



STORYTELLING AND SENSE OF PLACE

BEYOND THE RESTAURANT...

Dr. Gavin Urie
Edinburgh Napier University



“As a child, I was a very fussy eater. Cheese, bread, roast potatoes and carrots was about as far as I got

“As a child, I was a very fussy eater. Cheese, bread, roast potatoes and carrots was about as far as I got (and the carrots had to be chopped long-ways, I wouldn’t eat them round).”

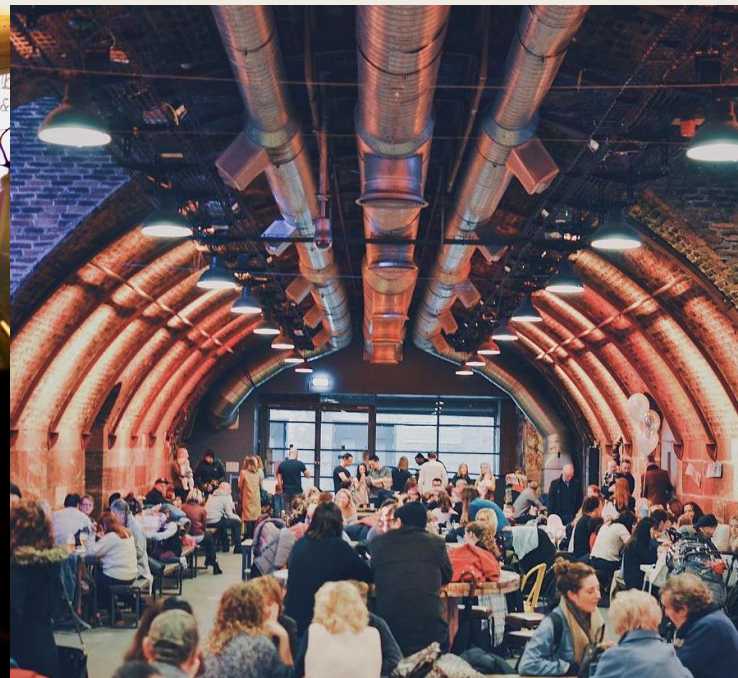
“I spend a lot of time in the kitchen and find it a creative, relaxing space.

“I spend a lot of time in the kitchen and find it a creative, relaxing space.

I began to explore new ways in which dining experiences were being held, organised and consumed around the UK.”

Research Interests

- Research focus lead to **social** events structured around the meal
- Online facilitation
- Supper Clubs, Pop-up Restaurants, Meetups
- Food Trucks, Festivals, Street Food, Special Events



GrubClub
Unlocking Hidden Dining Experiences

Edible
xperiences



Commensality

One of the most “*striking manifestations of human sociality*”

(Fischler, 2011: 529)



“meals are **memories**, milestones in our lives”

Rodgers (2011: 41)

“Foods are replete with meaning (...) some foods are for personal consumption, a private invocation of sentiment and memory, others are redolent of a sociality, a suggestion of belonging and a wider, shared experience of commensality

Morgan (2012, 191)

“it’s the oldest thing on earth isn’t it?

People sitting round in a circle and sharing some food.

It’s what you do to keep alive (...) its sharing, being good to somebody, it’s a pleasurable thing to do”

(Interview 8)

“I wanted to be a chef very early and did work in restaurants for a long time and got a bit disillusioned by the whole restaurant thing...

I was just working so many hours, I didn't really have a life... I wanted more interaction with the customers...

I wanted to be able to see the people I was cooking for. The reason I got into catering in the first place is because I enjoyed cooking for friends and family

(Interview 2)

What I love... the moment I love, is... it gets to Saturday night and I'm heating stuff up and tasting it and I'm like 'this is glorious! This is beautiful, I would pay money to come here!' and I think it's at that moment that I'm glad I'm able to share this with people

(Interview 3)

if you enjoy eating, that's the only prerequisite... and you enjoy talking to people - that's what makes it so popular (...) you have an opener, and a really easy opener, you are not going to get into a row (...) So that's maybe why it works. You don't need to have any great knowledge about it and you are not going to offend anybody

(Interview 12)

I think it's an immediate ice breaker... you taste something good, you do end up making eye contact in appreciation... at the very least! Yeah I think that's it... even bad food actually...

(Interview 21)

*‘Socially, we don’t make friends or see these people again, but that’s what I like, the **transient** and **temporary** meetings of people... it’s fun and there is no pressure.*

It’s like the one we told you about, we could have stayed there all night with the people we met at the table, but when the night came to an end we all said goodbye... and that was it...but that didn’t matter’

(Meal 28)

flickering moments of hospitality, “*little islands, magic touches, throwntogetherness*”

(Bell, 2012: 149)