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**Experiencing heritage at a World Heritage Site: personal encounters with  
Hadrian's Wall**

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**Experiencing heritage at a World Heritage Site: personal encounters with Hadrian's Wall.****Introduction**

Public heritage is the chosen representation of heritage at a place. The unmanaged heritage is the private heritage of people's lives (Howard, 2003). This paper uses the example of Hadrian's Wall to illustrate and develop the concept put forward by Poria et al (2004) that motivation for visiting heritage sites can be enhanced if the tourist is involved in that experience in a personal capacity. The unmanaged heritage, or the everyday practices of those who are (not) involved in heritage tourism of an area are often overlooked. It is proposed here that this notion not only applies to tourists of a site, but also those involved in the tourism offer. A combination of both public and private heritage is required for successful management of heritage sites.

The paper begins by introducing Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site, the next section puts the research in context by outlining the meanings of heritage employed here. It then discusses the methodology used: a form of photo-elicitation. The empirical data demonstrates different heritage journeys and levels of personal and public heritage involvement: a first time visitor, a regular return visitor and a heritage provider. Heritage experiences of Hadrian's Wall are explained here as personal journeys of involvement in the place and the heritage of that place. It is suggested that active engagement then motivates further involvement, contributing to a personal sense of belonging and collective identity.

The might of the Roman Empire is legendary. The Emperor Hadrian made the decision to build a wall across the north of England, making a statement about the power and strength of the Roman Army and in doing so, the location became important as the northern-most frontier of the Empire. Hadrian's Wall is an ancient archaeological monument. It crosses the north of England from Wallsend near Newcastle upon Tyne in the east to the Solway in the west. It has explicit status in terms of heritage: it is a World Heritage Site, designated in 1987 by UNESCO for its unique archaeology. This designation signifies that in the eyes of power and authority it is internationally important. The paradox of being a World Heritage Site is that whilst the place is designated for its uniqueness, it is deemed to belong to the world, not necessarily the locality

(Carman, 2002). This could have an impact on personal attachment to the place, and, as will be shown here, that personal attachment is often prompted by direct involvement and interaction.

The presence of the Romans has left its mark on the landscape, history and heritage of the region. This resonates with many visitors, and as Chronis (2006: 285) states: “admiration of a legendary past is a common theme among heritage visitors and to a large degree it is attributed to a conviction that the achievements and values of the past are transmitted through time and enrich the present (Lowenthal, 1985)”. Due to the Wall’s management as a unique archaeological structure much of the Wall and the sites along it have remained physically unchanged for years. This can result in a nostalgic perception of the Heritage Site, and also explains the popularity of sites with unique offers such as Vindolanda<sup>1</sup> and Housesteads<sup>2</sup>.

This paper explores individual’s personal encounters with heritage, using research from Hadrian’s Wall World Heritage Site to reflect on the nature of such experiences. It investigates personal and collective relationships with the ancient monument by studying participant’s heritage experience through photographic encounters. Participant generated photographs are used as a basis for the interviews to gain in-depth understandings of experiences by enabling the participant to create a narrative of their encounter with Hadrian’s Wall. This paper draws on participants of a PhD thesis, where 43 respondents took part (Bell, 2008). Three specific vignettes are discussed here.

### ***Heritage and tourism***

Heritage is one of the attributes that make up a place’s identity and like place, or meanings of place, is not homogenous or static (Graham et al, 2000). Meanings of heritage are relevant to both consumers of that heritage (tourists) and producers (for example, residents, and those involved in the tourism industry and management of the place) and should be seen as an interactive process of performances (Coleman and Crang, 2002; Crang. M., 1999, 1997; Crang. P., 1997).

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The production of heritage for tourism involves selecting and reclaiming a past, then turning it into an experience (Dicks, 2002). Organisations involved in heritage and management of heritage sites range from local interests to global concerns and “usually operate as a system of hierarchies” (Carman, 2002: 90). The choice of commodification has to resonate not only with the individual but also the wider audience in order to be successful. It also has, to some extent, to be able to evolve for any potential audience.

If people feel an affinity with a place, or the heritage of that place then they are more likely to participate in the community and develop a sense of ownership or belonging and feelings of “empowerment, attachment and value” (Crouch, 2000: 74, see also Poria et al, 2004, 2001). By participating, knowledge (or cultural capital) is produced, thus contributing to the creation of one’s own heritage. Through embodied practice, ideas of self and collective identities will change and alter over time: the heritage journey (Dicks, 2002). Dicks (2002) conceptualises heritage as more relevant to a person if it resonates with one’s own heritage: if there is a link with self. This heritage journey not only includes visitor schedules and itineraries but also “the metaphorical or literal journeys which constitute their personal life-stories” (Dicks, 2002: 126). She states that the relevance of the heritage to the individual (whether they are local or not) is a significant factor in enjoyment and understanding of the heritage. Dicks uses the example of mining museums and claims that by using the combination of “the personal biography and public culture” in the telling of the heritage, it is possible for the visitor to connect their personal biography with a wider sense of collective identity (Dicks, 2002: 126; see also Chronis, 2006; Poria et al 2004, 2001; Tilden, 1977).

Whilst some of the objects and artefacts that deal with heritage come from the past, it is actually how they are used and interpreted now that is relevant (Howard, 2003; Timothy and Boyd, 2003; Dicks, 2002). This interpretation of heritage is also linked to people’s perceptions and thus motivations for visiting heritage sites (Poria et al, 2004: 26; Dicks, 2002). People will also use their experience of the present to make “value statements about the past” (Chronis, 2006: 286). This was revealed in this study by some participants as a way of making a link between themselves and the Romans, or the Roman way of life. Further when discussing personal

heritage and the influence of this on a person's experience, Shanks (1992: 106, original emphasis) states that:

“...the experience of heritage is about encounter and images. Not the objects and sites themselves so much as what they say of *us*, of national or local identity, what they symbolize and evoke. These are not primarily cognitive experiences where facts and knowledge about the past are acquired from the official learned guide book. They are affective. And like the disorder of memory, heritage is piecemeal. In Britain heritage places considerable emphasis on this relationship with memory, relating sites and objects with images, sounds, impressions of a sort of cultural collective memory.”

So, it can be the feelings that a place evokes, or the symbolism of the encounter rather than the site itself that is significant to individual heritage or cultural capital accumulation and can also contribute to collective identity. This connection or accumulation can also be selective.

### ***Public and private heritage***

Howard (2003) introduces the concepts of public and private heritage. Public heritage is where practitioners and managers of heritage get involved with the management of a site. Thus, the public heritage is the one that is managed; the chosen representation of heritage at a place (Howard, 2003). The unmanaged heritage, which can be more meaningful, is the private heritage of people's lives (Howard, 2003). Personal, individual heritage, such as understandings of family history, traditions and their continuity in our social lives from past to present is one element that people use to construct part of their identity, private place is another (Hewison, 1987). It can be a personal connection or the discovery of a personal connection with the past and its relevance in the present that can be significant to the individual (Chronis, 2006). Whilst this research looks at heritage from a personal perspective, it is accepted that it is the combination of public and private heritages that contribute to both individual and collective identities.

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Participant's photographs and accompanying narrative revealed that their heritage experience of Hadrian's Wall was influenced by their own interests and background. By understanding what cultural resources are accumulated by visiting Hadrian's Wall, and what the expectations and experiences of peoples are, interpretation of heritage sites like Hadrian's Wall can be focused accordingly.

Howard (2003) used Relph's (1976) ideas about 'insidedness' of place to construct a typology of emotional experience relating to heritage and its situated meaning to the individual, connecting the concepts of heritage and place. Howard (2003) set out five different levels of insidedness: vicarious, behavioural, empathetic, existential and deep existential. He describes insiders of heritage as having "a distinctive and positive attitude to the heritage item, characterised by a set of personal historical meanings" (*ibid*: 113). This paper takes Howard's (2003) ideas and adapts and develops them further to suggest a more detailed typology of the 'insidedness' of heritage and emotional involvement (see Table 1). These categories signify reflexive experiences that are linked to direct experiences of place (apart from 'Emotive indirect' which will be built on nostalgia). They are used to describe people's encounters with Hadrian's Wall and will be returned to in the results and discussion.

Further understanding of how people are, or get, involved (or not) with heritage sites can, as suggested above, aid management of sites and also instil a sense belonging and thus increase involvement if handled in an appropriate way. However, each place is unique, particularly, as here, if approached from an individual perspective. Interpretation, therefore, needs to resonate with the personal heritage of the visitor without losing sight of the overall heritage of the site. Due to its ongoing, changing nature, this typology is useful for understanding people's involvement with heritage, suggesting that people's perceptions, expectations and experiences, both develop overtime and are influenced by the context of their involvement. This can add to the understanding of people's perceptions of heritage and contribute to further understanding to reasons for visiting. The typology is useful for investigating how people may use and stay involved with heritage, giving further depth of meaning to the concept of personal experience set out by Poria et al (2004, 2001).

Thus the research objective is to illustrate the importance of private heritage to individuals (and for management) at a World Heritage Site, whilst accepting the public heritage on offer, and also to explore and develop Howard's (2003) notion of levels of insidedness for heritage involvement, using photo-elicitation as the method of data collection.

**(Table 1 inserted here)**

**Table 1:** Heritage and levels of emotional involvement.

## **Method**

### ***Photo-elicitation***

In its simplest form photo-elicitation is a technique whereby photographs are used within an interview to reveal further understanding of the interviewee's opinions than would be gained by interview alone. Traditionally, the photographs used in photo-elicitation have been those produced by the researcher and are used to encourage and increase collaboration between the researcher and the researched. This research used a photo-interview technique, similar to that used by Beilin (2005, see also Hurworth, 2003; Cook and Crang, 1995), whereby participants are encouraged to create a narrative of their experiences through their own visual representation. Participants were asked to discuss photographs that they had generated specifically for the research by either putting them into themes and categories of their choice or providing an account of why they took the photos they did, whichever method they were most comfortable doing. Putting the photographs into themes and categories helped to define what the participant experienced and what their perceptions were of Hadrian's Wall. Thus, the interviews were driven by the participants: they were free to decide how they wanted to proceed with the interview and what they talked about (Heisley and Levy, 1991). As Pink (2001: 28) states, it was an opportunity to display "different types of knowledge and intentionality for the photographer". It was also a way for participants to express and inform their opinions and produce collaborative knowledge (Pink, 2006). Furthermore, the methodology encourages the researcher (and the participants) to be reflexive which in turn generates a richness of interview and depth of understanding through the presentation of the produced image.

Participants were not using their own camera, but consciously using a disposable supplied to them for research purposes. This was an intentional decision by the researcher. Firstly, by using a disposable camera, participants were limited to a maximum of 27 pictures. Secondly, if selecting pictures from a digital source the participant would be more likely to choose pictures for their aesthetic value when the object of the research was to discuss experiences and encounters. However, this does not mean that people did not take aesthetic photographs: the dramatic landscapes of the central section of the Wall lend themselves to 'picture postcard' photos. Thirdly, there would have been less direct contact with participants if the photos were digital. The direct contact aided my research, by talking face to face with participants I was able to convey to them the purpose of the research and distribute the camera, thus they had a point of personal contact. Fourthly, it gave respondents an opportunity to get involved with the research, creating active participants. Not everyone has, or has access to, a digital camera: participation in the research was accessible to all those who were willing (Beckley et al, 2007).

The cameras were distributed to participants in several ways. Due to the linear nature of the Wall and the rurality of many locations, the most effective method of distribution to visitors proved to be approaching them in one of the many car parks along the length of the Wall, having received prior permission from the appropriate land manager for each site. Workers and residents along the Wall were key in enabling me to distribute cameras. Also, through this initial contact with the workers and residents, I was able to engage them in the research as well. All participants (visitors, residents and workers) were provided with a disposable camera and asked to take photographs that represented their experience of Hadrian's Wall. They were not required to complete the film if they did not wish to, nor were they given a time limit in which to take their photographs. The period that they had the camera depended on factors such as their link with Hadrian's Wall, the duration of their stay (if a visitor), and their decision on when and what to take photographs of. The result was that participants returned cameras when they felt they had finished using the camera, which varied between two days (a visitor) and six months (a worker along the Wall). The total numbers of photographs taken was between four and 27 (the maximum number possible).



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After the return of the cameras, a copy of the photographs was sent back to the participant. They were asked to put the photographs into themes and categories, or build a narrative, using the photographs as the basis of their discussion on their encounters with Hadrian's Wall. Most of the participants did this prior to the interview; for some it was during. A subsequent interview was carried out with each participant, at a time convenient to them. All of the worker and resident interviews were done in person. Due to the location of some of the visitors once they returned home this was not always possible, so some of the interviews were carried out over the telephone. This was done using duplicate copies of the photographs which were all numbered on the reverse for identification, and proved to be a successful interviewing method. Analysis of the data was done by combining and comparing the participant's visual representations of the experiences with their oral account. The data was coded and themes identified from the data.

This thematic analysis was done using 'emic' coding, that is, using participants own words and descriptions for coding purposes (Cook and Crang, 1995). Due to the vast amount of varied data, Atlas.ti computer software was used to support analysis.

It is thought here that whilst some of the photographs taken by participants may on the surface seem to be very similar, the meanings and values for that image contrast widely (Harper, 1994). The photograph is very personal to the individual but also requires a verbal narrative to add depth to its meaning. Without an individual's explanation about the reason and importance of an image to them, it is completely open to interpretation by the viewer (Albers and James, 1988). The notion of the encounter is described here, and whilst the narrative begins with the visual prompt, participants also allude to other senses in order to convey their opinions and involvement. Lippard (1997: 55) suggests that "The snapshot is the personal photographic equivalent (or support) of the local narrative". However, this local narrative needs the accompanying words to put it in context.

### Three heritage journeys along Hadrian's Wall

The following examples have been selected as representative of three different kinds of journeys and encounters with Hadrian's Wall. Two were visitors and one is an employee of a site along the Wall. These participants closely linked their own heritage to the past, and their experience

can be likened to a heritage journey which can then be categorised using the levels of involvement in Table 1. For all three the emphasis was on the production and consumption of knowledge, and the consumption of what they considered to be their own heritage. The following three narratives, a first time visitor, a regular return visitor and a heritage provider, have been selected for this paper to illustrate different types of heritage journey and level of personal and public heritage involvement. The participants have different backgrounds and the examples are used to exemplify three different paths taken to become involved with the heritage of a site (other levels of emotional involvement are revealed in the PhD thesis [Bell, 2008]).

### *A local resident, first time visitor*

C19<sup>3</sup> lives locally and, at 37, had never visited Hadrian's Wall before. Though he had not been there, he was aware of its presence mainly through promotional material and driving past Segedunum Roman Fort at Wallsend on a regular basis. I met C19 in the car park at Chesters<sup>4</sup> and he and his companion had decided not to go in because they did not want to pay, as they did not feel that they should have to "pay to see our own history". So, even though C19 had never visited Hadrian's Wall, he already associated it with being part of his own history. As will be shown, he demonstrated this from a national, regional and personal perspective.

C19's photographs and explanations were a reflection of his realised connection with the Wall: the more he discovered the Wall, the more he felt it to be part of his own heritage. The main theme running through his photographic narrative was that of imagining what it may have been like for the Romans: linking the past with the present (Chronis, 2006). It is his own personal journey of discovery, both of Hadrian's Wall as a valid tourist destination and its link to his own personal heritage. He imagined the Roman experience of living, working and constructing the Wall and compared that to life on the Wall now. He then linked this with his own heritage and identity.

For C19, his first sight and touch of the Wall was notable and he took a photograph here to commemorate this significant moment: "...that was the first site that I saw, got out the car and walked up to it and touched it...". Up until that point C19 had had to imagine Hadrian's Wall. Driving from Newcastle on the A69, unless you know where to look, this is the first place that the

Wall reveals itself on the side of the road. C19 was able to see a tangible part of history, locate it in the landscape and actually touch it, not just gaze.

The next site that C19 visited was the Brocolitia Temple, a Mithraic temple adjacent to an unexcavated fort (Carrawburgh) just off the Military Road. This site is free, which is one of the reasons that C19 chose to stop here (Plate 1). He was surprised to find other people enjoying the place and this reinforced his idea that it was a worthwhile and significant place to visit:

“[T]here was a couple of people there also taking photos, it was just me taking a photo to say that you know, there is a lot of interest in this place and it's not just me that wanted to have a look at it.”

He then imagined what it may have been like in the time of Roman occupation:

“[...] like I'm standing on exactly the same spot as other people have been standing on and how did they cope with everything how, you know, when there was rain and snow and how did they shelter, it's just amazing that that's been there for so long<sup>5</sup> and people have been down there worshipping you know it's just amazing really.”

**(Plate 1 inserted here)**

**Plate 1:** [I]t's not just me that wanted to have a look at it' (C19)  
Source: C19

Another photo taken by C19 was of Housesteads, which for him reinforced the notion that it is a legitimate place to visit, he realises that it is significant, a popular place to visit, it is local to him and people value it. C19 placed a lot of significance on the fact that others were doing the same as him and visiting Hadrian's Wall. It affirmed to him that it is a meaningful place to visit generally and once there he began to make links between the place and his own heritage.

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C19's visit to Hadrian's Wall has since prompted him to find out more about the Wall (but still only on a free basis). He went to Arbeia Roman Fort and Museum<sup>6</sup> on a Heritage Open Day<sup>7</sup>. This triggered C19 again to link his discovery of Hadrian's Wall and the Romans, with his own history and the importance of knowing about his personal heritage:

“[Y]ou're getting your hands and your feet dirtied really, you know, you hear about all this stuff and it's very important to know about your history, and like I say, a feeling of people have been here before, what have they done, why did they do this and learning from them and you know maybe if they haven't done things right we should do things better or, it's just a sense of being, a sense of our relatives as such you know have been here before us.”

C19 then went on to discuss how he thought Roman history in general, then particularly regionally has had an impact on the people of north-east England and perhaps his own genetic heritage:

“I had a friend staying at the weekend and I took her to the Roman fort and [...] on the night time we went out to a local club and she said 'by you can tell there was Romans around here' because she said all the males and all the females in the club, including me had more or less the same features, you know dark hair, big bushy eye brows and chiselled looks and she said 'there's definitely Romans in you lot' [laughs].”

C19's experience of Hadrian's Wall demonstrates his growing attachment and value through discovery and learning. His experience was legitimised by the importance put on the place by others and this has also, in its own way, added to his sense of identity. In terms of levels of emotional involvement, originally C19 could be described as behavioural, that is looking upon the place with little involvement (and in this case, understanding), similar to that of the (masculinist) tourist gaze. Through visiting and igniting an interest in the Wall, he has moved to an empathetic level of involvement: a deliberate emotional involvement.

*A non-local return visitor*

It was C32's and his companion's fifth visit to Hadrian's Wall. The motivation for their visit was heritage and archaeology, wanting to go to Vindolanda "to see how the dig is progressing and to visit other places not visited before". C32's visit was directly linked to an interest in Roman history, for him it is a continuation, rather than the beginning of a journey into his heritage and the story of Hadrian's Wall. He has an on-going interest in Vindolanda, due to its progressive nature and described his visit to the Wall as "educational, stimulating, very enjoyable".

C32 put his 27 photographs into categories, seventeen in total, with several pictures overlapping into more than one category. The number of themes and their explanations reflects the depth of thought he put into taking and self-analysing the photos prior to the photo-interview. His categories included: facilities, interpretation, appropriate management, land use, landscape and views, the Vindolanda excavation, linking past and present, the Military Road, and atmosphere. They were a complete mix of practical and philosophical topics. For this reason he did not put them into priority order, but when asked which was the most significant to his visit he chose two photos (Plate 2 and Plate 3). He explained:

"[T]hat last one of the temple and the one at Vindolanda with the upturned wheel barrows those are possibly the two. I just liked the sort of intimate nature of the temple because there was another thing that I couldn't actually include in the photographs there, some flowers that somebody had left, or some little offering tucked in somewhere I seem to think. Anyway it seemed that people were still relating to it in the way that it was possibly meant and that was nice. And just the work that's going on at Vindolanda it's just so nice to go along and really quite fascinating to see how they interpret the tablets in the museum and all the bits of leather. The sheer quantity as well as the quality of the stuff, when you can actually see the shape of somebody's foot in a piece of leather that's been in a discarded shoe, you know, you're beginning to see ghosts when it's, when you're, in that way and the marks on the bits of wood carved the axles and that's really amazing stuff and the personal items, like the little ear wax cleaners."

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This highlights C32's interest in Hadrian's Wall in three ways. Firstly, the continuing use of the site at Brocolitia as a site of worship (also highlighted by C19). This is an illustration of the ways that visitors invent their own uses for sites when uses are not imposed on them. This can be in juxtaposition to management strategies for a site. Secondly, the importance of the continuing excavations at Vindolanda for discovering new things about the way of life of those who previously inhabited the site. Thirdly, the way the collection in the museum enabled him to imagine the people that would have used the items in the museum, giving him the ability to make a direct connection with some pieces. These elements all add up to the continuation of the past into the present and C32 being able, through imagination and the use of interpretation, to link that to his own heritage.

**(Plate 2 inserted here)**

**Plate 2:** "I was quite intrigued by the offerings that they put in the little dish at the far end" (C32)

Source: C32

**(Plate 3 inserted here)**

**Plate 3:** "I was trying to get people and digger but I couldn't really get them but there's the tumble down section of wall and the prop holding back all that, it's almost as good as having people there but I like the upturned the wheel barrow as well." (C32)

Source: C32

The following quote from C32 sums up his ongoing encounters with Hadrian's Wall:

"Each piece [the Wall and its sites] has its own facet and it's like a journey as you go from one end to the other it doesn't matter where you start or finish, but you learn so much as you go from site to site, but Vindolanda is kind of the peak, the top or the bottom, it's got so much breadth of interest it really holds as you say, more inclined [to] go back and visit that one just to simply try and catch up what is the latest development."

So again the participant actually describes his encounter with Hadrian's Wall as a journey. He is accumulating knowledge not just about the Romans but also the wider landscape within which the Wall sits.

C32's photographs reflect a depth of knowledge, and they illustrate different aspects of Hadrian's Wall. He is interested in the continued uses of the landscape, including agriculture and military uses of the landscape. C32 is aware that this is a working landscape and that Hadrian's Wall as a tourism destination occurs here because of its historical significance. His encounters and emotional involvement could be described as experiential: they are built on knowledge and experience of place, not through long residency however, but by conscious continual visits to the Wall.

### *The heritage provider*

C1 works at a Roman Fort, an urban site at the eastern end of Hadrian's Wall. He has a long association with the Wall. His first visit to the Wall was aged seven with his parents from Ipswich, with his memories punctuated by his purchases:

“I remember I bought one of those cut out kind of figures which they probably still sell, which is like kind of an A4 sheet, you colour it in, cut it out and it's the figure of a Roman auxiliary soldier.”

This continued through university:

“I went to St. Andrews University, my parents drove me up, we had some friends who lived in Hexham and we used to stay with them and I always loved coming through this area and we always used to go and visit one of the Hadrian's Wall sites, you know we used to stop off, Housesteads, Chesters or wherever, so yes, and I actually bought that picture up there and I had that up at university<sup>8</sup>.”

He then moved to the area after graduation and his interest grew further, “when I first moved up here after graduating, I do like walking, so I got out along the Wall a lot, I was almost quite obsessed with it really”, culminating in his working at a site along the Wall, and he declared, “I guess the Wall has probably been the key factor in me staying in this area, the Wall and its landscape if you like”.

So, C1's obsession with the Wall contributed to him staying in the region. He is familiar with and has a strong affinity with Hadrian's Wall which began as a child. Through this initial interest and from working at the Fort he has strengthened this link and the Wall continues to hold a fascination for him: "I've got much greater awareness of the whole picture I suppose."

When asked directly about whether he felt any emotional attachment to the Wall he replied:

"Yes it's a sense of history and it's a sense of ancient history which I think is fabulous because you can experience that in urban Newcastle, or you can experience that out in the fields, and it's some kind of connection with something so long ago, and perhaps it's linking back to that idea in my childhood that 'wow, this is the Roman Empire', you know, the Romans seemed, were, such a long time ago and then there's that direct connection. I think that's probably the key."

This links well to one of C1's photo categories, "the link with the people", where he describes that direct connection. "The link with the people" was his third most significant out of seven categories. The first was "the actual remains" which were of Hadrian's Wall and the excavated ruins at the Fort, the second was linked to Hadrian's Wall Path National Trail that begins at the museum. Both of these first two categories are linking the public heritage of the place with his own interests. There are three photos in "the link with the people" category, one of an ongoing plaque of the builders who are known to have been involved in the Wall's construction (Plate 4):

"I love the fact that it's the names of the people who were actually in charge of the work parties, or the ones that we know [...] we did special research to come up with this, looking at all the centurial stones that have been found, I mean the funny thing in a way is that these names have been recorded, it's unlikely that they actually did any work because they were the ones that were supervising it! I suppose that counts as work but erm, [...] and these were people that were actually here, along the length of the Wall, involved in the programme, in the



building and I just think that's fantastic that we've still got a record and we've left space so that we can add names as more stones are found [...] it's a personal link.”

**(Plate 4 inserted here)**

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**Plate 4:** “This is our Builders of the Wall Project. Again it’s a great contrast [to the cranes behind] and I love the fact that it’s the names of the people who were actually in charge of the work parties, or the ones that we know.” (C1)

Source: C1

The second photograph is part of an inscription found on site which is on display in the museum gallery that mentions Hadrian directly “I just like the link with Hadrian [...] so I mean that’s lovely, the fact that it actually mentions Hadrian”, thus creating a link with the museum, Hadrian and the individual. The third photograph is of an artist’s impression of a Roman soldier with the name of a cohort that was known to have been stationed at the Fort:

“[I]t just makes the point that we know from a number of inscriptions and an altar that the Fourth Cohort of the Lingonis were actually based here at [...] for a considerable length of time. [...] we don’t know the names of the troops, but at least we know where they originally came from, so again it’s adding life to the site.”

For C1 the significance in his photographs of linking the Wall with now, and his own heritage, with the people that built the Wall or those who were present at the time of the occupation of the Wall, was important. It was also evident that C1 feels privileged to work in such an environment. From a management perspective this helps stimulate the tourist imagination by giving the visitor actual evidence of who was there in the time of the Roman occupation, linking them, and bringing the past into the present. Thus suggesting that through engagement with the site and linking that with their own heritage will result in a more rounded experience for the visitor.

C1’s emotional involvement could be described as experiential: he has a direct emotional experience that is built on long association with place. It is also possible to track C1’s journey of involvement. When he began visiting with his parents as a child, he could have been described as perceptive, that is, the place initially being a background but he became non-deliberately involved through his purchases. He then moved on to emotive, becoming emotionally involved through active involvement (which he still remains today). Taking C1’s emotional attachment

into account, the result is that he could be considered to be a combination of emotive/empathetic and experiential, that is, having a direct emotional experience built on long association.

C1's environment, as well as his work, is an important factor in his continuing involvement with the site and with the wider landscape of Hadrian's Wall. He was interviewed whilst in a work capacity and discussed his encounter from both an official and a personal perspective, revealing complex relationships with the Wall.

Table 2 illustrates the type of involvement for each participant and their journey of heritage and levels of emotional involvement with regards to Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site.

**(Table 2 inserted here)**

**Table 2:** Participant heritage journeys and levels of emotional involvement.

## **Conclusions**

This paper has illustrated different types of involvement with heritage. The development of Howard's (2003) levels of insidedness into involvement, combined with Dicks' (2002) concept of a heritage journey have enabled the heritage encounters with Hadrian's Wall to be unpacked and the complexity of heritage experiences from one destination to be understood. However, they have also shown the difficulties of categorising experiences and attributing one type of experience to an individual, and the importance of accepting that perceptions are constantly shifting (Edwards, 1998). People visit heritage sites for a variety of reasons and their motives may not be immediately apparent. Actual encounters evolve and change, dependent upon motives and values. This has been evident in the photographs taken – participants had time to reflect on their intentions and emotions, and to think about why they go and get involved (or not) in activities along the Wall. Participants described their encounters as multi-sensory journeys: literal and metaphorical journeys of gaining, sharing and accumulating knowledge in both personal and professional capacities. Depth of knowledge of the individual is required in order to understand people's heritage experiences and the motivation behind their involvement in the available or offered heritage. It has shown the influences of public heritage on private meanings and vice versa, thus the significance of both for contributing to individual and collective identity.

The heritage journey (Dicks, 2002) refers to both mobility or movement through the landscape and a person's metaphorical journey (in some cases they are synonymous); a person's embodied experience of heritage that is evident through their representation in photographs of Hadrian's Wall. Individual experience is built on a person's perception of both their surroundings and how they feel that they fit into those surroundings. This link to a person's own heritage is an important aspect in heritage tourism and has implications for the management of heritage sites. It is suggested here that a combination of separation from the past and an individual's link to that past (their heritage) is what really enhances their experience (Poria et al, 2004). If they can imagine or understand or empathise with the individual of the past then they are more likely to gain a deeper appreciation of their visit, encouraging further investigation or return visits to that or similar sites. This paper has illustrated that this linking of past to personal present can also be applied to heritage providers (and residents, see Bell, 2008). It is suggested that these findings have implications for the future management of Hadrian's Wall. Management, particularly marketing and interpretation of sites should be provided for different potential and actual visitors, taking into account that individuals differ in their motivations and expectations (Poria et al., 2009; 2006).

This paper has illustrated the effectiveness of the method for this study by eliciting participants' in-depth descriptions of their encounters with Hadrian's Wall. However, I am conscious that it is the motivation at the time of interview and thus a snapshot in time. As the concepts in Table 1: Heritage and levels of emotional involvement, illustrate, these motivations shift and change over time and have proved useful for explaining the heritage journey. However, these categories may still attest to be too narrow to describe possible levels of involvement and to explain people's complex relationship with a place and its heritage. For example the evidence here suggests that categories such as 'Emotive/empathetic' and 'Experiential' could already have sub-divisions within them. The nature of the journey accepts that whilst some will remain in a given category, others will continue to change their views and perspectives depending on circumstance, understanding and knowledge. The participants, irrespective of their reasons for being at the Wall, expressed the importance of interacting with, and being influenced by others for enhancing

their encounter and gaining knowledge. This takes into account people's ever changing perspectives, and as Edwards (1998) suggests does not create static experiences. In other words, it is doing and interacting rather than seeing: an active rather than passive encounter (Coleman and Crang, 2002; Kilian, 2002; Perkins and Thorns, 2001). This research makes a positive contribution to other studies exploring personal heritage (for example Poria et al., 2009, 2006, 2004, 2001) that are quantitative and consider personal heritage of a site to be static. This research implies that the perception of personal heritage, and thus involvement with a site is ongoing, and that occurs before, during and after visiting Hadrian's Wall.

This research has used the visual as the dominant sense for explaining encounters with Hadrian's Wall, whilst alluding to the importance of sight in conjunction with other senses to explain participant's encounters. The narrative of the participant was the means by which the other senses were conveyed, using the visual to prompt these feelings. Thus, whilst not explicitly explored, it is acknowledged that other senses were employed to enhance the explanation of the encounter and give a deeper understanding of experiences.

Heritage, in particular the unmanaged personal heritage, was revealed by participants of this research to be important to contributing to their experience of Hadrian's Wall, irrespective of their background. Participants shared their personal experiences, which in some cases were also part of a wider understanding. Public and personal heritage are significant factors in peoples' encounters with Hadrian's Wall and some of the driving motivations for enduring associations with the area. Thus it is the social construction of place and a person's perception of their own heritage that gives that place value and meaning to them.

### **Future research**

The current research demonstrates levels of emotional involvement that occurred through the heritage journey whilst the participant was engaged in the research. Whilst some participants did allude to the nature of their emotional involvement, the research did not ask participants specifically, "the exact nature of the emotions involved, for example, emotions of patriotism, nationalism, or sense of awe (Timothy 1997) in relation to the tourist experience at the site" (Poria et al., 2006: 325). Further research could explore the integration of the current research,

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that is levels of emotional involvement and the heritage journey, with the specific nature of emotions involved to establish the motivations for different tourists and understand their (un)changing involvement with a specific heritage site. Another area for research could be using the levels of emotional involvement at other World Heritage Sites. Further understanding of embodied encounters with heritage, such as using other senses such as sound, in conjunction with the visual and sensual, could construct a completely fresh view of Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site.

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<sup>1</sup> Vindolanda is in the central section of Hadrian's Wall and is the one place in this area where visitors can watch and get actively involved in archaeological excavations.

<sup>2</sup> Housesteads is in the central section of Hadrian's Wall, and is the most visited site due to having the most complete Roman fort and its situation on the Whin sill ridge, offering panoramic views.

<sup>3</sup> Participant identification relates to the number of the camera that the respondent used during the research.

<sup>4</sup> This is an English Heritage Site in the central eastern section of the Wall.

<sup>5</sup> This is, in fact, now a replica – the original is housed in the Great North Museum in Newcastle upon Tyne.

<sup>6</sup> Arbeia is situated at the eastern end of the wall at South Shields and is a combination of excavated ruins and reconstructed buildings.

<sup>7</sup> Heritage Open Days are four days, over a weekend, in September when the Civic Trust works in partnership with English Heritage “offering free access to properties that are usually closed to the public or normally charge for admission” ([www.heritageopendays.org.uk](http://www.heritageopendays.org.uk): accessed 03.07.07).

<sup>8</sup> The picture currently above C1's desk is an artist's impression of a reconstructed and occupied Hadrian's Wall at Housesteads.

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