

PROJECT DETAILS
Project Title
Creating sustainable transport experiences in the context of rural tourism: the New Forest travel experience
Project Summary
<p>Rural destinations remain highly dependent on car travel with National Parks demonstrating the greatest car dependency (Natural England 2006). The consequent impacts on the local and global environment are potentially in conflict with their statutory duty to 'conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage' while promoting opportunities for visitor enjoyment and understanding (The Environment Act 1995). Previous research has focused on encouraging pro-environmental behaviour change primarily through use of alternative modes of transport. The limited success of such an approach has been measured through standard economic criteria and user volumes more appropriately associated with utility travel. Relatively little attention has been paid to the visitor experience, yet a positive experience is an essential element of a successful visit. The project aim is to analyse how the creation of the visitor travel experience might be harnessed to engage visitors in sustainable travel practice.</p> <p>Studies indicate a car based society lacks the experience that can enable more widespread use of public transport, walking or cycling (Dickinson and Robbins 2007). The New Forest National Park Authority is continuously developing a variety of visitor travel experiences in part funded by successful acquisition of Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) and Linking Communities cycling funding from the Department for Transport. This includes, some traditional modes, such as buses, packaged in a novel way, and some highly innovative schemes, such as a shared pedal bus and the first application of the urban public bike sharing model to a rural setting. It is through such travel experiences that car users regain lost travel skills.</p> <p>To understand these experiences requires a novel methodology to capture the inherently mobile practices of tourists. The project will therefore deploy mobile methods using tools such as the diary-interview-diary-photography method to capture experiential data of the user on the move in addition to more traditional ethnographic approaches to document observations of the use patterns and social interactions that make up the visitor experience. Analysis will follow three lines of enquiry:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The role of travel experiences in changing travel practice. 2. Which elements of the visitor travel experience offer most capacity to engage visitors in sustainable travel practice? 3. How an experiential perspective provides a conceptual alternative to cost benefit analysis models typically adopted in transport research. <p>The project outcomes will include new theoretical models to analyse visitor travel and best practice tools to engage visitors in sustainable travel.</p> <p>Sources:</p> <p>Natural England (2006). England Leisure Visits – Report of the 2005 Survey, Research International Ltd, London.</p>
Academic Impact
<p>While experiential research has evolved in relation to many types of consumer experience, there is much work needed to operationalize this in the transport domain. The project's main academic impact therefore lies in: (i) cross-disciplinary enquiry informing new transport models less dependent on economic theory; and (ii) addressing society's car dependence and associated climate change impacts, building on previous and on-going work in the</p>

fields of geography, sociology and travel practice.

As well as potential for high quality journal submissions in geography, transport and tourism, the outcomes will provide networking opportunities within both the transport and tourism community building on Dr Dickinson's existing contacts through the Royal Geographical Society and an RCUK Travel Behaviours Network. This presents opportunities to tap into further funding from RCUK cross-council research themes, namely the Energy theme, through which Dr Dickinson is currently funded, and the Living with Environmental Change theme.

Societal Impact

The impact of the research lies in two areas: identifying appropriate strategies for public and commercial sector organisations interested in managing visitor transport needs; and improving policy makers' understanding of the tourist travel experience and its implications for demand management. For example, existing research by Dr Dickinson has drawn attention to the prevalence of unplanned medium length car trips (10-25 miles) in the leisure domain which are responsible for a large share of CO₂ in the UK travel context. The emergence of new travel skills can be targeted to reduce such trips.

Research outputs will include a transport policy briefing document and an advisory note on rural tourism travel experiences. Overall the project will generate new knowledge critical to the future of the UK National Parks in relation to the sustainable movement of visitors. Emergent theoretical and applied solutions also open up opportunities to exploit new knowledge globally to address the significant challenge faced by tourism destinations elsewhere.

Training Opportunities

As well as benefiting from internal training programmes and the recently enhanced facilities within the School of Tourism, the candidate will be expected to engage with The Forge. This is a network of social science researchers interested in novel ways of conceptualising and analysing transport and travel funded by the ESRC. The Forge includes a 3 day summer school in 2014 at Leeds University (at a subsidised rate of £120 including accommodation). Ultimately the student will be equipped with a range of geographical skills applicable to the leisure/tourism and transport domains. Given the paucity of research in this leisure/tourism travel domain and growing concerns about its greenhouse gas emissions, the student will be well placed to exploit their specialist knowledge. In addition, the student will have developed a novel methodological approach to the contemporary transport challenge.

SUPERVISORY TEAM & RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT

First supervisor	1. Dr Janet Dickinson
Additional supervisors	2. Derek Robbins
Recent publications by supervisors relevant to this project	<p>Dickinson, J.E., Filimonau, V., Cherrett, T., Davies, N., Norgate, S., Speed, C, Winstanley, C. (2013) Understanding temporal rhythms and travel behaviour at destinations: potential ways to achieve more sustainable travel. <i>Journal of Sustainable Tourism</i>. DOI:10.1080/09669582.2013.802328</p> <p>Hibbert, J.F., Dickinson, J.E., Gossling, S., Curtin, S. (2013). Identity and tourism mobility: an exploration of the attitude-behaviour gap. <i>Journal of Sustainable Tourism</i>, in press.</p> <p>Dickinson, J.E., Lumsdon, L., Robbins, D. (2011) Slow travel: issues for tourism and climate change, <i>Journal of Sustainable Tourism</i>, 19(3), 281-300.</p> <p>Robbins, R., Brackstone, J., Dickinson, J.E. (2011) Planning approaches to achieve a more sustainable travel industry for tourism in the UK - a case study.</p>

	<p>European Journal of Transport and Infrastructure Research, 11(3), 320-333.</p> <p>Dickinson, J.E., Robbins, D., Fletcher, J. 2009 Representation of transport: a rural destination analysis, Annals of Tourism Research, 36, 103-123.</p> <p>Dickinson, J.E. & Robbins, D. 2009 'Other people, other times and special places': a social representations perspective of cycling in a tourism destination, Tourism and Hospitality: Planning and Development, 6(1), 69-85.</p>
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INFORMAL ENQUIRIES
To discuss this opportunity further, please contact Dr Janet Dickinson via email: jdickinson@bournemouth.ac.uk
ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA
All Candidates must satisfy the University's minimum doctoral entry criteria for studentships of an honours degree at Upper Second Class (2:1) and/or an appropriate Masters degree. An IELTS (Academic) score of 6.5 minimum (or equivalent) is essential for candidates for whom English is not their first language.
HOW TO APPLY
Please complete the BU Research Degree Application 2014 and submit it via email to the School Research Administrator - Denise George - stresearch@bournemouth.ac.uk by 21 March 2014 . Further information on the application process can be found at www.bournemouth.ac.uk/phd2014