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# Worship & Sightseeing; Building a Partnership approach to a ministry of welcome

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## **Worship & Sightseeing; Building a Partnership approach to a ministry of welcome**

**Peter Wiltshier & Alan Clarke**

### **Abstract**

This paper explores diverse opportunities for partnerships between the sacred and secular at religious sites. It identifies ways in which tourism suppliers can work collaboratively with sacred sites to enable sites to meet the demands of contemporary secular and sacred stakeholders. In the review of contemporary literature we consider supply and demand issues, site management, key components of partnership, ecumenical co-creation resources, cost-benefit and marketing needs. The paper is predicated on the provision of information and interpretation services for guidance, and development of all of these services. Methodologically, a participant observation approach was employed to confirm that tourism fits the strategic intent of religious leaders. We consider that partnership at a national, diocesan and parish level is an important part in effective tourism development. Elements of community involvement; capacity building and in-community development through engaging stakeholders are discussed. The balance achieved between stakeholders is important, and in our context the balance between local government and the tourism industry, and between active partners and the passive policy community, reflects the aims of the sacred and the private sector key partners, and the wider social capacity building aspects of community development agendas and government.

**Key Words:** collaboration sightseeing partnership religious stakeholders sacred secular community

### **Introduction**

Growing evidence suggests that sacred sites may benefit both financially and spiritually from the provision of support services at sites (health care and community care services are usually underwritten by local and central government. In 2006 the Church Synod expressed support for the UK government's Sacred Britain strategy. The strategy identified the clear need to increase visitation to sacred sites, to increase visits by under-represented groups and to be socially inclusive and to increase appreciation of the cultural heritage across a range of stakeholders. An important component of the strategy was the expressed desire to see partnership between tourism, heritage and faith bodies to unlock 'the potential of Britain's sacred heritage' (Bembridge, cited in Duff, 2006:3).

In defining partnership we consider both the religious and the business context. We acknowledge that partnerships in both senses include an understanding and

appreciation of these words: affiliation, association, collaboration, companionship, alliance and relationships. It also appears to be an imperative that any partnership recommendation is accompanied by consideration of cost-benefit and prioritised accordingly for the sacred site.

Sacred and secular partnerships aim to connect stakeholders through the context of sustainability, through benefits of long term investment in both social and economic contexts. This stresses the links between partnerships in the community, which is underwritten by the welcome afforded visitors, especially those identified as tourists (see for example Frew & Hay (2011) on the role of public sector tourism in Scotland; Capriello (2012) in Piedmont; Vagionis (2010) in Bulgaria). Such partnerships are predicated on freedom of access and by the visitors' perceptions of security and safety as they visit sacred sites, although the key in these situations may well be interpretation.

Our objectives focus on resource allocation, defining responsibility for the allocation of scarce resources at sites. Consideration of those who should adopt positions of responsibility for congregations and visitors is important (Dubini et al, 2012). The scale of the partnership to add value to both sacred and secular audiences is impacted by agitation and interference or 'noisiness' at sites. We identify that willingness in tacit knowledge sharing can be a limiting factor to the community of welcome. Additional factors include position in the life-cycle, the relative strength of identity, the role of volunteers and concerns over economic and hard issues such as theft and insurance. Partnership for a community of welcome also needs to examine historical affiliations and preferences for community engagement at the expense of any wider audience

### **Literature review**

This section is broadly divided according to supply side issues, client (both sacred and secular) demands and needs, site management issues, multi-faith and ecumenical issues, co-creation outcomes as a result of nascent and established partnerships, sacred site resources and finally marketing of brand and identity. There are ample opportunities and case studies from contemporary sites that contain elements we can replicate (Dwyer & Wickens, 2011; Simone-Charteris et al, 2010;

Ryan & Huimin, 2009; Stanciulescu & Tirca, 2010; Lo Presti & Petrillo, 2010; Stoykova et al, 2009; Karar, 2010; Moira et al, 2012). Capacity building occurs through the creation of a pragmatic approach to partnership. We also register a wider outcome from partnerships which are community-based and focused on developmental well-being at many levels of social capital accrual (Kagan, 2007; Taylor, 2000). Partnerships between the key stakeholders that can easily be recognised and approached by investors and third-way organisations should feature a planned approach to sustained development for sacred sites. In sum, the role of sacred space in the community, be it parish or diocese, is explicitly linked to the identity and cultural focus of that community, to the extent that social benefits are mediated by sacred spaces. Community capacity-building is essentially not a neutral technical process: it is about power and ideology and how these are mediated through structures and processes (Metcalf-Gibson, 2010; Craig, 2007; 354).

We note with some dismay the lack of formal engagement with perceived current partners. These partners are the day-to-day organisations and their representatives that the sacred site neglects to encourage or work harder to develop a sense of partnership. For example, the places of education in the immediate neighbourhood are often neglected. A school, college or university represents a source of skills and resources for development that need formal identifying, managing and acknowledging in a strategic approach (for example see Goddard & Puukka, 2008; McCauley 2011). The performing arts, theatre owners and operators, concert organisers, staged shows and amateur dramatics all present some form of opportunity and resource looking for a venue and exchange of money and skills. There is ample evidence that sacred sites may also perform functions as sites of counselling and support for the disenfranchised and distressed.

Food and drink providers are potential partners for sacred sites. Every special event and attraction has strong actual and potential links to entertainment through the provision of food and drink. This has been based upon past and current demands from worshippers, visitors and site stakeholders. Such partnerships are predicated upon the welcome and the traditional features of a welcome that includes food and drink as integral components of hospitality and acknowledgment of visitors. Tourism and food and drink are co-dependent and integral to the mutual goals of both

hospitality and tourism (Everett, 2012; Van Zyl, 2012; Haven-Tang & Jones, 2010). We present food and drink providers as key partners in the future prosperity of each group and in the viability and future health of the sacred site.

Film and television present a further opportunity to interpret sacred sites for both sacred and secular purposes. Morpeth, (2011; 97) writes of the impact that such filming has had in Yorkshire but perhaps more importantly he writes that the sacred and secular objectives may not compromise the former to benefit the latter; in fact he makes reference to policy documents that highlight the specific and identifiable need to bolster sacred spaces (see also O'Connor & Bolan, 2008 in Northern Ireland).

### **Supply side issues**

We acknowledge the recent expositions on tourism and religion featuring places of worship and devotion to sacred space as representations of opportunity for partnerships in both sacred and secular expression (Josan 2009 in Europe; Lo Presti & Petrillo, 2010 in Italy and Aragao & Macedo, 2012 in Brazil as examples). In Ireland, for example, less than 20% of the listed Heritage Sites have religious or sacred affiliation (OPW, 2011), and of those that are listed, many have dual purposes for interpretation and therefore visits can be arguably benefitting secular and sacred goals. The number of such listed sites in the Republic of Ireland is woeful in contrast to the total number of sites of special sacred significance that have yet to be formally identified for tourism purposes and therefore mapped for visits (see for example Griffin, 2008). Woodward, (2004), identified several key partners for developing a visitor site including the obvious charges and donations for admission and: catering outlets (up to 10 percent of revenue in some sites), retail (between 30 and 40 percent of revenue), and events (potential for nearly 10 percent of revenue) across a range of popular sites in England and Northern Ireland.

Special events are also important features of many sacred sites. Therefore partnerships between events management organisations and sites will increasingly become important. Sacred places somewhat determine their purpose in becoming features within the context of a festival or celebration and secondly, as the event organisation strives to marry the aim and objectives of the sacred space to the consumers, visitors fulfil a special purpose - to underwrite the costs of exploiting the

location and recovering conservation and interpretation expenses (see example in Hungary by Panyik et al, 2011; and in Haridwar, India by Karar, 2010). Partnership fatigue is nothing new for site managers, neither are the key stakeholders in both the public and private domain immune to shifts in political agendas, especially with fairly restricted and limited autonomy (Shaw & Williams, 2004; 207). Recent reports identify the express and explicit needs for new hierarchical and hegemonic structures to manage the complex nature of demand (Stausberg, 2011; 93).

Discussions around the concept of sustainability will inevitably invite dialogue, confirming the degree of partnership engaging the discussions at the specific site and, in general, towards the discussions of sustainability of action for the faith in question (see for example Stanciulescu & Tirca, 2010, in Romania). These discussions will be located in both conservation and stabilisation of the site concerned; they will however also be concerned for the future benefits of the site guardians and those responsible for the future health of both site and sacred objectives. Accessibility is important to maintain a credible visitor experience and visitors will express an affinity with projects to restore fabric and protect scarce relics if they can experience them personally. Accessible sacred sites are characterised by being open, with the provision of sufficient information and interpretation to create a warm welcome to visitors (Wiltshier & Clarke, 2012; Simon et al, 2011; Wiltshier, 2011; Shackley, 2001; Millar, 1989). This welcome is not just touristic, it includes valuing the sacred purpose and meeting worship needs. It additionally offers sympathetic interpretation to visitors who do not express their faith at the time of the visit but have a more general interest in the site itself from a historical, anthropological, sociological or other point of view.

### **Demand side issues**

Tourism can be conceived as a poor supporter of sacred purpose. Coupled with that, religious tourism is unfortunately quite often unappreciated as a community development opportunity by key stakeholders (see for example, Poria et al 2009; Ashworth, 2009; Wheeler, 2005). Previous studies have identified that religious sites must adopt a pro-active attitude and approach to managing the expectations, even demand of the visitor (Gouthro & Palmer, 2010; Karar, 2010; Rivera et al, 2009; Mangelaja, 2003; McIntosh et al, 2004). Today's sacred site managers must

demonstrate their willingness to engage the visitor in more ways than simply providing space and place for their worship.

Visitors make choices in consumption and on reflection will always influence decisions made by religious site managers, specifically concerning partners. The demand-driven components in the management of sacred sites need to be adequately considered and accurately measured pre-, post- and during-experiences by site managers to better reflect the drivers of positive and growing consumption but also to incorporate the contribution that partners can make to the visitors' experience (Leask, 2010; Lo Presti & Petrillo, 2010; Hayes & McLeod, 2007; Pine & Gilmore, 1999). Indeed, it is that experience that may drive increased contributions from consumption to the upkeep, maintenance and expansion of the interpretation services.

Visitors are often polled as to their expectations and their perceptions. There is ample evidence that the visitor is not expected to reflect on their experience and therefore a substantial lack of evidence is available to present to partners on the substantive quality, exceptional features and benefits that visitors to sacred sites have expressed. It is also worth considering which part or parts of the experience(s) they are asked to reflect on (Biran et al, 2011; Chis et al, 2010; Gutic et al, 2010). In short, presenting visitor numbers, audits of cars parked and coaches and buses on site is certainly useful but it does not highlight the contribution that the partners may bring to the visitor experience nor where the opportunities exist to expand services in a meaningful and profitable way for both site managers and partners (see for example, Wiedenfeld's 2006 study). Visitors express their individuality in their reason for site visits (Lo Presti et al, 2010; Rivera et al 2009; Stoykova, 2009), therefore, some experiences demand of the host an innovative approach, acknowledging the visitors' individual and often personal and idiosyncratic reasons for visiting. Mindful of this, we identify a lateral innovative approach to visitors in partnership with worship through demonstrated alternative reasons to visit.

The contemporary approach to managing visitors' expectations and behaviour has been well explored (Alecú, 2010; di Giovine 2010; Wiedenfeld & Ron, 2008; Pine & Gilmore, 1999; Wiltshier, 2007). A focal point is the need for a stronger

developmental relationship between churches and their stakeholders in tourism and other services (Timothy, 2007; Bramwell & Lane, 2004). The contemporary site manager should be vocal and competent at using public relations and modern media for the benefit of the site and key stakeholders. The site manager must make explicit the shortcomings of the physical day-to-day operations by identifying partnership opportunities and using available media to inform potential stakeholders and identified visitors who may support the projects to provide an income stream. Over the last ten years both the numbers of public/civic events and specially arranged services have increased considerably. In particular, the number of public/civic events has almost doubled (CoE Cathedrals, 2011; 5). These opportunities can bring income to offset expenditure on maintenance as well as interpretation and information provision. The church in the UK context admits being somewhat negligent about building these partnerships with key stakeholders. The church in the context of Hungary is observed to have developed skills and strategies to better manage these relationships (Clarke et al, 2009).

The church that turns its back on tourism turns it back on the local economy (Keith Orford personal communication May 2012).

In addition, we perceive an ecumenical and multi-faith approach to partnership. The multi-faith, ecumenical sacred sites may need to be enthusiastic to build linkages between religions and avoid identifying gaps between the sacred philosophies. Our project builds on what Mangelaja (2003) would term a macro-economic perspective (as opposed to a single country or micro-perspective). We identify a model which can therefore be applied in multiple situations with many stakeholders as possible actors within the model, to signify useful practices for emulation elsewhere. The nature of participant observation means that the model does require a degree of empirical site testing, which is the subject of subsequent research engaged in as part of the ATLAS Religious tourism and Pilgrimage Special Interest Group's agenda.

### **Site management issues**

In the United Kingdom (and in the SEE sites discussed in Clarke and Raffay's paper in this volume) we have witnessed a reluctance to participate in networks This may be attributable to perceived skills shortages, resources not allocated for visitor experience purposes, difficulties with fabric and security of sacred premises (Novelli



et al, 2006; Olsen & Timothy, 2006). The CTA identifies the inability to obtain tangible outcomes as important and additionally highlights the problems from a poor evidence base in terms of revenue and cost-effectiveness of managing sacred sites for visitors (Sharpley & Jepson, 2011; Morpeth, 2011; ATLAS, 2009; Shackley, 2005). Co-creation between visitors and worshippers is also deemed key to the success of partnership approaches to faith and development strategies. Our examples include the presence of alternative retail and educational programmes run on sacred premises for the benefit of community groups. Selected community stakeholders, working in collaboration towards a community-trust to operate postal services, retail of core food items, lending libraries and pre-school and after-school activity centres are fundamentally operating a co-creation model. This model benefits the community by providing cheap and easily accessed resources. The model benefits worshippers by providing secured access to the church building outside of hours of prayer and worship. It can also benefit visitors by providing alternative services after hours as well as additional interpretation (for non sacred purposes perhaps providing local information data).

In terms of sacred places and spaces, human and cultural components are now being introduced into the commercial sphere of activity (see for example Henderson, 2009 on Islam; Sharpley & Jepson, 2011 in the Lake District). Our approach to management is to grasp the issues which emerge with interventions focused on skills, resources, the knowledge base and market orientation. We wish to build on successful partnerships as best-practice case studies for sacred sites. We create a framework to support decisions for partnership approaches which will meet and hopefully exceed visitors' expectations. These frameworks necessarily should support participants at parish or local level, diocesan or regional level and nationally as well. Our initial research confirms that sacred sites do not oppose visitors, acknowledging the need for revenue from visitors and welcoming the opportunity to translate their sense of mission into purposeful information to be shared with visitors. Facilitators and facilitation need to identify and implement processes to continue and maintain existing networks (Warren, 2004; 69). Additionally, public and private partners establish and maintain an approach to cooperative planning that links key stakeholders in a strategic context (Levi & Kocher, 2009; Olsen, 2006;115). We also identify that among sharing initiatives with each other there are relevant issues to do

with supplying both site managers and volunteers with minimum levels of skills as well as more practical financial support (Jackson, 2002; 135). The duality and dyadic partners typically present as emotional and sensitive audiences. We observe that there are career stages in local parishes that are open ended; the clerical stages in parishes in the United Kingdom typically present a change of role within three or four years at each site - presenting further resource and skill depletion and an uneven approach to the deployment of resources for the benefit of each sacred site.

### **Sacred sites are managed by non-managers and volunteers**

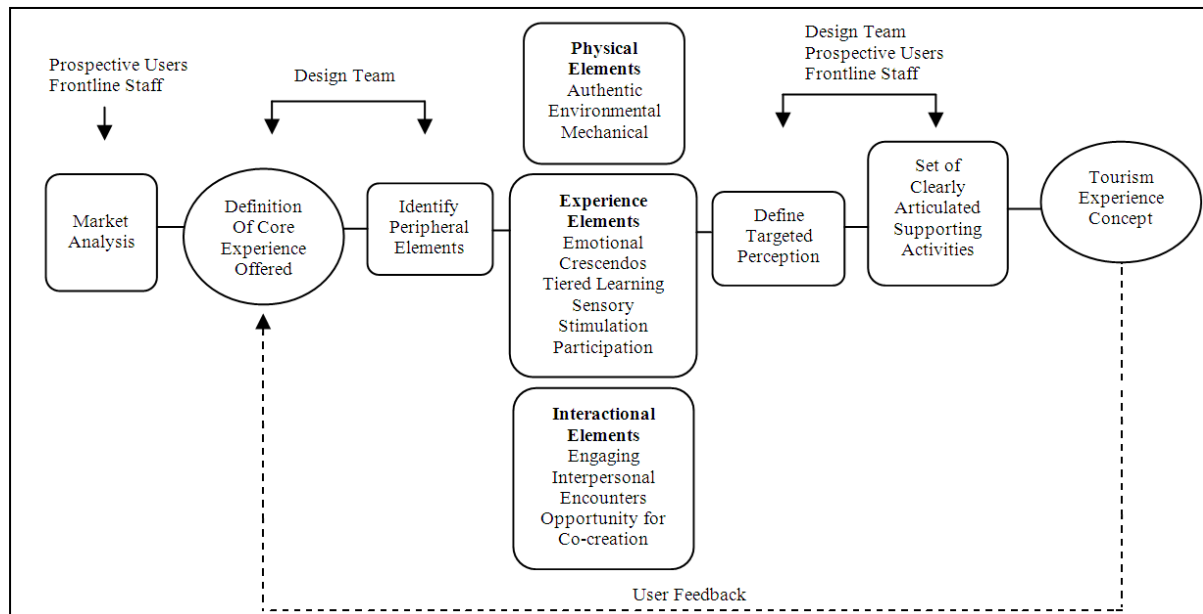
In identifying opportunities to pursue partnerships and formalise the engagement of networks beyond sacred mission we suspect explicit and tacit knowledge sharing is specifically missed in not sharing good practices. A sense of learning from experience in peaks and troughs is therefore paramount as a component of managing future development. The literature does refer to lagging, with rural communities especially prone to low levels of engagement in good practices (Olsen, 2011; Aref et al, 2009; De Araujo & Bramwell, 2002; Wiltshier, 2011; Clarke et al, 2009; Macbeth et al 2004: , Shinde, 2004;). The potential for benefits of diversified, regenerated local communities are often unexplored and social, economic, environmental and cultural impacts that increased partnership and networking may bring significant explicit and tacit knowledge to sacred as well as secular partners. Despite using a non-commercial model for strategic development and management, we observe multiple situations where partnerships can be based on a model that contains a commercial agenda. Therefore, in this commercial model, the role of entrepreneurs, serial and portfolio contractors should never be underestimated. Again, there are examples of good practice that we can all learn from (Shinde, 2011; Wiltshier, 2007). Partnerships between sacred sites and location marketing and branding is important and has been presented in the light of identity and shared values in several examples (Frew and White, 2011 on Brand Ireland; 26). It is not coincidental that various regional and national tourism organisations seek to ally their brand offer with sacred spaces. Purposeful promotion using sacred sites reinforces shared values and creates an environment for marketing. That it may be manufactured for a specific promotional purpose does not necessarily undermine sacred values and mission if handled sensitively (see examples Moira et al 2012; Maksin, 2010; Simone-Charteris & Boyd, 2010; Rivera et al 2009; Stoykova, 2009).

The role of public-sector heritage agencies has been explored in various political situations (see for example Edwards, 1998 in rural Wales; Poria et al, 2009, on the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem; Vorzsak & Gut, 2009, on Romania; Collins-Kreiner, 2010 in selected sites in Israel; Di Giovine, 2011 in Pietrelcina in southern Italy). A supportive heritage and cultural organisation and related culture can support the sacred site and become a vital reference point for identity, branding, marketing and interpretation support. We propose that these public-sector heritage agencies have a role to play where appropriate to reinforce the aims and objectives of the sites and to support interpretation for a wider range of invited and casual secular as well as sacred audiences. Case studies exist that identify and measure contributions to specific sites from specific visitor categories and origins (Goncalves et al, 2012; Moira et al 2012). Finally, we see good practices in sacred site management founded on knowledge and knowledgepreneurs (Alecú, 2010; Collins-Kreiner, 2010). In the near future religious partnerships could be constructed along the lines of multi-faith and ecumenical networks as well as the prosaic and less proselytising option through community lobby groups, educational partners in primary, secondary and further education networks. A further option is partnership with service organisations that remain defiantly independent and without a roof over their heads seeking premises for physical interaction with clients and potential clients (arts, crafts, performance, media, medical and health and welfare sector specialists).

### **Research methods**

The epistemological perspective is partly based on soft-systems thinking, largely derived from the work of Checkland and Scholes (1990). We gratefully utilise the semi-structured approach and epistemological approach espoused by Thompson & Perry (2004) and Perry & Zuber-Skerritt (1992). A participant observation approach is employed to confirm that tourism fits the strategic intent of religious leaders. In this we consider the role of quasi-religious organisations like the UK Churches Tourism Association (CTA) to identify a partnership strategy. The illustrative model proposed by Dalton et al (2009) is useful to readers in assimilating a systems-thinking approach to process stages for change to engage stakeholders (see Figure 1). We consider that partnership is important at national, diocesan and parish levels. Through the model of partnerships we demonstrate that bias and partiality can be

minimised. Our use of transformative intellectual action research featuring good practices allows us to generalise and reflect key outcomes of the project.

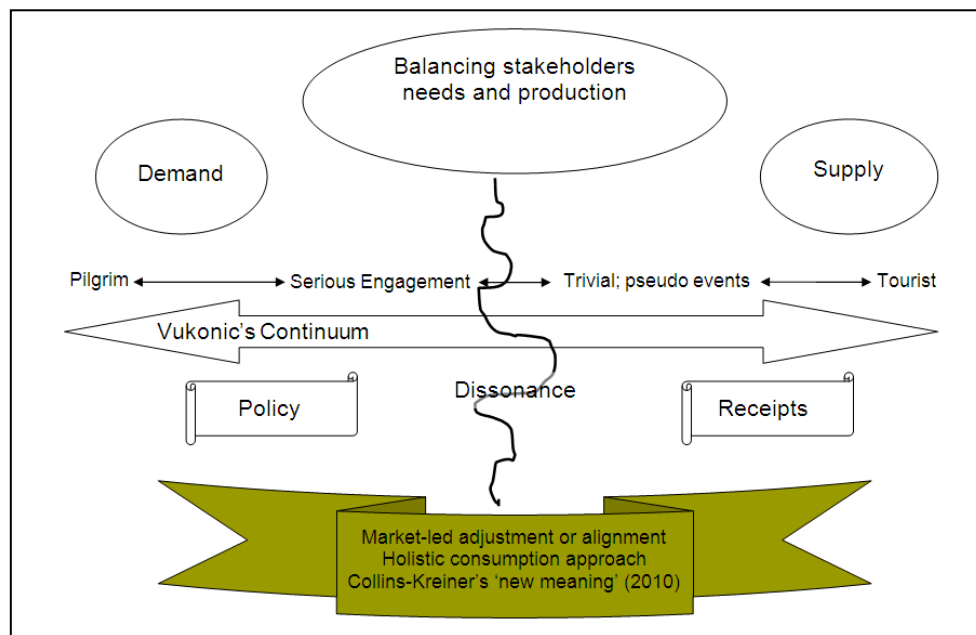


**Figure 1: Model of Partnership; Finding Partners for Consensus: the Experience Economy (Source Dalton et al 2009).**

We observed practices throughout Derbyshire and selected two of the churches for presentation here. They were selected because they highlight key issues that inform the development of the model presented.

### Analysis

It is recognised that visitors will have a variety of experiences, and may switch between types of experiences. Visitors to India for example, confirm this, as they undergo various inner experiences that change according to their length of stay or state of mind (Collins-Kreiner, 2010: 161). Together with an increasing dedifferentiation of pilgrimage, tourism and secular tourism, and the narrowing difference between the wishes of people to search for a new meaning to their everyday life, all the shifts described show that the study of pilgrimage is being modified in the twenty-first century. The 'tourism shift' seems to be the uniting element in the current research into pilgrimage (ibid: 162) and we would argue into understanding the emergence of religious tourism partnerships (Wiedenfeld & Ron, 2011).



**Figure 2: Balanced Scorecard for Sacred Sites**

This change is found in both the theoretical and the practical bases; it includes erasing the distinctions that were accepted in the past as well as a growing inability to distinguish between the different perceptions and research areas that are now becoming integrated. In Figure 2 we have identified three key sector partnerships and enablers in demand, supply and sacred purpose and highlighted the lessons learned from these experiences. As Pine & Gilmore (1999) observed more than a decade ago, the key to the success of partnerships is derived from co-creation. A shared experience, understood and articulated by consumers and partners is central to the offering. We construct a model that emphasises that the core of success in any venture developed from public and private partners depends on the quality of the offer by the owner, the shared knowledge of that quality developed by consumers and recognised through their collateral associations. The community hosting the sacred site must share the values, vision and strategy that fits with those values and vision espoused by the sacred site in question. Although we also identify the importance of diffusing tensions, specifically dissonance in resource allocation we can also make a good case for *ad hoc* and contingent approaches to developing partnerships that underpin specific goals determined by sacred and secular stakeholders.

In the following two case studies, we explore and elaborate the interconnections between the elements in the balanced score card and draw out some illustrative lessons from these explorations.

### **Case study 1 – All Saints’ Breadsall**

All Saints’ Breadsall in Derbyshire is a pretty Anglican parish church dating back to Saxon times with remarkable sedilia and piscina. The church is constructed of an attractive reddish-hued stone and features an elegant fifteenth century spire. The church is in a sleepy village some five miles from Derby City. All Saints’ has a valuable locally-mined Chellaston alabaster Pieta and beneath the re-tiled floor of the nave is the tomb of Erasmus Darwin. Like many country churches, All Saints’ hosts weddings at a modest charge of £500. The eighteenth century polymath, Erasmus Darwin, spent the final years of his life in the village at what is now a luxury golf resort, operated by Marriott Hotels, called the Breadsall Priory Hotel. The bicentenary of Darwin’s passing was celebrated at All Saints’. The association of intellectuals in and around Derby was concurrent with the early years of the Industrial Revolution and Darwin was part of a group of special thinkers who had important roles in the changes that paralleled the industrial growth. This Lunar Society included Josiah Wedgwood, Mathew Boulton, James Watt and Darwin. This partnership, expressed in the eighteenth century certainly can be used as a mirror by site managers with responsibilities for worship and celebratory visits almost two hundred years later. Visitors from throughout the world, more especially those whose ancestors migrated to the New World, return regularly to All Saints. The modest arrangements that the rector and vicar undertake to host special events support church maintenance and security.

Therefore All Saints’ Church at Breadsall can demonstrate, in its modest way, a diverse range of opportunities for sacred sites such as this to engage with the wider secular community for the purpose of exploring mission and supporting infrastructure development and building maintenance. In our project we have identified some key examples of successful partnerships that encourage sacred sites’ purpose and specific projects that deliver income to sites and expand in a strategic fashion the objectives that the site has focused on. Sacred sites represent best practice for recording and retrieval of key data for local communities and therefore for visitors

desiring information from the community in respect of ancestry, historical information and evolving practice.

One of the key issues that researchers encountered over the past two decades is that the maintenance of records and perceptions by visitors are central to visitor and stakeholder satisfaction. Many sacred sites have historical datasets which are eagerly sought by visitors (Shackley, 2001; Vukonic, 1998) and the perceptions and expectations of visitors will be central to enhancing a sense of partnership in identity and heritage for visitors as well as sacred congregations. There is little doubt that the methodology for visitor satisfaction and expectation as a common theme for success in partnerships is now required. As has been demonstrated in the case study sacred sites are developing links with stakeholders on the basis of shared values and mutual growth in key objectives; sure signs of emerging partnership. By using volunteers for this purpose the sites have been able to build sincere relationships with both sacred and secular partners. Stakeholders acknowledge the contribution that volunteers can make; in shaping the mission for future growth and development and the potential for future exploration of an extended sacred mission through secular activity as we can demonstrate. The provision of records and interpretive materials for potential investors could attract further inward investment as public sector organisations seek to rationalise service delivery and resource allocation for public facing information provision. We observe limited external use being made of current satisfaction evidence and reiterate the importance of volunteers and others within the site's organisational hierarchy working in future to secure vital evidence of success and indicators of under-performance and perhaps further oversight on training, interpretation, and concurrence of partners' strategic aim and objectives with that of the site.

### **Case study 2: St Lawrence's Eyam**

At the celebrated 'Plague' village 350 metres up in the Peak District one can witness a twenty-first century pilgrimage. St Lawrence's Eyam is a parish church that witnessed an early medical intervention that saved the lives of local residents after the plague arrived from London in 1665 on fleas aboard tailors' swatches. Locals quarantined themselves and some successfully managed to survive what was then, and still can be, a deadly illness. In the twenty-first century medical specialists

studying immunity surveyed the descendants of these hardy survivors to identify genetic clues. The manager of the visitor centre, which is a very well presented two storey purpose-built structure adjacent to St Lawrence's, is indeed one of those descendants. Mrs Plant managed the centre, its team of parishioners and volunteers for many years. She encountered huge demand (upwards of 100,000 visitors per annum) ranging from school parties to medical and other curious visitors. There have always been sufficient funds in the kitty to enable security to be maintained and links to an active visitor network of the neighbouring Mompesson's Well on the moorlands (the quarantine boundary) and the adjacent Eyam Hall owned by the Wright Family. This excellent small community, its central parish church and enviable moorland and dales aspect is in huge demand by upwards of thirty million day visitors from the surrounding conurbations (David James, Visit Peak District & Derbyshire Destination Management Partnership, personal communication, April 2013).

We should note the emerging expectations of visitors in respect of their motivations to further religious experience, study or conversion of faith. Thereby targeting appropriate partners and visitors based on the experience economy, co-production and informed expectations of both groups of stakeholders. A sacred site can be a place for educational activity and active absorption of new knowledge and skills. This can be ecumenical or inter-denominational. It also identifies that sacred spaces are places of refuge, for the young, disheartened, dispossessed, old and disowned. We also witness sacred spaces as partners; repositories for artefacts; sacred spaces as museums and places of interpretation as well as secular research and interest. Sacred spaces are becoming special places for all to worship, seek solace, seek intellectual and spiritual development for individuals; a place for neutrality as well as solidity in spiritual practice.

## **Discussion**

Having outlined the two case studies we will now pursue the critical examination of the processes involved in the two locations. At a commercial level, sacred spaces are often centrally located so provide a space and place to orient to the landscape for a variety of activities. Sacred spaces truly represent the acme of culture, history, art, music and architecture. If nothing else, as special situated spaces they permit the visitor and the local resident a tranquil place to pass time in inclement weather



and to rest awhile. Many partners can identify and value intrinsically and extrinsically these locations (Stausberg, 2011). These central locations provide a theme for branding and identity (The Crooked Spire in Chesterfield, England, has been adopted commercially as well as spiritually). Sacred spaces are invaluable sharing locations for performance and display of cultural output.

Many of these important special places can lay claim to partnerships and networks owing to their centrality and moreover their perspective, view and situation at the heart of the destination. Therefore partners seek connection with the brand and identity, the shared opportunity to undertake business ventures, performance and cultural dominance at a vantage point unparalleled.

Timothy & Olsen (2006) identify that spaces are contested for use as sacred and secular purposes. There is competition for partnership and networks that can equally lay claim to special places and purposes. In secular ways the expressions of ancestry discovery, disaster site visits, war memorials and cemeteries typify these contested uses. Even more likely in the market-force driven economy is the opportunity for entrepreneurs in new ageism, paganism, magic and the occult to take advantage of these contested spaces. It may become important therefore, to segregate defined spaces for occupation by sacred and secular purposes, to ensure the validity of the consumption experience according to these dyads. Partnerships must also drive the need for site protection, conservation and enhancement which are all under-funded activities.

The role of the media cannot be underestimated as a purveyor of conflicting messages regarding fitness for use by sacred and secular purpose. Partners may wish to emphasise key values and messages according to their buying power with the media channel at hand. On reflection one must consider the conflict and purpose in modes of partnership and rationale behind this activity. Partnership should aim to support identity, enliven participation in a community (whether it is sacred or secular) and in a market-driven economy provide further evidence of quality in experience, in service-delivery levels and ultimately in driving an enhanced experience for communities (Morgan et al, 2010: 165).

Introducing the idea of entrepreneurial orientation at sacred sites identifies the need for site managers that possess skills and aptitudes predisposing them to working in partnerships as pre-conditions for taking advantage of networks. A new era of continuous innovation has emerged, in which knowledge is the key asset whose exploitation determines success for many firms. In this context, it is accepted that effective knowledge management depends heavily on a company's ability to collaborate, both inside (Collective Entrepreneurship) and outside (Collaborative Entrepreneurship) the organization (Ribeiro-Soriona & Urbano, 2009: 425).

Although we perceive sacred sites as the equivalent of firms for the purpose of this analysis in the context of partnership and network development, we do acknowledge that sacred sites do not possess the same motivations, leverages, enablers and barriers that typify the commercial organisation. We do not acknowledge that such a framework of continuous innovation precludes capacity development in key staff within the sacred site. A new form of organisation structure and strategy may emerge reflecting the relative strength of partnership and values of both sets of organisations, the sacred site and the secular partner.

Partnership, collaboration and developing resources from networks depends on given pre-conditions, which should include: the purposeful identification of alliances with cooperating stakeholders for development agendas and; consensus building with strategic objectives, which sets the agenda. The final stage involves implementing, monitoring and managing outcomes for the benefit of a wide range of stakeholders (Arnaboldi & Casu, 2011; 643). The key to the success of partnerships is the recognition of added-value for all the organisations, the reduction in barriers to understanding and the achievement of recognition throughout. These can result in improved opportunities for new work that can be shared among a wider network of sacred and secular partners that results in an increasing accumulation of intellectual and social capital within the community setting.

In the temporal sense partnerships may be strategic and long term whilst others may be tactical and result in a short-lived project for which the partnership is the equivalent of the outsourced resources which neither partner can justify on a long-term basis. A good example of the former can be seen in tourism destination

marketing, aligning branding and identity. An example of the latter may be research to test consumer satisfaction and feedback on initiatives proposed through sharing resources in marketing.

## **Conclusion**

It can be seen that confusion exists regarding the role of partners and how adding value can be operationalised (Simone-Charteris & Boyd, 2010). Work has been undertaken that tests the strength of such networks as partnerships become normalised and strategic within the sacred and secular spaces occupied. This research is not specific as to the nature of governance and agreements that perhaps typify an idealised sacred / secular space partnership (Novelli et al, 2006). Shinde (2011), writing on Indian spaces of pilgrimage, identifies sites that can manage to take advantage of pro-active tourism industry stakeholders that amplify the spiritual experiences but the actual strength, conditions and parameters for operating these partnerships remain to be fully identified and recreated.

Closed and open partnerships can be further developed as the knowledge of collaboration benefits and network formation are spread more widely in the sacred and secular frameworks around partnership. There appears to be a real need to establish a values exchange model that acknowledges the aforementioned network expansion framework (Padin, 2012; Dalton et al, 2009). In turn, we can see that this leads sacred partners to develop partnerships through possible commercialisation. Over the past decade, evidence has accumulated indicating an emergent and symbiotic relationship between tourism destination managers and marketers that is clearly indicative of untapped potential for sacred site owners who can demonstrate pro-activity in line with Britain's Sacred Britain strategy. An example is cited by Silberberg (1995) where museums have adopted a pro-active stance especially in the provision of cultural spaces for performance and cultural display. The proviso might be that the sacred site manager should understand the integrative approaches to managing visitor experience undertaken within the horizontal and vertical supply chains. Some prior education and nuanced site team management could provide an income stream for the sacred site and introduce a new partner to the tourism industry. There will always need to be some space in the calendar for out of town

visitors at sacred sites which could become a sensitive issue for careful yet proactive site management.

It is critical to have community interests protected alongside the development of new partnerships where tourism may be perceived by some as offering a product or service that might be contrary to local community concerns and needs (See for example, Simmonds, 1994). Therefore, we have proposed a model that articulates the needs of the sacred, the needs of the visitor and identifies a working partnership between the two. Our holistic approach incorporates sacred and secular understanding of differentiation in needs and raises the challenge to the sacred partners to remain able and willing to accept a sliding scale of needs between the dyads. Partners can therefore meet the needs of the disparate stakeholders, by responding in a strategic manner to diverse expectations without compromising their own values and beliefs to external observers and other host partners.

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