The World Comes to Wales for the Weekend?
Assembling celebration and resistance at rural festivals

Dr. Sam Saville
Prof. Michael Woods
• Festivals research and literature
• Assemblage approach and methods
• Research findings: eating, drinking, walking, talking, singing and dancing!
• Conclusions
Festival Research

- Event management
- Social, economic and environmental impacts
- Experiences of festival goers
- Festivals and rural and urban regeneration
Festivals as ‘carnivalesque’
Festivals as assemblage?

De-Landian terminology (!)

Assemblages: components can perform material and/or expressive roles in one or multiple assemblages/sub-assemblages.
Exploring expressions of globalization

- Practices not just representations
- Observations and participation as well as interviews
Expressive Components

- Eating and Drinking
- Walking and Talking
- Singing and Dancing
- (Thinking and Feeling)
- (Buying and Selling)

In the interest of public safety we now conduct random bag searches. Thank you for your co-operation.
Eating and Drinking
OLD GRANARY
PIEROGI

- Baked PIEROGI House slaw & dip £7
- Baked PIEROGI Soup £7
- Boiled & pan-fried PIEROGI £7

- KOPYTKA (crispy Polish gnocchi) served with:
  - Herefordshire beef goulash
  - Wild mushroom sauce
  - BIGOS (Polish hunter's stew) served in a bread bowl

- Cream of tomato & basil SOUP £6
- Celery, spinach & tarragon SOUP £6
- Polish sour SOUP (Zurek) £7

Breakfast
- Super healthy PROSO MILLET porridge £6
  - A slow cooked, warming porridge

- Scrambled eggs £6
- Scrambled eggs with bacon, smoked bacon or mushrooms £6

- Boiled & pan-fried RUSKIE pierogi £6
- Baked pierogi £4

Gluten-free available!!!

Pierogi, not pasties!!!
Our delicious, Polish style baked pierogi are lovingly handcrafted yeast dough cases filled with a variety of gourmet fillings.
“There’s a lot of people from Thailand who they were born and brought up here, but their cultural background is Thai, and they make Thai as Thai people make it, but they make it using British local ingredients because that’s where they’re living, and to me that’s one of the most exciting things about being British at this point in time is that you have this vast cultural hotch-potch which is great”
The Green Bean
one pot cooking from around the world.

Today's Menu

Spanish Chicken

Caribbean Chicken

Massaman Curry

Persian Fusion

One pot cooking from Around the World
Wheat free Dairy free Gluten free

Breakfast

Tea
Coffee

Vegan

Gluten Free

Dietary Requirements

non-dairy
vegetarian
halal
keto

Allergen Information

Milk
Eggs
Wheat
Nuts
Soy
Fish
Shellfish
WYL CWRW CYMRAEG Y CWRT
COURTYARD WELSH BEER FESTIVAL
Walking and Talking
“Our programme is becoming a lot more inclusive. A bit more political... We’ve got the freedom because we’re independent. ... We can actually have a political agenda... We made a big installation that said Resist and it flashed and lit up at night when you powered it, and a play on the idea of resistance and electric resistance. Like political resistance... We had a petty protest where you made placards that little things that annoy you, like stop leaving all your hair in the plughole ... It was kind of this idea to empower”

Einstein’s Garden, Green Man Interview 3rd Nov 2017
“It’s not just pretty. It’s an industry. Whilst you’re coming to a rural area you shouldn’t think that you’re coming to necessarily recreational land. ...This is as industrialised as Wolverhampton or Manchester or Port Talbot. It’s just a different industry and I think that’s quite important to register.”

Hay Interview 13th Sept 2017
Singing and Dancing

“What is quite worrying is about the traditional dance. It’s not such good quality these days and not nearly as many... Because I think sometimes that some of the groups they are performing dances that they’ve performed for tourists ... We can tell the difference between a traditional dance and one that’s been choreographed and softened...”

Music and staging representative, Llangollen, Interview 5th Jan 2018
We’re trying to represent an international quality act... So headline English folk bands, Scottish, Irish, American and of course Welsh, but we’ll also try and represent one quality band from East Africa and West Africa, Latin America and the Middle East. One Klesma act. Maybe one blues or rock and roll kind of early American stuff. So we can get a balanced programme in that sense. We’ve also got to have enough American musicians, that is the background of our scene, all that old timer music, and obviously a big quota of local musicians as well.

Fire in the Mountain, Interview 8th February
Resistance and rejection of globalization

• Resistance through platforming political acts, organisations and campaigns

“We’re not constrained, like those at the BBC are by any pretence of balance. I’m totally uninterested in balance... but we went into festival business not politics.”

“What you can engineer is the make-up of the platform”

Hay Festival
“There’s a huge scene now, lots of ... multi-billion pounds international conglomerates that have taken over so many festivals. So we try to buck that trend. We publish our accounts online ... We’ve registered ourselves as a non-profit organisation. So we’re not there to make loads of money. We can’t be sold. We can’t be bought. We’ve insulated ourselves from the big business takeover”.

Fire in the Mountain
Cosmopolitan celebrations

- Festivals as spaces to explore different cultures
- Festivals specifically aiming to enable a cosmopolitan viewpoint
- Finding ways to create old ‘festival spirit’

“We’re very inclusive ... I think it’s more to do with an easy acceptance of difference, but I don’t necessarily think that’s a global thing. I just think that’s a human thing.”

Green Man, Interview  29th Nov 2017
Literature is about the other. The whole purpose of literature is to allow you... to imagine the world from someone else’s perspective. That’s a global thing.

Hay Festival

[I hope] “that we maintain the basic being of the Eisteddfod, which is getting people together from all parts of the world through music and dance. Highlighting the peace message”

Llangollen, Interview 24th April 2017
Rural roots
Conclusions

• Culture beyond representation
• Not wholly materially focussed
• Practice and process based approach of Assemblage – provides some balance
• Much more to be said – endless assemblages!