Preface

In the preface to his fascinating *Recent Earth History*, my mentor Claudio Vita-Finzi revealed that his book was an intended elephant that became a mouse. In producing *Rethinking Cultural Tourism*, I failed to follow Claudio’s good example, managing to conjure an elephant from my intended mouse. I must thank my editor at Edward Elgar, Katy Crossan, for her creativity in dealing with this transformation.

The space afforded by placing this book in the *Rethinking* series allowed me to diverge from my previous work. Although the text is the product of 30 years of research on cultural tourism, this book provides a radical departure from traditional approaches based on production and consumption. It has also been an opportunity to move beyond cultural tourism in a narrow sense, as culture produced for and consumed by tourists. The holistic view adopted here is important because the cultural tourism field is constantly expanding and changing, incorporating new cultural trends as it does so.

I make no apology for drawing extensively on my own research for this text. This is the material I know best, and it reflects my developing thinking on the subject. This book does not attempt to provide an objective view, rather a personal curation of information I consider useful for analysing the cultural tourism field. It reflects the positive sociology approach of an itinerant geographer turned jack of all trades. The approach is European in outlook, urban in content and focussed on contemporary culture rather than the past. This book attempts to develop new perspectives on cultural tourism rather than repeating analyses offered elsewhere.

The book presents a model that I hope will be useful for students and researchers in understanding and analysing cultural tourism as a field of practice. The main innovation lies in developing a ‘third generation’ practice approach which highlights the mechanisms through which cultural tourism practices are propagated and maintained.