

The Magic of Tourism: A Look Into the Impact of Harry Potter Tourism on Edinburgh

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## **ABSTRACT**

The Harry Potter series by J. K. Rowling has profoundly touched the lives of many readers. The series has become a global cultural phenomenon of unimagined proportions. Many of the places in the books and scenes in the movies are based on locations in Edinburgh, the city where Rowling wrote most of the Harry Potter series. These locations in Edinburgh have become places of Harry Potter tourism. Increased tourism can boost an economy, but it can also create issues for the permanent residents of these tourist destinations.

During the summer of 2018, fieldwork was conducted in Edinburgh with The Potter Trail walking tours, a tour company that specializes in connecting the fictional places of the books and movies to their real-world counterparts in the city. The aim of this research is to show ways in which Harry Potter tourism has affected Edinburgh by creating and authenticating points of connection. Over a three day period, the team observed eight tours and interviewed 35 tourists. The observations of the tours demonstrate ways in which the study area has been affected by the increased tourism. The analysis of the interviews suggest that visitors take these journeys in order to encounter points of connection which challenge the line between fiction and non-fiction.

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## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The view from the Glenfinnan Viaduct Steam Train features the rolling hills and every shade of green foliage that the Scotland Highlands are known for. The train runs from Fort William to Mallaig, both towns in province Lochaber. These days, however, some of the passengers are not simply interested in going from one point to another. Since the train was featured in the Harry Potter series as the main transportation to and from Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, many fans of the series boarded to experience a part of the series.

This type of tourism is known as media tourism. Media tourism centers around travel to places associated with forms of media such as books, movies, and music. This could be visiting the hometown of a favorite author, like many Jane Austen fans do, or following the same trail as Sherlock Holmes in one of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's mystery novels. Fans of the Beatles can visit Liverpool, venues they played at, or even the "Imagine" mosaic in Strawberry Fields in Central Park in New York City.

Another notable film series that attracts tourism is The Lord of The Rings trilogy. Fans of the series have found the perfect excuse to finally visit New Zealand. According to Gregg Anderson from Tourism New Zealand, there was a 50% increase in tourism since the first movie was created (Pinchefsky 2012). They can directly link \$33 million NZD per year to tourism generated by the trilogy. Media tourism is a unique cultural practice that many cities and businesses have capitalized on.

Tourism has an undeniable role in economic development, so it is increasingly important to study and understand the practice. Geography is at the center of tourism and travel studies, understanding tourism relies heavily on understandings of place. Williams (2002) asserts that “Tourism Geography reveals how geographic perspectives can inform and illuminate the study of tourism.”

An important part of tourism geography is the human aspect i.e., the tourists. Previously, the tourists that drive the tourism industry have been viewed simply as “idle consumers,” (DeLyser 2003). Though in recent years, geographers and other tourism researchers have started to value the perspectives and experiences of tourists as a resource. Switching the focus to the tourist experience rather than solely relying on tourist visitation patterns provides insights into what tourists find meaningful in their travels. With this shift in focus, geographers have found that, for some tourists, travel can serve as a type of pilgrimage (DeLyser 2003; Kruse 2005). This re-conceptualization of tourism has led to insightful research into the ways that the tourism industry and tourists themselves affect and create new meaning of place.

Media tourism takes on many forms, but one of the most popular today is the aforementioned Harry Potter tourism. The children’s book series was written by J. K. Rowling, a British writer who spent her young adulthood hopping between schools, jobs, and even countries. In her early thirties, Rowling was a single mom of one who spent copious amounts of time in a coffee shop writing her first novel, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone*. After receiving over a dozen rejection letters, she finally found a publisher for her novel. In 1997, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone*



was published (later released in the United States as *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*).

The novel became a series as more books, and eventually movies, were released. The series grew in popularity in the early 2000s. Between the seven books in the series and the eight supplemental works, there have been over 500 million copies sold around the world making it the best-selling book series in the world. There have been eight movies based on the original series and two based on the supplemental works (with more on the horizon) and between them, they are in the top three of highest grossing movie franchises in the world making over six billion dollars at the box office alone (Mendelson 2020).

Throughout the series, viewers and readers are introduced to dozens of locations in the United Kingdom from London to the Scottish Highlands. Some settings are real places and landmarks named specifically, while others are vague or fictional.

Harry Potter, the main protagonist, is introduced as an orphan. His extended family, tasked with caring for him after his parents were killed in an accident, is constantly burdened by his presence and they are not afraid to show it. They are a “perfectly normal” family, but he is peculiar and threatens their cookie cutter lifestyle. On his 11th birthday, Harry learns that he is a wizard, hears that his parents were actually murdered by a dark wizard, and receives a personal invitation to attend Hogwarts School for Witchcraft and Wizardry. At this boarding school tucked away in

the Scottish Highlands, he makes friends, gets sorted into Gryffindor (one of four houses), and begins to learn how to use his magic abilities.

During his time at Hogwarts, Harry and his two best friends Ron and Hermione are faced with fighting against Lord Voldemort, the archvillain of the series. They work together to uncover secrets of the wizarding world and refine their magic abilities while also going through normal teenage drama and angst. By the end of the series, Lord Voldemort has risen to power and Harry must fight and defeat him to fulfill a prophecy and insure a safe future for all witches and wizards.

The books and movies were released over a span of fourteen years, so an entire generation of children grew up as the books and movies were being released. These kids grew into adults alongside the students of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, which has created a meaningful connection to the story, the characters, and the places.

There are various ways for fans to interact with the franchise. Aside from the books and movies, there are online fan communities on tumblr, reddit, and the official Harry Potter website Pottermore. Additionally, there are almost twenty different video games for different consoles, merchandise like wands, mugs, clothes, board games, and some fans even seek out real world locations to so that they can experience and connect to the series in a tangible, material way.

One way that tourists can accomplish this is by visiting the Wizarding World of Harry Potter in Orlando, Florida. This theme park is based on the magical world created by Rowling in her novels but it features a lot of visual design from the movies.

The park is designed to immerse visitors in the world of Harry Potter from the moment they are welcomed by the Conductor of the Hogwarts Express.

Another way tourists can experience the world of Harry Potter is by visiting filming locations. Visiting filming locations does not offer the same type of immersion that the theme park does. Many of the filming locations, like the Millennium Bridge, Oxford, and King's Cross Station, are popular tourist destinations in their own right. Potter fans can visit these locations and see and walk among locations in the movies. They can stand where the actors stood and, to an extent, experience what they experienced while filming the movies. However, the high volume of tourists and regular foot traffic of the locations can make it difficult for Potter fans to feel fully immersed.

While the theme park and filming locations are concrete expressions of the Harry Potter series, some fans seek out spots that require a little more imagination. The city of Edinburgh has become a popular spot for Harry Potter tourism. J. K. Rowling was living in Edinburgh while she was writing the books. She spent her time in Edinburgh Old Town, traveling between Edinburgh University, where she was attending teacher training, and working on her manuscript in her favorite coffee shops. Rowling has said that when she had writer's block, she would go for walks around the few blocks of Edinburgh she had become familiar with, including walking around Greyfriars Kirkyard. A kirkyard, sometimes called a churchyard, is "an enclosed area surrounding a church, especially as used for burials (Oxford Languages)." The old winding roads, colorful shop fronts, and even the graves made their way into the

series. Many locations in the area are now associated with Harry Potter and several of these spots have changed in identity due to a rise in Harry Potter tourism.

Potter fans have started traveling to these different locations in search of something tangible to accompany their strong attachments to the series. Visiting these Potter tourist destinations blurs the lines between fiction and reality and provides the tourists with a magical experience that grounds them in the fictional world that they hold dear. The influx of Harry Potter tourists in places like London and Edinburgh is affecting existing tourism as well as the daily lives of the cities' residents. The aim of this research is to show ways in which Harry Potter tourism has affected the meaning of place in Edinburgh, Scotland by creating and authenticating points of connection.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Media tourism is a growing industry and it has become a new sub-field in tourism and cultural studies. Media tourism is the practice of traveling with the intent to visit locations associated with novels, movies, television programs and various other types of popular narrative works. One of the first uses of the term comes from Couldry's 2003 book on tourism. Media tourism is a broad category that encompasses other sub-fields such as literary tourism, cinematic tourism, and music tourism. Using the term media tourism is especially useful when studying multimedia franchises like Lord of The Rings, Game of Thrones, and Harry Potter. Each of these franchises began as a series of novels, then moved on to movie adaptations, and now they have each gained cult followings with online fan communities that reach across the globe.

#### **Media Pilgrimages**

In his 2003 book, Couldry asserts that the media tourism that fans partake in can also be described as "media pilgrimages," and can be compared to more traditional religious pilgrimages. Media pilgrimages may not have any religious significance, but their personal and social significance should be recognized and appreciated. Reijnder's study of James Bond media pilgrimages uses this idea and he goes on to quote Turner and Turner, "pilgrimage is more than just a physical journey: it is also a symbolic journey towards certain central values of society." The comparison of religious and media pilgrimages reflects the predominant role that media has in our lives. In 2018, the average American spent more than 10% of their

day watching TV. Plus, the widespread use of smartphones means that most people now have access to social media, books, movies, and music at all times. Spending a significant portion of your day engrossed in an activity that removes you from the monotony of daily life can change what is important to you. Values and morals from a book or movie can inspire a person to make changes in their own lives. Religion makes up a part of your identity and in the same way, being a fan of a book or movie can also make up a part of your identity, creating an emotional connection to the story.

For many fans, this emotional connection stems from the sense of place created by a book, movie, or song (Kruse 2003). During his trip to Liverpool, Kruse made a trip to Penny Lane (a Beatles song released in 1967) against the advice of his host. According to his host, there is nothing interesting to do in the area. While there is nothing remarkably Beatles related and many things had changed since the group's time in Liverpool, Kruse wrote that he the surroundings felt familiar to him. The lyrics in the song describe some general features of the area, creating somewhat of a landscape, and since the same building and infrastructure still remained, Kruse felt as if he already knew the place.

These landscapes, revealed through books and music can make people feel at home or familiar with the surroundings, much like what Kruse described. Though they've never visited that place or time period, they feel a connection to it. This may even inspire them to seek out real world experiences that reflect what they hear or read about. Tuan (1985) raises the question: can you draw conclusions about the cultural landscape of a region based on the literature written about or during a specific time

period? After doing a critical analysis on Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes collection, Tuan constructed three categories by which he attempted to re-map the landscape of Victorian era London. By looking at the categories of "local knowledge," "nature," and "environmental influence," his analysis revealed that key elements of cultural landscapes can be found in texts written during or about the time period and furthermore, they can be used to rebuild the cultural landscape of the region in a specific time period.

Some accuse Tuan of being uncritical in his analysis, however, Dhussa and Dutt (1981) addressed one of the issues in their paper featuring the literary work of Sarat Chandra Chatterjee, a well-known figure in Bengali literature. They used the same principles as Tuan's analysis, but they made one important distinction: perception. They noted that the literary works by Chatterjee, while useful for understanding the cultural landscape of the region, were only the author's perception of the culture. A similar idea was brought up in Joanne Sharp's critical analysis of literary geographies. Sharp used the term "context," to discuss the many ways in which background information can inform research and the understanding of a topic (2000). The human elements in writing, frequently seen in cultural geography, do not invalidate analysis. It is important to note the author's background because it can play a role in his/her literary representations of place and the interpretation of the work. These elements of critical reading are important for literary tourism research because they help present a complete picture of the piece of literature. It can also point to a

better understanding of the tourists' perception of the work and speak to their motivation for traveling.

A good example of the importance of context in media tourism is the writing of Bram Stoker, author of *Dracula*. While Stoker's depiction makes it wonderfully easy for readers to insert themselves into the journey, Stoker's representation of Transylvania created some tension between his writing and the Romanian government (Reijnders 2011). The book did not have a Romanian translation for many years. Understanding the context of the novel within Romanian culture was important for Reijnders' study, because *Dracula* tourism was actively discouraged by the Romanian government.

Stoker's detailed writing of place was not quite the Transylvania that the Romanian government wanted to broadcast to the world, but it was rather accurate from a geographical standpoint, tourists are able to visit locations from the book and in some cases even recreate the book's narrative journeys (Reijnders 2011).

In his study of *Dracula* tourists, Reijnders set out to discover why readers felt compelled to reenact these journeys. He found that *Dracula* tourists want to compare the real world landscape of the area to that of the novel. The detailed and realistic writing of Stoker makes it easy for readers-turned-tourists to make these comparisons. The tourists interviewed by Reijnders expressed that they want to be close to the story and make connections through a "symbiosis between reality and imagination." Discovering the physical, visual, and spatial relationship between reality and fiction creates a positive connection for the tourists. However, some of the tourists pointed



out the landscape inaccuracies from the story and this created a negative experience for some of the tourists who felt that the fictional world was being demystified. These tourists prefer to experience with their senses and think less about the specific details of the real world and how it relates to the fictional world.

### **The Real World and the Fictional World**

The idea of a paired relationship between the “real world” and the “fictional world” is a common topic of discussion throughout media tourism. Many researchers have argued that the motivation for media tourism lies in the tourists’ longing for the two worlds to merge or for the veil to be lifted between the two, if only for a short time.

It is often said that books, movies, and music provide an escape from reality. Macleod *et al.* (2018) use the idea of “armchair travelers,” in the context of media tourism. To a certain degree, fans are able to experience sense of place without leaving their homes. Reading, watching, or listening, fans are able to engage with the content and use their imagination to insert themselves into stories. However, many of these “armchair travelers,” have a desire to experience sense of place first hand, and as traveling becomes more affordable, more of them will be able to embark on the adventures themselves.

Throughout film and literary tourism literature, there are discussions about what the tourists seek, and some researchers have attempted to categorize tourists. For example, in her 2005 book, Beeton suggests that the difference between film tourists and literary tourists is that film tourists are more concerned with visiting the locations

where filming took place and literary tourists are interested in visiting locations that are significant to the author's life, such as birth place, hometowns, schools, and favorite writing spots. It is difficult to group people into just two categories and this is further complicated by modern multimedia franchises. Understanding this complication, Macleod *et al.* (2018) argue that there are visitors that embody both of the categories and are interested in many different aspects of media tourism.

Literary tourists themselves hold a great deal of power. Aside from the direct monetary and cultural effects of tourism, previous research shows that cities and businesses will try to adapt their landscapes in order to present tourists with an "authentic" experience, but it is up to the tourist to validate these attempts (DeLyser 2003, Kruse 2009, Lee 2012, and Jiang and Xu 2016). In some cases, these attempts do not get authenticated, but instead end up creating negative experiences for some tourists.

Kruse's research (2009) in Liverpool shows how some tourist destinations can suffer from "Disneyfication." This term is used in to describe a homogenized culture where consumption and merchandising are the most important thing but are cloaked in an aura of authenticity — e.g., Disneyland. Kruse participated in a guided tour on a "Magic Mystery Tour" bus. This Beatles themed tour transports the tourists around Liverpool, stopping at several locations that are meaningful to Beatles fans. Kruse also embarked on his own journey in Liverpool and in the surrounding suburbs to visit places that were not featured on the "Magic Mystery Tour." The city is significant to Beatles fans because this is "where it all started." John Lennon, Paul McCartney,

George Harrison, and Richard Starkey (Ringo Starr) grew up, met, and played some of their first performances in and around Liverpool (Kruse 2009). The areas of the city primarily visited by tourists are, as Kruse describes, “a patchwork of the authentic and commercial.” There are the authentic places, like Penny Lane and the childhood homes of the Beatles and there are the more commercial places like the countless gift shops that sell Beatles t-shirts, albums, and other various memorabilia. There are also places that fall in between commercial and authentic. For example, there is a replica of the Cavern Club (known to host The Beatles in their early days) which has been rebuilt in the same spot as the original, even using some of the original bricks. The club has been recreated as a tourist attraction, but it does have notes of authenticity. Kruse states that Liverpool is suffering from “Disneyfication.” It comes as a result of the increased tourism, but in turn, it can create a negative experience for future tourists.

In her study of tourism’s effects on social memory, Dydia DeLyser (2003) revealed that the tourism industry built around Helen Hunt Jackson’s novel *Ramona* was created as a cash cow for Southern California tourism operations. DeLyser found that although there are no direct references to any towns or places in the novel or by Jackson, many places began to claim that they were the basis for the novel. Most notably, Rancho Camulos did such a good job at convincing tourists that they were (or could have been) the inspiration for *Ramona*’s home that it was used as the location for the original film adaptation (DeLyser 2003). Southern California was the general setting for the novel. Cities and businesses around Southern California saw this as an

opportunity to make money, but the tourists, who were looking for a real location to visit and hold on to, validated these efforts through their visits. DeLyser argues that between the proposition of the cities and businesses and the acceptance of the tourists, the social memory and identity of Southern California was actually altered. This substantiates how much power exists in the imaginations of tourists.

### **Walking as a Geographic Tool**

Tourism studies often takes research out into the field. The practice of *walking* is a tool that geographers have been using to understand sense of place and meaning of place, and has been used in media tourism as well. Psychogeographers are at the forefront of walking theories and research. They have employed walking as a tool for interacting with and understanding our surroundings (Basset 2004, Bonnett 2017). More recently, tourism geographers have taken an interest in walking as well. Brown (2016) discussed the usefulness of walking as a tool during her autoethnographic work in France. She also points out that the literature is still lacking and many geographers have not given serious consideration to the practice of walking (Brown 2016).

However, walking is more common in the literature regarding media and heritage tourism. For example, McLaughlin (2016) explores the connection between reading and walking as literary tourism. “Some literary scholars have separated this embodied practice from the participatory activity that is reading,” (McLaughlin 2016). Some scholars, such as Tally (2013) would argue that venturing out to experience the spatial aspects of a work of literature is a less creative approach than that of a critical reader. Watson (2006) claims that literary tourism will ultimately

leave travelers disappointed and longing for the book. McLaughlin goes on to argue that literary tourism is not a less important or less creative activity than actually reading (2016). McLaughlin combats these arguments by showing the significance of walking as literary tourism through the lens of three types of Sherlock Holmes tour guide books (2016).

The first book written by Arthur Axelrad, *A Visitor's Guide to Sherlock Holmes's London*, book contains 36 self-guided walking tours of London. McLaughlin focused on the tour that leads to Holmes's supposed residence. Axelrad explains that the route would be the same shared by Watson on his way to visit Holmes. In the text, Axelrad insists that the tourists walk to the location at a normal to slow pace to facilitate the sense of place as Holmes's may have experienced it. Slow walking and *flânerie* (aimless idle behavior) have been encouraged by walking advocates to give the walker time to experience the full sense of place (Bassett 2004). By aligning their path with that of Watson, the tourists are giving meaning to their walk and helps them imagine themselves entering Holmes's London, blurring the lines between reality and the fictional world (McLaughlin 2016).

David Hammer's guide book spans Europe to follow the adventures of Holmes and Watson. This book is the product of detailed analysis of London's geography and the locations written about in the series of novels featuring Sherlock Holmes. Hammer made many connections between the real world and the fictional world created by Doyle and insisted that the fictional geography of Holmes's world was tied to reality:

I never really believe that Holmes had lived. I still don't, but I do believe that he was real; so real, in fact, that if he has not become a figure of history, he has of heritage, which surely constitutes a significant form of reality.

One of Hammer's tours leads to the Reichenbach Falls, the location of the final fight between Holmes and his nemesis Moriarty, which features a plaque to commemorate the fictional event. The idea that a literary figure could be significant enough to warrant a physical mark in the real world further blurs the lines between fiction and reality.

The final example from McLaughlin is Richard Warner's guide book. It takes the reader/tourist on a tour of Holmes' Peak Oklahoma. The key difference between the Axelrad/Hammer and Warner's books is that Warner's book is not about a place that Sherlock is supposed to have visited. In fact, this hill was not always named Holmes's Peak. Warner actually petitioned for the hill to be named after the fictional detective and won. The guide book, while it does the job of guiding the reader on their journey to the peak, does not take itself so seriously. The book has a "tongue-in-cheek" tone, according to McLaughlin. Warner draws parallels from the Sherlock Holmes series to things that would be seen or could occur while traveling to the peak. While the peak is only connected to Holmes in name, Warren attempts to portray it through the eyes of a Sherlock Holmes fan, thus creating a new experience.

These three books are examples of "expansionary literary geography," a term created by McLaughlin (2016) to show that readers can become creators themselves and also that tourism has the ability to affect meaning of place. By weaving fact and

fiction with past and present, readers turned authors have expanded upon existing literature to create a new way for tourists to experience Homesian geography.

### **Guided Tours**

Self-guided tours, like the ones discussed by McLaughlin are quite different from guided tours. Guided tours have been objects of study for tourism geographers and sociologists. The tour guide effect and tourist gaze are two of the most common topics in this sub-field (Gelbman and Collins-Freiner 2013 and Heimtun 2016).

The tour guide effect comes from the understanding that tour guides are performers (Heimtun 2016) and they have influence over tourists. Tour guides have been found to fall victim to stereotyping, but are also guilty of stereotyping tourists (Gelbman and Collins-Kreiner 2013). Most of the time, tour guides are locals and they can be stereotyped by tourists who have preconceived notions about what locals should be like, this can affect the way tourists interact with the tour guides. The stereotyping goes both ways though. Tour guides can come in with preconceived ideas of what people from certain places are like, or just how tourists are in general, and this can affect their interactions as well. This can be problematic since tour guides are meant to play the role of cultural mediator, bridging the gap between tourists and the local customs and culture (Cohen 1985). Tour guides are also responsible for carrying the emotional labor of the group.

Typically, emotional labor is described as “displaying certain emotions to meet the requirements of a job,” (Hochschild, A. R. 2015). In Heimtun’s (2016) example, tour guides led groups to see the Northern Lights. The Northern Lights can be elusive,

so the guides were responsible for the emotional labor of the group. There are five main forms of emotional labor discussed by Heimtun: stepping back, knowledge and expectation management, scripting, entertainment, and hostessing skills.

When the lights are present, the emotional labor of the guide is not as important, so they are able to *step back* and be available as needed. However, the Northern Lights can be tricky and are not easy to predict. Guides use their *knowledge and expectation management* so that if the lights do not appear, they will not be as disappointed. *Scripting* the tours can happen in a number of ways, but several of the Northern Lights guides created a “hunt” for the lights. This made the tour more interactive and gave the tourists a sense of contentment even if they did not see the lights. In a similar vein, guides often use *entertainment* to content the tourists. One guide who used humor said, “they laugh and you have them on your side.” This demonstrates that entertainment can make for a pleasant experience, even if the lights aren’t visible. *Hostessing* skills are the fifth form of emotional labor. Heimtun did not experience this during his field work, but it was evident in online reviews. Guides who use this form understand that they are responsible for keeping the tourists content. By providing simple refreshments, many guides were able to combat cold temperatures and uncomfortable transportation.

Heimtun also discusses a tour he went on in which the guide did not understand his role as a performer. Rather than focus on the satisfaction of the tourists, he focused on driving. This led to a group of unhappy and dissatisfied tourists. The



management of emotional labor demonstrates the importance of tour guides when it comes to the experiences of the tourists.

This study seeks to contribute to the growing body of knowledge in the field of media tourist. By drawing upon the work of Robert Kruse (2009), Dydia DeLyser (2003), and Reijnders (2009, 2011, 2012), I explored the fan experiences of Harry Potter media tourists in Edinburgh, Scotland. By being a participant observer of a walking tour, I was able to experience locations, both authentic and commercial, as a tourist. I was also able to interview tourists after their tours to get a better understanding of their experiences and what initially drew them to these destinations. Through this research, I was able to gain insight on the following questions: What motivates today's visitors to come to these locations? What is the visitors' involvement level with the Harry Potter Universe? How have these locations and their management adapted to the changes brought about by the Harry Potter Universe and its tourism? This information will provide an understanding of media tourism based on the Harry Potter franchise and how it has affected the city of Edinburgh.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **BACKGROUND**

The area of interest for this study is the Old Town neighborhood of Edinburgh (Figure 3.1). As the name suggests, it is the oldest part of the city. The center piece of Old Town is Edinburgh Castle, which is home to Edinburgh's oldest structure, St Margaret's Chapel (The City of Edinburgh Council). The earliest occupation of the site dates back to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, but the castle as it is known today was not established until the 16<sup>th</sup> century (Peacock 2017).

For much of its early history, Edinburgh was one of the main settlements in a region called Lothian. It is located in the Scottish Lowlands along the shore of the Firth of Forth, and fragments of its influence the region can still be seen today. Three of Scotland's council areas bare the name: West Lothian, Midlothian, and East Lothian. In the 7<sup>th</sup> century, Lothian was absorbed into the Gododdin Kingdom (Myres 1989). Not much is known about the Gododdin Kingdom, but by the end of the century the kingdom, including Lothian, was overtaken by the Angles and became part of Northumbria (Myres 1989).

The Northumbrian Kingdom spanned Northern England and Southeast Scotland and they spoke a dialect of Old English. Not much of Edinburgh's Northumbrian history was recorded, but this is when Edinburgh was first given its name (Fry 2009). The suffix of "burh" means "fort" or "fortress" and is a reference to the city's important role as the northern stronghold for Northumbria (Room 2006). It is suspected that the first part of the name comes from King Edwin of Northumbria.

During the Viking raids of Britain in the late ninth century, Northumbria was divided and the Lothian region came under Scottish rule (Peacock 2017). The region has, with few exceptions, remained under Scottish rule since then.

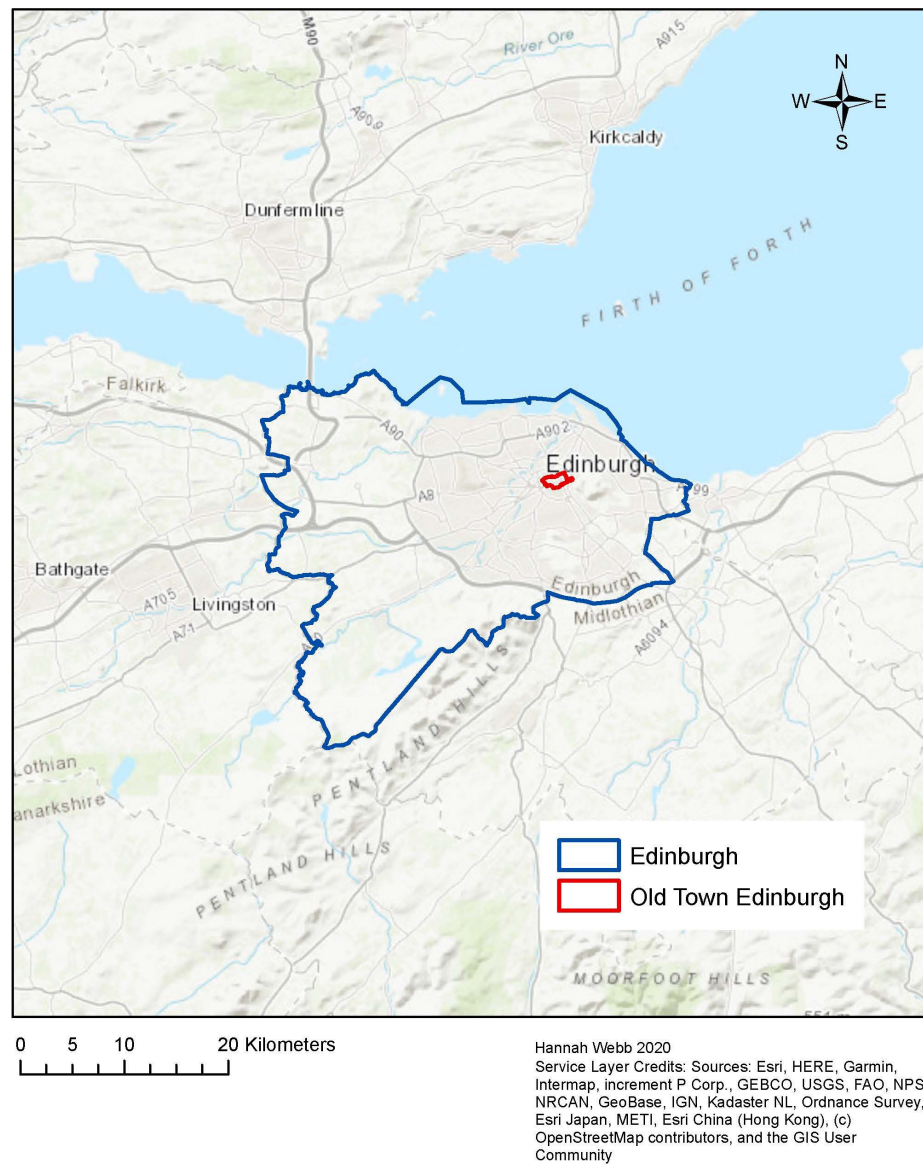


Figure 3.1 Map of Edinburgh

One of the few exceptions is during the Wars of Scottish Independence in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Control of the city traded hands between the Scottish and the English a few times (Peacock 2017). In a treaty between the English and the Scots, a large section of southern Scotland, including Edinburgh, were given to Scotland by Edward III of England (Lynch, 2011). Scotland did lose one of its main trading ports, so Edinburgh quickly became vital to the Scottish economy.

Many goods were traded via the port of Leith, a small community just north of Edinburgh (Peacock 2017). The city also became a hub for merchants and craftsmen who fulfilled the needs of the royals of Edinburgh Castle. Despite outbreaks of the plague, the population of Edinburgh and the surrounding settlements grew steadily (Peacock 2017). By the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the population of the region was estimated to be more than 15,000 people (Graham 1996).

Economically, Edinburgh was strong, but the city was struggling to keep up with its growing population. It was very overcrowded and this led to unsanitary conditions. The Edinburgh Town Council invested in making improvements and expanding the town to appease its citizens (Peacock 2017). This expansion marks the first two districts of Edinburgh, Old Town (Figure 3.2) and New Town. Many upper-class families moved to New Town and the lower-class families remained in Old Town.

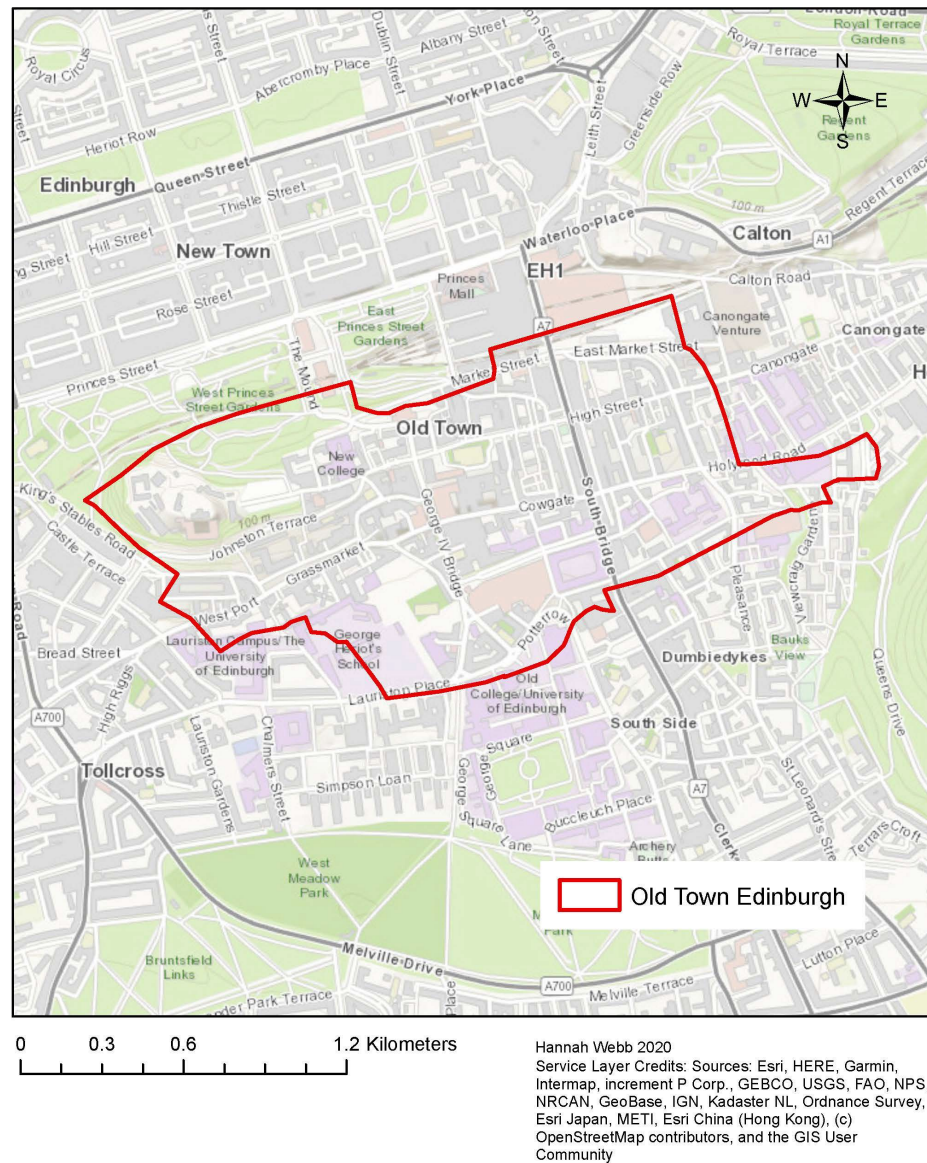


Figure 3.2 Map of Old Town Edinburgh

The Scottish Enlightenment took place during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century. Since the British and Scottish parliaments were combined, most law professionals moved

from Edinburgh to London, but the area was still home to many professionals and academics (Buchan 2004). Aside from the actual University of Edinburgh, many clubs and societies existed for discussions on culture, social sciences, history, and science (Houston 2001). Encyclopedia Britannica got its start in Edinburgh at this time and many well-known philosophers and scholars visited the city to meet with other thinkers. Because of the city's reputation as an "intellectual center," along with the neo-classical architecture of New Town, it earned the nickname "Athens of the North," (Lowrey 2001).

Edinburgh continued expanding, but Old Town remained a poor district with overcrowding and unsanitary conditions. In 1865, Dr. Henry Littlejohn released a report about these conditions and it prompted the local government to create improvements in the area (Peacock 2017). These improvements and updates lead to Victorian style architecture that can be seen in Old Town today. Unfortunately, the improvements also increased the cost of living in the area and many poor citizens were pushed into other poor districts, essentially passing the problem onto other parts of the city (Peacock 2017).

Modern Edinburgh, the capital city of Scotland, has a population of roughly half a million people (National Records of Scotland 2020). The city has a history of banking, publishing, and brewing industries, but banking is the one that has remained throughout the centuries (Peacock 2017). Many banks in Scotland are headquartered in Edinburgh. The other two industries have been replaced by scientific research,

higher education, and tourism (City of Edinburgh Council 2013). Many people are drawn to Edinburgh for the history, culture, and, of course, the pubs.

Old Town Edinburgh is now a popular tourist destination as well. As the oldest district in Edinburgh, it is home to some of the most historically significant buildings in the city. The National Museum of Scotland, The Scottish National Gallery, George Heriot's School, The National Library of Scotland, The Scottish Parliament Building, The Central Library, and Edinburgh Castle, just to name a few of the destinations in this bustling neighborhood. All of these locations make Old Town Edinburgh a popular destination for many of the people visiting Edinburgh (City of Edinburgh Council 2013).

### **J. K. Rowling and the Creation of Harry Potter**

Rowling moved to Edinburgh with her infant daughter to escape an abusive marriage (Ott 2020). She chose the city because it's where her younger sister lived. In the first two years of her time in Scotland, Rowling struggled to make ends meet and needed welfare benefits to provide for her daughter (Ott 2020). During this time, she also struggled with depression and thoughts of suicide (Haden 2017). Even during this dark time in her life, she still found a way to write and her difficulties can be found reflected in the series.

One of the many things Old Town Edinburgh is known for is being the birthplace of Harry Potter, but when J. K. Rowling arrived in Edinburgh in 1993, she had already written three chapters of the first book ("J. K. Rowling 2020). It had taken her three years to get those first chapters written, having had the idea while stuck on a

train between London and Manchester in 1990 (“J. K. Rowling 2020). Although the idea was technically birthed before she arrived in Edinburgh, the city played a large role in the creation of the Harry Potter universe.

In 1995, Rowling began training to be a teacher at Edinburgh University (“J. K. Rowling 2020). During this time Rowling also spent quite a bit of time writing at local cafes. Her brother-in-law owned a café on the south edge of Old Town not far from the University. To combat writer’s block or to lull her daughter to sleep, Rowling often took walks through Old Town and she fell in love with the architecture and character that the old buildings had (Charlie 2018). This is where the Wizarding World of Harry Potter was born.

The curved road and colorful store fronts of Victoria Street inspired Diagon Alley from the Harry Potter series. Similarly, Diagon Alley is a winding street located in a magically hidden part of London, England. It is a place where wizards can buy goods and services, but it is known specifically as the go-to spot of Hogwarts students for their yearly school supplies (Rowling 1997). Despite no official confirmation from the author herself, it is widely accepted by fans that Victoria Street is the inspiration based on the descriptions in the books (Charlie 2018). There is a plaque on Candlemaker Row (near the entrance to Victoria Street) that reads “Diagon Alley.”

Rowling has stated that she took many strolls through Greyfriar’s Kirkyard (Charlie 2018). This is a graveyard with beautiful architecture, a church, lush grass, and flowers. However, it was the graves, not the scenery, that really inspired Rowling.



A graveyard is prominently featured in the fourth book of the series and Rowling used names from graves as character names in the series.

Just outside of the gates of Greyfriar's Kirkyard is a boarding school called George Heriot's School. It is a primary and secondary school that features a house system similar to the one at Hogwarts (Charlie 2018). It was established in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and is still in operation today ("Home" 2019). This school is part of the inspiration for Hogwarts along with Edinburgh Castle and Alnwick Castle (Charlie 2018). This was yet another Old Town location that Rowling would have passed on her walks and she even ended up sending her children to this school.

The Wizarding World of Harry Potter is infused with the essence of Old Town Edinburgh. Rowling has lived and worked in Edinburgh since 1993, and her residence there greatly influenced her imagination and the world that she built. Now that the Harry Potter series has become a global phenomenon, it seems that the series itself is now having an influence on the very place where it was born.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **DATA COLLECTION**

To address the research questions and gain a better understanding of how Harry Potter tourism is impacting the city of Edinburgh, two methods of data collection were used: open-ended interviews and participant observation.

Many places across the United Kingdom are (or claim to be) part of the inspiration for the Harry Potter franchise. Edinburgh was chosen for this study because it is well established that many locations in the city sparked Rowling's imagination and informed the novels. She was also known to spend time writing at a few different locations in the city. The study area chosen is a one square mile area that features many of the confirmed locations and features walking tours hosted by up to five different tour companies, depending on the time of year.

The tour company that was used for this project was the Potter Trail Tour. This walking tour company was started in March of 2012 by a group of Harry Potter fans that met in an improv comedy group. Using their talent for performance art, they started what is arguably the most popular Harry Potter tour in Edinburgh.

The group, local to Edinburgh, began to notice that there was an uptick in tourists crowding the city, particularly the locations related to the Harry Potter book series. In an attempt to manage the increased tourism and make some money, the group decided to combine their love for Harry Potter and their performance skills to create the Potter Trail Tour.

The tour runs between one and three times a day depending on the season. Excluding the three days taken off during the Christmas holiday every year, they have only missed three days in seven years of running tours daily. The tour is approximately a mile in walking distance and takes between 1-1.5 hours to complete. The tours also run regardless of weather, they are wheelchair accessible, kid and pet friendly, and it is completely free, though donations are encouraged at the end of the tours. Because of the accessibility and the popularity of Potter Trail, it had the most potential for a diverse group of respondents.

The tour guides were willing to help and were very accommodating during the research trip. I initially reached out to them via email to discuss the possibility of working with them to collect data for my research study, but unfortunately my emails were going to their junk folder because it was an international email address. After two weeks of not hearing from them, I decided to reach out to them via Facebook as a last attempt to connect with them. Fortunately, I was able to get through. Once I connected with Richard, the lead tour guide, I was able to discuss the study in more detail and decide on dates to visit.

## **Interviews**

To determine what motivated the tourists to visit Edinburgh (and most specifically the Harry Potter literary tourism sites), in-person open-ended interviews were administered to tourists who volunteered at the end of each tour.

Open-ended interviews are commonly used by qualitative researchers. The appeal of interviews lies in the flexibility of the method. Questions can be edited and

expanded as the project progresses to obtain more meaningful answers. In-person interviews are beneficial because they offer the opportunity to develop trust and a relationship between the interviewer and interviewee.

The research team for this study included two research assistants and myself. We acted as interview facilitators at the end of each tour. Semi-Structured Interviewing (Aurini *et al.* 2016) was used during this portion of data collection. I created an interview guide to keep the interviews on track, but the questions were flexible. This guide (Appendix B) consisted of seven questions designed to provide insight to the research questions. Keeping the questions flexible is important for these types of open-ended interviews because it allows the researcher to guide the interview while still allowing the interviewee to answer the questions in whatever way they see fit (Aurini *et al.* 2016). This was especially helpful for this study because the interviewees were very diverse with very different stories to tell, but it still allowed for points of comparison in their responses. Aurini *et al.* (2016) point out that understanding how the questions were answered as well as interpreting the content adds an additional layer to the analysis.

One of the strengths of in-person interviews is that they create an opportunity for the interviewer to create a rapport with the interviewee. Dunn (2005) suggests that it is best to take some time before the interview to engage in small talk with the interviewee as a “warm-up” or way to help the interviewee relax. This was not entirely possible during the interview process for this study. The interviews took place at the end of the tour. Although the interviewees volunteered for the process, they were all

still taking time out of their days to do this, so it was important to move things along quickly. After a quick greeting and introduction, the researchers moved on to the questions.

There were a few exceptions to this. During the first tour, the three researchers followed the tour route and one researcher attended each tour after that. At the start of each tour, the researcher was introduced to the tour group so that they would be fully aware of the study and also that volunteers would be interviewed after the tour. During several of the tours, the researchers were approached by tourists to discuss the study or just to make small talk. Most of these tourists stayed after the tour to be interviewed. The rapport created through these conversations played a role in the responses provided by those interviewees.

During one of the tours that I embarked on, I was approached by a woman named Natalie. She was in her mid-twenties and was from Norway. She was visiting Scotland as a part of a vacation. Natalie had been on the Potter Trail tour once before on a previous trip to Edinburgh, but she wanted to attend it again because she enjoyed it so much the first time. Since Natalie had been on the tour before, she approached me with some questions about my research project. Eventually this turned into some questions about my education and my life in America as well as a discussion about her life. At the end of this particular tour, Natalie was the first to approach me and volunteer to be interviewed for the study. Natalie and I built a rapport during the time we spent talking. This more in-depth discussion with her allowed me to gain even

more insight into why she is Potter fan and why she decided to visit the Potter Trail Tour for a second time.

Each of the interviews were recorded using smartphone recording applications. This was a simple and cost-effective option for recording the interviews because every researcher already had a smartphone with them. The interview respondents were notified that the interviews would be recorded before they agreed to participate. Once consent was given, the researchers began recording on their phones. The files from each interview were emailed to me and then deleted from the phones. The files were downloaded and stored on an external drive in a locked room to ensure the privacy of the respondents.

While the smartphone applications made the recording process simple, it did not necessarily create high quality recordings. Due to the location that the tour ends at, there was a lot of foot traffic, noise, and wind that affected the recordings. In a handful of the recordings there are parts of answers that could not be transcribed due to these factors.

The location of the last stop on the tour also affected the number of respondents interviewed. The tour ends in a small walkway on the upper level of Victoria Street. With the often large size of the tours, it is a very cramped space. There were limited spaces where the researchers could go in order to conduct the interviews outside of the flow of the foot traffic. Many people were not willing to wait in this area to be interviewed.

We probably would have had more respondents if we had more interviewers. There were only two to three interviewers at any given time and that meant that some potential respondents left because they didn't want to wait around during their leisure time.

## **Methods of Analysis**

To construct a meaningful analysis of the interviews we conducted, I used a simplified version of Thematic Content Analysis. This form of analysis is commonly used in qualitative research and it can be useful for understanding the often complex data produced by qualitative data collection methods like interviews.

The first step for analyzing the interviews was to transcribe the audio files. The interviews were recorded using the iPhone voice memo application and the files were downloaded to an external hard drive. The hard drive was kept in a locked office at all times to protect the privacy of the interview respondents. The transcription process was listening to the interviews several times while typing responses into a Word document. This was completed for thirty-two interviews. Randomly generated names were assigned to each respondent as an additional measure to protect privacy.

The next step in analysis of the interviews was to use a word counting tool and create a list of the most commonly used words in the interviews. I did this because I thought it may produce interesting results that would jump start the next step of the process which is coding. Some of the most common words were, "books," "Potter," "see," and "want." The most common words did not prove to be very helpful. These words that appeared often were just common parts of speech or words that related

directly to the Harry Potter series. It was the words in the middle of the list that were more helpful. “Train,” “history,” “story,” and “friend,” were some of the words that sparked ideas and I ended up using these ideas alongside the ideas that emerged from the coding process in order to narrow down the final themes that came from this analysis.

The coding process reduces the data down to key words that are sorted into categories. These categories become the themes. I started by creating an excel document to help me keep track of my codes. I listed the randomly generated names on the first column and the questions on the first row. Then I filled in the cells with keywords or codes that corresponded to how each respondent answered each question. The most common codes I used were, “Family,” “friend,” “Rowling,” and “graveyard.” After reviewing the codes and the most used words from the previous steps, four main themes emerged: Nostalgia, Friends and Family, Place, and Connections Between Fantasy and Reality.

The final step was to interpret the interview results within the frame of the four themes. As previously mentioned, thematic content analysis can have some drawbacks like limited reliability and research bias, but combined with other tools, like the participant observation carried out during the fieldwork for this research, it can provide meaningful insight. Using these together will create a better picture of how Edinburgh has been affected by the Harry Potter tourism industry.



## **Participant Observation**

Alongside the open-ended interviews, we also used participant observation. This method was used in order to gain a better understanding of how a tour like Potter Trail is affecting the city of Edinburgh. There are three main forms of observation that were used from Robin Kearns (2005): counting, complementing, and contextualizing. Each of these were used during the participant observation portion of this study.

Counting was used throughout the study to estimate the number of tourists participating in each round of the walking tour and track the number of stores in the study area that stocked Harry Potter merchandise or memorabilia. Keeping track of the stores that sold Harry Potter related items was easy, there is a finite number of shops in the study area. It was logistically more difficult to estimate the number of tourists at any given tour. Since it is a free walking tour, some people left prematurely. The tour doesn't stop long enough for people to go inside any shops, so a few people took interest in a cafe or shop along the way and left the tour to visit those sites. Other people join along the way, making it challenging to keep up with exact numbers. It was also challenging to get an initial head count at the beginning of the tours. The study area is a high traffic area and a hot spot for tourism in the city. This, coupled with the usually large number of participants, made it tough to keep exact numbers. As noted in the chapter by Kearns (2005), counting as observation is not complete enough to paint a picture and is often used along with other observation and data collection tools.

Complementing helps “provide a descriptive complement” to other methods. For this study, complementary observations involved spending time in the study area between tours and taking the tours multiple times. Observing the study area while not on a tour provides a different experience of the city than what is experienced on the tour. The tour and tour guides inform the tourists’ experience by shedding light on the city in a new way. Collecting data in this way is useful for comparing and contrasting what is found with other methods. Kearns points out that his observations often contrasted with interviews taken during a study about household upkeep. This purpose of observation “assists in interpreting the experience of a place.”

The third method is contextualizing. This method is used to immerse the observer and provide a different level of understanding. We see this in Robert Kruse’s trip to the garden in Central Park that is dedicated to John Lennon. He brought a different perspective to his observation by being a fan. In the same way, my being a fan of Harry Potter helped inform the tourist experience observed throughout the study area.

Kearns identifies two types of observations: controlled and uncontrolled. The latter is more commonly used by physical geographers, but it does have its applications in the realm of human geography. However, uncontrolled observation is a more common practice for human geographers.

Controlled observations are more focused and have limits to what information will be collected. Usually the time, location, and data to be collected are set ahead of time and replicated the same way throughout the data collection process. With this in

mind, the earlier method of “counting” that was used in an attempt to keep track of the number of tourists on each of the tours could be considered a type of controlled observation.

Most of the observations during this study were uncontrolled. This type of observation still has expectations and goals, but it is not “restricted to noting prescribed phenomena” (Kearns 2005). Uncontrolled observation was key for this research because it allowed for flexibility while in the field. I was able to observe and take note of things as they presented themselves, rather than rely on a pre-set list of what to be on the look-out for.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **OBSERVATIONS**

During the three-day research period, I observed eight tours. Three tours on Friday, July 27<sup>th</sup>, 2018, three tours on Saturday, July 28<sup>th</sup>, 2018, and two on Sunday, July 19<sup>th</sup>, 2018. Although getting an accurate count of the tourists at each tour proved to be difficult, the approximate average number of tourists was 65 per tour. The outliers were the Saturday 2 PM tour and the Saturday 4 PM tour. Only 20 tourists braced the cold temperatures and pouring rain during the 2 PM tour. The next tour, Saturday at 4 PM, had almost 100 tourists in attendance, many of whom commented that they originally planned to attend the 2 PM tour, but were put off by the inclement weather.

Tour demographics were very similar across tours. Each tour had a female majority and most males in attendance appeared to be part of family units. The majority of tourists were young adults. Children made up less than 15% of the tourists on each tour, this is interesting because Harry Potter is known as a children's book series. Many people who were growing up with the novels and movies are now young adults, which explains the large number of young adults at the tours.

#### **Pre-tour Observation**

Before the first tour started, I walked around the study area for about half an hour. The Elephant House cafe is located on the main street and it had a line out the door. This cafe's claim to fame is that it is the "Birthplace" of Harry Potter (Figure

5.1). J. K. Rowling spent a lot of time at this cafe writing parts of the Harry Potter series, but this is not where she wrote the first and second books.



Figure 5.1 The Elephant House sign

Another cafe, called Spoon (Figure 5.2), occupies the space that was once the Black Medicine Coffee. Rowling wrote the first two books in the series at this cafe because her brother-in-law owned it and she could get free coffee. Although the Elephant House is not the actual birthplace of the series (hence the quotation marks), the large sign in their window still brings in a large crowd several times a day.



Figure 5.2 Spoon café



Figure 5.3 RS News and Gifts window display

Near Elephant House there is a shop that sells a variety of novelty items, RS News and Gifts (Figure 5.3). Snacks, postcards, clothing, and other merchandise bearing images of castles, the Scottish flag, and Greyfriars Bobby. Among these items is a collection of Harry Potter shirts, scarves, key chains, magnets, toys, and more.

After another short walk, I arrived at the statue of Greyfriars Bobby (Figure 5.4). Greyfriars Bobby is a Skye Terrier that is famous for guarding his owner's grave until his own death. He was there for over 14 years and it is now believed that rubbing the statue's nose will bring good luck. This is the location where tourists are directed to meet for the Potter Trail tour. I arrived early so I could observe the tourists as they began to gather.



Figure 5.4 Statue of Greyfriars Bobby  
Photo credit: @livinginscotland on Instagram

Greyfriars Bobby is located in a busy area and is an attraction itself. Many people stop to take pictures with the statue. The high foot traffic made it somewhat difficult to determine who was waiting for the Potter Trail tour at first. As the tour grew closer and the crowd continued to grow, I noticed a few people who appeared to be Potter fans. Some of them were discussing the series, carrying bags from Harry Potter shops, or wearing Harry Potter clothes and accessories. At exactly 12:00 PM, the group had grown to around 30 people and we noticed a man walking toward us wearing a long black cloak.



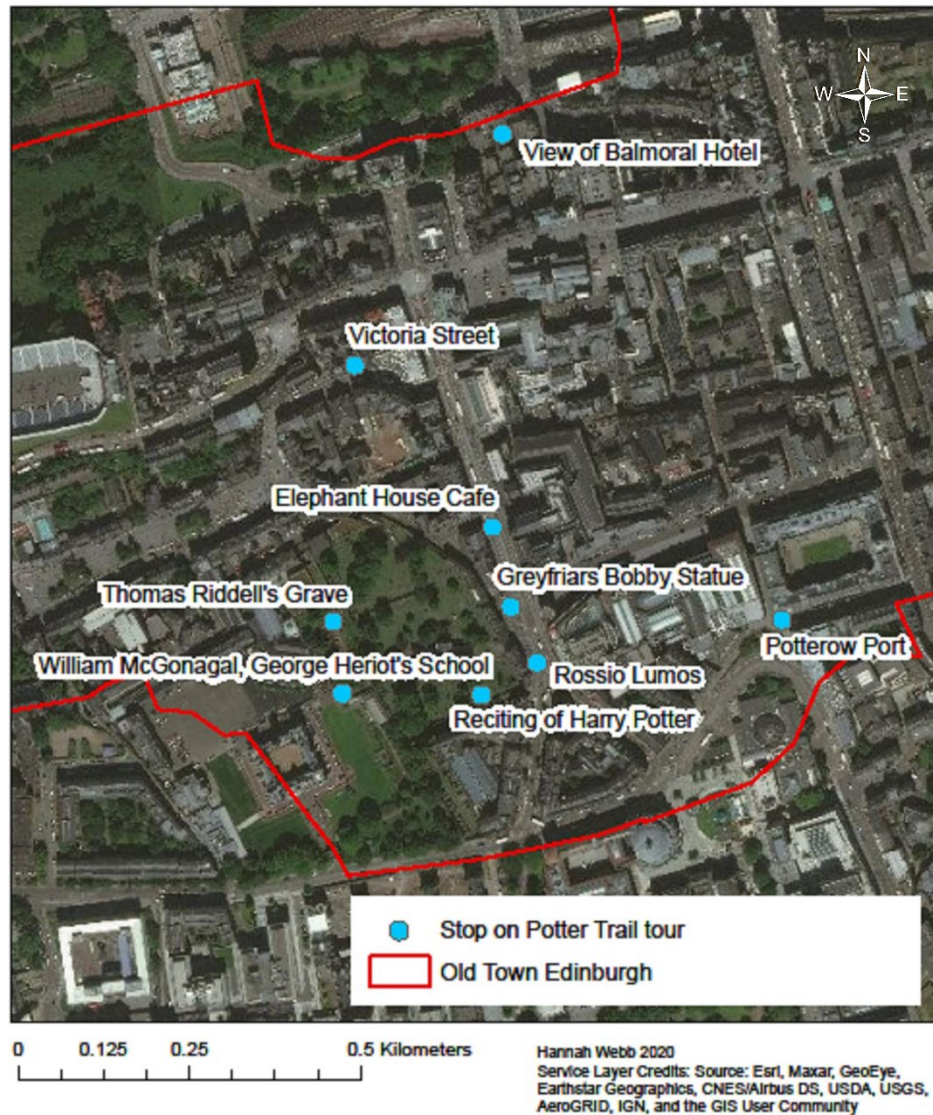


Figure 5.5 Map of Potter Trail tour stops

## Tour Observation

The first tour I attended was the 12:00 PM tour on Friday, July 27th 2018. We were met by a tour guide named Charlie. When he arrived, he directed the group that had already gathered across the street to help alleviate the congestion around the

Greyfriars Bobby statue. We waited for five minutes for anyone who was running late. During this time, I introduced myself to Charlie. He had been expecting me and we talked briefly about how he would introduce me to the group. At 12:05, Charlie directed the group into Greyfriars Kirkyard where there is a church, beautiful flowers and greenery, and dozens of grave sites.



Figure 5.6 Tour guide Charlie wearing a cloak

The tour stopped again just inside the gate of the kirkyard while Charlie talked to the group (Figure 5.6). Due to the size of the group, he had to speak loudly. He did not have a microphone or anyway to amplify his voice. He introduced himself as a wizard and explained briefly that he would be taking us on the tour. Then he introduced me to the group and gave a short explanation about my work and that I would be looking for volunteers for short interviews at the end of the tour. He

acknowledged the size of the group (about 60 people by this point) and mentioned that we would be crossing several busy streets and asked that we be patient since it was such a large group. At this point, Charlie announced that he would be teaching us all a magic spell to help with crossing the streets. He reached into his bag and pulled out about two dozen homemade wands and passed them out, requesting that kids get them first since there was not enough for everyone in the group. He encouraged everyone else to use their pointer fingers as makeshift wands. The spell involved waving your wand and saying, “*rossio lumos.*” The spell is supposed to change green lights to red lights so that the tour group will be able to cross the streets safely. Charlie guaranteed that the spell works every time, even if it takes a few moments for the magic to reach the street lights. After a few practice runs of the spell, we followed Charlie to the next stop.



Figure 5.7 Tour guide Charlotte quoting a passage from the series

The next spot on the tour was a small clearing in the kirkyard where he began to quote a passage from the series (Figure 5.7). He asked if anyone knew which book the passage came from and a young woman correctly guessed that the passage was from *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* (the fourth book in the series). After awarding 50 points to Slytherin (her Hogwarts house of choice), Charlie continued his speech by drawing parallels between the graveyard setting from the passage he recited and the kirkyard. He also said that J. K. Rowling visited the kirkyard regularly when she was writing the books.

The next stop was the first actual grave that the tour visited. The grave belonged to a poet, William McGonagall (Figure 5.8). This poet is the namesake for Professor McGonagall in the Harry Potter series. Charlie said that William McGonagall was known as the world's worst poet and often had fruit thrown at him during his readings. While at this location, Charlie told us about George Heriot's School. The school (Figure 5.9), a few yards behind the kirkyard, is clearly visible from the back gate. He discussed some of the history behind the school's founder and then about how it relates to Harry Potter. J. K. Rowling admired the school during her walks through the kirkyard and it, along with Edinburgh castle, inspired Hogwarts, the boarding school in the Harry Potter series. Hogwarts has a housing system that is similar to the one at George Heriot's school. Rowling sent her children to George Heriot's and they were enrolled in the house that corresponds to Gryffindor, the house shared by Harry, Hermione Granger and Ron Weasley, the three main characters in the series.





Figure 5.8 William McGonagall's grave marker



Figure 5.9 View of George Heriot's School from the kirkyard

While standing in front of George Heriot's school, Charlie reached into his bag to pull out a witch's hat. He asked for a volunteer to be sorted into a house. This is a reference to the Harry Potter series. At the start of each school year, all of the first year students are sorted into one of four Hogwarts houses during the first banquet. To mimic that, Charlie picked a young girl, roughly eight years old, and then placed the too big witch's hat on her head.

He explained that everyone in the group could play along and get sorted as well. He listed the four houses at George Heriot's school and asked everyone to pick the house they wanted to be in. After giving the tourists a moment to decide, he told them which of George Heriot's school houses correspond to the Hogwarts houses. The girl picked Lauriston, and Charlie explained that Lauriston corresponded with Ravenclaw. The girl, who was wearing a Gryffindor shirt, did not seem thrilled by this. Charlie then gave the group a few moments to take pictures and discuss the results of the sorting before moving on.

The next stop is the most popular grave in the kirkyard. The once grassy area now has a worn-out dirt path created by constant foot traffic. The grave is that of Thomas Riddell Esq. (Figure 5.10) and it is frequently visited by Potter fans because it is the namesake for the series' main antagonist, Tom Riddle (also known by his self-appointed title of Lord Voldemort). Charlie informed the group that at the peak of Harry Potter mania, many people would leave gifts, flowers, and love letters at this grave in honor of the villain. On Halloween at midnight, many people gather in costume to duel with their wands at this grave site. This grave of a man who lived

hundreds of years ago has become a shrine to a fictional character. To many people, the grave is no different from any of the others in the kirkyard, but to Potter fans, this location is a point of connection to the series.



Figure 5.10 Thomas Riddell's grave

Charlie directed the group on how to line up around the grave so everyone would be able to see the grave. There was some difficulty maneuvering the group, not just because of the size, but also because of fences that had been placed in the area. The kirkyard management placed the fences in order to try and regrow grass that had been stomped out. Charlie left several minutes for people to take pictures with the grave. As I waited, I noticed that one of the nearby graves had been vandalized. It said, "Sirius Black," in permanent marker (Figure 5.11). Vandalism, along with littering, is one of the concerns people have with the continued growth of tourism.



Figure 5.11 Graffiti in the kirkyard

Charlie led the group out of the kirkyard and we then had to cross a very busy intersection. He told everyone to prepare for the magic spell. Over fifty people held up their fingers and said, “*rossio lumos*,” and then the light actually did turn red. I then realized that Charlie had paused to watch the crossing signal on the other side of the street as a cue for when to perform the spell. The illusion of magic thrilled the tourists, especially the children. Only about half of the group was able to cross at once, so the back half of the group had to wait for the next red light. Charlie, who was already across the street was chatting with a few of the tourists, but everyone was pretty happy to talk amongst themselves while waiting, so there was not much entertaining required from Charlie during this part.



The next stop was about two blocks away from the kirkyard. We stopped at a bridge with a sign that said Potterow Port (Figure 5.12). This path would have been taken by Rowling as she walked from her coffee shop to Edinburgh University, but this is not the inspiration for Harry's last name as many may think. At this stop, Charlie told us a story about Rowling's childhood. She had neighbors who played with her and her sister when they were young and their last name is Potter. She has said that this is where she got the name.



Figure 5.12 Bridge at Potterow Port

Moving a few yards down the street, we had a great view of the Spoon cafe. Charlie shared the story about how Rowling wrote the first two books in that cafe and it is the true birthplace of Harry Potter. The Spoon cafe does not advertise their connection to Harry Potter's history. The building is the same, but it is run by new

management under a new name, and they have not embraced the Harry Potter tourism as much as other cafes and shops in the area. This may affect the authenticity to some of the tourists, but that did not deter many of the people on the tour from making plans to visit the cafe. Charlie mentioned that the Elephant House, the cafe that claims to be the “Birthplace,” was a place that she liked to write, but it is not the true birthplace.

Unlike the Spoon cafe, the Elephant House does advertise and welcome Harry Potter tourists. In fact, they have a big sign and pictures of Rowling on their walls (Figure 5.13). While this is not technically the place where Rowling started writing the series, at least two of the later books were written at the Elephant House and this, combined with misleading advertising, has transformed the café into a tourist site. Since the Spoon cafe does not have any advertisements related to Harry Potter, it seems that most tourists are willing to overlook the less than authentic Elephant House cafe and fully embrace it as the birthplace of Harry Potter. It is not a big stretch since there is some level of authenticity to it. Their bathrooms are now completely covered with graffiti that honors Rowling and the Harry Potter series (Figures 5.14 and 5.15). While there are no physical gifts or letters left at this spot, the wall to wall graffiti could be considered a shrine.



Figure 5.13 Images of Rowling in The Elephant House

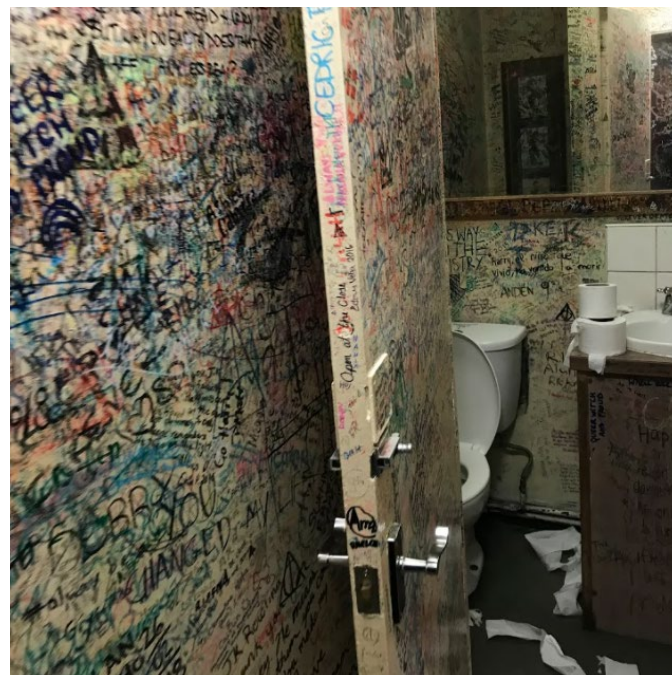


Figure 5.14 Bathroom graffiti at The Elephant House



Figure 5.15 Bathroom graffiti at The Elephant House



Figure 5.16 Sign in pub window

The Elephant House café regularly has a line of people waiting outside to get seated. Because of this, the Potter Trail does not stop near it, but instead passes by it on the way to the last few stops. On the way down the busy street, some tourists noticed a sign that was up in a pub on the tour route. The sign (Figure 5.16) reads, “Harry Potter was (probably) written here too... (Maybe?).” This is another example of a business trying to cash in on the Harry Potter tourism that supplies the area with new tourists every day.

Two of the eight tours that I followed stopped at street corner that overlooks the Balmoral Hotel. It is a bit out of the way, so it is not possible to take every tour to this location. The two times that I went were with tours that had less than 50 tourists on it. The unassuming street corner does not have any shops or advertisements related to Harry Potter. I doubt that many tourists make it to this location without the help of a tour guide. It’s a beautiful spot with a great view of the Balmoral Hotel, which is quite a long distance away from the rest of the tour. The hotel is where J. K. Rowling finished writing the Harry Potter series. By the time the final book was being written and edited for publication, the series had grown in popularity and J. K. Rowling had become a celebrity. She was no longer able to write at her favorite cafes in Edinburgh. Instead, she rented a suite in the hotel to stay in to finish the book in peace. That suite is now known as the J. K. Rowling Suite and can be booked for \$1650 GBP per night. Along with the usual luxurious amenities, the suite also includes several “magical”



details like a brass owl knocker on the door and a signed note from Rowling from the day she finished the series.

The final stop on the tour is Victoria Street (Figure 5.17). The tour guides lead the tour up to the terrace above the street so that everyone could get a nice view of the beautiful street. The winding street is home to several beautiful shops and restaurants. Many of the buildings are brightly colored and features window boxes with lush floral arrangements. Sometimes there are even banners strung across the street. The shop faces are nicely decorated and the street is always full of people window shopping. There are two Harry Potter shops on this street, Museum Context (Figure 5.18) and The Boy Wizard (Figure 5.19). Both of these shops sell licensed Harry Potter merchandise, but Museum Context also sells other items as well as unofficial Harry Potter memorabilia.



Figure 5.17 Victoria Street



Figure 5.18 Museum Context window display



Figure 5.19 The Boy Wizard store front

When we visited Museum context, there were many pieces of fan art for sale. Posters, post cards, and cards decorated with handmade Harry Potter inspired art, but these items are not licensed. They also carry other “magical delights and curated curiosities” according to their website. I noticed that many of the places that carried Harry Potter merchandise also offered cheaper off-brand unlicensed merchandise as well. For example, they may carry graphic shirts that reference magic, but don’t directly use Harry Potter images or quotes, or they may have scarfs that match the house colors of Hogwarts.

On the terrace while looking down at Victoria Street, there are two final stories shared by the tour guides. The first story is about how this street is most likely the inspiration for Diagon Alley in the Harry Potter books. Based on the description in the books, many people believe that it’s true, but there is no official word from Rowling herself. One specific clue that people get from Victoria Street is a joke shop on the street that features a giant pair of novelty glasses above the doorway (Figure 5.20). This joke shop, Aha Ha Ha Jokes & Novelties, is said to have inspired Weasleys’ Wizard Wheezes, which is a magical joke shop in the series. The tour guides go on to say that the joke shop is not welcoming of Harry Potter tourists and that they do not want the attention from Harry Potter tourists. When I eventually visited this store, they actually did carry any Harry Potter merchandise and had some of these products advertised in their windows (Figure 5.21).





Figure 5.20 Aha Ha Ha Jokes & Novelties store front



Figure 5.21 Aha Ha Ha Jokes & Novelties window display

The final story of the tour is a story about a special book release. Before the release of *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*, Rowling created a contest and she had children write reports about the book launch for their local newspapers. She chose a few special kids and invited them and their families to a special book release party at Edinburgh Castle (Figure 5.22). The kids were brought in by carriages and fed a feast similar to the ones described in the books. There were other activities provided throughout the evening and just before midnight, Rowling made her appearance and read a passage from the book. Every kid left with their own copy of the book.

The tour guides officially end the tour by thanking everyone and passing around the witch's hat for donations. At this time, they reminded everyone that I would be taking volunteers to interview.

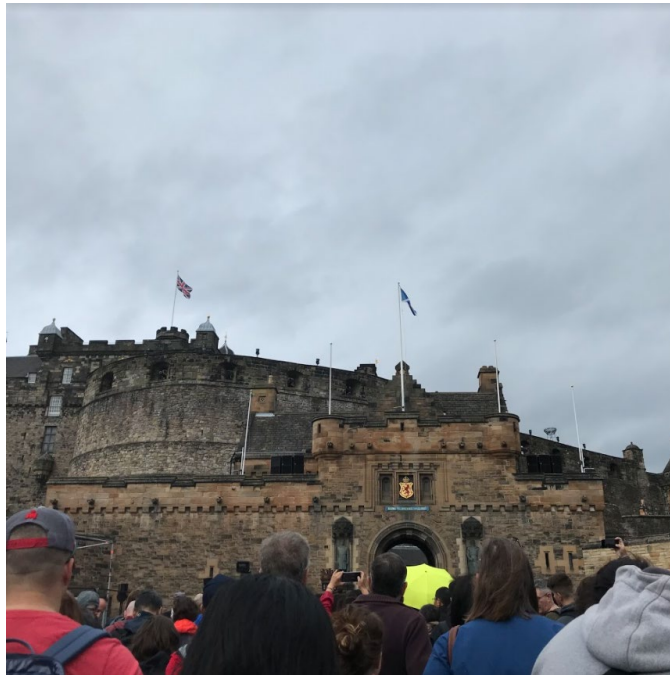


Figure 5.22 Edinburgh Castle

## **CHAPTER VI**

### **INTERVIEW ANALYSIS**

Over the course of three days, the interviewers were able to conduct a total of 35 interviews. Due to bad wind and user error, three of the recordings were not usable, so we had a total of 32 usable interviews. Only four of the respondents were male, the remaining 28 were female. Not everyone felt comfortable giving their age, but the average of those who did was 31. The youngest was 20 and the oldest was 64. All of the respondents were in Edinburgh for leisure and most of them found out about the tour through online searches. A few of them had heard about it through word of mouth, and one of them had been on the tour during a previous trip to Scotland. Everyone on the tour enjoyed the experience, though two people did complain about the size of the tour groups. This tour is enjoyable for everyone because the guides talk about Harry Potter within the context of Edinburgh's history, so there is still content that is enjoyable for those who are not fans of the series.

During the analysis of the interviews the topic of connection showed up repeatedly. This was something I expected based on the previous literature. The purpose of tours such these is to find new connections to books, movies, and music. The Potter Trail tour has between 6 to 10 stops (dependent on the time of day and the size of the group) and each one offers a unique story and point of connection to the books, the movies, and the author herself. Within the idea of connection, four main themes emerged: nostalgia, family and friends, history, and fantasy.

## Nostalgia

The Harry Potter series became popular in the late 1990s and early 2000s. The children from that time period are now young adults and many of them latched on to the coming of age story of Harry and his friends. The books and movies were released over a fourteen-year period and young fans grew up alongside their favorite characters. The Potter Trail tour gives fans the opportunity to connect to the series in a new way, and for the young adults on the tour, it triggered a nostalgic response.

Just I love Harry Potter loads. I have since I was a kid. This tour kind of took me back, especially the part about the kids who got to go to the castle. I wish I had known about that. But even as an adult it surprises me by how much is crammed into the stories and how amazing they are. Jess, 24

Jess expressed her fondness for the series and mentioned that the tour reminded her of her own childhood. Specifically, the story about the children who were selected to participate in the special midnight release of the final book at Edinburgh Castle. Hearing the story about a few lucky children evoked feelings of nostalgia, or perhaps a longing for a different childhood in which she would have been able to take part in the special midnight release.

My son and I were just talking and I bought him his first Harry Potter book in 1998, when he was eight. We have Harry Potter wands at home. We've been to the show as well. And now this tour. Loads of good times. Jenny, 64

Well I started to read them because my daughter was about six years old and the mothers of her friends, they read the books. ... Then I started to read them together with my daughter. I enjoyed them and now this stuff reminds me of my little girl, but she isn't little anymore. Mary, 50

The Potter Trail tour was added to Jenny's list of Harry Potter related experiences that she's had with her son who started reading the books at a young age. The series has provided entertainment to her family for over a decade and has left positive and lasting memories in her mind. Similarly, Mary states that "this stuff," presumably Harry Potter related things like Potter Trail, remind her of when her daughter was young.

So the Harry Potter series was one of the first books I ever read. I started reading it late. I didn't really read until I was thirteen, I barely read books, but Harry Potter's books helped me learn. I had not watched the others. I had watched some. Back where I live we don't have cinemas. I really wanted to watch it in a cinema but I could not. It wasn't that bad. ... The story about her [Rowling's] childhood reminded me of when I was first learning and reading the books. We used to play imaginary games. Simpler times. Safuan, 21

Safuan's connection to the series may not go back to his early childhood, but it is still significant to his development. Growing up in India, he was not exposed to Harry Potter until his early teens. He heard about the movies as they were premiering but his village did not have a theater, so he did not get to see the movies. He decided to start reading the books and they became a tool to further his reading abilities. Using the series in this way solidified his connection to it and attending the Potter Trail tour made him remember the days when he was young and first learning to read.

The Harry Potter series, although loved by people of all ages, is first and foremost a children's series. For a lot of the young adults on the tour, they bonded to the series and characters at a young age. The older tourists reported watching their children make these bonds, even though they may not have directly connected with the series in the same way. As shown in the interview results, the tour allowed tourists the

opportunity to stroll down memory lane, revisiting something that was so important to them in their past, while also learning more about the series and creating new memories.

The theme of nostalgia actually had quite a bit of overlap with the next theme, family and friends. For many of the older respondents, their nostalgic experience on the tour was connected to their children. When they think of the series, they think of the connection it helped them make with their children many years ago.

### **Family and Friends**

Throughout my observation of the tour, I saw only a handful of solo tourists. Although there has been a rise in solo tourism as of late, leisure travel is something that is usually done with friends or families. In the interviews I saw a trend of connection involving these relationships. In most of these cases, the tour as a whole sparked the connection rather than a specific point on the tour.

For example, several of the interview respondents were marginally involved with the Harry Potter universe, but they were on the tour because of the interest level of their friend or family member. When asked what brought them to the tour, they had the following responses:

My daughter. We came here because she wanted to. Ryan, 48

She (friend) read it on the internet and we thought it would be nice. Ireland, 25

Another example is respondents who heard about the tour and thought that one of their loved ones would really enjoy it. By bringing them to the tour, they created a new

memory together and a new point of connection for their relationship.

I went on the tour two years ago with my classmates and we are back in Edinburgh now and my mom's here. And I wanted to show her because she is a fan as well. And I liked it so much that I knew she would love it to. We had a great time together. Natalie, 22

My daughter has seen them [the films] many times. She's read all the books. She also has clothes, hats, shampoo even. When I saw the tour on Tripadvisor, I knew I had to bring her here and she loved it. Isabella, 51

We wanted to visit Edinburgh and looked up what could be fun with the kids. I also saw that this was award winning and thought it would be good and it was. The kids had such a fun time with the wands and the spell. Tanya, 43

Another interesting example of relationship connection comes from Stefani. "When the first book came out, my grandmother gave it to me. We read together a lot. I think she would have really enjoyed this tour too. I wish she could have been here."

Although Stefani's grandmother was not able to attend the tour, it still sparked memories of her relationship with her grandmother. Carrying her grandmother's memory during the tour and wishing for her to participate in the tour suggests that the tour created a new connection between Stefani and her grandmother even though only one of them was able to attend.

Although some of the respondents were not as excited about the tour as others, they still showed up with their friend or family member to let them do something they would really enjoy. For others, they brought or attended with someone they love because they would both enjoy the tour. This created a special memory for them. Interestingly, the tour didn't just create a connection for living relatives. Stefani

reported that while on the tour, she was thinking of her grandmother who had passed, wishing that they could have shared the moment together. Stefani's grandmother was not there in person, but she was certainly there in spirit, and that made the tour even more special.

The Potter Trail tour is obviously Harry Potter centric, however, since the series was heavily inspired by the United Kingdom and the city of Edinburgh, the tour also covers some of the history of the region. The next theme that came out of the interview process is not about connection to people, but a connection to place and the history of how the series came to be.

## **Place**

From poetry and literary figures to politicians and historical events, many local stories were shared during the tour. Only nine of the respondents were from the United Kingdom and none of them were from Scotland. For many tourists, stops on the tour became points of connection to the history of the series and the area.

Most respondents shared that their favorite part of the tour was the first location, Greyfriar's Kirkyard. This is a popular place to visit for Potter fans, paranormal enthusiasts, and people interested in the history of Edinburgh. The draw for Potter fans is the fact that J. K. Rowling would take breaks from writing by walking through the kirkyard. She has also admitted to using some names from grave markers in her writing.

(What was your favorite part of the tour?)



The graveyard. It was cool to see where she used to walk and how she found the names. Britta, 20

I think the cemetery. Particularly seeing McGonagall and hearing the story about Miss Jean Brodie. Rachel, 47

Other tourists enjoyed learning about the spots around town where J. K. Rowling wrote the books. Seeing the locations where the creative processes took place is one of the main attractions for Potter fans.

I really liked seeing the areas where J. K. Rowling was potentially writing in. I thought that was pretty cool. To know that she lived in the city and this is where she got a lot of the inspiration. That's probably been my favorite thing. Emily, 24

Oh, I loved all of it. Maybe seeing the cafe where she wrote the first manuscript. I mean we didn't go in it or anything, but I definitely want to go in there. It was the Spoon Cafe. I really loved seeing that because it was like the one thing that I didn't know on the tour. Sam, 22

Others were excited to make connections with Rowling's personal history. Her story of failure, perseverance, and eventually success has been inspirational to many people. Those sentiments were not lost on the tourists.

My favorite bit was the history of her and how she wrote it here because I wouldn't have necessarily linked it to it but the tours made it more obvious how it was (unintelligible). We've been here before, to the Elephant cafe. Actual Loren, 34

I really enjoyed the school part. That tidbit. The stories he told about how she got the name Harry Potter. She accomplished so much in one year while

raising a baby on her own and getting a teaching degree and writing a book on the side. She's a superstar. Jocelene, 31

J. K. Rowling's personal history is tied to the United Kingdom and that creates a new lens through which Potter fans can view the region. Rowling's story of failure and success resonates with people because they like to believe that they can succeed in life in the same way she did. Walking the trail that Rowling walked when she was just a single mom and not a world-famous author is inspiring.

As previously explained, Rowling drew inspiration from the city and that is reflected in several parts of the series. As she took walks with her infant daughter, she was inspired by Edinburgh. This idea became a big theme in our responses.

Connecting the reality of Edinburgh, a several-hundred-year-old city, with the fantasy of the Harry Potter series was a high point for the tourists.

### **Connections Between Fantasy and Reality**

Almost every stop on the tour is something that inspired the books or movies, so it is expected that many tourists would find these locations to be points of connection to the fantasy world that they love. In some cases, the line between reality and fiction is blurred and tourists are able to step into the realm of magic.

The graveyard. That was pretty amazing. It has this Harry Potter touch to it that makes you feel like you're one of the characters as well. Markus, 24

The part where they showed us the school and did the little sorting ceremony. Made me feel like a witch! Tess, 26

I started to learn about Harry Potter when I was a kid, but I didn't really understand it when I was a kid. It was really about five years ago when I started watching the movies again and I think I started roleplay and all these

things. Now it's my life and this tour is like coming home to the wizarding world. Salli, 20

In fact, just waiting around with fellow Potter fans can be enough to transport tourists into the world of Harry Potter.

The very beginning, the meeting place because we all had to find the same place to meet. So, you start looking for clues and then slowly you start to see someone with a Hufflepuff t-shirt or with a necklace. It felt like we were all just gonna grab onto a portkey (magical teleportation device). Best beginning ever. Stacy, 20

Similarly, the performance carried out by the tour guides was also important for some fans to cross the boundary between the real world and the wizarding world. A script was developed by the tour guides and is followed closely during each tour. It involves storytelling and the teaching of a magic spell.

From the very beginning of the tour, the guides explain that they are wizards and will be leading them on the tour, then they teach everyone a spell that “turns green lights red” so the group can safely cross the street. This gets the tourists into the spirit right away. The tour guide performance is important because it also shows the tourists that the guides are fans of the series themselves. This creates an instant connection from tourist to tour guide based on that one common thread.

Maybe Charlotte (the tour guide) herself because she made the experience really special and she really knew a lot about HP and I felt like she was my classmate in Hogwarts. Bell, 25

I liked seeing how into Harry Potter the guide was. Like she's definitely a Harry Potter nerd just like the rest of us. It's a free tour, but it's not just about

the money it's about the feeling and the whole thing and she made me feel like we were in the book! German, 21

Visiting the locations with an engaging tour guide may not be enough for some fans. For example, Jocelene enjoyed the more passive act of visiting the locations, but she was also looking forward to participating in more active forms of Harry Potter tourism.

I had a really nice time. Our next trip will be to go on the train tour thing that goes to Ft. Williams. That's where they got the footage and scenery from the Hogwarts Express. You get to ride it and everything. It makes you feel like you're really leaving for Hogwarts. I also heard about a tour that has wizarding classes and a feast so we'll have to look that up. Jocelene, 31

Stepping into the graveyard that inspired a pivotal scene in the series was a magical experience for the tourists. Several of our respondents said that they felt like they were crossing over into a magical realm. The performance put on by the tour guides aided the journey from the real world into the fictional world where wizards and magic are a reality. Because of this, the tourists leave the tours with a positive experience.

Throughout the interview process, we had the opportunity to speak with thirty-two people. We gained insight into why each respondent attended the tour and what stuck out to them about the tour. We also used the interviews as an opportunity to learn about the level of engagement each respondent had with the series.

For example, we asked each person if they had read all of the books and watched all of the movies. Every respondent said that they had watched and read all of

them. I expected that the majority of our respondents would have watched all of the movies, but I was more surprised to learn that they had all read the books. It is much more time consuming to get through an entire book series. We also asked them if they had purchased Harry Potter memorabilia before. Only nine respondents had not purchased Potter merchandise of any kind, the rest had (many of whom were wearing some of that merchandise). About half of the respondents reported that they were involved in online fan communities. These respondents provide some information about how involved in the Harry Potter universe the respondents were.

Overall, it seems that some of our respondents were all big fans of the series, while others were more casual fans who mostly stuck to enjoying the books and movies. It was expected that the majority of the people who were, not only on a Harry Potter tour, but were also willing to respond to an interview afterwards would be fans of the series.

As demonstrated above, the analysis of the interviews resulted in four major themes: nostalgia, friends and family, place, and connections between fantasy and reality. Each of these themes were points of connections that tourists found along the tour. Nostalgia was big for young adults and older adults who had children when the series was coming out. It reminded them of childhood or watching their children grow up, taking them back to a simpler and often happier time of their lives.

Similarly, friends and family included tourists who were attending the tour with family members, creating a special memory and point of connection within their relationships. In some cases, everyone was happy to be on the tour together, but that

wasn't always the case. Other instances showed that friends or family had been brought to the tour, even though they weren't fans. Attending a tour like this and giving up your time, even though it's not something you are particularly interested in, can show dedication to a relationship and be a meaningful act.

The connection to place relied heavily on the tour guides. For tourists who do self-guided tours, it can be easy to miss out on the small details that are scripted on the guided tours. There have been plenty of self-guided tourists that have visited the kirkyard or the Elephant House café for over a decade now, but guided tours offer more detailed information in a succinct fashion. Since, the tour guides provide a lot of information on the tours, it's even easier for tourists to not only connect with the series and the city, but also to authenticate these locations as true Harry Potter tourist destinations.

Of all the themes, connections between fantasy and reality is probably the most common. This is understandable because the main purpose of the tour is to visit the real places that helped bring the fantasy world to life. This is another area where the tour guide performance helped facilitate the connection. The script that they follow begins by directly telling the tourists that they are entering into the magical realm. Carrying this emotional labor, the entertainment of the group, the tour guides create an even more immersive experience.

From the interviews we learned about what motivated the tourists as well as what their experience on the tour was like. This information is part of the complete picture of why tourists are making these media tourism pilgrimages. Learning more

about these things can inform future research on media tourism, how tourists authenticate locations, and how they can affect the local region.

## **CHAPTER VII**

### **CONCLUSION**

Media tourism is a growing industry across the globe. Many governments and businesses have capitalized on this phenomenon and seen economic growth in return. Chakravarti estimates that the Harry Potter franchise is worth upwards of four billion GBP to the economy. Increased tourism also leads to overcrowded tourist attractions, which can affect the environment of the attraction in numerous ways (2016). Therefore, it is important to understand tourism and the myriad of effects it has on the world.

Researchers in media tourism sometimes switch the focus from the where to the why. Understanding what compels tourists to visit places from their favorite book, movie, or song plays a big role in understanding media tourism as a whole. DeLyser, Kruse, and Couldry found that media tourism is akin to a religious pilgrimage in many ways. The connection a tourist feels to the Harry Potter series, for example, is what compels them to seek out these experiences.

The literature has also shown that it is up to the tourists to authenticate the tourist attractions in order for them to be true points of connection. For example, although the Elephant House Café is not the true birthplace of Harry Potter, their popularity and ability to draw in tourists has authenticated them as the “birthplace” of Harry Potter. Combining these ideas, the aim of this research is to show ways in which Harry Potter tourism has affected the meaning of place in Edinburgh, Scotland by creating and authenticating points of connection.



During the interview process, we wanted to gain a better understanding of why tourists were drawn to these Harry Potter destinations. Using the thematic content analysis, we noted four recurring themes that people mentioned in their interviews.

For many people, nostalgia is the reason they feel connected to the series. An entire generation of kids grew up with Harry Potter books which created a nostalgic connection for many of the tourists.

Other tourists have used the Harry Potter series to connect with their friends and family. There were several families in each tour group. Many respondents expressed that Harry Potter is common interest in their families and friendships.

Rowling was able to weave the United Kingdom's history and culture into the book and movie series' and these connections were highlighted frequently on the tour. This connection, called "place" here, is a way for tourists to learn about the UK, through the familiar lens of Harry Potter.

Finally, we found that the connections between fantasy and reality were another significant reason that people were so drawn to these locations. Several tourists reported that, with the performance put on by the tour guides, they felt like they were stepping into a new world, a magical realm. The fantasy of Harry Potter came to life for them.

These four ideas were the main reasons we found that tourists were drawn to these real life Harry Potter locations. The individual connection they had to the series inspired them to make the pilgrimage, but the next part of the research shows how these pilgrimages may be affecting the city of Edinburgh.

The second part of our data collection was participant observation. Before the tour started, it was noted that the study area, Old Town Edinburgh, already has quite a bit of foot traffic with tourists and residents. Old Town is the oldest part of the city, so there are dozens of historical and cultural sites to visit, like Edinburgh Castle and Museum of Edinburgh.

The Elephant House Cafe frequently had a line out of the shop and down the sidewalk. This is most likely Harry Potter tourism, because the draw of the cafe, aside from coffee and pastries, is its association with Rowling. We also noticed that the majority of shops in the area carried some type of Harry Potter merchandise. From small keychains in convenience stores to specialty Harry Potter shops, it's obvious that the series has made quite an impact on the retail stores in Old Town.

The increased traffic at several of the Harry Potter related sites, both on and off guided tours, is affecting the environment. For example, in Greyfriars Kirkyard, the grave of Thomas Riddell (the namesake of the series' antagonist) has a near permanent patch of dirt where grass will no longer grow due to the heavy foot traffic and the numerous amounts of letters and gifts that are left at the grave. This site has been turned into a shrine to the fiction wizard, and it has created a lasting effect on the grave.

Just a few feet away from Riddell's grave, there is a decorative stone that resembles a gravestone, it is meant to be unmarked. It now has graffiti over it with the name of another character written in permanent marker. The tourism created by the

series is altering these historical places, because the tourists are authenticating them as Harry Potter destinations.

Another form of vandalism (and also somewhat of a shrine) are the bathrooms in the Elephant House Cafe. The bathrooms in the cafe are pretty much covered in hand written notes left by Potter fans. It may be a bit dramatic to refer to this as vandalism, the cafe seems to celebrate it as just another reason to come to their shop. Tourists leave notes to Rowling in hopes that she will return to the cafe and read them.

The shrines, along with the tourists who are able to recognize a passage from the book, mirror the behaviors that can be found in some religions. Memorizing scripture and creating altars are common expressions of faith among believers, and seeing this symbolism in Harry Potter fans reinforces the idea that these tourists are making pilgrimages of their own.

Some examples of how Harry Potter tourism is affecting the area are fairly harmless, others are leaving a lasting impact on this historical city as well as its residents. As the generation that grew up with Harry Potter become adults and begin starting families of their own, and the series continues expanding, it seems unlikely that the Harry Potter tourism will see a significant decrease for a long time.

Future research in this area can be improved in several ways. Limited funding for this study limited the amount of time we spent in Edinburgh and number of researchers who were able to assist with this project. Spending more time and having additional researchers would create a larger pool of respondents and allow for more observations to be carried out on and off the guided tours. It would also be beneficial

to expand future studies to other Harry Potter tourist destinations such as the Wizarding World of Harry Potter at Universal Studios in Orlando, Florida and the Warner Bros. Studio Tour in London.

This type of research project can also be expanded to other forms of media tourism. Due to the large economic impact of media tourism and the lasting environmental effects it can have, it is important to understand the reasons tourists take these journeys as well as what their impact can be. In order to preserve these sites, it would be beneficial for local governments to understand the impact so they can mitigate potential damages while still capitalizing on tourism.

Harry Potter tourism in Edinburgh is just one example of how media tourism can affect a city and its residents. There are some obvious signs of this impact, but future research is needed to achieve a more in depth understanding of the long-term effects on this and other forms of media tourism.

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## APPENDIX A

### IRB CONSENT FORM

#### ADULT CONSENT FORM

Please share your thoughts in our research project.

**What is this project studying?**

The study is called "The Magic of Tourism: A Look into the Effects of Harry Potter Tourism in the United Kingdom." This study will help us learn how the Harry Potter series has affected the meaning of place in the United Kingdom. What we learn may help us better understand how culture plays a role in developing the meaning of place. This study is part of the thesis research being carried out by Hannah Webb and supervised by her advisor, Dr. Perry Carter.

**What would I do if I participate?**

Your participation includes a 5-10 minute interview. In this study, you will be asked to share your experiences, thoughts and feelings. Some questions will be about your connection to the Harry Potter series. Some questions will be about your thoughts. Some will be about what you experienced. The interviews will be audio recorded in order for us to obtain accurate information.

**How will I benefit from participating?**

Besides providing the project with valuable information, there is no compensation.

**Can I quit if I become uncomfortable?**

Yes, absolutely. Your participation is completely voluntary. Dr. Perry Carter and the Institutional Review Board have reviewed the questions and think you can answer them comfortably. You may skip any question you do not feel comfortable answering. You can also stop answering questions at any time. You are free to leave any time you wish. Participating is your choice. However, we do appreciate any help you are able to provide.

**How long will participation take?**

We are asking for 5-10 minutes of your time.

**How are you protecting privacy?**

Your name will not be linked to any documentation and any use of this material in reports, publications or presentations will never be associated with participants in this study without permission. No one other than the researchers associated with this project will have access to the raw data. All related documentation will be stored either in a locked file cabinet in the researcher's office or on a password protected computer.

**I have some questions about this study. Who can I ask?**

- The study is being run by Dr. Perry Carter (principal investigator and advisor) and Hannah Webb (graduate student) from the Department of Geosciences at Texas Tech University. If you have questions, you can reach them at Texas Tech University Department of Geosciences: +1-806-834-7431.
- TTU also has a Board that protects the rights of people who participate in research. You can ask them questions at 806-742-2064. You can also mail your questions to the Human Research Protection Program, Office of the Vice President for Research, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas 79409 or email them to [hrpp@ttu.edu](mailto:hrpp@ttu.edu).

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

This consent form is not valid after 08/31/2018.

Rev: July 2018

## **APPENDIX B**

### **INTERVIEW GUIDE**

#### Open-Ended Questions for Tourists:

What is your name, age, and country of residency?

What is your involvement level with the Harry Potter Universe? (For example, have you read the books and/or fanfiction, watched the movies, played video games, purchased Harry Potter themed memorabilia?)

What brought you to this tour (or location) today?

If you were not a Harry Potter fan, do you think you would still be interested in taking a walking tour of Edinburgh?

What part of the tour did you enjoy the most?

Do you plan to take any other tours while in the area?

Do you plan to visit any other Harry Potter associated locations?