OVER THEIR DEAD BODIES:
A STUDY OF LEISURE AND
SPATIALITY IN CEMETERIES

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Abstract

Over their dead bodies: a study of leisure and spatiality in cemeteries

This thesis offers a critical exploration of the leisure uses of cemeteries and the relationship between people and places in burial grounds. It interrogates the concepts of heterotopia, purple recreation, enchantment and dark tourism and uses the graveyard to extend their descriptive and analytic utility. Extant cemetery research focuses overwhelmingly on their historical role and the relationships between mourners and the grave, with only passing reference to recreational uses. Using the techniques of heuristic inquiry the study considers the cemetery as a greenspace for leisure by exploring the ways in which both researcher and participants perceive, experience and use these ‘dead’ spaces. Data was gathered from twenty-two semi-structured interviews and conversations with thirty participants and through 550 hours of participant observation. This was complemented by data collected from both site erosion and material trace accretion, for example, paths worn in the grass, smoothed tree branches, litter and graffiti. The application of garbology, or the study of rubbish and other material traces, to a cemetery site augments current practice in heuristic inquiry methodology, building on techniques developed in a variety of other settings. This thesis also enhances current knowledge of people-place bonds, socio-spatial theory and temporality. It scrutinises the conflation of different species of time in the graveyard and the impact this has on sense of place. Conceptual contributions are made by linking deathscapes with the three emergent themes of purple recreation, enchantment and dark tourism. Woven through these three themes is the concept of heterotopia which is critically examined with reference to cemeteries and the distinctive people-place bond formed between these sites and their recreational visitors. This thesis concludes that cemeteries offer a unique space for leisure and argues that the sense of place experienced in the cemetery engages the visitor in deep and meaningful ways that have previously been underestimated.
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Author declaration

I declare that the research contained in this thesis, unless otherwise formally indicated in the text, is the original work of the author. The thesis has not been previously submitted to this or any other university for a degree, and does not incorporate any material already submitted for a degree.

Signed

Dated
Chapter one: Introduction

...heterotopias are fundamentally disturbing places. Children’s games, holidays, festivals, brothels, prisons, asylums, cemeteries and ships alter to different degrees what might be described as everyday existence. However, in describing generally the space in which we live, as opposed to Bachelard’s inner space, Foucault refers us to that which ‘draws us out of ourselves’. This is crucial. Heterotopias draw us out of ourselves in peculiar ways; they display and inaugurate a difference and challenge the space in which we may feel at home.

Johnson (2006:84)

Our cemeteries and churchyards are full of life. They play host to visits from dog walkers, historians and sunbathers alike, with each individual bringing their own interpretation and experiencing the site in a unique way. Whether a person visits for the peace, the thrill or the convenience impacts on their own view of how and why the cemetery matters. The details of this individual experience, perception and construct of ‘cemeteryness’ is exactly what this thesis sets out to reveal. The data from my research brings burial spaces to life and shows that far from being merely land-fill sites for the dead, burial grounds can be rich in activity and emotion. As places of interplay and interaction for the living and the dead, though, cemeteries are not normal places. I start this exploration of the ‘otherness’ of the cemetery through Foucault’s (1986) concept of heterotopia, or counter-spaces, and use the data gathered to build a deeper understanding of what heterotopia means in the case of the cemetery. Alongside this I also use the cemetery as a means to elucidating a clearer understanding of heterotopia and how such places can function in society.

Cemeteries reveal their heterotopic nature through the simultaneity of different forms of time, through the juxtaposition of life and death, art and nature. These sometimes uneasy juxtapositions produce a unique sense of place that participants expressed as ‘other’ than normal places. Alongside this sense of alterity, there is a darkness in the cemetery site that arises from death, but is depicted and sustained by the imagination and creativity of the living. This thesis expresses the importance of tone and shade in the cemetery. Here sense of place is influenced by day and night with activities ranging from the above-board to the shady, and where the shadow of death looms in varying intensity over the landscape of the necropolis.
I have striven to capture the breadth of sense of place of burial grounds in order to theorise what these spaces are and what they can do. My data came from interviews, informal conversations that arose during participant observation, field notes, diaries, rubbish and left-behind material traces. All of these strands showed time and time again that people love and hate cemeteries. They showed that there is something unique and special about the feel and experience of cemetery spaces, and that people go there specifically for leisure and recreation. Everybody I spoke to felt something or had an opinion about cemeteries and churchyards, leading me to conclude that burial grounds evoke strong reactions and sometimes irrational responses. This tension between logic and emotion came across repeatedly in people’s narratives, where they expressed conflicting opinions about past and present experiences. In this research I co-mingle my own and my participant’s experiences, stories and feelings to elucidate a new understanding of spatiality in the cemetery.

Whilst churchyards are, in religious terms, sacred spaces (Shackley 2002), and cemeteries are more functional in their role, they both contain links between the living and the dead, memorial stones, monuments and statues, that act as intermediaries and signals about the nature of the site. In this thesis I use the term deathscapes to describe cemeteries, churchyards and graveyards. Whilst deathscape is a term most commonly used to ‘invoke both the places associated with death and for the dead’ (Maddrell and Sidaway 2010:4) and includes crash sites and battlefields along with burial grounds, I invite the reader to assume here that I refer to deathscapes purely as a term for burial grounds. While it could be seen as problematic to reduce the meaning of this term down, I contend that keeping the larger connection associated with death in the landscape serves as a reminder than these sites, whilst contained by walls are part of a larger life-scape. In addition the term deathscape, as used by Kong (1999) and Teather (1998) captures the sense of personal and emotional fraughtness of burial grounds and communicates that these are places where public and private lives and deaths conflate.

**Research aims**

The aim of this research is to unpick the detail of how the living use, understand and interact with deathscapes and make a contribution to current knowledge about the spatiality of cemeteries, with a particular focus on heterotopia. The research questions I asked arose from my own life-long interest in graveyards and the subsequent background
literature search I carried out into the field. This identified gaps in current knowledge as well as inspiring the direction that my research should take. The research questions I chose to ask are:

- What types of leisure activities take place in cemeteries?
- How are cemetery spaces perceived and represented by visitors?
- How can the concept of heterotopia both inform, and be informed by, research into cemetery recreation?

Cemeteries allow us to understand heterotopia better; Foucault links cemeteries with heterotopia in his writing *Of other spaces*, but does not back this concept up with empirical analysis. This research was an attempt to redress this omission and extend current theorisations of heterotopia. In my research the three dimensions of purple recreation, dark tourism and enchantment flow from the way in which heterotopia plays out in the cemetery and all the curious activities that take place there reinforce the idea of heterotopia. These three strands feed in to my overall aim of critically evaluating the relationship between perception and use of the cemetery and theorising leisure and spatiality in deathscapes. Jackson (1967) argues that cemeteries no longer have a purpose in society and so I seek to understand the veracity behind this claim.

I come to this research as an individual with numerous experiences of recreation in deathscapes, covering a very broad spectrum from anti-social to botanical. It is important for me to show transparency in this research since this very active and enthusiastic history of graveyard use has informed my research from inception to the present day. As a child I played in village churchyards, finding entertainment in lurking behind gravestones in order to leap out and disrupt weddings, or reading inscriptions and telling scary stories. My sisters and I all remember the grave of the lady killed by an avalanche on her honeymoon, thrilled by the fact that the very rock that crushed her now lay above her in death. Later in life and less innocently, I found the churchyard to be the perfect secluded space for teenage exploits and deviant or so-called ‘purple leisure’ (Curtis 1979, Caldwell and Smith 2006). As an adult I seem to have gravitated towards the more acceptable end of the leisure spectrum and become involved in greenspace activities such as botanical forays and dog walking. In addition, on my holidays I have always sought out dark tourism, the touristic phenomenon of visiting sites associated with death and disasters (Sharpley 2009), primarily due to my love of graveyards. Added together this assemblage of
interests and experiences has given me great insight into the secret life of the cemetery. My own experiences have also suggested three broad themes of purple leisure, dark tourism and enchantment, which are echoed throughout the research in other participant’s narratives and stories inspired by litter and graffiti. Coming to the field with the recognition that my history will impact on my research does also present challenges in design, delivery and analysis. It is with this in mind that I specifically chose heuristic inquiry as a method and methodology that valued, and indeed exploited, my own place within the research. This is further discussed in chapter three of this thesis.

The history of deathscapes
This thesis, then, examines what goes on in the cemetery alongside the ‘official’ business of burial, mourning and land management. With regard to cemeteries, the bulk of the literature and the focus of much recent research and writing is around attitudes to the corpse, the cemetery and grief, the history and development of cemeteries, cemetery landscapes and conservation (eg Sloane 1995; Winter 1997; Rugg 1998; Reimers 1999; Rugg 2000; Cooper 2001; Francis 2003; Bachelor 2004; Francis et al. 2005). While history per se is not of primary relevance to the research questions posed here, a brief consideration of some of the main strands that arise from this literature does serve to illuminate something of the sense of place of the cemetery, and the amenity role that deathscapes played from mediaeval times onwards. Many authors hint at recreational activities taking place in the present day (Greenoak 1993; Dunk and Rugg 1994; Worpole 1997; DTLR 2002); others supply historical accounts (eg Lindon-Ward 1989); and authors of fiction frequently use the cemetery as a backdrop to a wide variety of leisure pursuits (eg Meade Falkner 1980; Kassel 1991; Athkins 1992; Breslin 1995; Hutchens 1999; Chevalier 2001) but none are directly concerned with leisure as the central focus of their work.

Some of the history of burial grounds and their alternative uses does have relevance to my research, setting a precedent for leisure activities and understandings today. To take the objective space of the cemetery back to its origins is to understand that the primary role of this site is for the disposal of the dead (Loudon 1981). In Britain and across the Western world there is a trend for burial or entombing of the dead, with the aim of protecting the health of the living through speedy and effective decay of the body (Loudon 1981). From about the eighth century burial took place in churchyards which were
traditionally located at the heart of the community. By the thirteenth century it seems that churchyards already had a thriving social role, apparently playing host to activities as diverse as gambling, theatrical performances, music and dancing (Ariès 1994:1). The pleasant atmosphere of the churchyard changed through time, however and by the late 1800’s many urban churchyards were full to overflow, and extremely unsanitary (Curl 2001). These conditions were one of the main drivers for the development of cemeteries and protection of the health of the living was the reason that many of the first cemeteries, unlike churchyards, were located away from towns and cities.

An additional advantage conferred by a presumed more hygienic, rural location was the possibility of burying the dead within an Arcadian setting – this was the birth of the so-called ‘garden cemetery’ (Francis et al. 2005). The creation and maintenance of attractively landscaped cemeteries was supposed to have the benefit of providing support and comfort to the bereaved (Ariès 1994; Tarlow 2000). Curl (2002) credits Loudon further as being amongst the first of his time to envisage that properly designed and managed cemeteries could become pleasure-grounds and provide a setting for ‘contemplative recreation’ (2002:253). Loudon articulates this Victorian agenda:

> The main object of a burial-ground is, the disposal of the remains of the dead… A secondary object is, or ought to be, the improvement of the moral sentiments and general taste of all classes, and more especially of the great masses of society. (1981:1)

Alongside moral education, artistic sensibilities, too, were fostered by the ever more elaborate sculptures and monuments on display at a time when public art was very limited (Ciregna 2004). The supposed transition from general community space to morally instructional space may have been well intended and may have increased visitor numbers enormously but in reality did not change recreational uses of burial ground sites completely. Lindon-Ward (1989:317) describes how visitors still came to seek “present pleasures” rather than moral guidance, causing cemeteries to suffer vandalism and destruction of property as well as playing host to activities from horse racing to picnicking. However, as purpose-built parks increased in number, the need for cemeteries as recreational space decreased (Lindon-Ward 1989).

Contemporary research picture

My research, then, is embedded in a historical picture rich in cemetery usage and where cemeteries and churchyards are replete with life as well as death. The modern day picture
that frames my research is less well illustrated, although I have carried out some preliminary work around online stories of cemetery recreation (Deering 2010). Bachelor’s (2004) study of the importance of cemeteries to mourners found that only 0.1% of visitors to cemetery spaces in Australia were there for recreation. However, rather than imply that cemeteries are not used for recreation to any great extent this instead suggests that there may be a unique situation to understand in the UK which has both a longer history of burial and a greater population density than Australia. Huang (2007) addresses the perceptions of how cemeteries might be used for recreation in Taiwan, finding that many people perceive that they have a value for recreation but she does not explore the actual uses and the impact this has on the cemetery itself. Some recognition of the amenity potential of cemeteries can be found in Dunk and Rugg (1994:16, 38) who remind us of the intentions of cemetery designers to provide spaces suitable not only for burial of the dead but for the education and recreation of the living as well. Dunk and Rugg continue by theorising that greater recreational use might be made of cemeteries today if such spaces were better provisioned, through facilities such as toilets, benches and maps. This is a sound argument when considering those indulging in recreations recognised by Dunk and Rugg: naturalists, historians, educationalists and passive recreators. However, I believe that the more nebulous groups of cemetery users that include smokers, drinkers, and dog walkers may have different needs and that their use of the cemetery is recognised only insofar as they are seen as a negative influence, responsible for vandalism and graffiti (Worpole 1997:4).

Death and place
This thesis explores the details of what people think and feel about these burial sites today, what motivates their visits and what they do when they are there. A central question here is whether the sense of place of a cemetery comes solely, in-part or not at all from the fact that it is a place full of dead people. There are potentially many other influences on the sense of place, as deathscapes can of course also possess religious and historical significance (Worpole 1997). It is also important to remember that deathscapes and their characteristics are dynamic, changing through time and indeed time is one of the themes that emerges from the data throughout this thesis. At first the cemetery landscape is one of grief; as the landscape ages, and plots become full, Rugg argues that cemeteries may cease to have a specific death-related purpose (Rugg 1998). However, Francis et al. consider that vestiges of the original purpose remain, commenting that
respondents in their research were emphatic that cemetery and park experiences were quite different (Francis et al. 2000). Sloane (1991) expands on this in his assertion that the cemetery depicts the changing attitudes to death through time. This blatantly suggests that the sense of place cannot be divorced from death. In this thesis I consider these conflicting viewpoints and examine how visible death is to cemetery visitors and how it impacts on the experience and sense of place.

In terms of recreation, the fact that sensing death is unavoidable may be a positive influence. Foster and Hummett (1995) remind us that gravestones are carved with messages conveying love, anger and happiness—suggesting the potential for visitors to gain a variety of different cemetery experiences. Landscapes of memorialisation such as war memorials and cenotaphs are described by Scott (2003) as idealized or arcadia. Sculptors and artists, Scott proposes, try to transform decay and suffering with beauty and comfort. And it may be this artistic influence or it may be the buried bodies beneath the ground that account for the powerful influence Worpole sees the cemetery exerting on the imagination (2003:22). Despite this beauty, cemeteries are places for mourning, remembrance and reflection. Woodthorpe experiences the cemetery site as an emotional one, full of sadness (2007; 2009). In contrast, Robinson (1996) avers that cemeteries look ahead and sees beyond the sadness, arguing that death is nothing more than a reminder of our immortality. Whilst I personally would question this, having qualms about assuming immortality, this suggestion does reinforce the fact that cemetery visitors bring individual beliefs, attitudes and experiences that will form the scaffolding for the sense of place that they perceive. The lack of consensus about what a deathscape is like, and how it can be experienced suggests to me that this is an area ready for further research that could yield new understandings of these challenging spaces.

The aim of this research was to bring new knowledge and understanding of spatiality in deathsapes. To meet this challenge I chose to use a qualitative approach to data collection since this would give me the richness and detail required to construct the sense of place and experience of a cemetery visit. The research was based in four different deathsapes; two of which were cemeteries, two churchyards and with the same split between town and city location. I employed mixed methods which allowed me to generate and analyse data from people, stories and artefacts. I used semi-structured interviews and informal conversations that took place during participant observation to
reveal the detail of individuals’ experiences and uses of deathscapes. This was complemented by the data that I collected from both erosion and material trace accretion, or garbology, in the cemetery sites – the evidence gleaned from paths worn in the grass, smoothed tree branches, litter and graffiti. As a researcher who brought considerable ‘baggage’ of experiences and attitudes into the field I recognised that it was important to work within a methodological framework that valued this experience. I chose to use a heuristic methodology since this methodology offered the most honesty in recognising the interface of my own and my participant’s experiences and accounts. Moustakas views the heuristic process as a way of explicating a phenomenon whilst ‘the self of the researcher is present throughout the process’ (Moustakas 1990:9).

Throughout the course of my research I have collected and collated a wide variety of data about the recreational uses of cemeteries now disused for burial. Interview participants’ narratives and the narratives woven from litter, graffiti and erosion data have all revealed new perspectives and understandings about this area of research and shown the diversity of roles the cemetery can play in the community. Deathscapes matter, not least because there are so many of them. Whilst cremation is currently the preferred choice of over 73% of people in the UK (Cremation Society of Great Britain 2010), burial was the only option before the invention of cremation and so cemetery and churchyard sites where people have been buried in perpetuity are numerous across the country. The Home Office suggest that there are up to 23,000 religious burial grounds in England and Wales (Wilson and Robson 2004), The University of York’s Cemetery Research Group (CRG 2010) estimate that there are 10,000 cemeteries in England, whilst CABE (2007) put the figure for churchyards and cemeteries in England and Wales at less than 20,000. In short whilst the number of these spaces is not known precisely, the order of magnitude does suggest that there is a huge potential and scope for leisure activities in these loci. Whilst the project bears influence from recreation and play, to greenspace management, death, folklore and tourism, I believe that it is within the three specific fields of dark tourism, purple recreation and enchantment that my research can make the most significant and meaningful contributions to current knowledge and theory.

**Cemetery management and policy**

Historical literature tells us that many Victorian cemeteries were designed to be both appealing to and suitable for visitors (Loudon 1991). Modern day cemetery research and
policy literature adds to this picture by exposing the fact that cemeteries frequently lack
the necessary infrastructure to support this recreational use (Dunk and Rugg 1994). In
addition Worpole (1997) identifies that many of our older burial grounds have been
poorly maintained. They have suffered from the effects of time and vandalism, which in
turn makes them less safe, accessible and attractive to potential visitors. Despite these
contributors hinting at a situation where cemeteries are less than inviting spaces, Dunk
and Rugg and Worpole acknowledge that visitors still flock to burial grounds. Dunk and
Rugg concluded from their research that ‘local authority cemeteries contain sufficient
features to merit their promotion as recreational amenities’ (1994:39) but did not take
the next step to discover the nature of this recreation and how it might impact on site
management. My research complements the current academic literature by exploiting this
identified knowledge gap. It delineates the traditional and creative ways in which cemetery
visitors use the site and engage with nature and architecture as well as death.

Cemetery design and management policy can also be informed by the findings of my
research. Management literature recommends that planning activity should consider how
the site may be made more accessible to the community (White and Hodsdon 2007); that
amenity should be designed-in to burial grounds (Wilson and Robson 2004:xiii); and that
managers should better appreciate how burial grounds play a role in the provision of
“human recreation and enjoyment” (DCA 2005:29). Widening out this evaluation of the
need for recreation venues inevitably leads to a consideration of the current crisis in
greenspaces. At the time of writing, concerns range from the lack of public access to
tableness and resultant ‘nature deficit disorder’ (Louv 2005), to the ethics of selling public
greenspaces to raise money in a time of austerity (Milton 2011). Harvey (2011) writes
that around a third of the UK’s greenspaces, waterways and wetlands are in danger of
being lost to development and neglect. This follows the pattern set in previous decades;
10,000 playing fields were sold between 1979 and 1997, and 90% of UK allotments have
been similarly disposed of. Cemeteries and churchyards currently offer sometimes-
unrealised greenspace opportunities to local communities and in this thesis I explore how
these spaces are currently used and some of the value that they hold to those who visit.
There appears to be a lot of acknowledgement of what needs to be known and accounted
for, but a lack of information about what the recreational activities actually are. This is
where my research can inform the professional field, giving greater insight not only to
how cemeteries may be used, but also a greater appreciation of the drivers behind these uses which will help to integrate this sympathetically into the management regime.

**Spatiality and material culture**

The second area to which my research can make a significant and original contribution is that of spatiality. Cultural geography and sociology both engage with issues of space and place. Sense of place research and theorisation has explored settings as diverse as forests, cityscapes and deserts in order to find out how these places are created, perceived and experienced. (Macnaughten and Urry 1999, 2001). Whilst research has been carried out to better understand the nature of the cemetery landscape from the perspective of the bereaved (Winter 1995, Bachelor 2004, Francis et al. 2005), there has not been any significant research carried out to understand the sites from the standpoint of non-bereaved, leisure visitors. My research accesses the narratives of a wide range of cemetery visitors and professionals. This data is used in tandem with litter and material trace data to conceptualise the experience of deathscapes and reveal some of the layers of meaning in a landscape that fits Crang’s (1998) metaphor of landscape as palimpsest more than most.

In the cemetery it is not just the landscape that is symbolic and socially produced. Artefacts such as rubbish, graffiti and desire lines are all endowed with meaning. Such material realities represent a factual ‘truth’ about deathscape activities and I draw on this to create a synthesised narrative of the told and untold life of the cemetery. Rathje and Murphy propose that:

*Our private worlds consist essentially of two realities – mental reality, which encompasses beliefs, attitudes and ideas, and material reality, which is the picture embodied in the physical record.*

Rathje and Murphy (2001:12)

and with this in mind, I meld data collected about both mental and material reality in order to pursue a veracious construction of the cemetery as a place and concept. Interviews and conversations generated a wide range of attitudes and ideas, whilst garbage and material traces showed activity locations and rich detail about visitor preferences. Bringing these data together added an additional dimension to my understanding and conceptualisation of deathscapes.
Cemeteries have been argued to be ‘counter-sites’ or examples of Foucault’s heterotopia (Foucault 1986, Meyer and Woodthorpe 2008). I take a detailed look at this concept which Foucault used to describe places that are not ‘normal’ everyday sites, but ones that represent crisis or deviance. The themes of purple recreation, enchantment and dark tourism contribute to my construction of cemetery spatiality. In addition they inform a consideration of what the concept of heterotopia brings to our understanding of the cemetery space, and how a better understanding of the cemetery can in turn extend the theorisation of heterotopia.

**Thesis outline**

In chapter two I review the literature around cemeteries, recreation and spatiality. I make a claim for the use of the space-place continuum model proposed by Tuan (2008), discussing the meaning of space and place and why a theorisation of deathscapes benefits from the two terms. Following on from this I consider a range of spatial theories, from Lefebvre’s trialectic of spatiality (Soja 2009) to Foucault’s heterotopia (1986), through non-place, to liminality. I find that the concept of heterotopia plays an important role in mediating an understanding of the unusual qualities of the cemetery and its cultural role. I reject Sørensen’s (2009) proposal that cemeteries are non-places, since by following Augé’s lead I consider that this model encompasses sites of transit and movement (2009). Whilst deathscapes can claim these properties to a degree, Augé certainly privileges this theory for places that are more purely dedicated to the transitory such as airports and train stations. Cemeteries seem to be places that are difficult to encapsulate with just one model, and in this chapter I posit that the concept of heterotopia can be a valuable tool that offers a singular insight into the property of oddness or uncanniness found in the cemetery. At the same time I find that it is expedient to use space and place together in order to best reflect the dual roles of the cemetery as delineated space and personalised place.

Following this consideration of spatiality and cemeteries, the subsequent chapter moves into the practical planning design and delivery of the research, providing a comprehensive summary of the theoretical position, methodology and methods employed. Surveying recent cemetery research reveals that it has very much been focused on the connection between cemeteries and grief, mourning and related landscape issues. There is therefore no clear precedent for methods appropriate to researching recreational uses and sense of
place in deathscapes. Starting from a constructionist epistemology, and assuming that there are many different versions of truth to be uncovered, I consider how best to gather data from people and from the landscape itself. My research is embedded in the methodology of heuristic enquiry and I discuss the reasons for selecting this methodology as the most appropriate to this investigation. Working in a landscape of death and burial meant that my research had to be ethically aware at all times. I outline the planning decisions made and control measures put into place that ensured the wellbeing of participants at all times. Following this, the chapter looks at site selection before moving onto the methods undertaken, namely interviews, informal conversations and the study of litter and material traces. I review the way in which data was analysed and finish with a reflection on the process and brief outline of the main themes that emerged from the data.

One of the first broad themes to emerge from the process of data collection was that of purple recreation (Curtis 1979) which is covered in chapter four. This term encompasses a range of activities that are recreational in motive and purpose and yet may be construed as deviant or anti-social. Examples of such off-colour activities that I recorded in the cemetery included drinking, drug taking and sex. In this chapter I find that purple recreation seems to be inextricably linked to heterotopia, with the ‘otherness’ of the cemetery site offering sanctuary to those activities that have been cast out of other urban spaces. Ownership and authority were critical factors in determining the development of a site for purple recreation. Whilst the cemeteries and churchyards that I studied were all owned or managed by councils, churches or trusts, their ownership status was not always clear to local people. As a result cemetery spaces seemed to have their own rules and norms that were often different from the norms of the rest of the town or city outwith the cemetery walls. In some sites activities such as drug taking or drinking were recognised but seemed to have tacit approval or tolerance provided no further norms were breached. Indeed, in most of my sites graffiti was confined to benches, bins and paths. Rubbish was littered, but in a tidy way (for example being stuffed inside broken tombs) and drinking was constrained to either specific parts of the cemetery, or to specific times of day or night within the site. All of these moderately respectful behaviours point to the fact that although cemeteries were eminently suitable for deviant recreation, being secluded and sometimes remote, these behaviours were yet moderated by the cemeteryness of the site. In this chapter I consider the role of heterotopia and the notion
of respect in delineating what activities take place where and when and reflect on the different ways used by managers to modify behaviour in cemetery sites.

This lugubriousness continues in chapter five where I look at dark tourism in the cemetery. Dark tourism is the academic study of visits to places associated with death, disaster and suffering (Sharpley 2009). Whilst I am not studying tourism per se, tourists do constitute a proportion of the visitors that engage in deathscape recreation. In dark tourism the literature suggests that the principal drivers for visits include ‘the search for novelty; nostalgia; the desire to celebrate crime or deviance; and more basic bloodlust; and …dicing with death’ (Sharpley 2009:11). Opinion is divided as to whether motivation has a significant role in creating this form of niche tourism, or whether it is almost irrelevant. Walter (2009) asserts that it is of little importance since in most cases visitors end up at a site by chance, happening to be in the area for another reason. He suggests ‘The activity comes first; the motivation may follow later.’ (Walter 2009:54). I take up Sharpley’s (2012) suggestion that what dark tourism needs now is greater empirical research around the experience and impact of dark tourism on visitors, echoing Seaton’s (2012) call for the prioritisation of observational research over theory.

Many of my participants describe visiting cemeteries as a tourist and I use these narratives to unpick a deeper understanding of the relationship between the living and the dead in the cemetery. This proves to be a complex relationship in which the living and the dead occupy the same space at the same time, both in harmony and in tension with each other. The apparently passive dead are given agency by the living through the realms of the imagination. The stories of my participants show how the dead and the living are close-knit in the community space of cemetery and support both Ariès and Johnson’s argument that these are spaces for the living and the dead together. As previously mentioned, death does impart a sense of darkness to burial grounds and I explore how the heterotopic qualities of cemeteries can enhance this. The ‘otherness’ of graveyards seems to facilitate visitors to transcend prescribed routes and understandings of the cemetery space. Imagination plays a key role here, being nourished by the fertile grounds of the graveyard and allowing visitors to have an individualised rather than a packaged experience.

Another area of contention is the issue of the value of dark tourism. Alongside the tangible economic benefits that can result from tourist visits to an area, Stone suggests it can also ‘allow[s] death to be brought back into the public realm and discourse…[and]
may aid the social neutralisation of death’ (Stone 2009:37). Stone acknowledges that this facet of dark tourism is purely theoretical, and raises it as a theme in need of further elucidation alongside that of motivating factors and demand. Dark tourism, then, has itself still many facets where there is scope to shed light on speculation and embryonic theory. I perceive that my research could contribute to this body of knowledge through new insights into the experience of visiting a dark tourism site. Data captured and analysed in my research will bring new perspectives and have the potential to build theory around the as-yet poorly categorised notions of motivations for cemetery recreation, and will feed in to the discussion in dark tourism about the extent to which motivation generates activity. Walter (2009:55) identifies that there is a paucity of information about what people do at dark tourism sites and so there is also clearly a gap in knowledge here into which my research can fit. Looking back to my research questions, what I attempt to build from the data is a heuristic picture of the experience of a deathscape. This picture emerges throughout the chapters of this thesis, and the next section outlines the sequence of events through the chapters that follow.

Not all behaviours recorded were of a purple nature, rather, the majority were typical greenspace activities such as dog-walking, reading and eating. In chapter six I examine the role of the natural and cultural elements of the cemetery in creating and sustaining sense of place and how sense of place then impacts on use. Looking first at the natural world, I reveal how participants engaged with animals and plants during their cemetery visits. In this chapter the senses take centre-stage as narratives describe the sights, sounds and smells of the cemetery. The cemetery seems to have an almost supersensory impact and I discuss how encounters with nature can transport visitors and create moods of calm, relaxation and enchantment. Once again time emerges as a theme through the data, with ecological cycles running both with and against the interrupted time of the dead and the circadian rhythms of the living. Heterotopia weaves through time and place here and I discuss how the state of enchantment is contingent on the properties of otherness implicit in the cemetery. Despite the abundance of natural life in the cemetery, this is also a place of death and death can impart a dark wash to the experience of enchantment. While the dead bodies are unseen and underground, they do occupy a physical space that is manifest in the uneven ground and the headstones and this occupying of space has implications for materiality and spatiality. Memories of the dead community speak to visitors through tombstone messages, layout and design of the individual grave and
location in the deathscape. As they interacted with this landscape of death, participants revealed the complex and nuanced ways in which they engaged with the stones and I build on these descriptions to argue that whilst nature and culture can enchant the visitor, in the cemetery this is always a form of dark enchantment. The presence of death casts a shadow over the experience of enchantment that may be experienced just as a wistful melancholy through to a deeper sense of mortality and destruction.

The thesis concludes in chapter seven with a discussion of how these three disparate types of recreation can take place in just one site. At first glance there would not appear to be obvious connections between purple recreation, dark tourism and enchantment. What I explore, however, is how these alternate cemetery realities are contingent on the heterotopic characteristics of the cemetery. It is the abnormality of the cemetery, the way it both disrupts and reinforces the everyday life spaces around it, that makes the sense of place of the cemetery so distinctive. The inversion of everyday norms means it is an ideal place for rule-bending activities such as those encompassed by purple recreation. The natural beauty that sits in sometimes uneasy juxtaposition with monuments and graves can facilitate transition into a state of enchantment, and it is the dark ‘otherness’ of the graveyard that gives tourists an imaginative experience that cannot be conjured up in more formally educational sites.

As I have mentioned, I engaged with heuristic inquiry as a methodology for this research. The analytic stages of this process are made manifest in a short section between each chapter of the thesis, accompanied by a photo that shows how the development of my creative synthesis mirrored the research and writing of this thesis. The object that I create is built up in layers from the story of my own and my participant’s experiences of recreation in cemetery spaces. At the end of the creative process, some of these layers are hidden and so these intervals between chapters allow the hidden to be exposed in a way that echoes the layering of meaning in the cemetery site itself. The creative synthesis is thus a metaphor for the cemetery itself, having meanings created upon and around it, and a deeper and tangible explanation of heterotopia. The final photo shows the finished object, which appears to be fixed and yet can be subtly dynamic in nature. Just as the cemetery succumbs to change through cycles of daily, seasonal and historical time, so this creative synthesis can be opened, shut, emptied and filled with many different meanings.
being contained within. It is never fully determined but relies upon the determination of those who interact with it to reach a fuller understanding.

**Conclusion**

In summary then, the research in this thesis informs the fields of spatiality, extending current use and understanding of heterotopia; leisure, adding to extant understandings of purple recreation and dark tourism, and cemetery management, shedding light on the range of ways that cemeteries are used and how these can be of benefit to the community. While these topics may appear to be disparate in nature, the contrasts between them may in fact make their synergy more significant and more productive in this piece of research. The subsequent chapters will demonstrate that there is a niche for this research, and evidence the value of answering the research questions posed in this chapter. Simply put, graveyards and cemeteries are strange and unique spaces. They are ubiquitous and yet separate from everyday life. They are at once normal and abnormal, dark and yet beautiful. And it is the fact that they are so hard to describe and categorise that imbues them with such a super-sense of place. This thesis argues that deathscapes matter. This ‘mattering’ is manifold – deathscapes matter because they are amenity assets that cost money to run; they matter because they are spaces that people find enjoyable and inspiring to visit; they matter because they have as-yet unanswered questions embedded in them about the nature of our world and our how we experience and understand it.
Engaging with the cemetery landscape
Source: photograph owned by author
Within each researcher exists a topic, theme, problem, or question that represents a critical interest and area of search. The task of the initial engagement is to discover an intense interest, a passionate concern that calls out to the researcher, one that holds important social meanings and personal, compelling implications

Moustakas (1990:27)

Diary 20th December 2004

I really can’t remember the first time I went to a burial ground. As kids we spent so much time playing in Stepleton [chapel burial ground] that it seemed quite mundane. In the churchyard of the next village along, Ray and I – the Nora Nasties Gang – used to collect things we found, like old confetti or the lettering from graves, and use them for magic potions. We had a little brick altar for brewing up the spells, but as far as I know the magic never worked. Even without that graveyard magic, something seems to attract me to deathscapes. I have been to burial grounds in England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland, France, Spain, Cyprus, Russia, Canada, United States, Bermuda, and Gambia. I have studied the flora, taught botany, visited celebrity graves, walked the dog, relaxed, sunbathed, drunk, partied, and more in graveyards. I feel welcomed by graveyards. Some visits are quite dramatic, some too personal to mention, but one quite ordinary visit earlier this year brings out some of the characteristics and connections I am starting to see in my research. It took place on the day of my wedding reception.

While the boys were off clay pigeon shooting, Mum and I went to Blandford to find my great-grandmothers grave. Mum thought that she could remember where it was, although she had not been for years. She pictured it by a path and a way away from the water tap. She had a memory of being really scared when asked to fetch water for the flowers.

It was raining solidly when we arrived at the cemetery. We wandered around, getting wetter and wetter feet as we looked for the Lavington grave. There was no sign of it, but we saw a host of other Blandfordians such as Bunces and Loaders – names above shops in the town which took me right back to my childhood. After quite a long time we were going round in circles and despaired of ever finding the grave so Mum decided to call Aunty Peg and see if she could show us.

We went to fetch her and she guided us straight there – to a white marble grave, well kept and telling the story of part of my family. We cleared the leaves off the edges and talked a bit about the people there and who used to care for the stone in the old days. Then having found it and having had enough of the rain, we got back into the car and took Aunty Peg home. What surprised both me and Mum was the nearness of the grave to the tap. That long scary trip of Mum’s memory was only a few steps away from her family, dead and alive.
Chapter two:

Deathscapes and spatiality

Wobbler said it was spooky and sometimes went home the long way, but Johnny was disappointed that it wasn’t spookier. Once you sort of put out of your mind what it was – once you forgot about all the skeletons underground, grinning away in the dark – it was quite friendly. Birds sang. All the traffic sounded a long way off. It was peaceful.

*Johnny and the Dead* by Terry Pratchett (2004:7)

This chapter builds on the concept of deathscapes proposed in the introduction and considers the role of heterotopia in constructing place in the cemetery. Whilst cemeteries are modelled as spaces for grief by Francis et al. (2005) and Woodthorpe (2010) and as sacred (Kong 1999) and historical spaces (Etlin 1984, Curl 2001, 2002) they are also spaces much used for leisure and recreation. Theorisations of leisure and recreation have been enhanced by the consideration of spatiality (Aitchison 1999), which describes the effect that space has on entities, actions, interactions, concepts and theories, or ‘the constitution and conduct of life on Earth’ (Gregory et al. 2009:715-6). However, to date, there has been a general neglect of the spatiality of burial grounds in contemporary leisure literature. Theories of spatiality gravitate around distinctions between space and place (Taylor 1999, Tuan 2008, Massey 2009) and this chapter uses the work of Tuan (2008) to argue that there is conceptual merit in regarding space and place as related but at different points on the spatial spectrum. Deathscapes have two important identities, the ‘public’ face that represents the management and geography of the site and the ‘private’ face of visitor’s individual experiences. Using space and place allows these two to be held apart and acknowledges their interplay and tension in a way that Massey’s (2009) singular space cannot. Juxtaposition is at the heart of space and place in the cemetery, and this chapter exposes the fit between burial grounds and the spatial concepts of space, place, heterotopia, non-place, and liminality.

Place is created and fostered within a physical space through sensory encounter and the construction of relationship (Pink 2008). I will briefly consider the role of the sensorium in shaping our understanding and perception of deathscapes, before turning to related
space-place concepts and exploring their credibility and utility within the auspices of
deathscapes. Foucault’s heterotopia (1986) is a key concept in this area, which I explain
before examining the explicit links to burial grounds. Sørensen (2009) makes an
alternative claim that deathscapes fall under the aegis of non-place which I discuss with
reference to the work of Augé (2000, 2009). His theorisation of non-place as a space of
transit and movement supports my challenge to Sørensen’s wholesale application of this
term to deathscapes, which do not appear to have all the qualities of non-place. In
conclusion this chapter finds that cemeteries have resonance with Foucault’s heterotopia
but dissonance with non-place. Instead I argue for the construction of deathscapes as
having heterotopic qualities that supersede the importance of the space/place/non-place
devide in terms of the functionality of the site and that also locate cemeteries as places of
otherness – geographically, socially and emotionally.

**Theorising deathscapes**

Deathscapes are locations for burying bodies as well as amenity resources for the living.
Deathscapes are unusual spaces that are the seat for personal relationships and place-
making but remain troubling to explain and define. As Pratchett (2004) described, to think
about all the bodies underground provokes a very different response from simply viewing
the natural scene lying above ground. This difference can be the cause of tension between
different site users as they view the deathscapes through a leisure or bereavement-
minded lens. The simple fact that deathscapes makes us confront death in its myriad
forms is quite possibly at the root of the slipperiness of defining or explaining sense of
place here. There are, however, a number of contributors to the field of spatiality that
improve our understanding and ability to theorise deathscapes. In the following section I
first turn to Foucault’s heterotopia (1986) and argue for the applicability of this term to
deathscapes, contingent on a re-examination of the term ‘deviance’ used in his six
principles. I next consider non-place, but reject this in the context of the deathscapes.
Finally I reflect on the value of liminality for burial grounds and expose how it frames and
focuses our attention on some of the more difficult and interesting aspects of deathscapes
– their social and emotional distance from everyday life and their unsettling in-between-
life-and-death quality.
Heterotopia

Investigating the nature of the cemetery naturally leads us to Foucault’s (1986) writing about heterotopia. In origin heterotopia is a medical term that describes a tissue developing in an abnormal place, dislocated within the body. Foucault transposes this term outwith the body and uses it in a tantalising way to encapsulate a suite of ideas about space and the links to time, access, deviance and crisis. These links are explained with reference to six principles that set the parameters for these ‘other places’. Foucault asserts that all societies have, and indeed need heterotopias, and his first principle is that they are always either sites of crisis or deviance. Sites of crisis are privileged or sacred places for people at specific times such as childbirth or the moment of initiation in adulthood. In modernity, Foucault saw such places of crisis as waning in importance in tandem with the rise in significance of heterotopias of deviance. These loci are formed to accommodate those members of society who do not fit societal norms and include such examples as psychiatric hospitals, prisons and rest homes. The second principle of heterotopias is that the society where such a place exists can make use of the heterotopia in different ways at different times. He cites the cemetery as an example here, suggesting that whilst burial grounds used to be the sacred heart of a city, they have now been banished to the suburbs or beyond with our fear of death and disease and have created their own separate city where families may visit the dead rather than hold them close by.

The third principle is that heterotopia is capable of using one place to juxtapose many different and potentially contradictory spaces. The example of the theatre beautifully expresses the essence of this part of the model, being a physical place that can transport audiences to a multitude of other un-real worlds. In the fourth principle Foucault connects heterotopia to time, describing how the site comes to full power at an absolute break in time such as death or may draw its essence from the building up of layers of time (in the instance of a museum) or from existing for only a relatively fleeting moment such as the case of the travelling circus or carnival. The fifth principle is about access. Heterotopias have very specific ways of opening and closing, and access may be limited – such as to a prison or indeed a cemetery. Entry may be compulsory in some instances, in others may be subject to rituals and rites, or may also be illusory, where access is denied to the real heterotopic site but allowed to a fabricated, representative heterotopia. Foucault proposes that the sixth and last role of the heterotopia is that they have a
significant function in relation to all the other space that is around them and not part of them. He describes this as follows:

*Either their role is to create a space of illusion that exposes every real space, all sites inside of which human life is partitioned, as still more illusory...Or else, on the contrary, their role is to create a space that is other, another real space, as perfect, as meticulous, as well arranged as ours is messy, ill constructed, and jumbled. This latter type would be the heterotopia, not of illusion, but of compensation...*  

Foucault (1986:27)

Commentators on Foucault’s theory of heterotopia are quick to point out that in sum, he said very little about space (Macnamee 2000) and that what he did say about heterotopias was ‘briefly sketched and somewhat confusing’ (Johnson 2006:75). We are also told that he later felt ‘uneasiness’ (Saldanha 2008:2082) with the concept and indeed that he ‘immediately abandoned’ the idea of heterotopias after developing it in 1966/1967 (Saldanha 2008:2080). Despite, or perhaps because of his apparent lack of extensive theorising about the subject, many disciplines have appropriated the concept and added new interpretations and uses. Macnamee (2000) uses the term to contain ideas around the mental spaces and imaginary worlds created by children when they are immersed in activities such as reading, playing video games or listening to music. Allor (1997) applies the term to the boulevard Saint-Laurent in Montreal to convey the uniqueness of this street that acts as the dividing line between French and English speaking populations of the city, and the meeting point for many other cultural practices. Hall (2004) finds the value of heterotopia to Indigenous peoples to be significant; she describes the way in which public space has traditionally been hostile to these marginalised groups, and yet through the creation of their own heterotopias within city squares and streets, Australian Indigenous people can reclaim public space, affirm their identity and find insulation from discrimination. Shackley identifies English cathedrals as heterotopias by virtue of their being ‘a ritual space that exists out of time’ (2002:345), and this final example is probably the most pertinent to an understanding of deathscapes as heterotopia, finding a resonance with the similarly sacred qualities that some people recognise in churchyards and cemeteries (Shackley 2001).

The heterotopia concept has been widely applied, but faces much criticism as well. Harvey (2000) finds it a banal and politically pointless exercise, whilst Saldanha (2008) considers Foucault’s work highly flawed. Saldanha asserts that whilst Foucault takes a structuralist perspective and considers that heterotopia is a counter-site, and that this
status is conferred to very specific types of space, this misses the point that in reality no space is without a degree of discordance. Where does this leave heterotopia? Is the term meaningless since the essence of this argument is that everywhere has heterotopic qualities in varying proportions? Further problems arise from the closed, fixed way in which Foucault defined the spaces of heterotopia. Massey (2009) reminds us that time and histories do not take place in the sort of isolation that the heterotopia identifies. Communities interact to produce history and this necessitates flow between spaces rather than fixity. Heterotopia, it seems, may be beguiling but it is not a watertight theory for describing and categorising spaces. It is important to consider, though, whether there is any social or geographical rule that does not have an exception. And bearing this in mind I believe that there are elements of the heterotopia that add value to our understanding of deathscape: even whilst the theory is not all-encompassing and perfect.

One of the most significant facets of heterotopia is that it acknowledges the impact of death in the cemetery, identifying that this break in time creates a unique place. It also recognises that this is a space whose use evolves through time; this is especially relevant to the cemetery where we find both changes in appearance and use with the passage of time (Rugg 1999). It is also useful to consider deathscape as a juxtaposition of contradictory places. Hetherington’s description captures this sense that heterotopia are relational most succinctly when he argues:

> Heterotopia do not exist in themselves, there is nothing intrinsic in the Palais Royal, or indeed any other site, that might lead us to describe it as a heterotopia. It is the heterogeneous combination of materiality, social practices and events that were located at this site and what they came to represent in contrast to other sites, that allow us to call it a heterotopia

Hetherington (1996:8)

As we have seen, Foucault specifically names the cemetery as a heterotopia and outlines how it fits this model. Foucault’s heterotopia opens up an understanding of how place can be disrupted by time and agency and underlines how place is a relational concept. It also emphasises the significance of death in rupturing effect of time and thus place, something that becomes evident in the voices of participants in later chapters. Meyer and Woodthorpe argue persuasively in favour of heterotopia even though they recognise that:

> Foucault’s analysis overlooks the dissolution and disappearance of living beings (and their substantive remains) which are deeply embedded (both symbolically and physically) in the setting of the cemetery landscape.
While I assent that heterotopia does indeed have a useful application for deathscapes, this avowal relies on the clarification of Foucault’s proposition that heterotopias are sites of deviance. The implication here is that death itself is deviant. Deviance in sociology is often synonymous with crime and delinquency, but by definition, however, it means to stray from a culturally accepted path, meaning that it is relative and can change over time with societal practice. Returning to deviance and the cemetery it is pertinent to recall that over twenty years have passed since Foucault’s writings. In this time society’s relationship to death has changed (Walter 1991, Berridge 2002). If death is no longer deviant or taboo, we need to re-examine which characteristics of the cemetery are deviant. Purdy (2005) considers the heterotopia to be a porous concept, suggesting that the principles and interpretation need not be as rigorous as Foucault implies. With this in mind I propose that it is more useful to view deviance as the way in which we encapsulate the tension found in deathscapes between the visible and invisible, secret and open, the difference and similarities to other everyday greenspaces. Taking a step back now from death in the landscape, it is pertinent to consider the role of space and place concepts in an understanding of the cemetery, and the next section looks more closely at what a range of different theories can offer to deathscape research.

**Space and place**

Attempts to make sense of the world through space and place have resulted in the proliferation of theories and concepts, but as yet no path has been mapped out to explicate how and why these concepts have relevance and importance to cemeteries. Here I outline how the work of Lefebvre (1991), Soja (2009), Massey (2009) and others can contribute to the debate about space and place, and I make a claim for both space and place having a use in the context of deathscapes. Appropriating space and place for deathscapes leads into a consideration of how place is made and experienced through the senses at both an individual and social level. Place can seduce (Cartier and Lew 2005) and stimulate the senses (Paterson 2009) and yet also alienate or rebuff (Ekinsmyth 2003, Abbot-Chapman and Robertson 2009). The idea that individuals or cultures create places to love and hate, relax in or fear, has a particular significance for deathscapes. I briefly consider some of the factors that contribute to how a place is sensed and the ways in which users can claim place and communicate ownership through their actions. This chapter explores the interplay between place, heterotopia and cemeteries and then in
later chapters I show how the themes of purple recreation, enchantment and dark tourism build a specific sense of cemetery place onto this foundation.

Defining space is the starting point for this discussion about spatiality. In everyday terms, space is ‘the limitless three-dimensional extent in which objects and events occur and have relative position and direction’ (Allen 2002:853). Massey (2009) elaborates on the definition of space, describing one traditional way of imagining space is being a surface such as the sea, land or air, upon which measurable phenomena, events and histories take place. This rather objective view, however, undervalues space by conceptualising it as purely a geographical demarcation, a location on a map. In the language of humanistic geography, space is used to denote the physical location where an activity or event happens (Tuan 2008). Space in this model has a distinct, tangible reality and can be measured and surveyed but is limited in reach; it needs the counterpoint of place (which I explain later as the personal, experienced and lived aspect of space) to give it function (Miller and Rivera 2006). Lefebvre (1991) took a different standpoint to this and broadened the definition of space to such an extent that place becomes superfluous.

Henri Lefebvre is argued to be the first person to persuasively reason that space is socially produced rather than of solely geological origin (1991). Lefebvre postulated that the traditional notion of absolute space was not feasible, since at the point of habitation and social activity it becomes ‘relativized and historicized space’ (Hubbard et al. 2008: 5). In a departure from the objective, positivist spatial model, Lefebvre posited his own conception of space as a three-way or trialectic fusion of cultural practice, representations and imaginations. Lefebvre was emphatic that no single way of describing space should be favoured, considered more valid or privileged in any way. In The Production of Space his triad of spatial fields is comprised of three elements. ‘Spatial practice’, or perceived space, which is re-described by Soja (2009) as ‘Firstspace’ is the space of production, of the creation of the material evidence of social spatiality. It is the human behaviour and activity of everyday life and the social space resulting from these interactions; ‘Representations of Space’ is the ‘Secondspace’ of Soja’s interpretation and this space encompasses the conceptual space of scientists, architects and planners. Lefebvre viewed this space as dominant and controlling, epitomised by rules, signs and order. Soja’s ‘Thirdspace’ is Lefebvre’s ‘Spaces of Representation’, distinct from first and second space, whilst also including them. This is lived space, replete with the complexities
and social life, art, mystery and symbolism. Thirdspace is practised and lived rather than being of mental or physical reality; Cresswell (2004:38) argues that in Lefebvre’s model places are never fully established and finished but are constantly recreated through reiterative practice. Despite Lefebvre’s thesis that no one space should be privileged, his political choice was to focus attention on lived space, which, more than the other two he considered to be limitless, inclusive and full of possibility (Soja 2009). With this model, the term place is seemingly made redundant since the three parts of space can contain all the different strands of social, political, conceptual and productive space that are required.

Turning from the self-contained Thirdspace model for a moment, it is important to recognise that there is still a view that space and place are both useful and different terms (Tuan 2008). When space can be viewed as a real and measurable site or location, place is a natural accompaniment that offers people a connection to the hard ‘features’ of space. From a humanistic perspective, the concept of place recognises that people live in a world alive with meaning and that this contributes to the social construction of place through such vehicles as emotion, sense, and experience (Tuan 2008). Tuan coined the term ‘topophilia’ to express this bond between people and place that transformed a site of action, or space, into a site of pause, and connection or place (Cresswell 2004). Tuan’s place needs space to exist, and indeed he uses the concepts as if they are on a continuum that moves from the abstract to the experienced:

In experience, the meaning of space often merges with that of place. “Space” is more abstract than “place”. What begins as undifferentiated space becomes place as we get to know it better and endow it with value.

Tuan (2008:6).

Agnew (2005) argues that place is associational, weaving together different type of spaces and times and this strikes a chord with cemeteries, which by their very nature exhibit blended time and place almost out-of-space. However it is also right to question whether we need these two terms or whether they create a pointless problematisation and tension around what could be conceived as a simple issue of how to refer to a defined location or area.

Massey (2009) contends that the separation of these terms is artificial and unnecessary. She questions the traditional view of place as having a fixed and firm boundary, as being closed and nurturing, while space possesses attributes of openness and freedom. Massey
avers that place must be viewed on all scales from the body outwards to the world, with all levels simultaneously porous and interlinked. Massey considers place fluid, uncertain, relational and dependent, which resonates with Sayer’s (1985) own theory that space and place cannot be meaningfully theorised due to their contingency. In *For Space* she argues that space should be conceived as a product of interrelations and interactions, that it encapsulates multiple trajectories, and that it is always changing, a work-in-progress. In Massey’s version of space, no other term is required because space is recognised as itself being dependent on and co-constructed by people and society. This is a valid point that without people being in space, space would not need describing; as soon as any location has been discovered and measured or observed it is relational and contingent in the way that is often privileged to place. For the purposes of the deathscapes, however, I do not consider that it is ‘thick’ enough to convey the multiple, contemporaneous worlds that these sites can incorporate. Further, employing a dichotomy of terms makes space available to encapsulate the geographical and operational aspects of the site, where place encompasses the personal relationships built with that space.

Ceding, then, to the notion that both space and place have a conceptual value in deathscapes and that in a crude way space is just sitting there, how is it transformed into place? Place is created when spaces are encountered, interacted with and experienced with the senses (Tuan 2008). The primacy of the senses in this process of understanding and mediating space and place is emphasised by the work of Sliwa and Riach (2012). They identify the importance of the olfactory sense, of a geography of smell, in creating social and cultural space. More has been written about the role of visual senses in creating place (for example Frers and Meier 2007) but other senses have also been recognised as significant. Paterson (2009) explores the role of the haptic in creating place, whilst Crang (2003) argues that sensory methods have an increasing role to play in understanding our social and geographical worlds. The reaching-out-into-the-world of the senses creates a unique and individual reality of the body within the space. However, the embodying of space can also be an individual or a shared process. Urry describes how place is created with a focus on the personal relationship through the ‘romantic gaze’ or through the ‘collective gaze’ of a group (Urry 2005:78). Place can excite, calm, enthral or even disappoint, but there is always a ‘sense’ there that makes it more than just a space. Crouch articulates the process of space becoming place very vividly:
The subject engages space and space becomes embodied in three ways. First, the person grasps the world multi-sensually. Second, the body is ‘surrounded’ by space and encounters it multi-dimensionally. Third, through the body the individual expresses him/herself through the surrounding space and thereby changes its meaning.

(Crouch 2000:68).

Building on this, Cloke et al. (2005) suggest that the realms of imagination - our internal, mental geographies - also shape the physical geographies around us and from this our actions within them. Cosgrove (1998) claims that it is not just people and cultural processes that shape the landscape, but the landscape that shapes the people who interact with it. Since every space user is an individual, it follows that they will bring their own unique imaginative and emotional geographies to play in creating their experience and the sense of place and equally be shaped by the environment around them in an also unique way. Every leisure site, every burial ground can evoke strong emotional, sensory and physical responses. Bull et al. (2003) argue that as places are thus socially constructed and subject to interpretation by the individuals own sensorium, anywhere can have a value for leisure. Cartier and Lew (2005) remind us that whatever places look like, or are portrayed to be, people actually visit or keep coming back because of the promise the place holds rather than the reality of beauty or otherwise. They describe this phenomenon as the ‘seduction of place’ and in the choice of the word seduction, the potential for irrationality or the personal in the relationship between place and person can be better understood. Seductive appeal, they clarify, differs across gender, sexuality, age and more and involves the willing stimulation and tantalisation of the senses – visual, aural, haptic, flavourful and olfactory.

This idea of seduction feeds in to the creation of the sense of place with its willing offering up of the body to the experiences available – the sensory opportunities. Although there has been a dominance of vision in the western world, the other senses still play their part in the creation and experience of place (Paterson 2009). Tuan (2008) claims that the organisation of space is dependent on the sense of sight, but that our other senses expand on and enrich this creation, bringing greater understanding through such broader sensory awareness. Smell in particular seems to have a strong association with memory and place (Law 2001, Sliwa and Riach 2012) whilst also conveying subtle information about the mass, volume and direction of an appealing or displeasing odour (Tuan 2008). Similarly sound has more significance than might be initially realised. In our
modern world of cars, phones, music and more there is an anti-urban prejudice that values natural, rural sounds over man-made, urban noises – often referred to as sound pollution (Arkette 2004). Such sonic pollution is often blamed for hindering our ability to recognise individual sounds and their qualifying characteristics of direction or cadence (Tuan 2008). Places that are perceived as quiet or replete with natural sounds only are therefore at a premium and create a unique sense of peace for our battered ears (Macnaughten and Urry 1999).

Churchyards and cemeteries are often given descriptors such as ‘peaceful’ or ‘natural’ (eg Greenoak 1993) which implies that such spaces could be desirable for an escape from urban noise. Whether or not one wants to escape from man-made sounds, deathscapes do have a different soundscape to the rest of the town or city environment. Worpole states that ‘the Cemetery remains a world apart from this bustling, cosmopolitan modernity’ (2003:133). Arkette turns this around and questions why the urban soundscape cannot also be appreciated as it too is diverse and informative. She argues that the familiar man-made sounds can reassure and serve to create sense of place and community. In the city cemetery it is important to remember that whilst sounds may be more natural within than without, participants still experienced the urban sound palette, albeit muffled and muted. This deadening of sound hints at the outside world whilst providing a barrier, a separation from the life beyond the cemetery gates. It also reflects the presence of absence (Meyer and Woodthorpe 2008) or ‘deadening’ that we perceive with our other senses – that is to say the unique visual appearance of a natural place full of the remains and memorials of the dead and the tactile experience of a growing, living environment suffused with lifeless stone. In the case of the cemetery I have found that there is a range of typical ways in which cemetery spaces are perceived from natural greenspace to scary burial ground. These categories of perception are impacted by the aural, olfactory and visual experience on offer and shape the way in which the sites are then understood and used.

In place or out of place
From the concept of the formation of sense of place through bodily experience it becomes clear that there is a strong and personal relationship between individual and place. Despite the fact that urban places, including the cemetery, are always ‘inherited environments’ (Bondi 1998:10) individuals bring their own personal worlds to bear in
their interpretation and experience of place. Although the individual is thus the significant agent in the creation of place, other factors are at play in this process. Gender, age and ethnicity alike have been shown to have a considerable influence both in perception of place and in their use for leisure activity. The *Green Spaces, Better Places* report found that use of parks was greatly influenced by factors such as age and gender (DTLR 2002). In general the report found that older people, women and ethnic minorities felt a higher degree of fear of crime than the young and that this curtailed their visits to public spaces. This research has been corroborated by Wesely and Gaarder (2004) in their study of women and outdoor recreation where they found that participation was self-limited due to safety concerns. The sense of place women constructed was strongly influenced by fear, a factor that Aitken (2001) also identifies in his study of young people’s geographies.

Young people are the focus of Aitken’s attention when he says ‘Places are important to young people because these contexts play a large part in constructing and constraining dreams and practices’ (2001:20). I would argue that this is true of all people, not just the young and see this constraint reflected in Ekinsmyth’s (2003) description of how places are encoded with messages about who belongs. When ‘read’ and understood, this can render people out of place by, for example, the simple fact of their gender. The significance of gender to sense of place is also highlighted by Abbot-Chapman and Robertson (2009) who found that females tended to feel more in-place in private space, whilst males preferred public space.

Significant too, in their study was the role of cultural understanding in shaping a relationship and creating place. Abbott-Chapman and Robertson found that young people who were given frequent opportunities to recreate in the natural environment were subsequently more likely to consider such places as welcoming and thus cite them amongst their favourite places. Urban dwellers that had not spent a great deal of time in nature preferred indoor or urban places. Abbott-Chapman and Robertson conclude that concepts of nature and of special places are learned rather than implicit; favourite places are typically local and familiar and choice is greatly influenced by links with leisure and recreational pursuits. Whilst meaning-building then may have an influence on what types of spaces different people occupy and enjoy, the underlying explanation of environmental preferences in humans is argued to prefigure discussions about society and culture, having its origins in evolutionary rather than cultural time (Appleton 1975, Kaplan 2002, Parsons...
and Daniels 2002, Falk and Balling 2010). However, cultural influence and personal experience has also been shown to have a role in determining how people feel about places. In the context of the deathscape this is a reminder that these places become special through a process of learning, use and meaning-building. It can be through this meaning-building that spaces are chosen for appropriation and territory (Delaney 2005, Robinson 2009).

Tonkiss describes the spatial tactics individuals use to occupy and appropriate spaces to their own design. She asserts that such apparently subtle choices as selecting a specific seat on a bus, or taking a shortcut across the grass provides a ‘minor opiate’ which can make communal life more tolerable to the individual (2005:139). Such moves can also be part of the bigger picture of embodying a space and creating a personal sense of place. In the cemetery ‘place’ is claimed visually by the families that have buried their dead there (Buckham 2002) and this sense of ownership is encapsulated by Francis et al. in The Secret Cemetery, which describes their research into mourning behaviours in London cemeteries. They write: ‘In London’s cemeteries, through the language of stories and flowers, the passages of burial and both initial and ongoing bereavement become marked on the landscape.’ (2005:54). However, bereavement is not the only activity to mark the landscape. Visitors establish small victories over the landscape such as leaving litter, picking flowers, making graffiti or taking a rubbing. These territorial practices create bounded, meaningful spaces that reiterate the enduring relationship people seem to seek with place (Delaney 2005). Perception creates location or places but these are then reinforced by the actions of the user, which can in turn shape and influence the perceptions of others. Deathscapes can be claimed by users since they provide freedom in the form of secret, hidden places – identified by Aitken (2001) as a desirable characteristic of public space. More, Robinson (2009) sees what she calls ‘space’ in her study of young people’s nocturnal use of parks and streets as party to the leisure activities, as a character itself in the plot. It seems that space or place (whatever you choose to call it) is imbued by people with the power to attract, reject, and even take part in our outdoor social lives.

Non-place

Heterotopia is not the only theory of place linked with cemeteries. Sørensen (2009) argues that rather than being a place, a cemetery is a non-place. This theory rests on the
idea that the creation of place necessitates embodiment or bodies. In modern Denmark where he locates his research, Sørensen describes the rise in popularity of cremation since its inception in the 1880’s and the subsequent change in burial practices and professionalising of death in society. He explains that the popular mode of disposal in Denmark is cremation followed by urn burial in a lawn cemetery site. The process of cremation, he conjectures, ‘terminates the concept of a person’ (2009:125) destroying the body physical and rendering the person as idea. In explicitly categorising the cemetery as non-place, Sørensen states that he considers this lack of a body to be integral to the theoretical construction, and qualifies this by adding that it is common practice for few or no people to attend the actual burial of the urn, meaning the situating of the (non)body is not ensured. With the geographical distance between bereaved and dead, the lack of a body, and the possibility that the body is not ‘placed’ by living friends or relatives at burial Sørensen concludes that this types of cemetery can only be a non-place. I find this troubling as it ignores the presence of living bodies in the cemetery and also denies the presence of very real and embodied memories of dead people – which are surely enough to create place.

Looking further at theories of non-place to clarify this against the concept of the dead place brings us to Augé who described them in some detail: ‘If a place can be defined as relational, historical and concerned with identity, then a space which cannot be defined as relational, historical or concerned with identity will be a non-place’ (2008:63). Augé qualifies this by adding that a place can be place to one person and non-place to another and says that both place and non-place never exist in pure form - they are like polarities and never completely erase each other. He claims that ‘there are no ‘non-places’ in the absolute sense of the term’ (2008:viii) but asserts instead that the place /non-place coupling is a purely a tool for gauging the degree of sociality and symbolisation of a particular place. Whilst Augé identifies non-places as the spaces created for the purposes of transport, transit, commerce and leisure and the way in which people relate to these spaces, he does leave room in the theory for a consideration of the cemetery as non-place. A significant element of the non-place is the isolation of the individual in a crowd. This does resonate with the experience of some cemetery visitors, who can be left alone in their thoughts and actions in a way that would perhaps not happen in a place where death was not so prevalent. Augé focuses too on identity and the requirement to prove it in order to gain entry to many non-places. Whilst the casual cemetery visitor may not
face any issues of identity, it is true that names (finding your family tree, researching a historical figure, visiting a celebrity grave) do play a big part of the cemetery culture. Similarly we are reminded by Augé that non-places are places of transit, to be passed through. With the exception of the dead interred there, all cemetery visitors are doing just that – passing through whether quickly or slowly.

However even with the elements of non-place that can be found in a cemetery as I identified above I do not consider that deathscapes are non-places. Sørensen ignores the very real presence the dead can have long after the point of burial and cremation (Hallam et al. 1999) and gives no recognition to the powerful sense of place that visitors (Greenoak 1993, Worpole 1997) and mourners (Frances et al. 2005) can create and experience in the cemetery. Burial grounds are spaces in the sense that they have structure, management and locational dimensions. They are places from the perspective of being experienced, relational and imbued with meaning. De Certeau ascribes the process of meaning acquisition and transformation of space to place to the power of narrative and story (Bremer 2006). In deathscapes there are myriad stories of tragedy, drama, love and life indicating to me that this is not a non-place at all. The essence of deathscapes cannot be derived from one element alone, but is I suggest, a matrix composed of the physical, mental, social and emotional that these significant elements make up part of the matrix of the cemetery. It is a complex, fluid, changing entity. It is meaningful and real. It is not a non-place.

**Liminal space**

Whilst rejecting the non-place argument with regard to the cemetery, Sørensen does draw our attention to the journey of the body from point of death to burial. Following this trajectory reveals some fascinating aspects of the cemetery life cycle. If the cremation, and/or decay, of the body takes away or detracts from the ‘placeness’ of the cemetery, I suggest that this does not render it a non-place, but rather this leaves it as a liminal or in-between space. The term liminal, from the Latin limen for threshold was first applied by Van Gennep (1960) in the context of transformative rites of passage. Liminality describes a space and/or time of limbo, of being between or being in transition. It has since been applied diversely to encapsulate the sense of change and development during pilgrimage and how a pilgrim centre is ‘a place and moment "in and out of time"‘ (Turner 1973:214), the ‘virtual space betwixt and between geographical space’ in Madge and O’Connor.
the limbo of the corpse awaiting burial whilst in the mortuary (van de Geest 2006), and the mental space that musicians can be transported to when immersed in musicking (Boyce-Tillman 2009). I consider that deathscapes too fit into the model of a threshold, a liminal space as they are firstly the very real and tangible space where death and life are juxtaposed, but also represent a place in which the emotions and senses can be engaged and immersed to saturation and the point of transportation to another imaginary, mental world. This duality of the liminal space, that it can be purely a mental space or in contrast a very real, locatable site, has similarities to the concept of heterotopia which can be state of mind or place.

As liminal, betwixt-and-between sites where geography and chronology are reshaped and history is made spatial, cemeteries are places of social, religious and ethnic continuity and belonging. Cemeteries act as bridges between two worlds – the home of the living and the metaphorical home of the dead, the home of origin and the home of settlement. Francis et al. (2005:195)

The qualities of a liminal space are arguably a simple case of transformative discontinuity in the social fabric and space of the liminal site. This is purported to typically occur when a person or persons are moving between different stages of life, or experiencing a revelatory experience (Turner 1973:13). More, Shields posits that the interstitial quality of a liminal space permits us to experience a freedom from everyday life and habits since the normal societal rules do not firmly apply in liminal space (2002:84). Boyce-Tillman (2009) expands on the model of freedom in liminality, explaining that people who enter a liminal space are taken away from practical, bodily concerns and allowed to imagine other worlds, to be joyful and to be immersed in their senses. Deathscapes offer a physical site for just such an immersion and transportation, being the uneasy place of co-existence of the living and the dead, replete with emotions, stories, hope and fears. Davis (2008) explores the liminal space between the living and the dead in the funeral setting and sees liturgical stories and rituals as an opportunity to bridge the divide. She finds comfort in the rituals and routines of the burial process and reflects that this element of the familiar fosters the bridging of the divide in a positive and healing way. While it cannot be denied that some people seek out the liminal space of the cemetery in order to find a thrill or sensationalise the mundane, others then may be using the space in a different way to make a connection and peace with the fracture in our society between life and death. Although the notion of liminal space does usefully capture some elements of the cemetery, heterotopia, in my view, remains a more versatile and informative concept.
Heterotopia allows cemeteries to exist as real places (which they incontrovertibly do) rather than between-places, or un-places. Cemeteries are real, physically existing entities and while they may be thresholds to ‘otherness’ they are also ‘otherness’ themselves.

**What works for deathscapes**

The arguments for space, place, Thirdspace and more, range back and forth with valid points and convincing explanations on each side. Returning to Lefebvre’s tactic of splitting space into three over the traditional space/place dichotomy does appear to offer more flexibility and more possibilities for describing deathscapes even without the use of place. Lefebvre did not tend towards the word place, instead illustrating the thicker aspects of its essence in his terms ‘everyday life’ and ‘lived space’. Soja (2009) considers that the reason for separating space and place come down in the end to the desire of cultural geographers to give place a more concrete quality and social influence leaving space as abstracted, distanced and somewhat insubstantial concept. This privileging and isolating action, Soja asserts, diminishes the meaningfulness of both words. He suggests that Lefebvre’s triaelectic of space offers a richer and more insightful tool to understand the intricacies and minutiae of social space. Whilst I acknowledge the beauty of this triaelectic of space, I am not convinced that it helps unpick the deathscape setting any more effectively than the dialectic of space and place.

In order to understand deathscapes, I contend that two lenses are required. One lens is space, the measurable, formal aspect of the cemetery is useful to encapsulate characteristics of the cemetery identity concerned with the ownership, management and policies. Space describes the cemetery as a facility for the dead and the living. The other lens is place. Place is produced by people rather than consumed or used (Crouch 2000) and is ideal for containing and expressing the personal relationships that people build with deathscapes. An important provision to this is that the terms space and places form part of a continuum. The continuum extends from the hard reality and structure of an architecturally influenced semi-natural place for the burial of the dead to the nebulous and unique imaginings and interpretations of that space by individuals and groups that create a place with a sense of identity and relation. At the poles of this continuum, dead places contain meaning and richness and value (Fog Olwig and Gulløv 2003) whilst dead spaces can be mowed and managed, opened and closed. The dead place exists in the mind even
when one is absent from it; dead space is a spreadsheet that requires funding, management, conservation and control in perpetuity.

**Place and leisure**

Leisure uses of cemeteries are as varied as that of any site. I assert that the motivations behind these activities are equally diverse, but may be strongly affected by the nature of the site. Such activities may be chosen as a way to experience flow, or immersion that allows an engagement with the liminal space both physically and mentally. I suggest that it is the liminal and indeed heterotopic nature of the cemetery that actively invites or sustains a breadth of different leisure uses. Some of the leisure activities recorded in deathscapes fit the categories variously labelled as ‘purple leisure’ (Shinew and Parry 2005), ‘abnormal leisure’ (Rojek 1999) or ‘deviant leisure’ (Caldwell and Smith 2006) and this may be of key importance in understanding the nature of the cemetery. Lyng (1990) describes risk-taking activities as edgework, and elaborates on the concept by qualifying that these activities confer a sense of self, along with fear, excitement, focus and a removal from the mundane. Perhaps the liminal/non-place/heterotopic nature of the cemetery invites such self-creating activities as the self cannot otherwise be found there. Blackshaw (2010) suggests that edgework actually helps people to cope with boundaries such as those between order and disorder, life and death. Another factor that may be such a tactic to cope with the unsettling properties of heterotopias or non-places is the creation of other such non-places through activity itself. Macnamee (2000) describes children creating their own heterotopias through everyday leisure activities such as reading, music and video games, and this idea of activity as heterotopia is reiterated by Johnson (2006). He illustrates his thesis through reference to imaginative games, dens, tents and hiding places and posits that both these places and the games they invoke are heterotopic in nature. However the same can be said of liminal spaces. They can be time or space and thus must be mental but can also be physical.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter I have explored a range of concepts in order to elucidate current understanding of the spatial nature of deathscapes. The space/place debate has generated a great number of variations in the theorising around and definition of the exact qualities and nature of the terms space and place. Where some argue for the applicability of the single term, space, as sufficient, others are keen to split space into two or three sub
sections, notably Lefebvre’s trialectic or Soja’s Thirdspace propositions (Soja 2009). As Casey argues, dichotomies, or indeed trichotomies are always artificial distinctions but can sometime offer insights into phenomena (2009) Thus the three elements of space in the trialectic are a useful tool for breaking down our understanding of space and yet in the realms of deathscapes, I side with Tuan’s space/place continuum (2008). This offers a concise approach to separating the space of the cemetery – those aspects associated with management, location, size and shape, from the more personal and relational place that the cemetery can become to an individual visitor. In this thesis my focus is on the use and perception of deathscapes and there are distinct themes of personal and management-oriented connection to deathscapes.

Moving on from space and place brought this chapter into another area of contradiction and contention, heterotopia. Foucault’s ‘counter-site’ has an intuitive resonance with deathscapes, and indeed he himself says that cemeteries are heterotopias (1986). Having examined the building blocks of heterotopia, however, I found certain discrepancies and discord with my own understanding of deathscapes. Death no longer has the taboo and stigma that gave cemeteries the deviant qualities that Foucault identified and so I argued for the clarification of ‘deviance’ such that it better described cemeteries as ‘not-normal’ or unusual places. Although Sørensen makes a persuasive case for the cemetery as non-place, and I found certain parallels with Augé’s own detailed explanation of non-place, I do not think that this theory is applicable or necessary to an appreciation of deathscapes in spatial terms. Liminality, the final term that I discussed does offer insight when unravelling the spatial threads that wind through the cemetery. Liminality usefully encapsulates that sense of ‘in-betweenness’ of the deathscapes, the real and imagined tension between the living and the dead that helps us to construct the cemetery as a place. As liminal places cemeteries are to a certain extent unknown and it is into this very niche that my research fits with its ambition of deconstructing and explaining the nature of this very personal space that has, in the words of Greenoak, an ‘existence that is beyond time and the everyday world’ (1993:14).

Deathscapes then can be space, place, heterotopia, and liminal. This superabundance of concepts raises the question of why cemeteries have not previously attracted more attention from spatial theorists. Worpole encapsulates something of the multiplicity of
the cemetery space and begins to unpick the component parts when he says ‘cemeteries are paradoxically both places of presence and absence, of both sanctuary and fear’ (1997:2). This notion of a slippery spatiality is reiterated by Francis et al. who write:

> The landscape of the cemetery, including those of older burial grounds, is always open to reinterpretation. Some current re-readings reflect changing attitudes about society’s relationship to nature and the environmental importance of older, disused grounds as valuable sites of ecological biodiversity and urban green space. Other reinterpretations are based on a growing awareness of the need to preserve the heritage value of these unique cultural landscapes

Francis et al. (2005:198)

Given my argument that cemeteries have liminal qualities alongside the relevance of other spatial concepts, I want to outline why I also consider that this concept is of limited use here in comparison to heterotopia. Although liminality captures the sense of the deathscape as a threshold between different places and perhaps different states of mind, it has little scope beyond this sense of nebulous ‘in-betweenness’. Heterotopia, on the other hand, has substance and structure. Heterotopia has dimensions of time, of access, of relation, of juxtaposition and of evolution, and these allow it to be used in a tangible way to explore the phenomenon of the cemetery, and capture the multi-faceted nature of these sites. Kong (1999) argues that deathscapes are multi-vocal in nature and I explore this in later chapters through the behavioural expressions of purple recreation, dark tourism and enchantment. It may be that this multi-vocality not only gives rise to many different forms of recreation, but also gives cemeteries so many different identities, as places, non-places, liminal places and heterotopia. Heterotopia itself gives us a route to explain how cemeteries can be all these things at once, a characteristic lacking in the other concepts. It allows access to explore a physically real space that simultaneously exists in different times and with different meanings to different people. Cemeteries are complex and in the next chapter I describe the range of methods I used to try and unpick this nebulous character.
Cemetery collage – deathscape immersion
Source: photographs owned by author
Once the question is discovered and its terms defined and clarified, the researcher lives the question in waking, sleeping and even dream states. Everything in his or her life becomes crystallised around the question…people, places, meetings, readings, nature – all offer possibilities for understanding the phenomenon.

Moustakas (1990:28)

Diary 21st May 2005

Matt, Smudge and I travelled to the open day. The avenue leading from the entrance was lined with stalls and bustling with people walking through, stopping to look, signing up to join the Friends.

The cemetery open day was a day of funny weather – warm sunshine, thunder, rain and then more sun. But there were people everywhere, not just families but couples, punks and lots of Goths. Vampirish men and women with black lace-draped parasols.

Under the leafy jungle-like canopy of the trees we wandered through quiet paths, sided by old crumbling stones that peered out from the cow parsley and sloping, drooping, dripping branches. We passed families on bug-hunts and other dog-walkers. In the sun and rain the cemetery had a quiet aura of natural beauty, juicy, leafy gracefulness. You would come around a corner and see a huge monument or slab, but in amongst the undergrowth you could almost forget it was a cemetery, it was so overgrown. The odd stone that caught your eye amid the gloomy vegetation looked mysterious and enticing. There was a sort of haphazard magic in the air. And lots of little biting flies too.
Chapter three: Methodology

Like your research trip to the library or courthouse, you need to be prepared for your trip to your ancestor's final resting place, taking along your “cemetery tools”, so you can bring home a replica of your ancestor's grave marker. (Bringing home the actual marker is considered larceny in most states, so I don't recommend it.) I keep a well-stocked, dedicated tote bag for just such excursions to the cemetery, since one never knows when one will have to make an emergency trip to the graveyard.


In this chapter I explain the methods and methodology I used to explore and investigate deathscapes. I discuss the theoretical and methodological framework that structures this research and how this framework is used to reveal the extent and variety of leisure uses of cemeteries and explore their sense of place. I argue that capturing the unusual qualities of ‘cemeteryness’ or ‘churchyardness’ requires unusual and inspiring methods. This journey of understanding involved an unusual space, designed for the burial of the dead, but appropriated by the living in different ways. The activities that take place in these deathscapes range from the everyday, such as walking and reading, to those deemed anti-social, which include drinking and creating graffiti. Researching the details of people’s leisure lives in the presence of death meant that it was important to approach data collection in a sensitive and creative way. My research sought to interrogate the rich, thick detail of life in deathscapes and so I used a suite of qualitative methods to generate the data. I conducted twenty-two semi-structured interviews and informal conversations with thirty participants (some participants were interviewed in couples or groups) to reveal the intricacies of individuals’ experiences and uses of deathscapes. This was complemented by the data that I collected during 550 hours of participant observation. During this time spent in my study sites I recorded data on erosion and material trace accretion, evidence gleaned from paths worn in the grass, smoothed tree branches, litter and graffiti that I collectively refer to as garbology in this thesis. There were challenges in using mixed methods, but advantages too, in the fact that I was free to generate and analyse data from my own and other participant’s stories as well as litter and other artefactual evidence.

To date, deathscapes have been the subject of limited research with regard to their function and conceptualisation as spaces or places. Whilst authors such as Woodthorpe
(2010), Frances et al. (2005), Bachelor (2004), Kong (1999) and Teather (1998) all give us important insights into the functioning, role and sense of place of the cemetery for mourners and the bereaved, there has been little research directed specifically at the cemetery as venue for recreational visits. Huang (2007) comes closest to this in her survey of public opinion of the possibility of newly landscaped cemeteries in Taiwan for recreation, but still falls short of engaging with people using real cemetery spaces for leisure. Dunk and Rugg (1994) identify different categories of cemetery users, but do not delve into these categories and unpack the different meanings and perspectives that these visitors bring, and the way in which these create and contribute to activity. The role of my research then is to fill this gap between accounts of historical uses of cemeteries for recreation (Lindon-ward 1989, Ariès 1994, Worpole 2003b) and the contemporary construction of a cemetery identity and sense of place through their function as sites for mourning (Bachelor 2004, Frances et al. 2005, Meyer and Woodthorpe 2008).

In this chapter the first section explores my choice of theoretical and methodological stance. With issues of spatiality and sense of place at the heart of my research questions it was appropriate to couch the research in a constructionist framework. This epistemology recognises the existence of different truths and the importance of allowing each account to speak for itself (Crotty 2007). With my own experiences of deathscape in my mind, I chose to base my methodology on heuristic inquiry (Moustakas 1990). This methodology includes the researcher as participant and allows data to be generated from the self and other participants as well as other sources. Following a description of this methodology and the ethical issues that I considered in planning and delivering this research, I move onto explain the methods that I used for data collection. Interviews and informal conversations formed part of my data, with additional data being gathered from unobtrusive sources such as litter (Webb et al. 2000). Having proffered the details of these methods, the subsequent section describes how I analysed these diverse data and finishes with a reflection on the methods and methodologies employed.

**Researching deathscape**

The big questions this research asked were about the experience, meaning and meaningfulness of deathscape, and what these factors contributed to the way in which deathscape were used. In order to attain this goal of exposing constructed meaning, I designed a research plan that followed a predominantly qualitative strategy. Qualitative
research encompasses a range of different approaches with the overall aim of gaining knowledge in a natural context to increase our understanding, detail and explanations for social phenomena (Kvale 2008). It is for this reason that the research was approached from the epistemological standpoint of constructionism. The term deathscape encapsulates an enormous variety of sites, from rural churchyards to city-centre cemeteries; a deathscape is not a single objective truth ‘waiting for us to discover it’ (Crotty 2007:8), but rather myriad truths or meanings that come into existence as individuals engage with these spaces. Whilst not objective then, from a constructionist viewpoint this meaning is also not simply subjective. The construction of meaning from this theoretical perspective necessitates a starting point or focus which in the instance of my research was the graveyard - a real, physical space about which individuals and society can construct versions of truth or meaning. This meaning-making does not wholly start from scratch, however. Our culture - whether familial, local or national - has a significant impact on our world-view, behaviour and experience. As Crotty says:

*For each of us when we first see the world in meaningful fashion, we are inevitably viewing it through lenses bestowed upon us by our culture. Our culture brings things into view for us and endows them with meaning and, by the same token, leads us to ignore other things.*

Crotty (2007:54)

In this research I tried to look through the lenses of my participants and gain a clearer sense of how they individually viewed burial grounds. Bringing these individual viewpoints together then gave me a chance to build a collaborative sense of place for the cemetery and better understand how it functions within the community.

Implicit in my research was the methodological framework of heuristic inquiry (Moustakas 1990), derived originally from the theoretical perspective of phenomenology. The structure of heuristic inquiry allowed me to acknowledge the significance of the meaning of deathscapes and anticipated that individuals would see the same thing through different lenses, thus constructing many different forms of cemetery and churchyard. I was interested in exposing what these meanings of deathscapes were and how different meanings impacted on leisure uses there. One version of deathscape that is also incorporated in this research is my own. Being so intimately connected to the subject matter, I felt it was important to apply a methodology that celebrated this knowledge and enthusiasm rather than denied it. The connection that I have to my research is reflected in Hiles’ statement ‘In heuristic inquiry, the research question chooses you, and invariably the research question is deeply personal in origin’ (2001:6) This sense of valuing personal
knowledge and experience made heuristic inquiry the best fit for my own approach to research. Moustakas describes heuristic inquiry as:

[...]a way of engaging in scientific search through methods and processes aimed at discovery; a way of self-enquiry and dialogue with others aimed at finding the underlying meanings of important human experiences. The deepest currents of meaning and knowledge take place within the individual through one’s sense, perceptions, beliefs and judgements.'

Moustakas (1990:15)

Whilst heuristics have more traditionally been associated with psychological rather than sociological inquiry, the process is highly applicable to research which seeks to elucidate meaning from participants including the researcher (Hiles 2002). In addition a heuristic approach is receptive to the use of alternative forms of data such as the litter and graffiti that contribute to my findings (Moustakas 1990).

Applying this methodology involves seven core processes which I summarise here based on Hiles (2001) distillation of Moustakas’ principles. They are as follows:

- Identify with the focus of the inquiry – getting inside the research question
- Self dialogue – allowing the phenomenon to speak to your own experience
- Tacit knowing – drawing out internalised knowledge
- Intuition – using intuition as the bridge between tacit and explicit knowledge to see them as a whole
- Indwelling – the process of turning inwards to reflect on knowledge and seek a deeper understanding
- Focussing – keeping attention on the question in hand in order to contact the central meaning of the question under study
- Internal frame of reference – the outcome of the heuristic process is placed within the researchers own internal frame of reference.

Heuristic inquiry requires personal commitment and full immersion in the data. Given my involvement in the subject matter of my research, this approach seemed to be the most honest way to collect and analyse the data. This theme of methodological ‘honesty’ continued in the ethical dimensions of the research as well. The potential delicacy of research in a place of death was a consideration from the start, and was an issue that was critically appraised by the University of Brighton’s Research Ethics Committee. As a result
I have tried to consider as many ethical angles as possible to safeguard my research participants and this is covered in the next section of this chapter.

**Ethics in deathscapes**

There were a number of important ethical considerations in this research and I outline below where these were anticipated and experienced and what measures were put in place to address and mitigate situations. In any research situation which involves talking to people, there is the potential for harm or disclosure, and so it is essential for the researcher to be prepared and have protective strategies in place (Rubin and Rubin 2005). Research in a deathscape has the potential to confront issues of grief, mourning and loss and whilst the nature of these did not form the focus of my research I had to be prepared for the possibility of encountering and impacting on individuals in mourning. The likelihood of this was reduced in the planning stage by choosing to base my research around cemetery sites that were either wholly or predominantly disused for contemporary burial. At all four of my chosen sites the majority of graves dated from before the 1950’s and most plots were untended by families. The exclusion of active cemeteries from this research was specifically intended to reduce the likelihood of the research impacting on those in mourning. Even so, it was possible that closed cemeteries may be visited by people who are grieving. The measures outlined below demonstrate how this research aimed to have a minimal impact on people experiencing bereavement and offered support to those in need.

**Permission and protection**

Before any research in a burial site was instigated, I wrote to, or met with, the site staff to discuss any ground rules that they wished to impose relating to the research. This followed the example of Francis et al. (2000, 2005) whose staff consultations for their study of cemetery behaviours directed them to interview only the long-term bereaved in cemeteries. This study of around 1500 people visiting graves in cemeteries was notable for the fact that the interview refusal rate was extremely low. Francis et al. were engaged in a sociological study and were not counsellors, yet they found the majority of people welcomed the opportunity to talk about the grave and their deceased loved ones:

*Naturally, a high degree of sensitivity was required, but at the same time, the refusal rate was very low. People were invariably willing to participate and to discuss their motivations, intentions and often to share innermost reflections*

Francis et al. (2000:36)
This openness about death and bereavement endorses the argument posited by Walter (1994) that talking about death is an important part of recovery from grief, and that everyone has a role in this, from counsellor to work colleague. Bradbury encapsulates the tension that exists between being sensitive to the needs of the bereaved and excluding them from research in the following excerpt:

_People who have just suffered bereavement should be protected, but it is also important that we do not blindly follow cultural restrictions that merely express our discomfort with the topic of death. The sentiments, views and opinions of people facing this universal experience need to be heard if we are to forge a humanistic response to death and bereavement._

Bradbury (1999:42-43)

With this in mind, I believe that research can be conducted in a cemetery without harm to the bereaved. Indeed there is evidence in the literature to corroborate the argument that talking about the deceased is in fact a supportive element of recovery from grief (Parkes 1996:28).

The overall recruitment strategy kept contact with bereaved people to a minimum, but it is also true to say that many people have experienced bereavement at some point in their life and so it is always prudent to maintain sensitivity to death. In preparation for the potential needs of a participant I employed two specific protective measures. Firstly I used public events such as open days and guided walks to recruit people for interview or conversation. At one cemetery I visited, the annual open day drew over 2000 people, with attractions ranging from falconry to hearse displays. With the emphasis on entertainment and education such events were ideal for recruiting leisure-focused participants. Many cemeteries also had Friends groups that organise the management and conservation of the cemetery sites. In two of my sites these were used as a first point of contact to gain access to people with a predominantly recreational interest in the site. The second measure that I employed was simply to be prepared for the needs of individuals should they arise. In the spirit of feminist consequentialist ethics this meant that the individual context and consequences for that person should inform the course of action (Driver 2005). In practice this entailed having information and contact details for organisations such as CRUSE bereavement care to hand. Should a participant need any professional support, I would have referred them to an appropriate expert organisation (Gray 2004).
Confidentiality in data collection, storage and communication

The research was designed in a considered way with a view to pursuing the most ethical course of action wherever possible. This process started with the design of research questions that attempted to avoid leading or prejudicing participants. Consent forms and supporting information about the research aims and the process of taking part were also written and fully explained verbally to each participant, who was then asked to sign their consent. Participants were reminded that they could withdraw at any time, or not answer a question should they so choose. Full explanation was also given of the process of data recording, storage and use. My first interviews were recorded on minidisc; the discs were rendered anonymous and stored in a safe whilst transcribed notes were saved as anonymous files on my computer. Later interviews were recorded digitally and these files were stored securely on my computer, with the same procedure being followed for any transcriptions that were made. Hand-written field notes accompanied all interviews and these were stored in a secure location during the process of research and analysis. Being cognisant of the issues pertinent to the Data Protection Act (OPSI 1998) I made certain that the research was compliant at all times (BSA 2002; Pullen 2005).

Alongside the appropriate and correct storage of data it was also important to protect participants from unnecessary disclosure about their leisure activities. Regulations such as the Local Authority Cemeteries Order (1977) and the Cemetery Clauses Act of 1847 prohibit certain types of activity and behaviours (for example golf and loud music) with the intention of maintaining a respectful atmosphere in the cemetery. Despite the existence and enforcement of regulations, illegal uses of cemetery sites do occur. There was therefore every possibility that participants might report illegal or prohibited uses of the site during interview. Following the BSA ethical code, I chose to maintain confidentiality of any such behaviour unless I deemed that the participant or someone else may be harmed by this position. This stance was, of course, made clear to participants in the consent process, giving them the chance to choose what they might, or might not, disclose during the interview process.

Before beginning to conduct any practical fieldwork it is essential to put the research questions into a theoretical and methodological framework. In my research I chose to value my own accounts and understandings of deathscapes and it was this standpoint
combined with an overall constructionist epistemology that directed me to qualitative methodology and in particular to heuristic inquiry.

Deathscapes are unusual sites for research. In order to answer my research questions about the sense of place, meaning and experience of a cemetery I chose to take an approach to data collection that honoured the spirit of Webb et al. who encourage ‘creative and opportunistic exploitation of unique measurement possibilities’ (2000:1). This meant that alongside the interviews and informal conversations that I conducted, I also sought data where it could be found in deathscapes. I turned to the remnants of visits and traces of activities that were evident in litter, graffiti and the erosion of paths and monuments. Used in tandem with the voices of my participants, this data set gave me access to new narratives and stories of deathscapes. There were challenges in using an uncommon method and in combining it with the more traditionally generated interview data. However, my employment of heuristic inquiry was highly compatible with this unconventional mix, being a vehicle for creative synthesis and valuing all forms of data. In this section I outline how I carried out the research itself and describe the details of the different methods employed in the field.

**Implementation and methods - sites of study**

The individual cemetery and churchyard sites visited and discussed for this research project were chosen on the basis of a number of different criteria. In order to provide a manageable breadth and contrast, I decided to focus my research efforts on four deathscapes, each of which was given a pseudonym as another layer of protection for research participants. In terms of location it was important that these sites were open and accessible to the general public so that they could be used for leisure purposes to any degree. It was also important that the deathscapes chosen were either wholly inactive, that is to say disused for burial, or that they should have specific areas that were closed to new burials. This measure was important as it firstly increased the likelihood that the sites would be appropriate and used for leisure, and also that this met the ethical criteria (outlined above in this chapter) with regard to the fact that the research was planned to have a minimal impact on mourners and those recently bereaved who might be visiting a grave rather than recreating.

I selected four sites that met these criteria that are described in Table 3.0-1 below.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site pseudonym</th>
<th>Cemetery or churchyard</th>
<th>Town or city</th>
<th>Size of site</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>St Joan of Arc, Greetham</td>
<td>Churchyard</td>
<td>Town</td>
<td>Small</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Pierre, Clearstone</td>
<td>Churchyard</td>
<td>City</td>
<td>Small</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marchester</td>
<td>Cemetery</td>
<td>City</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rushton</td>
<td>Cemetery</td>
<td>Town</td>
<td>Large</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.0-1 Characteristics of the four deathscapes research sites selected

St Joan of Arc is a small town-centre churchyard in a Greetham, a busy rural town. The town is well supplied with recreational greenspace but the defining feature of this site is that it is criss-crossed with paths that lead to different residential and commercial parts of town and is widely used as a cut-through route. St Pierre is similar in that it also acts as a thoroughfare between residential and business areas of Clearstone. Being in a city, however, it is used by a larger population where there are pressures on open space and greenspace in particular. Marchester is a city cemetery. It is located out of the city centre in a mixed residential area. It forms part of an extensive area of common land and so acts partly as an access route to this. Interestingly this site is very busy, despite being situated right next to a large park. The fourth site, Rushton, is a large cemetery in a town. It was the quietest of all my study sites, due perhaps in part to a marginal suburban location that was near housing but also other open space. Of all the four sites it was the one most noticeable for having a large area active for burial as well as an extensive disused area.

Mixing methods in qualitative research

Having chosen the sites for the field work aspect of this research I embarked on a series of reconnaissance visits. Knowledge and ideas from these visits fed into the process of method design that was governed by my methodology. The theoretical framework described previously connects my research to a pursuit of the understanding of meanings and world-views. In my search for answers I chose to use several different qualitative tools or methods to generate data; my own experiences of deathscapes informed me that these were not simple places, but ones that carried many layers of meaning. I also anticipated that there were some users that I would struggle to recruit for interview and so sought to broaden my approach such that data was generated from more than just personal accounts gained from face-to-face interaction. Having given consideration to a
variety of different methods as tools to get at the data this research requires, I decided to use a suite of different methods, each of which had the potential to bring something different to the data pool, namely interviews, informal conversations and garbology. Making what was, to me, the familiar world of the deathscape strange through a focus on garbology in particular helped me to see these places in a new way, and to ‘look beyond and transform...current knowledge’ (Clough and Nutbrown 2007:49).

Mixing methods is often seen as a guaranteed way to complicate matters (Silverman 2006:9). Despite this there is also a fascination and challenge that can be derived from multiple methods, whether or not it is a good idea (Gillham 2005). One argument in defence of mixing methods is that this can increase clarity in the instance where sources corroborate each other (Silverman 2005). In deathscapes, I chose to mix methods simply to help capture data about activities and meanings that may be less socially acceptable and therefore hidden or under-reported in interview and conversation. I did not envisage that this strategy would lead me towards an overall truth about deathscapes - something that Seale (2008) considers to be a common but naive assumption of mixed methods - but rather that it would increase the breadth of my knowledge about these spaces and the methods themselves. In the spirit of qualitative research I avoided forcing these methods to triangulate and reach a fixed truth, instead following Richardson’s suggestion of crystallisation (Fusco 2008). Richardson advocates this approach for what she calls ‘mixed-genre productions’ stating that this method shows the multidimensionality of experiences and ‘deconstructs the traditional idea of validity’ (2000:13). Fusco quotes and augments Richardson’s description of the potency of crystallisation, saying that it “provides us with a deepened, complex, thoroughly partial understanding of the topic...Paradoxically, we know more and doubt what we know. Ingeniously, we know there is always more to know” Crystallization of methods might impart a more deep, complex and thoroughly partial understanding of the social world’ (2008:163). In the section below I provide the details of my research methods for both interview and conversations and garbology.

**Interviews and informal conversations**

I identified interviews and opportunistic informal conversations as an appropriate method for my research, following Kvale’s simple logic ‘If you want to know how people understand their world and their lives, why not talk with them?’ (2008:1). As tools,
interviews and conversations alike are considered important apparatus in qualitative sociological inquiry (Kvale 2008). In the context of the deathscape, interviews have been used in a variety of different way to elicit information such as that about mourning behaviours and activities (Frances et al. 2005), mourners’ feelings about the cemetery landscape (Woodthorpe 2009) and the importance of cemeteries to those who have been bereaved (Bachelor 2004). Frances et al. and Woodthorpe both recognised and experienced the potential delicacy of the interview in a setting of the dead. Both explored the impact of this approach for the interviewer and the interviewee, each of whom can experience positive and negative influence from the interaction. This is not unique to deathsapes, however, since any interview has the potential to generate emotionality, stress and distress (Rubin and Rubin 2005; Silverman 2006). It was important that this information was taken into account at all stages of design and delivery of the research itself in order to conduct interviews to the best ethical standard.

**Participant selection and recruitment**

In order to find out about the leisure uses of deathsapes it is essential to talk to those people who engage in or observe such pursuits. Equally rich as a source of data are those people who have a different type of investment in the site - the managers, staff and volunteers that have an alternative sense of ownership and perspective on the activities of visitors to deathsapes. I anticipated that speaking with people from a range of different backgrounds would offer more opportunity to interrogate experience and knowledge and thus build and test theory (Rubin and Rubin 2005). Gaskell (2000) suggests that there are limited versions of reality, which implies that after a time nothing new would arise in the research process. While agreeing that the range of themes and categories of reality do have parameters, I question what is intended by a limited reality, having found from my thirty participants that no such saturation was reached. Participants were recruited in various ways, including attendance at events, guided walks and talks, though the church, local councils, and through Friends groups. Most participants were interviewed alone, but where conversations and interviews arose spontaneously on site, they sometimes involved couples or small groups. This resulted in a total of twenty-two interviews taking place with thirty participants. Within this number participants came from a range of different backgrounds and included church wardens, vicars, Friends group committee members, tourists, regular visitors and rangers. More information about each individual can be found in the participant profiles section of the appendix where pseudonyms are
given to each participant and the minimum details described in order to maintain anonymity. Table 3.2 below lists the participants (by self-chosen pseudonym) and gives brief details regarding their approximate age, which site they were visiting, and a self-chosen category for the main form of recreation or relationship to the site.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant pseudonym</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Cemetery</th>
<th>Approx age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anna, Kath and Nicky</td>
<td>Dog walkers</td>
<td>Greetham</td>
<td>30's</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charm</td>
<td>Dog walker</td>
<td>Rushton</td>
<td>40's</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claire and Sue</td>
<td>Cemetery tourists</td>
<td>Rushton</td>
<td>40's</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debra and Amber</td>
<td>Cemetery tourists</td>
<td>Clearstone</td>
<td>20's</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al and Seth</td>
<td>Cemetery tourists</td>
<td>Marchester</td>
<td>20's</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elle, Katya and Mona</td>
<td>Cemetery tourists</td>
<td>Marchester</td>
<td>20's</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joan</td>
<td>Purple recreator</td>
<td>Rushton</td>
<td>30’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mina</td>
<td>Purple recreator</td>
<td>Clearstone</td>
<td>Late teens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sylvie</td>
<td>Purple recreator</td>
<td>Greetham</td>
<td>20’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manfred</td>
<td>Purple recreator</td>
<td>Greetham</td>
<td>30’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitzi</td>
<td>Parent recreator</td>
<td>Rushton</td>
<td>30’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diddy</td>
<td>Parent recreator</td>
<td>Clearstone</td>
<td>40’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jael</td>
<td>Parent recreator</td>
<td>Greetham</td>
<td>20’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valerie</td>
<td>Friends founder</td>
<td>Marchester</td>
<td>60’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jack</td>
<td>Friends founder</td>
<td>Marchester</td>
<td>60’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jane</td>
<td>Friends member</td>
<td>Clearstone</td>
<td>40’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lindon</td>
<td>Church warden</td>
<td>Clearstone</td>
<td>60’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard and Janice</td>
<td>Walk leaders</td>
<td>Marchester</td>
<td>50’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luther</td>
<td>Greenspace manager</td>
<td>Rushton</td>
<td>40’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pierre</td>
<td>Greenspace ranger</td>
<td>Rushton</td>
<td>40’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pewter</td>
<td>Recreator</td>
<td>Greetham</td>
<td>30’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imogen</td>
<td>Taphophobe</td>
<td>Clearstone</td>
<td>30’s</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 3-0-2 Participant names and information**

This diversity of participants was intended to give a wide-angle view of both the nature of cemetery leisure and the personal and professional relationships formed with these deathscapes. However, as can be seen from the table above, there was an uneven split between male and female participants, with more women being interviewed. Participant
categories were not equally represented, as recruitment was both opportunistic and through existing contacts on site. While this means that the findings here are not universal to all sites, I feel that this exploration of cemetery truths is still a useful addition to current knowledge and offers new insights into the sense of place and experience of visiting a cemetery.

In contrast to the planned nature of interviews, informal conversations arose on a number of occasions when I was participating in cemetery visits and events. In these situations I was always open and honest about my research and ensured that conversations and any notes or recordings made were consensual. Such conversations did not follow the same format as interviews, being more subject to the spontaneous generation of questions during the process of conversation (Gray 2004). This method is advantageous in terms of the flexibility that it affords the interviewer, who can conduct a naturalistic and flowing conversation without forcing questions. The serendipity of normal conversation can make comparability difficult, but in my research this form of data was used alongside that resulting from a more formal approach and was therefore complementary in nature. One of the groups that I was interested in, in part because of the conflict that they experienced and generated, was dog walkers. To facilitate contact with this group I used the technique of a ‘bridging device’ (Goffman, cited in Emmison and Smith 2000) or field aid in the style of Salter’s bicycle (Cloke et al. 2004:124). Taking my dog into the cemetery, where this was permitted, offered opportunities to engage in conversation with other dog walkers in an informal way. Dog-as-conduit proved to be a very useful tool in reaching out to this large, but sometimes marginalised, user group.

**Interview and conversation location and style**

With a mind to minimising distress or detriment to the participants, I attempted to structure the interview recruitment, location and question schedule to design out as much risk as possible. The choice of location for the interviews and conversations varied between each site. Participants took an active part in deciding on the location and the choice in many cases reflected the nature of the site, weather conditions and their own personal obligations and commitments on the day. Whilst I attempted to ensure the comfort, privacy, safety and convenience of the participants, the reality was that locations varied widely in their suitability and presented unique issues and problems in several cases. In many instances the cemetery or churchyard itself formed the location, which
enabled participants to point out specific features or locations and increased the sense of connection to the data being generated during the interview. Many participants were keen to take me on a walking tour and used this to prompt their memories, descriptions and stories of events they had experienced or observed. Indeed in some interviews we actively engaged with a form of ‘dwelling’ in the landscape (Casey 2009), sitting on specific benches, visiting dens and lying down in sunny corners of the site to immerse ourselves in the setting. This form of mobile (and occasionally immobile) methodology drew on the approach espoused by Buscher et al. (2011) and Lorimer, who argues that ‘in the midst of walking it is possible to think about being-in-the-world and find grounds for a freer experiential exploration of what it is to be or become’ (Lorimer 2011:23). Buscher et al. (2011) argue that mobile methodologies capture a closer sense of participants’ worldview, and while Lorimer adds that ‘a mobile view is different – more wobbly, unset, unbalanced’ (2011:29) this reality method of interviewing brings embodiment, and thus a physical truth to the process of data collection through this ‘co-present immersion’ (Buscher et al. 2011:9). The mobile methods I employed did offer a very useful way of bringing the research alive; however colder and wetter days sometimes prematurely curtailed the interview and made focus and concentration more difficult for both parties. One interview took place in the church at the centre of the churchyard. Whilst this seemed like a good idea on a cool December afternoon, it so happened that a rehearsal for a choral performance was also taking place. Not only was the recording quality affected by this, but the churchwarden was also interrupted on numerous occasions with volunteers asking questions about the church decor and location of materials required for the staging and seating.

In the interviews carried out for this research I used a semi-structured technique. Prior to starting the interview process I compiled an interview guide comprising topics and questions appropriate to the study. The questions were grouped according to themes but designed to be followed with some flexibility leaving freedom to probe and question on specific topics as required. This tactic allowed the research to be plastic and proactively respond to fruitful lines of enquiry whilst also having a consistency between interviews (Bryman 2004). With the emphasis on the way participants themselves portray and assimilate issues and events, semi-structured interviewing offers insight into participants’ histories and attitudes. The concept of the interview as negotiated text constructed cooperatively by interviewer and participant encourages reflexivity and recognition of
roles in the research process. (Fontana and Frey 2000). The freedom of scope of the semi-structured interview was of particular benefit during the pilot and developmental stages of research as it allowed unanticipated avenues of information to be explored, which then helped to redefine and focus the questions that were used in the final schedule. Alongside the traditional mores of the semi-structured interview, I also assimilated aspects of Rubin and Rubin’s (2005) responsive interviewing technique. In this model the researcher responds to the interviewee’s comments and then continues the questioning along the routes of enquiry opened up by the participant. This offers a chance to learn about the topic in question from the participant’s point of view with less of the researcher’s own lens. Bearing in mind though that it is not always practical to enter an interview situation without any questions prepared, I did have an interview schedule, but chose to follow complementary avenues in the style of Rubin and Rubin as and when they presented themselves.

In the responsive interviewing framework the interviewer is not expected to be neutral, being recognised instead as influencing and affecting the conversation. Rubin and Rubin assert that in responsive interviewing no one style is superior ‘what works is a style that makes the conversational partner feel comfortable, obtains needed information, and is compatible with the researcher’s personality’ (2005:31). From the perspective of my research about deathscapes this had implications for interviewing people; I attempted to treat people as individuals and make the interview experience suitable and appropriate for each participant. In addition I interviewed people holding different offices that related to the deathscape, church warden, ranger, and trustee. In these interviews I found it important to value that official role and the insights it offered, while also striving to gain a personal perspective alongside the professional. Responsive interviewing has some confluence with aspects of feminist theory that I also melded into my approach. The importance of building a relationship with the interviewee is highlighted in feminist methodologies, along with the shared responsibility to create the interview conversation (Crotty 2007). A general attitude of openness was advisable in an interview situation therefore, as Clough and Nutbrown (2007:29) remind us ‘channels of communication determine what may pass along them’. Open methodologies are necessary to learn about concepts and events, but are arguably also the best way of affording a sympathetic and respectful experience to the participant. In deference to the idea of such open
methodologies, my second research method sought out data in litter, finding that this data ‘spoke’ in quite a different way about cemetery use.

**Garbology and material trace data**

_Data are all around; given an imaginative cast of mind researchers can see possibilities in garbage, gravestones and the number of squashed flies on radiator grills._

Lee (2002:32)

Interviews and conversations give valuable insights into behaviours and attitudes but cannot reveal the whole story or truth behind a research question. Participants’ positionality may cause them to omit details, or give socially acceptable answers that represent only part of the truth. In addition the interviewer may show unconscious bias or differences between interviews that create inconsistencies between respondents (Lee 2000:31; Emmison and Smith 2000; Brewer 2000:65). To circumvent this issue there have been an increasingly wide range of creative approaches to data generation in recent years, including that of garbology, which I applied in my own research. This approach was pioneered by Rathje and Murphy (2001) who describe the range of research carried out by The Garbage Project in their book _Rubbish! The Archaeology of Garbage_ (2001).

Garbology is a specialised aspect of archaeology that studies litter and rubbish in order to evidence habits and activities and social trends. Pessel (2006) applied the principles of garbology to his study of a Polish Christmas and showed that the data can generate a wide range of factual information, as well as offering the basis for considerable informed inference. Other ‘unobtrusive measures’ are described by Lee (2000), who demonstrates the value of studying both erosion and accretion as indicators of the traffic and use of sites such as museum. Gray (2004) applies the same principles when he describes how found objects can act as windows into the unseen uses of a venue. In the context of the cemetery these ‘unobtrusive measures’ (see Figure 3.0-1 below) offer a useful complement to the more traditional tools of interview and conversation.
One of the most obvious features that can form a useful point for study is that of erosion, or the wearing down of a substrate through weathering or use. In many instances erosion can give clear indications of past activity; studies in museums, for example, have been able to show the relative popularity of different exhibits by the wear of floor tiles (Webb et al. 2000). In the context of the burial ground, erosion of different areas and substrates can be both illustrative and informative with regard to the nature and level of use. A typical example of erosion in a cemetery is the presence of worn-out areas of grass where people have repeatedly taken short-cuts across the site (see Figure 3.0-2 below). Lorimer describes how the footfalls of previous walkers will have already created a ‘desire line’ through the landscape: the force and weight of bodies and traction of boots wearing away ground vegetation’ and that this is ‘an easy lure for all those who follow’ (2011:28). Tree limbs and tombstones may be smoothed through use, or grass worn away near popular areas of seating, creating a visual juxtaposition of design versus use. This research used
evidence of erosion to facilitate the understanding of site use. Where erosion was found it was described and photographed to elucidate both the character of use and the meanings that are associated with this. Where appropriate, participants recruited for the interviews were also asked about these features which then acted as prompts to different stories and opinions.

Figure 3.0-2 Desire line connecting two authorised paths in the cemetery

Source: photograph owned by author

Where erosion describes the wearing-away of features at the site, accretion describes the build-up of trace material and deposits. Rathje and Murphy comment 'If our garbage, in the eyes of the future, is destined to hold a key to the past, then surely it already holds a
key to the present’ (2001:11). With echoes of modern police methods, the study of macro and micro litter and artefacts can give detailed information about both people and places. Webb et al. (2000) suggest that the use of this method could range from the study of nose prints on glass fronted museum cases as an indicator of popularity with different ages, to the estimation of liquor consumption in a dry town through a count of empty bottles in garbage. There are parallels in deathscapes where data about more ‘anti-social’ activities that might be taking place such as sex or drinking can be collected or photographed in a way that is sensitive to privacy and does not compromise participants. Deathscapes offer up a great richness of accretion data, from cigarette butts and beer cans to condoms and graffiti. All these data contribute their own insight and information into the use of the space that at times can corroborate or conflict with information gathered from interviews and conversation.

As described above there are a range of different techniques that can be used to study material traces in the cemetery. In my research, data included such items and formations as litter, graffiti and signs of erosion. I recorded the information predominantly in photographic form, making notes to describe positioning, condition and other relevant
information about the traces under my gaze. In order to get the broadest picture of use, I visited each site on a number of different occasions and at different times of the day and year. I examined litter that was lying on the ground, in undergrowth and that had been purposefully stuffed into nooks and crannies around the site (see Figure 3.0-3). In addition I looked into rubbish bins where the design allowed and photographed the contents of bins at different locations in deathscapes (see Figure 3.0-1). In interviews I also took the opportunity to ask participants about litter and graffiti and noted any their comments about the frequency and nature of anything that they identified as belonging in this category. One interviewee, Valerie, offered up a variety of rubbish stories, most memorable being comments about ‘biospills’ such as vomit, their frequency and location in the cemetery and the inferences that could be made about a Saturday night in that city. In this way, data that could be viewed as purely quantitative in nature gained a qualitative richness, a narrative and individual history that connected it to my personal and interview data.

It was a considerable challenge to bring the data together from interviews, conversations, rubbish, erosion and my own experiences. Whilst the different methods had their own stand-alone advantages in terms of the data that they could yield, bringing the parts together to create the sum required a creative turn. The heuristic process was advantageous at this point as it presented the opportunity to assimilate the data internally during the immersion and incubation phases that are described below. The outcome of this slightly risky process of mixed methods was not only a more inspiring and sensory research process (for me) but also, I believe, a richer end product after the data analysis. In the section below I describe the process of analysis in more detail and outline some of the themes that emerged from the data.

**Data analysis**

As discussed above, this research employed mixed methods, resulting in data being collected in a range of different formats, from interview audio files and participant observation journal notes to photographs of material traces and items of rubbish. This section gives an account of how new knowledge was extracted from this diverse range of data sources through the process of analysis. Using the guiding principles of heuristic inquiry for the analysis of data from interviews and garbology gave me a strong structure to follow, along with the freedom to use my own ideas and intuitions in this process. I
describe the heuristic phases below before moving forward to explain my position regarding transcription and the use of a bricolage approach (Kvale 2008). Rubbish, photographic and audio data were all analysed in a narrative fashion using the same heuristic principles, and culminating in a ‘creative synthesis’ that expressed my own interpretation of the data stories. I continue the section with a description of the analysis process used for graffiti. Graffiti in particular presented a number of challenges to analysis and so I finish with a consideration of the advantages and disadvantages of the approaches used.

Data collection bleeds into analysis in heuristic inquiry and ranges back and forth in different phases. The phases of heuristic inquiry are given variously as either six (Moustakas 1990) or seven (Hiles 2001). Hiles’ seventh category is that of validation of the inquiry, or the process of continual cross checking of the data, which I consider to be necessary and implicit in the research rather than an end point activity. As such I will describe heuristic inquiry here on the basis of six phases that provide a structure and direction to the collection and analysis of data. Greater detail about my personal experience of this process can be found in the sections between each chapter that describe the trajectory of my journey into research. The first phase of heuristic inquiry is that of the initial engagement with the research question. The heuristic approach requires that the researcher is deeply concerned with the subject matter, and in the context of my own research into deathscapes this is the very reason that the heuristic methodology was appropriate to my research. Following this phase is Immersion which Hiles summarises by stating that ‘the research question is lived in waking, sleeping and even dream states’ (2001:14). This intense stage is followed by a period of incubation during which the researcher is less concentrated in focus and allows knowledge and understanding to be internally processed. This leads naturally into the next phase, illumination, which describes the point at which a breakthrough is made in the researcher’s understanding of the question. Explication occurs next and is the ‘full examination of what has been awakened in consciousness. What is required is organisation and a comprehensive depiction of the core themes.’ (Hiles 2001:14). The end product of this process of inquiry is the phase of creative synthesis during which the researcher takes the core themes revealed in the analysis and expresses them in a creative form such as narrative, painting, or sculpture. As a person that self-identifies as unartistic, I actively sought the challenge of creating a physical expression of my engagement and understanding of the research topic. In
practice I enjoyed the months of planning and learned a great deal about cemeteries from the process of expressing meaning through materiality. To get to this end point of creative synthesis necessitates an intensive period of analysis and I continue below with further details of how this was carried out.

**Interviews and conversations**

I recorded interviews and conversations throughout the process of my research, latterly in digital format. I decided not to take the traditional route of fully transcribing interviews for analysis (Kvale 2008, Gillham 2005), instead following Raisborough’s lead in appreciating the power of the spoken word and background sounds in their original format (2007). Many of my interviews echoed Raisborough’s own experience that ‘the background noise on the tape recordings (of bugles, orders, interruptions, cadets running past) clearly spoke to the conditions of women’s everyday leisure experiences’ (2007:692). The sounds of nature (birds and trees), religious life (church bells and the resonant sounds of voices in church) and location (traffic noise) all played a part in creating the atmosphere of the interview as well as the experience of the deathscape. I listened to each interview or conversation between twenty and thirty times, meaning that although this method did not save time over transcription, it did allow me to enter more fully into the interview experience on each listening. Repeated listenings of this data allowed me to draw out themes and codes from the interviews. These key insights were recorded in a written format which facilitated the conflation of data from a range of different formats. During this process the heuristic phases of immersion and incubation were critical to entering the world of the data and understanding it, whether the data was written or in an audio file. Having outlined here how I used an audio approach to interview analysis, I next turn to my written records and discuss how these were analysed and understood.

**Participant observation journal entries**

Participant observation across my four study sites resulted in my spending 550 hours in graveyards. Sometimes this was at events such as guided walks or nocturnal storytelling sessions, in which notes were written up after the event. At other times I sat on benches or gravestones and made observational notes about the sites and any activities taking place. These notes usually comprised a shorthand commentary of what I saw, heard and experienced and were sometimes accompanied (or replaced) by sound recordings (for
example when it was too rainy or dark to write) and often included rough sketches. Despite the format thus being rather variable, I followed the same overall analytic approach as for the interviews. The data was read and then sorted into themes and codes, or listened to with the same result, or in the case of sketches, these were studied and translated into narrative themes and codes. In some cases this reduction of data into the written word may have reduced some of the impact of the original data source, but the benefit of the heuristic approach is that the experience of the immersion phase ensures that the researcher is strongly connected to the data and thus does not lose sight of the significance of the different elements within the data.

**Garbology**

Discarded items provide information not only from their very nature (a dog dropping for example telling us that a dog has been present at that location) but can also inform us about opinion and intent. Nelson (2004:25) tells us that littering is ‘a safe, minor form of rebellion and transgression’ and that litter is a mark of consumption ‘it shows you have enough money to exert your consumer power and it’s a visual sign of your wealth in this respect’. It also conveys both subtle and overt signs of domination. I consider that litter acts as a three dimensional form of graffiti, claiming space and territory for people, as evidenced by Williams (1997) who found that some litterers deliberately placed rubbish items in specific locations. Moving onto a form of behaviour more commonly recognised as claim-staking brings us to graffiti itself. Unlike other physical traces of human activity, graffiti is purposeful and intended to be encountered and interpreted. As a result, it can be indicative of the attitudes, opinions and other social preoccupations of its creators (Lee 2000). Research into graffiti culture indicates that language, tags and content all convey distinctive messages about the artists, and their perceptions of the area (Emmison and Smith 2000). Whilst this approach has not been previously used in deathscapes, it offers a unique route to accessing the role of the cemetery amongst some of its more elusive visitors. At the point of data collection, all material traces whether graffiti, erosion or littering, were recorded photographically. In the analysis phase of the research these items of photographic record were then brought together and studied as a whole.

Analysing these diverse photographic records did present something of a challenge. To a certain extent they could be treated as traditional written information and sorted into categories and codes. Equally, photographic images offered powerful records of
garbological evidence in deathscapes conveying stories about use and activity that were often far more evocative and powerful than field notes. Following the techniques of Kloftas and Cutshall (1985, cited in Emmison and Smith 2000:141), I recorded and categorised graffiti using the scheme described below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Graffiti</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal identifier</td>
<td>Names, initials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group identifier</td>
<td>Group names, name strings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slurs and insults</td>
<td>With names or places</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teen and romance</td>
<td>Linked names, hearts, initials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal</td>
<td>Police, crime etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activism</td>
<td>Political slogans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>Praise, slurs, other references</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outlaws</td>
<td>Swastikas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drugs</td>
<td>Drug names, slang, pictures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>Sexual references and drawings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>Symbols and words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obscenity</td>
<td>Unconnected obscenity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>Cartoons, doodles, song titles</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Table 3.0-3  Categorisation of types of graffiti |

Coding graffiti in this way allowed trends to be seen more easily, and the presence or absence of particular types suggested ways in which people related to the space as a place to pass through or defended neighbourhood. The messages conveyed by graffiti were read and understood by other users; thus I was less interested in what was intended than in what people perceived. Rubbish and other material traces that were recorded in photographic form were similarly sorted into themes for coding. These included the manner of deposition (eg wedged, binned, or decorative), the primary purpose of the item (eg wrapper for food, drink container, smoking paraphernalia) and the location of the item. Translating physical items and photographs into a narrative structure allowed the data to then be brought together with that generated from the interview and participants observation processes. The themes and codes were fused from all of these different sources in order to make sense of the cemetery landscape from different perspectives.
Having data in different formats – written, photographed, collected and recorded – meant that to a bricolage approach was necessary to make sense and order out of the findings. DeSilvey considers this process to be the ‘imaginative recuperation of these webs of connection and affinity’ (2007:403) and explains that such a method of reconstruction works through associative links as ‘objects yield their stories through their alignment with other, equally unscrutable, remains’ (2007:404). Kvale (2008) describes this analytic tactic as employing mixed strategies and moving between different styles and methods throughout the process of analysis. Despite this offering an apparent freedom from rules, I broadly followed the same sequence of events for each data set. The first stage was recognition – the point at which immersion in the data lead to concepts, themes and markers being revealed. These concepts and themes are next clarified by comparing different interviews and data sets before the third and fourth stages of coding and sorting take place. Finally this product can be synthesised, which involves combining the concepts that have been derived from the data to create a theory of how the culture, in this case, the experience of deathscapes, works (Rubin and Rubin 2005). Although data generated from the garbology methods was initially in a different format to the interviews, the heuristic approach meant that all of the different forms of data could be brought together in the analytic process.

Reflection on knowledge production

Conducting this research proved to be both fascinating and frustrating. Each different strand of my methodology brought inherent issues and concerns when applied to real life research. Arguably, the strength of qualitative research is that it allows us to find out what happens in the world. All data, whether interview, conversation or litter is actually a step away from this, being merely what a suggestion of the whole story, or what people think or believe happens (Silverman 2006). Silverman reminds us, however, that whilst interviews may be a contrivance, no data collection can be otherwise; everything that a researcher sees or records is contingent on influencing factors that can be as basic where you were stood or what you look like. Garbage and the associated unobtrusive data that I collected proved to be insightful about deathscapes but did also have both flaws and limitations.

One obvious issue with garbology is that such trace data can produce conservative estimates of behaviour since some activities leave confusing or even no traces. Data that
is left can provide information, but is inferentially weak. Worn paths or cigarette butts
can show that people have used the site but are not conclusive evidence of motivation,
activity or intention. While a clustering of litter around a bench or tree can suggest that
this is a preferred area, data can be contaminated by litter that blows in to the site or that
is simply dumped by fly-tippers. Pessel (2006) reminds us that material remains may
appear to be unwanted but are in fact full of the memory of the previous purpose. This
information may be useful in concreting activities and choices (telling the story of a
smoker or a sexual encounter for example) but can also occlude stories that may never
be told, such as the unseen graffiti below the top layer, or the exact use of the discarded
blanket found in the bushes. Lee sees the positive in this, saying ‘As we go through our
daily lives we inadvertently scatter remnants of our passage’ (2000:32) but he reveals
something of the potential inconsistency of the data, with his use of the word
‘inadvertently’. Whilst graffiti may be purposeful, and arguably therefore a more accurate,
source of data, rubbish, remains and erosion can only ever hint at the real stories.
Scanlon writes this in a different way, saying ‘garbage provide a shadow history of modern
life’ (2005:36). The shadowiness of this history Scanlon describes is suggestive not only of
rubbish being but a ghostly representation of an object, activity or intention, but also gives
it a heterotopic flavour. Rubbish seems to connect the different worlds of the past,
present and future, with the cemetery as the threshold of intersection between these
different places.

**Rubbish and heuristic inquiry**
The methods and methodology selected for this research were central to the
construction of this version of the cemetery space. As part of this journey is the
forefronting of the process of knowing itself, I chose heuristic inquiry as the
methodological framework for this research in order to honour and exploit my own
cemetery experiences. As an approach that requires a ‘free fall surrender to the process”
(Sela-Smith 2002:70) it is both a difficult and an easy journey to follow. It was made simple
by the fact that I was already immersed in the subject through my own interests, but in
my case also more demanding since I work full-time in a different field. This necessitated
switching from one role to another on a daily basis as I moved between a set of different
identities. The very level of emotional involvement required by heuristic inquiry also
contributed at times to the difficulty of the exercise. During the process of this research I
had two babies and experienced three deaths in my family, events which brought a new
poignancy to the cemetery landscape for me. Despite these challenges I was able to continue my research, in part because the method of heuristic inquiry gave me the opportunity to respect my emotions and consent to care for myself.

Method and methodology are crucial to the data collection and thus the findings claimed by this research. Employing heuristic inquiry quickly opened up a number of debates and from these, challenges to the method itself. There is debate amongst scholars as to whether Moustakas’s method should involve participants other than the researcher or not (Moustakas 1990, Sela Smith 2002). Sela Smith argues that heuristic inquiry in its purest form is concerned with experiencing experiences rather than asking about experiences and thus should come from the self. However, whilst Moustakas does write specifically about the importance of personal engagement and experience of the subject matter, he also refers to the additional knowledge that co-participants can bring to the research. I chose to explore the experiences of other participants in order to gain both breadth and depth in my inquiry. I also found that participant’s stories triggered more recollections of own, creating a fluid dialogue between myself and others.

As a supplement to the data gathered from interview, I chose to capture additional information about cemetery spaces and activities from material traces and litter. I am not aware of this type of data being used before in heuristic inquiry, but it finds a precedent in Moustakas’s suggestion that additional materials may be used judiciously to inform the researcher:

*To supplement the interview data, the heuristic researcher may also collect personal documents. Diaries, journals, logs, poetry and art-work offer additional meaning and depth and supplement depictions of the experience gained from observations and interviews*

Moustakas (1990:49)

Guided by Emmison and Smith (2002), Rathje and Murphy (2001), Webb et al. (2000), and latterly also influenced by DeSilvey (2006, 2007) I studied material traces and absences such as rubbish, graffiti, desire lines or social trails and other signs of people’s use and abuse of deathscapes. These signs and vestiges of activity sometimes gave an intimate picture of the way deathscapes were used. They led me to hideouts in areas of shrubby vegetation and to the most popular benches for a smoke. They spoke of attitudes to cemeteries, of the purple recreation that took place in these spaces and of volume of use as the discarded matter changed day by day. Whilst sometimes illuminating, then, these
shards of information were also capable of hiding as much as they revealed. The people behind the objects were usually unknown; the motivations and experiences of visitors were not revealed through these items. However, as a technique to supplement interview data I found that rubbish sometimes gave away secrets that might otherwise have remained buried. I was wary of inferring too much from the objects about the visitors to which they had once belonged but also saw a role for rubbish not just in informing about sense of place but also contributing to the sense of place. Sites with litter and graffiti communicated an additional message about how they were looked after, about how the community engaged with them – garbology was able to converse on a number of different levels.

Bringing together heuristic inquiry and garbology together worked sympathetically in this research, giving depth and intensity to the understanding of experience and activity. To date, found objects relating to legend-tripping events are the only form of material traces that have been studied in the context of the cemetery (Holly and Cordy 2007). This piece of work specifically looked at items that had been placed at vampire and other legend-inspired graves in order to better understand the phenomenon of legend tripping. Holly and Cordy discuss the possible role of flowers, coins, cigarettes, and hair clips in magic, and as tributes to the dead.

Yet, there was also the material record to contend with – and these objects were silent. They could not speak to their donors or to their donor’s intentions and beliefs (or disbeliefs). We could assume that the objects were left by teenagers who pour into cemeteries at night to score each other and to playfully test – and pretend – that such tests yield positive results. And indeed, it is quite possible that many - perhaps all – of the objects we recovered were deposited in this manner. But in this article we wish to explore some alternative readings of this material record. We believe that such readings are warranted in that an archaeological approach to legend landscapes is apt to reveal a wider range of activities and visitors than one that relies solely on direct research with informants. People who come and so in the middle of the night, decline initiations to be interviewed, or operate under the radar of participant-observation research, for instance, nonetheless may contribute something to the “material record”. Thus while the interpretation of the material record is always difficult, at least we can be confident that the sample is inclusive’

Holly and Cordy (2007:346-7)

Holly and Cordy describe the objects they found as silent. Whilst I agree that we may not know all of the intentions or beliefs of the person who left the object, I do think that objects have voice and can contribute to a composite depiction of experience. The voice can speak of the purpose of the item, whether it is active or passive, disposable or
durable, specialised or generalist. Objects can have distinct forms and functions and from these we can gain an insight into the purpose of the object as well as the impact that it makes on the space it inhabits. The idea that objects increase the inclusivity of the sample is one of the reasons behind my decision to include material trace data in my research. It is also one of the reasons for including photos in this thesis alongside interview quotes and field note excerpts – as a way of increasing the clarity of understanding of the cemetery site. Moustakas talks about the ‘material’ collected and what could be more material than material objects?

**Discovering deathscapes**

Given then, that there is a place for rubbish in heuristic inquiry, it is pertinent to reflect on how heuristic inquiry and garbology fare in the domain of heterotopia. Drawing directly on the experience of my research I consider that heuristic inquiry is an eminently suitable approach to take. It is designed to unpick experiences (Moustakas 1990), and whilst cemetery/heterotopia are real places, they are contingent on experience to create their sense of place. Heuristic inquiry explicates the experiences that interact with space to form place and the relationships that are formed and reformed between people and place. Since heterotopia are not ‘normal’ places, they are less easy to read than everyday spaces, and may have different rules. Using additional cues such as the evidence of garbology, of erosion and accretion, can add another dimension of information that complements the narratives of interview and observation.

The uncanny contrasts and aberrant combinations of material traces and the nature/culture of the cemetery shown in photographs throughout this thesis serves to underscore the heterotopic nature of these places. I here use the term uncanny after Scanlon, who describes how ‘canniness in some sense represents a knowing and so it is our ignorance of ruin, decay and so on that renders garbage uncanny, unfamiliar or unhomely’ (2005:167). Furthermore, material traces are often the seemingly inconsequential things that people do not recall in interview. Despite their apparent triviality they may reveal ingrained attitudes and beliefs; to ignore litter is to change the subject of the study. Litter is not just the remains of an activity but a feature of how place is perceived; it has sound, smell and colour sensory impact that can challenge the sense of place (Paterson 2009). Desire lines in my research led me to well-worn spots under shady trees and to popular smoking areas – places that are significant to those that use them.
and yet that might have been missed if I had stuck to the rules and the path. When studying a place outside of the normal rules, I contend that the research must also reconsider the rules of engagement to understand the phenomenon.

The research methods and methodology employed had strengths, particularly in their commitment to the narratives of the researcher and use of trace data, but were sometimes challenging to analyse. Using heuristic inquiry was, from my perspective, an effective way to conduct the research, since it made my own bias and knowledge manifest, but the lack of precedent in sociology made this experience an uneasy one at times. What I hope that this research can do is illuminate our understandings and experiences of recreation in deathscapes and use this to build on the concept of spatiality in burial grounds. The significance of creative synthesis to this methodology is multifarious. Firstly it played an important role in helping me to understand and organise the data. Secondly it offers a simulacrum of the cemetery and attempts to encapsulate the experience of the cemetery in physical form as a complement to the written words of the thesis. In the words of Wendy Rogers ‘I wanted the qualities of the experience to be tangible’ (Rogers 1998:199). From all of the analytic processes employed, some key themes emerged from the data relating to the use and purpose of cemetery sites, namely purple recreation, dark tourism and enchantment. The following chapters examine these themes in more detail and build a multi-faceted model of spatiality and leisure in deathscapes.
Thinking inside the box: early days for the creative synthesis project

Source: photograph owned by author
Incubation is the process in which the researcher retreats from the intense, concentrated focus on the question. Although the researcher is moving on a totally different path, detached from involvement with the question and removed from awareness of its nature and meanings, on another level, expansion of knowledge is taking place...The period of incubation enables the inner tacit dimension to reach its full possibilities;

Moustakas (1990:28)

Diary 2nd June 2006

I open the crooked metal gate. Go along the grass path, broken up by bare bald patches and sinewy tree roots. Weave through graves and angels with long, narrow wings. I cannot tell what they are thinking. Odd bits of graves are illuminated by shards of light, but it is fading all the time. Smudge behind me is crunching through the dry leaf litter.

It seems like afternoon and evening are jostling for place. The air is very still and sunlight is sliding through the gaps in the tree canopy, but fading slowly, weakening. It is just me, Smudge and the treetops bristling with blue tits and blackbirds. Watching me, ignoring me, bouncing through the leaves in search of food.

I sit on a bench. Lean back. Close my eyes. I am in a sort of reverie. I can almost feel the birdsong on my face it is so thick, playing in cordant and discordant waves over the backdrop of cars, planes, and distant dogs. The sudden sharp burst of engine noise as a boy racer speeds up the slip road to the Tesco Extra. I open my eyes. Little flies dot the air, in sharp definition against the slatey blue evening sky. I can feel so many different strands here – nature, culture, sounds, senses, family and connections. Together they are something complete, but so interwoven I am not sure how to tease them apart.
Chapter four:

Deathscapes and purple recreation

In this chapter I show how the apparently respectable environs of the cemetery of churchyard can be appropriated for deviant or so-called ‘purple’ recreation activities (Curtis 1979). Multiple narratives arose from both interview and material trace data to indicate that burial grounds are widely used for recreational activities that were against the rules (see Figure 4.0-1) and that participants variously described as ‘inappropriate’, ‘anti-social’ or ‘dodgy’. Whilst there is a literature about cemeteries and churchyards in relation to the more sensational recreational uses such as legend-tripping (Holly and Cordy 2007) and dark tourism (see Lennon and Foley 2000, Tarlow 2005, Sharpley 2009, Stone 2009) there has, as yet been little documentation of the quotidian purple uses of graveyards. Here I argue that it is the heterotopic nature of the cemetery that makes it suitable for purple recreation. Interviews reveal the extent of these activities and

Figure 4.0-1 Churchyard signage
Source: photograph owned by author
photographs visually represent the richness of heterotopic juxtapositions of the animate and inanimate, of nature and culture and contrasting human behaviours. I explore the almost mutualistic relationship between heterotopia and purple recreation and how purple activities ebb and flow through tacitly agreed time and space.

Behaviours such as drinking, loitering and engaging in sexual acts in public usually come under the banner of anti-social behaviour. These types of activity are widely viewed as problematic and ascribed to categories of deviance, vandalism, and transgression (Halsey and Young 2002, Bell 2006, Carrington 2009). In the context of my research I posit that this is too simple a classification of such activities, favouring the argument put forward by Williams et al. that the essence of deviance in recreation is 'something that is unusual, unconventional, or different' (Williams et al. 2009:211). The voices of my participants redefine the parameters of deviance and lead me to contend that purple recreation is a more suitable descriptor for these activities. Purple recreation as a descriptive term lacks the judgement inherent in other categorisations such as deviant or delinquent and allows the activities to be viewed with greater neutrality. Whilst I consider that Curtis was flawed and too simplistic in his definitive assignment of specific activities to a ‘good’ or ‘bad’ status (1979:286) he did make the important clarification that so-called ‘off-color’ activities were forms of recreation even while they were potentially anti-social or criminal in nature. He explained that these marginal behaviours provided participants with some level of enjoyment and reward even whilst they came into conflict with the norms of society. Purple recreation, then, can have benefits in the way that ‘normal’ leisure does, but what sets it apart is that it also has a cost for the participant or other people (Russell 2002).

Two specific themes of socialising with drink and drugs, and having sex, arose from the data and are covered here under the sub headings of drinking, taking drugs and hanging out, and sex in the cemetery. Implicit in these are the additional themes of respect, ownership, authority and control that were meta-narratives across many of the different strands of this research. In this chapter I contribute to the literature of purple recreation (Curtis 1979, Robertson 1994, Caldwell and Smith 2006) through the claim driven by my data that cemeteries are important sites for what is regarded as deviant activity. Placing deathsapes as sites of purple recreation extends current understandings of purple recreation, adding a deeper perspective on the ‘placing’ of deviance, a facet which Curtis -
primarily concerned with activity rather than location - does not factor in to his concept of purple recreation. In addition the conflation here of purple recreation and heterotopia reimagines the concept of deviance as realised by Curtis. He recognised deviance within recreation but still felt that it was ‘wrong’. I argue that heterotopia allows us to see that these so-called deviant activities are very much place-dependent and can be interpreted as wrong if placed inappropriately, but that they can also be acceptable if place has a fit with activity.

**Purple places and people**

Recreation is usually viewed as a positive, constructive or healthy use of free time (Rojek 1999, Williams and Walker 2006). As such it is argued to benefit the participants either through conference of new skills, increased fitness or self-confidence (Shinew and Parry 2005). Whilst participants in my research did cite a number of educational or beneficial ways in which they might spend their time in a graveyard – from walking to preservation tasks – the majority also made reference to a darker element of recreation. It was also clear from the data that unsanctioned uses of these sites were prevalent. The Local Authorities Cemeteries Order (LACO) regulations are clear in their delineation of appropriate and inappropriate activities-

> ...LACO creates certain offences in local authority cemeteries, including creating a disturbance, committing any nuisance, interfering with any burial, interfering with a grave, playing any game or sport, or entering or remaining in a cemetery when it is closed to the public.

Department for Constitutional Affairs (1997)

Despite this, my research demonstrates that users and managers alike have their own thresholds of acceptability for different uses and activities. In this chapter I focus specifically on the topics of drink, drugs and graffiti, and sex as these themes arose most strongly from the interview and rubbish data. Some participants had direct experience of purple recreation in a cemetery; others approached the issue as observers. The excerpts below suggest something of the range of purple activities that participants reported in interview.

> We have found all sorts of things...traffic lights, a safe, TVs, videos and lots of condoms

Richard and Janice (walk leaders, Manchester) 2005
This [churchyard] is kind of the centre of all of that [anti-social] activity. In the evening the street drinkers get lashed up and pissed up and fight and there is shouting and stuff like that.

Pierre (greenspace ranger, Rushton) 2010

It is a fantastic place for drug dealing. You could say that one of its uses is to focus anti-social behaviour in one place.

Pierre (greenspace ranger, Rushton) 2010

Gathering these behaviours under the aegis of purple recreation allows them to be examined without the baggage of criminality inherent in terms such as anti-social, whilst recognising that they do stray from societal norms. In looking more closely at this data I try to suspend judgement on the activities as positive or negative, taking inspiration from Moffat et al. (2009) whose research into marijuana use demonstrated that it could have a positive effect for users through increasing the connection of those young people to the natural world. Millie (2008) reminds us that context is very important in the decision over what is seen as appropriate, inappropriate, purple, or anti-social behaviour. In the case of the cemetery, with its distinctive sense of place, I suggest that there is a unique context and different norms to everyday life elsewhere. Cemeteries are unusual places which seem to have their own rules and norms. If purple, in recreation, describes activities that conflict with the norms of society, then I would suggest that cemeteries could equally be described as purple places. They sit uneasily in the narratives of many of my participants who gave them multiple identities depending on factors as diverse as their own mood, the weather and the time of day or night. Viewing graveyards as purple or deviant places also fits with Foucault’s (1986) thesis of the cemetery as heterotopia. Such places are, he suggests, deviant or ‘other’ in nature. One of the principles Foucault (1986) uses to define heterotopia is the juxtaposition of things which do not ordinarily go together. In this chapter juxtaposition is at the heart of all the data and is evidenced here through interview and photographic data which demonstrate that cemeteries are places where the seemingly incompatible come together. In the next two sections I take a closer look at what actually happens in the cemetery, using data from interviews and garbological evidence. These sources of data collaboratively construct a model of the graveyard as a place rife with anti-social behaviour and yet also a place where this behaviour is permitted, under a different set of place-rules.
**Hanging out: drink, drugs and graffiti in the cemetery**

Amongst the many purple activities that take place in graveyards, hanging out, socialising, drinking and taking drugs are some of the most common occurrences. Interviewees described many instances either of taking part in such activities, or of witnessing groups using graveyards in this way. I start here by looking at how interviewees’ words were supported by the material trace data that I collected on site. Figure 4.0-2, below, shows graffiti written on a churchyard bench, one of several showing this tag around the graveyard. Applying Klofas and Cutshall’s model of categorising graffiti (1985, cited in Emmison and Smith 2000) reveals that the only types of graffiti found, or reported were personal and group identifiers, and teen and romance tags. The nature of these graffiti reveals details about the use and value of the graveyard to those who have made these marks.

Firstly they show that cemeteries form part of a neighbourhood that has been claimed by a specific group, with these tags and marks being signifiers of ownership and territory. One site in particular had been tagged with a stylised postcode symbol that seemed to stake a claim on the area for those involved with that group. Secondly they imply that the group or individual undertaking this tagging, who has developed this sense of ownership, has also created some set of ‘rules’ under which they operate. In the sites I studied, one rule seemed to be not to write graffiti on gravestones or memorials. Although we cannot infer any explanation for this apparent rule, it is still interesting to note that so-called deviant members of society seem to have ways of controlling and governing their own behaviour.
There are several possible layers of interpretation of this graffiti and it is important to start at the most superficial level and recognise that this tagging is evidence of the site being visited by a tagger, and then from this, that the purpose of the tag is to claim the site for that person or group. Clearly this tag does not indicate what else the person or group may have done in the churchyard but we can gain a small insight into the mindset of a graffiti writer or tagger from Halsey and Young (2002) who describe the skill, hierarchy and symbolism in this form of art. Carrington (2009) further explains the purpose of tagging and graffiti as instruments of ‘voice, identity and space’ (2009:417)
Graffiti and tagging, then, play a role in claiming an area (see also Figure 4.0-3) but also offer a tantalising glimpse of heterotopia in action. Not only do these writings present a neat juxtaposition of presences in line with Foucault’s heterotopia but they also echo his description of the mirroring, reflecting or inverting qualities of heterotopia. Here the tagging on the bench is a deviant mirror of the memorial bench that would be normal to see in a deathscape. This bench inverts the expected form for a memorial bench by celebrating the living rather than the dead. And whilst the claim of the dead on the landscape is incontestable, this tag was ephemeral – soon cleaned off by the council.

Graffiti hints at the different types of time found in the cemetery. In contrast to the stasis of ‘dead time’ – the time of the deceased that has been brought to an abrupt halt, the ‘living time’ of those passing through is seen here to be evanescent; the claim has been staked by the tag but is then taken away.

Figure 4.0-3 Graffiti on a churchyard bin
Source: photograph owned by author
Graffiti was not the only purple activity to leave an audit trail in the cemetery. Drinking alcohol was commonly reported by interviewees and also evident in garbological data. Participants described both taking part and observing drinking in the cemetery. Pewter (recreator, Greetham) recalls her teenage years, saying 'it was the main place to hang out for a beer', whilst Pierre (greenspace ranger, Rushton) comments that the point of one graveyard is simply for 'teenage drinkers and dog poo'. Walking round with Pierre we spot a street-drinker asleep on the ground, to which Pierre says 'there is your other user group'. Interviews were rife with examples of drinking and all of these described just two groups of people that did so - young people and street-drinkers.

Figure 4.0-4 Contents of a cemetery bin
Source: photograph owned by author

The photograph above (Figure 4.0-4) is typical of many churchyard and cemetery bins that I looked into. In the photo there is evidence of drinking activities (beer and cider refuse) and dog waste from those visiting for a dog walk. The photograph captures the contrast between different activities, echoing again the idea of juxtaposition so central to heterotopia. The fact that the purple activity of drinking ends with the neat and tidy packaging of the cans into a bag and their disposal within a bin presents a unique insight.
into the way in which deviance and respect coalesce and reform into an almost polite version of deviance.

In Figure 4.0-5 above, there is a carefully concealed can of Stella Artois by the anchor. Although graveyards did show signs of littering in common with surrounding public areas, they were also very likely to show compliance with bin usage or the use of this form of ‘wedging’ where litter is strategically deposited in a place from which it will not blow away or look too untidy (Williams et al. 1997). This idea of ‘tidy littering’ prefigures discussions below regarding the concept of respect in the cemetery, and hints that there
is a general avoidance of messy and therefore ‘disrespectful’ littering, but that where receptacles for litter are not available, people will litter in a discrete and minimally invasive way.

![Litter wedged in a broken tomb](image)

**Figure 4.0-6 Litter wedged in a broken tomb**

*Source: photograph owned by author*

Many acts of purple recreation caused tension between users, who disagreed as to whether they were acceptable or not in a burial ground. In some instances, participants expressed contradictory opinions at different stages of the interview. Jane (Friends member, Clearstone), for example, firstly said that neither the presence of a drug dealer nor incidents of rowdiness and drunken behaviour were a problem went on to say:

> *I think something like a music festival with really loud music and drunkenness would feel wrong but maybe that is just me.*

Jane (Friends member, Clearstone) 2010

When asked why specific activities were not thought to be appropriate, participants most frequently referred to two arguments: firstly that they showed a lack of respect and secondly that they altered the site or caused damage. The inability of participants to pin
down whether or not the cemetery was special or sacred hints at the slipperiness that heterotopia imparts. Once more though, this brings us back to the issue of respect, as some participants were clear that nothing illegal should take place in a churchyard but felt that even everyday activities could be construed as anti-social when they took place in a churchyard. Mitzi (parent recreator, Rushton) describes a dilemma she experienced when in a churchyard ‘I dunno, when we were up there for that fete I thought “should I have a cigarette here, is that disrespectful?”’ Several participants described how they felt that the sites did require more sympathetic behaviour than other open spaces such as parks because of the dead bodies there. This heightened awareness as to the nature of the site did not suppress the incidence of purple recreation, with high levels of anti-social behaviour reported in three of the four sites. But as the photographs and evidence of, for example, tidy littering show, it may have influenced or ameliorated the manifestation of purple recreation.

From a management viewpoint some activities damaged or reduced the quality of the site. Examples of purple recreation were cited as making the graveyard seem less safe to visitors, or causing disturbance for local residents. Littering, rowdiness, drinking or even the unauthorised scattering of ashes and burial of pets were cited as making more work for the maintenance and patrol teams. It was not all about workload, crime and perception of crime however. Luther (greenspace manager, Rushton) also raised the issue of sanctity when he said ‘There are some things we would consider to be inappropriate as they [the churchyards] are still consecrated ground.’ Although he would not be pushed for a personal explanation of what consecrated ground meant, Luther (greenspace manager, Rushton) alluded here to a sense of difference, of sanctity or sacredness.

Perhaps surprisingly very few participants made reference to religion in their interviews despite the fact that several had official roles within the church authority. Others gave vague attributions to the notion of respect and put forward the suggestion that the ground was in some way sacred. Imogen (taphophobe, Clearstone) was the only participant who openly aligned herself as spiritual and she voiced the strongest opinions on this matter. She did not think that anything except visits to pay respects to the dead were acceptable, saying:
It is a burial place. It should not enter anyone’s mind that children could run around and play there. It should be a place of peace and tranquillity. It should be sacred and should be respected.

Imogen (taphophobe, Clearstone) 2010

Indeed, respect was much more commonly mentioned than sacredness as a reason why activities were not fitting. Valerie (Friends founder, Marchester) introduces her ideas of appropriateness and respect in this example:

They [teenagers] might gather on a summers evening and want to have a little party or something. And basically you want to have a society where there is respect, and there are other places to have parties.

Valerie (Friends founder, Marchester) 2005

Jane (Friends member, Clearstone), was amongst those who took a more benign view of this sort of use. She justified activities such as drug-dealing, saying that there ‘Used to be lots of drug dealers but [it was] not a problem really as they did not want to be noticed – not in their interests!’ Jane felt that if people did not cause any problems to her, then they should be allowed. Indeed she suggested that the dealer’s presence actually served to reduce the likelihood of more serious incidents of anti-social behaviour as he acted as a form of local police. Lindon (church warden, Clearstone) talks about the same churchyard when he says ‘It shouldn’t be a sacred space...it is for all.’ Echoing Jane’s (Friends member, Clearstone), sentiments that the site should welcome any visitor, he gave an example of a rough sleeper who had lived there for three years and had become so much a part of the community that he had received post. He felt that the site should not be exclusive, although acknowledged that it was not always safe at night. Indeed he told me that there had been both a rape and a murder in the churchyard – but felt that the more it was used the safer it would be. Lindon (church warden, Clearstone) had an official role within the church community and I often felt that he was being rather guarded in his answers because we were within earshot of many members of the parish. He expressed a desire for tolerance of all uses of the churchyard and stressed the all-inclusive nature of the church community to all. However, when he said ‘Less desirable uses? We have had everything’ it appeared that he did class some activities as less appropriate, although he could not be pushed to actually name what these might be.

Both Joan (purple recreator, Rushton) and Jane (Friends member, Clearstone) remarked on the fact that graveyards are frequently used for drinking. Joan (purple recreator, Rushton) explaining that ‘Lots of people do get drunk in graveyards and I don’t think
there is that much of a problem with it. I don’t think there is that many things which would be inappropriate.’ This was corroborated by Jane (Friends member, Clearstone) who commented that ‘We get a bit of rowdiness and drunken behaviour but it is not a problem.’ Both interviewees said at a later stage that they felt these sort of uses were acceptable, but qualified it by saying that if the behaviour extended to ‘Graffiti-ing, sacrilege or whatever the word is...defacement’ (Joan - purple recreator, Rushton) then this moved into unacceptable territory. Graffiti was an area of contention too with most people thinking it was wrong, except for Debra (tourist, Clearstone) who noted that a long standing piece of graffiti art had been cleaned off from the cemetery, saying ‘I am disappointed that the graffiti is gone...it was peoples tributes and reverence.’ From the management perspective however graffiti was uncommonly found, as Luther (greenspace manager, Rushton) describes. ‘Graffiti ? In churchyards, no. In Foolvar [a disused graveyard in Rushton] the benches, not the monuments, have what I call the ‘I love Lucy’s’ which is pen markers and etchings which we remove.’

Despite recounting these examples and incidents, interviewees remained positive about the churchyards and cemeteries of which they spoke and many recognised that the problems of cemeteries were also the problems of other public areas. Although some of the cited purple recreations did change the sense of place of the graveyard, and made it seem less safe, many participants said they would still visit, but would take precautions. Mitzi (parent recreator, Rushton) captured this sense of the difference of the site at night, saying “[I am] nervous in the dark. It’s a practical thing as there might be weirdos out here.”

Joan (purple recreator, Rushton) described drinking with friends in her local churchyard as a teenager simply because it was a convenient and central location to the college where she was studying. She commented during our interview that ‘It is a nice place to hang out, drink cider.’ Other interview participants also remarked on the suitability of graveyard sites for loitering, drinking and drug taking. Luther (greenspace manager, Rushton), who had experience of managing many cemeteries throughout his career commented that:

They tend to be in areas where they are reasonably enclosed and you do sometimes get anti-social behaviour. So certainly at Ceasing [a disused graveyard in Rushton] we have had issues from time to time with drinking, street drinking.

Luther (greenspace manager, Rushton) 2010
Luther (greenspace manager, Rushton) explained to me that the walls around the sites added to the privacy that visitor might seek and Pierre (greenspace ranger, Rushton) added to this by describing other sorts of shelter and hiding places that were used: ‘we get kids bunking off and they will come in here. There were a couple of bushes they could hide behind here.’ These bushes had subsequently been removed and the activities Pierre describes had stopped accordingly.

Although participants did not approve of anti-social behaviour and criminal activities, many expressed empathy for why it did take place. Each site obviously had its own characteristics and contributory factors, which Luther (greenspace manager, Rushton) puts simply in his comment on the levels of street drinking in one site. ‘The reason that [this site] is used is because the off-licence is just across the road’. In this instance the convenience of the secluded seating to the off-licence made it highly attractive to street-drinkers who had been pushed out of the alcohol exclusion zones in the town centre. As well as the proximity to alcohol, the privacy of the site was also recognised as important to people wanting a space for purple recreation. Imogen (taphophobe, Clearstone) , who was very offended by the idea of people doing anything in graveyards beyond tending to graves, did still comment ‘I get why people would go there to do things that are unsavoury because you are not likely to get disturbed too much.’

This theme of seclusion is significant to the type of activity taking place. Recalling her experience of drinking in a churchyard as a teenager, Joan (purple recreator, Rushton) explains the choice of venue because it was ‘Away from the crowds. I think that is why we were there’. And this connection between the privacy that could be found in the cemetery and the uses that it was put to became significant when people talked about ways in which the unwanted activities could be reduced. Richard and Janine (walk leaders, Marchester) gave the example of gangs of under-age drinkers gathering on the benches in the more isolated parts of the cemetery. Littering and noise became a problem for other visitors who were also intimidated by the size of the groups of young people. The simple solution that they came up with was to move the benches to cross-roads and more open parts of the cemetery. This had the instant effect of reducing the problem as there was no easy or comfortable place for the young people to gather out of sight. Luther (greenspace manager, Rushton) talked about this same problem with street drinkers, saying:
... with sites like that we’ve ended up with playing little games with putting benches in because people ask for them, taking benches out because there is anti-social behaviour. A bench can become the focus of a gathering.

Luther (greenspace manager, Rushton) 2010

One form of passive people management, then, is to manipulate the environment so that it is less suitable for these user groups. Pierre (greenspace ranger, Rushton) described how gravestones might be moved to the edges of a site to improve sight-lines and thus reduce the availability of places to ‘lurk’. Luther and Pierre with their insight into greenspaces in Rushton both felt that fear of crime was a greater problem than actual crime. And their identification of ‘problem’ areas where vegetation prevented a clear view through the site, or provided a place to hide finds a resonance with the work of Herzog and Kutzli (2002), who found that humans have a strong preference for open areas and a lack of concealment in landscapes. Fischer and Shrout (2006) corroborate this with their own work that showed children have a preference for prospect as opposed to concealment in landscape paintings. Valerie (Friends founder, Marchester) mentioned that when they were actively managing parts of the cemetery vegetation and removing dense brush the problems of anti-social behaviour were reduced along with the ground cover. These basic measures however were not always enough. Lindon (church warden, Clearstone) described how he had to ‘constantly keep on top of the council to maintain and patrol the site’ which was in a ‘zero tolerance, asbo area’. He was not alone in having concerns about the way the cemeteries are policed. Valerie (Friends founder, Marchester) said quite angrily ‘But you can’t really, can’t really say that you’ve 24-hour cover, patrol. Come on - we need to have it’. Richard (walk leader, Marchester) was also concerned at the problems in the cemetery, saying ‘well, the police, the city patrol, they did not even know where the cemetery was.’

In fact, in two of the sites I studied the matter of ownership and control was not at all clear-cut. In one site the council owned the land but a Trust was responsible for the management, which left both sides unclear as to who was to action some of the preventative measures. Another site was owned by the church but managed by the council, leaving the church often powerless to tackle the anti-social behaviour in its own grounds. This complicated ownership status meant that the sites were often under-resourced and not even on the radar of statutory services such as police. Luther (greenspace manager, Rushton) hinted at the problems this caused, saying ‘[there is]
tension between management and maintenance as to who runs it – church or council'.
Not all sites had this problem of responsibility however. One of the sites in my research
experiences high levels of anti-social behaviour and features on the local police website as
a priority issue to tackle. They identify actions that include regular high-visibility patrol,
presence of the CCTV van and closer work with the local youth club and detached youth
work team.

Pierre (greenspace ranger, Rushton) recognised the importance of enforcement to
control anti-social behaviour but also gave his opinion that activities there were governed
by the principle of ‘Monkey see monkey do – one street drinker invites others... if it was
mothers here then there would be more mothers.’ Luther (greenspace manager,
Rushton) also paid reference to how cemeteries looked and felt, qualities influenced by
the maintenance and management regime. He said that for people to use the sites for
anything other than anti-social behaviour, they needed to be ‘physically and perceptually
safe.’ Safety was a theme that was referenced by different participants with regard to
how they would use the site and more specifically, when they would visit. Valerie’s
(Friends founder, Marchester) comment: ‘I personally don’t feel threatened but obviously
at certain times of night I would not walk round, you know, I stick to the main streets.’
tapped in to the idea of the cemetery having a circadian rhythm. It is a space of multiple
identities and interviewees described how it felt different in the day and the night.
Alongside the dead and the living time I referred to earlier, this suggests an additional
layer of circadian time which had a strong influence on perception and use of the site.
These examples reinforce how heterotopia is intrinsic in the construction of cemetery
place and evidenced in the apposition of a range of different times, from the abrupt
stoppage of time in death to the daily cycles of daylight and night. Mitzi (parent recreator,
Rushton), who enjoyed the graveyard by day for the history and community she found
there (‘I am a sucker for a good story’) said that it would be transformed at night and that
it would be a scary place in the dark and would make her feel ‘ quite heebie-jeebie’. She
was not alone in feeling this transition from friendly to fearful place and in later sections I
consider those participants who actively sought out the fear-inducing quality that can be
found in a burial ground at night.
Sexual places: debauchery and desire in the cemetery

Toff Kids ‘see sex at grave’

A couple were spotted having sex in a graveyard by pupils and staff at a posh grammar school, a court heard yesterday.

Sozzled Andrew Donaldson, 41, and Karen Waters, 42, allegedly romped naked as kids filmed on their mobiles.

Peter Townsend, an IT teacher at Reigate Grammar School, Surrey, told Guildford Crown Court: “I was alerted by pupils looking out of a window and laughing. I could see a lot of flesh.”

Teachers at the school - where David Walliams was a pupil - called 999.

A policeman arrested the pair, who had put on their underwear.

Donaldson was so drunk he could not be quizzed until the next day and said he had been sunbathing in his boxer shorts.

The pair, from Oxford, deny outraging public decency. Trial continues.

Sun newspaper (13 Jan 2011, pp.35)

Sex outdoors is ostensibly a taboo activity (Bell 2006). Death and places of death are, contestably, also taboo (Walter 1994, Woodthorpe 2010). Extrapolating these arguments indicates that sex in a cemetery is a problematic act in a problematic space and yet this is a phenomenon in need of further explication, being under-described in current research.

The refrain of heterotopia resonates through the conjugation of sex and cemeteries, reinforcing the modelling of heterotopic sites as places that host deviance. The existing literature in which cemetery sex is featured takes an intention-led view of sex as being for the purposes of raising spirits or ghosts (Holly and Cordy 2007). While one of my participants made reference to the interest of one specific group of young people, that she termed Goths, being centred on the deadly nature of the cemetery, other participants views converged on what might be described as the ‘convenience’ theory. Interestingly, despite the fact that first-hand experience of cemetery sex was relatively rare amongst my participants, many talked about this occurrence without prompting and almost all expressed fairly well constructed opinions on the matter. Where I chose to raise the topic of sex in the graveyard interviewees did not seem too surprised. This would appear to be because there is a precedent for stories about sex or lewdness in graveyards to appear in the press and in fiction the cemetery finds itself as a backdrop to romance, love and sex (Chevalier 2002).
As the epigraph to this section shows however, cemetery sex does happen, whatever people think about it. Several participants had come face-to-face with visitors indulging in sex or sexual exploits and were surprisingly matter-of-fact about what they had seen. Valerie (Friends founder, Marchester) commented that:

*It is the local fornicatorium you see...and of course you get, when I say the Goths, this is probably very rare, but there will be a couple of people that like to screw on graves. That'll be very rare, but let's not rule it out because it does happen. I've worked with adolescents and I put nothing past them!*

Valerie (Friends founder, Marchester) 2005

Richard and Janice (walk leaders, Marchester) reported a direct encounter with a couple having sex in a cemetery in their interview.

*We were doing a guided walk and nearly stepped on a couple making love in the long grass. They stood up and they were quite angry. Now we send Geoff on ahead to make sure the way is clear.*

Richard and Janice (walk leaders, Marchester) 2005

Richard and Janice (walk leaders, Marchester) regularly led guided walks in the cemetery, usually with historical or natural history themes. This explicit interruption to one of their walks made them laugh when they recounted it. They were surprised at the time, and Richard (walk leader, Marchester) reported being slightly put off his stride in the guided walk, which had about twenty people in attendance. Although the couple they disturbed had been quite angry, Richard and Janice (walk leaders, Marchester) felt that this was probably the shock the couple felt at being caught at an embarrassing moment. Despite seeing signs of sexual activity in the cemetery, they had not had a repeat performance of this encounter again, and both thought that sex was actually more common after dark than in broad daylight, echoing the idea of the circadian rhythm of the cemetery touched on earlier.

Other participants pointed out places that they knew to be popular for sexual activity. Pierre (greenspace ranger, Rushton) described two distinct areas where this took place, each with its own specific user group. In one area he commented that ‘[This is the place for] chaps to have gay fun’ and then later on he described the after-hours activities that took place in the churchyard, which was very close to the town centre. ‘Think about it, we have all been in a situation where you have got your lovely lady and it is very late at night and you are thinking [gesticulates to imply sex].’ Pierre (greenspace ranger,
Rushton) continued by pointing out to me the very monument that he would choose in this situation, a flat table monument. He felt that sex in the graveyard was very much linked to circadian time, being a spontaneous and nocturnal pastime.

Alongside sexual intercourse, participants also reported other sexualised activities taking place. Both Valerie (Friends founder, Manchester) and Richard and Janice (walk leaders, Manchester) reported the story of some saucy photos of a model being taken in the cemetery. These photos appeared on the internet and in a local paper, much to the dismay of all three who felt this was not appropriate for the reputation of ‘their’ cemetery. Valerie (Friends founder, Manchester) describes the incident:

*There was a young woman, a model and she posed in the cemetery [for photographs]. But she was doing sexy poses and it didn’t go down well. We did not wish this to be encouraged.*

Valerie (Friends founder, Manchester) 2005

Her opinion was echoed by Richard and Janice (walk leaders, Manchester) who said “We recognised the cemetery when we saw the photos in the paper. The photographic model was not very tasteful.” In other words an overt display of sexuality in a cemetery was not seen as appropriate and might lower the tone of the site, or encourage other people to view it through a sexual lens. The syzygistic pairing of a sexy model and stolid tombstones is yet another reminder of the implicitness of heterotopia in cemetery sense of place. The stones and photographs in this thesis serve as a reminder and illustration of the oddness of some of the juxtapositions witnessed or reported which build on the notion of the cemetery as heterotopia. Whilst Richard and Janice (walk leaders, Manchester) had seen the funny side of disturbing a couple having sex in the cemetery, neither responded to this ‘modelling’ incident with any humour. This seemed to be because the risqué photos were so widely broadcast and could change the way the cemetery was viewed, in contrast to the relatively small audience present in the case of the fornicating couple. The story of the couple caught in flagrante could be recounted as evidence of the funny things that happened, but did not constitute a threat to the wider decency of the site.

In this research, sex in the graveyard divided people’s opinion. One school of thought was that it was inappropriate, although participants often struggled to articulate their reasoning for this. The most common explanation put forward for the ‘wrongness’ of sex in a burial ground was the issue of respect. Participants articulated the view that it...
showed a lack of respect. On further questioning it appeared that this concern for respect was sometimes on behalf of the dead inhabitants, and sometimes the relatives who had been left behind to grieve. Whilst some participants were concerned that the deceased should be accorded high levels of respect and be left in peace, others felt that the human remains in the ground would not be bothered by sex, but rather the sensibilities of visiting relatives or other people in the cemetery needed to be considered.

Since the graveyards I researched were not active for burial, managers reported that there were rarely any relatives visiting graves around the sites. However, in two of my sites there were significant historical graves that did attract visitors from all over the world and so this might account for the concerns of people at these specific sites.

Respect was often put forward as an important consideration in the graveyard, but was hard to explain. Charm (dog walker, Rushton) articulates the fuzziness of the idea of respect succinctly in her interview:

> I think, probably, inappropriate things would be sexual encounters one feels and I don’t know why. It is like going out to dinner. You need to dress properly to show respect for the place you are dining.

Charm (dog walker, Rushton) 2010

Jane (Friends member, Clearstone) makes the point that respect is very personal and gives this as a reason for the differing opinions found about what is acceptable or not in the cemetery. And Joan (purple recreator, Rushton), despite being supportive of cider drinking has a blunt attitude to sex saying:

> Shagging is obviously inappropriate. It is not respectful to the dead or their relatives. I’m pretty much against any public shagging - although doing it on graves would normally be considered a bit more pervy I’d say. Also religious people tend to be a bit more touchy about such things - and would generally disapprove - I suppose in my mind respect means not doing things which may cause offence to others – [Bel - so is it more about the living that the dead? Or do the dead get offended too?] I think it’s definitely the living - I don’t think the dead would mind - they might even enjoy it.

Joan (purple recreator, Rushton) 2010

Here Joan (purple recreator, Rushton) summarises one of the main issues at the centre of both the sex and other anti-social behaviour debate – the tension between the living and the dead.

Bell (2006) makes a convincing argument as to why public spaces are used for sexual purposes. He does not name the cemetery as an example of a suitable public space, but
put forward other spaces, namely car parks, lay-bys and public toilets as sex zones and these spaces share some of the liminal qualities of the cemetery. He contends that:

*These transitional, marginal spaces are popular sex sites ... as they offer ready-made alibis for presence there – public spaces therefore become, somewhat paradoxically perhaps, preferred sites for some kinds of sexual activity, particularly those that are legally or morally transgressive’*

Bell (2006:397)

Whilst the cemetery presents a slightly problematic space with regard to this theory, since the ‘ready-made alibi’ may be less convincing in this environment, I suggest that there is a resonance here with his contention that liminal spaces are well suited to outdoors or taboo sex (Bell 2006:391).

Participants may or may not have agreed about whether sex was appropriate in graveyards but they all felt the explanation for why it happening was simple. The seclusion, the flat table monuments and the thrill of being in a graveyard were most likely to be given as the reasons why others would have sex there. Some comments were also made about the suitability of graveyards in general for cottaging. Jael (parent recreator) walked past a graveyard nearly every day and remarked that there were always men perched on gravestones about the site, waiting and looking around. She said that this was a popular place for gay men to meet up and that ‘you should not go off the paths because the bushes are full of men. I have to stop the girls [her children] running around here because they could find anything.’ She felt that this sexual activity was focussed here because there were lots of places to go and be unobtrusive when having sex, and that once somewhere became known for being a meeting place then it would be busy day or night. This view supports the position of Bell (2006) who describes how places become recognised as ‘sex zones’ by a specific community. Bell suggests that such sites are recreated as ‘counter public’ spaces that can be short-lived, are usually secret, and are ‘carved out of the interstices of heteronormative geographies’ (2006:402).

Only two interviewees overtly admitted to having had sex in a cemetery. Manfred (purple recreator, Greetham) was keen on sex in a burial ground, saying ‘Sex in graveyards? I can only say that it is a positive experience and everyone should try it’. Manfred (purple recreator, Greetham) felt that it was atmospheric in the graveyard but ultimately it came down to the fact that he loved to have sex anywhere outdoors in sunny weather. Echoing
this sentiment that it was about sex and not actually about the cemetery, Sylvie (purple recreator, Greetham) described her experience in this area:

“Well the first time was sort of by accident – we just wanted to go anywhere we could and that happened to be a churchyard. I didn’t think about it being a churchyard until afterwards, and I think as long as you don’t get caught it is fine. The dead people are not going to care – they might even like it!”

Sylvie (purple recreator, Greetham) 2008

Sylvie (purple recreator, Greetham) did not think that anyone should be upset by her behaviour since they had not left any litter, or vandalised anything. She commented that sex is a very natural, biological thing and so it was fitting to have sex in a natural environment, even if that was an old churchyard. Both Ravenscroft and Gilchrist (2009) and Hubbard (2001) agree that non-traditional sexual citizenship is created ‘in liminal spaces that disrupt dominant geographies of heterosexuality by creating transitory sites for sexual freedom and pleasure where the immoral is moral and the perverse is normal’ (2001:68). Ravenscroft and Gilchrist see public sex through the lens of the carnivalesque, averring that it takes place in liminal sites that represent a break from the norms of reality.

Sex, then, seems to come down to convenience and opportunity, created by the alternative norms of the cemetery space. The general consensus was that deathscapes were suitably secluded and dark places that offered privacy to those visiting. Several voiced the opinion that especially for young people still living at home, outdoor spaces, including cemeteries, might offer the only chance at some privacy. Valerie (Friends founder, Marchester) made the interesting comment in her interview that the cemetery had been referred to as the fornicatorium from her youth to the present day, suggesting that this was nothing new. She felt that young people accounted for the majority of those who had sex in the cemetery, usually because they had no other private spaces available. In the example of the group she describes as ‘Goths’, she felt that they would be likely to favour the cemetery above any other nearby secluded spot because of the extra titillation that it provided. This connects back to the idea of legend tripping that I have previously referred to, which has an extant literature about the supernatural power of sexual intercourse on a grave.
**Life space and death space: mixing the living and the dead**

Cemeteries are not just great places for purple recreation by virtue of their seclusion and lack of policing. More than this, they have an additional dimension above and beyond other green spaces that gives them an edge when it comes to providing a place to recreate, the death factor. Death literature suggests that there is disagreement as to whether or not death is taboo, or sequestered in society (Gorer 1965, Walter 1994, Woodthorpe 2010). In a cemetery, however, there can be no containment of death - or rather this is the place within which that death is contained. Death is the whole point. To a certain extent and for certain people, the fact that it is a burial ground is attractive and can be seen to actively encourage visits and recreation. Nocturnal drinking and partying was the most influenced in this way. Although some participants mentioned séances and rituals at the graveside, no one that I spoke to had experience of this, although there is an academic interest in this sort of activity (see Holly and Cordy 2007, Holloway 2010). However, returning to the drinking and parties, the characteristic that graveyards possessed that nearby parks or town squares did not was the thrill factor of being in a place of death, surrounded by ghosts and other supernatural beings and being or imagining oneself being scared.

Many participants said they would be fearful being in a cemetery in the dark, but were divided as to whether it was the living or the dead that would bother them. Both living and dead had the potential to ‘lurk’ thus their real or imagined presence rendered the site perceptually less safe. A typical comment from an interviewee, Joan (purple recreator, Rushton), introduced her thoughts about why it was a scary place to go at night: ‘It’s dark and has got dead people in it. I think if they happened to wake from the dead they would obviously be quite upset and would come and harass you in some way’. Several participants said that although logically they knew there was nothing scary there, their imagination could not be tamped down. In the words of Imogen (taphophobe, Clearstone) this was simply expressed as ‘Maybe I watched too many horror films but [I thought the dead bodies] were all going to come up’. Whilst Imogen was actively deterred from going into the graveyard because of her fears, others expressed that they actively sought this feeling of heightened senses and emotions. Pewter (recreator, Greetham) said that she ‘came here a lot as a child – mostly to spook each other out’ and described leaping out on her friends and pulling pranks on people to scare and surprise them. Sylvie’s (purple recreator, Greetham) experiences echoed those of Pewter in that
she too had chosen to visit the churchyard because it felt like a more exciting place than any other part of the town.

We used to hide behind the gravestones and spook people at night. We would wait outside the church until there was a quiet bit in the service and then knock on the door or windows. It was like our patch, for our gang.

Sylvie (purple recreator, Greetham) 2008

Some of the recreation that took place in churchyards and cemeteries was illicit and exciting in itself, but for other more mundane activities, the fact that they took place in a graveyard gave them an edge, an extra potency that they otherwise lacked. Mina (purple recreator, Clearstone) talked about how her group of friends used to visit the graveyard at night. She described some pretty innocent behaviour that was given much higher status because the site was a graveyard: ‘when people come in you can hide behind the gates and rattle them’. The significance of it being a burial ground was that ‘there are lots of dead people under you...skeletons clinking around...it is scary and exciting’. Here Mina articulates something of the essence of Warner’s (2000) argument that fears can serve a positive role. Warner explains:

That children’s word ‘scary’ covers responses ranging from pure terror to sheer delight, and the condition of being scared is becoming increasingly sought after not only as a source of pleasure but as a means of strengthening the sense of being alive, of having a command over self.

Warner (2000:6)

Figure 4.0-7, below, shows a shadow on a churchyard wall. This picture was taken to capture the sensation of excitement and fear experienced during an interview with Joan (purple recreator, Rushton). We had been unable to meet by day and so had visited the churchyard one evening. The floodlights threw up bright light from the ground level which gave a superficial sense of normality, but also created areas of dense, dark shadow and temporary blindness when moving between light and dark areas. This shadow (my own, cast against a wall) followed us around and the movement, when caught in the corner of the eye was repeatedly unsettling. Here in the light and the dark, the substantial (of the walls) and the insubstantial (of the shadow) come together to create a place of exhilarating fearfulness. Chasing that elusive thrill of being alive is the sensationalism at the heart of edgework, described by Lyng (1990) as voluntary risk taking activities that:
In the edgework model the experience of taking a risk creates high levels of stimulation and so the participant gains a sensory reward for the activity. Lyng (1990) describes how a person reaching the height or the ‘edge’ of the experience finds that their perceptual field becomes highly focussed, that time slows and that they experience a strong connection to their environment. I suggest here that the edgework model also describes the deliberate fear-seeking activities of those people who visit cemeteries for purple recreation. The purple recreation literature describes activities done for a thrill, or for reward of a physical or emotional nature that society does not fully endorse. It is taboo leisure. So where better to do something taboo than in a place that is full of taboo itself. It is also a place where you will not be judged since it is free to access and the residents
are seemingly unable to express their opinions. One participant described the dead in a graveyard as ‘losers’ (Pierre, greenspace ranger, Rushton) and suggested that being dead was an inferior state. Extending this contention suggests that a visit to a burial ground can improve your self esteem or social standing since you are the one alive in a land of dead ‘losers’. In this hypothesis graveyards validate the aliveness of visitors, helping them to be in the now and grooming the visitor for an edgework-esque thrill. This thrill can be augmented by also being there for thrilling activities which serve to exacerbate the edgework effect.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter I have demonstrated not only that burial grounds are sites of purple recreation, but also that the additional frisson that comes from being in a place of the dead can augment the experience of purple recreation. Putting purple recreation into the cemetery is a new concept and so I want to tease out a little more about what it means both for purple recreation and for cemeteries as spaces. What strikes me is the symmetry between purple recreation and cemeteries, both of which encapsulate ideas of deviance and otherness. Purple recreation, in the case of drinking, sex and graffiti is all about doing something exciting that consolidates the participant’s sense of aliveness, of now, and of identity. I argue that putting this quest into the graveyard has the potential to ramp up the impact quite considerably. Cemeteries are places replete with identities, histories and family stories. As some of my participants confirmed, being in a graveyard heightens your own sense of connection to family and place in time. In addition as one interviewee pointed out, you are the winner, the living amongst the dead, which can have an empowering effect. Thus purple recreation and cemeteries magnify each other’s impact.

Amongst others, Mina (purple recreator, Clearstone) and Pewter (recreator, Greetham) separately described graveyards as exciting. Curtis (1979) similarly describes how purple recreation generates risk as excitement, as I explained earlier with reference to Lyng’s (1990) concept of edgework. One point of purple recreation activities – most obviously shown by graffiti – is that it is a way of delineating personal geography onto a corporate, or alienating landscape. In burial grounds, participants recognised that formal policing was an issue that left cemeteries ripe for selection for purple recreation. This lack of surveillance, this seclusion leaves physical and mental space for individuals to inscribe their
personal geographies and claim space. As I have argued, events and people experiences in space act to create place – which is both a personal and dynamic entity. In the case of burial grounds perhaps the living are co-authoring the landscape with the dead.

Ghosts of the living and the dead alike, of both individual and collective spirits, of both other selves and our own selves, haunt the places of our lives. Places are, in a word, personed – even when there is no one there.

Mayerfield Bell (1997: 813)

Through this act of authoring, deathscapes are reinforced as heterotopia, places of otherness and for otherness. In the next chapter I explore dark tourism. This phenomenon superficially appears to present visitors with a complete, authored experience and yet I explore how visitors break out of these restrictions and find their own imaginative way within the touristic landscape.
Creative Synthesis – Illumination

The start of the decoupage using cemetery leaflets, newspaper cuttings & c.
Source: photograph owned by author
The process of illumination is one that occurs naturally when the researcher is open and receptive to tacit knowledge and intuition. The illumination as such is a breakthrough into conscious awareness of qualities and a clustering of qualities into themes inherent in the question. The illumination process may be an awakening to new constituents of the experience, thus adding new dimension of knowledge.

Moustakas (1990:29)

Diary 4th February 2007

It is cold, just 3 degrees, and it rained in the night so all the benches are damp. The churchyard has people passing through to work and the shops, but otherwise it is very much the domain of birds. A robin sings loudly from the top of an oak tree. Pigeons feast on a huge pile of chips, starlings watch them. The sound of birdsong is outdoing the traffic noise from the roads.

Apart from the birds it is me and the litter. Sweet wrappers chewing gum, fizzy sweets, and fruit shoot bottles lying in the grass. An ear bud. At the bottom of the bins, a few beer cans and some broken glass. Around the bench the ground is worn and sunken and trampled with cigarette butts, broken lighters, bottle tops and pistachio nuts cases.

All around me are the tales of the churchyard, stories of night-time adventures. The rubbish speaks out so loudly of things I cannot otherwise see, things I wish I could witness. The litter is bright in colour and noisy underfoot and yet it is not so different to the dead bodies. It has been cast aside, left behind when the living move on, have to move on. And when it was useful – as food or as a living person – it was wanted. Now that these people and things are empty, they lie here waiting for the next big thing to happen.

Despite all the death and rubbish, how gorgeous it is to sit here on a winter day with the sun warming my legs and arms, and an ever-so-slight, tickly breeze tangling things up and the grass spiking up all juicy-green and dewy. The starlings are now sneaking through the wet tufts of grass all glossy and gleaming. Life and death are tangled up in every part of this place.
Chapter five: Exploring the dark side

Sam and I discussed Dark Tourism. He knew me really well so I asked him why he thought being a Dark Tourist appealed to me so much. His theory was that we lived in such a safe, emotionally stagnant world that we were all looking for some rush – a release of life, a longing for temporary escape from our self-built comfort bubbles... I looked at him in slight confusion. He was talking about himself. He’d always hated the idea of being stuck in a rut and the idea of conformity terrified him. He’d come from a very comfortable, fairly unexciting background and had forever longed for something different. I was the opposite, in a way. I had such a weird, topsy-turvy upbringing that I felt totally precarious when I left school and spent about ten years trying to get some sort of routine going, to lay down some roots. Now I had those roots, maybe I was ready to look at where I came from and what it did to me?

*The Dark Tourist* by Dom Joly (2010:56)

Introduction

In the previous chapter I have described how participants engage in purple recreation in cemeteries, visiting these sites for the unique sense of place they exemplify. I have shown how the heterotopic properties of the graveyards accommodate a range of ‘deviant’ uses including purple recreation. I now turn to tourism and consider specifically the graveyard visits made by travellers for pleasure or sightseeing. Drawing on the standard definition of tourism as travel to/staying in places outside a person’s usual environment, it can be argued that day trips and visits conducted outside of the normal routines constitute tourism. That is to say people can step in and out of tourism in their lives. As Cartier and Lew describe tourism, it is not a clear-cut category but rather one with an inherent imprecision:

[There is a] messiness of tourism as [a]category of activity, experience and economy. In the touristed landscape, people occupy simultaneous or sequential, if sometimes conflicted, positions of orientation

Cartier and Lew (2005:3)

Cartier and Lew (2005) draw attention to the different experiences people have in the same landscape and this chapter shows how this is a crucial element of dark tourism. A cemetery trip is a different leisure experience from a visit to a museum or park, and so in this chapter I will use the model of dark tourism to conceptually explore touristic visits to
the cemetery. Dark tourism (Lennon and Foley 2000, Sharpley and Stone 2009) is a form of niche tourism that has also variously been called grief tourism, black tourism or thanatourism. Cemeteries are identified by Sharpley and Stone (2009) as part of the dark tourism matrix, a term which serves to bracket out visits and travel to sites or attractions associated with death, disaster and suffering from wider forms such as heritage tourism (Lennon and Foley 2000).

As a newly delineated sector of tourism, Stone (2005:145) acknowledges dark tourism theory as 'eclectic and theoretically fragile' and Sharpley corroborates this opinion, saying that 'consequently, understanding of the phenomenon of dark tourism remains limited' (Sharpley 2009:6). I use the term dark tourism strictly to refer to cemetery visits that were different from everyday recreational visits in that they involved travel to the site and participation in a touristic experience. Throughout this thesis I also use lower case for the term dark tourism as a way of emphasising that, in the context of my research, there was a looser affiliation to this concept than in darker instances such as visits to Auschwitz. In the context of the cemetery this could be a visit to see specific graves such as war graves or titanic graves, attendance at a guided walk, churchyard fete, or an outing to a cemetery as part of a holiday (see figs 5.0-1, 5.0-2). Of the cemeteries that I studied, two had significant graves, monuments or events that attracted national and international tourists, whilst the other two did not appear to attract interest beyond travelling genealogists and family historians. In total, ten of my participants had engaged in touristic visits to cemeteries, with four having experience of welcoming tourists to cemetery sites for tours, events and to find family graves. Others said that they had not yet taken part in specific touristic visits to cemeteries but did intend to in the future. In this chapter I examine the accounts of these participants to make an empirical contribution to current understanding of dark tourism and spatiality in the cemetery.

The question raised by Dom Joly at the start of this chapter, about motivation for visiting sites of death and disaster and the function these sites perform, is echoed in dark tourism literature and explored in this chapter. I take the lead from Walter’s (2009) argument that there is a knowledge gap concerning the relationships between the living and the dead and make a contribution to greater understanding of this bond in the context of the cemetery visit. Whilst cemeteries are firmly situated within the dark tourism framework (Sharpley 2009:11, 16) and whilst participants in my research related examples of touristic
visits to cemetery sites that fit within this model, they also described a personal and imaginative aspect to the visits that current theory does not engage with. Dom Joly also hints at the role of dark sites as ‘other places’ that exist in juxtaposition to and give meaning to everyday lives; I pursue this in an exploration of the role heterotopia can play in dark tourism. In this chapter I build on the foundations of dark tourism literature and show how my participants’ experiences support and enrich extant definitions of dark tourism. I also argue that bringing heterotopia and dark tourism together can offer new and useful insights into the visitor experience at a dark site.

Whilst the majority of my research participants talked more widely about recreation, many had experience of cemetery tourism, having visited graveyards both in the UK and abroad. I have included in this chapter only data from those that had practised dark tourism; indeed for participants such as Al and Seth (cemetery tourists, Manchester) this was the only type of cemetery visit they had undertaken. I also draw on data from cemetery events such as guided walks, fairs and storytelling festivals (see Figure 5.0-1, 5.0-2, 5.0-3, 5.0-4 and 5.0-5 below), as my research showed that these attracted day-tourists from over 50 miles away. My intention here is to show that dark tourism, as it is currently described, is commonplace in cemeteries. Despite this, the extant literature explains little more than aspects of supply and demand. Cemetery tourism may lack the high-impact of sites of mass atrocity such as Auschwitz, but I argue that gaining a greater insight to this lighter form of dark tourism can still enrich current definitions of dark tourism.

**Dark tourism**

Travel and visits to places of death and disaster as an identifiable form of tourism has been recorded for centuries (Sharpley 2009:9). As tourism more generally expanded in the 20th Century, so, apparently, has the demand for dark tourism encounters. The portfolio of suppliers meeting this need includes cemeteries, according to Sharpley (2009) who defines these experiences as ‘travel to sites associated with death, suffering and the seemingly macabre’ (2009:10). In England alone it is estimated that there are between 10,000 and 20,000 churchyards and cemeteries (see chapter one). Assuming that travelling to visit a burial ground is a form of dark tourism, then this is clearly an important phenomenon to study, with implications for management and conservation of burial grounds, which are further discussed in chapter seven.
Cemeteries are places of dark tourism on the one hand (Stone and Sharpley 2008) and on the other are also heterotopia (Foucault 1986; Meyer and Woodthorpe (2008). By melding these concepts of heterotopia and dark tourism I argue here that further insight can be gained into the phenomenon of dark tourism in the context of the graveyard and beyond. People and things exist in space and place (Allen 2002, Massey 2009). Many of these spaces and places can be viewed as normal, everyday spaces of living and working, whilst the less usual places may fall under the category of heterotopia (Foucault 1986). Sites of dark tourism can be everyday places for the people that live and work around them, but to the tourists visiting, they are more often considered to be out-of-the-ordinary in nature and affect, able to trigger strong emotional responses (Biran et al. 2011). In this respect they have parallels with Foucault’s concept of heterotopia, which encapsulates spaces that have been variously described as unsettling (Hetherington 1997) and disturbing (Cheng 2002, Johnson 2005).

Returning to the concept and parameters of dark tourism itself, it has been further elaborated by Dann, (cited in Sharpley 2009:11) who distinguishes different forms of dark...
tourism based on the type of site visited. He describes cemeteries as fields of fatality and
and while this sort of typology can be useful for arranging and organising dark tourism
sites and conveying a sense of the breadth of the experience, it gives little scope for
exploring why people visit such places and what the places may mean to these visitors.
Dann does tackle this concern and suggests a range of motives that include the wish to
overcome fears, the quest for interest and diversion, nostalgia, and a curiosity in crime
and deviance. Clearly these are once again descriptive categories and do not give a
significant insight into the unique experience of individuals at specific places of dark
tourism.

Figure 5.0-2 Visitor at a Hallowe’en churchyard event
Source: photo owned by author

The argument that dark tourism can only apply to sites that encapsulate elements of
death and disaster that have occurred in living memory is contested by others such as
Seaton (1996) who consider that the pedigree of dark tourism can be traced at least to
mediaeval times through the ‘thanatopic tradition’ – the contemplation of death. He sees dark tourism as a facet of thanatopsis and is persuasive in arguing that dark tourism is driven by the motives of the participant rather than the nature of the dark place and that it ranges in intensity from darker to lighter forms along a continuum.

Sharpley traces this argument through to the conclusion that such a ‘continuum of purpose’ (2009:19) can be used to create a matrix of supply and demand that shows the extent to which an interest in death drives consumption, and how purposefully supply then meets this perceived demand. Four distinct shades result from this matrix:

- **Pale tourism** – tourists with a minimal or limited interest in death visiting sites unintended to be tourist attractions
- **Grey tourism demand** – tourists with a fascination with death visiting unintended dark tourism sites
- **Grey tourism supply** – sites intentionally established to exploit death but attracting visitors with some, but not a dominant interest in death
- **Black tourism** – in effect ‘pure’ dark tourism, where a fascination with death is satisfied by the purposeful supply of experiences intended to satisfy this fascination.

(2009:19)

Similarly, Stone (2005) argues that there are a range of hues in dark tourism, since the single term dark is too broad to express the manifold dimensions of this complex phenomenon. These greyscale tones span from sites of death and suffering, which he suggests are the darkest, to sites associated with death and suffering as the lightest. This seems to suggest that cemetery tourism is light in shade and yet Stone argues that ‘the cemetery is fast becoming a place where the living are ‘charmed’ by the dead, and thus may be plotted within the centre of the ‘dark tourism spectrum’ with both light and dark elements’ (2005:155). In Stone’s typological foundation for the supply aspect of dark tourism, he distinguishes different categories for different tourism venues. The category Dark Resting Places encapsulates the cemetery or graveyard as a product for tourism.

Indeed, much of the focus of dark tourism literature is around the questions of supply and demand and touristic motivations (See Sharpley and Stone 2009) but Walter (2009) considers it from a different perspective when he writes:

*The trend among dark tourism scholars to emphasise motives, even in the case of Seaton (1996) to define dark tourism by the presence of particular motives loses sight of the character of most dark tourism. It does not seem likely that investigating the demand for dark tourism will shed much light on the phenomenon. Rather... considerable mileage*
may be gained by, firstly, investigating the kind of relationship that the living have at dark tourism sites, not just with each other but with the dead; secondly, locating dark tourism within the large family of institutions in which the living relate to death and to the dead; and thirdly, looking at the functions such sites may hold for society as much as for individuals.

Walter 2009:54-55

Walter is not alone in seeing more to the dark tourism venue than numbers and motives. The relationships between the dead and the living are both evidenced in the landscape (Etlin 1984), and the way the landscape is portrayed. Worpole (2003) points out that cemeteries are frequently used as settings in TV and film, and argues that this demonstrates death is not hidden or sequestered in our society, but is part of individual and communal life. Cemeteries have a role in society for the disposal of the dead, but can serve a wider purpose. Research carried out by Frances et al. found that ‘cemeteries are places of social, religious and ethnic continuity and belonging.’ (2005:195). Thus the cemetery appears to be a conduit between the living and the dead at an individual and societal level.

Dark tourism literature gives little insight into the mechanism by which these emotional responses are engendered. The more frequently cited opinions regarding the motivations for visitors to dark sites are that people come as spectators to disaster sites, enjoy bloodlust, explore their fascination with dark events and death, come to terms with the normally sequestered experience of death or even just tick a famous site off a list (Sharpley 2009). Aside from more recent studies such as Biran et al. (2011) there has been little empirical work concerning experiences and motivations. Given that it may be this very affect that influences the success of a site as a dark tourism venue this is clearly an area that merits further investigation. However, if dark tourism sites are extraordinary then perhaps their world can be explored in a new way through the lens of heterotopia. Foucault’s other spaces have been conceived in myriad ways as both real places and mental states, and examining this connection between place and perception may be able to add to current understanding of dark tourism.

What the literature shows so far is that there has been much effort expended in categorising the type of dark tourism site and in looking at the supply and demand for these attractions. For the future sustainability of cemeteries it may be that there is great practical merit in this activity as it can guide the marketing, management and approach to interpretation at such sites. Walter makes the important point though that:
[...] whether the site is visited or not does not depend heavily on individual motivation; rather it is contingent on whether the guidebook mentions it, whether it is chanced upon the way to other sites, whether it fits your schedule, and so on... I may be wrong that most dark tourism sites are typically contingent rather than motivated. Other scholars may be right that visitors to dark tourist sites come with a demonstrable sense of detachment from issues of mortality that such sites do something to remedy. We need to know.

Walter 2009:54-55

He argues that the activity precedes motivation and suggests that much more can be learned from recording and contextualising what people do at such sites than can be gleaned from any attempt to look at visitor motivations. Whilst I think that Walter rightly highlights an important distinction between the traditional pursuit of supply and demand data and an examination of the relationship between people and place, my findings suggest that he underestimates the important of interest as a motivating factor. In accordance with Walter, I did find that many people chanced upon the cemetery and then found that they liked it, but there were a significant number of people that actively sought out cemetery sites for the characteristics they knew they would enjoy therein. However, it can also be argued that visitors do not always know what motivates them, or why (Seaton 2012), to which end it would be more beneficial to gain an understanding of the experience of dark tourism from empirical research.

In my site-specific research I contribute to this theorisation and elucidate more about the relationship between people and place, and the experience and motivations of those visiting graveyard sites. To try and explicate some of the big issues that Walter identifies, I approach the question of dark tourism in the cemetery through participant’s perception of the site and the relationships formed with death and dead people. The transformation of a graveyard from space to place occurs at the personal and individual level as a visitor engages and forms a relationship with the space. It seems vital to me that any furthering of knowledge about dark tourism would have to include a better understanding of the way in which visitors relate to the sites and the relationships they form with the history and stories there. Without a relationship there could be no experience at a dark tourism site. The stories would not generate empathy or shock, and the standard motivations postulated by dark tourism scholars such as thrill-seeking would have no weight. Relationships explain the power of dark tourism; when a visitor forms a relationship with the site, however fleeting it may be, they become participants of the dark tourism
experience. By examining the way in which they relate to and experience death and dead people and how they see the connection between the cemetery and the community I bring new insights and information to the field of dark tourism.

**Relationships to death and dead people**

There is no one way in which participants related to death itself or the real or imagined dead people residing in the cemetery, but the attitudes that were expressed indicate some overall themes. Use of the term dark tourism here signposts that this is a place of death, the space of the dead; however in this research, participants made much more subtle distinctions when considering the role of death in the landscape. They recognised that time and appearance all served to alter how, and even if, they related to death at all. What was notable about the issue of dead people was that it was never the first topic that participants raised in interview. When asked about the cemetery, participants tended first to refer to it in the form of a landscape or place, categorising it predominantly in a visual way before peeling off additional layers of meaning and value. Luther (greenspace manager, Rushton) felt that ‘people don’t think of the bodies in old cemeteries’, suggesting that this visual approach to the landscape distilled the cemetery down to being perceived at face value as a decorative greenspace. He felt that death receded with time and that there was a significant difference between how people responded to old and new cemeteries that he attributed to the visual differences in the landscape:

> I think people relate to them [new and old cemeteries] in a different way. I don’t think they think of the bodies under there. The closed churchyards tend to be separate from the church so you are not immediately reminded of the function. If there are not many monuments then it just seems like an interesting space - maybe that is why some of the current cemeteries and burial grounds are not used that much—people don’t see them as a place for the living, people don’t feel comfortable there because they are surrounded by death.

Luther (greenspace manager, Rushton) 2010

This opinion was supported by data from other participants who identified how the passage of time changed their attitude or their perception of the power of death. Rugg raises this very point when she says

> The nature of burial space is not immutable. Even without the operation of other factors, the passage of time alone can change the nature and meaning of individual sites. The cemetery’s physical characteristics will alter: at a very basic level landscapes will mature and taste in memorial design will change...indeed over time cemeteries may acquire the characteristics of local parks.
The quantity and nearness of death then, seems to have a direct influence on the way the place is sensed and experienced. Luther (greenspace manager, Rushton) expresses the opinion that there is a difference between places for the living and places for the dead and seems to suggest that living people are not comfortable in a place they perceive as for the dead. Charm (dog walker, Rushton), Joan (purple recreator, Rushton) and other participants described burial grounds very much as for the living but also made a distinction that this was not a complete ownership, that there was also a sense of otherness there that did make it a spooky place. This idea of a place which is not quite one thing or another, is not quite tangible, has echoes of heterotopic otherness. The passing of time was measured by bodies and stones in dead spaces, which seemed to function with slightly different rules to everyday life. In the making of the sense of place in the cemetery, death and dead bodies both were and were not important factors. For many participants there was a distinction between death and dead people. Death was generally seen as a rather abstract concept, and dead people were perceived both in a general and a personal way. Jane is typical here in how she separates the long-dead from the known deceased:

There are some interesting people here, but I don’t often think about them as dead. I do when it is recent deaths... this tree is for one my neighbours, a woman of my age who died unexpectedly and it was quite traumatic for everybody. Also two years ago a friend of mine died and I had just been to the funeral when Mark was running his heritage weekend. I just thought ‘I don’t want to be around tombs’. It was all a bit raw and sad. But most of the time it’s OK because they have been here for a really long time.

Jane (Friends member, Clearstone) 2010

Mitzi (parent recreator, Rushton) had a similar experience to Jane, and felt that she did not normally react in a negative way to the graveyard but that there had been exceptions.

It is not sad cos I am removed from them - it could be a programme I am watching on telly or a book I am reading. I did feel sad one day we came up and it was Brandi’s anniversary but I did not remember until we were up here. We decided to come up after school and I did feel a bit choked then, but only because I had something personal to think of that was relevant to that day.

Mitzi (parent recreator, Rushton) 2010

Mitzi had a personal experience of death during her youth and felt that this coloured her views on death and dead bodies. Although she believed that the body was just an empty
vessel after death, she hated the thought of the dead body in a box underground as it would change the way you would think about the deceased. She explained this

When she got cremated I was glad she was cremated. If you imagined her physically buried in a box you would be imagining the state of the body as time went on. Whereas cremation— that’s it – the body is not going to be decomposing. She is going to look how she looked and then she is just ash. And it is in a box. It’s not going to go anywhere. It is contained; it is always going to be in the ground.

Mitzi (parent recreator, Rushton) 2010

In this example Mitzi’s views are contingent on the fact that she is thinking of an individual when she thinks of death and dead bodies. The experience was still a very powerful one for her and Brandi was not just a body, she was still a loved one rather than one of the many dead in the cemetery. When ‘the dead’ were just bodies, a nameless, faceless collection of characters they had a different type of emotional power than known and newly dead people. Even so, participants did not like to speak of the bodies rotted or rotting underground. Dead bodies were translated into people rather than being corpses; they were the deceased, they were reduced to bodily remains, Luther (greenspace manager, Rushton) changed my words to make them sound more respectful. This resonates with Woodthorpe’s findings at the City of London Cemetery (2010). Here her work showed that death itself was not a forbidden topic, rather that dead bodies were the thing that no one wanted to talk about.

The effect of time that participants describe here echoes the argument in dark tourism as to whether sites have to be associated with death that occurred in living memory to be truly dark in nature. Sharpley and Stone (2009) argue that sites of even ancient atrocity can still have a dark character and this seems to reflect the position of DeSilvey (2005), writing about decay and transformation. She observed the decay, degradation and change of objects over time and argues that this mutability does not decrease the potency of the objects. She contends that the type of power, or the way it has an effect does change but this is not a lack, but a difference in power. Gross (2002:36) neatly encapsulates this concept, saying ‘objects have to fall into desuetude at one level in order to come more fully into their own at another’. I think that this argument transfers to the cemetery and suggest that the power of death itself may recedes with time but the power of the people and stories can transcend death, decay and time itself. There was recognition amongst participants that dead people were not totally disempowered even as they became physically absent. Participants commented on how these people could have their stories
told very effectively through the monuments, carvings and words left behind but it was these that gave the deceased agency rather than their own now-absent bodies. Luther (greenspace manager, Rushton) summarised this when he said:

*The power of death recedes with time - but you can still be touched by it. However then it is all about stories and history. So if you look at them and think what happened, then it can make you sad as you identify with the individual story.*

Luther (greenspace manager, Rushton) 2010

Valerie (Friends founder, Marchester) attributed her attitude to the cemetery and to death to her childhood experiences during the war. She felt that she had gained experience of death early in her life and that this had almost normalised it for her.

*My father was in the army, so I suppose that is why military graves have a particular resonance, you know. And I was born in 1938 – bombed out of Coventry – came here in 1944, went to Germany in 1948 and that was bombed too. So death was a big feature of my world. You would have all the photographs - on pianos, or radios - of young relatives, of friends all there. And I have still got a photo that still moves me because I was going to “marry his brother” when I was three. So your consciousness of death, was very much part of it if you were brought up in war time. So maybe some of my interest and respect – and all the questions that you ask – I sort of grew up with them.*

Valerie (Friends founder, Marchester) 2005

Valerie’s (Friends founder, Marchester) explanation of her interest in death as well as her acceptance and understanding of it serve as part of the explanation of her involvement in the cemetery Friends group as well as her visits and travel to other cemeteries and war graves. The participants that I have introduced so far show that they did form emotional relationships to the dead people even if they were not known. Although the power of death receded with time and the maturing of the visual landscape, this was sometimes overcome by vivid personal experience such as those shared by Mitzi (parent recreator, Rushton) and Joan (purple recreator, Rushton). Valerie (Friends founder, Marchester) and Jane (Friends member, Clearstone), were just two of my participants who showed that they actively sought out visits and travel to cemeteries whilst also forming an emotional connection to the dead people represented through tombstones and memorials. This contrasts with Walter’s opinion that dark tourism is almost accidental in nature since Valerie (Friends founder, Marchester) is clearly very purposeful in her pursuit of these sites. Unlike Valerie, Mitzi (parent recreator, Rushton) had had little experience of death during her childhood, but had been affected by the death of someone very close in her twenties. Mitzi (parent recreator, Rushton) explained her own beliefs with me in order to
explain how she felt about the dead bodies that she did not know in the graveyard. Her argument again reflects the idea that the body something almost avoided, in this instance neatly packaged as a waste product left behind by the soul:

*It sounds strange because this is where they are, but I don’t think about them physically being in the ground. To me, because the interest is there in what happened when they were alive, it doesn’t really matter that they are there. A body is just an empty vessel. Imagine like a car – the engine goes – it is beyond repair and it is just empty, a piece of metal. Where as that is just an organic shell. The body is just a vessel... for the souls. The body is used, it has done its purpose and then the soul goes on.*

Mitzi (parent recreator, Rushton) 2010

Participants were divided in the extent to which they professed a belief in an afterlife, or personal faith. However, there was an interesting phenomenon that the dead people in these burial grounds did get the opportunity for an afterlife through the visitors and their interest in the stories contained within the cemetery walls. Putting the stories in context allowed people to view them as history which seemed to transform some of the emotional impact into interest and curiosity. Mitzi (parent recreator, Rushton) describes her own interest and feel for the graveyard here:

*I just feel a sense of history – who was that person, what was their life, that person, what was their life, how did they die- it is more than “ooh there is somebody dead there”.*

Mitzi (parent recreator, Rushton) 2010

**People watching**

Here we see the stories of the dead allowing them to live on, to transcend the death of their physical body and remain in the minds of the living. Many participants commented on individual graves and the tales they had read there. Some had been able to further expand on these through their own interest in historical research, which gave the pursuit a more serious tenor, but in many cases the stories that drew people in were the more dramatic ones. Stories rich in tragedy or comedy were remembered and were regaled in an almost gossipy way. Mitzi (parent recreator, Rushton) described herself as a ‘people watcher’ in the burial ground. She felt that the burial ground was good site for this activity as you actually had some parts of the story written there before you, in contrast to how you might people watch in a cafe or street. Dead people and death took on the mantle of soap opera in these instances. Jane (Friends member, Clearstone) shared some of this ‘gossip’ with me during our interview:
The lovely tomb at the top with the urn is to Anna Maria Crouch who was a regency actress. She was a sublime singer and wonderful person who lit up the room with her presence. Sadly she died, aged 41, falling out of a carriage drunk.

Jane (Friends member, Clearstone) 2010

Valerie (Friends founder, Marchester) had a second-hand anecdote that was similarly shared with relish:

But one grave that he showed me a photo of, is of a tree. There is a tree on the tombstone, and there is a guy cutting the branch from the wrong side! So you can see how he got his death! It is a comic grave.

Valerie (Friends founder, Marchester) 2005

For Charm (dog walker, Rushton) the stories were of great interest in a historical way but she also felt that the appearance of the tombs and monuments controlled how we perceived death and dead people, saying:

The shape of stones connects to what they say. The gothic ones are all about hellfire and brimstone. That’s quite a scary attitude! I think the Victorian ones are quite scary and the modern ones are sad. We express ourselves differently

Charm (dog walker, Rushton) 2010

This excerpt suggests that it is the interpretation of gravestones that can start the dark tourism journey, but that participants then were able to escape from this rigid script through their imagination. On guided walks and tours people regularly strayed from the route and wandered off, to the exasperation of the guide. Visitors were drawn to the intricate, the ornate, the shiny, the romantically decayed and the overgrown monuments that told quite a contradictory story to that proffered by guides and guidebooks. Figure 5.0-3 below, shows a cemetery visitor engaging with the design of a gravestone during an open cemetery visit. This tour was typical in the fact that participants showed a marked preference for taking photos of the more elaborate stones even when they commemorated people that were not of recognised local or national importance. This appears to demonstrate that visual aspects play a significant role in shaping the experience of a cemetery visit and the nature of the relationship formed.
This suggests that the way in which visitors relate to death is fine-tuned by a number of different influences. The landscape itself contributes to the atmosphere and conjures a backdrop within which the individual graves can play their role. The words and stories connect people to the dead and give them access to a range of emotions, from sadness to humour. And then continuing this predominance of the visual in building these relationships the shapes and styles of the monuments impact on how we understand the attitudes to death at the time of that person’s death which can further influence how we relate to that death now. In the quotes above, Jane (Friends member, Clearstone) described the tomb as ‘lovely’, Charm (dog walker, Rushton) comments on the
appearance and shape of the stones and Valerie (Friends founder, Marchester) describes a complex design on one particular stone. The people buried in these places would not exist in their minds without these visual prompts, and indeed Kellaher et al. (2005) describe how small modern graves have their impact amplified by the addition of items such as wind chimes or teddy bears; in the case of these elaborate memorials, the amplification has already been put on the highest setting. These individuals will not be part of the massed dead but keep their personalities even in death.

The ‘natural order’ of life and death and the agency of the dead
Valerie (Friends founder, Marchester) describes how being in a cemetery puts her in touch with what she calls the ‘natural order’ of life and death. She felt that being there and seeing the stones gave her a cue to reflect on death as part of life, and she contended that she saw this as a positive thing. Jane’s (Friends member, Clearstone) interpretation of being in the burial ground also hinged on this connection. She described working with the children’s churchyard gardening club to put into context her feelings when visiting cemeteries in England and abroad.

> We do talk about it [death] but we don’t ...we are quite OK about it all, I so I suppose you just transmit that feeling. The stones are all really old here – some back to 1600. And the bodies have just gone back into the earth, it’s nature’s cycle.
> Jane (Friends member, Clearstone) 2010

For Jane (Friends member, Clearstone) and Valerie, (Friends founder, Marchester) both active volunteers in their local burial grounds and visitors to burial grounds abroad, this conflation of life and death in the site seemed to be key. They acknowledged death and the power that it held but saw it as the counterpoint to life. Each seemed to have a mental model of the cemetery as a natural part of the life cycle and in this way did not convey a sense that death was an alien or totally negative aspect of the site. This may have been how they felt, or they may be suppressed these feelings, or forced a managed retreat to keep them under control but this is what they said they felt. Where, however, that balance of life and death changed, so too did the perception of the site. Jane (Friends member, Clearstone) commented that she preferred the churchyard since some of the stones had been cleared, saying 'It was such a grim churchyard when it was just full of tombs. It was just for the dead.' To Jane and other participants the ratio of death / life cues seemed to be important in governing the sense of place and where there are just ‘remnants of death’ the site has a more favourable aspect. Despite this Jane (Friends
member, Clearstone) did acknowledge that the dead people had played an important role in her use of the churchyard since it was prime building land in the city centre ‘it has not been built on because of what it is – it has been saved by the bodies!’

This is an interesting suggestion that in some way dead bodies, that we might think of as passive or vulnerable, can in fact have agency. The power of the dead seems to resonate with Harrison’s model of vulnerability and power.

*The human...has almost always [been marked out] through the attribution of a positive capacity or power, in terms of a ‘being-able-to’, be it for speech, reason, poetry, manufacture, choice, laughter or dying. And yet vulnerability cannot be thought of in such positive terms. Vulnerability is an incapacity: not, however, as a lack of power but as an ‘un-power’.*

Harrison (2007:427)

Just as Harrison argues that bodily vulnerability does not mean powerlessness, data here seems to indicate that dead humans, who are ‘not-able-to’ in the way Harrison describes above, are equally not powerless, but instead possess an *other*power; their inability constitutes a different sort of presence. Valerie (Friends founder, Manchester) gave an example that exemplifies the power of the supposedly powerless in the cemetery, a youth who she identifies as vulnerable in life but who in death has considerable power.

*There is a boy of eighteen that died. [Indicates a family grave plot] He died just round here because of the lightning. He sheltered on the common from a storm. The lightening shot him, and the whole city went like this [shows shock] – two kids, two young kids of eighteen- and you just couldn’t believe it. And so that made a tremendous impact I think, and you felt the vulnerability, and the vulnerability of youth. But because of the story on the stone here people still respond to this. And visitors that have, that don’t know the local story, they see this and feel the same, an empathy and you realise there is all this death around.*

Valerie (Friends founder, Manchester) 2005

This idea that dead bodies can have agency, can be active constituents of the landscape, changes the way they are seen and by extension their role in the community. Some participants felt that the activity of the dead would be a scary thing and viewed them as an ‘other’ that, if they were not in their rightful place – the ground – would be troublesome. Joan (purple recreator, Rushton) typifies this when she says

*I imagine they might occasionally wake from the dead and if they did it would obviously be quite scary. In fact I am really scared right now. I think if they happened to wake from the dead they would obviously be quite upset and would come and harass you in some way.*
Here dead people are almost no longer people. They have been conferred a malevolent power that they may chose to use in some way that perhaps we cannot imagine. As an ‘other’ being we do not understand their ways, wants or even their capabilities. In talking about her fear of being buried alive, Mitzi (parent recreator, Rushton) described how she felt that the dead would continue to be tormented if this had happened as it was such a traumatic death. Indeed the actual act of dying was seen as having the potency to affect the dead, with a person who had been murdered or who had died in a gruesome way being more likely to ‘have the potential to be cross’ (Imogen - taphophobe, Clearstone). The emotions of the dead, if they had been suitably stirred by an unjust, early or shocking death could, then, have affect in the world of the living. Amongst participants in this research this was not a commonly held viewpoint. Those that did feel dead people had the potential for negative actions admitted that this came more from their imagination than experience, but explained that they could not separate their imagination from their emotions. Imogen (taphophobe, Clearstone) conveyed her fear as she described going out of her way to avoid walking past any form of burial ground ‘There’s nothing more terrifying than walking past a graveyard. I think all the bodies are going to come up. It’s horrible, scary’. On clarification, neither Joan (purple recreator, Rushton), nor Imogen (taphophobe, Clearstone) felt that only the people who had been ‘bad’ in life had this tendency to reappear after death and ‘harass’ people. They felt that death itself was enough of a bad event to ‘turn’ even the nicest person.

Relationships between the dead and the community

Moving on from the consideration of how cemetery tourists relate to death and dead bodies, Walter (2009) also argued that it would be of value to the field of dark tourism to have a greater appreciation of the role the site plays within society, how it functions for the community. Whilst dark tourism is concerned both with the visitors and the dark site they visit, it must also pay attention to the fact that the site is always embedded geographically and socially within a local community. The relationship between the local people and a site of dark tourism can influence and be influenced by the tourist trade. It is therefore to this relationship that I turn next, to better understand the emplacement of cemeteries as tourist experiences within a local setting. Visitors may be attracted to a site by virtue of the famous graves or disaster monuments and I will try to unpick here
why this historical significance and other features are of value to the community and the impact this can have on society at a local level.

One of the most explicit findings of my data was the importance of heritage and history to cemetery visitors. Participants enthused about historical events, regaled me with tales of disaster monuments remembered and created rich verbal tapestries intertwining history with architecture, beauty and emotion. Beginning here with personal stories told to me about cemetery history, I will then discuss participants own understandings of the sites and the history that they encountered.

Burial grounds were acknowledged by many of the participants as being incredible repositories for social and community history. A great number of stories were shared with me during this research, some very local and almost mundane and others of international repute. Whilst this record-keeping and history-holding is an obvious part of the cemetery, this cannot diminish the pleasure that visitors took in reading the stones, tracing stories and exploring some of the strands of history that weave through the graveyard. Charm (dog walker, Rushton) expostulated when she saw one particular gravestone “this chap served throughout the Indian mutiny. That’s the other thing of course, the history of these – it’s fantastic!” and she was not alone in her interest and excitement at a new discovery. Mitzi (parent recreator, Rushton) simply said “To me it’s almost a novelty when you come to graveyards and it is just the sense of history. You wander about in wonder at the lives of the people who have been buried there.” Some visitors were discerning in their interests, a case in point being Valerie (Friends founder, Marchester) who said that she would look in the main at “graves that usually have a historical or literary significance. I like the emblems, the work of the masons”; Jane (Friends member, Clearstone) felt that she was similarly drawn to graves with a historical connection but that she also privileged graves aesthetically; having a background in the arts she enjoyed looking at what she saw as beautiful and well crafted stones. She was not alone in this appreciation, as this quote from Luther (greenspace manager, Rushton) shows:

_We used to read stories on stones as a child. I remember a massive memorial with angels - that was a gipsy family - had pictures of their horses on it. As a child it was the best and most elaborate in the whole cemetery._

Luther (greenspace manager) 2010
In the eyes of the participants, the home of the dead could also play a positive role in the community. Sometimes cemeteries drew the community together, such as in the act of conservation, heritage works or events and open days. At other times the power of their stories was a factor that contributed to the social role of the cemetery site. In this way it might be said that the dead can either work collaboratively or as individuals. Richard and Janice (walk leaders, Marchester) described how tourists came on the guided walks the Friends group ran and were influenced to act as a result of what they saw:

One of the monuments [to a nautical disaster] often has candles and offerings on it. People come on the walks and then bring their family and as they open up the cemetery more graves get tended and you start to see flowers appearing on stones that have been abandoned for years – and it might not even be family but people who have been touched by the stories

Richard and Janice (walk leaders, Marchester) 2005

Hallam and Hockey (2001) and Woodthorpe (2010) identify that objects added to the cemetery landscape, such as the candles Richard and Janice (walk leaders, Marchester) describe above, can heighten the meaning of the graves but argue that the objects do not convey the same meaning to all. Data from my participants corroborates this idea with some finding the addition of objects and even graffiti as suitable and atmospheric, whilst others described it as tacky or tasteless. From the tourist’s viewpoint, then, they were influenced on a number of different levels by what they saw. Some were drawn into the local community and the community of the dead by the beauty of the graveyard architecture en masse.

Valerie (Friends founder, Marchester) saw this emotional connection to dead people as a critical factor in the engagement of people to the site. For herself she found the stories moving rather than depressing, and in addition identifies that she also feels a sense of envy for those who have been buried in family tombs:

I do have an envy of dead people. In a way jealousy isn’t the right word but it is something that is rather lovely to have – a family grave. Our society is so split up and certainly my family isn’t into that sort of thing here. So I feel quite envious of people with family graves, where over the generations you know where everyone is. I think there is something very moving about those.

Valerie (Friends founder, Marchester) 2005

Whether or not there was an emotional connection to dead people, there were particular figures mentioned repeatedly that drew visitors to graveyards. Whilst not in
any of my study sites, Jim Morrison and Karl Marx were both mentioned by several participants when relating stories of visiting or planning to visit burial grounds. Joan (purple recreator, Rushton) stated that she had always intended to visit both Karl Marx and Jim Morrison but had not yet got around to organising it. Al and Seth (cemetery tourists, Manchester) talked about their visit to Paris to see Jim Morrison, saying 'It felt a bit touristy and yet for us it was a special place, our visit a bit of a pilgrimage'. For them, the presence of one person was the lure to the site and this was a commonly reported feature with the visitors being either fans of a famous person, or family looking to trace their roots. Valerie talked about the value of their cemetery in helping people from all around the world connect with their family histories:

> If you have somebody that comes over from America, they want graves specifically pointed out. It can be free so you can come and go, you can just find your bit, your family, as we have the information to hand. We get people from America, certainly, and New Zealand

Valerie (Friends founder, Manchester) 2005

She enjoyed visiting other cemeteries and found herself in the shoes of a tourist on occasion.

> We went up to Bath, and Plymouth - that was fascinating. They had a special thing for loads of young kids that had died. This was not a war thing. It was when submarines first started there were lots of deaths because the technology wasn't up to it and lots of them were 16 year old boys because they were training. So the local kids in Plymouth had done some stuff. They have got a super cemetery and wonderful memorials for these graves, which is tremendous. Because whatever cemetery you go round is fascinating because the walkers take you round and show you the interesting bits.

Valerie (Friends founder, Manchester) 2005

Valerie (Friends founder, Manchester) was a champion for the cemetery she was involved in, justifying its importance through historical value. In interview she did refer to the other facets of the site such as nature, but felt that the heritage was what made the site both unique and an almost untapped reserve of information.

> And there is so much here. You have got many naval things- you've got the Chinese Navy, you've got the Charge of the Light Brigade, you've got Waterloo, and lots of the regiments which are no longer here, they've still got graves with their ensigns on.. so again from a historical point of view it is valuable

Valerie (Friends founder, Manchester) 2005

Jane (Friends member, Clearstone) also identified history as a vital component of the churchyard where she volunteered, indicating a well appointed monument to me and
saying “This Captain – someone traced his family to Australia and his family have funded the refurbishment of that”. She made the connection between history and the present day and demonstrated, through examples of several different monuments and heritage events that had been organised, that this churchyard was something of a community anchor. Other participants also described how cemeteries brought people together. Joan (purple recreator, Rushton) felt that local history was the draw, as did Richard and Janice (walk leaders, Marchester) and Luther (greenspace manager, Rushton) and this was most clearly evidenced in the many cemetery and churchyard open days attended by myself and other participants. The majority of these events were marketed as heritage open days, framed from the start by history, and judging by attendance Joan and the other participants were right about the draw of this subject to the community.

Figure 5.0-4 Visitors queuing for a ghost story at a nocturnal churchyard event
Source: photograph owned by author
Data that I collected from a wide range of cemetery events augments the testimony of my participants and suggests that burial grounds are of considerable interest and value to both the local and the wider community. They can provide a source of income for parochial projects such as restoration and repair, but most significantly for these sites, can be used to actively shape the relationship formed between visitors and the site. The way in which events are promoted shapes the expectation of the visitor and indeed attracts one sort of visitor over another accordingly. Figure 5.0-4, above, was taken at a ghost story event in a churchyard and shows a long queue of people waiting to be invited in to a small tent with the storytellers. What the photo cannot show is that people were prepared to wait for over 15 minutes to hear a spooky story. While these people waited they were surrounded by noises in the dark of other visitors playing hide and seek or sitting drinking mulled wine on the tombstones. As part of a much larger event, this evening in the churchyard attracted local and county-wide visitors to attend. It was an evening of imagination and intrigue that built a unique relationship between the visitor and the graveyard and seemed to be seeking to confer a sense of liminality and possibility on the site. The juxtaposition of light and dark as the flickering candles lit up tiny glimpses of the night served to emphasise the heterotopic otherness of the churchyard and the sense that it was many different places at the same time. The photo below (Figure 5.0-5) shows a very different dark tourism event, a historical walk through a provincial cemetery. In this image the visitors can be seen walking behind the guide, with those at the back quite some distance from the front. During this walk people were noticeably straying from the pack in order to explore their own version of the walk and take a look at graves that had not been highlighted by the tour. This photograph shows how the cemetery fits into a wider world (evidenced by the view to farmland beyond the cemetery walls) and yet is distinct by virtue of the graves and the planting of trees that would not be found in the farmland and ancient woodland surrounding the site.
Conclusion
The data from these participants showed that relationships between the living and the dead are slippery; they fluctuate and are affected by many variables. Stone contends that dark tourism provide a channel for death to be reintegrated into everyday life, allowing ‘absent death to be made present’ (2009:37). He continues by saying that ‘the consumption of dark tourism may aid the social neutralisation of death’ and argues that dark tourism as a new social institution gives people access to a safe method of engaging with and thinking about death. Whilst there is truth in this argument, the data here suggests that cemetery dark tourists are already sensitive to death and the dead and that death is not as absent from their lives as dark tourism theory would suggest. However, as

Figure 5.0-5  Tourists on a guided cemetery walk
Source: photograph owned by author
Stone argues, the graveyard does provide an easy route to connecting with death and the dead for those that choose to do so.

In looking at the social role of the cemetery, I found that it can play a part in the community beyond that of a place for mourning and memory as evinced by Bachelor (2004) and Frances et al. (2005). Visitors with no connection to the deceased gather there to recreate and share common interests such as history and heritage. This suggests that dark tourism does not have to be about travelling across the world to see genocide camps or sinister sites but that there is a spectrum from extreme to parochial dark tourism. Reimers (1999) study of graves led to her postulation that graves are a display of personal and collective identity. In dark tourism I suggest that this clearly displayed identity helps to consolidate a relationship with the living at both individual and community level.

Looking at heterotopia and dark tourism together underlines the fact that dark tourism sites only exist in relation to non-dark sites, which frame and give meaning to the dark sites. Like heterotopia, considering dark tourism sites to be many different spaces within one space gives access to a greater understanding of how one site can mean so many different things to visiting tourists. It hints at how visitors to dark sites can have a completely non-dark experience at the site, having been open to other parts of the experience than the contact with death. Heterotopia gives value to this type of non-dark visit, one that dark tourism would not perhaps credit. From my work it becomes clear that a visit to a cemetery can be dark tourism but does not have to be; the visitor may engage with the site as a heterotopia rather than the more constrained dark tourism experience. Foucault (1986) argues that society needs heterotopias to give perspective to the everyday places we inhabit. Dark tourism sites specialise in this sort of moral, educational reflection; seeing them as heterotopia as well gives value to the other types of perspective that visitors may gain on a visit to a dark site. It seems that the unsettling relationship these other spaces have with their environs can trigger the imagination. Once the imagination is free to take up the ingredients of place and meaning and perform its own alchemy, the resulting cocktail may confer a revelation of sorts for the dark/heterotopic site visitor. The next chapter continues to explore this sense of revelation in a place of death, with a focus on the charming and enchanting power of cemetery deathscapes.
Creative synthesis – Explication

Expressing the themes in my creative product
Source: photograph owned by author
The purpose of the explication phase is to fully examine what has awakened in consciousness, in order to understand its various layers of meaning. Perhaps the most significant concepts in explicating a phenomenon are focusing and indwelling, where concentrated attention is given to creating an inward space and discovering nuances, textures, and constituents of the phenomenon which may then be more fully elucidated through indwelling.

Moustakas (1990:31)

Diary 13th January 2011

Gloomy, rainy, just the sound of rain tapping on leaves all around me. It is twilight and the graves are wet and slimy, slugs crawling across the front.

I just stopped at the churchyard on the way to school and it seems different to my study ones – so much more full of death. I look at all the xmas decorations on the graves – wreaths, flowers, photos and notes and it is really sad. I feel quite hollow. I can only think about the warm, huggable bodies lying out of reach in the ground. I feel like it is me that has lost someone here.

There are cans of beer, reindeer with red light-up noses and narcissus tete-a-tete. Oddly my favourite narcissus, but now tipped over and growing valiantly sideways. I right them.

Rain drips down my neck, on my paper. All I can hear is the splat and crackle of water. A wet, glistening sound. No birds. No rustle of leaves. I feel enclosed, almost trapped in the sadness and I need to go and get the boys from school and nursery to hold them and feel this will never happen.

I think at the start of all this I did not really connect with death. I loved cemeteries for the nature, the curiosity of the stones and stories, and their romantic beauty. I have had so much death now that I cannot miss it. And I can still see the beauty, but it is through a lens of death.
Chapter six: Enchanting encounters in the cemetery

Like every hummingbird and bumblebee
Every sunflower, cloud and every tree
I feel so much a part of this
Nature's got me high and it's beautiful
I'm with this deep eternal universe
From death until rebirth.

Corner of the Earth by Jason Kay (2001)

Looking at cemeteries through the lens of the amenity greenspace offers the chance not only to consider the practical use of disused burial grounds for everyday recreation, but also to tease out more about the relationship between people and place. Participants in this research exhibited a range of feelings and opinions about burial spaces. What is obvious, but also at the heart of the sense of place of a burial ground is the fact that these are places at once both similar and different to parks, woodlands and gardens. In previous chapters I have argued that cemeteries are heterotopia, or places of otherness and in this chapter I explore how the juxtaposition of nature and culture in the cemetery contributes to both engaging and enchanting experiences. I consider the agency of trees, plants and gravestones in creating sense of place and fostering the people-place bond and explore how time, seasonal changes and metamorphoses impact on visitors. Many participants identified cemeteries as being places of calm and peacefulness and I try to convey their understanding of how a place of death and despair can be construed in this way.

A small proportion of participants communicated a stronger feeling of engagement with the cemetery space and I use the literature of enchantment and transcendence to grasp the nature of this relationship and explain how this level of unity with the landscape can be engendered. Nature, art and architecture are all variously attributed with the potential to inspire, transport and enchant those who choose to engage with them (Diffey 1994, Williams and Harvey 2000, Kuspit 2002). With this literature as a springboard, I develop and extend this theory by following the trajectory of the data from interest and curiosity
through to absorption and immersion in the landscape. I argue from the data that that the conflation of nature, art and architecture in the cemetery landscape can induce a transcendent or spiritual experience. Here I appropriate the term ‘dark enchantment’ to encapsulate the sense of being captivated and enchanted within a ‘dark’ setting where nature and architecture can be beautiful but also bear witness to death. As in dark tourism, I use the term ‘dark’ to reference the connection with death, tragedy and dead bodies and draw on dark’s other meanings of mysterious, sinister and sad to focus the specificity onto the sense of enchantment that can be engendered uniquely in a burial ground. Admixing heterotopia with this notion of enchantment presents the opportunity to explore both how enchantment can occur and how dark enchantment might subtly differ in character to Bennett’s (2001) original conception.

**Being in a cemetery**

Whilst participants shared many everyday and almost mundane cemetery experiences with me, their stories also revealed more powerful encounters. There was a strong sense of normal co-existing alongside extraordinary sensation in the burial ground, which I contend is another manifestation of heterotopia in the graveyard. In the previous chapter I suggested that burial grounds could accommodate different social rules than other spaces by virtue of their heterotopic properties. This sense that cemeteries have more dimensions, more space than other places is echoed in this chapter as I explore narratives that tell of the mundane and the profound in the graveyard.

It was both my own experiences and those of the participants that alerted me to the parallels between the enjoyment of visiting and the literature of enchantment and transcendence. In common parlance, to enchant is to cast a spell on, to bewitch; to attract and move deeply, or to delight (Allen 2002). More can be understood about how the potential of everyday life and places to enchant from Bennett’s writings on this subject, where she says:

> [...] enchantment entails a state of wonder, and one of the distinctions of this state is the temporary suspension of chronological time and bodily movement. To be enchanted, then, is to participate in a momentarily immobilizing encounter; it is to be transfixed, spellbound.

Bennett (2001:5)

Bennett argues that such a state of captivation can be conjured up by the experience of a place or event and that with enchantment comes an elevation of sensory ability. In this
heightened state she claims that one can see richer colours, detect subtler aromas, and have a super sensitive haptic ability. This sensory bombardment feeds in to the enchantment and contributes to experience of being transfixed and transported.

Notable from participant’s account of their visits is the richness of sensory language used. Being engaged with the landscape incorporates the mind and body together and increases awareness of the moment through the body. When doing my research I found that participants such as Charm (dog walker, Rushton) and Janice (walk leader, Manchester) used a rich and nuanced language full of emotional narratives when describing their visits to cemeteries and graveyards. The things they spoke of articulated an embodied experience of the site, referring to feelings, sensations, the sensorium, the soundscape. The interview and walk recordings that I made serve as an auditory reminder of these very physical experiences as they are imbued with sounds other than words – gulls shrieking, the sound of water over a weir, trees rustling, thudding footballs, barking dogs and humming traffic sounds. What could not be recorded, but that I noted as consistently as possible, was the physical expression of the senses by participants. They did not just speak. They gestured, they moved, they seemed to reflect internally and to visualise themselves in past settings whilst actively being in contact with the environment whilst we were there, touching stones and plants and signs as we walked.

The way that participants narrated their histories caught me up in the moment, transported me into their stories and memories, to almost join them in this alternative world. The graveyard held an attraction for Pierre (greenspace ranger, Rushton) that was conveyed by his words – calm and straightforward, and his voice – which held a note of awe as he said:

I love the idea of a churchyard at night – wonderful. The quietness, the sort of dead calm, and in theory that nobody goes there at night and if they do they are up to skulduggery, smuggling...

Pierre (greenspace ranger, Rushton) 2010

Pierre’s imagined world of the cemetery blended with his very real enjoyment, tempering and enhancing it with a slight sense of mystery. Jack (Friends founder, Manchester), however, was one participant who was less involved in memories, imagination and the numinous, interacting with the burial landscape at a more tangible level. His connection to the deathscape was no weaker for this, but reflected a difference in approach at a
personal level. Jack (Friends founder, Marchester) commented that ‘the environment here brings people to the nature walks and we also attract artists, historians, dog walkers.’ He appreciated the natural and man-made assets of the cemetery but also viewed them as commodities to bring people in. From his interest in the site and the extensive volunteer work he had carried out there it was clear that he had a strong connection to the site, but he expressed this in a very different way to the almost romantic language used by Pierre (greenspace ranger, Rushton) in the extract above. Between the casual and regular visitors it was possible to establish that there was a sliding scale of engagement between person and place that came out of the data which I have represented in table 6.0-1, below.

![Table 6.0-1 Scale of engagement](image)

Just as space and place flow into one another, so this scale is a crude way of expressing how participants moved between different levels of relationship intensity. It should also be noted that flow between the states might not be as linear as in this depiction but could ‘jump’ across and between different parts of the continuum. In this research I found that different states coincided in different people, once again underscoring that deathscapes are sites of juxtaposition and contradiction.

**Dark enchantment**

The data show that people engage with nature and the art of the cemetery in different ways, from fleeting casual relationships through to sustained and deep emotional connections. It has been shown elsewhere (see Williams and Harvey 2001, Berg and
Heijne 2005, Ryan et al. 2010, Heintzman 2010) that interaction with nature or art can produce feelings ranging from vitality and excitement through to transcendence and awe. Whilst the enchanting powers of nature and art have been considered separately before, the cemetery provides a unique environment to study nature and art together and offers a new perspective on the experience of transcendence. The cemetery also offers a novel opportunity to explore the interplay between heterotopia and enchantment, which I explore both here and in chapter seven.

The presence of death within the cemetery echoes the thesis of Koole and Berg (2005) who argued that nature and death are intrinsically linked, since it is inevitable that life will culminate in death. Their research showed that people looking at wilderness pictures were more strongly reminded of death than when looking at pictures of cultivated nature. As a result, their findings showed that participants were more likely to prefer the tamed version of natural spaces. Extrapolating from this suggests that an urban park, being a cultivated site, would be perceived favourably by visitors for the lack of danger and death reminders that it brings. If we substitute the urban park for an urban cemetery there is instantly the hint of tension arising, for the nature of the cemetery is such that it brings with it the baggage of death and returns us to the idea of an unfavourable site. I would argue however, that it simply returns the cemetery to a place more powerful than a park. The cemetery can be a place with the power to enchant as strongly as wilder environments such as mountains or waterfalls. Charm (dog walker, Rushton) encapsulates this feeling when she comments ‘I don’t know why they always fascinate me. I think it is that connection with death. That we are mortal, fallible. It connects you with nature, makes you feel part of the world’. She hints at how enchantment, death and despair coexist in deathscapes and can create the powerful force of dark enchantment.

Juxtaposing dark and enchantment together in this way mirrors the other heterotopic dualities of the cemetery - life and death, nature and architecture, day and night. In the same vein, individuals also often contradicted themselves, crediting cemeteries as being beautiful and relaxing at one moment, and creepy or spooky the next. In other words the cemetery seemed to have an identity crisis. Some participants found enchantment because it was a burial ground, and others in spite of the fact. This slipperiness is at the very heart of understanding heterotopia in the cemetery. In heterotopia, contrasts, contradictions and uncanny pairings create a sense of otherness, of difference to normal
places. Dark enchantment draws its power from this unique sense of place of the burial ground. It is the expression of the emotional connection to facets of the cemetery such as nature, beauty and death and is thus a sombre and yet uplifting form of captivation. And it is this co-existence or layering of characteristics that reinforces how dark enchantment is so closely connected to heterotopia; dark enchantment is a form of mental and emotional otherness, where heterotopia is a physical, placed otherness.

The question of how enchantment or transcendence can coexist with despair is one that has already been asked. Bennett suggests that enchantment is the grasping of life and survival instinct against the odds, that it helps you to manage the despair inherent in life:

*Enchantment, that energizing and unsettling sense of the great and incredible fact of existence, reflects a stubborn attachment to life that most bodies seem to possess. To be enchanted is, in the moment of its activation, to assent wholeheartedly to life – not to this or that particular condition or aspect of it but to the experience of living itself.*

Bennett (2001:159-160)

**Feeling the cemetery**

The majority of participants felt a strong connection to the graveyards and cemeteries that they visited. They described them as beautiful (Joan, purple recreator, Rushton), tranquil (Jane, Friends member, Clearstone), soothing (Janice, walk leader, Marchester) and inspiring (Pewter, recreator, Greetham). They saw stories, mysteries and intrigue as well as peacefulness and fresh air. Cemeteries are places for putting dead bodies (English Heritage 2007) and whilst they may be designed to be comforting, educational and to some extent recreational, this does not fully explain the level of joy and enjoyment people find within their walls. Participants identified a specific ‘feeling’ of being in a graveyard or cemetery that was different to a park or other greenspace. They articulated this feeling frequently in quite simple terms but also conveyed the sense that there was something ineffable about a deathscape, something beyond the language they used to describe why they like the site and what it felt like. Attridge (2011) argues that the English language lacks the breadth of vocabulary to encompass everything that we experience, and that complex feelings generated by art or other stimuli, are simply beyond cognition and beyond conventions of communication. This argument complements my findings that participants were at times dissatisfied with the words they had available to describe the cemetery experience, and suggests that it is impossible to reduce feelings to words. However, I consider that it is still important to make this attempt and extract all possible
knowledge from the blunt tools of language available in order to add to current understandings of both heterotopia and deathscapes.

Pierre (greenspace ranger, Rushton) at first related the ‘feeling’ of the cemetery as being brought about by the physical characteristics, saying ‘I quite like graveyards actually. I think they have nature, they’ve got features, they’ve got architecture and they’ve got peace and quiet.’ He teases out some distinct elements of the natural and the man-made, themes which are picked up on later in this chapter, but then continues in a more reverential tone and describes an imaginary graveyard scene ‘[What would you be doing?] Just being. I would look out as the full moon glinted down on the tombstones – wonderful’. As he spoke he seemed to visualise the scene and there was a moment of stillness in our interview that was rare for Pierre (greenspace ranger, Rushton), whose usual pace was frenetic. He was not alone in his creation of alternative world in the graveyard. Valerie (Friends founder, Manchester) echoed some of his sentiments when she said ‘Then there is a kind of tranquillity because you don’t expect to hear too many loud noises, you don’t expect to have, like, fairgrounds, it is a different world’. Pewter (recreator, Greetham) felt that the churchyard we met in was sometimes ‘like a garden and now...otherworldly’, conveying a sense that deathscapes cannot be neatly categorised as one thing or another, being able to move or be perceived in many different iterations. Overwhelmingly what participants described on first considering what a cemetery was like, was that it was ‘peaceful and quiet’ (Elle – cemetery tourist, Manchester) or ‘a contemplative place’ (Jane – Friends member, Clearstone). Luther (greenspace manager, Rushton) outlines how the different elements of the cemetery landscape come together:

We always used to go and walk around the cemetery because it was nice. There was wildlife, there was a grave which got carved angels on which was fantastic. We used to go and collect chestnuts in the season. It was a different sort of place. Quiet.

Luther (greenspace manager, Rushton) 2010

All of these accounts attempt to capture the sense of place of the cemetery and seem to be in accordance that it is akin to another world, or a place of heterotopic alterity. Participants struggled to articulate how it seemed different, and usually proffered words such as peaceful or tranquil in an effort to explain why. Descriptions identified the juxtaposition of natural and man-made features, or visual and auditory sensations. They did acknowledge the death there, but most seemed to feel that the sense of death receded with time (a motif which seems almost omnipresent in this research and which I
pick up on later in this chapter) and that it was more the sculpture and the nature that contributed to the sense of place than the presence of death itself. They were perhaps struggling, unwittingly; with the complex task of describing the experience of the deathscape as heterotopia. The next section examine the way in which nature and architecture in turn contribute to this otherness, this sense of the cemetery as a different world and the narrative of enchantment and transcendence this engendered.

**Appreciating nature in the cemetery**

Nature was one of the significant elements of the cemetery identity that participants cited as contributing to the sense of place they experienced. Here this term is used to encompass living organisms of all kingdoms as well as the habitat within which they reside. Soper (1995) identifies everything un-human, and not made by humans as nature, and draws attention to nature as ‘otherness’, a subtle reminder here that once more cemeteries play host to numerous juxtapositions that may in turn contribute to heterotopia. Nature appeared in a number of different guises in my research, from cemetery bush tucker walks and bug hotels to creepy trees and overgrown bushes that might hide attackers. Most mentions of nature were positive, some positively ecstatic and just two female participants gave a mixed report on their attitude to nature in the cemetery, being concerned about the more gloomy, overgrown areas where people could ‘lurk’.

Returning to the concept of a scale of engagement with place, the milder effects might be described as pleasurable or energising rather than transformational. Indeed, Ryan et al. (2010), Kaplan (1995) and Kaplan and Talbot (1983) all report that nature has restorative and vitalising properties and suggested that this went some way to explaining why people are drawn to natural environments. Both Harrison et al. (1998) and Seymour (2003) assert that natural spaces make an important contribution to physical and mental health. Harrison et al. found in their research that the presence of a greenspace, no matter how small, made an important contribution to public health. Berg and Heijne (2005) reiterate how greenspaces can offer aesthetic pleasure, discovery and learning and in this way help combat stress and mental fatigue. They also highlight that nature can threaten, but aver that even fear can be positive, as it can have the capacity to invigorate and fascinate, even whilst it causes stress and heightens emotions. All of these arguments were supported to some extent by the data. Participants talked about how relaxing it was to visit, how it was
a place to walk the dog or get some fresh air, or as Janice (walk leader, Marchester) put it
'It is a friendly place. I forget all my health problems there.' The cemetery seemed to
nurture the wellbeing of the living as well as the dead.

It is significant that every participant in this research referenced nature in some way
during their interview, more than any other theme that arose. Often this came in the
form of a comment about the appearance of the site, such as Jane’s (Friends member,
Clearstone) observation ‘over there is a mass of ox-eye daises – it is fantastic.’ She
continued along these lines by adding ‘this area at the back is all raspberries and
gooseberries...masses of herbs with big poppies amongst it all’. Whilst at face value this is
a purely descriptive list of plant species present on the site, it is pertinent to note that at
the time of the visit (December) none of these plants were evident, being either perennial
or deciduous. Jane (Friends member, Clearstone) conjured up the year in wildflowers as
we walked around and created an almost tangible floral installation in both our minds.
She was not a professional gardener but enjoyed the sensory qualities of the plants and
appreciated the colours and textures with her artist’s eye. What she claimed to be
engaging with in the churchyard was nature itself. Pierre (greenspace ranger, Rushton)
showed a similar awareness of the plants in the churchyard we visited and documented
what we saw as we walked ‘This is just going to be a wheat field soon – I am sure the
birds are going to love it. And here ... (pointing) white campion, honesty, something furry
[Bel – ‘mullein’]

Valerie (Friends founder, Marchester) was another participant who returned to the
theme of nature repeatedly in interview. She described how the flora had noticeably
changed as the volunteers cleared overgrown areas of the cemetery saying ‘a lot of the
dog walkers noted when the brambles were cleared, how much some of the beautiful
wildflowers which they thought we planted have just been able to grow’. She portrayed
the cemetery as a sanctuary for wildlife in a city that had little space for nature, saying

*The different trees, the different blossoms, the birdsong, the different birds that you can
see up here, some of the flowers that you get up here you won’t get anywhere else. They
are natural, but they have survived here, but not survived in cities*
Valerie (Friends founder, Marchester) 2005

Valerie (Friends founder, Marchester) narrated the tale of a historically important space
that had been neglected over time. Her own interest was in the heritage of the site and
yet whilst championing this cause she perhaps unwittingly spent more time detailing nature. Her manner towards the wildlife and nature was apparently non-committal but her language and the richness and detail of her accounts suggested that this element of the cemetery was more important to her than she would give witness to.

Pierre (greenspace ranger, Rushton) was an unashamedly passionate commentator on the nature of churchyards. It was the most prevalent topic of discussion in interview and one that he returned to repeatedly. He described the badger activity at one churchyard with both affection and humour:

> Look at these holes – badger, badger, badger, badger, badger, badger... I was just talking to the lady that lives there [points out a house bordering the churchyard] and looked in to one of these holes and a badger face was looking out. The badgers are coming here and digging the living crap out of everything...and digging the dead crap out of everything. As a wildlife area it is perfect...the badgers are loving it.

Pierre (greenspace ranger, Rushton) 2010

Participants expressed a general interest in the range of species that might be found in the cemetery. Some of this was based in fact, as the interviewee had seen or heard a particular animal or plant. To a lesser degree there was also a tendency to imagine or assume what might be there, as shown here by Joan (purple recreator, Rushton) who suggested ‘I can imagine a few foxes and badgers lurking in there...a few beasties.’ Sylvie (purple recreator, Greetham) felt that it was just the right habitat for ‘snakes and lizards – they would like to bask on the tombs I think. I have had a look in lots of churchyards but never seen any yet.’ Other interviewees were less specific about what they saw and heard, but appreciative of the atmosphere that they intuited from their surroundings. Al (cemetery tourist, Marchester) explained to me that the cemetery had a different quality to the rest of the city, which was just metres away outside the stone walls. He did not dress this up, but just stated ‘There’s birdsong. It is peaceful, natural’, words echoed many times over by other participants including as Janice (walk leader, Marchester), Jack (Friends founder, Marchester) and Luther (greenspace manager, Rushton). Some participants were engaged with the environment at a more excited level. Nature came across at times as less of a passive and attractive backdrop to the activities and drama of life and death, and brought its own impact onto the visitor. Charm (dog walker, Rushton) was trying to unravel her interest in cemeteries when her thoughts were literally hijacked by the sight of a nature feature:
I don’t know why they always fascinate me. I think it is that connection with death. We are mortal, fallible. It connects you with nature, makes you feel part of the world. GOSH, look at that tree!

Charm (dog walker, Rushton) 2010

Once again we see here that it is the juxtaposition of nature and the man-made that jolts visitors into different level of awareness and perception of the site.

Species of time

Alongside the botanical richness that they illustrated, several participants observed a broader connection to the cycles of life and nature, echoing the references to time found in chapter four. Jane (Friends member, Clearstone) reflected on the cycle of life when she talked about eating fruit and herbs grown in the churchyard by the gardening group. She said that she was not bothered by the thought of the produce being contaminated by death, saying ‘the bodies have gone – it is all part of nature’s cycle, decay and growth and so it does not feel like it is a place of the dead.’ Where she did feel an impact was in the shorter cycles of the seasons and of night and day. Jane (Friends member, Clearstone) explained ‘I am very aware of the seasons, looking at the trees. It puts me very in touch with nature. It is a contemplative place. It makes you calmer.’ This sense of physical and mental change echoes Soper’s comments on nature, space and time:

Nature, in this conception, is both a present space and an absent – already lost – time/space: a retreat or place of return, to which we ‘go’ or ‘get’ back, in a quest not only for a more originary, untouched space, but also for a temps perdu, or perhaps more accurately, for a time that never was, a time prior to history and culture

Soper (1995:187)

Soper here sees in nature something that participants recognised in deathscapes – a sense of being lost-in-time and yet surrounded by reminders of historical time and ecological time. Time seems to be a tool with which people can access a deeper connection with the living/deathscape and its various forms (including circadian, ecological, dead time) each present a different point with which to view and engage with place. Both Jane (Friends member, Clearstone) and other participants connected nature with the circadian time, commenting on weather, time of day and conditions alongside the life cycles of nature. Pierre (greenspace ranger, Rushton) observed how the wildlife, time and weather interacted to shape the experience when he noted ‘There’s trees with dappled sunlight coming through – it is lovely’. He later referenced the feeling of a cemetery at night, connecting the creation of sense of place with more than just geography.
This sense of rhythm was also picked up on by Pewter (recreator, Greetham), who commented on the fact that the site felt quite ‘pedestrian’ by day to her as she was so used to it, but that as it moved through circadian time and into night it became more powerful and ‘otherworldly’. She continued by saying that it was like ‘an interesting garden with lots of history and places you are not supposed to step on, but during the night it seems to take on a life of its own.’ As befits heterotopia, the graveyard changed from being beautiful and benign in the day to something quite different at night. Joan (purple recreator, Rushton) commented that ‘there are lots of hidey places...at night the big trees are quite scary’. She clarified this by saying that it was living people she was scared of rather than ghosts, and Charm (dog walker, Rushton) found the same concerns in her consideration of the churchyard. She described the interplay of her real fears and her imagined fears

In the lit up areas (at night) it feels less murderous here although in reality it is more murderous. There might be people lurking behind those trees or stones...because that is what bad people do. It is not the dead you should worry about. I think it is safe here but in my imagination it feels less safe.

Charm (dog walker, Rushton) 2010

The daily cycles of light and dark, then, changed the landscape of the cemetery considerably with dark bringing fears and wilder stretches of the imagination. On the whole, participants expressed the feeling that in the rational part of their mind they did not have any fears, but that they were not in control of their imagination. It was from the imagination, this ill-controlled part of the mind that thoughts of ghosts, vampires and the dead rising from the grave emerged. Charm (dog walker, Rushton) sums this up neatly when she says ‘Do I believe in vampires? No. Does my imagination believe in vampires? Yes!’

Nature and dark enchantment
Interviewees identified two characteristics about cemeteries when they were giving the signs of an enchanted state: the natural world, and the solemn beauty of the monuments. Having considered the more general enjoyment and appreciation of greenspace experienced by participants I turn my attention now to the more powerful, personal and emotional connections participants felt and thus to the literature of enchantment and transcendence. Williams and Harvey (2001) examined the spiritual meaning of nature and the transcendent experiences in forests. They argued that nature itself has the ability to
invoke transcendence, which they described as ‘a moment of extreme happiness; a feeling of lightness and freedom; a sense of harmony with the world; moments which are totally absorbing, and which feel important’. I would argue that transcendence as described here is akin to enchantment, sharing the same characteristics of timelessness, absorption in the moment and a feeling of union with the place itself, or one’s place in the universe. In the way it is used, enchantment is more suggestive of being (spell)bound to one place, whilst transcendence is suggestive of movement, of going beyond the normal realms of the senses. From the words of my participants, however, I feel that these are two different manifestations of the same essential somatic phenomenon – a supersensory, emotional connection to a place or event. Such experiences have been reported to be triggered by the natural environment but this has not previously been extrapolated to the natural and man-made environment of the cemetery. Sylvie (purple recreator, Greetham) shared her feelings of being in a churchyard that captures the strange experience of enchantment:

On a sunny day you can wander around. Sometimes everything together – the sun, shady trees, and all that, it makes you sort of sleepy and quiet. You go right out of yourself, and forget there is a world out there. Everything is here and maybe a minute seems like five or ten – vague and dreamy

Sylvie (purple recreator, Greetham) 2010

Sylvie (purple recreator, Greetham) explained how she sought out the churchyard on hot summer days, knowing that it would be shady, peaceful and cool. Going into the churchyard, she seems to be entering a different world, one that alters her bodily sensations. She feels that there are two worlds, one inside the churchyard and one outside. As she engages with the deathscape she moves physically and mentally away from the outside world – from normality – and deeper into heterotopia. This seems to spark a shift into a mode of enchantment and a sense of being out-of-time.

Sylvie’s (purple recreator, Greetham) experiences are echoed in Janice’s (walk leader, Marchester) narrative when she explores why she loves to visit the cemetery. She has previously described how she feels that it nurtures her health, but continues by sharing her thoughts on how it can alter her mood and emotions.

Well, I do love it here. There is just something about the place. I like all the elements – the history and plants and so on, but together they are really nice. When you come here it is pure escapism. You look around and the cares of the world fall away. I do like a holiday – the beach and all that – but you can get away right here. It can lift you up,
take you out of yourself. I don’t know how it can cheer me up really because of all the death, but I suppose it is all the love and emotion squashed right in these walls

Janice (walk leader, Manchester) 2005

In this excerpt Janice describes how a walk around the cemetery changes her mood and takes her away from her troubles. For Jane (Friends member, Clearstone) there is enchantment to be found in walking around or sitting in the churchyard, but she also finds a moment of transport when she is busy working in the children’s garden:

Partly I come here because our garden is so small. When you are digging – and we had a lot of that to do, as well as moving all that rubble – then you get in a rhythm. I love the smell of the soil. It is so rich in here and moving it and turning it to plant seeds and start off new life is so engrossing. But the digging – that is for the body and mind. I am in my own little world.

Jane (Friends member, Clearstone) 2010

Jane’s (Friends member, Clearstone) experience of working in the churchyard garden resonates with Heintzman’s claims that enchantment can be triggered during recreation in a natural environment (2010). He argued that nature-based recreation is conducive to spiritual wellbeing and can furthermore be the springboard to what he describes as a spiritual experience, or an ‘awareness of a transcendent dimension’ (2010:73). While he identified a number of contributory factors in this process, from solitude and isolation to the challenge of an extreme activity, he concludes with the suggestion that at present there remains a great deal still unknown about spirituality, writing:

Spirituality has been likened to an iceberg: Only the small tip of an iceberg is observable from above the water. Given the elusive nature of spirituality viewing a small part of the phenomenon of spirituality as it relates to nature-based recreation may not be enough...

Heintzman (2010:73)

What this tells us then is that people and nature can have a strong emotional/psychological or spiritual relationship, but that it is hard to define what it is and how it works. It can be active, for example in a conservation task where participants clear and overgrown area or plant up a border and in their physical labour and concentration seemingly merge with the place and the task. It can also be passive, evoked by the sensory experience of looking, touching and listening in a place of interest or beauty.

As participants have mentioned, there were a range of inputs that created the mood they experienced in the churchyard, but it is pertinent to ask what actual aspect of nature and art it is that brings about this enchantment or transcendence. Kuspit (2002) writes about
Kandinsky, who believed that colour was the key to this experience and clearly participants in this research supported that theory, being affected by the aesthetic qualities of what they saw. The visual dimension of the cemetery has a strong impact and yet from my research I think it is clear Kandinsky focuses too much on just one bodily sense. Sound appears to be at least of equal importance in the cemetery setting. It was mentioned frequently in the form of birdsong, peacefulness and the sounds of trees in the wind. The cemetery soundscape was separate from other urban areas and had distinctive qualities that people both valued and sought out. Sounds, too, were able to transport people back into memories and the anecdotes participants shared retained the noises as well as the sights when they were recounted. It seems that enchantment is a spell cast by more than one sense.

What comes out from these interviews is a sense that participants engaged with nature in a very personal way. The perceived beauty of nature had the power to change their mood and move participants through relaxation and happiness towards deep immersion and enchantment. The way in which participants refer to how it felt, describing the warmth of the sun or the colours and textures of plants is a reminder that this is an embodied, sensory experience. Time was also frequently referred to, echoing the connection made in chapter four to different modes of time. These time zones serve to remind us that the cemetery is a place of disrupted and concurrent species of time. It is an ‘other’ place that does not abide by normal rules. In chapter four I argued that this heterotopic quality allows deathscapes to accommodate deviance in the form of purple recreation. Here I suggest that the experience of enchantment is just another variation of deviance that heterotopia incubates in the cemetery.

Appreciating tombstone art in the cemetery
In second place behind nature in the list of the most prevalent themes in the data was that of the art and architecture of the cemetery. There were three main ways in which the monuments and statutes were described. The first was in terms of their appearance, illustrated here by Luther (greenspace manager, Rushton) who describes a tomb and statue he recalled from his childhood ‘I remember a massive memorial with angels - that was a gipsy family - had pictures of their horses on it. As a child it was the best and most elaborate in the whole cemetery.’ Luther continues, describing the statue in great detail, despite the fact that some 40 years have passed since he saw this particular monument,
suggesting that it had a considerable impact on him at the time. Secondly participants talked about the cemetery architecture almost in the sense of furniture and gave rich illustrations of how the tombs and sculptures were used and the queries and conflicts this raised in their mind. Participants conveyed their uncertainty about what was allowed in the churchyard, as illustrated by Mitzi (parent recreator, Rushton) here:

[...] the kids were jumping around and having a climb on them [gravestones] and they had the barbeque thing literally half-leaning on one of the tombstones... And so you think, if they are the people actively involved in the church and they think that is OK to do then anything goes.

Mitzi (parent recreator, Rushton) 2010

The third manner in which participants engaged with a described graveyard monuments was in terms of their (assumed) meaning. Charm (dog walker, Rushton) expresses the opinion that

[...] the stones tell a story about approaches to death. If you have got something like that shape [a massive square slab of rock with a pillar on top], that Victorian gothic-y thing then you really need to be saying ‘bad people’ – hellfire and brimstone, that sort of thing

Charm (dog walker, Rushton) 2010

Individuals varied to the extent in which they mentioned some or all of these three points and this seemed to reflect the interest and engagement of the participant with the churchyard and hinted at their motivation for being there.

The appearance of tombs and statues made an impact on nearly every cemetery visitor and worker that was interviewed (see Figure 6.0-1 below). Many responded positively to the aesthetic qualities of the tombs and made the connection between the appearance of the stones and how they felt as a visitor in the site. Joan (purple recreator, Rushton) had an occupational interest in food and picked out one headstone that seemed to resonate with her profession. She noted ‘It’s got, like, a little basket of fruit on it. And flowers. It looks a bit eighties, but it can’t be!’ Joan focused on the detail of this one stone within the churchyard and this engagement provided an interesting counterpoint to the other parts of her experience as she expressed an interest and sense of rational enjoyment of the site but at the same time was openly uncomfortable in the churchyard due, she said, to a diet of horror films and a rich imagination.
Jane (Friends member, Clearstone) described how as an art student she had carried out a project drawing different gravestones. She had found them fascinating, saying ‘I like the sculptural qualities of the tombs. The shapes and textures and quirky designs’. For Jane the appearance of the stones was an intrinsic part of the attraction she felt for the site. She explained that the main reason she visited and gardened in the churchyard was because it was the nearest greenspace to her house, that it was convenient. Despite seeming to show detachment from the site by her comments about location being her primary motivator she also showed a deep sense of attachment to the churchyard through her community activities. She was very observant and gave me stories about a number of different monuments as well and personal commentary about the aesthetically interesting features. This sentiment was echoed by Pierre (greenspace ranger, Rushton) when he picked out the detail on one stone we passed: ‘Look at the scrolled ends on that
– it is absolutely gorgeous’. His interest in the site was professional but he often stepped outside of this work identity to convey a different sense of his relationship to burial grounds. Anna’s (dog walker, Greetham) comments augmented this picture of cemetery space as able to capture imaginations and provoke comment, speculation and commentary saying how she found some stones to be ‘sculptural and flamboyant’, whilst Sue (cemetery tourist, Rushton) brought a measured eye to what she saw with the dry remark that there was some ‘amazing real estate here.’

Approaches to the appearance of the statues and monuments varied between participants who seemingly made an emotional connection to the stones and what they had seen. Charm (dog walker, Rushton) initially looked at some of the more sentimental epitaphs with scepticism before pausing to retract what she had said about them being tacky by saying that this showed that ‘people loved these people so desperately’. Reading inscriptions seemed to have the power to influence mood and shift participants between different levels of engagement with the site. The stones told conflated stories of sadness, fear, humour and artistry that were perceived in different proportions by participants at different times. Valerie (Friends founder, Marchester) was at times very sensitive to the sadness and emotion of the gravestones such as when she described the stone of a boy who had died at the age of eighteen:

_He died just round here because of the lightning. He sheltered on the common from a storm. The lightening shot him, and the whole city went like this (shows shock) – two kids, two young kids of eighteen- and you just couldn’t believe it. And so that made a tremendous impact I think, and you felt the vulnerability, the vulnerability of youth._

Valerie (Friends founder, Marchester) 2005

She was also able to see the funnier side when she recounted the story of a genealogist friend who had been seeking out family connections and found out how one branch of his family tree had been cut short:

_But one grave that he showed me a photo of, is of a tree. There is a tree on the tombstone, and there is a guy cutting the branch from the wrong side! So you can see how he got his death! It is a comic grave._

Valerie (Friends founder, Marchester) 2005

Several participants likened the gravestones to people in some way. Jane (Friends member, Clearstone) felt that ‘there is something of a face about them, or standing figures’ and articulated that when they were densely packed in rows and rows they
looked like crowds pressing forwards. She felt that they were more sinister en masse at a
distance and somehow ‘friendlier’ up close. Both Joan (purple recreator, Rushton) and
Charm (dog walker, Rushton) referenced the shapes of some of the gravestones as
evocative of people in some way. Joan (purple recreator, Rushton) felt that a long,
horizontal tombstone ‘looks like an Egyptian mummy’, whilst Charm (dog walker,
Rushton) described what she saw ‘They’ve got some interesting shapes, sort of coffin
shapes. Even that pile of leaves is a blooming body shape!’ Once again we can see in these
excerpts a sense that gravestones are more than one simple thing. They can represent
standing people, or faces; they can look like mummies or bodies; they challenge our
expectations. This speaks once again to the heterotopic nature of the burial ground, with
its sense of multiple layers of identity and fluidity of meaning. And just as the graveyard
can be many different things, so it can be used in many different ways.

The way in which stones, statues and monuments were used by visitors arose frequently
in interview. The majority of uses were the more mundane, practical ones in which the
stones provided seating, table space, play structures and sunbathing spots (see Figures
6.0-2 and 6.0-3). Luther (greenspace manager, Rushton) described the most common of
uses ‘There is a large monument (a table top tomb) by the path and you can see people
sit on it regularly’. He felt that visitors discriminated between monuments, choosing the
best vantage point, flattest surface and most accessible height. Most interviewees agreed
with Luther’s (greenspace manager, Rushton) thinking that the use of stones for seating
was in the main a practical choice. They talked about the convenience of the site to the
town centre or the lack of other seating available when describing their own or other
user’s preferences.
Younger visitors used cemeteries as playgrounds, climbing on monuments and trees and creating dens and places to hide in the wilder areas. Diddy (parent recreator, Clearstone) recounted an anecdote from his own youth, pointing to a large tomb as he said 'that one there, my sister fell off it when she was about five and broke her arm. You never used to have the bar...the cage bit on the top...you used to be able to climb right up it'. Children did not seem to question playing in a graveyard, this appeared only as a dilemma amongst adults. Parents were sometime unsure if play activities were acceptable and respectful. Mitzi (parent recreator, Rushton) felt that there was a difference between what was acceptable for children and adults, and preferred to follow the lead of other visitors. She talked about watching some children climb on an old gravestone and her confusion about whether it was acceptable or not. Mitzi finishes by evaluating the graves in terms of their age. She decides that the older ones are in some way different to more recent stones – referencing ideas of dead time once more in this excerpt:
Would it be different if we had done it? Maybe – but then we let them do it so that is as
good as us doing it. And the one they used was broken, had no name, it was very old so
it felt less personal. A hundred years dead feels different to five, but once you are dead it
does not matter.

Mitzi (parent recreator, Rushton) 2010

Jane (Friends member, Clearstone) was quite open to the site being used for different
activities and enjoyed the lively atmosphere that sometimes arose on a busy sunny day.
She singled out the playful activity of a group of young people one summer saying,

One day I was in the rest garden and there were some really sweet young people doing
sack races using the stones for a slalom. It was harmless jolly fun - there was a bit of
whooping, and other people would think that is not really respecting, but I think it is
great.

Jane (Friends member, Clearstone) 2010

Both Mitzi (parent recreator, Rushton) and Jane (Friends member, Clearstone) conveyed
the sense that the acts of children were somehow above reproach, were perhaps
innocent in their intent.
Historians and genealogists form a keen group of users of the gravestones of many cemeteries and churchyards. They research family history and events through the evidence of the stones and may take rubbings or photographs of what they find there. Valerie (Friends founder, Marchester) had a great interest in this side of the cemetery’s business and was enthusiastic about promoting the site to new users groups such as universities. She recounted a humorous tale about the exploits of one heritage worker who had been using a standard method for reading a well-worn headstone:

"Trying to get the names off graves - it is not always easy to read the things as they have faded. A useful thing to do is to have a black piece of cloth which you put over yourself and the... grave and shine a torch because that brings the letters out and one worker in (county) Heritage, um, dusk had come, and by the time she crawled out from under her black thing, there were a group of alcoholics that were having a little drink and they suddenly saw this apparition (laughs)"

Valerie (Friends founder, Marchester) 2005

Cemetery experts such as these may be well versed in the symbolisms and meanings of the graveyard but lay people varied in the extent to which they understood the symbols and intended meanings of gravestones from a historical perspective. However all of them talked about what they felt or thought was being conveyed by the pictures, words or shapes that they saw there. Luther (greenspace manager, Rushton) approached this very much from a social perspective and commented that visitor’s relationship to the site was likely to change throughout their own life:

"People are very interested in local history. They (graveyards) have a connection to the locality and it is part of the urban fabric that create the sense of place... I don’t think younger people would be thinking about these backstories...teenagers are disinhibited and will use it and play there. Older people are more cognisant of the site and will walk around and look at wildlife or use it for somewhere to sit. As people mature it gains more social meaning. It is only when you get older that you get that... I don’t think teenagers have that empathy. They would not think of that as they sit on the gravestones smoking and having a drink."

Luther (greenspace manager, Rushton) 2010

Pierre (greenspace ranger, Rushton) contended that it was the gravestones that signified that this was a burial site, and that without them people did not have the reminder of what the site was, or the cues to behave in a particular way. He described one churchyard where very few stones remained and likened it to a dog park. Pierre (greenspace ranger, Rushton) felt that ‘Leaving the gravestones is a reminder to respect the place. There are only a few here so they are seen like follies. If they were all there it
would have a different atmosphere’. He felt that the stone represented the body and that the body was effectively absent if there was no stone.

So far I have shown that the memorials and tombstones were significant in catching people’s interest and affecting how people used and perceived the site. The excerpts above show how happy and sad gravestones could influence mood and create and emotional response in participants. Now I turn to a deeper level of engagement described by some of the interviewees and explore the idea of dark enchantment in the cemetery.

The dark enchantment of gravestones
The daily interactions of people and stones have been described above and offer an insight into the way in which people use and understand a uniquely textured environment. People have been drawn to the gravestones for sitting, climbing, reading and more besides. For participants such as Mitzi (parent recreator, Rushton), Charm (dog walker, Rushton) and Jane (Friends member, Clearstone), however, the stones had a greater potency than just as repositories of information or comfortable seating. Their experiences moved them into the realms of dark enchantment – they were on occasion transfixed and transported by what they saw and felt in a way that gestated wonder with a tinge of melancholy.

Whilst the primary motive for sitting on a gravestone was seen as convenience, many participants felt that the setting added value to the experience of sitting. Jane (Friends member, Clearstone) commented that ‘nothing is nicer than sitting on the grass leaning against a gravestone in the sunshine. You close your eyes and feel the warmth of the stone, you sort of become immersed in the landscape’. She felt that there was something more than just sitting going on, although was unable to articulate what this was or why. It is clear from her description that this is very much a sensory experience, incorporating light, heat and the tactile sensations of grass and stone. There is a sense here that this combination, this juxtaposition of inputs takes her into place. She ‘becomes immersed’ in the landscape, suggesting a unity with place that is strongly reminiscent of Bennett’s (2001) descriptions of enchantment. Equally within this anecdote we can see that this place, the cause of this odd experience, cannot be a normal one. Jane’s description reinforces the notion that participants recognised the ‘otherness’ of deathscapes – their heterotopia.
Sylvie (purple recreator, Greetham) too connects with the presence of stones and uses the words ‘magic’ and ‘charm’ in her description of a more derelict area of the churchyard. She sees romance in what she calls ‘gothic charm’ and conveys a feeling of engagement with place that recognises how the appearance contributes to perception and imbues it with a sense of magic.

*When the stones are really old and all higgledy-piggledy there is something romantic, something magic about that. The decay – it is a gothic charm*

Sylvie (purple recreator, Greetham) 2010

The meaning and value of the stones was also important to Mitzi. She looked around the churchyard and swept her arm out as she said:

*There are so many stories here. It is almost like being in a library. I am a people watcher, love to sit and have a coffee and watch people, make up scenarios - and this is exactly what I do here as well. You get a feel of the information from the stone but not the whole story – like the blurb on the back of the book. My imagination runs away with me –I am not sure about ghosts but here I can sort of see the real people, dresses and hair-that sort of thing.*

Mitzi (parent recreator, Rushton) 2010

Mitzi (parent recreator, Rushton) concentrates her interest in the stories and her imaginings of the lives of the long dead. Once more we get a sense of the parallel strands of time running through the deathscape as she moves in and out of dead time in her mind. There is a suggestion of enchantment when she describes how her imagination takes off, suggesting that her interaction with the stone stories has the power to cast her out of her normal state of mind and into another, imagined world. In Valerie’s (Friends founder, Marchester) connection to the stories, she alerts us to the emotional power of the events recorded, alongside the more factual elements of history and record-keeping. The emotional impact shocks and transports her into the moment of the event, into the dead time for which the gravestones act as repository.

*For me it is the history I am interested in. And it shows social patterns, the local community and important national events too. You can connect emotionally too. That (points to monument for a shipwreck) is a powerful symbol. Death is shocking and makes you shudder. It takes you right there, how it must have been on the night it sank. I admit I have seen the film so you do get images of that in your mind but this is more real here. I think it takes this physical reminder to take you on the journey.*

Valerie (Friends founder, Marchester) 2005

In Valerie’s (Friends founder, Marchester) account I argue that the agency of the tombstones is incontrovertible. The graves have a creative capacity, a power that can
exert a strong influence over the visitor. Just as the trees described in the last section seem capable of bending place around them, so I argue here do the gravestones. DeSilvey (2006, 2007) describes how the objects of an abandoned farmstead resonate with meaning and memory. I contend that gravestones have an even greater power to communicate emotion, stir the imagination, and cast the living temporarily into the world of the dead.

Luther (greenspace manager, Rushton) felt that cemeteries did have an emotional dimension but rationalised it to human physiology saying:

*People have emotional reactions to being in different places – some churchyards or graveyards get a feeling there, like serenity, but I don’t know how that is created. In woodland or shady areas you can feel the change of temperature, light and humidity. That has a fundamental effect on the body so maybe it creates the sense of place from this, from a really physiological perspective.*

Luther (greenspace manager, Rushton) 2010

Luther’s (greenspace manager, Rushton) argument here is reminiscent of literature about human evolutionary preferences and the origins of early man in the savanna (Falk and Balling 2010). He is looking for a biological reason for people’s responses to place, but does not consider the contributions of culture in shaping people’s perceptions, something which has also been shown to have considerable effect (Fischer and Shrout 2006).

What these strands show about the art and architecture of the cemetery is that people engage with the cemetery landscape in different ways. Some of the interactions I have described are brief and almost inconsequential. Others, such as Jane’s (Friends member, Clearstone) churchyard contemplations, or Mitzi’s (parent recreator, Rushton) engrossment in the stories of the inhabitants have a much more powerful resonance. Some of this affect may arise from the presence of death in the churchyard, but participants clearly identified that they were interested in and moved by the art and architecture that they saw, some of which found a greater impact by virtue of its size, its tangibility and its location in a natural setting. This aesthetic experience has been well documented in art galleries and more traditional settings. Pelowski and Akiba (2011:80) describe how people throughout the centuries have been ‘struck, moved and changed by their encounters with art’. They call this a conflation of transformation and a moment of epiphany, which bringing us back into the realms of transcendence once more.
Conclusion
In this chapter I have explored the simple pleasures of cemeteries and churchyards as well as the more transforming enchantments that these places can seemingly engender. Both nature and tombstones appear to have powers or agency independently to evoke an emotional response and mood from visitors; together in the deathscape setting they can have an even stronger impact. What I believe comes through clearly from this data is that the otherness of heterotopia is a real, experienced phenomenon. Participants engaged with the sense of place through the manifestations of nature and gravestones, and these tangible material presences made real the absent otherness of death. This chapter also evidences the prevalence of juxtaposition in deathscapes, with contrasts of colour, shade, and materiality being brought to the fore. Time too is highlighted as a characteristic that both nature and tombstones display. Each of these different states, times and presences seems to wrap around the other such that participants moved between different realities as they moved through the site.

Figure 6.0-4  The juxtaposition of nature, culture, light and shade in the graveyard
Source: photograph owned by author

Figure 6.0-4 shows how blurry the demarcations between different states can be and gives a visual window into the potential of deathscapes as a glut for the senses.
Furthermore, I suggest that the contrast of nature and culture not only has a powerful ability to provoke enchantment in visitors but that the apposition of these contrasting materialities (see Figure 6.0-4) once again reinforces the heterotopic nature of deathscapes. In the final chapter that follows, I bring the three themes of enchantment, dark tourism, and purple recreation together. Following the thread of heterotopia through these diverse themes, I build a sense of the cemetery as place and consider the role that deathscapes play in society.
Mirroring the cemetery; creative synthesis as cemetery-in-miniature
Source: photograph owned by author
Knowledge of the data and a period of solitude and meditation focusing on the topic and question are the essential preparatory steps for the inspiration that eventually enables a creative synthesis. The major concepts that underlie a creative synthesis are the tacit dimension, intuition, and self-searching. The researcher must move beyond any confined or constricted attention to the data itself and permit an inward life on the question to grow, in such a way that a comprehensive expression of the essences of the phenomenon investigated is realized.

Moustakas (1990:32)

Diary 12th May 2012

The coffin has had an eventful life – it has been a boat, an ice-cream kiosk, a gladiatorial arena and more. Now that I have wrestled it away from the kids it has become my bedside table and seems very at home. So, with the coffin almost part of the family, it seems only right that we took it on a family trip to the cemetery.

I wanted to see where it would fit in, and tried out lots of different spots in the cemetery. There was sunshine and clouds and a strong wind so the poor coffin did take a few falls when it caught the breeze. Apart from some soil spilled and a few dents and scuffs it survived pretty well. And stood there amongst the gravestones I felt that I began to understand what it was trying to say.

It was reminding me that the cemetery has death both on the inside and the outside. Its collage of leaflets, newspaper articles and flyers said how fundamental stories, histories and memories are to the cemetery. The bonsai yew tree spoke of the Victorian language of trees, and of how nature can be both planned and rogueish in the place of the dead. It expressed the sense that this place, like my unpainted and unvarnished coffin, is never finished. The textures of paper, ribbon, velvet, wood, rope, ceramic and soil tell tales of the multiple identities of deathscapes. The colours signify the three themes of purple recreation, dark tourism and enchantment, and the drawers hide the secrets of these representations. The partially opened curtain is suggestive of both a theatre – that heterotopia of worlds-within-a-world – and the veil between life and death. The coffin speaks to me of the senses, of life, of feeling and of an open space with no door. And yet it always brings us back to death. These are just some of the discernable meanings and familiar identities. But the slippery, heterotopic nature of the cemetery cannot be fully described by this coffin, or by the thesis I write.
Chapter seven: Conclusions

But for Foucault, it is the cemetery that provides the most powerful example of familiar time and, as Ariès suggests, a space that formulates a break in time that becomes strangely permanent:

The city of the dead is the obverse of the society of the living, or rather than the obverse, it is its image, its intemporal image. For the dead have gone through the moment of change, and their monuments are the visible sign of the permanence of their city. (Ariès, 1976: 74)

The cemetery is also used to illustrate how these change their function at different stages in history and reflect wider attitudes in society. In many respects, Foucault is rehearsing work by Ariès here. The medieval cemetery was traditionally in the centre of the city, with a close and untroubled promiscuity between the living and the dead. With enlightened concerns about hygiene, coupled with a growing disbelief in immortality, cemeteries at the end of the 19th Century were gradually placed outside the city where those who could afford it found an individual place of rest or ‘dark dwelling’ in perpetuity.

Johnson (2006:79)

This thesis has taken a journey through the cemetery visitor experience in search of answers to the research questions posed in chapter one:

- What types of leisure activities take place in cemeteries?
- How are cemetery spaces perceived and represented by visitors?
- How can the concept of heterotopia both inform, and be informed by, research into cemetery recreation?

The overall aim of this suite of questions was to understand the sense of place and spatiality of the cemetery and how this contributes to its construction as a leisure space. At the heart of this research was a critical and novel interest in the cemetery as heterotopia and how leisure uses mirror this ‘otherness’. In this chapter I build on Foucault’s conceptualisation of the cemetery as heterotopia and deepen current understanding of the relationship between heterotopia and people. I elucidate new aspects of heterotopia through an exploration of the identity of the cemetery that manifests as engagement with nature and architecture, purple recreation and dark tourism. These facets, however, are not the sum of the cemetery, one of whose other
roles is as a taskscape and cultural signifier as captured by Frances et al. in *The Secret Cemetery* (2005). The concatenation of these different strands of identity is also important in contributing to the character of the cemetery. The narratives weave in and out of each other in a subtle tapestry that is threaded, too, with the concept of heterotopia. By unpicking some of these threads I seek to show that deathscapes are far from dead. This thesis contributes depth and intensity to extant understandings of purple recreation, enchantment and dark tourism and uses heterotopia to expose something of the ‘cemeteryness’ of deathscapes. Cemeteries and churchyards are shown to be unusual places, but ones that are strongly rooted in society. I refute Jackson’s (1967) contention that cemeteries have lost their meaning in society, arguing not for a loss of meaning but for a difference in meaning. I believe that deathscapes carry out different roles at different times of people’s lives and death, and as Stone (2012a) and Stone (2012b) argue, perform a mediating role between the living and the dead.

**Purple recreation and heterotopia**

I accessed one version of the cemetery/heterotopia through the vehicle of purple or so-called deviant recreation activities. As chapter four discussed, purple recreation categorises what can otherwise be termed deviant leisure activities on a spectrum – shades of licit and illicit – rather than labelling all such activities as equally bad and anti-social (Curtis 1979). Curtis identified that not a great deal was known about ‘this shadowy territory’ (1979:286) and argued:

> if we are to deal more effectively with today’s complex leisure needs and desires of all people, we must learn more about this off-beat zone of purple recreation.

Curtis (1979:286).

This research is a response to Curtis’ (1979) call for a greater understanding of purple recreation and offers new insights into the experience of purple recreation itself as well as the motives behind venue choice.

Curtis’s writing clearly expresses his personal distaste at purple recreation, with the suggestion that it is corrupting and morally wrong. However, he does at least recognise that these activities, usually labelled as criminal or deviant, can have a recreational impetus rather than being construed as purely anti-social in character. The term purple recreation, then, is useful since it avoids the judgemental overtones of ‘anti-social behaviour’ and also allows for there to be a range of activities with different degrees of deviance. Ravenscroft
and Gilchrist (2009) argue that deviance itself comes not from the individual but from society, which determines both norms and ab-norms. Given that a variety of forms of purple recreation take place in deathscapes, it is pertinent to consider the reason why. That is to say, why the activities are ‘allowed’ in the cemetery, and what they ‘gain’ from a graveyard setting.

In chapter four, participants identified several reasons why deathscapes were used for purple recreation. Sometimes it was simply the geographical convenience of the site – being near to home, the town centre, or an off-licence. Deathscapes were often felt to be secluded and poorly policed, giving the impression that people could do what they liked there. Ownership could be ambiguous, and where responsibilities were shared between several organisations participants did not know who looked after the site. Furthermore, some participants explained that they actively sought out deathscapes. They contended that being in a cemetery whilst engaged in activities such as drinking or having sex gave the activity an edge, or an extra thrill that heightened the effect, reminiscent of the legend-tripping work of Holly and Cordy (2007) and Bird (2002). Although interviewees such as Mina (purple recreator, Clearstone) felt that this ‘frisson’ was caused by the presence of dead people and the association with horror films, interview data clearly showed that death was just one of the influences on place perception and the subsequent use of the site. A suite of factors, including death, that categorised the cemetery as heterotopia seemed to have more significance here. Turning instead to heterotopia allows an alternative understanding of why cemeteries are so popular for transgressive recreation.

Being a heterotopia means that it is an ‘other space’ which may have different rules and norms from everyday spaces (Foucault 1986, Johnson 2006). Likewise, purple recreation is outwith the norms and rules of mainstream society. However, both heterotopia and purple recreation need the counterpoint of normality in order to exist (Curtis 1979, Hetherington 1997). While Curtis indicated simply that more needed to be known about purple recreation activities, I have used the framework of heterotopia and the spatial medium of the cemetery to consider the interaction between place, person and activity. Heterotopia is central here, and the novel configuration of heterotopia and purple recreation gives the opportunity to consider both place and activity in a new way. This idea of normality and abnormality resonates with the work of Ravenscroft and Gilchrist.
on carnivals (2009). In their explication of the carnival phenomenon, they describe how carnival delineates an authorised temporary change to normal rules of behaviour. In heterotopia too, there is space to operate under different rules. Lindon (church warden, Clearstone) and Jane (Friends member, Clearstone) were amongst the participants who tapped in to this idea, with both describing how ‘undesirable’ activities were overlooked on site where they did not create a problem for other users. It is this notion of ‘thoughtful’ deviance, or ‘social’-anti-social behaviour that seems to be a key component of the symbiosis between purple and normal recreation, between heterotopia and everyday spaces. Thoughtfulness was evidenced in my research through the selective placing of graffiti only on furniture as opposed to gravestones, and litter that was often wedged out of sight rather than simply thrown on the ground. The presence of these curious juxtapositions of contrasting things reinforces the heterotopic nature of the site and emphasises the value of collecting data in a more inclusive fashion.

As long as the rule-breaking purple recreationists kept their activities within acceptable limits, and maintained a level of respect for the site, the illegal activities could seemingly be overlooked. This sanctioning of transgression seems illogical but actually fits very well with heterotopia. In this concept, Foucault (1986) argues that all societies need heterotopias, which function in juxtaposition to other sites. In the case of purple recreation, the heterotopic deathscapes clearly meet a need in providing a site that is not a normal everyday one as a venue for this ‘abnormal’ recreation. Everyday spaces are therefore ‘protected’ from transgression by the presence of alternative venues for this activity. Returning to the idea of the carnival shows additional parallels. In carnival there is a temporary inversion of norms that lasts for the specified duration of the celebration. After this time the agreed everyday rules come back into force. Extrapolating this idea of inversion to the cemetery – which is placed rather than ephemeral like a festival – indicates that this temporary inversion may manifest in several different ways. My research suggests that one form of inversion is circadian – such that the site may be ‘normal’ in daylight hours, and ‘deviant’ at night. Cemeteries differ from carnivals in that they are spaces rather than events; and in the instance of Greetham churchyard shown below in Figure 7.0-1, the separation of purple and normal recreation reflected this through an inverted spatiality. There was one bench that attracted visits from groups of drinkers and smokers at all times of the day and night, suggesting that this was an established place for a blind eye to be turned, whatever the time.
Looking back to the interview data, cemetery managers, church wardens and rangers did know about many of the more deviant forms of leisure that were taking place in deathscapes. Sometimes they intervened, for example moving benches so that street drinkers would not congregate, but overall there was a great sense of tolerance. Lindon (church warden, Clearstone) felt that the churchyard should be open to all, not kept as a sacred site. This reference to the idea of the cemetery as open connotes heterotopia once again and serves to remind us that in this space of otherness there may be abnormal rules at play. Lindon (church warden, Clearstone) did not condemn drinking and drug-taking, despite the fact that he pointed out that the site was in a zero-tolerance area. These opinions were echoed by Pierre (greenspace ranger, Rushton) and Luther (greenspace manager, Rushton) alike. It is as if these are the tacitly agreed spaces for
recreational pursuits that are disallowed elsewhere. Participants had an incomplete sense of place and so had room in their concept for extra-normal activities. And perhaps the fact that the cemetery can have multiple identities, can be a heterotopia alongside other normal sites, and can be different things at different times means that this is acceptable.

**Dark tourism and heterotopia**

In chapter five I explored how heterotopia can be used to increase our understanding of the dark tourism experience. The broad-brush category of dark tourism does not facilitate the expression of all its dimensions – namely that dark sites may play host to dark and non-dark tourism acts, and that the experience of dark tourism may occur at sites that are not explicitly managed as dark attractions. My research strongly showed that the relationship formed between person and place was crucial in determining the experience and perception of the site. Tuan argues that place does not exist without people to experience and interpret space (Tuan 2008). However, it is not just people that determine place; places are always in juxtaposition with other places and this contrast (or similarity) between places contributes to their manifestation. It is well recognised that heterotopia are relational places; their unusual existence is contingent on the presence of normal, everyday sites (Foucault 1986, Hetherington 1997). Similarly dark tourism sites must also be relational, qualified by the incidence of non-dark places to frame both understanding and experience.

Elements of this argument are identified by Biran et al. (2011) who claim that awareness is a precondition of perception with regard to dark tourism, and that therefore not all visitors participate in dark tourism at a dark site. As a result of their research, Biran et al. also argue for a new definition of dark tourism, saying that:

> Dark tourism is peoples’ purposeful movement to spaces displaying acts and sights that are commonly absent from the social realm, which involves a sense of unease in seeing or participating in them.

Biran et al. (2011:837).

This definition begins to tap into the idea stated here that both dark tourism sites and heterotopia are determined by a sense of difference to surrounding places. They only exist in relation to normal places. Biran et al. ascribe the power to create unease to dark sites, but do not extrapolate or explore this feeling further. In my research, data suggests that unease bleeds into the uncanny, bringing this experience back into the refrain of heterotopia.
Both heterotopia and dark sites are relational, and both can spark feelings of disquiet in the visitor. There is an apparent blurring of the lines between these two spaces of alterity which has not been recognised in dark tourism theory, with its focus on capturing the mechanics of the phenomenon. Titrating a little heterotopia into dark tourism serves to precipitate the realisation that dark sites can be heterotopias or that dark sites can conjure a heterotopic state in the visitor – that is to say an emotionally powerful and unsettling sense of otherness which is not a solely dark experience. At cemeteries my research showed that people enjoyed the natural environment and the scenery and were not always in touch with, or even overtly aware of death. Visitors drew on a variety of different influences in the environment to create the sense of place. Heterotopia allows us to see how the non-dark aspects of sites categorised as dark tourism venues can act in combination to create a sense of otherness that is not dependent on death. Hetherington (1997) argues that the effect of heterotopia is produced as they act as a repository for the unusual, things which are then ordered through ‘a process of similitude which produces, in an almost magical, uncertain space, monstrous combinations that unsettle the flow of discourse’ (Hetherington 1997:43). Recognition of this magic and monstrosity could, I believe, stimulate useful new understandings in dark tourism and move it away from its current consumer/product-oriented stance.

My research also found that the imagination plays a very important role in the dark tourism experience in deathscapes. The cemetery exists both physically and in the mind of the participant with the co-mingling of both experiences creating a composite deathscape experience. Many dark tourism venues have strong storylines that visitors follow as they explore the site, following a prescribed route and provided with interpretation along the way. This mapping of the personal journey and the stories encountered serves to contain and control the visitor. However, I found that people transgressed these ‘approved’ versions of dark sites both physically, as they moved off the signed route, and mentally, as they used their imaginations to create their own dark site. From my research I suggest that there is a greater role for the imagination in dark tourism that than has previously been recognised in dark tourism literature. As dark tourism sites sit within the surrounding frame of non-dark sites it may be that this simple juxtaposition, this ambivalence or splintering of the familiar catalyses the imagination and moves people into heterotopic other-worlds.
Heterotopias serve different users in different ways (Andriotis 2010) and my research found that in some instances, dark spaces were able to provide a glimpse of the numinous or a personal transformation of some kind. There is an established literature around the transformative potential of heterotopias (see St John 2001, Shackley 2002, Neal and Walters 2007, and Gutic et al. 2010,) with the suggestion that it is the lack of regulation in heterotopia that fosters this sense of transformation or revelation. Traditional dark tourism sites may seem to be highly regulated, having mapped out routes, signage, and educational literature, but as I have previously argued, the visitors’ imagination cannot be regulated in this way. As a result the dark site can be a heterotopia for the visitor, can give free reign to their imagination and can in turn generate some form of personal transformation. My research showed that visitors sought calm and peace of mind, a connection to the natural cycle of life, and the chance to reminisce on their own histories when they visited graveyards. These stretches of the imagination and mind may seem pedestrian but were for many participants a form of revelation that gave them a new state of mind, produced relaxation or stimulated their creativity.

**Nature and enchantment**

In chapter six I showed how participants were both engaged and enchanted by deathscapes. I use the term enchantment in the spirit of Jane Bennett (2001) as a way to describe how a surprising event or out-of-place moment triggers a sense of wonder, plenitude and joy. In cemeteries, participants connected with place using their senses and through the agency of nature and cultural expressions in the form of stonemasonry. Both of these features had the capacity to render participants into a different state of mind and towards enchantment. Indeed, from my research results I would argue that in this setting, it is not nature or culture in isolation that creates enchantment. Their apposition is uneasy in the cemetery and thus engenders the heterotopic sense of otherness so unique to deathscapes. There seems to be a thaumaturgical power to the ternary of nature, culture and death. Deathscapes are unsettling ‘other’ places or heterotopia, and in the context of this research seemed to be able to offer participants a short-cut to enchantment, but as I discuss below this was sometimes a species of penumbral or dark enchantment.

Trees, plants and to a lesser extent, animals, were referred to by participants both in their descriptions of deathscapes and in their accounts of what characteristics appealed to
them most. Pierre (greenspace ranger, Rushton), Jane (Friends member, Clearstone) and Charm (dog walker, Rushton) were effervescent in their descriptions of graveyard wildlife and underlined the importance of these sites, not only as nature reserves for animals but as places for people to have contact with nature. There is a considerable body of evidence to argue that nature can have a positive effect on mental (see Manzo 2003) and physical wellbeing (Harrison et al. 1995) and yet participants sought to explain something more than this. Encountering the cemetery through the senses gave them an experience and a relationship to the cemetery that they found ineffable. Perhaps this is an encounter with the slipperiness of heterotopia, whose ‘otherness’ challenges articulation. Participants described moments of relaxation, of being in-the-moment and of immense pleasure at the enjoyment of bodily sensations. Without necessarily using the words, they made forays into enchantment during these moments of sensory connection.

In deathscapes, then, nature had an emotional impact on visitors. Just as Jones and Cloke (2002) and Cloke and Jones (2004) found in Arnos Vale Cemetery, so I found in the deathscapes I studied, that trees in particular appeared to have a creative capacity, an agency. Some of the impact of trees may be intentional since cemetery designers strategically deploy trees that are both symbolic and low maintenance (Loudon 1981). In the disused sites that I studied these deployed trees now stood alongside ‘rogue’ trees that had self-seeded, suckered and somehow gained a foothold in the landscape. The trees that visitors noticed and remarked on tended to be the larger specimens, or those which had grown in an unusual habit, which expressed a form of reciprocity between tree and place. Jones and Cloke (2002) argue that as slow-growing life forms, trees take on the appearance of the place, responding to the pressures of the environment around them and being shaped by forces such as the prevailing wind. Always though, trees are contiguous with the built aspects of the landscape. Whilst the effect may be aesthetically harmonious this juxtaposition is a reminder the sense of place here is underpinned by the concept of heterotopia.

Within the cemetery-heterotopia, as place shapes trees, so trees can shape place. Trees move gravestones as they grow, cast shade and shed leaves, adding noise and filtering sounds and sunlight (Cloke and Pawson 2008). On a guided walk in Rushton cemetery the weather caused the trees to upstage the guide on numerous occasions. Due to its situation at the crest of a ridge of high ground the site can be very windy. On one wild
winter day, the Scots pine trees were whistling so loudly they drowned out the voice of the guide. Visitors were transfixed by the impact of the weather, causing this sound and movement of the trees in stark contrast to the motionlessness of the tombstones. This resonates with the findings of Kööts et al. (2011) that weather can influence mood and sense of place. Overshadowed by the drama of the trees, the graves momentarily appeared passive, not regaining their hold on the visitors until they had moved away from the trees.

**Time passing**

Charm (dog walker, Rushton) and Jane (Friends member, Clearstone) were amongst the participants who took great pleasure in the natural environment and suggested that part of the joy and the power of the cemetery was its explicit and base connection to the passing of time, the cycle of life and the seasons. Jane (Friends member, Clearstone) indicated where flowers would burst at a later time in the year whilst Charm (dog walker, Rushton) envisaged the roots of an oak tree sucking up bodies to recycle them into branches, leave and air. These changes or metamorphoses appear less extreme than Kafka’s ape Rotpeter transforming to ape-man cited by Bennett in *The Enchantment of Modern Life* (2001:20). However, just as Bennett argues that such a metamorphosis has the power to enchant, so do I consider that the simple everyday metamorphoses participants experienced in deathscapes also bear this capacity. Snowdrops bursting through the ground, horse chestnut sticky buds erupting into leaf and gorse seepods dehiscing on a hot, dry day in the churchyard are just such morphing transformations as to transport the viewer out of the moment. What these metamorphoses also do is present a non-simultaneous apposition of life stages. This elision of ecological time and the participant’s own living-time clashes in such a way as to reinforce the heterotopic intensity of the cemetery.

Enchantment, though, can also be found in the mundane daily rhythms of life. Bhatti et al. (2009: 63) proffer examples of how simple activities such as eating, walking and shopping can engender moments of wonder and in the cemetery one of the most commonly found activities – dog-walking – also had this potential. As my dog, Smudge, galloped across the burial ground one day, another dog walker remarked to me how joyful the dog looked as he ran. We both became immersed in watching what we interpreted as an infectious moment of elation for Smudge; we were enchanted by his physicality, and the sense of
being-in-the-moment that he projected. Like the wind-blown trees, Smudge acted in contrast to the fixity of the monuments and to the signs of death all around.

**Tombstones and enchantment**

As well as being touched by nature in the cemetery, participants also responded to the man-made elements of the deathscape. Gravestones, memorials and monuments alike all had the power to capture the imagination and interest of participants, leading to an emotional and sensory connection. The physicality of gravestones, expressed in their size, texture, shape and orientation, was often remarked on by visitors. Many stood on a vertical axis, a feature that Bachelard described as having an especial resonance with people, echoing their own stance (Bachelard 1997, Jones and Cloke 2002). The tangibility of gravestones was important in their agency; being substantial gave gravestones the power to invoke a sense of place through touch. As Hetherington (2003) argues, people make place through their sense of touch, through a direct interface with the world, and the contrast between the feel of stones, trees and plants in the graveyard had a potent ability to create place. This contrast is evidence of the heterotopic qualities of the cemetery and reiterates how enchantment and heterotopia are so inextricably bound in this site, with each providing feedback to intensify the other. In some cemeteries these standing stones crowded like people, each speaking silently to the visitor, each proffering a story for the taking. The gravestones perform a stand-in role for the person rather than the unspoken body, and suggest that the person is yet alive, and has agency.

This human-stone fusion is encapsulated by Hook in his writing about monuments when he says ‘We have here, in the uncanniness of presence without physical body a sense of a de-corporealized surveillance extending beyond the confines of the human’ (2005:699). This intimates that a person’s grasp, their reach, can extend beyond the grave and it is this sense of the dead reaching out through the message of their monument to engage visitors with the stones. The symbols and embellishments invited interpretation and started visitors on a trajectory of interaction with the stones. This uncanny apposition of living and dead flesh is another reminder of how closely linked heterotopia is with sense of place. The data speaks to the idea that people were affected by the histories of the deceased as they saw them written on the stones. The designs and decorations of the masonry evoked a sense of how that person had been loved or respected at the time of their death (Mytum 1994, Buckham 1999, Tarlow 1999) and created an introspection and
reflection amongst participants. It is this, more than the effect of nature, that induced what I have described here as dark enchantment.

**Dark enchantment**

Some moments of enchantment in deathscapes were also tinged with melancholy and I contend that this plangent note exists on a continuum from joyful enchantment through to what I term dark enchantment. Dark enchantment channels the ‘dark’ of dark tourism. It is a nod to the recognition of the presence of death and this can add a more reflective and sombre tone to the feeling of enchantment. Sylvie (purple recreator, Greetham) captures what appears to be a polysemic form of enchantment when she recalls:

> I lay on the grass but though I could feel my real body as a little bit of damp came through, I was sort of caught between floating and sinking. I could almost feel like I was melting into the ground, joining it. Being relaxed I suppose. But although I had my eyes closed and was really happy – I love the sun – I could tell there was death there. It was not sad exactly, it was just there hovering at the side.

Sylvie (purple recreator, Greetham) 2006

Sylvie (purple recreator, Greetham) captures the sense of the cemetery as a place of both enchantment and heterotopia here. She senses an alternate time that runs concurrent to her own living-time, and momentarily takes her out of the relentless forward pace of living-time and into a more nebulous realm of enchantment, into an ‘other space’ within the other-space of the cemetery. Certainly within the cemetery environment enchantment seemed complex, more nuanced and infused with absent death. Deathscapes, as other heterotopia, unsettle and break rules of normal everyday places. Bhatti et al. (2009) use the example of the garden to describe powerfully how ordinary places can enchant. Extraordinary places such as the cemetery also have this ability, but here it is escalated by the already-disturbing sense of these places as heterotopia. As places of ‘otherness’, perhaps the register of the cemetery is nearer to the elevated sensory range of enchantment.

Returning to heterotopia, I have previously noted how Foucault links these places inextricably with time. In the context of the deathscape, time is explicit and all around. Stones are marked with dates and ages; lichens map the slow encroachment of nature; death is possibly the end of time to an individual. Whilst death is argued to be something that many fear, it also holds a fascination and inevitability:
Clearly, we are of two minds about the dead body, using and discarding it, displaying and secreting it, exposing and disguising it, revering and defiling it, viewing it as a site of amusement and solemnity and as sacred and profane.

Foltyn (2008:155)

In the model of enchantment espoused by Bennett (2001), to consent to enchantment is to choose life and savour the experience of living. Conversely, she sees disenchantment as a failure to consent to life, and a lack of meaning. In the heterotopic place of death the visitor is surrounded by meaning and intention; love, passion and respect are literally carved into the landscape. The cemetery may not hold the promise of an afterlife or everlasting life but it carries a powerful message of memory and emotional response. The enchantment conferred by this landscape is an affirmation of life wrapped around a kernel of sadness and death. Where heterotopia and enchantment elide lies a powerful and alternate form of dark enchantment.

Why does it matter? Cemeteries and greenspace policy

Whilst this thesis argues for the cemetery as heterotopia, it also situates it as a place of value for recreation and leisure. From an experiential perspective I have shown that the sense of place has a strong influence on how, when and why dead spaces are used for leisure activities and yet this personal experience is embedded in a larger framework of greenspace policy. Just as Ariès (1994) and Johnson (2006) describe the cemetery as a place for the living and the dead alike, so I, too, found cemeteries to be closely embedded in the world of the living. As such it is important to assert that dead spaces do not exist in isolation, having implications for policy as well as personal considerations. Deathscapes are part of a complex social and political framework, governed by legislation such as the Local Authorities Cemeteries Order (1977).

The strongest message from my research is that cemeteries are flourishing as community greenspaces, with a wide user-demographic. They work hard for the local community and for tourism interests, but could be made to work harder. People make choices every day about where to go and what to do in their leisure time. Towns and cities offer amenities such as parks, gardens, swimming pools and museums for the explicit purpose of recreation. (Urban Green Spaces Taskforce (UGST) 2002). Greenspace is defined by Harrison et al. (1995) as land, water and geological features which support plant and animal populations, and which are located within walking distance of the houses of local residents. Greenspaces are a popular part of the recreation matrix, with all of England’s
greenspaces combined attracting annual visit numbers exceeding 2 billion (UGST 2002). The classification employed by both Harrison et al. (1995) and the UGST (2002) categorises cemeteries and churchyards as green spaces, alongside more obvious examples such as parks and riverbanks, by virtue of their relatively natural appearance and indeed they form the second largest reserve of urban green space in England, after parks (Welch 1991). However, keeping disused burial grounds open comes at a price; the law requires owners to keep the burial ground in a ‘good and decent state’ (DCA 2005:10; Open Spaces Act 1906) and whilst there is advice available on the management of old cemetery land, it tends to have a focus on heritage and conservation value and less emphasis on managing for amenity use (Dunk and Rugg 1994).

Given that figures suggest there could be around 20,000 burial grounds in England alone, this is a potentially significant reservoir of greenspace land for recreation. Harvey (2011) cites the health benefits of simply living with a view of greenspace as worth up to £300 per person per year. A more detailed report by CJC Consulting for the Forestry Commission looked specifically at the economic value of greenspace and made the following statements:

1. A reduction of 1% in the UK sedentary population (from 23% to 22%) would deliver an estimated social benefit of up to £1.44bn a year
2. If people have access to high quality, well cared for greenspace they are more likely to engage in frequent physical activity
3. Greenspace in an urban context is the most highly used resource and offers flexible use
4. Greenspaces are cheaper to run than gyms

(after CJC Consulting 2005)

These figures indicate that greenspace, and urban greenspace in particular, can make a positive contribution to physical and mental health. However, local authorities are facing budget cutbacks at the present time, and research shows that greenspaces are likely to be hit disproportionally (GreenSpace 2011). GreenSpace found that of the 82% of local authority parks and greenspace teams facing budget cuts, 30% will lose more than 20% of their budget and 46% will face budget reductions that are greater than those facing the rest of the organisation. Although working cemeteries have protected functions in the form of burial, those functioning only as greenspace are likely to struggle. Indeed, research into the likely costs of meeting health and safety standards for monuments in...
local authority cemeteries estimated that £48 million would be spent over three years from 2001. The Home Office (Robson and Wilson 2004) considers that this figure severely underestimates the scale of the problem and that the real cost of this remedial work is considerably higher. Some local authorities and dioceses may have to consider shutting disused cemeteries, and churchyards to the public, reusing graves, and selling off land and buildings if the costs cannot be met (Luther, pers. comm.)

Closing churchyards and cemeteries would have a tangible impact at a local level. In some London boroughs, for example, cemetery land makes up as much as 68% of public greenspace (Worpole 1997). Whilst my research has shown some of the different ways in which people use and engage with cemetery space, further work in this area could follow up Manzo’s exhortation that whilst much is know about how the political economy shapes the urban environment, there is lack of empirical research into the effect of people and communities:

In this framework, structure and function are critical and people are seen as passive, economic abstractions whose subjective experiences are irrelevant. What is sorely lacking in this perspective is an appreciation for the role that individuals play as active participants in, and shapers of, their environments.

Manzo (2003:56)

My research has attempted to enrich our current understanding of the role of participants in shaping the physical and mental landscape of the cemetery. This is a partial response to Manzo’s calls for a greater understanding of the reciprocity of people, place and political structures. In the context of the cemetery, I contend that the living and the dead have a form of agency that creates and is created by the sense of place and in interaction with visitors. Individuals in the deathscape bring their culturally-based assumptions, their imagination and their experiences to co-create a unique sense of place. Given that GreenSpace (2007:9) report from their research that ‘97% of respondents believe that parks and green spaces help to create a nicer place for them to live’, it is clear that green places are much valued and provide a range of benefits to the community.

In short, although investments need to be made into cemetery and churchyard lands to make monuments safer, and improve paths and facilities, there is the potential to off-set these costs against health and well-being gains. It is not just the larger cemetery sites that can make a contribution to the amenity greenspace matrix; research by Harrison et al. (1995) showed that positive health benefits could be measured from the presence of any
greenspace, regardless of the size. This suggests that even pocket greenspaces such as churchyards can play an important role in the community. Equally, improving guidance available for cemetery management, and changing policy to increase flexibility could achieve a better greenspace for local communities and local authorities alike. Further research into cemetery management and policy with a focus on their role as community greenspaces could be very beneficial in exploring the financial costs and benefits of these sites. This in turn would allow more informed decisions to be made about managing these spaces into the future. Whilst my research did not have this detailed investigation into the monetary value of cemetery greenspace at its heart, it was clear the people valued and enjoyed these spaces and that they performed a range of roles within the social world of the living. However, it is not until the significance of this role for health, wellbeing, and sheer joy can be understood that cemeteries can be protected from development, managed as conservation areas and set aside for the living and the dead.

**Conclusion: Over their dead bodies**

*There is something in cemeteries for everybody.*

Valerie (2005)

In this last section I summarise the novel findings of my thesis and outline the contribution that I make to current knowledge. In the light of numerous calls for greater understanding of heterotopia and cemetery spaces, this thesis accesses the experience and identity of deathscapes through three portals – purple recreation, enchantment, and dark tourism. Put together, these three themes appear to clash in terms of who might take part, where, and when and yet they also demonstrate one of the fundamental principles of the cemetery/heterotopia – the juxtaposition of the seemingly incompatible that creates the unique sense of ‘cemetaryness’ of deathscapes. The multiple identities found by participants, the incongruent uses, and the extreme dislocation of time present in deathscapes, are factors in the heterotopic construction. True to form as heterotopia, I describe here how cemeteries are slippery and hard to pin down in any definitive way; participants identify different dimensions of experience present in the same place. The space can simultaneously be creepy, romantic and peaceful, impelled from one state to another by a single sensory input to a visitor. This connection to the senses, and the body being-in-place is a critical factor in the negotiation of the cemetery identity and one that
has not previously been explored in any depth. Inputs to the sensorium are also influenced by the uncanniness of heterotopia. As I show here through photographs, deathscapes offset a wide range of should-not-be-found-together things. Indeed the cemetery is rife with contradictions and antitheses, not least the fact that they are places for the living as well as the dead.

Contrasts, contradictions and juxtapositions that have not been previously described elsewhere are evidenced throughout this thesis in the photographs, and participant accounts. These communicate an embodied understanding of how heterotopia in the cemetery is perceived. Garbology, which I have used in a novel way in this research, proves itself to be a useful method to employ. It allows access to physical manifestations of the ‘otherness’ of these sights, their multiple meanings and identities through erosion and rubbish. Hetherington (2004) argues that rubbish is never fully or finally disposed of, but is just moved to the next point of its journey. Just as rubbish, then, is never settled, so it must be that the apparently peaceful rest in-perpetuity of dead bodies is also never settled, but is simply in transition to the next point. If cemeteries are not sites of settlement, I argue that they are thus unfinished places, that they do not have a final identity. This makes sense with regard to heterotopia; both the living and the dead are in different stages of time and progress and this conflation of difference unsettles space around it, setting the differences, the layers and complexities into relief.

As the dead contrast with the living, so the stasis of death and inanimate objects is set in juxtaposition to the movement of the animate people, animals and plants living in and visiting the deathscape. The cemetery has myriad worlds that co-exist – the world above ground and the world below that seems to echo that above with its bodies (albeit dead) and extensive tree root systems (branching as above-ground although without leaves). Living and mobile bodies inhabit the above-ground and bodies are confined below; the contrasts of lifeless stones and living plants; the dark of night and the light of day; the oasis-like calm of greenspace within a busy urban environment; and most complex of all the the juxtaposition of layers of time. Each opposing element of this juxtaposition seems to act to draw attention to, and draw out the qualities of the other. Hetherington (2004) refers to artistic interventions in museums that involve:
Putting anomalous objects into ordered displays – plaster casts of discarded pairs of knickers (so-called ‘knicker beasts’) in fossil cabinets in the Pitt Rivers museum in one recent example, or putting contemporary artworks alongside old objects because they have been a source of inspiration for a contemporary artists. What these objects attain (and it is their purpose in the former case, the latter is more subtle in its effects) is to reveal precisely that permanent display cabinets are spaces of disposal brought to life again by the shock effect of an incongruous, nonrepresentational blank that unsettles either a class of objects, a classificatory scheme, or a visual sense of representational order. We are made to see not only the knicker beasts but also the fossils that have been disposed of in their display since they were collected perhaps over a hundred years earlier at a time when the theory of evolution was still novel and shocking and more people were interested in fossils that they are today.

Hetherington (2004:167-168)

Rubbish in the graveyard is reminiscent of these knicker beasts, bringing death into a stronger focus through contrast. Heterotopia too, imparts something of this challenge to our perceptions, as Johnson articulates: ‘heterotopias draw us out of ourselves in peculiar ways; they display and inaugurate a difference and challenge the space in which we feel at home’ (2006:84). These challenges may be presented by the rupture in time, the rubbish, or the contrast of life and death, but it is the relationship between deathsapes and time, something which has to date received little attention, which I will explore next.

The cemetery-heterotopia is a place that has captured time and holds ‘dead time’ in stasis whilst other types of time move in orbit. Ecological time describes the rhythms and patterns of growth and change in the natural world. Participants in this research were highly attuned to this type of time, seeing and describing the life cycles of plants and animals in the cemetery. Circadian time captures the phases of night and day, dark and light that were again powerful factors in creating sense of place for graveyard visitors. Participants described that the cemetery felt different at different times of the day or night and thus might be used in accordance with this perceived sense of place. Living time encapsulates the time mode that individuals bring with them into the cemetery. Just as Levine (1997) argues that different cultures run on different time zones, so I contend here that when the living come into the space of the dead, the different modalities of time in operation fuse and blend. To enter the cemetery is to encounter contrasting forms of time and to be moved from one’s own time zone by these temporal impacts. When living time meets dead time it reacts to precipitate a form of time-travel, conveying visitors into an individual and imaginary version of historical time. Circadian and ecological time also have substantial impact on graveyard visitors, but an impact that is predominantly expressed through the overall perception of the sense of place. Darkness as part of
circadian time can introduce a sense of fear to some visitors, whilst others may be transported by the sight of a full moon over the tombstones. The changing seasons of growth and decay in ecological time can bring a sense of peace to visitors and has been shown here to be the catalyst for moments of enchantment in the cemetery. As far as we know, none of the other modalities change dead time at all, but dead time itself has a fundamental impact on all other modes and is, I believe, a core constituent of the cemetery experience.

In the cemetery there is fixed, date-stamped, time-of-death, time all around. To enter this place is to be surrounded by past time and yet to exist in the present time. As mentioned above, the sense of permanence of the cemetery clashes with other trajectories of time, which I believe then sparks the unique and ineffable sense of a deathscape. Being able to enter into pockets of (imagined) past times gives an impression of time-travel simultaneous to staying in time. And unravelling from these two time periods come a range of other past and future times. Participants relate how they both remembered deceased friends, family and life events, and were also provoked to project into the future and envisage events yet to pass. There was a tangible sense of mortality in the cemetery and participants were drawn to dwell on their own death and that of family and friends in sometimes dark and melancholy ways.

Both Ariès (1994) and Johnson (2006) write about the translocation of cemeteries in the nineteenth century from urban centres to urban outskirts, describing how this gave individuals a ‘place of rest, of ‘dark dwelling’ in perpetuity’ (Johnson 2006:79). Clayden et al. (2010) write about dwelling in natural burial grounds, and argue that the meaning of these sites emerges from human dwelling within the site. In this instance, dwelling encapsulates elements such as farmers’ interaction with the land, family history, the local community and the natural environment. It would seem that built objects are therefore ‘crystallisations of human activity’ (Kellaher et al. 2010). My research shows that it is not only the built objects in the form of graves that show human activity, but that rubbish and other garbological data can do this too. These material traces show uses of the land that contribute to place-making and thus to dwelling. Casey (2009) writes about dwelling in gardens, saying ‘as built places, gardens offer dwelling of some sort’ (2009:169). He outlines what he consider to be two distinct forms of dwelling: hestial, being a way of dwelling by residing in a place, and hermetic being dwelling through moving through a
place. Casey considers that gardens do not offer purely hestial or hermetic dwelling, but something with elements of both, that they are ‘on the edge of dwelling’ (2009:169). Like gardens, I contend that deathscapes are an intermediate environment between wild nature and the constructions of human kind. They have paths and views that pertain to hermetic dwelling, and tombs and mausolea that offer hestial dwelling, but only support elements of either kind of dwelling. This brings us back to dark dwelling. Having argued previously in this thesis that cemeteries are places for the dead and the living, dark dwelling seems to be the appropriate term to capture this part-hestial, part-hermetic, part ‘other’ form of being within the landscape. It is a form of dwelling imbued with the darkness of the melancholy of death, alongside the pleasure of nature and art. It is a dwelling of the dead in perpetuity, of permanence as well as of the evanescence of the living. It is dwelling that captures the heterotopic rupture and elision of different modes of time and creates a new time-place within the walls of the cemetery.

In this thesis I have shown new dimensions to the cemetery and found it to be a complex and dynamic place with many layers of meaning. Deathscapes function as visitor attractions for dark tourism. They attract people looking for a place for purple recreation and they can charm and enchant the visitor. The cemetery is a place where the many layers of meaning can appear messy and ‘other’, somehow ineffable and yet tangible. This makes it a challenging space to understand, but offers strengths with regard to the future sustainability of such sites. Kong writes:

> Yet, divergences in meanings need not be solely acrimonious. Indeed it is in divergent meanings that deathscapes may find a lease of life. Berry (1997) illustrates [...] how a non-profit group has taken up the task of preserving the historical cemeteries by introducing multiple meanings for these cemeteries, turning them into recreation and tourism grounds to which visitors can be bussed in for night-time tours. In other words, the preservation of these burial grounds occurs precisely because of the multiple meanings that can be ascribed to deathscapes.

Kong (1999:6)

In summary, this thesis finds that cemeteries have a meaning to people that is less about place and more about relationship and positionality. The role of cemetery as taskscape has been explored elsewhere (see Francis et al. 2005) but here I hope to have demonstrated its important and diverse role as a leisurescape and hinted at how more could yet be revealed about its imaginary geography. Manzo (2003) reminds us that place is inextricably linked to development and sense of self, and argues that the people-place
bond is at the heart of our world view. Deathscapes are greenspaces, purple spaces, dark spaces and more besides. As Foucault’s heterotopia (1986) so beautifully captures, they are a stage on which life and death play out. The choreography of the cemetery is intricate and different for each person, with the loosely coupled layers of meaning infinitely shifting and sliding. But, however they are experienced, used and construed, they remain the elusive and magical interface between the living and the dead.
References


Appendix A

Over their dead bodies: a study of spatiality and leisure in cemeteries

Participant Consent Form

1. I agree to take part in this research which explores how cemeteries are used for recreation.

2. The researcher has explained to my satisfaction the purpose of the research and the principles and procedures that will be followed.

3. I fully understand what is required of me as a participant in this research.

4. I understand that any confidential information will be seen only by the researcher and will not be revealed to anyone else.

5. I understand that any information stored on a computer will be made anonymous and that raw data will be stored in a safe and confidential way.

6. I understand that I can withdraw from the research at any time.

Name: ……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

Signed: …………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

Date: …………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
Appendix B

Participant information sheet:

Research on recreational uses of cemeteries and churchyards

Bel Deering, University of Brighton

About the researcher

I am a PhD student at the University of Brighton. Alongside my studies I work for an animal welfare charity and have carried out research at cemeteries in Aberdeen and Moscow.

The research

My aim in this research is to find out how people use cemeteries and churchyards for purposes other than burial, and explore attitudes towards these spaces. Cemeteries and churchyards that are no longer used for burial can be expensive to maintain and so face uncertain prospects, from neglect and abandonment to being sold off for development. It is important to find out if there are any other ways of using cemetery and churchyard sites that can improve the quality of life for local residents as well as maintaining respect for the dead.

There are two main ways that I will be collecting information about this: through interviews with cemetery staff and people who visit cemeteries for pleasure, and through recording and interpreting litter and other signs of activity. I hope that taking part in the research will be enjoyable for those who choose to get involved.

What will volunteering involve?

By volunteering, you agree to take part in an interview with the researcher, Bel Deering. This will last between one and two hours and will take place at a time convenient to you. With your permission, the interview will be recorded on a digital recorder. If at anytime you wish to withdraw from the research or do not wish to answer specific questions you are free to do this. During the interview we will talk about the ways in which you have used cemeteries and graveyards for recreation. You will be asked to indicate on a map or on site which areas you like or dislike and to share any stories about this.
Protecting your privacy

Any information that you share will be treated with respect and kept in strict confidence. Written and recorded spoken data will be kept in a secure place. Your name and any other names and places you mentioned will be changed so that others will not be able to identify you from the data.

Who will benefit from the research?

The research will contribute towards my PhD at the University of Brighton, and may be included in academic papers. It will be of use to cemetery managers, and professionals involved in urban planning and green spaces, and as such this research endeavours to inform policy relating to cemetery use.

Feedback

You will be sent a summary report containing the main findings of the research and have the opportunity to give feedback based on this and your experience of the research process. You are also welcome to make comments and give feedback throughout and after the interview.

Bel Deering

University of Brighton

Email : ab110@brighton.ac.uk

My work is carried out with the approval of the University Research Ethics Committee.
Appendix C

Participant profiles

Rushton Cemetery

1. Luther (greenspace manager)
   In his mid-forties, Luther works in senior management for Rushton Borough Council, with overall responsibility for the staff working in the greenspaces in Rushton. I approached Luther for an interview through the Council and we met on a weekday in the office. In this thesis I describe him as a ‘greenspace manager’.

2. Mitzi (parent recreator)
   Mitzi is in her thirties and lives about 15 minutes drive from the churchyard. I met her at the Rushton fete and we took a walk around the cemetery as part of our interview conversation. It is only recently that Mitzi has started to visit the churchyard, prompted by a friend who was going to a fete there. She has taken her daughter a few times now but had not really been to many churchyards before this one.

3. Charm (dog walker)
   A keen dog walker, Charm has visited lots of churchyards and cemeteries with her dogs. Having recently moved into the area for work she made her first visit to the churchyard and found it a very powerful experience. She is in her late forties and holds a professional position in a large organisation. Charm and I met up when dog walking and subsequently visited the churchyard in Rushton around dusk on a wintery afternoon.

4. Joan (purple recreator)
   Joan is involved in many voluntary activities in her free time but does not have a particular interest in cemeteries or graveyards beyond her youth when she used to gather in a churchyard to drink and socialise. She was curious about the churchyard and made a first visit just for a look but is unlikely to make a special trip to the churchyard. Joan and I originally made contact having met up at a volunteer event and visited the churchyard during a very cold spell one winter.
5. **Pierre (greenspace ranger)**

   Pierre is in his early forties and works for Rushton Council. Part of his role is to patrol a wide range of the burial grounds in the borough. I approached him to ask for an interview and he drove me around a number of different churchyard and cemetery sites managed by the council and was able to show me a wide range of evidence of the different leisure uses of dead spaces.

6. **Claire and Sue (cemetery tourists)**

   Both Claire and Sue were visiting as tourists from the USA. They were visiting the site to follow up their interests in history and celebrity burials, but were also attracted by the peaceful and natural surroundings of the cemetery. They were both in their forties and we met at a cemetery event and chatted as we walked around the site.

**Clearstone – St Pierre’s churchyard**

1. **Jane (Friends member)**

   Living just down the road from the churchyard, Jane is an artist and mother in her forties who has an interest in the environment. She volunteers with the both the adult and children’s churchyard gardening group and knows a lot of other local people who are involved in St Pierre’s church and churchyard in Clearstone. I contacted Jane after meeting her at a ghost story event in the churchyard and we met up on a bright and cold weekday afternoon for a walk around the three churchyard settings.

2. **Imogen (taphophobe)**

   Imogen is a working mother in her thirties with an interest in nature, but a fear of cemeteries and graveyards (taphophobia). Having strong spiritual beliefs, she feels that burial grounds are sacred spaces; her personal experience of a number of deaths in her close family means that she also finds these places extremely emotional and sad. She had never visited the cemetery and said that she would never go there as it was a place only for the dead. Another interviewee put me in touch with Imogen and we met up in a cafe to talk near Clearstone to talk about cemeteries and graveyards.
3. **Diddy (parent recreator)**

Diddy is a father in his forties. He lives nearby to Pierre’s churchyard and has been visiting there since he was a child himself. I met Diddy in the churchyard playground at St Pierre’s in Clearstone one day in the summer when our children started to play together on the roundabout. We struck up conversation about the churchyard until it was time to go home for tea.

4. **Mina (purple recreator)**

In her late teens, Mina and her friends were on the swings in St Pierre’s Churchyard one day when I was doing some fieldwork. As it was Hallowe’en we soon got into conversation about the site and she shared some stories about her exploits and imaginings in the churchyard.

5. **Debra and Amber (cemetery tourists)**

These two friends are in their twenties and were visiting the cemetery for the first time. I met them on a guided walk of the churchyard and we chatted as we walked around the site. They were on holiday in the area and had wanted to visit the site for one of the famous graves. Whilst they had found the grave itself mildly disappointing, they felt that the churchyard itself was very beautiful and peaceful.

6. **Lindon (church warden)**

I was given contact details for Lindon when I wrote to the Parish Vicar asking permission to carry out research in the churchyard. Lindon is in his sixties, and one of two church wardens at St Pierre’s. We met on a very cold and drizzly day and so agreed to sit inside the church for the interview. This presented some issues as there was a rehearsal underway for a concert later that day and so this interview had a rather fragmented nature due to the interruptions of parishioners and performers.

**Marchester Cemetery**

1. **Valerie (Friends Founder)**

In her late sixties, Valerie is a founder member of the Marchester Cemetery Friends group with a special interest in history. She was an academic during her working life, mostly in the field of literature and keeps up a strong work ethic in her retirement to
the great benefit of the Friends Members. She has high ambitions for the cemetery and has an interest beyond this local one, having visited sites across the UK and abroad. I was put in touch with Valerie after attending a guided walk at the site, and we met up for a walk around the cemetery on a sunny spring day just before my first child was born.

2. **Jack (Friends founder)**
   As a founder member of the Marchester Cemetery Friends, I was told by every other member to get in touch with Jack for an interview. Jack is a retired professional man who has always had an interest in local history, and we met up at the cemetery to talk and walk amongst the graves. He has a great passion for the history and wildlife of the cemetery as well as an encyclopaedic knowledge of the darker side of cemetery life.

3. **Richard and Janice (walk leaders)**
   These two fifty-somethings volunteer together for the Marchester Friends group and run guided walks and other events. As neither is currently working they spend a lot of time involved in cemetery projects and planning for forthcoming events. I met them when they led a guided walk that I attended and I subsequently visited them at Richard’s house for an interview.

4. **Al and Seth (cemetery tourists)**
   In their early twenties these two young men were on a recreational visit to the cemetery. They had not been before as they were currently on holiday and felt that now they had been and had some photos as souvenirs there was little reason to come back. They did not habitually visit graveyards elsewhere – this was purely a touristic visit. We met at an event at Marchester and stood next to a monument that was significant to both of them as we engaged in the interview.

5. **Elle, Katya and Mona (cemetery tourists)**
   These three students in their early twenties were backpacking around Europe over the summer, visiting from the USA, and dropped in to the cemetery to look for some culture. I met them at the grave of a cult figure that seemed to attract quite a lot of
attention and we had a chat about their travels and their response to this cemetery visit.

**Greetham – St Joan of Arc Churchyard**

1. **Sylvie (purple recreator)**
   In her twenties, Sylvie is a self-confessed 'graveyard rabbit' who enjoyed hanging out in burial grounds. We met at St Joan of Arc churchyard in Greetham and walked around the site before sitting on a bench to continue our interview. I met Sylvie through the toddler group that ran from the church hall and used the graveyard as a greenspace for play during the summer months.

2. **Pewter (recreator)**
   Pewter was an artist and teacher in her thirties who enjoyed visiting graveyards for a variety of reasons. She had been to Jim Morrison’s grave as a teenager, and played in her local churchyard as a child. Pewter knew another of my interviewees and we agreed to meet at Greetham for our interview.

3. **Manfred (purple recreator)**
   I met Manfred through a music event at the churchyard and we met up for a walk around the site. He is in his early thirties and worked and lived locally to the churchyard. He said that he visited the churchyard for some aspects of recreation, including meeting people for sex, as it was a convenient location but expressed disinterest at most of the other activities that took place there.

4. **Jael (parent recreator)**
   Jael is a young parent in her twenties. She has three daughters and lives near to the churchyard. Her route to school takes her past the churchyard, with a possible shortcut being through the more wooded section. She said that her children enjoyed visiting the churchyard but that she was always a bit wary as she felt that it was a popular place for cottaging.

5. **Anna, Kath and Nicky (dog walkers)**
Anna, Kath and Nicky, all in their twenties, are regular dog walkers in part of the churchyard that has been slightly cleared of the older stones. I met them as I walked my own dog in the graveyard and we had a conversation whilst walking with our pets. They were interested in the history and nature that they noticed in the graveyard but had mainly visited for the convenience to their homes.
Appendix D

Information about data collected

Interviews and informal conversations

Interviews were classed as pre-scheduled meetings, while informal conversations were essentially interviews that arose serendipitously from interactions in participant observation. Totalled together, I recorded twenty-two interviews and conversations with thirty participants. This amounted to around thirty-five hours of recorded data stored either digitally or on minidisc.

Interview notes

I made notes during and after interviews to describe the setting, my own observations and opinions and other details that would augment the audio file. These notes fill one journal and are ordered chronologically.

Participant observation and material trace data

I undertook 550 hours of participant observation and recorded information on these experiences in a range of different formats. These include audio files, written notes, illustrations, maps, photographs and material traces. I took in the region of 500 photographs, of which 100 were used to inform the research findings. My hand written notes filled three journals, and my illustrations and maps one further book. I recorded twenty audio files of commentary and soundscapes from visits and events and removed forty risk-assessed items of rubbish for analysis. These were later disposed of through conventional waste streams.