provide classification for the material in order to make sense of the data and to facilitate easy retrieval. Richards (2005) identifies codes as a way of linking data to ideas and from ideas back to supporting data and thus linking codes, as well as data to each other as patterns between codes become apparent.
In developing codes I went through a procedure of open coding in which I read through the data of the transcribed interviews and video and noted the ‘emic’ code (categories used by the participants to describe their own worlds, Cook and Crang, 2007). In reviewing the data again I noted the instances ‘etic’ codes which do not appear in the text but are chosen by the researcher because they refer to the research question. As ideas and codes were generated from the data I revisited the data to identify further occurrences of these codes and to redefine and recategorise the codes. In this way the codes developed iteratively and there was a creative (Bailey, White and Pain, 1999) element where I was using knowledge I had developed from research and reading literature to identify codes and the categorization of the mind maps helped me identify interesting relationships. Although Crang (2005) stresses that merely coding is not the same as interpreting, the codes that I selected had to have a level of robustness in that there had to be evidence in the data that would substantiate them as being chosen as coded, but neither were they absolutes. I was seeking codes that would enable me to see the patterns in what people were saying and from that identify how the concept might vary rather than developing a definitive account (Cook and Crang 2007).

Although the use of ‘etic’ and ‘emic’ codes is an approach to coding, and while it is argued that a truly grounded theory approach should only use emic code as a means of keeping coding, and the development of theories and concepts, as close as possible to the sense of spirit of the interviewees worldview, it is still the analyst who selects which words are to be used as codes and thus imposes their own world view. Cloke et al (2004) argue that coding, therefore, should be seen as a constant movement between the concepts of the researchers and the interviewee. As such it is an iterative approach in which the initial analysis provides a basis for a return to the field for further research. This was the case for my research as I constructed a list of six themes from the codes early on in my fieldwork and returned back to the field to validate them through further data gathering. I was not necessarily using the exact language used by my participants but rather I was looking for more general constructs to describe the themes emerging rather than being tied down to seeking out particular instances of when my participants used the exact phrase ‘escape’ or ‘rhythm’.
Although I did some initial work using NVivo building up codes by creating free nodes using the seven themes and building up a tree based on those themes, I abandoned this as a an analysis tool because I had completed this code tree showing the relationships by manually going through the data. I found this manual approach to the analysis more helpful to my way of working.

3.6 Reflections on methods

Despite the preparations I had made for my fieldwork there were inevitably instances of unexpected issues arising which were sometimes welcome – as in the discovery of themes – and sometimes not so welcome – when I forgot to turn on the camera during filming. As it was an iterative process, the learning along the way of both findings which informed my research going forward and also honing my technique helped me to both refine my approach but also to identify which questions, based on themes, to explore.

In terms of techniques I had some experience of interviewing prior to starting my PhD, gained through my work as a journalist. This experience helped me with the face-to-face interviews with staff and volunteers although I still sometimes felt hesitant about approaching visitors as I felt I was intruding on their time at the sites this, however, was never mentioned by my participants. I found that during the staff and volunteer interviews responses ranged from imparting deeply personal information about traumatic events that had happened in the participants’ lives to receiving a glowing positive summary of working for the National Trust, which was probably valid and keenly felt by the participants but led me to reassure the participants that the interviews were about understanding their engagement with place rather than their experiences of working for an organisation such as the National Trust.

The concept of performativity highlights another challenge in social research: while a researcher is an active and reflexive agent in the process of constructing information (Cloke et al, 2004) they are also an influence throughout the research
process. However, given the dynamics of a research method such as interviewing this offers the opportunity to “interact with people by talking to them, listening to them and negotiating with them over narrative accounts.” (Cloke et al, 2004: 151). This was borne out in my own use of semi-structured interviews and walking with video that allowed me to explore a subject further when it arose in the course of an interview with a participant.

Although it has often been noted that research is messy (Cloke, 1995) and that there is an element of positionality and reflexivity (Hughes et al. 2000) on the part of the researcher it is also worth emphasising Massey’s (2003) point about the important relationship between how ideas are constructed and developed and the need to accept and recognise more transparently that ‘the desk’ (i.e. the conceptual view) and ‘the field’ (i.e. the empirical view) are part of one overall, theoretically contingent project. This was particularly true in the development of the themes as they grew out of suggestions from my supervisors in the early part of the project designed to provide a framework for a literature review and transformed into concepts, derived from the data, that I then went back and rewrote the literature review around.

I offered to present my findings at the four field work sites, which three out of the four sites responded to - Woodchester’s ranger did not respond to my offer of a presentation of the findings. I did the feedback sessions at the sites for the volunteers and staff I had interviewed as a way of communicating my findings to the people who helped me in the process of my fieldwork and also to validate the findings with my sources from whom the data had been generated; in qualitative research this is referred to as triangulation of data (Cresswell, 2007) used to check and establish validity by analyzing data derived from the same set of research questions but from different sources. My initial findings were well received and I found the staff and volunteers very engaged with the findings which seemed to resonate with their experiences.
3.7 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the research design and methodology used to ground the theoretical concerns of this thesis as noted in 1.3. Section 3.1 discussed a multi-sited research design based on an ethnography method that seeks to capture the embodied and rich emotional experience of how people engage with place. Section 3.2 develops how the approaches to such methods meet the challenges inherent in place-based research. Section 3.3 lists the ethnographic techniques that address practice-based research including the use of video diary and walking with video techniques. The research design and method presented here aims to capture and express the emotional and performative engagement that builds on the insights already gathered by the National Trust in their visitor surveys. By acknowledging the embodied ways of how people engage with place I aim to empirically ground emotion and affect in a way that brings together the concerns of emotional geography with individual experience.
Findings – memory, rhythm and escape

4.1 Introduction

This chapter and the next chapter detail the analysis, evaluation and interpretation of the data that were produced as a result of the use of the methods described in the previous chapter.

The findings are described under six themes; the first three – memory, rhythm, escape – are described in this chapter and the remaining three - connection and belonging, the senses and material objects - are described in the following chapter. The themes address the central objective of exploring the often complex engagements of how people interact with place and how they can help develop new ‘readings’ of visitor experience and practice.

The ordering of the themes, and indeed the themes themselves, reflect the messy and creative nature of the findings in that the themes that emerged were not clearly defined nor did they emerge as discrete, tidy entities. While there is overlap and tensions amongst the themes, they are not always comparable to one another in that some are more emotionally based, such as memory, and others are formed through, and of, the physical interaction between people and place, such as the senses. I acknowledge that there are different possibilities to group the findings and the order I have proposed is not intended as a definitive or hierarchical order but rather as my own way of seeing how the themes could be grouped in order to facilitate the process of writing up my findings in a coherent way.

The six themes represent the significant issues that emerged from the fieldwork and their inclusion was based on the importance people placed on the theme, the amount of times they were mentioned and the emotional response that the theme
engendered when discussed by participants. While I acknowledge that this can be subjective and based on my own interpretation this is countered by the rigour of the coding process which provided strong and clear evidence of the themes.

The volume of data from the fieldwork stage created a sense of excitement, as well as anxiety, for myself as the researcher, at the challenge of addressing the objectives of the project as defined in chapter 1. This sentiment is articulated by Crang (2001):

“There is a certain moment of pleasure that often occurs in projects when we complete fieldwork and with satisfaction look at the mass of accumulated materials…and think of what we have achieved. This is the lull before the storm, the moment before a rising anxiety starts tapping on our shoulders… and asks what are we now to do with all this stuff” (Crang, 2001: 127)

The quote describes the point one must step back and ask what does all this ‘stuff’, as Crang puts it, mean? This chapter sets out to go beyond a description of the data and to analyse, evaluate and interpret the data to address the central aim of investigating the meaning that places have for people and how people engage with place.

4.2 Memory

While there are many approaches to the consideration of memory – psychological, neurological, social - this section will examine memory from the social perspective. In particular people’s emotional engagement with memory and how a range of registers – material objects, place (and its affects), embodied practices – can either deliberately recall or act as a trigger for memory as well as being the actual subject of recall. Through the examples of visitor engagement used throughout this section I demonstrate how memories can engender a broad spectrum of emotions as both a past and future experience.
Memory functions in different ways in the visitor experience and this multi-faceted experience of memory was challenging to capture because of the different ways in which memory was experienced at sites. The obvious challenge of describing and representing these many facets of memory (and their overlaps) has proved difficult and I am uncertain if I have managed to resolve the many roles and characteristics of memory but this section attempts to describe how they manifested themselves in people's experience of place.

As with the other sections within this chapter, I have mirrored the same structure as the literature review in chapter 2. This is to connect the literature with the findings and reflect the way the themes developed iteratively through an examination of the literature and conducting the fieldwork. The section begins by examining how memory is experienced through material objects and then examines the findings that reflect the social and spatial nature of memory and finally looks at the collective versus individual memory although there is a certain amount of cross over and interconnection between these three areas which I will highlight.

4.2.1 How memory is experienced through objects

The relationship of memory and objects occurred throughout my fieldwork in a number of ways: as objects that were specifically placed somewhere to engender a response. For example, the Sweet William flower that a participant, Eric a gardener at Hidcote, mentioned when referencing how people enjoy recognising plants and how this evokes a memory:

“People love to see stuff they've got, absolutely love it. I started planting Sweet William in the rose walk and people stopped and said I love those flowers, my grandmother used to grow those flowers… “

(Eric, staff gardener, Hidcote)
In this example the memory is recalled through an object that is not intended to trigger a memory but does trigger a personal memory of someone that is absent in that they are not physically present and may or may not be present elsewhere. This links to the literature review, section 2.7, that examined how material objects can engender different emotional responses which enable us to make ourselves as we go along (DeSilvey, 2007; Gordon, 1997) and memory of past events is interwoven through the objects we encounter (Bull and Leyshon, 2010). Furthermore, Maddrell (2013) notes how absence is:

“evoked, made present, in and through enfolded blendings of the visual, material, haptic, aural, olfactory, emotional-affective and spiritual planes, prompting memories and invoking a literal sense of continued ‘presence’, despite bodily and cognitive absence.” (Maddrell, 2013:505)

There was also evidence of objects being used to enhance the sensorial experience of place that demonstrates how themes overlapped. This is evident in the following example of the overlap between memory and other themes of senses and material objects, which are discussed in section 5.3 and 5.4. At Dyrham garden guide, Greg, purposely took people round a route that would include a Katsura tree which smells of toffee tree at certain times of the year:

“And today I took them past Katsura tree, the burnt toffee tree and you could smell the tree but it’s very elusive. So I suppose in one sense we are trying to share an experience we’ve had because we think it’s an interesting experience and ultimately we hope it will enrich their lives but it’s difficult because people come with different expectations. “

Greg, retired, male, 60s, volunteer garden guide, Dyrham

This sensorial experience creates a rich memory for people but Tilley (2006) suggests that the sensorial aspect of gardens fulfils something more primordial in us. Although using the practice of gardening, as opposed to just walking through a garden, Tilley (2006) sees gardening as a way of redressing the existential alienation inevitably produced in a culture of mass production and mass
consumption by utilizing and exploring the range of sensory and perceptive capacities:

“We live without any longer making that which we consume and, for much of the time sit in offices and houses remaining cut off and insulated, suffering varying degrees of sensory deprivation, from the living world beyond. “

(Tilley, 2006: 313)

The use of memory making objects at National Trust sites engenders an emotional response and thus informs the sense of place remembered. Acknowledging that this is dependent on a specific memory may mean to a particular person – dependent on the experience at the site, what memories they bring to the site - the memory of the object encountered at the site shapes the experience of place and the experience of remembering the place.

Engendering an emotional response to the tangibility of objects elsewhere at National Trust sites is a tactic that has been embraced by the National Trust as Anne, a garden guide at Hidcote makes reference to the effect the perfume in the shop at Hidcote and the atmosphere it creates:

“…and the shops always look and smell nice and the music is always playing and it’s soothing music. It’s all very genteel and maybe that’s harking back to when things were different and seen as being better. “

(Anne, retired, 50s, garden guide volunteer, Hidcote)

The power of objects to affect after leaving the site was also highlighted by a participant: Sarah, a staff gardener at Dyrham, described the challenge of how to get people to tick the box on the visitor feedback forms (a simple questionnaire visitors can fill in as they leave the site) that asks if the visit had inspired people to do something in their garden. Sarah describes the subsequent connection that people can make with the garden after the actual visit is over:

“maybe if you buy a plant then it flowers it reminds you of your visit here. We’ve been trying to investigate how to get people to take things home,
sometimes we give people cuttings and that helps people to connect, you see the smile on people’s reaction.”

(Sarah Kinlay, 35-45, head gardener, Dyrham)

This type of memory relies on the object being taken away from the site and being recognised after the visit and the memory associated with the visit being relived. This builds on the literature review, section 2.7, which examines how objects have an agency of their own and can be taken out of their physical environments and circulated to represent emotions and meaning in other physical and temporal boundaries (Della Dora, 2009).

Sarah Kinlay’s quote, above, demonstrates the materiality of the object and suggests how objects can nurture self-identity as visual, haptic and embodied experiences that produce an affective-emotional response (Maddrell and Dell Dora, 2013). Research into the notion of the garden in relation to identity also emphasis how the process of gardening is a means to caring for the self (Tilley, 2009) and the garden becomes, what Tilley (2009) refers to as a ‘material objectification of labor’ (2009: 183), a way to experience personal autonomy over decision making that they may not be experienced in other parts of life and empowers through maintenance and ownership of space. However, a plant or a flower taken away as a cutting or as a bought item from a site becomes a memory of the place. In this way gardens to many are what Tilley (2009) refers to as ‘deep memory groves’ and remembering how, why and when an object was purchased provides deep biographical significance. How objects are tied into a sense of self-identity is explored in more detail in 5.4.1; this section also examines how objects experienced at a site or taken away from a site extend our memory of the site. I now examine the ways in which objects triggered memories.

4.2.2 Triggered memory

The National Trust goes to great lengths to engender a sense of recalled memory though some of the examples above – particular flowers in the garden, selling plants in the shop. The following looks at some of the examples from my fieldwork
of triggered memory and the ensuing emotional experience and how this affected the person’s experience of place.

One participant, Edward (65 year old, retired, male), recognised a camera in the Fox Talbot museum at Lacock as the same one he had at home, given to him by his father: please refer to the video clip ‘Video Diary Edward Camera’ on the enclosed DVD

![Camera in Fox Talbot museum, Lacock](image)

In the post filming follow up interview with Edward, I asked him why it was so important to see a camera that he not only recognised but actually owned he said that “the past connects us with the present and gives the present meaning” (quote from transcribed interview). This reflects the way in which, as DeSilvey describes, “our identities are tangled up in our relations with the things we surround ourselves with” (DeSilvey 2007, p.405). Material objects play an important part in memory, helping to describe and relate an historical narrative. However, they also trigger another history, a personal narrative in the case of the museum camera as it was an object that explained the history of photography but also had special, personal significance for my participant.

Another example of a triggered memory came from an interview with a participant, Anne (volunteer, 60ish, retired, widow) which illustrates the emotional response a
triggered memory can engender. Anne described something she was getting made for her husband – a replica hand axe made by Warwick Museum - but her husband died before she got the opportunity to give it to him. The memory triggered a renewed sense of grief for Anne as she relived the loss of her husband and served to show how powerful objects can be in engendering not just a memory but a forceful emotional response. As I listen to the recording of our interview conversation I hear the silence that follows this emotionally charged recollection as I gave my participant time to express her grief and I reflect on how this exchange affects me and creates a new or renewed sense of grief (and a new memory) as we relieved my subject’s loss. Anne’s expression of grief demonstrates how the social support of quality relationships, such as a happy marriage, provides emotional support and shapes well-being (Ross, 1995) and when lost, people seek that support in other relationships. In Anne’s case this was found, in part, through her relationship with both the place – Hidcote – and the people she interacted with through her volunteer work at the site.

The example of my participant Anne’s experiences of the ungiven gift to her husband demonstrates what Anderson describes as ‘involuntary remembering’. Although at the time of this recalled memory we were discussing gardens, and how there is some sort of essence in material things that could stem from the person who originated the object (or garden, in this case), the memory of Anne’s ungiven gift to her husband cut into the moment and the temporal sequence of the past and present were disturbed.

This example describes the sense of absence being in the present and is found again in the same interview when the participant makes reference to a little pottery Roman bowl she owns and the connection with people unknown. Although, unlike the axe example, there is no personal involvement or connection with the origin of this object it triggers an imaginative exploration about absence (Wylie, 2009) and how the emotive response to an object leads to a practical enactment of the self:

“…if something has been dug up and the last time it was held was hundreds, thousands of years ago, that connection with people is weird….it connects me with a real person at that time.” (Anne, informant, Hidcote)
The challenge for the National Trust is to use objects to both create or invoke memories through places, objects, landscapes and, at the same time, allow visitors to make their own memories. The latter is more challenging, as the memories people recall from objects can be arbitrary, nevertheless from my findings it seems that the personal memories are the more powerful ones. One example of memory making from my fieldwork was a mother at Dyrham Park who said her son had learnt to walk on the lawn which, in turn, was a special memory for her but she was also at Dyrham because it gave her physical space for her and her three boys as she lived in inner city Bristol with a small garden. So the physical space that the site had created allowed a personal memory to be created.

Another example of triggered memory occurred when Sylvia, a participant at Dyrham, heard the sound of a piano being played in a different room and commented on it which then triggered a conversation with a room guide who said the sound of piano playing bought back the memory of her father making her practice as a child. Hetherington (2003) describes this as “how we invest ourselves in the immediate surroundings that we inhabit” (2003:1941) and as the Hetherington goes on to note, a place gets generated through such practices. While these ‘registers of memory’ (Lorimer 2006) describe and capture memory through different formats and from different triggers the workings of involuntary memory are, as Jones (2011) notes, very obscure. This also underlies the role of the senses as a mechanism for triggering memory

There is also the aspect of how material objects are used to evoke memories within National Trust sites. Dale Dennehy, National Trust outdoor operations manager for a portfolio of properties including Dyrham, explained the role of objects to engender an emotional response based on triggered memory:

“people love kitchens they recognise things that their granny might have had in her kitchen so there is that sort of connection with family, with the past, with you personally which is important. But what I think is nice is when people remember coming here as a child, I think it’s really nice when you can get that. I think it’s good that children come here and enjoy it
rather than coming here to be dragged around but come and enjoy the place and hopefully bring their children back.”

Dale, male, 40s, outdoor operations manager, Dyrham

Similar to the example of the Sweet William flower earlier, this example demonstrates how people have memories in place before they visit sites and the challenge for the Trust, in creating the visitor experience, is to generate an environment where past memories are allowed to be recalled or triggered but also the generate space and sense of place where new, future memories can be built. That sense of connecting people to place, as well as people absent or still present, by building memories through objects also came up through a scheme that Dale runs at Dyrham where trees are sold for memorialisation. The memory engendering aspect of this scheme was intended to run through generations and entice people in the future to come to Dyrham and, in this way, was building a memory for the future:

“We do lots of things to get a spirit of the place so we sell trees and people often buy them as memorial trees all around the park. So if you came in here and said I’m looking for a tree for my granny who passed away I would ask where she liked in the park, what her favourite tree was then there is a planting plan and I try and tie up the requirement with what we need to plant on site and we would encourage people to help plant the tree. We don’t have plaques but we do record it. It’s about ownership, they feel they have part of the place, it’s not my place it’s about getting people to feel they are part of the place. We are starting the same thing at other sites because it’s about that emotional engagement with a place. People come back with their children to see the tree.”

Dale, outdoor operations manager, Dyrham

This quote shows how both people and place, conjointly, form the visitor experience and rather than seeing memory as simply a burden of the past the quote demonstrates how memory and place come together and, as Jones (2011) articulates, memory becomes that which “makes us what we are…we are
conglomerations of past everyday experiences, including their *spatial textures and affective registers*.” (Jones, 2011: 875, original italics).

Harvey (1996) describes this as the construction of a sense of place becoming an active moment in the passage “from memory to hope, from past to future. And the reconstruction of places can reveal hidden memories that hold the prospects for different futures.” (Harvey, 1996:306). The desire to represent memory through the marking of a ‘place’ is a feature of all modern societies, and as McDowell (2008) notes, is particularly prevalent after a tragic event. What can be seen from the above quote from Dale Dennehy is that it is not just a marking of a place but building a connection to a place through memory, as Rose (1995) suggests:

“One way in which identity is connected to a particular place is by a feeling that you belong to that place. It’s a place that you feel comfortable, or at home, because part of how you define yourself is symbolized by certain qualities of that place” (Rose, 1995: 81)

As referenced in section 2.2.2, memory is experienced through objects that we meet in various way – be they objects present in the form of souvenirs, memorial trees, cameras in a museum – through these objects and their emotional affect, people build ‘complex personhood’ (Gordon, 1997). The objects, in turn, engender different emotional responses through our different types of memories: memories of absent people from our lives, memories of the visit to the site. I now examine how memory is formed through social and spatial aspects.

### 4.2.3 The social and spatial nature of memory

Using the experiences of Anne, the garden guide volunteer at Hidcote who had lost her husband in the previous year to our interview, I now explore how memory and emotional responses shape our experiences of place. Anne described two different places in the garden at Hidcote which she had visited with her husband at different times: the orchard she had visited just before he died and the wilderness
section which she had visited much earlier, again with her husband, and was a much less painful memory:

“I was walking through the orchard last week and I had to get out because I remembered we had been there in June and the difference then and now, that, that was quite painful, I assume eventually it won’t be. I have a memory of when I first came here and walking right up the other end in the wilderness and the ground goes like that [indicates a wave motion] because it was ploughed and I said to my husband the ground goes up and down, why’s it going up and down? And he said it was ridge and furrow and I didn’t know what that was you get a lot of it up here but that’s quite a nice memory. That’s quite a nice memory so it’s odd that in two different places you can have two different memories so I don’t go there now. One is from long ago and one is from just before my husband died, so I don’t go there now.”

(Anne, volunteer garden guide, Hidcote)

Anne’s first experience of her memory of the orchard can be described as ‘habit memory’ (Bergson 1988) where the body experiences what Casey (1987) describes as pre-reflexive, tacit and pre-articulate dimension of experience. For both memories – the orchard and the wilderness – Anne had a past emotion and affection which was relieved in the intensified present and in this way represented a ‘not quite present’ into everyday life. This example also speaks of the more-than-representational (Lorimer, 2005) that Maddrell (2013) sites when she describes how the absence-presence is just one of the many more-than-representational:

“experiences of lifecycle that thread through the weft of complex place-temporalities, contributing to what Edensor describes as the ‘dynamic and processual qualities of place’”

(Maddrell, 2013: 517).

Anne’s experience also demonstrates how the memory of visiting the site with her husband was powerfully overwhelming and the emotional response that this memory engendered demonstrates how we can map meaning or the ‘invisible landscape’ of grief (Ryden, 1993) which makes for ‘an emotionally heightened
space’ (Anderson and Kay, 2001). Anne’s response to managing these painful memories is not to physically go to this part of the site in an act of self-care.

In addition to the emotional response that both the orchard and the garden provoked for Anne, there is also a temporal aspect to this experience. The linear sense of time is re-encountered through “the creation of an interval between context of a past affection and an intensified present affection” (Anderson, 2004:17) demonstrating how memory can change through time (Legg, 2005) and how:

“Each recollection is as much a recollection of the last time an event was remembered as a direct relationship with the event in question.”

(Legg 2005: 457)

Place is built through people’s memories, experiences, emotions that they bring to a site and in addition to this individual spatial context of memory there is also a collective interpretation that the National Trust makes in their site.

For example, bringing memory into the garden area at Dyrham was handled in such a way that reflected the many pasts of the site rather than one particular point in time. Dale described it as ‘the layers of the garden’ because, he explained, the garden changes every 100 years to reflect the planting layout and design of the era and to take the garden back to one point in time would be both impractical in terms of what flowers were around in the Victorian era, for instance, and would do a disservice to the other pasts that the garden has experienced. Citing Ashworth and Graham (2005), Sarah McDowell (2008) refers to this approach as “heritage as the selective use of the past as a resource for the present (and future)” (2008:40) which describes how these evocations are being used by the Trust to create and engender a response from the visitor and build a memory.
4.3 The nature of rhythm

In this section I explore the findings of the multiplicity of rhythms and how they are formed on an on-going basis at the sites and how they collide and structure both time and place as much as ‘linear time’ (Crang, 2001). Recent work has increased attention on how rhythms shape human experience in timespace and pervade everyday life and place (Edensor, 2010). Rhythm emerged in numerous ways in my fieldwork as a key focus through which places are experienced, practiced and thus analysed. While regular rhythms offered a consistency to the sites through daily opening times and times of tours these were meshed with other processes of seasons, volume of people, weather that contributed to the forming of place as “part of an infinitely complex spatial network and not self contained envelopes” (Massey, 1995).

Rhythms come from various sources: calendrical, diurnal and lunar, lifecycle, somatic and mechanical. In addition to examining these forms of rhythm I also examine how the rhythms are cross cut with seasonality, emotion and materiality at the sites. I start by briefly examining some of the rhythms from outside of the site that impact or affect the visitor experience from motivations for making the visit to prior knowledge of the site. Rhythms within the site are then considered, such as how people move around the site and the collective and individual rhythms present at sites and how “these rhythms shape human experience in timespace and pervade everyday life and place.” (Edensor 2010:1).

4.3.1 Rhythm findings

A multitude of rhythms exist at (and outside of) National trust sites: opening and closing times of the day, week, month and year, winter closure and house opening; seasonal rhythms that shape the look and feel of the landscape and gardens; number of visitors; routes around the site to name a few. These rhythms, in turn, affect the practices of people at sites and contribute to the meaningful shaping of social time and space (Cresswell, 2006) which is explored in more detail in rhythm of mobility in the next section. The findings indicate that rhythms serve to underlie how places are about relationships, about placing (or displacing...
or replacing) of people, materials, images and the systems of difference they perform (Shell and Urry, 2006). For this reason, National Trust sites are not experienced in a similar manner by everyone, for place is both the context for practice as well as a product of practice (Jiron, 2010).

There are also rhythms prior to arrival at the site that effect the experience of visitors to National Trust sites such as the traffic while journeying to the site, the rhythm of the holiday that visitors may be taking or work rhythms, the weather, the rhythm of the weekend. While not an exhaustive list of outside rhythms, these are examples of how human and non-human rhythms merge together and spill over into the experience at the site. It is also worth noting how there has often been a distinction between the journey and the destination as a place with the place seen as a fixed entity exerting a push or pull on people to visit; however Sheller and Urry (2006) argue for a new mobility paradigm that recognises the complex relationality of places and people connected through performances. In this way, places are dynamic and are also generated as is the relationships between people, material, images and activities that are performed (Molz 2006).

When considering the complexity, fluidity and mobility of the sites it is important to note the diversity of people who visit them and the reasons why they do. The National Trust devotes much effort to such analysis in the form of visitor surveys and, through these results and my own research, I found that there is a multitude of roles and associated practices of people who visit National Trust sites from local, regular visitors to first time visitors to habitual visitors in the form of staff and volunteers, to people en route to a holiday destination or on a day trip. This diversity of visitors brings with it complex rhythms which are, in part, concerned with rhythms that exist externally to the site, as mentioned above. The roles also have varying rhythms to their visit depending on time, familiarity of the site and tasks or schedules they have imposed on them in the form of work schedules. I witnessed how rhythms came from the mobility practiced from these roles – as people did a range of common visitor practices such as walk around the site, park their car, have a picnic, take a tour, give a tour, weed a border, sit in the garden. These embodied experiences, “the visceral, elusory nature” (Simpson, 2008: 824) of the body and its capacity to affect and be affected by a multitude of other (than
its own) rhythms through the practice and performance at the sites, moves away from Lefebvre’s (2004) notion of dressage and the regulated, embodied rhythm that this suggests. Instead the experiences embrace a more reflexive attunement to place where places are symphonies of events Wunderlich (2010).

Site rhythms, then, are outcomes of the complex interplay between human and non-human actors and the differing reasons for visits and differing visit practices can generate distinctive rhythms within the visit. An example of this are the volunteers, who have a regular temporal rhythm to their interaction with a site as they typically volunteer on the same day each week – through the rhythm of a rota - and doing similar tasks although not always in the same physical location. The volunteers’ perception of the site is referenced in terms of the day they volunteer as Chris, who volunteers every Friday at Dyrham, expressed:

“The people you meet on a Friday are all what I would call ‘nice people’, they’ve all got careers and done something whereas I’m a Bristolian and bit more rough and ready.”

(Chris, female, retired, 60s, Dyrham house volunteer)

Although the inference is that the people the participant interacted with on a Friday were somehow different than those from another day of the week, and a suggestion that she was different from them, there was a clear distinction made, in the volunteer’s mind, that the people on the day she volunteered at the site were good people.

Weekly routine also informed the practice at sites with events arranged on certain days as Dale Dennehy, outdoor operations manager at Dyrham, explained:

“For under-five year olds on a Tuesday we have this outdoor thing where we are simply getting them to pick grass, roll down a hill, pick up a worm and have a sing song.”

(Dale Dennehy, outdoor operations manager, Dyrham)
These weekly and daily routines highlighted by the participants are cyclical rhythms that interweave with more linear rhythms that I witnessed at the sites such as the movement of people around sites, the steady stream of people asking questions and buying products and food. Lefebvre argues that the relationship between the cyclical and the linear is one of an antagonistic unity:

“Cyclical repetition and the linear repetitive separate out under analysis, but in reality interfere with one another constantly. The cyclical originates in the cosmic, in nature: days, nights…monthly cycles, etc. The linear would rather form social practice, therefore from human activity: the monotony of actions and of movements, imposed structures.” (Lefebvre, 2004:76)

This interweaving of both cyclical and linear becomes more blurred for Lefebvre in later analysis as Meadows (2010) highlights:

“His notion of linear repetition is at the heart of this shift, in which the cyclical takes on properties of social organisation. The linear forms repetitions through its infusion with the cyclical, such that hourly demands and social practices compose rhythmic regimes in their repetition across days, weeks or seasons.” (Meadows, 2010: 85)

This describes the merging of the rhythms I witnessed at the four sites: from the practices that were informed by the circadian rhythms of night and day, such as when the sites were open or walking during daylight hours in Woodchester, interwoven with the repetitive linear rhythms of everyday, such as the bodily mechanism of walking with its constant rhythm or organised tasks in the garden such as deadheading or grass cutting or having lunch in the on site café. These were bodily rhythms that encompass, and are informed by, both linear and cyclical rhythms. There was also evidence of what Wunderlich (2010), writing about cities, describes as:

“slower movements which intertwine with social activities which can be thought of as temporary halts […], breathing occasions, moments of silence and encounter”. (Wunderlich, 2010: 45)
I witnessed this in visitors to Dyrham who were sitting on a garden bench, reading a book. In these performances visitors were practicing a form of resistance to the normative rhythms found elsewhere in the site which typically included walking around the garden, deer park or house. This resistance rhythm is similar to the ‘slow’ movement who declare in the manifesto “we are aiming at those who wish to listen to the rhythm of their lives, and possibly adjust it” (Capatti, 1996:5). This was, perhaps, most apparent in the rhythm that the seasons imposed on the gardeners where growth of plants cannot be hurried and a site develops at its own pace.

4.3.2 Temporality findings

As these examples show, there are multiple rhythms that exist before visitors reach a site and at a site and these rhythms not only exist at different levels – cyclical and linear – but are interconnected and entwined with each other. Rhythms were experienced at the sites as a singular flow of experience and collectively through the practices and performances referred to by Seamon (1980) as ‘body-ballet’ which describes the sequence of preconscious actions used to complete a particular task which, in turn, generates a sense of place. Cresswell (2004) suggests that places are performed on a daily basis through such routines, through people living their everyday lives and in participating in these daily performances ‘we get to know a place and feel part of it’ (Cresswell, 2004:34). Although a visit to a National Trust site is not part of people’s everyday routine (except for the daily routine of full time staff or the weekly routine of volunteer staff) there was evidence that people bring their outside routines into the site and perform them in order to achieve the sense of belonging and perhaps security that is referred to by Cresswell (ibid). This was particularly relevant for rhythms centred around food and drink, as evidenced by a participant at a National Trust site, Westbury Court gardens although not part of the final four sites of my fieldwork was on a long list of sites detailed in my methods chapter (chapter 3). At the site a mother and her young daughter had bought a picnic to eat, when I spoke
to the mother she said she regularly came to the site with a picnic as she felt that it was somewhere enclosed for her daughter to run around.

Figure 4.2 – Mother and daughter at Westbury Court gardens

4.3.3 Mobilities’ findings

How people moved around the site, what they did at the site, where they went, how long they spent at the site were all rhythms, both collective and individual, found at the four sites and were, in turn, influenced by a number of factors such as weather, time constraints, how many other people are at the site. In this way site rhythms were constantly in a process of change and were not fixed entities but places of chance and process (Pred 1984). As such, places are never finished but are always becoming and there is a set of cultural and social expectations that pervade places (Cresswell 2004) and influence our behaviour in a place. Consequently, places are events and the rhythms of these events are influenced by the official, directed routes and paths around the sites and the events organised at the sites, as well as by how people actually move around the site and what they
do at the site which could differ from the laid down rhythms that the sites attempt to impose on the visitors.

For example, there are a number of suggestions on the National Trust website, within the site specific pages, for the possible routes to take round the sites and for different visit themes based around walking, shopping and eating. An example is the Lacock site which, on its website, provides a pdf of a map of the site under the ‘eating and shopping’ section of the visitor information section. This directs the visitor to experience the site, and its surrounds, through eating and buying things through a pre-defined route and a rhythm informed not only by a consumer experience but also by the other people present at the site, as Urry (1995) puts it:

“The collective gaze thus necessitates the presence of large numbers of other people, as are found for example in English seaside resorts. Other people give atmosphere to a place. They indicate that this is the place to be and that one should not be elsewhere”

(Urry, 1995:138, original emphasis)

The motivation for the visit and familiarity with the site influences the rhythm of the visit from how long a visitor has to look around and thus how much time they can take to view the site to the time of day, week, month that the visit takes place with some times at sites being busier than others.

The activities such as shopping and eating at Lacock exist largely because of the tourists that go there and this sense of place is developed more in the literature review (chapter 2) as are the issues around the authenticity of such places. However, Lacock is a site whose very attractions enforce a physical route and rhythm to the place whereas Hidcote purposely lacks a prescribed route once the visitor passes out into the garden from the small part of the house that is open to facilitate access to the outside. When I asked the Hidcote visitor engagement manager, Lisa Edinborough, via email, if there were any routes highlighted for the visitor her reply explained their absence:
“we intentionally do not have a set route for visitors to follow. Johnston [founder of the garden] wanted the garden to be very much a ‘discovery’ and as such we want people to experience this vision. We want people to get lost, to find hidden pathways and discover a hidden garden room. “

(Email from Lisa Edinborough, 9th October, 2012)

I witnessed this sense of both getting lost and discovery in my fieldwork at Hidcote as the photograph figure 4.3 demonstrates: people in the foreground are looking at a map of the site which highlights the key areas of the site but does not give a prescribed route around the site. People used this map to orientate themselves around the site but there was still the opportunity for people to ‘discover’ the site, as Lisa puts it, as the person in the middle of the picture to the left demonstrates as he going through one of the many constructed gaps in the hedge which leads to another part of the garden. In this example the rhythm of the site is informed by visitor’s interpretation of the site and not wholly managed by the Trust’s signage and printed guides.

Figure 4.3 – visitors at Hidcote

In this way a site can generate different rhythms depending on how people move around it, just as Lefebvre (2004) acknowledges the distinction between the strolling tourists and the hectic pace of peak-time pedestrians as they succumb to the regular pulse of the traffic lights. The walking participants talked of their habitual walks through Woodchester Park as a different rhythm to how the visitors
made their way round sites such as Hidcote and Dyrham. A strong theme to emerge at Woodchester Park, which has routes of various lengths, was one of familiarity with participants taking the same walking route each time they visited the site. One informant at Woodchester Park, Karen, described how she takes the same route through Woodchester Park almost every time she visited the site:

“I don’t think I have a favourite part, I don’t go for the mansion, I would probably say the blue route but I like looking at the lakes too. Most of the time I’m not aware of what I’m doing, if you blindfolded me I could probably still do the walk! I don’t tend to notice things around me, my husband will say ‘did you see the ruins’ and I just say ‘no’.”

(Karen, thirties, nurse, Woodchester Park)

The different routes that exist at Woodchester Park – varying from a 3km play trail to an 11km valley walk – have their own rhythms which I have experienced carrying out fieldwork at the site. As I walked around these trails I passed people and then walked alongside some people. There is also a rhythm to the walk which plots a familiar journey as described by a participant, Sally, who always goes the same route round Woodchester Park when she visits the site. In the following excerpt from our interview, Sally describes the emotional response to familiar objects and practices that the route engenders from her children:

“we do this route, we walk round the house, visit the tea shop, sit on the benches outside. But we always go the same way round.....there’s excitement but there is also something about the comfort and familiarity of knowing what you getting and the anticipation of the things that you like which are known so like in the playground the children know what’s coming next and eagerly run to the next thing.”

(Sally, forties, student, Woodchester Park)

Through the participants’ description of their experience of walking at the site, there is what Edensor (2010) describes as:
“a distinct embodied material and social ‘dwelling-in-motion’ merges (Sheller and Urry 2006) as place is experienced as the predictable passing of familiar fixtures under the same and different conditions.”

(Edensor, 2010:70)

However, rather than the familiarity of their walking environment making the participants unobservant to their surroundings it served to heighten the emotional response, as Sally identifies when she describes how her children look forward to experiencing the site because of the familiarity and embodied knowledge they have of the site. Although the first participant, Karen, describes how she is not aware of what she is doing and could do the walk blindfolded because she knows it so well, this does not infer that she does not notice things. During the interview Karen talked about the noise of the trees and the sunlight coming through the trees and the animals she saw.

The experiences of both participants of the rhythm of walking through the site allowed for what (Edensor, 2010) describes as a weaving through place where the walking body weaves a path that is:

“contingent, and accordingly produces contingent notions of place as well as being always partially conditioned by the special and physical characteristics of place”

(Edensor, 2010:70)

This contingent sense of rhythm of the walk was also dependent on a number of factors such as the weather or if accompanied or not, as Karen describes:

“I’ve always loved walking. I grew up at the edge of a town and always loved walking and always have done it. And it’s exercise sometimes I do it quickly to get my heart rate up and sometimes I just wander…..just whatever I need to do, it’s functional, I need an hours’ brisk walk I do the blue walk…I look at the weather, I still go out if it’s raining I walk fast. If my husband is with me we’ll go out for a walk and a chat so I use it as a functional and a nice thing to do.”

(Karen, Woodchester Park)
Just as Lefebvre’s pedestrians varied their rhythms depending on whether they were strolling tourists or hectic peak time pedestrians there is a sense of regular and irregular rhythms at sites produced not just by the site or the body but other rhythms such as the weather as well as emotional responses.

I now examine non-human rhythms that exist within and sometimes between the sites from the seasonal rhythms to the rhythms of opening times to the diurnal, weekly and yearly rhythms. Within some of these there are further nuances of rhythm including busy times of the day, events, and bank holidays, that create a sense of place temporality that is then experienced collectively by visitors, staff, volunteers through performance and practice which creates a sequence of unfolding processes.

Wunderdlich (2010) proposes that these common temporal experiences suggests that a sense of time is not only somewhat inter-subjective but also place specific so the rhythm of a place is being produced and perceived jointly and there are also individual senses of rhythm. This was alluded to by a participant, a gardener at Dyrham:

“it’s quieter and more relaxing you can almost feel the place calming towards the end of the day when the volunteers have gone home and the place is yours and it’s got that real special magic”

(Sarah, staff gardener, Dyrham)

This underlies the different quality of experience that a full time member of staff can have as she experiences the site on a daily basis as oppose to a volunteer who would experience the site on a weekly basis.

The same participant described a strong emotional response to the site that was grounded, in part, to her experience of the site at different times of the day:

“There is also different times of the day and moods that you get that appeal – you can walk round here at 11am and there is mist that has a magical feel to it…it’s feelings as well from the time of day and the weather which sets
you off and makes you fall in love with the place and has that magical feel to the place."

(Sarah, staff gardener, Dyrham)

Places create a sense of flow as patterns of practice, performance and events interweave according to a tempo and a sense of time. These places relate singular place-temporalities characterised by particular states of flow (Wunderlich, 2010: 50). Similar to Wunderlich’s (ibid) description of flow in Fitzroy Square, London, National Trust sites are characterised by a sense of temporal immersion coupled with a sense of protracted (prolonged) time as Karen, the Woodchester Park walker, alluded to when she described how she was not aware of her environment when she was walking. This runs alongside the rhythms that the site imposes where lunch is held at the same time, closing and opening times happen at the same time which, in turn, informs people’s practice and performance and thus their flow around the site.

Opening times varied between sites with Woodchester Park being open all year round and the other sites either having reduced opening hours and parts of the site, such as the Barn café at Hidcote, closed during November and December or closing in full during these months as in the case of Dyrham. The opening times are tied in with the seasons, for most of the sites, with more restricted access to the sites for visitors during the winter months. I now examine the effects of these seasonal rhythms in more detail and their impact on the visitor.

The seasons are represented by variations of weather, daylight hours, winds, tides, and these in turn affect everything from growth of crops and flowers to how much sleep we have (Kohsaka et al 1992). As each season returns each year, but is not necessarily the same as previous seasons, then seasonality has elements of cyclicity, in that it returns (but in this case not necessarily identically) and linearity where there is a one-digit annual change to the calendar (Johnson, 2010)

Human activity is, to some degree, influenced not just by other living things but also by these seasonal rhythms and, as Ingold (1993) highlights, these seasonal rhythms are embodied not just into the enduring features of the landscape but are also developmentally incorporated into our very constitution as biological
organisms. Wylie (2007) argues that referencing this temporality due to seasonal rhythms is problematic when examining dwelling because it is “grounded within a rural, cyclical temporality, it would seem to be dependent upon such a temporality, and can only be achieved through it.” (Wylie, 2007:182). I now examine how seasonal rhythm is perceived at sites and the practice and performance that results from seasonal rhythms.

The principal way that seasonal rhythm affects the embodied practice, or what people actually did, at the sites was through the weather and associated conditions which influenced not just what participants physically did at a site but how they did it. For example, weather had a direct impact on the rhythm of a Woodchester Park participant, where the participant’s rhythm of her embodied practice (walking) was influenced by the weather although she maintained that she was not deterred by inclement weather. Instead it changed how she physically engaged with the place through her pace of walking: “I look at the weather, I still go out if it’s raining, I just walk fast” (Karen, participant, Woodchester Park).

There is a correlation between weather and seasonal highlights and visitor numbers as the following quote from Tony Berry on the Horticulture Week website:

"The weather had a positive impact on visitor numbers in 2013, especially with the warm weather over the summer […] in 2014 we will be aiming to build on these figures by continuing to extend our opening hours and encouraging visitors to experience seasonal highlights, which will include doing more with Christmas." (Appleby, 2014)

The seasons strongly informed the embodied practices of gardeners at my sites; for example Jan, a volunteer gardener at Lacock, answered a question concerning what she particularly liked about gardening by describing the deep satisfaction and stress relief she got from handling soil but she also talked about how the season gave the garden, and its incumbent tasks, a strong sense of rhythm:

"you can just feel everything from everyday life just melting away and before you know where you are you’re just lost in the soil – what’s got to go
in, what's got to be harvested – and there is a sense of rhythm of the seasons that when you're that close to it is really strong that sense of seasons and now we are going into a tired phase where we are putting everything to bed and once you know it, once Christmas is gone the seed order will come and everything will kick off again. It’s marvellous.”

(Jan, female, 60s, retired, gardener volunteer, Lacock)

The participant believed that the rhythm of the seasons, and the incumbent weather patterns including corresponding temperature and daylight hours, dictated what tasks could and could not be done in the garden. An example of this was the weather in the summer of 2012 which had been poor or ‘challenging’ as my participant, Jan, described it. This had meant she had to sow seeds for a second time because the first batch had failed to germinate which was the first time she had had to do this. However, instead of being resentful of this extra effort that the season’s weather had caused my participant, and which was essentially a variation on the expected pattern of the seasons, she saw it more as just ‘going with the flow’ and rather than seeing this as an anomaly she viewed it as part of what made up the rhythm of the season and, therefore, pointless to fight it.

In this example the rhythm of the seasons was unpredictable (referring back to the definition at the start of this section, season can be considered to reappear rather than repeat) but instead of this being negative, or having an inherent power over my participant, by embracing the unpredictable changes in weather she found it empowering. In this sense, we move along with the seasons which do not transform the world, rather they are part of the world transforming itself through time and through the actions that happen depending on the time of year which, in turn, creates the garden, the place.

Temporality is another aspect of the seasonal rhythm evident in my fieldwork as the season informed what was done and when it was done at the sites and season was always being thought about “…then thinking about what we are going to do next season” (Di, female, 60s, gardener volunteer, Dyrham). In this context the formation of the space was dependent on the season or, more exactly, what the weather conditions were at a certain point in time that enabled tasks in the garden
to be completed or not. Seasons can be unpredictable in terms of both temporality and content as Di, Dyrham garden volunteer, noted: “we get used to the seasons here so you can see the garden changing as the weather and the season changes”

This temporality was identified as key to appreciating fully both the site and the seasons, as Bryan the gardener at Lacock put it “people come on a regular basis which is a good way to see it because it changes through the seasons”. The seasons and the weather influenced the performances and practices of people at sites and, in turn, influenced their experiences of place. Through the sensorial experience of place people formed an emotional perception and relationship to place that influenced when they visited and how the memories that were formed at sites were brought back to the sites and, in turn, informed their on-going experience of place. The sense that a visitor might miss out on seeing something if they came in only one season was evidenced by Lacock gardener Bryan’s statement - “if you come in June you’d miss out on the snow drops and crocus.” Temporality was also used to reference seasonal rhythm and to give a reference point defined by what should and should not be growing at a certain time of year but this was predicated on knowledge of what flowers and vegetables will be growing during which season. This implicit knowledge was demonstrated by one of my participants as we viewed her video diary of Hidcote, in particular the vegetable plot, at which point in the video she remarked “there’s some beans, not bad for this time of year.”

Seasonal rhythm also influenced the physical routes of guided tours taken around the sites with the different seasons bringing different views of the garden as winter means less foliage on trees and shrubs affording more of the garden to be seen which is the reason behind the choice of winter route that the garden guide at Dyrham selects:

“But in the winter we would go across the square and up the church path and go along the terrace because you can see right into the garden.”

(Greg, male, retired, 60s, Dyrham garden guide volunteer)
For Lacock village residents the seasonal rhythms gave different physical access to their site because of the decline in visitor numbers during the winter months as expressed by a resident when asked about the highpoint of living in Lacock village. She replied that it was the season of winter because there were fewer people, meaning visitors, and “you see more locals, they tend to come out” (Tracey, mid-twenties, Lacock resident).

The emotional responses to seasonal rhythm was particularly strong among the gardening staff and volunteers who came into constant contact and witnessed seasonal rhythm most keenly and over a more consistent period of time at one site. Bryan, a gardener at Lacock stated that seasons were important and when I pressed him about why they were so important he gave an emotionally referenced response:

“I think it mirrors life we start out as being cared for and we have all these ambitions when we are young and then we get a bit longer in the tooth as you go into your autumn and you feel more comfortable. For me I believe in the afterlife so there is a winter but it’s a passage to Spring and that’s why I think spring is so magical because things don’t really die they come back again the next year. In every season you can do a list of things that make it worthwhile.” (Brian, gardener, Lacock)

Here, the participant uses the seasons to make sense of a wider issue in his life – the afterlife – and by aligning the challenging subject of death, birth and one’s own mortality with seasons, the participant was able to give context to these subjects and make them easier to understand by putting them into a framework aligned with the four seasons.

This type of emotional response to seasonal rhythm, in order to understand or make sense of another aspect of life, was also evident when I followed up Jan’s description of the seasonal rhythm in the section above. I asked Jan why this type of seasonal rhythm that she had described was so important and she said it was because people sometimes ‘fight it’ and by this she explained that people are:
“always looking for something else instead of just stepping back and just be content with what you have I think you have a less stressful life. Just go with it, go with the flow” (Jan, volunteer gardener, Lacock)

As well as using seasonal rhythm as a device to interpret aspects of emotional life outside of the site, it was also used to interpret the site itself. Karen, Woodchester Park walker participant, also referenced her experience of the site at different times of the year and the impact of seasonal rhythm on the site:

“…sometimes when the sun shines on the trees in the summer it seems to glow a bit brighter.” (Karen, visitor, Woodchester Park)

The participant went on to describe how she could identify with the certain seasons – “I’m much more a spring and autumn type of person” - but she also stated that she thought the park was happy at any time of year “even in winter when there are no leaves”. This is what Cloke and Jones (2001) refer to as ‘embodied embedness’ where the experience of being in the landscape is interpreted through the senses and, in this way, dwelling becomes an embedness in the landscape.

This embodied embedness seemed to take on a literal form for a garden volunteer at Dyrham who spoke about the garden having a ‘persona’ and how this changed throughout the season:

“You can see the light is different, light in the trees is different. So the garden takes on a different persona.” (Di, garden volunteer, Dyrham)

This exemplifies how landscape is much more than a view but rather, as Maddrell (2011: 17) summarises, “landscape inevitably combines its materiality and the socialised perception of that materiality” and as Wylie (2007: 7) notes “landscape is not only something we see, it is a way of seeing things.”
4.4 Escape

Escape is multi-faceted and overlapping and takes many forms whether in a physical sense – going to a new location, or revisiting a favourite place – or in a mental sense where escape is achieved through escaping not necessarily through a place but by altering a state of mind. Having examined how escape has been interpreted through the literature in chapter 2, I will now look at how escape was evidenced in my fieldwork.

In this section I start with reviewing how escape from outside pressures occurred at the sites before moving on to examining escape and nostalgia before finally looking at escape and place. It should be stressed that there is much overlap between these sections, such as escape from a situation can be facilitated by escaping to a destination that provides a respite as evidenced by my findings.

4.4.1 Escape from outside pressures

There was a strong desire for escape from outside pressures found in my fieldwork from participants at the site with descriptions of ‘calm’, ‘relaxed’ and ‘chilled’ being used in response to the question of how the site made them feel. While these emotional responses to the sites can be viewed as motivators for visiting or escaping to the site in the first place they also act as a motivator for revisiting the site so that the same emotional response could be attained. As well as these more benign emotional motivators for escape there was also evidence of more complex emotional responses taking place. During the course of the fieldwork I listened to accounts from volunteers, particularly those who sought escape from personal grief or loneliness experienced at home. Coming to the site offered the chance to leave these issues behind and escape in work, as referenced by a garden volunteer at Dyrham:

“…so whatever issues are going on in your life you dump them before you come here and they just disappear” (Di, garden volunteer, Dyrham)
The above quote suggests how escape from emotional unrest is enabled by the physical act of passing in to a National Trust site and, in this way, escape from overlaps into escape to where the destination is part of the process of escaping from something as well as escaping in the work Di did at the site. The following quote from a garden volunteer at Hidcote used similar language in her response when I asked her how it felt to be in the garden:

“People tend to enjoy themselves whatever problems they have they tend to dump them at the gate and it’s a nice atmosphere with a buzz of conversation and occasional laughter and I love that, it’s a really nice feeling.” (Anne, garden guide volunteer, Hidcote)

A sense of getting away from it all was a prevalent theme for visitors, staff and volunteers. This escape varied from looking for an escape from the “hustle and bustle of life” (male visitor, Dyrham) to the site visit providing more of a refuge in the sense of escaping from something oppressive or difficult at home and at the same time escaping to a destination where emotional connection is made, as the following excerpt from Chris (female, retired, mid-60s, volunteer shop assistant, Dyrham) demonstrates:

G: Do you find that volunteering/working here is part of your life, because it sounds like it is...
C: Oh, completely and I broke my ankle a couple years ago and everyone was so lovely also I lost my dad just before Christmas and everyone knew about that because I used to come in without sleep but I always came in.
G: So you were the main carer for your dad?
C: Yes and this was a bit of a break and to do the house at Christmas we had to get books down to find out how it was done in Victorian times so there was no oasis so that went back to the start of my days as a florist in ’63 so it was just moss.

Chris’ time at Dyrham provided not just a respite and, in that sense, an escape from, caring for her sick father but after her father died the site became an escape
to a destination which provided emotional support, as she describes in the following extract:

“I love the shop, at first the till drove me mad but I really enjoy it now because it’s different and I’ve met some really nice people and the staff are lovely and it’s come at the right time for me this year because I haven’t got dad anymore so that filled in quite a lot. I don’t know what I’m going to do in November to get me out the house. My dad was 95 I had him a long time so it’s been a life saver coming here having a chat and you meet some really nice people and I always ask people about their visit.”

(Chris, female, retired, mid-60s, volunteer shop assistant, Dyrham)

This sense of both escaping from a stressful home situation and escaping to somewhere that provides emotional response was repeated in another participant – Jan, a volunteer gardener at Lacock:

“yes, (pause) and there have been days where I couldn’t come, my husband was very ill last year and nearly died, I missed it, I missed the companionship, I was aching to come back, it just shows how much it means to you.”

(Jan, volunteer gardener, Lacock)

It is clear from these quotes by Jan and Chris that the ‘companionship’ from the fellow volunteers and staff provided much needed emotional support and respite from a difficult home situations. In these examples the site provides a physical place for escape to happen but it is the people at the site, and the relationships that are formed, that generate the real sense of escape both from the situation at home and escape to an environment that provides respite.

This reinforces the notion examined in section 1.2, which looked at emerging approaches to place, that place is constructed through people’s interpretations and experiences of place based not only on the physical qualities of the site but also the sense of connection that they foster with others at the site. In this way people imbued places with personal meaning, the ‘autobiographical insideness’ (Rowles, 1983) cited in the review of connection and belonging literature in section 2.5.
This emotional connection with place is clearly made by Jan and Chris through the connection with others which provides the escape from a stressful situation. This relationship forming also indicates that a sense of self is connected to a particular place and, in this way work, friendship and family can be thought of in spatialised terms. For each of these forms of sociality is typically associated with a series of identifiable locations (Conradson and McKay, 2007) and place, thus plays a major role in the ongoing constitution of identity (Bondi et al., 2002; Cresswell, 2004; Pile and Thrift, 1995)

Other forms of escape from outside pressures that I witnessed in my fieldwork included conversation which was not simply an act of communion taking place but appeared to represent an escape from loneliness and, therefore, a motivation for visiting. This often took the form of light banter but the staff and volunteers commented on how the conversation signified something more than just a simple exchange of information as highlighted by the following excerpt from an interview with Sarah, the Dyrham gardener:

“...you get lots of comments from people some people want to have a chat about gardening but some people just want to have a chat so that conversation can start on one topic about gardening but end up on something completely different like where your last holiday was. You get different people wanting different things some people just want contact.”

(Sarah, gardener, Dyrham)

Eric, a gardener at Hidcote, described a similar experience:

“... being in a work place you have a bit of banter and when these chaps retire the banter’s gone so a lot of the blokes like a bit of banter so they’ll say ‘what do you keep over there’ and I’ll say ‘that’s where we keep the giraffes’ and you just have a laugh... people really miss that you have a laugh at work.”

(Eric, gardener, Hidcote)

These examples demonstrate how the seemingly trivial conversation that visitors engage in with volunteers and staff at National Trust sites seems to fill a deeper
need for human engagement and represents an escape from a present that lacks something such as the ‘banter’ that the men missed from their work place or the simple ‘contact’ that suggests an escape from loneliness. The staff and volunteers were aware of how important a simple chat was to visitors and looked out for people who seemed in need of a chat. There are no formal mechanisms at National Trust sites for this type of engagement and maybe the reason they happen is because there is nothing formal in place, they can just happen spontaneously, but the evidence from the above quotes suggests that these are important connections being made, that they are, to some extent, replacing something that is missing in the lives of visitors.

It was also evident that volunteering formed an escape from the more mundane – the boredom of being at home. As well as providing a relief from boredom the escape to the destination also provided a positive emotional experience of shared community, as the following quote from a volunteer at Lacock illustrates:

“I was interested in the building and I like people and I was bored at home so I thought I would give it a shot and I absolutely love it”

(Liz, female, retired, late 50s, room steward, Lacock)

Escape, therefore, does not simply mean escape from other people but it can mean escape to the support that relationships with other people offers and it is through the seemingly trivial and idle conversations in passing or the regular volunteer days that significant support is provided. As Cohen and Taylor (1992) frame it: “we look elsewhere to cope with routine, boredom, lack of individuality, frustration.” (1992: 112). The relational encounters that the participants sought produced particular affects which can be thought of as “a form of embodied cognition or thinking, a processual engagement with the world that is often direct and non-reflexive, but that constitutes thinking all the same (Conradson and McKay, 2007: 170). Emotions are often understood as the conscious perception of particular affects “with the naming and interpretation of such experiences mediated by specific vocabularies and cultural formations” (Leavitt, 1996: 515).
4.4.2 Escape and nostalgia

Nostalgia acts as a release because it is ‘memory with the pain taken out’ (Lowenthal, 1985) and this is especially prevalent in our consumption of heritage where it is often represented as an idealised past that deflects attention away from the woes of the present. In this sense, nostalgia seeks to create an escape, and as Tannock (1995) suggests, a coping mechanism. Instead of referring back to a lived experience, nostalgia is a re-representation of the past or as Urry (1995) describes it “a cleaned up heritage look suitable for the gaze of the tourists” (1995: 219).

There was evidence at the sites of intended triggers for nostalgia, for example, at Hidcote where the gardeners planted flowers such as Sweet Pea because visitors commented on how they remember the flower from their childhood. The findings from the four sites demonstrated a link between escape and nostalgia with emotion. For example, in an interview with Hidcote garden guide, Anne, we talked about the emotional effect that Hidcote, as a site, had on people and we attempted to understand what enabled people to experience a sense of escape from their problems when they physically entered a National Trust site:

“Maybe it’s just beauty and it enables people to forget what’s going on just to be here and to relax…maybe there is something about allowing yourself to relax, I mean you wouldn’t do it consciously, you just come here and enjoy it…I don’t know maybe there is something…maybe stepping back in time, we try to recreate, in the rooms that are open, how it was with music playing with some of the old things around….maybe the grass was greener…” (Anne, garden guide volunteer, Hidcote)

This sense of being able to relax because of the comfort of the physical surroundings of Hidcote, and the sense of nostalgia that the site strives to recreate, is the confusing mixture of homeliness and reassurance, of surprise and difference in leisure that visitors seek Crouch (1992). While this may be a manufactured sense of heritage that the sites create, it stems from a desire to experience a cleansed version of history and springs from:
“a negative experience of the present or negative perceptions of an individual’s life situation that results in the past being re-examined through rose-tinted spectacles.” (Goulding 2001: 567)

Escape through nostalgia was also cited by another participant – Sally at Woodchester Park – who described how the ideals exemplified by the National Trust and their sites, speak to a nostalgic view of a more wholesome life that as a society we are seeking:

“That sort of country living ideal has become popular, not just from the green people but country living magazine, you know the bunting and cake stands and it’s become a whole package and the National Trust fits in with that image and life style.”

(Sally, female, student, 40s, walker, Woodchester Park)

This type of nostalgia looks to the present, as does Tuan’s (1998) view of Disneyland, rather than the past, and describes an idealised way of living that has implied positive values. There is also the suggestion in the above quote that these ‘country living’ ideals which have become popular can be found at National Trust sites and how this social construction of a nostalgic past can engender an emotional response.

Integral to the process of social construction is the issue of authenticity, a subjective experience which can be seen, in a heritage context, as a combination of the developer’s intentions, the consumers’ interpretations and the interaction among them (Herbert, 2001). The reinvention of the past, that nostalgia facilitates, relies on a selective memory but Samuel (1994) suggests that there is no such thing as an authentic past, instead memory changes and is historically conditioned. However, Schouten (1995) suggests that tourists:

“…are not primarily looking for scientific historical evidence. They may even be only partly interested in the historical reality as such. Visitors to
historic sites are looking for an experience, a new reality based on the tangible remains of the past. For them, this is the very essence of the heritage experience.”  

(Schouten, 1995:21)

This concept of visitor experience is based on a version of history, as interpreted by the heritage organisation and the visitor, and is key to this thesis. Visitors are seeking an experience but their experience is defined not just by the identity of the site but their own interpretation of heritage; this experience, in turn, affects their consumption of place and how they construct a sense of place to take away and relive. In this way, visitors bring something to a site and through this process act back on how site is defined.

4.4.3 Escape and place

Place is a dynamic concept incorporating attachments and connections between people. Place is, also, seen in different ways by different people which was evident in the fieldwork concerning escape and place. The sense of escape that a site produced was based on what a participant was trying to escape from – pressures of work, loneliness at home – or escaping to an idealised place that represented qualities of life that were sought after or imagined, as in the example of nostalgia in the previous section. An example of seeking escape in a tranquil place was evident in the calming effect experienced by, Karen, a participant at Woodchester Park and the sense of escape that this engendered:

“I like the calm and peace you get with trees and sometimes the only noise you can hear is the leaves making a swish noise, it is just a very calm place. And it’s a place if I want to go and think or get away from whatever is going on at home it’s a great place to go and think.”

(Karen, walker, Woodchester Park)

Karen said that the Park made her feel safe, perhaps surprisingly as a single female walking in a large wood. However my participant related her feeling of safety back to cycling in a large wood. However my participant related her feeling of safety back to cycling in a large wood.
Thompson’s et al (2007) research study into woodlands and community use where a strong finding from the study was a link between childhood woodland visits as predictors of adult patterns of use. This sense of safeness that Karen felt at Woodchester Park not only enabled her to enjoy an escape from her hectic work life (as a theatre nurse in a hospital) in the form of walks in the woods, but it created the sense of escape as few other environments held the same deep rooted emotional response that the woods held and engendered the sense of safety and freedom for her. In this sense, both the physical environment and the participant’s positive childhood associations with woods created the mechanism and motivation for the escape.

The physical aspect of the sites facilitated different experiences that provided motivations for people to engage with the sites and, in so doing, provided the mechanism for escape. This was articulated by a visitor to Dyrham, a father with two children, who said how the physical boundary of the site provided the escape to a safe place and, within that, an escape from his children:

“they’ve generally got beautiful grounds that the kids can run around in and me and my wife can sometimes get a few minutes to ourselves.”

(Father, visitor, Dyrham)

There was also evidence of overlap in different types of escape experienced by the same participant at the same time. Robin, a conservation assistant at Dyrham, experienced a quiet moment in the working day and an escape from the immediate pressures of work but it was the place as well as the lack of other people in the place that enabled a sense of escape:

“…there’s the odd moment that I get first thing in the morning when I can open the front door when it’s quiet and you can breathe in the cool air and I’ve stood there knowing that it will be a really mental day or knowing that there is a lot going on, it’s a busy environment but enjoyable busy environment. But there is now and again where I think, sometimes walking from the staff car park down that little run through to staff door sometimes I take a little detour to the front entry and stand and look out at the park and
it’s those quiet moments when, to do with people not being around it’s that positive kind of happy reflective state of mind sometimes you just need a minute or two like that sometimes…”

(Robin, conservation assistant, Dyrham)

In this quote the participant is escaping both from the rigor of the day but at the same time the place provides an escape because the place is calm and by experiencing the site in a quiet moment this respite enables him to be reflective. This reflective state allows the participant to find some sort of peace, as he articulates it, ‘you just need a minute or two like that sometimes.’ Similarly, the following quote from Karen, at Woodchester Park, underlies how escape from, in the form of walking through the wood provided an emotional release from the stress of everyday life, particularly work:

“ … and it’s that contrast from being surrounded by people at work and there are lots of demands being made of you at work, asking questions - to have no one or to have no responsibility, no demands you’re free to do what you want and it’s as far as I can get away from work.”

(Karen, visitor, Woodchester Park)

For both these participants the escape from the everyday rhythm of their daily routines had a beneficial affect; rhythm, and how it affects people and their experience of place, is explored more fully in section 4.3.

The fieldwork identified clear ways of escape for visitors to the four sites. However the form that escape differed between the sites: for example, at Woodchester, Karen was seeking escape from other people as a means of refuge from her demanding job as a theatre nurse. However at Dyrham volunteer Chris sought escape from loneliness at home, after losing her father, through the social support of the volunteer community at Dyrham.

The evidence from the findings indicates that people seek escape at National Trust sites from the pressures of the outside. This was evident in the data drawn from both visitors and volunteers who cited a personal absence in their lives that
precipitated engagement with a National Trust site. While the literature in this area suggests extreme mechanisms of escape in the form of alcohol, drugs or even suicide there seems to less written about more prosaic forms of escape that are, nonetheless, powerful in the effect and reward for the people who engage in them. Recognising this emotional aspect of people’s engagement with place as a motivating factor in volunteering or visiting could help the National Trust to more effectively form relationships with people.

4.5 Conclusion

These findings highlight the multilayered nature of how place is constituted and the conflicting but entangled perspectives from which places might be understood and experienced. While memory was both complex in its manifestations it was, also, experienced through different mediums: place and objects engendering both collective and individual instances of memory. Memory served to produce an emotional effect on people which, in turn, influenced concepts of identity. The findings also illustrated how memory had spatial and temporal dimensions, extending the affective-emotional response of interactions with place and in this way people and place, conjointly, formed the visitor experience.

Rhythm was also present in various forms in both human and non-human ways, inside and outside of the site and the relationship between people, material, images and activities performed contributed to the dynamic way in which places were generated by shaping social time and space. Rhythms, then, were outcomes of the complex interplay between human and non-human actors and the differing reasons for visits and differing visit practices generated distinctive rhythms that served to not only inform the experience people had at sites but was part of the production of place.

The findings also demonstrated how themes could be experienced in a variety of ways: escape, for some, was an escape from outside pressures and for others it represented an escape to a nostalgic view of the past which provided a sense of
security and safety. Place was a concept central in the theme of escape as people sought places for the quality inherent in those places and also sites represented places of refuge, as for a recently-bereaved volunteer at Hidcote. The feelings that people brought to places and also what they practiced at places shaped what the place meant to them (Casey, 2010).
5

Findings – belonging and connection, the senses, material objects

5.1 Introduction

This chapter is a continuation of the previous findings chapter and provides an analysis, evaluation and interpretation of the remaining themes – connection and belonging, material objects and the senses. The chapter starts with an examination of connection and belonging and the nuanced and interconnected meaning of, and between, the two terms and their connection in context of people and place. I then move on to the senses and how these emerged through practice and performance at the site. Finally, I examine material objects, already discussed in the context of memory (section 4.2) and explored in this chapter in relation to identity and spatial and temporal dimensions.

5.2 Belonging and connection

I established the framework of literature concerning belonging and connection in section 2.5, where I made the distinction between the two concepts examining them separately. I now use these understandings of each term in this findings section; however, the literature suggested that there was a degree of cross over between the two terms and this was evident in the findings so the examples cited here are not intended to represent clear, mutually exclusive concepts but reflect how the two themes often merged. My findings are based on this framework and I start by examining the meanings of connection and belonging to place, then to people
5.2.1 Belonging and connection to place

Places have complex meanings and are an integral part of the social world of everyday life and, as such, form an important conduit through which identity is defined and situated (Cuba and Hummon, 1993, Proshansky et al 1983). The concept of belonging is intimately tied to place, as any understanding of community and affinity with specific landscape – place-making – simultaneously constructs a sense of socially recognised membership (Trudeau, 2006). Belonging captures:

“the desire for some sort of attachment, be it to other people, places, or modes of being, and ways in which individuals and groups are caught within wanting to belong, wanting to become” (Probyn, 1996: 19)

An example of a sense of belonging to place was expressed by a participant, Karen, who regularly walked at Woodchester Park and described how she felt a sense of propriety over the wood as reflected in her reply when I asked her if she felt that the wood was her place:

“Yes, I do think that. Pride is not quite the right word but I just feel fortunate that it’s there. Our families know the place now, because we drag them round. A walk round the Park and then back to a log fire in a pub is a good day.” (Karen, visitor, Woodchester Park)

For this participant, her sense of connection with place was gained through her embodied experience of walking in Woodchester Park. This embodied act, and the resulting affect in terms of emotional engagement with the site, demonstrates how subjects are not separate entities situated in place but rather are co-constituted through place (Duffy and Waitt, 2011). Just as my participant, Karen, identified the site as a place of escape in section 4.4 so this interpretation and association of the site, borne out of both her experiences of walking to relieve the stress of her job and sharing the site with her family through walking, had shaped her interpretation of the site from these personal meanings rather than just the qualities of the place itself (Cuba and Hummon, 1993). This interpretation
provided my participant, Karen, with a sense of “autobiographical insideness” (Rowles 1983). Similarly, Cuba and Hummon (1993) describe how the identity of a place is not only constructed through physical, social and cultural contexts but is also mediated by the characteristics that people bring to place and the structure of their experience of place (Cuba and Hummon, 1993).

The connection with the natural environment was a significant factor in Karen’s perception of the site also evident in another participant - Sally – whose experience and consumption of the site, is already noted in the section on memory, section 4.2. Raymond et al (2010) describe this type of connection to the natural and social environment as “related constructs to the highly personalised attachment associated with place identity and place dependence.” (2010: 423). Individual connection with place is not just a function of experience with nature or social interaction with friends and family but it is the mechanism through which individuals construct their own identity through their history with a place. Sally, visited the site because it provided an opportunity for her children to “run riot in nature”, as Sally described the experience of her children using the play trail at Woodchester Park. The role of intergenerational consumption of sites is not just about sharing an experience with your family but it is also important in how heritage values are passed down between generations and become accepted within a wider cultural context:

“Heritage values are important and determinant to the dynamics of cultures, only if they are accepted and reproduced in time by many communities in an intergenerational process…Past, present and future communities can share values carried by buildings and sites, if the interpretation codes of these values are also transferred between the generations. Thus, to recognize a building as a social heritage is the creation of a vector of communication with future communities, and the intergenerational transference of built heritage is an important form of maintaining the cultural values in societies.” (Zancheti, 2002: 21)

Although this quote references the built environment, the concept of recognising an interpretation of values and then passing these on is salient to the participant,
Sally’s experience with her family at Woodchester as she views the site as an opportunity to connect with nature:

“I suppose it would be about connecting with ourselves as animals and our place in the whole eco system and environment and connecting with that because we are so utterly disconnected from it.”

(Sally, walker, Woodchester Park)

Sally expressed a need to pass this desire “to be in the countryside” on to her children to enable them “to connect and be part of the bigger picture”. The escape through nature, through walking and playing in Woodchester Park with her children enabled Sally to access a physical representation of some of the concepts she valued and wanted to pass on to her children around eco and sustainable living. This was exemplified when Sally was talking about why she liked the cows (which graze in Woodchester Park), she described how they “embody the principles I approve of, they are quality, organic meat. They obviously have happy lives, they represent that simpler life.” Sally’s seeking out ways to physically connect with nature finds parallels in Tilley’s (2009) exploration of what gardens mean to people and how, in a culture of mass consumption in which we buy products that we have not produced, gardening:

“is a craft through which many people cope or come to terms with their existential alienation in a world in which the normal condition is estrangement.”

(Tilley, 2009: 177)

Just as gardening is a way of people to reconnect with themselves through the expenditure of time, energy and artistry (Francis and Hester 1992) so Woodchester Park and its dynamic making of place through performance such as Karen’s walking, or through Sally’s children’s play or by watching the cows, references a notion of dwelling that my participants could relate to their own sense of identity. For Sally, this identity was influenced by her past, her childhood desire to escape to the countryside, but it also had a view to the future through her children’s experience and memory making practices that were being laid down at the site. This notion of dwelling is what Cloke and Jones (2000) refer to when they
describe how we are embedded in landscapes and place as well as networks and “how these formations invariably have a time-depth where past, present, and future are interconnected” (Cloke and Jones, 2000, 650).

The impact of nature on a place was also evident in the connections to sites made by staff and volunteers linked into different times of the day and seasonality as voiced by, Sarah, a gardener at Dyrham:

“There is also different times of the day and moods that appeal – you can walk round here at 11am and there is mist and that has a magical feel to it. And then you can walk to the end of the avenue and get that blast of masonry and it is enchanting. It’s not just places, its feelings as well from the time (of day) and the weather which sets you off and makes you fall in love with the place and has that magical feel to the place.”

As noted in the literature review on connection and belonging in chapter two, while attachment to place can be both negative and positive there is an acknowledged affect that place has on people in terms of emotions and feelings and from this the sense of place is formed. For the participants, the sense of connection and belonging to place formed through what they practiced at the sites which led to an emotional affect and sense of attachment to the sites.

5.2.2 Meanings of belonging and connection to people

There are times when the need for affiliation motivates individuals to seek out social contact (O’Connor and Rosenblood, 1996). Early investigation into affiliation (Schachter, 1959) suggested that people find it necessary to associate with one another in everyday life to satisfy a variety of goals. Some of which are non-social in nature, such as interacting with a shop assistant to buy food, and some are inherently social in that they are satisfied by other people, such as the desire for friendship.
To capitalise fully on their social connections, people must not only affiliate with others, but they also establish interpersonal relationships of various kinds (Leary, 2010). While acknowledging that affiliation or interaction with others can have a negative impact, such as an increase in stress, my findings suggest that people use various levels of interaction with others at National Trust sites for positive outcomes. An example is the following description from a volunteer garden guide of her experience of how some visitors seek out human contact through conversation:

“…but I’m using skills like my knowledge around plants, I’m using my counselling skills, listening to people a lot of the time people do ask questions but especially older visitors just want to talk, they want to tell me about their gardens and all sorts of things and I find that fascinating. “

(Anne, garden guide, Hidcote)

Other examples of desire for connection with another human through seemingly trivial conversation are highlighted in the findings on escape, section 4.4, but it is worth noting here how forms of light banter - as identified by gardener Sarah at Dyrham - with visitors seem to be motivated by a need for connection:

“ Yes, you get lots of comments from people some people want to have a chat about gardening but some people just want to have a chat so that conversation can start on one topic about gardening but end up on something completely different like where your last holiday was. You get different people wanting different things some people just want contact.”

(Sarah, gardener, Dyrham)

This underlies how people seek to interact even when the encounter has no other purpose than to associate with others and as, highlighted in the section on escape, no formal mechanisms exist for these type of interactions the staff and volunteers seemed to be intrinsically aware of the importance of it and identifying it as a motivation for people to visit. However there is also another aspect of this interaction in that people do talk about anything and this can sometimes be darker issues that are troubling them. Anne hints at the burden of such interactions:
“A few years ago a chap came and said it was the first time he had been out since his wife died. And I’ve been told all sorts of things and I don’t know if they want to tell somebody, when I was training to be a councillor they did say it’s like you have an invisible sign saying please talk to me and I think there may be an element of truth and you learn how to stop people.”

(Anne, garden guide, Hidcote)

The experience that Anne describes acknowledges the personal attention that volunteers are able to offer and how this makes visitors feel valued. This also highlights the value of volunteers that goes beyond the economic contribution they make (Maddrell, 2000) and emphasis the significant role they play as ambassadors and facilitators for the National Trust’s values and behaviours, one of which is being interested and listening.\(^8\)

For the staff and volunteers connection with the sites is multi layered and often represents both a departure from their previous work environments and an opportunity to establish a connection with people which might be lacking in their personal lives; as the following extract of my interview with Anne, a volunteer garden guide at Hidcote, demonstrates:

A: it’s got a more intimate feel then where I used to work which had more than 500 people so it’s easy to get to know people and they know me and there is that feeling of being part of it, I was going to say belonging but I’m not sure that’s the right thing to say but I certainly feel part of this community.

G: Why do you think belonging isn’t the right word to say?

A: I don’t know…(pauses)…because I’m not here every day. When I was at work I had my place, I knew everyone, I belonged but I am sort of a visitor here I’m here just one day a week and then I go away so that’s not really belonging if I was here everyday I might feel I belonged. But there is

\(^8\) Source: ‘Our Values and Behaviours’: http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/document-1355789328361/
an advantage to having just one day a week, being a volunteer, not having a contract, it’s a different life.

There are two points to note concerning this quote. Firstly, Anne makes the distinction between feeling a connection with the place but not belonging and although this quote references place I am examining it in this section on people to explore the difference between connection and belonging that a person can feel. Secondly, the purpose of the quote, as relevant to this section on people, is to highlight her relationship with the people she volunteers with being distinct from the relationship she had in her previous professional life.

To explore the first point: the difference Anne makes between connection and belonging to the two different places underlies the varying degrees of affiliation that people have to a place, formed through who else is at the place and this highlights how “people must not only affiliate with others, but they must establish interpersonal relationships of various kinds” (Leary, 2010: 869). If the relationships are positive and significant it can lead to a desire for acceptance and belonging (Baumeister and Leary, 1995). Although Anne references the distinction between connection and belonging to the place, it also references the relationship to people that are in that place, which is the second point. Anne distinguishes between her previous professional life and her current volunteering role but the motivation for fostering a sense of belonging for people, as suggested by the literature (Gerson et al 1977), is social involvement, particularly those involving community attachment which provide a sense of belonging also long term residency contributes to place identity, particularly in building sentimental attachment and a sense of home (Cuba and Hummon, 1993).

Having made the distinction between connection and belonging, Anne goes on to talk about the emotional attachment to the place and how these feelings inform her emotional relationship to the site:

A: ..how could you live somewhere like this and not be emotionally connected. I’m very attached to my house because I’ve lived there for 16
years and I feel very attached to this place, a similar sort of attachment, even though I don’t live here.

G: but earlier you said you didn’t feel you belonged..

A: No I don’t belong but I feel an attachment

The performativity of working as garden guide and researching the site had led to an emotional connection being made to both the physical site and the ‘story’ of the site as Anne describes it. In addition to this personal experience of connection there was also evidence of a sense of belonging fostered amongst the volunteer community, as participants described their relationship with others who volunteered on the same day each week:

“And I enjoy being with the Thursday team because either we’ve got a strong interest in horticulture or they are much more qualified than me so I can learn from that and we all get on.”

(Di, garden volunteer, Dyrham)

This sense of belonging to a group with a shared interest was evident in a number of my volunteer participants and the motivation for seeking out this originated, in some part, from some difficult situations at home. Jan, another volunteer gardener, described how her husband had been very ill in the previous year and then when I asked if volunteering was an outlet for her she agreed it was and described the importance of the social bonding with the other members of the team:

“Oh, gosh, yes, it’s completely different coming over here to my normal life you get dirty, you have a good chat and our little group have been together for a long time and Sue and Reg [staff gardeners] are fantastic people they are up against with budgets, is there enough money for this and that but they soldier on and are quite inspiring really.”

(Jan, female, retired, mid 50s, volunteer gardener, Lacock)
5.2.3 Not always a comfortable connection

For some, connection to a place was more difficult and the type of emotions that the connections engendered was not always positive. I spoke with a man sitting on a bench in the garden at Dyrham while his wife went around the house. The man spoke about his unease he felt thinking about the hardship that the people who built the house had to endure, especially in contrast to comfortable life the person who owned the house led:

“Going back to my early days I wasn’t very keen on big houses because they were built on the backs of the poor labourer who lived in a hovel somewhere while matey up there lived in a nice house with all his food somewhere who built the house and paid for it was living in a shed somewhere and I feel very aggrieved about that, there is something totally wrong with society that that should happen so when I sit in a place like this.”

(Retired, white European male visitor, Dyrham)

5.3 The Senses: as evident in people, place and performance

In this section I investigate how the senses were engaged through the practice and performance at sites and the affective emotional response this engendered. Each of the five senses did not show up in equal measures in my fieldwork; instead the senses of sight, hearing and touch were dominant and this is reflected in their emphasis in my findings section. Additionally, people tended to experience more than one sense at a time and there was a certain amount of overlap between the senses in the experiences of participants summed up by a volunteer gardener:

“you’re seeing things, you’re feeling things”

(Di, garden volunteer, Dyrham)

As detailed in chapter 3, describing my methodological approach, there were challenges in asking people about some of their sensory experiences. When I asked participants questions about what they smelt or touched, for example, there
was often a blank response, as people did not engage, in the main, with the sites consciously noting the smells or touching their way round the sites.

Tilley (2006), in his ethnographic study of Swedish and British gardeners, describes how vision and smell were unproblematic categories that needed no further explanation but touch, sound and taste needed more explanation for respondents to be able to answer questions on these senses. Tilley attributes this to the all consuming aspect of these senses that embed them into our unconscious:

“Gardeners, like the rest of us, lack a sophisticated vocabulary to talk about sounds or scents or touch or taste compared with the way in which we can readily talk about visual aspects of the garden, or it can be argued, such sensations are so all-embracing and personally intimate they become part of our unconscious.” (Tilley, 2006: 327)

5.3.1 The sense of sight

Participants frequently described their engagement with a site through a visual framework with gardens, perhaps inevitably, producing more of visual sensorial impact amongst the participants than buildings at the sites. While participants often referred to the beauty in the flowers or the drama of the vistas in a garden, for example, there was also evidence of the emotional connection that people made through what they saw at the sites:

“I like being outdoors, I find it very therapeutic seeing things grow, I love colour” (Bryan, staff gardener, Lacock)

This quote demonstrates that while gardeners came into significant physical contact and sensorial engagement with place, through touching and handling plants, it is the emotional response to this performance that has most impact. This emotional connection to the senses is articulated by Game and Metcalfe (1996):
“we feel meanings. A term that indicated the intimate association between bodily senses and emotion.”

(Game and Metcalfe, original emphasis, 1996:58)

Additionally, the seasonal changes witnessed in the garden was commented on by several gardeners and perceived as a positive aspect of the garden:

“We get used to the seasons here so you can see the garden changing as the weather and the season changes.” (Eric, staff gardener, Hidcote)

Seasonal rhythms are discussed more fully in section 4.3, but the inference, from the above quote, is that the seasons produce visually different aspects in the gardens. From my own visits to different National Trust sites I also sensorially experienced the places. An extract from my fieldwork diary at Chedworth Villa in April, 2012 starts with my observations of how cold I am feeling and the noise of the “gentle patter of rain” that permeates my visit. During this visit I also witnessed how absorption of some of the senses can lead to a neglect of another aspect of something present as the following extract from my fieldwork diary at Chedworth Villa illustrates:

“I focus [filming] on a couple sitting, listening to the guide through their headphones while their child tries to catch their attention. I’m struck by this scene – the use of the ‘interactive’ guide, interactive seems a strange name in this instance as it’s cutting the parent off from interacting with the child. The interactive guide moulds these two people in their own little bubble, focusing on the spoken word in their ear but seemingly oblivious to their immediate surrounds.”

Although this is my own observation and I did not speak with the people involved it did underlie how our senses, and the performativity that is a medium for these senses, can both enrich an experience but also shut the participants off from using other senses, in the example above the sound coming through the headphones blocked out the sound from the child.
5.3.2 The sense of hearing

Similarly, senses were often articulated by an absence by participants. For example Bob, a visitor reception volunteer, in answer to a question about his favourite place on the site described the cloisters in the Abbey at a particular time of the day, in the morning before the place opens to the general public. Bob described the lack of noise as the defining feature that made the place special:

“I think it’s the cloisters, there’s something about there… I come in the morning at about 9am and the sun is shining on the abbey, total tranquillity and I like that, when you walk in like that, it’s quiet.”

(Bob, visitor reception volunteer, Lacock)

This quote emphasises the therapeutic qualities of silence and how it can be “interwoven with landscape” (Maddrell, 2013) producing a heightened awareness of the environment. The absence of sound can also enable a reflexivity that has a healing quality as a participant who was involved in a busy conservation role articulated:

“…there’s the odd moment that I get first thing in the morning when I can open the front door when it’s quiet and you can breathe in the cool air …. it’s those quiet moments when, to do with people not being around it’s that positive kind of happy reflective state of mind sometimes you just need a minute or two like that …”

(Robin, conservation assistant, Lacock)

This conscious act of seeking out a silent place in order for the participant to escape and, in so doing find solace, enables not only a physical but also facilitates a mental escape. The participants’ experiences demonstrate how, as referenced in the literature review in chapter 2, senses like feelings and experiences, are never owned by the person but rather they pass through us (Harrison, 1998). Furthermore this emphasizes how affect goes beyond the “attentional filter of representation that seeks to capture experiences as something inner, personal, subjective” (McCormack, 2003:496), instead it places emotion as the personal
capture of feelings of intensity, as expressed by my participant Bob. In this way Paterson (2005) sees affect as ‘unqualified intensity’ which is:

“actualised in the sensible materiality of the body, but which opens up this actualised intensity into something mutual between bodies, or between bodies and things, a passage between intra- and inter-corporeal intensities.” (Paterson, 2005: 164)

There was also a selection process in relation to the senses that was evident with one participant - Karen, a walker in Woodchester Park - who mentioned hearing specific sounds at a site was:

“I like the calm and peace you get with trees and sometimes the only noise you can hear is the leaves making a swish noise, it is just a very calm place.” (Karen, walker, Woodchester Park)

Karen’s identification of certain sounds at Woodchester Park underlies the distinction between hearing, a passive experience where the majority of sounds are heard, and listening which implies a more active and attentive exercise. As referenced in chapter 2, through the work of Duffy and Waitt (2011) on soundscapes, Karen’s identification of certain sounds show how individuals are selective in what they hear and how they attribute meaning to what they hear as demonstrated by the emotional affect that the sound of leaves engenders in Karen.

This lived sensation captures the emotional feel of a place (Duff, 2010) as well as shaping the experience of a place and signifies how place is not simply a set of coordinates on a map but “is a lived, felt and relational experience of thinking, feeling body/subject.” (Duff, 2010:885). In this way the meaning of place is driven by how it is experienced through body and less on the cultural meaning of place(194,583),(879,716) (Duffy and Waitt, 2011). Building on this, Ingold (2004) notes that if perception is a function of movement “then what we perceive must, at least in part, depend on how we move” (Ingold, 2004: 331). This is reinforced as Sylvia moved through the Dyrham house and heard the piano playing (while in a different room) and
commented on it and physically made a gesture to acknowledge the playing which then triggers a conversation with the room guides about the piano and the affect it has, with one guide noting how the sound reminded her of her father making her practice the piano.

Furthermore, sounds exist alongside, and interact with, the sounds that the participant’s own body makes through the landscape as her body touches the ground through the performance of walking. Karen, the participant walker at Woodchester Park, describes how the feeling of walking through the wood makes her feel:

“I like to go walking whenever I’ve got a day off, it’s not always Woodchester but quite often it is because it’s only half an hour from where I live. It’s just a beautiful place to walk and I feel very at home in the woods, surrounded by trees. My husband would rather go walk in a mountain. There is something, there is something calming about woods…”

(Karen, walker, Woodchester Park)

Through the corporeal engagement with place and the emotions triggered by this engagement, Karen experiences what Crouch (2003) describes as the “the
repetitive doing of things” and how it can be “affirmation of […] a powerful sense of being or ‘practical ontology’” (Crouch, 2003:18). The repetitiveness of walking also generates a type of rhythm of thinking, as Solnit (2002) notes:

“…the passage through a landscape echoes or simulates the passage through a series of thoughts. This creates an odd consonance between internal and external passage, one that suggests the minds is also a landscape of sorts and that walking is one way to traverse it.”

(Solnit, 2002: 5-6)

The sounds in an environment like Woodchester Park can be expected to change every time the site is encountered because of variables such as the climatic conditions, the types of birds present, time of day/week/year. These different sounds in an outdoor environment signal change and animation and make up a soundscape (Rodaway, 1994), where there are many sounds coming from different directions and of different characteristics, or as Rodaway describes it “the sonic equivalent of landscape.” Dale Dennehy, outdoor operations manager at Dyrham, describes how he attempts to get visitors to experience the sensorially rich soundscape of Dyrham by “closing their eyes and listening for sounds like bees and birds”. Through initiatives such as these, the National Trust are attempting to get people to experience their places in a rich, meaningful approach that builds a relationship.

Our own experiences, feelings, preferences inform this process of selective hearing and I note from my own fieldwork diary that I also notice that there are certain sounds that stand out for me. In April 2012 I volunteer with a working party from the Cheltenham National Trust Volunteers Group, a voluntary association of Trust members who are independent from the Trust but undertake work as requested by the Trust at specific sites. Our volunteer work entails cutting up and burning small trees that are left over after a small part of a valley in the Park has been cleared. The sounds that are noted in my fieldwork diary are ones that I had not come across before – gliders as they take off from a nearby glider school:
“Throughout the day the eerie sound of gliders punctuates our work as the soft whistling of the little parachutes that bring the pulley mechanism that the gliders use to take off, falls to the ground.”

(Fieldwork notes, Woodchester Park, 4<sup>th</sup> April, 2012)

These sounds stand out for me because I had never come across them before and I remember finding them unusual and a little disconcerting to begin with. My own experience of hearing the glider and the participant, Karen’s, experience of hearing the leaves as she walked in the Park describes an attempt to capture that which is “actually being lived, and not only what is thought is being lived” (Williams, 1977:131). Paul Harrison describes this as an attempt to valorise experience for itself and “apprehend the lived present as an open-ended generative process; as practice” (Harrison, 1999: 499, original emphasis). In doing so the soundscape changes with our behavioural interactions and “unfold in complex symphonies or cacophonies of sound” (Rodaway, 1994: 46)

5.3.3 The sense of touch

This concept of experiencing the senses through an open ended form of practice, whereby people actively engage with the landscape in order to experience it sensorially was evident at my fieldwork sites. For example at Hidcote people touched and smelt the flowers and tried to touch the pigs living in an open pen within the garden. Even the marketing literature at Hidcote encourages people to take home ‘a unique memento of your day’ via the National Trust’s largest plant centre and by taking away something tangible that can be touched, smelt and seen from a visit to Hidcote, the National Trust attempt to build a relationship between the visitor and site.

At Hidcote I witness other forms of active engagement with the site – the visitors playing tennis, the small boy trying to talk to the fish in the pond.
These are examples of how through performances people are sensorially engaging with place and not just for those who are doing the practice of the performance – the people playing tennis, the child talking to the fish – but other people at the site that hear and see these performances which, in turn, inform their sensorial experience of place. Through these performances, and the sensorial experience of such performances, people’s sense of meaning and belonging are enhanced into what Edward Casey describes as ‘thick places’ (Casey, 2001), where places are made “in and of affect and practice” (Duff, 2010).

In this way, layers of multiple practices and performances occurring at the fieldwork sites make up the production of place. This is also noticeable in my
participant observation videos of the sites that show not only the agency and performance of visitors but also the other elements of the production of that place at that time such as the weather – the noise of the wind is very noticeable – the way that people walk in front of the camera, noise of car engines, the effect a sudden rain shower has on people. This is what Casey (1996) and Massey (2005) refer to when they describe a place as an ‘event’ and, as such, recognise the fluidity of place acknowledging the human and non-human elements. It also suggests how place is constantly changing through social and material relations and practices (Pink, 2007).

This was evident in the video diary at Dyrham where I was struck by how the sensorial experience of my participant, Sylvia, was made up of how she perceived the site through her movement, how she touched the outside stone as can be seen from the video clip - please refer to the ‘Walk with Video Sylvia’ video clip in the enclosed DVD:

![Sylvia touching the stone of Dyrham house](image)

Figure 5.4 Sylvia touching the stone of Dyrham house (still from video)

In touching the stone wall of Dyrham house, Sylvia was sensorially experiencing the site through both vision and touch as she articulates in the accompanying dialogue as she touches the stone: “I always like looking at stone with a view to its decorative qualities”.
Her touch underlies the relationship between vision and touch a concept that has been emphasised by some film theorists such as MacDougal who writes that:

“touch and vision do not become interchangeable but share an experiential field. Each refers to a more general faculty. I can touch with my eyes because my experience of surfaces includes both touching and seeing, each deriving qualities from the other.” (MacDougal, 1998:51)

It also serves to illustrate how I used the embodied and emplaced sensorial experience of my subject and myself when I viewed the video clip. This involved understanding other people’s worlds through sensory categories and recognising that these multi sensory environments are constantly being remade (Pink, 2009). The use of video helped me to understand how place was constituted, experienced and understood by others and how different connections were being made.

5.3.4 Senses of taste and smell

The sense of taste was used as a way of reinforcing the experience and subsequent memory of a site, such as at Dyrham where the outdoor operations manager Dale Dennehy explains:

“I’ve always been really keen to get people involved in what we do such as visitors taking part and then we can explain things so it’s not just about enjoying the place for what it is, it’s more in depth. So the recent pear day we got people tasting the Perry.”

(Dale Dennehy, outdoor operations manager, Dyrham)

Smell is closely aligned with taste (Stevenson, Boakes and Prescott, 1998) in sensory perception and although smell was rarely mentioned outright in my fieldwork there were certain smells associated with specific aspects of certain gardens. For example, as referenced in section 4.2.1, at Dyrham there is a Katsura tree which smells of burnt toffee when the weather is warm. I came
across this tree when I made a fieldwork site visit and took the garden tour. The tree is also mentioned in a participant interview with the volunteer garden guide, Greg, when we are discussing what people might be thinking and feeling on the garden tours:

“And today I took them past the Katsura tree, the burnt toffee tree and you could smell the tree but it’s very elusive. So I suppose in one sense we are trying to share an experience we’ve had because we think it’s an interesting experience and ultimately we hope it will enrich their lives but it’s difficult because people come with different expectations.”

(Greg, volunteer garden guide, Dyrham)

The role of scent in the above example signalled an individual character of a tree and the tree became more alive. The scent of the tree also gave a more intimate experience, so that the garden was not simply viewed like a painting but by being in it and smelling it the experience became more of a living and changing thing.

By experiencing a place through our senses we are experiencing an embodied perception of our environment and in this active, sensuous experience there is an emotional outcome as Anne, a volunteer garden guide at Hidcote, articulates in her description of the shop at Hidcote:

“And the shops always look and smell nice and the music is always playing and it’s soothing music. It’s all very genteel and maybe that’s harking back to when things were different and seen as being better.”

(Anne, volunteer garden guide, Hidcote)

While each of the senses has emotional correlations, often ranging through positive and negative responses (Rodaway, 1994), olfaction is particularly evocative of emotional responses and is closely associated with memory. Anne’s observation of how smell can engender a nostalgic memory of a bygone era underlies how the sniffer and the environment or object that is being sniffed gives rise to, “a distinctive sensuous experience of space and duration; past, present
and potential spaces; and this is both physiologically grounded and culturally defined” (Rodaway, 1994:71).

5.3.5 Disconnected senses

Throughout my fieldwork there were also instances where a disconnection between people and place presented itself sensorially. On a visit to a site on my long list – Westbury Court gardens – I noticed a man and woman sitting at a table both with headphones on and both reading books. Through sight and sound they had chosen to disconnect from their immediate environment, which was a place that people would normally choose specifically to seek out the visual stimulus of the garden. Whereas the couple’s behaviour was more in line with how people try to escape a negative surrounding, for example, being on the London underground where to shut out what you see and hear is practiced by the majority of users.

Another instance of where the senses were used as a mechanism to disconnect was provided by Jan a volunteer gardener at Lacock, who described how the visual experience in the garden was enhanced for visitors because there was little else to distract the visitor:

“…even the village people are buying stuff and consuming stuff and creating but here, inside, it’s separate and no-one else is consuming, just with their eyes, they’re enjoying what we are doing. And that’s nice, there’s nothing to buy, it’s something else here.”

(Jan, volunteer gardener, Lacock)

This suggests that the sensory aspect of the effect of gardens produces something deeper than merely a visually pleasing scene. It is through this re-connection with nature, by what Tilley describes as “utilising and exploring [the body’s] entire range of sensory and perceptive capacities” (Tilley, 2006: 313) that we redress the alienation that comes from the sensory deprivation of sitting in offices and houses and being cut off from the living world around us.
The body is the means through which we experience and feel the world (Edensor, 2000) and the senses act to inform presence and engagement to constitute ‘being-in-the-world’. In this way, cultural meanings and social relations are not only inscribed upon the body, but are produced by it, and the senses both experience and structure space (Edensor, 2000) in this way bodies belong to place and help to constitute them whether they stay in place, move through place or move towards other spaces (Casey, 1996).

### 5.4 Material Objects

Material objects play many practical roles in social life (Wallendorf and Arnould, 1988) and need to be considered in the different moments of production, exchange and consumption (Gosden and Marshall, 1999). It can be argued (Harré, 2002) that social life is only made up of symbolic exchanges and the joint construction and management of meaning, including the meaning of bits of stuff. This process of interpretation is contingent on historical and cultural contexts, as Harré, 2002 describes:

“This gives the illusion of something being real in the way that a mountain chain constraining territories are real. Money is a case in point. Issuing and using a bank note is just a performative act, a promise. So too is communion wine, the Stop sign... these things are social objects only within the dynamic frames of story-lines.” (Harré, 2002: 32 original emphasis)

We can look to the past as well as the present for the meaning that object share: Kaplan (1994) sees museums, their collections, and exhibitions as both products and agents of social change. Pearce (1994) extends this by emphasizing our own role with objects and affect:

“It is our better understanding, as we live our lives, of the processes of making meaning which enables us to analyse the nature of our relation to the objects which come from the past, and to perceive how they affect us,
both individually in the dialectical creation of meaning and self, and socially in the ideological creation of unequal relationships.” (Pearce, 1994: 28)

My findings reflect this reflexive affect of objects and how this crosses over from the collective to the individual, often within the same object. I will now examine this in more detail by looking at objects and identity.

5.4.1 Objects and identity

My findings from my fieldwork suggest that people identified and made a connection with objects because of their familiarity and the memory the object triggered, as Eric, a gardener at Hidcote, comments:

“people love to see stuff they have at home… I started planting Sweet William (a type of flower) in the rose walk and people stopped and said ‘I love those flowers, my grandmother used to grow those flowers’…”

(Eric, a gardener at Hidcote)

This quote suggest how objects can convey our connection to others and help express our sense of self (Levy 1981). The materiality of objects that trigger or recall memories or feelings tends to be of somewhat secondary importance to knowing what the object is and does and how it connects us with our own past. The role of the objects in the above quotes show how they help to anchor us in a world where we have become increasingly detached from physical places; they offer us an antidote to what anthropologist Appadurai (2011) describes in his term 'deterritorialisation' where the objects, ideas and exchanges that we use to define culture have become detached from physical places.

Connections made through objects was evident in the personal stories that visitors recounted to garden guides at Dyrham which were prompted by objects at the site, as described by Greg, a garden guide at Dyrham:
"We had someone last year who lived near the Wilkinson's jam factory and when we were near the Mulberry tree he said that the workers used to wear paper suits and they make mulberry jam (because it stains). There are a lot of personal stories – a man last year who lived on a boat in the Norfolk broads and he said a lot of boats are made of Tulip wood and the wood takes colour well, the wood is soft. (Tulip tree is a feature of the garden tour).

(Greg, volunteer garden guide, Dyrham)

People’s personal connection to an object is obviously subjective to an individual’s experience but there was evidence at the sites of how there seemed to be space to allow people to make these connections. For example, at Dyrham and at Hidcote there were no interpretative boards and few maps or suggested routes round the site; instead it was intended that people make their “own connection with the place” as Sarah, a gardener at Dyrham, describes. As noted in the rhythm of mobilities, section 4.3.3, there is a tacit decision made to have no set route for visitors so, in the words of Lisa Edinborough, visitors can “lost, to find hidden pathways and discover a hidden garden room”.

Objects can change their meaning over time (Leach, 1983) and my findings suggest that objects could go through a lifecycle during a timespan; an example of this were objects donated to the Fox Talbot museum at Lacock:

“And we’ve got some nice objects donated to us because once they understood the importance of the object they realise that their children or their grand children wouldn’t have the same interest in the object as they would. So our collection has grown.”

(Roger Watson, curator, Fox Talbot museum, Lacock)

This quote demonstrates how objects are recognised as having a value and at the same time acknowledges that this value will not be recognised by individuals (in this instance the donor’s children and grandchildren) but it is recognising that some people will know and appreciate the significance of the object. This concept was, to some extent, validated by another participant – Edward – who, as captured in the findings on memory in section 4.2, recognised a camera in the Fox Talbot
museum in Lacock that was the same camera that he had inherited from his grandfather. This finding demonstrates how people not only use objects to construct their identity but that they use key possessions to extend, expand, and strengthen their sense of self (Ahuvia, 2005).

For Edward the object was significant because it articulated how “our identities are tangled up in our relations with the things we surround ourselves with” (DeSilvey 2007:405) but the object did not just unlock something about his identity it seemed to offer a line of connection and was a manifestation of the ‘life history’ (Appadurai, 1988) or perhaps most suitably articulated by Edward himself: “the past connects us with the present and gives the present meaning” (quote from transcribed interview). The participant also references how memory plays a role in the meaning objects have for us and how the emotional response we have to objects is formed through, and iteratively forms, our sense of self-identity.

This example demonstrates how objects have the ability to evoke a presence of someone as much as an absence (Maddrell, 2013) and Maddrell (2013), citing Elizabeth Hallam and Jennifer Hockey (2001), notes that there are layered or multiple readings encoded in memory spaces. I would extend this layered meaning to objects and the value of objects can change through what we do to them and through time or association with certain social groups (Miller 1987). A study by Wallendorf and Arnould (1988) found that younger people focussed on the accumulation of functional items needed for independent living and expression of emerging self, whereas older people selected representational objects to show intergenerational ties. While the definition of ‘younger’ and ‘older’ was not made explicit in this study, my findings suggest that there is a recognition of the value of objects as signifying intergenerational ties. The value lies in the memory around those objects and how this process can be something that is on-going as parents who were bought to National Trust sites as children are now, themselves, bringing their children to National Trust sites, as Dale Dennehy operations manager at Dyrham explains:

“Yes, it’s like kitchens people love kitchens they recognise things that their granny might have had in her kitchen so there is that sort of connection with
family, with the past, with you personally which is important. But what I think is nice is when people remember coming here as a child, I think it's really nice when you can get that. I think it's good that children come here and enjoy it rather than coming here to be dragged around but come and enjoy the place and hopefully bring their children back.”

(Dale Dennehy, Outdoor operations manager, Dyrham)

This references how the visitor experience at National Trust sites and how the organisation’s brand has changed its identity through the interaction with objects at its sites by moving away from the ‘do not touch’ mentality to one that encourages interaction between its visitors and objects. Ben Pipe, catering manager at Hidcote, summed up the effect that this has had:

B: We notice we get a lot more families then we ever did and we are doing more for families so there are lot more activities for kids. We’ve just… I suppose we’ve become alive to the fact that kids can run up and down and make noise and enjoy themselves and it’s fine that this happens and it’s fine they get from it what they need to get from it and it doesn’t have to be quiet and stuffy and silent.

G: Yes, it used to be like that, very formal.

B: Yes there was a lot of ‘don’t touch’ and ‘shhh’. I just wouldn’t get anything from that experience as a child.

Objects are used, also, to extend the visit to sites when they are taken away from National Trust sites to create a memory of the visit to the site beyond the day of the visit and away from the site itself. To cater to this need for a memento of the day, National Trust shops sell a variety of gifts some of which are generic items - biscuits, cards, soaps - that can be found in all of their shops as well as some merchandise that is unique to each store, for example, at Lacock the retail manager, Di Vickers, said that a local man makes glass earrings for the shop. The type of merchandise available, the memento that people can take home with them, is an interpretation of the site that the visitor makes for themselves. At the same
time this object is often a chosen representation. As Amy Gazin-Schwartz (2004) notes when talking about the National Trust gift shop at the working rural village of Avebury:

“It (the shop) also deals with the past and with an image of the past, but this is no longer just any past. It is a particular pastoral past that has its roots in particular class-based ideas about rural life, history and landscape. It is a quite conservative image that situates the present-day gift shop and the stone circle together within a well-crafted and well-regulated historical continuum.” (Gazin-Schwartz, 2004:446)

The objects sold in the shop are contemporary constructions and incomplete histories of the actual past but this seems to matter little to consumers as Gazin-Schwartz (2004:54) notes “there are multiple levels of taste, authority and interpretation”. The fact that visitors experience this consumer idea of the past through the mass produced, or even handmade objects, in the gift shop matters little. There is no single correct interpretation of such sites, rather visitors craft their own version of heritage experience within what is offered at these sites. From my own observations it is the need to shop at the sites that is the over riding aim of visitors rather than historical accuracy.

5.4.2 Material objects and space/place

The transformation of meaning and value of objects was evident in multiple ways at the sites: from Hidcote lavender purchased on site and bought home to memorial trees at Dyrham to the modern day play trail installed at Woodchester Park.

I will now take on one of these objects - the memorial trees at Dyrham - to demonstrate how objects help people define a place. The memorial trees can be purchased by the public at Dyrham and dedicated to someone who has passed away. Here the connection process is more complex as a sense of connection is being triggered by an object and then a sense of belonging is actually recalled, or
formed, through the object. The National Trust intends the trees to facilitate a sense of emotional belonging to the site, or as my participant describes it as ‘a sense of ownership’:

“It’s about ownership, they feel they have part of the place, it’s not my place it’s about getting people to feel they are part of the place. We are starting the same thing at other sites because it’s about that emotional engagement with a place. People come back with their children to see the tree. Most of those benches in the garden are bought by people’s donations.”

(Dale Dennehy, Outdoor operations manager, Dyrham)

These objects – trees, benches – are a way for people to keep alive the bond with loved ones who have passed away in what Maddrell (2013) describes as ‘absence-presence’ where the very present sense of absence is made tangible through objects. These bonds that are built through objects can enable people to construct “a durable biography that enables the living to integrate the memory of the dead into their ongoing lives” (Walter, 1996: 7) and in so doing create “a renegotiated sense of self-identity for those who remain.” (Maddrell, 2013: 507). The benches and trees become ‘memory objects’ which enable a relationship between the living and the dead and, in so doing, emotional affect is bestowed on these objects and memory is dealt with through these objects (Horton and Kraftl, 2012).

Moving on to gardens, there were places that presented not only a space of enjoyment for visitors but could also be seen as objects laden with meaning for those volunteering and working in them. Through the physical practices of gardening, gardens represent a product of labour and so by investing time, effort, often money into a garden, the sense of belonging is created as noted by one of Hidcote’s gardeners:

“When I started here it was the start of a lot of the projects so I put a huge amount of work into the garden so then it becomes something you feel you own. It’s an extension of my own garden, my own life; you work and watch things progress, mature and develop and you really do feel it is integral to
your life that you helped create. We are custodians, you feel ownership of it, from growing everything from seed, propagating things. This can cause conflict sometimes because you’ll see a member of the public walking through the borders or snapping a flower off.” (Eric, gardener, Hidcote)

The last sentence makes reference to a negative outcome of the sense of belonging, and consequently ownership, that Eric felt. This raises the issue of how objects, and our sense of ownership over them, can cause negative emotions and feelings.

However, gardens gave the opportunity to transfer a tangible object, either in the form of a clipping that some gardeners gave to visitors or as a purchased plant, to extend the visit to the site and re live the memory of the site. I found myself buying some ‘Hidcote Lavender’ as a tangible reminder of my time spent at the site. When I mentioned this to Anne, a garden guide at Hidcote, she said it was a very common experience and she constantly got asked where people can buy the plants they saw in the garden. When I asked her why she thought people did that she explained:

“whatever they get from being here they want to take a little bit of that home.” (Anne, volunteer garden guide, Hidcote)

The transformative agency of objects was also evident at sites where the social-spatial relations of objects encountered by people had an emotional affect. This was evidenced by Edward’s interaction with the sensory musical installation at the botanic garden at Lacock, as seen in the video clip: please refer to the ‘Video Diary Edward Botanic Garden’ video clip in the enclosed DVD
The video diary of Edward is an example of how an embodied interaction with a place produced an emotional response. The participant initially felt that the sensory music making instruments were "more for children" but once he had actually used the instruments his reaction became one of ownership: 'look at that, what I just did', where the participant felt an emotional impact of his interaction with the site.

Edward's interaction with the site addresses what Morton (2005) describes as "the sense of the now, and the liveness and richness of real time". Furthermore, Edward's experience demonstrates how it is possible to negotiate access to the spaces which are created in the 'now'—for example, embodied and expressive ways of knowing, being and communicating in situ. Edward's interaction with this non-human agent was very much a creative, sensory and affective performative act and although there was some speech the majority of the interaction is about the non-verbal, the sensory feedback that the instruments provide, the way that Edward moves around the space, interacting with the instruments he encounters. There are a multitude of affective relations that exist in this encounter: the speed at which Edward interacts with the instruments, the presence or absence of other people using the same instruments, the weather, Edward’s own physical interaction with the instruments and the handling of the camera at the same time. These affective relations and practices structure the sociospatial context of this performance but as Simpson (2012) stresses:
“this structuring is an ongoing process, evolving multiple durations at differing degrees of speed and slowness, and so it is not necessarily determinative of how things will remain or might come to be.”

(Simpson, 2012: 194)

Edward’s interaction with the installation at Lacock demonstrates how, as Duff (2009) frames it, “to experience a place is to be affected by place” (2009:881, original emphasis). The affective atmosphere created by my participant’s interaction with the site captures the emotional feel of the place, as created at that moment in time which contributes to the sense of place-making (Duff, 2009).

5.4.2 Material objects out of time

Acknowledging that objects change meaning over time, as Whatmore (2006) puts it, there is an attempt to:

“hold onto the relational and emergent imperatives of material force in which the ‘thing-ness of things’ – bodies, objects, arrangements – are always in-the-making” (Whatmore, 2006: 603)

In this way “humans are always in composition with nonhumanity, never outside of a sticky web of connections or an ecology [of matter]” (Bennett, 2004: 365, original emphasis).

I also came across objects that seemed to be out of time which gave a discombobulating affect. An example is when, on a site visit to Hidcote, I noticed they had Christmas cards in September and I mentioned this to one of my participants, Di Vickers the retail manager at Lacock, who said that Christmas cards come into their shops in June. When I asked why she explained:

“…because we sell most of our Christmas cards between June and September because of the overseas market. And with the National Trust
it's a good brand and when you go to Marks and Spencer and buy something you're just making a rich person richer but when you buy something here it's a charity it all goes back into the Trust."

(Di Vickers, Retail Manager, Lacock)

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter has continued the findings and examined how notions of connection and belonging define and construct our sense of social identity. This sense that the individual is understood as a complex relational entity, capable of making and sustaining connections across a range of times and places also serves to underlay the feelings and emotions that individuals sought to keep alive when they returned to their own environments. Examples of this were seen in physical manifestations such as the cuttings that gardeners gave out to visitors that asked about plants, or items bought in the shop, or simply the verbal connections people make by relating an experience they encountered at a site - listening to a piano, for example - and connecting it to a childhood experience. In this way people sense of a place, built through their own experiences, is related it back to their understanding of the world. This sense of place is not, then, confined to a physical location but carried over time and space. The themes overlapped and came together: people sought connection with others, through volunteering for example, as a way of escaping the loneliness following a bereavement.

The findings also demonstrate how we meet objects in various ways and how they have an emotional affect on us – cameras that trigger memories of relatives, trees that are a memorial to someone no longer with us, or plants purchased from the National Trust sites serve to remind us of our visit. While there are a range of emotional responses to objects, which can change as the meaning of objects can change over time and space, it was evident from the participants’ responses that material objects affect how we experience place. Edward’s interaction with the installation at Lacock demonstrates how, as Duff (2009) frames it, “to experience a place is to be affected by place” (2009:881, original emphasis). The affective atmosphere created by my participant’s interaction with the site, through objects,
captures the emotional feel of the place, as created at that moment in time which contributes to the sense of place-making (Duff, 2009).

It is worth noting that while objects define identity and selfhood, they also convey and extend our self-concept to others (Belk, 1987). This is mediated through the consumption of objects, such as the donated cameras in the Fox Talbot museum, which serve as a reminder that an object will not carry the same meaning through generations as it does for the current owner. It was evident from the findings that the emotional affect engendered by objects was mediated through the experience they referenced; for example, in the form of a memento or in relation to people in the memories that they triggered, which was not contingent on the authenticity. In this way objects purchased at National Trust sites frequently reference and borrow heritage and yet, authentic heritage from a family item can be discarded.
Conclusion and future research questions

6.1 Introduction

This final chapter of the thesis provides a summary of the key findings. The chapter is divided into two parts. Part one revisits the aims and objectives of the research and I will highlight three key findings which underpin visitor experience and place-making at National Trust sites. These are firstly, how the themes of escape and a sense of connection and belonging are facilitated within National Trust sites and how they contribute to a sense of self identity, secondly, how do people’s practices at sites engender an emotional affect and thirdly, how do material objects play a role in memory making and memory invoking with the context of National Trust sites. My mixed methods approach to this research has utilised both video and audio to capture what Morton (2005) describes as the sense of the now and the richness of real time. Through this approach I was able to understand the multi-layered nature of how place is constituted and the conflicting but entangled perspectives from which places might be understood and experienced.

Part two discusses the implications of the research, particularly in terms of directions for future research. The chapter ends by offering some brief concluding remarks about the research project overall.

6.2 Summary of key findings in relation to the research aims and objectives

It is useful to begin this summary by restating the overall aim of the project and briefly recapping the project rationale. As stated in chapter 1, the thesis aimed to investigate the meaning that places have for people by using the four National
Trust sites as a lens on place meaning. By looking at the practices of people in the four sites through the use of mixed qualitative methods I have explored and captured the emotional, sensorial and pre-cognitive aspects of engagement with place.

The research focussed on two research objectives:

1. How do the practices and performances conducted at sites affect people’s sense of place?

2. How does the reciprocal relationship between people and place influence people’s behaviour and how the National Trust manages its sites.

My research revealed that people seek to form a sense of connection and belonging to other people through visits to National Trust sites. This motivation for seeking connection and belonging overlapped with the theme of escape and was demonstrated by volunteers Jan and Chris who volunteered, in part, to escape from pressures of caring for other people and loneliness. Significance also lies with the place that people escape to in the form of the support and companionship offered by other volunteer and visitors in the same physical location. The result is to escape from a stressful situation at home and to receive emotional support from others and the type of relationships that the volunteers and staff build amongst themselves enables not just an affiliation with other people but a significant and personal relationship that can lead to a desire for acceptance and belonging (Baumeister and Leary, 1995). This relationship forming also indicates that a sense of self is connected to particular places and, in this way, work, friendship and family can be considered in spatialised terms, for each of these forms of sociality is typically associated with a series of identifiable locations (Conradson and McKay, 2007) and place, therefore, plays a major role in the on-going constitution of identity (Bondi et al., 2002; Cresswell, 2004; Pile and Thrift, 1995).

My findings also revealed how a sense of escape, through connecting with others, was also evident in the conversational exchanges that visitors had with staff and
volunteers. These exchanges were framed as questions concerning the site and, for some people, this exchange with another person, provided the level of connection required for a meaningful emotional connection. For other people these exchanges moved on to talk about something more personal and troubling, as in the example of a volunteer garden guide at Hidcote who related how one visitor told her it was the first time out of the house since his wife died. Although no formal mechanisms exist for these types of interactions, staff and volunteers seemed to be intrinsically aware of the importance of them. This type of value that is added to the visitor experience goes beyond economic contribution (Maddrell, 2000) and fulfils an informal but intrinsic role to people’s experience of place by establishing connections with strangers.

Acknowledging that people visit National Trust sites for a variety of reasons, from occasional or one off visitors who are passing through on their way from home to a holiday location, for example, to regular volunteers who do a shift once a week in the role of a gardener or room guide, the research recognised how people engage in different practices at sites – children playing on grass, walking through woods, talking to garden guides. My research found that in addition to these practices representing an escape from everyday routine, or the confines of physical dwelling, there was also an emotional affect that informed a sense of place. Through people’s engagement with National Trust sites in a range of ways from walking to sitting and reading, to gardening, playing tennis, to leading tours or simply having a cup of tea people were able to sensorially and emotionally engage with place by touching stone walls of buildings, listening to the sound of piano music and smelling the burnt toffee scent of a Katsura tree on a garden tour. In this way the meaning of place is driven by how it is experienced through body and less on the cultural meaning of place (Duffy and Waitt, 2011). The emotional affect that these engagements produced were also dependent on individual characteristics such as cultural identity, memory and age; however, these practices illustrate an active embodiment at the sites that enabled an understanding of place in more-than-representational forms of knowledge (Corolan, 2008). These findings signify a departure from the social constructionist approach where place is less about cultural meaning and more about how people experience it, acknowledging at the same time that consumption of place can also
be culturally mediated. This was further extended in my research by identifying how this sense of place transforms social and spatial dimensions to be relived and reproduced in other times and places through material objects such as purchased souvenirs or cuttings of flowers given by gardeners.

Building on this concept of how embodied practices shaped the meaning of sites, my research shows how people’s actions at sites forms their experience of place and signifies how place is not simply a set of co-ordinates on a map but “is a lived, felt and relational experience of thinking, feeling body/subject” (Duff, 2010:885). The practices carried out at sites stressed the way in which place is a complex, co-constituted process where place is a fluid entity. This way of making place in an embodied and folding in and through of physical action to produce place could be viewed in practices such as the weekly outdoor activity morning for under-fives at Dyrham where children are encouraged to ‘pick grass, roll down a hill, pick up a worm and have a sing song’, in this way my research showed how the sites were experienced as a lived sensation that captured the emotional feel of a place (Duff, 2010). These embodied practices are intended to engender an emotional response and lay down a memory that will influence future practices of these children as articulated by the catering manager of Hidcote who cited childhood visits to Hidcote as a reason why people choose the site as a wedding venue.

My findings showed how the National Trust has encouraged practices that engage bodily and cognitive interaction through inspiring people to touch objects in kitchens which the outdoor operations manager at Dyrham explained was so successful because of a mixture of memory and imagination where people recognised kitchen objects that their grandmother might have had in her kitchen. This temporal aspect of the reach of objects at sites was also evident in the concept of memorial trees at Dyrham where a tree can be dedicated to a deceased loved one which enabled memorialisation by connecting people to place through an object – a tree – and in so doing enables people to invest themselves in the place. In this way people and place form the experience conjointly and through these objects, and their emotional affect, people’s identities are shaped. My research showed that this on-going process of memory making and memory invoking had agency beyond the site as objects bought or given at the site had
emotional affect re lived off site. This is an on-going process as memories are remade as they are recalled and we are constantly renegotiating our sense of identity through objects and associated memories.

How objects are encountered at sites was also demonstrated in the findings to enable people to form connections and attachments with place and to make place meaningful and a way of “seeing, knowing and understanding the world” (Cresswell, 2004:11). It was also evident that through these experiences of practices and encountering objects, place becomes constitutive of one’s sense of self (Casey, 2001). Although it should also be noted that while place is constitutive by what people do it is also informed by other aspects of place such as collective and individual rhythms which are influenced by routes round sites and where visitors are permitted to go as well as the weather, number of other visitors. As such, places are constantly in a process of change and practices, like walking, are contingent and produce contingent notions of place as well as being “always partially conditioned by the special and physical characteristics of place” (Edensor, 2010). The research findings indicate that while the National Trust can prescribe or script what people do at their sites, which can influence the practice and performances that people experience at sites, it cannot completely control their actions or subsequent experience of place. Instead, the findings indicate that place making and memory making at sites was enabled by simply offering the physical environment needed for certain practices such as the mother, who lived in a flat in nearby Bristol, who cited the piece of lawn at Dyrham where her son had taken his first steps; hence place is not simply a set of physical co-ordinates but becomes about the people who use it and the memories and emotions they bring and make at the site through practice and performances. This example also reference a lifecycle moment which has emotional affect for the mother and the child as there is also evidence that moments such as these are pivotal in influencing people’s behaviour in later life to return to a place they enjoyed as a child, as referenced by the catering manager at Hidcote who noted how people book their weddings at the site because of positive childhood memories of the site. The findings also suggest how place affects people by acknowledging that place not only engenders an emotional experience but that this, in turn, leads to and enables people to act back and affect the meaning and identity of place. As such,
National Trust sites are formed on an iterative basis derived from people experience at the sites and what they are seeking to get out of the sites – ‘the calm and the peace’ (Karen, walker, Woodchester Park), for example – in addition to what they bring to the sites in terms of cultural identity and memories and these factors influence the affect of the performances and practices made at the site. This is exemplified in the findings by one participant walker at Woodchester and her children who described how the rhythm of walking and movement through the landscape provided not only an opportunity for play but also created a relationship between the participant and the landscape as the mother stressed how they always moved through the site on the same route as it provided “comfort and familiarity” and an anticipation of things that she knew her and her children would enjoy. Engagement and embodiment with the site provide a means by which we experience and feel the world (Edensor, 2000) and walking was an embodied performance by which participants both experienced and made place.

The above example stresses how affect has power because of the expected outcome of planned for practices and the emotional reassurance that these actions bring but my findings also showed how the unforeseen affected experience of walking through a part of Hidcote garden unexpectedly reminded one participant of her late husband as the last time she had been in that part of the garden was with her husband. Similarly, a participant at Dyrham heard a piano being played in another room that triggered an emotional response in the form of a memory of music practice as a child. These examples emphasise how the affect that places engender in people, where place is an event whose precise spatial configuration and rhythms are dynamic, moves away from the concept of place as simply a geographical location but a “lived, felt and relational experience of thinking, feeling body/subject” (Duff, 2010:885).

Recognising the role of affect in people’s engagement with place through the performances and practices carried out represents a departure for the National Trust who have, traditionally, viewed the narrative of the sites - in terms of ‘its setting’ and the people who used to live there - as informing how people experience the site. My research shows that it is what people do at these sites, the “embodied and expressive ways of knowing, being and communicating in situ”
(Morton 2010:662) and emotional affect that these actions produce that informs experience and place making more than cultural meaning of place. However, the way in which people are affected by place is complex and is influenced not just by the practices and performances but by the person’s identity – gender, ethnicity, age – as well as an assemblage of thoughts, feelings, memories, ways of doing things, possessions which do not fit together in a dedicated pattern but is always a compromise, always pragmatic, always in flux and never pure (Haraway, 1988: McCracken 1988). This assemblage of experience is, in part, made of the moment in place and also informs the place’s identity as place is created in and of the moment.

In addition to the affect derived from spontaneous and place driven practices and performances at sites there was also the affect that was produced from planned performances and practices, such as volunteering. It should be stressed that the spontaneous and planned practices and performances were not two separate concepts as planned engagements with place can result in spontaneous practices. In order to examine the concepts of both planned and spontaneous practices and performances at sites I have made the distinction between the two. Planned practice and performances manifested as volunteering, for example, were done with the intent of providing the affect of escape. This was evidenced by the physical act of being at the site that enabled an emotional escape, often from demanding or stressful situations that existed in the personal life of volunteers. This was expressed by a participant who described the way in which people dealt with problems entering the site: “they tend to dump them at the gate” (Anne, garden guide, Hidcote). This quote expressly identifies the transformative affect that being at the site has and the nature of this escape varied from “escaping the hustle and bustle” (female visitor, Dyrham) to escaping difficult circumstances at home - caring for sick relatives, escape from loneliness caused by death of a partner – in this way, the site provided more of a refuge, as described by one participant volunteer gardener who had been caring for a sick husband which prevented her from coming to the site: “I was aching to come back, it just shows how much it means to you” (Jan, volunteer gardener, Lacock). This demonstrates how the site provided more than just an escape from a difficult situation, but an emotional support and respite in the companionship from fellow volunteers.
My research found that sensorial engagement with place was a tactic used by the National Trust to build a relationship with sites through a range of physical practices and performances at sites. As such, practice turns place into an event (Massey, 2005) and an on-going relationship, where production of place is layered as memories are triggered, new memories made and bonds of connection and belonging are made through communities of staff and volunteers and through different generation of families. As such, place is not simply culturally constructed, instead, places naturalize different worlds of sense (Feld and Basso, 1996). This interplay between senses, memory and place making is one that has had little focus, apart from notable exceptions such as Hetherington (2003), Maddrell (2011) and Lorimer (2006).

There was evidence of practices at sites that were intended to engender a particular response and thus inform the experience of that site. An example of which is the planting of the Sweet William flower at Hidcote by one of the gardeners because he said that people had told him how much the flower had reminded them of their grandmothers’ gardens, demonstrating the dynamic role of feedback. However, the findings showed that people made their own emotional and sensorial engagements with place such as the participant at Lacock who touched the stone wall and heard the piano being played, or the gardener at Lacock who used the seasons as an analogy as a way to make sense of life – all reference a way of connecting with nature through the body’s range of sensory and perceptive capacities and provides a mechanism of engaging with place in a way that we don’t find else where in our lives because of the sensory deprivation of sitting in offices or being inside for extended periods of the day. In response to this, the National Trust has recognised the importance of moving away from their ‘don’t touch’ ethos and positively embracing, where practical, a more sensorial engagement with their sites.

There was evidence to demonstrate that being in a landscape is interpreted through the senses and, in this way, dwelling arises from an embedness in the landscape where gardeners described how the seasons and the incumbent changes it bought in the materiality of the gardens were a reminder to “go with the
“flow” in life as Jan, a volunteer gardener at Lacock, put it. The findings showed how, through performance and practices, people were able to find a sense of meaning and belonging in places that were full of power to evoke memories but were also simply places of refuge from a world from which we are sensorially alienated. The human and non-human actors and elements of place contribute to the multiple layers of production that occur at sites and places are made out of this affect and practice.

It was clear how the reciprocal relationship between people and place was borne out of a sense of people’s interpretations of place made through their experiences of place based not only on the physical qualities of the place but also the sense of connection that they foster with others. In this way people imbued places with personal meaning, the ‘autobiographical insideness’ (Rowles, 1983). This has been extended through the use of objects, such as the memorial trees at Dyrham, which not only shape the landscape but shape a sense of identity as the trees become objects invested with meaning for present and future generations (Maddrell, 2013). By laying down memories through memorial trees at Dyrham – social and spatial aspect of memory – the trees grow and change the place where they are and people’s memories change.

The National Trust are seeking to recognise the interconnection between people and place and the “affective atmospheres [that] capture the emotional feel of place, as well as the store of action-potential” (Duff, 2010: 881) by demonstrating how this can be relived after the visit through material objects, video, photos. There is a circularity to the building of place as emotions, memories, affects are triggered and built by the place and objects of sites and, in part, can be taken away and relieved and then used to inform future behaviour, such as site visits. Building on the existing literature on dwelling I wanted to demonstrate how this is not necessarily a linear process, and is not solely built on the objects, landscape, buildings, gardens that are encountered at a particular place. Instead experience is made up of what we bring to a place – our memories, our cultural identities, how the journey to the site made us feel – and the memories and emotional
experiences formed at the sites which are taken away and relieved and built on outside of the site through objects, photos and story telling.

In this way places are not static but are made of performance and this performance acts back on us as we experience place through our senses and memories, both voluntary and involuntary, are evoked through what we see, touch and do at National Trust sites. The creation of place can be highly individual and can only exist because of a set of conditions for that person as one mother who said her son had taken his first steps on the lawn at Dyrham and continued to tell me that the reason why she visited Dyrham was because she lived in inner city Bristol with a small garden. The physical space enabled the participant to create a place, a memory that had significance for her because of her own set of circumstances. The ‘registers of memory’ (Lorimer, 2006) enable people to have an experience at a place but also for a new experience to be formed that will become a memory going forward. Furthermore, acts of embodied practice have an emotional affect – gardener, Brian, at Lacock said that the rhythm of the seasons helped him to make sense of wider issues in life – life and death – by drawing an analogy between the season and the stages of life, death and afterlife. By deriving meaning from an embodied act this participant was emotionally affected by the practice of gardening at the site and, using this experience, and was able to reflect on his own sense of self identity.

Drawing on these conceptual conclusions, my research shows how place is a fluid concept formed by the set of emotions, memories, cultural identities that people bring, in addition to what they do, think and feel and the emotional affect produced through the engagement with the site. While the National Trust has scripted how people should experience site, my research demonstrates how people develop their own interpretation and rituals as a means of building their own sense of place in addition to the scripted narrative of the site.

I will now explore the implications of these conclusions for the National Trust before exploring the directions for future research.
6.3 Implications for the National Trust

The challenge for the National Trust is to find ways to recognise that places are co-constituted; formed through a complex interplay and overlap of the practices that people do at sites, the assemblage of emotions, thoughts and feelings that are produced and the richness of the story inherent in the site.

One way to consider these simultaneous, multiple, parallel, perhaps competing, and sometimes interwoven forms of place-making would be to understand place in terms of multilocality. This implies (amongst other things) "seeking to understand the construction of place from multiple viewpoints" and recognising that "a single physical landscape can be multilocal in the sense that it shapes and expresses polysemic meanings of place for different users" (Rodman, 2003: 212).

As illustrated in chapters 4 and 5, what people practice at sites and the objects they interact with, inspired by the site and manifest in walking, gardening, sitting, taking tours recognises how place and people are not separate entities but rather are co-constituted through place (Duffy and Waitt, 2011). My findings evidence the way in which people make their own sense of place at National Trust sites through, what Rowles (1983) describes as ‘auto-biographical insideness’. Just as the video diary participant, Edward, recognised a camera in the Fox Talbot museum at Lacock as the same as the one his father had given him, this underlies how it is not just the cultural, social and physical context but what people bring to place that forms an individual’s experience and sense of place.

The implication for the National Trust is to recognise how some people develop a sense of identity through place and how it helps people come to terms with their existential alienation in a world in which the normal condition is estrangement. This could be estrangement in terms of alienation from other people, evidenced as a reason for volunteering from participants who had lost their life partners, or estrangement from the production process of food and other objects, which the participant, Sally at Woodchester Park, cited when she spoke about getting back to nature and the cows at the site. In these examples what the participants are bringing to the site is very much affecting what they think, do and feel at the site.
and thus shaping their experience of place. This acknowledgement that other pasts, presents and futures are at work at sites marks a departure from how the National Trust currently frames visitor experience in terms of the past and present of the site itself.

This thesis highlights the implication for the National Trust of examining people and place not as a static concept but as co-produced in a dynamic approach. While I acknowledge that this way of viewing place is messy and difficult to capture as it attempts to grasp an open-ended generative process and formalise it into some sort of practice that can be measured and benefits identified, it does reflect the process of experiencing place in an emotional and sensorial way. In recognising and valuing this approach, the National Trust would be able to access how people experience place recognising and placing value on the emotional and sensorial consumption of place.

6.4 Directions for future research

As noted in the introduction, the research outlined in this thesis is, in part, a response to re-conceptualising existing approaches to understanding how the practices and performances that people carry out in place affects their meaning of place and how this, in turn, reflects back both on their own identity and how their sense of place. This section will now examine three ways in which this research could be extended.

As with any research project, there are always constraints and limitations. The first recommendation for future research would be to examine how different cultural and ethnicities experience National Trust sites as place. The majority of visitors, staff and volunteers to the National Trust sites within this project were of white, British ethnicity which was reflected in the sampling audience of this research. It would be interesting to explore perceptions of the National Trust and barriers for visiting in different socio-economic and diverse ethnic groups. With the notable exception of Tolia-Kelly’s work on ethnic minorities in this area which has
attempted to unravel multiple relationships embedded in visitor engagements within this landscape and thus disrupt the moral geography of this landscape as embodying a singular English sensibility, normally exclusionary of British multi-ethnic groups, (Tolia-Kelly, 2006), there has been little examination of these issues specifically within the National Trust context.

The second area of research recommended her would be to conduct a longitudinal study based research on the four sites. The case studies of the four sites clearly indicate how sites change the course of time – a season or a year. It would be instructive to reassess how visitor experience of the same place is shaped by visiting at different times. As a control variable it would be interesting to have the same people visit at different times.

The third area would be to conduct a comparative study, within the heritage sector. This might include a comparison with other heritage sites, such as English Heritage sites, in more geographically dispersed areas then was possible for this research. A comparative study of other tourist sites would probe further the experience of tourists at visitor attractions and the placing making process. Although there has been exploration of how consumers actually engage in the production process while consuming (Holt, 1995), there has been relatively little in-depth research into the experience of tourists at visitor attractions, and the research that has been undertaken has been focused primarily on consumer behaviour (Swarbrooke and Horner, 1999) and consumer marketing (Suvantola, 2002).

6.5 Concluding remarks

This chapter has demonstrated how the research objectives have been met. The project has provided conceptual and empirical insights into how visitor’s experiences, through their practices and performances, shape the meaning of place. The research has demonstrated how individuals make sense of place through their own experiences and relate this back to their understanding of the
world and, in this way, a sense of place is not confined to a physical location but carried over time and space.

The methodologies employed in this thesis have proved valuable in developing an overall conclusion which has enabled me to attend not just to embodied and phenomenological aspects of place-making but also the highly complex processes practiced at sites that are made up of “non-verbal, expressive and emotive, non-cognitive aspects […] of performance” (Morton, 2005:663).

It was also evident how different routes, mobilities and voices can create place in different ways and from different perspectives, even though they might share many aspects of a common narrative and invite the viewer to gaze either in similar ways, or at the same material "landmarks". Analysis of the place-making processes of local visual representations, local visual practices, and my own visual practices can lead to a way of understanding the multi-layered nature of how place is constituted and the conflicting but entangled perspectives from which places might be understood and experienced.

The findings underlie how emotional and physical engagement help define the richness of human interaction with place and how place is not a fixed entity but is a complex, co-constitutive process where a sense of place is continually being made. The significance of these findings for the National Trust should help them understand how they could form an on-going relationship with people based not solely on a scripted narrative of their sites but one that recognises the emotions and memories people bring to sites and the affectual power that these have in informing their sense of place in the present and future.
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Appendices


Arrived at approximately 10am, car park already full due to sunny, mild weather and the fact it is Sunday.

Parked car and asked couple who were kitted out in hiking gear about the hiking in the area. She looked at me in my paint spattered track suit bottoms and my tired trainers rather dubiously. But they were helpful and told me to go and look at the fort and that it was easy to follow the trails as they were clearly marked and that there was a map further up. They did that thing that couples who have been together a long time do – they both talk to you at the same time.

While I was looking at the map I noticed a couple with a pair of big Alsatian dogs. I go over and ask if I can take their photo, explaining briefly that I am doing research for the NT. She tries to get the dogs to sit but they have no interest in that. I ask their names and she says ‘Max’ and ‘Chelsea’. ‘Ah, a boy and a girl’ I say, ‘a bitch and a dog’ she replies. They walk their dogs here every day, she explains her husband is disabled (he hasn’t spoken) and infers, by not saying anything, that this is as much about getting out for them as it is for the dogs.
I go for the red trail which the map says will take approximately 1 ½ hours. I head out on the trail and soon get lost but pick the trail up again.

What I notice:

- people talk to their dogs as if they can understand them, I think we are culturally unique in that us British have no embarrassment about saying things like ‘now you’ve had all your treats there are no more’ with the utter conviction that you are being understood.

- I notice that on the longer trail I meet fewer people – I get passed by a pair of serious hikers in serious hiking gear. They don’t say hello.

- I talk to an elderly lady walking her two dogs up a very steep hill with beautiful views. I comment that there are not many people and she says that it’s always the same the further you get from the starting point.

- I notice the cows hoof print next to the hiking boot imprint and it’s a physical reminder of the presence of others, absent now but once here walking the same path.
- I see the belted Galloway breed of cows whose meat I can buy in 10kg boxes as the signs on the fences inform me.

- there are steps that have been built into the side of the hill to aid ascent and descent but they are too wide and steep. I love the informal alternative path that runs alongside which has been created by people. It's as if it's a physical manifestation of people saying 'look your official, resource heavy path does not do the job, let us make what we need'.
- I love the criss cross of paths, it’s like the landscape is telling us that there is not simply one straight true path.

- the path signs are complicated – one sign has three different badges on it signifying different routes.

- I notice a bench with an abandoned aluminium tray full of coals – a single use bbq- that has burnt through to the wooden bench underneath. Both serving as a reminder that for all the beauty and the people that care deeply there are still acts of vandalism to be found.
The lower car park which I hadn’t noticed when I first arrived is now full too. All sorts of people are pouring from their cars – dog walkers, families, serious hikers, grown up children with elderly parents who just want to take in the view.
Appendix 2: Data from National Trust showing visitor numbers against type of site

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2009 Visitor number category</th>
<th>Large mansion, gardens, collection</th>
<th>Smaller house, collection, garden</th>
<th>Monument, open landscape, industrial heritage</th>
<th>Gardens, grounds principal attraction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20,000 - 29,999</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Alfiston Clergy Birmingham Back2Back Melford Hall Moseley Old Hall Peckover Smallhythe Townend</td>
<td>Aberdulais Falls Bembridge Mill Dolaucothi Downhill Demesne Levant Mine Souter Lighthouse</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50,000-69,999</td>
<td>Berrington Hall, Brockhampton, Hatchlands Park, Hughenden Manor, Nunnington Hall, Oxburgh Hall, Packwood Hall, Saltram House, Uppark House</td>
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<tr>
<td>70,000-89,999</td>
<td>Arlington Court, Basildon Park, Castle Ward, Croft Castle, Ham House, Hanbury Hall, Plas Newydd, Standen House, Upton House</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90,000-109,999</td>
<td>Chirk Castle, Coughton Court, Felbrigg Hall, Knightshayes Court, Knole, Lacock, Lyme Park, Montacute, Nostell Priory, Petworth, Powis Castle, Sizergh Castle, Snowshill Manor, Speke Hall, The Vyne, Tyntesfield, Wimpole Estate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>110,000-129,999</td>
<td>Baddesley Clinton, Beningbrough Hall, Blickling Hall, Castle Drogo, Charlecote Park, Cotehele, Dyrham Park, Erdigg House, Mount Stewart, Scotney Castle</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 130,000-149,999 | I | Dunham Massey<br>Dunster Castle<br>Ickworth<br>Anglesey Abbey<br>Kingston Lacy<br>Mottisfont Abbey<br>Chartwell<br>Wallington |
| 150,000-169,999 | J | Bodiam Castle<br>Corfe Castle<br>Avebury<br>Fountains Abbey<br>St Michael's Mount |
| 170,000-189,999 | K | Bodnant Gardens<br>Nymans Garden<br>Sissinghurst Castle<br>Stourhead<br>Tatton Park<br>Wakehurst Place |
| 190,000+ | L | Attingham Park<br>Cragside<br>Lanhydrock<br>Penrhyn Castle<br>Poldsden Lacey<br>Waddesdon Manor |