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Doc Martin and film tourism: The creation of destination image

Abstract

This study investigates the relationship between film-induced tourism and the concept of destination image via a substantial primary data collection exercise, followed by content analysis of television episodes. Port Isaac, on the north coast of Cornwall, in the west of England, is the setting for the popular ITV television series Doc Martin, starring Martin Clunes and Caroline Catz. Television can enhance the attractiveness of an area, especially when building on images of small-scale fishing and quaint customs.

Findings showed a visitor profile fairly consistent with those of previous academic studies whilst frequency tests indicated that many respondents had clear destination images of Port Isaac prior to their visit. Consequently, content analysis of Doc Martin episodes was further undertaken; the results of which confirm there are links between images depicted in the television series and those pertaining to Port Isaac. Key features of the village are apparent in both forms of research undertaken. With primetime screening on national television, the series acts as a display window for the village and surrounding area. The research indicates the series acted as a key influence on intention to visit, not surprisingly, for British tourists. Almost 76 per cent of respondents associate Port Isaac with a specific image. The study is unusual, in film tourism research, in using two distinct forms of data to contrast the situation.

Key words: film tourism, destination image, Great Britain

Introduction

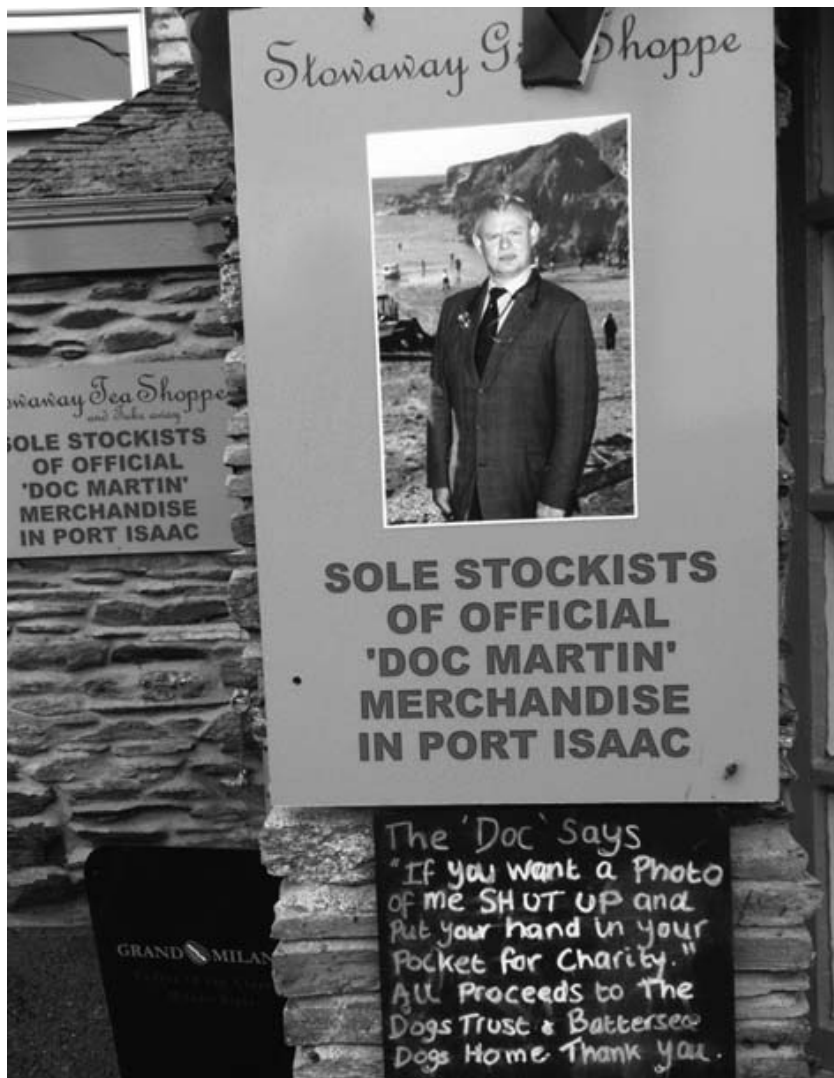
Doc Martin is a British ITV1 television comedy-drama series, starring Martin Clunes as the eponymous medical practitioner, set in and around the small fishing village of Port Isaac, on the north coast of Cornwall, in the west of England. Cornwall has an estimated population of 535,300 (Cornwall Council, 2011; Office for National Statistics, 2010); whilst the Port Isaac and St Kew area has a population of just 2,084 (Cornwall Council, 2010). Cornwall is an iconic destination, attracting hundreds of thousands of international visitors annually (Thornton, 1993; Williams and Shaw, 1993), partly because the county possesses a cultural and linguistic heritage distinct from the rest of England (Busby, 2002; Busby, Hunt & Small, 2009; Harvey, 2000), and also because of diaspora tourism (Busby, 2004). As with many destinations, there are multiple representations, from stereotypical images portrayed in guidebooks of pirates, smugglers, celebrity chefs (Busby, Huang & Jarman, 2012) to sweeping landscapes (Hale, 2001; Tregidga, 2012).

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There have now been five television series and, in all the episodes, the settlement bears the fictitious name of *Port Wenn*. Film tourism, which includes television (Beeton, 2005; Hahm & Wang, 2011), occupies a key component in the UK tourism market and, yet, the official Destination Marketing Organisation website for the county (www.visitcornwall.com) makes very limited passing reference to the production. This paper reviews research undertaken to establish whether visitors to Port Isaac are influenced by the television series and to what extent their perceptions have been influenced by the medium. Images of specific locations are considered and whether these relate to those depicted in the series. Key socio-demographic variables are also examined. What makes this paper rather unusual, in film tourism research, is that it uses two distinct forms of data. The structure proceeds with a brief reflection on the film tourism phenomenon and destination image literature before examining the findings of the two research exercises.

Figure 1
Doc Martin advertisement at Stowaway Tea Shoppe, Port Isaac



The film tourism phenomenon

Whilst Karpovich (2010) is one of several researchers to state that film tourism, teletourism, and movie tourism is the same concept, Torchin (2002) distinguishes between movie and television-induced tourism, asserting television has a longer, more levelled impact to featured localities as it has lasting appeal, drawing visitors for many years (Heitmann, 2010). Previous studies have shown that television programmes actively increase visitor numbers to certain destinations (Busby & Klug, 2001; Connell, 2005a; Croy, 2010; Im & Chon, 2008; Iwashita, 2006; O'Connor, Flanagan & Gilbert, 2008; Schofield, 1996; Soliman, 2011) or, at the very least, increased interest in these places (Benzine, 2005; Carr, 2007). Quite possibly, viewing localities through visual media is even a destination experience itself, offering the opportunity to gather additional information (Beeton, 2008; Riley & Van Doren, 1992).

In terms of the importance of this sector of tourism, research by O'Connor, Flanagan and Gilbert (2006) suggests a fifth of inbound UK tourists visit to explore film locations; a figure expected to grow over forthcoming years due to increasing time periods people dedicate to watching television, greater cinematic interest and continuous technological developments (Belch & Belch, 2004; Shani, Wang, Hudson & Gil, 2009; Soliman, 2011). Tooke and Baker (1996) studied four television dramas and documented their subsequent effects upon visitation numbers to featured localities. In each case, visitation increased dramatically. There are many various forms of film-induced tourism and Table 1 provides a comprehensive overview of these, along with their common characteristics and various examples in relation to published academic literature.

Table 1
Forms and characteristics of film-induced tourism

Type/Form	Characteristics	Examples
Film location an attraction in its own right	Locality is the primary travel motivator and an attraction in its own right; however some are not considered tourism destinations until they have featured on-screen.	<i>What's The Story In Balamory</i> (Isle of Mull); <i>The Full Monty</i> (Sheffield)
Film tourism as part of a holiday	Tourists visiting film locations; e.g. booking studio tours as secondary activities within a larger holiday, without previous knowledge.	On-location Tours <i>Gavin & Stacey</i> (Barry Island)
Film tourism occurring due to special interest	Such special interests include booking holidays to destinations as a direct result of its TV profile; visiting celebrity homes; film locations with celebrity status and locations representative of another era.	<i>The Andy Griffith Show</i> (1950s); <i>Heartbeat</i> (1960s);
Film tourism icons for tourists to gaze upon as a focal point for their visitation	Natural scenery, historical background, storyline theme, actors, movie premieres, film festivals, symbolic content and human relationships all serve as movie tourism icons.	Cannes Film Festival; <i>Lord of the Rings: Return of the King</i> premiere.
Film tourism to places where filming is only believed to have taken place	Visitors travel to places represented even if the film represents a different actual setting; raising questions about illusion, reality and authenticity in what visitors are expected to see and why.	<i>Chicago</i> , Chicago (filmed in Toronto); <i>Braveheart</i> , Scotland (filmed in Ireland)
Film tourism as part of the romantic gaze	Tourists like to gaze on TV and film locations in solitude and privacy, establishing a semi-spiritual relationship.	<i>Blue Juice</i> (1995) North Cornwall

Table 1 Continued

Type/Form	Characteristics	Examples
Film tourism for pilgrimage, nostalgia and escape	This elevates the consumer beyond the mundane reality of everyday life. Nostalgic film tourism can take the form of visiting locations that represent another era. Film tourism pilgrimage involves visiting film sites to 'pay homage' to the film.	<i>Field of Dreams</i> ; <i>Steel Magnolias</i> , Doune Castle, (<i>Monty Python</i>); <i>The Lord of the Rings</i> sites
Travel programmes	Travel programmes are the successor to travel guidebooks and written travelogues; providing a vehicle through which places and people are interpreted to wider audiences.	<i>Getaway</i> ; <i>Pilot Guides</i> ; <i>Cook's Tour</i> ; Rick Stein in Padstow

Source: adapted from Beeton (2000); Busby & Hambly (2000); Busby, Huang & Jarman (2012); Busby & Klug (2001); Connell (2005a); Riley & Van Doren (1992); Riley (1994); Riley et al. (1998) Tooke & Baker (1996); Urry (1990).

Destinations and film

Commonly, destinations feature in television programmes as an effective promotional tool to reap economic benefit (Jewell & McKinnon, 2008; Nicholson, 2006; Soliman, 2011; Yilmaz & Yolal, 2008). Placing destinations in visual media is the ultimate tourism product placement permitting a level of promotion unachievable through traditional advertising (Balasubramanian, 1994; Busby, Brunt & Lund, 2003; Hudson & Ritchie, 2006a; Morgan & Pritchard, 1998). This concurs with research by Iwashita (2008) who ascertained that television programmes were the most important information source for increasing international travel interest to the UK, listed by 70.1% of his Japanese respondents.

Television effectively enhances a destination's charm, particularly when reflective of authentic features enticing viewers to actually visit (Busby et al., 2012; Grihault, 2003; Karpovich, 2010; Urry, 2002). This is apparent in *Doc Martin* as Port Isaac's fishing harbour and slipway feature significantly. Moreover, when a programme obtains a primetime viewing time-slot, as *Doc Martin* does, it acts as a display window for featured localities (Bolan, Crossan & O'Connor, 2007; Connell, 2005a). *Doc Martin* has been screened on Mondays at 21:00 and due to its popularity has the advantage of recurrent viewing. Moreover, film locations are frequently termed hyper-real places of simulacra, whereby reality and artificial elements are mixed and visitors cannot identify between real and fantasy (Baudrillard, 1983; Eco, 1983; Heitmann, 2010; Schofield, 1996). Tourists are fascinated with this mythology created by the "interplay of fiction and environmental setting" (Connell, 2005b, p. 764). This curiosity further stimulates interest in featured localities. For example; *Doc Martin* is set in Port Isaac with the fictional village of Portwenn in the series, but commonly television engrosses viewers so strongly that most are not concerned with distinguishing between reality and fiction (Herbert, 2001; Iwashita, 2008; Mordue, 2001). This has also been documented by Buchmann, Moore and Fisher (2010).

The issue of destination image is, then, very pertinent. Such images are formed, enhanced and altered by the consumption of scenery presented on television as it is an extremely powerful marketing tool, perceived as a credible, un-biased information source (Connell, 2005a; Croy, 2010; Kim & Richardson, 2003; Riley, Baker & Van Doren, 1998; Tooke & Baker, 1996). Featured destinations are predisposed to exceptional media exposure which induces people to form specific destination images (Bolan & Williams, 2008; Hanefors & Mossberg, 2002; Iwashita, 2008). Images induce certain depictions of an area into the prospective visitor's mind, consequently providing them with a pre-taste of the destination (Fakeye & Crompton, 1991).

First impressions of a destination are as likely to come from television as real experiences (Sydney-Smith, 2006). Many destinations have inherently attractive physical properties including stunning landscapes and idyllic surroundings. Landscapes are often compressed through media representations for photographic purposes because visitors are fascinated with pictorial beauty, consequently becoming a commodity for tourism consumption (Crawshaw & Urry, 2000; Tzanelli, 2003). Additionally, this fascination is amplified by the involvement of famous actors (Busby, Ergul & Eng, 2013; Iwashita, 2008; Macionis, 2004a; Riley & Van Doren, 1992). *Doc Martin* stars renowned actor Martin Clunes in the picture-perfect Port Isaac. Moreover, an individual's personal engagement with television creates imagery with symbolic meaning; thus forming attitudes and emotional appeal towards depicted localities (Heitmann, 2010; Kim, 2011). Destination images influence the anticipations, expectations and imaginations of prospective tourists and can even result in television viewers having an emotional attachment to actors as if close companions (Busby et al., 2013; Kim, 2011). Furthermore, destination images create an additional pull factor for inducing visitation to a particular destination (Chen & Tsai, 2007). Destination images can be formed through attributes featuring on television, films or wider media and advertising forms including postcards, guidebook photography, travel brochures and the internet (Busby & Klug, 2001; Busby & O'Neill, 2006; Jenkins, 2003; Mackay & Fesenmaier, 1997; Molina & Esteban, 2006; Huang, Busby & Bosdou, 2009; Scarles, 2004; Yüksel & Akgül, 2007).

Methodology

A number of researchers have identified the need to study the relationship between mass-media and destination image, including; Sonmez (1998) and Sonmez, Apostolopoulos and Tarlow (1999). Consequently, this research aims to explore the relatively neglected area by selecting a case-study example. This case study is particularly interesting as Port Isaac is labelled the fictional village of 'Portwenn' in *Doc Martin* and no reference to Port Isaac is made throughout the series; so what effect does this have on the visitor?

Following a pilot study, the data collection comprised 302 face-to-face, full interviews with visitors to Port Isaac, over seven days in autumn 2011; the timing was entirely due to researcher availability. Tourism is less affected by seasonality compared with twenty years ago (Visit Cornwall, 2010) although it is accepted that restricting data collection to just the autumn may influence results. Furthermore, recent research highlights the presence of international visitors year-round (Busby, 2003).

By undertaking the pilot study, the location with the highest footfall was identified as the viewpoint across the harbour, near the seating area in Fore Street which, therefore, became recognised as the most appropriate site to intercept visitors. The on-site visitor survey was administered using the next-to-pass non-probability sampling technique recommended by the Tourism and Recreation Research Unit (1983). Additionally, the total number of people passing by whilst interviewing respondents was recorded across all seven days of research. This gave a combined total of 641 people and is illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2
Number of people passing by whilst interviewing respondents

Date of visit	Tally	Running total
04/11/2011	68	68
07/11/2011	84	152
08/11/2011	112	264
10/11/2011	129	393
12/11/2011	98	491
15/11/2011	77	568
22/11/2011	73	641

Through analysing the five most perceived images pertaining to Port Isaac gathered from the 302 survey respondents, quantitative content analysis (Holsti, 1969) of *Doc Martin* was undertaken as an alternative, secondary form of data collection. This took the form of numerical content analysis of the first, third and concluding episodes for each of the five *Doc Martin* series produced by using a systematic quota sampling technique (Neuendorf, 2002). Every series has been included for consistency purposes. The systematic quota sampling method is favourable as the five most referred to images, pertaining to Port Isaac, had already been identified from the results of the street survey. These episodes were purposely chosen in order to identify and eliminate any external biases commonly associated with introductory and concluding episodes of a television series thus increasing the internal validity (Robson, 2011) of this study. Episode three was chosen to secure accuracy and consistency as it is within the middle of each series.

Data collection for the content analysis initially consisted of counting the number of times each of the five most identified associated images of Port Isaac referred to by respondents in the visitor survey was depicted within *Doc Martin*. After excluding renowned individuals Martin Clunes, the Fisherman's Friends group and complex image of a typically Cornish fishing village, the most cited sites were: the Doctor's House/Surgery, Port Isaac Fisherman Ltd., the Harbour/Slipway, the Old School House and, finally, the Chemist/Pharmacy; all of which are attributable to *Doc Martin*. The rationale behind excluding Martin Clunes, The Fisherman's Friends and the recorded image of a typically Cornish fishing village is that they are not specifically pertaining to the destination of Port Isaac itself; thus deemed insufficient for inclusion. Secondly, the total amount of time dedicated to featuring these places was accurately recorded to the nearest hundredth of a second using a Sportline 240 stopwatch, then further rounded to the nearest whole second for completeness. Third and finally, this timed data was then used to work out the overall percentage that each site features within each episode. This use of numerical counting exercises as a form of content analysis is utilised within social research (Lasswell, 1965).

Findings and discussion

The results shown in Table 3 illustrate a visitor profile consistent with findings obtained from the contemporary literature, in particular the 2010 Cornwall Annual Visitor Survey yet with a few significant

differences. Firstly, this is evident as almost all visitors interviewed during the survey were from the UK (96%) with only 4% from overseas. Additionally, the findings show that Port Isaac is visited by many loyal repeaters (46.7%) although still attracting a healthy number of first time visitors (53.3%). Furthermore, by using the results of the question exploring the main occupation of the chief income earner in the respondent's household, it was possible to categorise interviewees into five standard socio-economic classifications. Findings show that 38% of the visitor sample to Port Isaac fell into socio-economic groups A or B which is considerably higher than the normal 23% of the total population which belong to this category (Businessballs, 2009; Visit Cornwall, 2011). It has also become apparent that there were a slightly higher proportion of female respondents (54%) than male (46%) supporting the belief that television drama series attract a higher proportion of female visitors to the featured film locations than males (Iwashita, 2008; Warnick, Bojanic & Siriangukul, 2005).

Table 3
Key features of the visitor sample

Respondent data	Port Isaac	
n =	302	
Live in Britain	258	86%
Live within Cornwall	31	10%
Live overseas	13	4%
First visit to Port Isaac	161	53%
Second to fourth visit	87	29%
Five or more visits	54	18%
Sought information prior to visit	59	20%
Unaware of any travel-related advertising	274	91%
First visit year 1940-1960	6	5%
First visit year 1961-1980	22	18%
First visit year 1981-2003	44	37%
First visit year 2004-2011	48	40%
Male	140	46%
Female	162	54%
Under 25	10	3%
26-44	79	26%
45-64	168	56%
65+	45	15%
Socio-economic type A or B	116	38%
Retired (Other)	73	24%
Graduate qualifications	107	35%

Note: percentages rounded.

Over a third of respondents held a graduate qualification (35%); although lower than previous film tourism studies (e.g. Busby & Klug, 2001), this still concurs with the notion that the visitor profile is more highly educated than the general public (Buchmann et al., 2010; Schofield, 1996). In contrast,

however, the age profile of visitors to Port Isaac is significantly different as only 3% of respondents were under age 25 and 71% of respondents aged 45+ although in the 2010 Cornwall Annual Visitor Survey, 21% of respondents were under 25 and 60% aged 45+ (Visit Cornwall, 2011). This difference is further reinforced by the fact that 24% of respondents were retired. Another disparity is that the majority of visitors (80%) did not seek any information prior to their visit and were largely unaware of any travel-related advertising concerning the locality of Port Isaac (91%). This is significant as it raises the issue of what destination images were held. Did *Doc Martin* have an influence?

More becomes clear with reference to the purpose of visit. Port Isaac is predominantly a destination for excursionists or those who have a very loyal following of *Doc Martin*. With regard to influences encouraging respondents to visit Port Isaac, the largest of which was television with a dominant 42.7%, followed by nostalgia (18.9%), clearly confirming that television programmes actively encourage people to visit the featured destinations, just as previous studies acknowledge (Busby & Klug, 2001; Busby et al., 2012; Connell, 2005a; Croy, 2010; Im & Chon, 2008; Iwashita, 2006; O'Connor et al. 2008; Soliman, 2011). This finding also categorically supports Riley's (1994) suggestion that motion pictures do act as pseudo-tourism attractions, whilst further inferring that the majority of respondents visit Port Isaac with a pre-existing sense of meaning and emotional attachment with the location (Heitmann, 2010; Kim, 2011; Pocock, 1981, Urry, 1990).

Table 4
Port Isaac – visitors and influences

Purpose of visit to Port Isaac	n = 302	%
General day-out/day trip	151	50.0
Specific visit to location of Doc Martin	60	19.9
General holiday	51	16.9
Conduct specific activities	32	10.6
Other	8	2.6
Influence of visit to Port Isaac	n = 302	%
Television	129	42.7
Nostalgia	57	18.9
Close to home/where staying	32	10.6
Friend/family member	27	8.9
Curiosity/novelty	14	4.6
Other	43	14.2
Associate Port Isaac with image, icon or individual	n = 302	%
Yes	229	75.8
No	73	24.2
Type of associated image, icon or individual	n = 229	%
Places depicted in Doc Martin	104	45.4
Typical Cornish fishing village	46	20.1
Martin Clunes	38	16.6
Fisherman's friends group	18	7.9
Other	23	10.0

The most significant findings in relation to the aim of this study were firstly that 229 respondents (75.8%) actually associated the case-study location of Port Isaac with a specific image, icon or renowned individual whilst, secondly, these types of reported imagery were largely associated with the physical places depicted within *Doc Martin* (45.4%). This, coupled with the fact that 38 respondents (16.6%) associated Port Isaac with the famous actor Martin Clunes strongly indicates that *Doc Martin* acts as a powerful marketing tool and tourist icon which has been amplified by the involvement of famous actors, thus inducing people to form specific destination images (Bolan & Williams, 2008; Busby et al., 2013; Croy, 2010; Hanefors & Mossberg, 2002; Iwashita, 2008). It is this significant finding which led to the decision to conduct the content analysis as a secondary form of data collection. Additionally, the second most referred to image, by 20.1% of respondents, was of a typical Cornish fishing village, which arguably represents those who have an organic destination image of Port Isaac.

Table 5
Data specific to the television series Doc Martin

Degree of Doc Martin influence to visit Port Isaac	n = 302	%
Main purpose	74	24.5
Strongly	59	19.5
Slightly	54	17.9
Unsure	7	2.3
It hasn't	81	26.8
Never knew	27	8.9
How Doc Martin represents the Cornish identity	n = 302	%
Accurately	48	15.9
Stereotypically	164	54.3
Uncertain	90	29.8
Level of Doc Martin promotion in Port Isaac	n = 302	%
Over sufficient	36	11.9
Adequate	145	48.0
Insufficient	45	14.9
Non-existent	76	25.2
More inclined to watch Doc Martin after visit	n = 302	%
Yes	84	27.8
No	89	29.5
No, as already an avid viewer	129	42.7

The data shown in Table 5 illustrates that nearly two thirds of visitors had some form of organic or induced destination image prior to their visit (Ateljević, 2000); thus significantly impacting their decision to visit Port Isaac. Unsurprisingly, 54.3% of the respondents stated that they believe *Doc Martin* is culturally stereotypical of the Cornish identity. This supports the notion that television commonly exploits the distinctively unique Cornish identity to manifest cultural stereotypes (Kennedy & Kingcome, 1998; Kent, 2003; Tzanelli, 2003), which raises questions about the issue of authenticity in

television and film. The fact that 84 visitors stated yes they were more inclined to watch *Doc Martin* after their visit suggests that they have formed a complex destination image of Port Isaac through their experiences obtained whilst visiting the locality itself (Ateljević, 2000).

There is a high level of awareness of the television-induced tourism phenomenon within the survey population. This is because 277 respondents (91.8%) either agreed or strongly agreed that television programmes actively encourage tourism to the localities featured on screen; whilst 91.1% of respondents stated that they were aware of a television or film location. Following cross-tabulation of variables, a significant association was identified between the degree of *Doc Martin* influence and the image, icon or renowned individuals visitors associate with Port Isaac, significant at the 99.9 per cent level (Pearson chi-square=36.759, df=5, p=.000). This finding supports the argument that imagery depicted in television has a significant subliminal influence upon the viewer and evidently influences their behaviour by inducing them to visit featured localities (Craighead & Nemeroff, 2004; Iwashita, 2008; Pratkanis, 1992; Synodinos, 1988).

The second part of the data collection consisted of quantitative content analysis of the external views of the five most identified images within *Doc Martin* that uniquely pertain to the locality of Port Isaac. The most identified images by respondents were obtained from the initial questionnaire survey and are highlighted in italics in table 6.

Table 6
Visitor's associated images of Port Isaac identified from primary data collection

	Fre- quency	Percent
Valid <i>Martin Clunes</i>	38	12.6
<i>Harbour/Slipway</i>	23	7.6
<i>Doctor's house/Surgery</i>	34	11.3
<i>Port Isaac Fisherman Ltd.</i>	29	9.6
<i>Typically Cornish fishing village</i>	45	14.9
<i>Fisherman's friends group</i>	18	6.0
<i>Old school house</i>	13	4.3
<i>Chemist/Pharmacy</i>	5	1.7
<i>Laurence Llewelyn-Bowen</i>	3	1.0
<i>Other</i>	20	6.6
<i>None</i>	74	24.5
Total	302	100.0

The findings in Table 7 clearly reinforce the primary data collection results and further confirm that the *Doc Martin* television series induces people to form specific destination images of Port Isaac prior to their visit, consequently providing them with a pre-taste of the destination (Fakeye & Crompton, 1991; Sydney-Smith, 2006). This is evident as, for example, the image of the 'Doctors House' featured

a total of 47 times, lasting for 248 seconds; when adding the totals of each first *Doc Martin* episode for series 1-5. Furthermore, as at least four of the most referred to images of Port Isaac, by visitors, feature so intensely in *Doc Martin* (with the exception of the 'Chemist/Pharmacy'), it is argued that this has a significant subliminal influence upon the viewer by influencing their decision-making behaviours and thus encourages them to visit Port Isaac (Synodinos, 1988).

Table 7
Content analysis findings

Rank	Primary data collection results	Secondary data collection results (SDC)								Revised rankings from SDC
		1 st Episodes		3 rd Episodes		Final Episodes		Cumulative Total		
		N =	Secs:	N =	Secs:	N =	Secs:	N =	Secs:	
1.	Doctors house/Surgery	47	248	40	242	37	233	124	723	2.
2.	Port Isaac Fisherman Ltd.	22	130	9	85	11	98	42	313	3.
3.	Harbour/ Slipway	60	512	43	450	42	333	145	1,295	1.
4.	Old school house	35	147	23	65	26	93	84	305	4.
5.	Chemist/ Pharmacy	13	60	4	51	14	91	31	202	5.

Notes: * N = Total number of times each image pertaining to Port Isaac appears for series 1-5.

** Secs = Total number of seconds each image appears throughout series 1-5.

However, one surprising result of the content analysis was that the image of Port Isaac's 'Harbour and Slipway' was only the third most referred to image by respondents, yet it evidently featured considerably more in *Doc Martin* than the other four images; hence why in the revised rankings, following the secondary data collection, it is ranked first. On a final note, when comparing the results from the first, third and final *Doc Martin* episodes it can be observed that there are few differences between the findings thus any potential bias commonly associated with establishing and concluding episodes can be eliminated within this study.

Conclusion

By selecting the case study location of Port Isaac for primary research, the researchers have attempted to quantify the impact and effect of visual images depicted in the British television comedy drama series *Doc Martin*. This has been achieved by initially interviewing 302 visitors to Port Isaac by means of a face-to-face street survey whilst, additionally, undertaking content analysis of selected *Doc Martin* episodes in order to compare results with those from respondents in terms of imagery depicted. This research is unusual in adopting two forms of data collection.

The results indicate that television shows do have a significant impact on influencing tourist motivation to visit the places depicted on-screen by clearly identifying that the locality of Port Isaac is largely visited by those who have a keen interest in *Doc Martin*. Furthermore, the findings strongly suggest that Port Isaac is largely visited by day trippers which underpins Herbert's (2001) contention that excursionists rather than tourists are more likely to visit localities featured on television. With 4% of respondents visiting Port Isaac from overseas, this possibly supports O'Connor et al's., (2006) suggestion

that inbound tourists to the UK increasingly visit with the principal intention of exploring British television and film locations. However, perhaps the most significant finding in relation to the aim of this study was that 75.8% of all respondents actually associate Port Isaac with a specific image, icon or renowned individual. The importance of the tourist destination image in influencing individual's perceptions and destination choice has been widely acknowledged and is borne out by this research.

Upon analysis, it became apparent that the majority of these images were either associated with those places depicted in *Doc Martin* (45.4%) or the series' lead actor, Martin Clunes (16.6%). Although this may infer that Port Isaac has made use of *Doc Martin* as a status symbol and uses Martin Clunes as a brand, this seems to have occurred without overt marketing *per se*, evident from the 91% of respondents who were unaware of any advertising and as one in four respondents perceived the level of *Doc Martin* promotion in Port Isaac as 'non-existent'. However, within this modern world of 'celebrities', as actor Martin Clunes is clearly juxtaposed with the locality of Port Isaac, it is still therefore argued that a certain iconic status has been achieved (Busby, Huang & Jarman, 2012). Port Isaac and Martin Clunes have become synonymous since *Doc Martin's* introduction in year 2004; which undoubtedly has created a complementary link in any future marketing of the destination despite the fact that currently very little has been done to take advantage of this apart from one local independent café (See Figure 1).

In terms of limitations, whilst the survey sample was respectable, researcher availability and place of residence precluded a year-round approach to the data collection. However, it is considered that findings would not have been significantly different even with peak month survey data.

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