

Literary Tourism and Yeats' Legacy – What can we learn from Shakespeare's birthplace?

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This year 2015 celebrates the birth of the distinguished poet and Nobel Laureate William Butler Yeats. For visitors interested in Yeats and his contemporaries as well as modern day writers and poets, literary tourism offers an opportunity to capitalise on Ireland's literary production, stretching beyond cultural stereotypes to tell an authentic story of Ireland's cultural identity on a world stage. The literary tourism sector has evolved from people's interest in literature, places that inspired the writing, formed the setting of the literary work or those linked to the writer's birthplace, home or death.

This study seeks to explore the concept of the literary place and the literary tourist incorporating themes of authenticity and commodification within the context of literary tourism. It explains how a place's connections to an author or literary locations are increasingly being used to promote tourist destinations. The research will consider best practice and challenges as identified through a series of eleven qualitative interviews with key managers of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust and the Royal Shakespeare Company based in Stratford-upon-Avon, an international literary tourism destination visited by up to 5 million tourists each year. The primary research explores the strategies used to preserve and promote the 'lives, loves and legacy' of Shakespeare. To conclude, the study recommends showcasing Ireland's literary tourism offerings in a collaborative and sustainable way and it reflects on how insights from the Stratford experience could influence key stakeholders focused on preserving Yeats' legacy whilst making it accessible to a wider audience.

Keywords: Literary tourism, Yeats legacy, Stratford-upon-Avon.

Introduction

"I longed for a sod of earth from some field I knew, something of Sligo to hold in my hand."
(William Butler Yeats)

The year 2015 celebrates 150 years since the birth of world-renowned Irish poet and playwright WB Yeats. Yeats received the Nobel Prize for Literature in December 1923, the first Irish man to do so. The Nobel Academy described Yeats as having 'given expression to the spirit of a whole nation'. Yeats wrote evocatively about many real Irish places, to the extent that many literature lovers make the pilgrimage to Ireland and in particular, to Sligo to directly experience where Yeats found such inspiration for much of his best known and loved works. Luca Crispi, professor at University College Dublin describes Yeats as 'a lens for the development of Ireland in the 20th century' (Wallace, 2009).

Ireland is recognised worldwide as a nation of writers, poets, playwrights and storytellers including its four winners of the Nobel Prize in Literature. Literature helps people to understand the history, outlook and lifestyle of other cultures and Ireland's literary heritage has been described as often the first connection with 'the character and characters of Ireland' for many of our visitors throughout the globe (Tourism Ireland, 2007). Over several centuries, literature has remained an important aspect of Ireland's culture and heritage. For example, the Book of Kells, a 9th-century gospel

manuscript housed in Trinity College, Dublin is visited by up to 600,000 people every year. This literary tradition in Ireland has remained vibrant and alive offering a range of attractions, activities and experiences including theatre productions, literary festivals, tours and exhibitions relating to the lives of our most famous writers and poets. However significant Ireland's cultural offering, there appears to be a dearth of exclusive literary attractions designed to enhance the 'experiential tourism' product and specifically meet the needs of the literary tourist.

There is no statistical data available on the market size or scale of literary tourism but cultural tourism accounts for at least 40% of all international tourism. In 2012 seven out of the ten most-visited countries in the world were situated in Europe and the heritage of Europe, in particular its cultural heritage, is one of the oldest and most important generators of tourism in the region (UNWTO, 2013). In Ireland, cultural tourism is estimated to be worth over €5 billion annually to the economy (Fáilte Ireland, 2012). Demand for cultural and heritage tourism has increased significantly in recent decades. This may be explained by more sophisticated tastes in travel, a greater desire for authentic experiences and a shift among the tourist population towards engagement with local cultures. The modern 'cultural tourist' is no longer satisfied with passive observation. S/he seeks to engage and participate in deeper, more authentic and interactive experiences, and wishes to be part of the creativity and vibrancy of their chosen destination. Fáilte Ireland (2012) identifies one particular market segment titled the 'culturally curious'. These tourists wish to broaden their minds, expand their experiences and they are genuinely curious.

Methodological Approach

This study of literary tourism developed and utilised a blended research methodology incorporating both an extensive review of secondary data and primary research involving qualitative interviews with eleven managers of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust (SBT) and the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) based in Stratford-upon-Avon. This research was conducted by Mary McGuckin and Dr. Una Mannion in Stratford-upon-Avon in June 2012. A purposive sampling approach was adopted as interviewees were selected based on the knowledge and expertise of their respective positions. The findings are drawn from an analysis of the data collated from the strategic qualitative interviews and the transcribed interviews were analysed in context of international literature and key emergent themes. The study concludes with a discussion around developing literary tourism in a collaborative and sustainable way within Ireland.

Literary Tourism

Literary tourism is associated with 'places celebrated for literary depictions and/or connections with literary places' (Squire, 1996). It can be traced back several centuries at least to the Roman Empire. Andersen and Robinson (2002) categorise literary tourism as cultural tourism from an anthropological perspective 'in that it involves tourists and visitors identifying with, discovering, and creating signifiers of cultural values with those people who have become part of the cultural mythologies of places'. Literary tourists are often attracted to a destination by a blend of real and imagined worlds. For some, the books or the poetry have inspired and transformed the reader into a tourist. There are two broad categories of tourists who visit literary places: literary pilgrims and generalist heritage visitors. Herbert (2001) explains that it is not just the literary pilgrim who visits literary sites:

'Literary places are no longer accidents of history, sites of a writer's birth or death; they are also social constructions, created, amplified, and promoted to attract visitors. There are still literary pilgrims but those who visit such places out of curiosity and general

interest rather than a single-minded sense of dedication outnumber them. That these latter types may gain pleasure, enjoyment, and perhaps enrichment is not contested, but the experience will be different in kind from that of the literary pilgrim.'

So-called literary tourists can simply be well-educated holidaymakers who are seeking an authentic experience, may have heard about the place's linkage with a writer although they may not have high levels of knowledge about the actual work of the writer.

Literary tourism can be considered a niche within the wider field of cultural and heritage tourism. The relationship between literature and place can be traced to cultural or humanistic geography. Squire (1993) explains that cultural geography is about de-coding meanings and understanding how these meanings are communicated and interpreted. Literature is used to depict evocative and often accurate images of place or landscapes. However the links between the popularity of these images, landscape values and tourism remains an under-researched area. Squire (1994, 1996) and Herbert (2001) attribute it to the category of 'heritage tourism' i.e. more place-based. Places and landscapes linked to the lives and works of authors have grown in popularity with regard to the heritage tourism sector. Bennett (2004) uses the example of Dublin as a city brand that has drawn upon its cultural heritage 'from the often kitschy appeal of Irish music to mainstays of the modernist literary canon...WB Yeats and James Joyce'.

The literary tourism sector has evolved from people's interest in literature, the places that formed the setting for the literature as well as actual literary places. Literary tourism is a heterogeneous sector involving:

1. Literature – poems, short stories, novels, essays, diaries or autobiographies;
2. Literary places – connections with lives of writers – the author and its artistic inspiration gives birth to a literary place – linkages to places of birth, living and death of writer – place is linked to his/her spirit;
3. Place that formed the setting for a novel etc – e.g. destination was known by the author and was used or transformed for one of his/her stories.

According to Butler (1986 cited in Busby and Hambly 2000), there are four forms of literary tourism. Busby and Klug (2001) added fifth and sixth forms.

Table 1: Forms of Literary Tourism

1. Aspect of homage to an actual location (closely linked to the popularity of the author and his/her connection to the location, associated with the emergence of the 'literary pilgrim' and tends to occur on a higher intellectual level)
2. Places of significance in fictional works
3. Place that was appealing to literary and other figures (i.e. setting enhances quality of contact, sights and memorabilia, relates to author- and fiction-related literary tourism)
4. Literature so popular that the area becomes a destination in its own right. (The destination gains popularity purely on author-related literary tourism e.g. Agatha Christie Country)
5. Travel writing (e.g. the works of Bill Bryson)
6. Film-induced literary tourism (i.e. the tourist has read the author's work after seeing a film based on a book).

Source: Butler (1986) cited in Busby and Hambly (2000), adapted by Busby and Klug (2001)

More recent categorisation of literary tourism places it within the context of media-related tourism i.e. associated with books, authors, films and television programmes. It is also linked with creative tourism i.e. relating to the creative arts including music, film, design and architecture. More recent examples of literary tourism include J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter series or Dan Brown's The Da Vinci Code.

Many of these categories are exemplified in the growing number of literary festivals and events which have expanded beyond 'serious' literature to promote a wider range of literature linked to arts and contemporary culture. These festivals are perceived as an excellent way of raising the literary, artistic and cultural profile of destinations whilst helping to regenerate these regions. Examples include the Happy Days Beckett festival in Enniskillen, Listowel Writers' Week, Cúirt International Festival of Literature in Galway and the Franco-Irish Literary festival as well as the many UK festivals including those listed on www.literaryfestivals.co.uk. These can include themed one-day or time-specific events (i.e. weekend, one or two month, off-season) and/or exhibitions at relevant tourist attractions, character nights or other night-time events. 'Book towns' in rural locations have emerged as a centre for bookshops and dedicated literary festivals (Seaton, 1996 cited in Andersen and Robinson, 2002). One of the most famous is Hay-on-Wye located on the border between England and Wales. Some dedicated bookshops have increased their business by focusing on specific literature genres to meet the requirements of visitors seeking quality literary publications or titles relating to the destination they are visiting.

Literary trails have been developed in many destinations. These are designed to enhance the connection between the tourist, the host community and the environment – both literary and physical. Herbert (2001) categorised three types of designs for walking trails: writers' trails, setting trail (e.g. Da Vinci Code) and the memory trail. The memory trail draws people to places they can

recall from their memories e.g. of a book or poetry from their childhood. Many literary trails are now managed and delivered via mobile phone and GPS applications. Digital-based trails offer maps, text messaging services and other media services. 'Ian Rankin's Edinburgh' offers a virtual guided tour of Edinburgh whilst providing information on the Rankin's stories and characters at key locations. Dublin iWalks is a podcast-based literary trail produced by Dublin Tourism. Virtual literary maps are available for certain literary tourism destination e.g. one developed by the Edinburgh UNESCO City of Literature Trust in 2013. There are numerous websites dedicated to literary enthusiasts or literary tourists including www.literarytraveler.com and www.literarytourist.com. These provide information dedicated to literary tourism including relevant destinations, bookshops, literary activities and events, virtual maps and route planners, blogs and podcasts.

The Literary Place

Literary places can be tourist attractions in their own right or as part of a broader tourist destination. They can be attractive because of the emotional values or meanings visitors attach to them. A minority of visitors have a pre-existing sense of meaning or emotional attachment but for many, these are gained through the experiences during the visit. As Ridanpaa (2007) explains

'through literature, places can be constructed as mystical, magical, sacred, unique and 'other' thus informing individuals' 'geographical imaginaries' of locations or regions...These geographical imaginaries influence the travel decisions made by tourists.'

Places associated with authors are more likely to endure as these are kept alive by the writer's work (Ousby, 1990). Yiannakis and Davies (2012) cite Pritchford (2008) who suggested that 'popular literature influenced people's perceptions of rural spaces, with the often romantic and sympathetic presentations of rural landscapes influencing visitors' understanding of rural spaces, livelihoods and economies'. Thus cultural tourism and in particular, literary tourism attractions can prove a valuable asset to rural communities.

In general, there are two types of literary place as detailed in Table 2.

Table 2: Types of Literary Places

1. Real-life or author-related places:

'In these places, a visitor can still walk out of a house and into landscapes which have barely changed since the writer drew breath and breathed literature into them...We walk in our writers' footsteps and see through their eyes when we enter these spaces.' (Marsh 1993, cited in Herbert 2001)

a. The *gravesite* of the writer/poet

E.g. the grave of WB Yeats at Drumcliffe in Sligo. This type of activity originated in the mid-eighteenth century during which time 'necro-tourism' grew in popularity. Watson (2006) suggests that this literary pilgrimage originates from the concept of the religious pilgrimage.

b. The *birthplace* of the writer or poet

E.g. Shakespeare's birthplace in Stratford upon Avon. This requires even greater imagination and emotional investment on the part of the literary tourist than paying homage to the human remains of the writer/poet at a graveside (Watson, 2006)

c. The *home* of the writer or poet

E.g. Herbert (2001) suggests that people are drawn to former home of writers due to a sense of nostalgia. Andersen and Robinson (2002) described how the writer's home provides tangible connections between the "created" and the "creator" allowing visitors to engage in diverse emotional experiences. It offers an intimate and authentic experience to visit the creative space where the written works were actually conceived and realised.

2. Imagined or fiction-related places linked to written works.

Places can carry meanings from imagined worlds which can be perceived to be 'real' to the visitor in that they evoke involvement and emotions. Herbert (2001) considers that these places where the real and the imagined merge possess special meaning to visitors. Pocock (1987) identified that the image of Heathcliff evoked more excitement in fans of Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights* than simply visiting Haworth to tread in the footsteps of the Bronte sisters.

Source: adapted from Herbert (2001)

In addition to the pursuit of authenticity, tourists are drawn to literary places due to the qualities of these places. Herbert (2001) distinguishes between exceptional and general qualities of the place.

Table 3: Qualities of a Literary Place

Exceptional qualities:

- Places with links to the life of the writer;
- Place that are associated with the settings for stories or novels. This may involve a merging of the real and the imagined, thereby giving the place a special meaning;
- Places associated with affective values, nostalgia, memory or symbolism. Tourists are drawn to these locations for broader or deeper emotional reasons e.g. place evokes memories of stories from their childhood;
- Places connected to a dramatic event in the writer's life e.g. location of his/her death.

General qualities:

- Places located in an attractive setting
- Places offering a range of facilities or services
- Places in a convenient geographic location e.g. along a tourism itinerary.

Source: Herbert (2001)

Ideally a literary place should possess most or all of the above qualities in order to optimise its development and promotion from a tourism perspective. These qualities form the basis of the image of the literary place that could be projected from a marketing perspective. Using a destination's literary connections can present the visitor with both explicit and implicit representations of the destination. The concept of literary tourism has been identified by local authorities, destination management organisations and entrepreneurs as an opportunity to enhance or develop a 'place product' attracting a variety of enthusiasts and general visitors. Literary tourism has grown into a commercially significant phenomenon and positive images of many destinations connected to literature are now being promoted accordingly. For example, the London 2012 Olympic Games presented Britain's rich literary heritage to a global audience.

Authenticity and Commodification

The concept of authenticity alongside the sense of place in literary tourism cannot be underestimated. Given the significant intangible element involved in cultural and heritage tourism, the authentic experience is very important and should at least meet or ideally exceed visitors' expectations. There are two types of authenticity, hot and cool, according to Selwyn (1996) cited in Jones (2004). Hot authenticity relates to the emotions produced from the imagined world of tourist make-believe i.e. relating more to fiction-related literary tourism. Cool authenticity refers to locations or buildings where notable deeds were proven to have been performed and is therefore more evident in author-related places. Tourists choose to visit places linked to literature in their search for authenticity, both in toured objects as well as a search for a 'real self' (Yiannakis and Davies, 2012). Stiebel (2004) considers that 'the authentic site requires markers but our notion of the authentic is the unmarked'. Tourists are looking for the authentic experience yet literary places require commodification or 'markers' to shape the experience. Wallace (2009) in her study of 'Yeats's country and Yeats Country' describes:

'The tourist looking at Ben Bulbin from Yeats' grave understands that not only is it a site belonging to Yeats's life but also a site belonging to Ireland. Authorship comes to "belong" to a particular location, and literary tourism comes to represent something particularly "Irish".'

She cites MacCannell (1999) who describes site designation as “social reproduction”. In the case of “Yeats Country” however, she suggests this exists alongside a dearth of markers. Markers include orientation and interpretation aspects of a destination including signage, media and personal communications and/or interactions in addition to prospect and refuge points. Wallace (2009) asks ‘What does a tourist “get” out of looking at Yeats’s last pair of glasses?’ The visitor may view or be allowed to touch artefacts or memorabilia associated with admired writers. Where literary places are developed for tourism purposes, authenticity can be socially constructed and become a subjective experience. The literary place can thus become a combination of the creations of curators and marketers as well as the consumer’s interpretations of these. However, Malamud (2009) bemoans the ‘cheap appropriation, an amateurish displacement of the text’s aesthetic sanctity’. His fear is that ‘the intellectual property, the legacy, the brand, of the writer whose integrity be sullied by less devout caretakers’. As one tour operator suggests ‘You’ve read the book, now take a look’.

Through professional interpretation, communications and visitor services, the tourist’s understanding and appreciation of the values of literary heritage can be enhanced. Hoppen, Brown and Fyall (2014) state:

‘It is important to ensure that all stakeholders are in agreement with the quality of the literary tourism product and its ability to meet, if not exceed, the expectations of visitors. At the same time, authors and publishers will be keen to maintain ownership of the destination’s touristic interpretation of their literary content and the degree to which it is commodification for the mass, rather than a niche, market.’

They highlight the significance of local residents as ‘attractors’ as they can generate positive word of mouth with regard to their local literary endowments. Much of this tourism activity should be embedded within the host community. It is critical that literary destinations have a clear vision so as to ensure collective buy-in from its many stakeholders. This vision and the critical role of key stakeholders are evident in the Stratford-upon-Avon case study detailed below.

Stratford-upon-Avon & William Shakespeare

Stratford-upon-Avon is an international literary tourism destination visited by up to 5 million tourists each year (see Appendix 1). It is home to a unique world recognised *brand* – William Shakespeare. The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust (SBT) is described as:

‘the world’s leading charity in promoting the works, life and times of William Shakespeare and offers a unique Shakespeare centred experience with outstanding archive and library collections, inspiring educational and literary event programmes and five wonderful houses all directly relating to Shakespeare’

www.shakespeare.org.uk

The birthplace of William Shakespeare was visited by 818,000 people in 2013 and the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust has set their sights on reaching one million visitors by 2018. The key product offerings provided by the SBT are as follows: five Shakespeare Houses & Gardens; Education & Learning; Collections and Campaigns & Outreach. It depends entirely on income generated through

visitors, volunteers, donors and 'Friends'. The charity derives 86% of its income from visitor revenues.

Accessibility to the SBT and engagement with all visitor types is of paramount importance. The Trust seeks to create a sense of pride among the British public and to position Shakespeare as someone the people feel proud of...*Warwickshire's son...the world's greatest playwright*. This is reflected in such concepts as *Shakespeare Aloud!* Visitors can enjoy live Shakespearian theatre in the Birthplace gardens with costumed actors perform excerpts from well-known Shakespeare plays. In 2012 a programme of signature events was launched inspired by Shakespeare including poetry, drama, gardens, film and exhibitions. Examples include the Stratford-upon-Avon Poetry Festival, Theatre in the Garden performances at Hall's Croft, African-inspired productions of Shakespeare in the UK, Garden and Allotment Festival at Anne Hathaway's Cottage, Shakespeare Film Festival and Shakespeare's Stories, a jointly curated exhibition with the RSC and British Museum, lunchtime literary talks and junior archaeology digs.

Another major stakeholder is the world famous Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) with its home in Stratford. This registered charity is funded by Arts Council England grants as well as foundations and trusts. Its recently redeveloped Royal Shakespeare and Swan theatres generate an annual turnover of £32 million. The company employs 700 staff and produces around 20 productions a year which travel both nationally and internationally. The mission of the RSC is 'to connect people with Shakespeare and produce bold, ambitious work with living writers, actors and artists'. As well as the plays of Shakespeare and his contemporaries, the RSC produces new work from living artists and develops creative links with theatre-makers from around the world.

Both the SBT and the RSC are intrinsically linked to the communities in which they are embedded. The SBT offers volunteering opportunities or as it describes 'getting hands-on with the Trust' in such areas as living history, room and exhibit hosting, gardening, farming, archaeology, education, collections, retail and administration. The Friends of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust is a support group including local residents, scholars, researchers, theatre lovers, students and generally Shakespeare enthusiasts. Its role is described as follows:

'...a lively and supportive group that contributes to the ongoing conservation and interpretation of the five Shakespeare Houses. The Friends also help us to enrich our collections, support the work of the Learning and Education department and provides an enriching experience for all our visitors'.

The Collections & Library

The Shakespeare Centre houses the Trust's extensive library, archive and museum collections which included the RSC archive as well as the records for the town of Stratford-upon-Avon and the surrounding South Warwickshire area dating back to the twelfth century. The collections are approached as a living identity where there is on-going acquisition, disposal, cataloguing, caring and exposure and are designated as being of national importance. The library holds over 55,000 books, including the *First Folio*, one of the most important books in the English language and is an international centre of excellence for research and scholarship. There are over 11,000 objects in the museum collection. The collections are rigorously curated so that the collection does not become a static set of artefacts hidden away and these are brought to life for visitors through exhibitions, events and virtual shows. Accessibility and widening understanding are the key values that underline

the approach of the collections team whether they are working with scholars, students, teachers, enthusiasts or general visitors.

Education & Learning

The SBT's education and learning offering is tailored to the needs of specific learning groups and attempts to capture needs across the learning trajectory, from early formal learning to lifelong learning and informal learning activities. A diversified learning offer reflects this effort to bring Shakespeare to diverse learners in multiple formats and media. Similarly, the RSC offers a myriad of learning programmes and platforms incorporating three dominant aspects, Open Access, education partnerships and Teaching Shakespeare. The Open Access programme aims to develop Stratford as a learning destination concept through strategic partnerships with universities and organisations such as the SBT. The RSC is involved in a Learning and Performance Network, a long-term partnership initiative where the RSC works with 400 state schools across England. It has also established partnerships with theatres located in proximity to the selected hub schools. Further details of these education and learning platforms and partnerships are provided in Appendix 2

Other examples of preservation of the Shakespeare legacy include the 'Birthright Project' and the 'Passport to Shakespeare'. These projects question what should be the birthright of a child born in the same county as Shakespeare? What should they have achieved at certain crossroads in their lives? How does the legacy impact at an individual level? Thus the themes of accessibility and authenticity of the literary legacy as well as connecting through education and partnership are highly valued by many of Stratford's stakeholders.

Market Segmentation and Branding

According to the findings of attitudinal research conducted by the Marketing Department in the SBT, visitors were classified into six segments according to motivation/purpose of visit. The first three of these categories are highly motivated to visit Stratford. Visitors to the SBT properties are categorised in Appendix 3.

Table 4: Categories of Visitors to Stratford

1. Passionate pilgrims (e.g. paying homage, life-long ambition to visit Shakespeare birthplace)
2. Enthusiasm for 'the man' (e.g. belief in the power of Shakespeare's language)
3. Interested in historic context (i.e. focus on the 'life and times')
4. Young European / non-English speaking (with perception that Shakespeare is complex, difficult to understand?)
5. 'Uninterested' (i.e. mainly UK visitors)
6. 'Not relevant to me' (i.e. mix of nationalities)

The primary focus of all aspects of the SBT visitor experience, its properties, educational programmes, collections' outreach work and the virtual communities is to make Shakespeare relevant and accessible to the visitor. An overview of marketing communications activities undertaken by the SBT is provided in Appendix 4. The Trust's consumer and trade marketing activities were rejuvenated by the 2011 launch of a new brand and visual identity. The new brand achieves a more integrated and consistent approach regarding all the life, works and times of William Shakespeare. One marketing manager described the new logo as 'offering a modern take with a heritage font representing England's oldest Trust'. The new brand and visual imagery is designed to capture the visitor's emotional engagement with Shakespeare. The language and tone of voice in the new brand concept emphasise Shakespeare's own language and includes specific quotations. It is considered that this distinctive use of language may have different connotations or representations for visitors and enthusiasts. This may also reflect the sense of pilgrimage influencing and motivating many people to visit Stratford. Further investments in creating interactive and engaged online communities are evident with a new SBT website and social media presence as well as a Shakespeare i-phone application *Eye Shakespeare* incorporating augmented reality that enables users to bring Shakespeare to life. Further details are provided in Appendix 5.

Collaborations & Partnerships

In 2011, an independent Destination Steering Group involving a public/private collaboration of 12 partners was established with its objective to create a Destination Management Organisation for Stratford. Further evidence of partnership is Stratforward Business Improvement District (BID) Ltd representing the local business community. A Town Host programme was established. Local volunteer town 'ambassadors' dressed in highly visible yellow jackets are trained to provide a more enhanced visitor experience.

Collaboration is fundamental to the work of many key stakeholders in Stratford including a range of partnerships between the SBT, the RSC, Shakespeare Institute at the University of Birmingham, International Shakespeare Association, Stratford-upon-Avon District Council, Visit Britain and Visit England. The Stratford-upon-Avon District Council works with Stratford-upon-Avon College to provide and deliver a Tourist Information Service for the district. The SBT collaborates with the Royal Shakespeare Company and Warwick Castle in a marketing consortium to promote what is known as 'Shakespeare's England', described as '*Three unmissable attractions – One unique region*'. Warwick Castle offers visitors the opportunity to experience life in a fully restored 17th century castle with Great Hall and Georgian State Rooms, defensive towers and ramparts, artefacts and landscaped gardens. This promotional collaboration offers visitors one, two and three day itineraries that are flexible and can be adapted according to customer needs. Bespoke or exclusive arrangements are

available from each of the three organisations. The Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions (MICE) visitor segments are specifically targeted with customised product offerings by partner organisations. The prospect of enjoying a major sporting event in the region is also promoted e.g. golf (The Belfry), horse racing (Warwick and Stratford), rugby (Leicester Tigers) and cricket (Edgbaston). Similarly, a range of courses and workshops are available to cater for different visitors' needs including performing arts, English and language study.

The culture at both the SBT and the RSC reflects a willingness to share knowledge and expertise as well as openness to collaboration. The sharing of so many 'stories' by interviewees illustrates a constant drive to innovate in terms of operations and service delivery. The enthusiasm and passion displayed by volunteers at the SBT properties and the professional approach of the Town Hosts illustrate the sense of ownership and is further evidence of the importance attached to preserving and sharing the Shakespeare legacy and the Stratford connection. Both the SBT and the RSC seek to create an attractive and accessible visitor offering that raises revenues whilst sensitively preserving the Shakespeare legacy. Box office sales ultimately subsidise other work within the organisation at both the RSC and SBT.

Conclusions & Recommendations

Destination branding strategies should project the appeal of places where literary connections are evident. These must be designed to enhance the visitor's sense of identity with the destination so as to achieve sustainable returns from the emotional and experiential engagements with the tourist market. Collaborative approaches to destination marketing using tourist routes, trails or clusters may prove valuable. However the greatest challenge remains bringing together all divergent stakeholders associated with the destination to work toward common goals including the development of a consistent and sustainable literary destination brand. Identifying and involving key stakeholders is important to ensure sustainability. Training in product development, branding and customer care could help communities maximise the literary heritage value of the destination. Community based literary tourism projects would encourage direct communication between communities and the tourism and heritage sectors while sustainably developing literary assets as tourism products.

Preserving authenticity and safeguarding core cultural values is a cornerstone in the development of sustainable literary places. Commercialising literary heritage and making it accessible presents many challenges as it may entail its simplification for marketing and communication purposes. A balance must be struck between developing literary tourism products to make them commercially viable whilst protecting the authenticity and integrity of the writer's legacy. Informing the visitor and managing his/her expectations is a vital role for all those involved in the development and marketing of literary tourism places including interpretation of the literary tourism product. Communications about literary heritage and culture should be commenced before the visitor arrives at the destination. The communications received even before the visitor leaves home can help to build expectations and a sense of curiosity that can ultimately improve the visitor's enjoyment and appreciation of the literary experience.

For those involved in developing or managing literary tourism sites, what is required is the creation of 'experiences' to make the tourist feel connected and engaged with the literary place in a memorable and emotional way. Those involved in destination planning and marketing should focus on authentic experiential tourism products in which the tourist can become immersed as these are

increasingly becoming a valuable source of revenue. From an Irish perspective, this might include the following:

- Creation of appropriate spaces or purpose-built facilities as venues to professionally interpret and showcase our literary legacy;
- Proactively developing new tour routes, circuits or literary networks;
- Showcase and promote literary festivals and events using a professional and co-ordinated approach;
- Bundling literary tourism attractions to create a themed set for stronger market appeal.

Yeats' birth 150 years ago is being celebrated throughout 2015 in a series of almost 200 events across the globe from his spiritual home in Sligo as far as Paris, New York and Tokyo. One of the objectives of the Yeats150 celebrations is to make Yeats accessible to all. The programme combines culture and creativity as it celebrates Yeats' life and works. Yeats150 offers the potential to create a platform to showcase Ireland's literary legacy and could act as a catalyst for change as regards the perceived value of literary tourism. The creation of a signature project experience or flagship centre is critical to preserving the Yeats legacy and co-ordinating the existing Yeats' visitor offerings. This requires design of a hub offering a unique, authentic and enriching experience to attract the 'literary pilgrim' yet meeting the more general requirements of the 'culturally curious' and the 'incidental tourist'. This could be enhanced with a digital marketing strategy including the development of a mobile app to facilitate the visitor as s/he connects with Yeats's life, work and his legacy. Considering best practice in Shakespeare's Stratford, collaborations and relationships between key stakeholders should be facilitated and built in a sustainable manner. This is particularly important with regard to the fundamental roles of education and learning, collections, acquisitions and archives. Collaborative marketing consortia or partnerships could also prove very valuable.

Finally it is obvious that there are many advantages to be gained by connecting places with authors or literature in the promotion of destinations. However, literary tourism remains under-researched in the academic world. Further research is required, in particular regarding visitors' motivations, expectations and their perceptions of an authentic travel experience. Given Ireland's literary legacy that narrates an authentic story of our cultural identity to a global audience, it is imperative that further research is dedicated to this potentially rewarding, enriching and sustainable area.

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Appendix 1: Overview of Stratford-upon-Avon

Stratford-upon-Avon is home to a unique world recognised *brand* – William Shakespeare. The Stratford-upon-Avon district attracts 4.9 million visitors per year and is one of five districts in Warwickshire, set within the West Midlands region. The district has a population of 118,800 and is

mainly rural. It generates approximately 36% towards the total tourism spend in Warwickshire county and expenditure on retail and catering in the district is valued at 56% of the total tourism economy. Tourism is one of the main sources of employment for the district with over 8,000 jobs supporting the tourism industry. This equates to around 6,300 direct tourism-related jobs with an additional 1,700 indirect and induced jobs being created. Income generated by coach travel alone to Stratford-upon-Avon during the peak summer months, based on an average spend of £48.00 per head, is estimated to be worth in the region of £13 million to the local economy. (www.stratford.gov.uk accessed May 2012)

Appendix 2: Education & Learning at the SBT and the RSC

The SBT provides courses to primary and secondary school students, university and college students, postgraduates, residential courses, accredited courses through partnerships, online learning and courses for those engaged in life-long learning activities. In 2011, more than 11,000 students and adult enthusiasts participated in courses offered by the SBT. It also works with educational institutes, local educational authorities and partners with colleges and universities to both develop and innovative teaching and learning practices in relation to heritage, theatre and all things Shakespeare. The Shakespeare Centre offers a first-class suite of modern, well-equipped and comfortable facilities for student groups, discursive learning experiences, participatory workshops, literary lectures, and conferences for groups as small as six or as large as 250. The collections and archives are housed in the same building, and the SBT offers bespoke courses for visiting groups drawing on archival material as requested.

Teaching Shakespeare is a joint business venture in collaboration between the RSC and University of Warwick Business School offering an online programme of accredited and non-accredited courses and resources. The core of this programme is ten hours of high quality, beautifully crafted films of RSC artists and practitioners working with students in classrooms. It models how an active classroom of Shakespeare can operate, integrating academic subject knowledge about social historical context, the particular play in performance, performance history with a very contemporary approach to the teaching and learning of Shakespeare's plays.

Appendix 3: Categories of Visitors to SBT properties

1. 'Walk-up' individual visitors – domestic and international day-trippers, weekend visitors to region (predominantly UK)
2. 'Walk-up' groups
3. Tour operators e.g. organised half-day tours, Asian tour groups
4. Ticket holders with annual pass, gift aid recipients.

Appendix 4: Summary of Marketing Communications at SBT

In terms of marketing communications, a range of media is used including print advertisements in press and magazines as well as radio and television e.g. to promote events such as the launch of the archaeological 'Dig for Shakespeare'. An example of poster advertising greets the visitor at the Stratford train station, capturing a scene from Shakespeare Aloud! *When shall we three meet again?*

Sales promotions are consistently employed including promotions through Groupon, LivingSocial and KGB Deals. This remains a somewhat contentious activity from the perspective of some members of the SBT Trust and is perhaps an example of the challenge of preserving authenticity alongside commodification. There are many examples of direct marketing including guidebooks (in eight languages), 'flyers' targeting both the travel and education trades including mailshots targeted at UK schools. The SBT is involved in a diverse range of consumer, trade and corporate communications, many of which offer excellent PR opportunities. One prominent example was the media coverage of the Chinese Premier visiting Stratford and images of his experience at the Shakespeare birthplace in June 2011. The SBT marketing team is very proactive in gathering valuable market research and intelligence, predominantly through visitor surveys. The collated data is used to determine its strategic marketing focus and provides an excellent indicator of how visitors engage with the Shakespeare experience.

Appendix 5: Shakespeare Online

Through interviews with respective managers, the effort to develop the digital offer and create an interactive atmosphere through digital vehicles was evident. The SBT refers to its online activity as 'democratising Shakespeare in the digital age'. Its website demonstrates this activity with multiple blogs for different segments as well as a Facebook, YouTube and Twitter presence. In 2011 a digital course '*Getting to Know Shakespeare*' was developed and targeted at the general Shakespeare enthusiast. Online communities and 'Blogging Shakespeare' were created to further enhance digital engagement. The Trust developed its first e-book and released its first i-phone application, *Eye Shakespeare* in June 2012. Much of the RSC collections including its performance database, archive and the museum catalogue are available online. *Living Shakespeare* is a video-based project capturing the stories of some of the thousands of pilgrims who have travelled to Shakespeare's birthplace, asking them quite simply, why they made the voyage and what it means for them to be there. Every video is categorised by country in order to display the international impact of Shakespeare's Birthplace and to allow for easy viewing on a country by country basis. The goal was to capture at least 1,000 visitor stories per year and share those stories freely with anyone who has access to the internet.

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