

## **Introduction**

**Scott McCabe and Tim Gale**

We are very pleased to be able to present to you these proceedings of the conference “BACK TO THE FUTURE: Restating the Case for Tourism in Higher Education” held at Canterbury Cathedral Lodge in December 2010. The conference, as you will have seen from the cover photograph, took place in the midst of one of the harshest winter spells ever recorded in the UK. Canterbury and the cathedral especially looked absolutely magical in deep snow, a picture-postcard view of England at Christmas time with coloured lights and heavy snowfall framing a traditional idyll of Christmases past. The weather so severe that some delegates could not make it through the snow, but the atmosphere of the conference was warm and convivial as always, and we were delighted that so many delegates could make it, particularly those who had travelled from Brazil, Indonesia and Mediterranean Europe and this lent the conference with a feeling of cosy collegiality. This was against a backdrop of an uncertain future for higher education in general in the UK in the light of changes to funding causing Universities to fundamentally rethink their curricula. Hence the title of this conference, ‘restating the case for tourism in higher education’, reminding those who had been at the forefront of the development of tourism higher education of the challenges the subject faced in its nascent years. The keynote speech of Professor David Airey, an emeritus fellow of the ATHE, reminded us of the relative importance of our subject compared to more established subjects, in terms of student numbers, and research development. He also pointed out some relative weaknesses and posed questions, challenges and ideas to take the field forward. This certainly gave all the delegates food for thought over our conference dinner.

However, the papers presented in the conference parallel sessions did reflect the seriousness and quality of efforts in taking the tourism curriculum to new audiences and to new levels of professionalism. The papers that follow represent some of that great diversity of research being undertaken in Higher Education in Tourism in the UK, Europe and beyond. The variety of themes and diversity of research issues covered in the following papers reflects the multidisciplinary nature of our field and the breadth and complexity of tourism as a subject. Such is the diverse nature of the papers in this collection of papers, we have not attempted to theme them but have organised them alphabetically. One thread that appears to run through these papers is a theme of sustainability and responsibility in the industry and thus in tourism

education. From analyses of the development of new university studies in tourism in Europe, to integrating tourism in strategic management of historical towns, to the governance of sustainability in natural tourism in Brazil, to rural regeneration in Derbyshire, many of the following papers reflect the role that tourism in higher education has to play in making the case for sustainable, ethical, responsible and well-governed management practice in the industry.

We hope that you will enjoy reading the proceedings of this conference and find them stimulating and thought-provoking for your own research and educational practices.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Scott McCabe', with a horizontal line underneath.

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