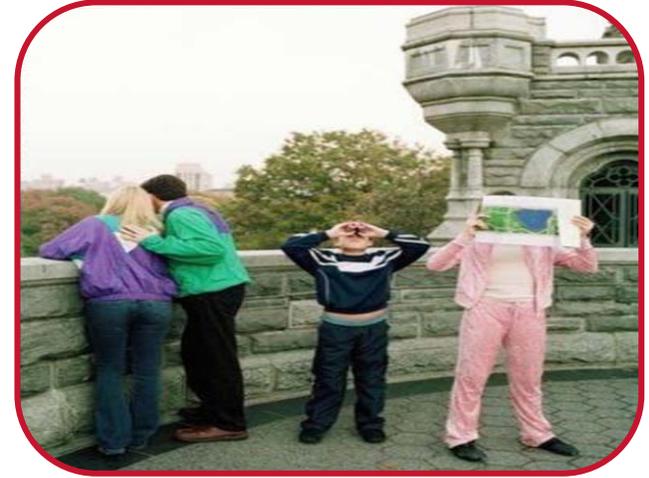


Broadening Access to the Historic Environment

- Understanding families from lower socio-economic groups



Case Study at Bolsover Castle

Presentation March 2009



ENGLISH HERITAGE

bdrc[®]

Key Findings – How to Break the Parent:Child Non-Participation Cycle

- Exploit positive childhood memories from school trips
 - Emphasise that children less likely to experience school trips to historic properties nowadays
- Challenge the 'boring' label
 - Overtly communicate physical activities, events, facilities
- Create a 'comfortable' atmosphere
 - Recognise that many will be out of their comfort zone
 - First impressions and the welcome on site are critical to enjoyment, recommendation and repeat visits
- For those with 'tangible' access barriers to visiting
 - Assistance or reassurance with transport, disability provision, expenditure commitments (it's a relatively low cost day out)
- Outreach work will be critical
 - Meeting likeminded people a major motivator
 - Helps this segment to feel comfortable



Key Findings – Implications for Product and Service

- **Children’s audio guide is very important for engagement**
 - Need to incorporate into any offer for this group and encourage take up (this group sometimes lack confidence) – within admission fee
 - Should allow flexibility in visit – explore where they want to
 - Is there a way of communicating child audio guide contents to adults without using audio guide themselves?
- **Teenagers technology obsessed**
 - Uploading audio guide version to mobile phones – keeps within comfort zone
- **Physical participation with adults of high appeal**
 - Dressing up, archery to name two examples
- **Some operational facilities more critical for this group**
 - Picnic facilities for low cost catering
 - Smoking area
 - Facilities for those with limiting disabilities more likely to be required among this sector
- **No hidden costs**
 - All inclusive admission
- **Meet their ‘historic’ product expectations**
 - Battles, Kings and Queens, see a typical castle



Key Findings – Implications for Communications Channels

- **Sector heavily into camping and caravanning**
 - Work with this sector to deliver messages
- **Sector highly outdoors focussed**
 - Seaside, parks, country parks, woodlands – usually free or low cost
 - Work with these destinations to deliver messages
- **Popular mass media is a key trigger for interest**
 - Especially TV e.g. Tudors
- **Local lifestyles**
 - Physical barriers to travel – lack of private transport, petrol costs
 - Tend to remain within ‘comfort zone’
 - Local media therefore critical, especially local newspapers
- **Sector is extremely risk averse**
 - Families tend to be anyway, but lower socio-economic groups (especially non-visitors) even more so
 - EH website key for delivering reassurances about visit ‘experience’ as well as operations
 - Online reviews becoming more important – look at Bolsover Castle on You Tube!



Presentation Content

- Key Findings
- Background and objectives
- Research approach
- Developing a family offer for lower socio-economic groups
- Relationship between childhood and adult heritage participation
- Conclusions and recommendations



Background

- 'Taking Part Survey' indicates that:
 - Lower socio-economic groups (SEG) less likely to visit heritage sites
 - Adults from lower SEG less likely to have visited as children
 - Children from lower SEG less likely to visit outside school trips
 - Lower SEG more likely to visit heritage sites as a family
- Other research supports hypothesis that child participation is strongest determinant of adult participation

Developing family offer for lower SEG likely to increase participation now and in future, with child participation extending to adulthood



Objectives

- Beyond 'Taking Part', to find out more about attitude towards and experiences of heritage sites among people from lower socio-economic groups. In particular:
 - Understand extent to which and why participation as a child impacts upon future participation as a family
 - With a view to developing a family offer for lower SEG
 -and understand what family offer would most likely break the child:adult cycle of non-attendance
- Ultimately contribute towards English Heritage and wider heritage sector policy in this area



Research Approach - Sample

- Case study at Bolsover Castle, Derbyshire set by English Heritage
- In depth research among 15 families from DE socio-economic groups
- All from local area (Chesterfield, Rotherham, Mansfield, Worksop, etc) but not visited Bolsover Castle in past five years
- Four research sessions, each consisting of four families (three in one of the groups), structured to facilitate understanding of relationship between child and adult participation and differences in attitudes by primary and secondary school age families

Heritage sites	Children 7-10 years	Children 11-15 years
Parents visited as child (take children regularly)	✓	
Parents visited as child (<u>do not</u> take children regularly)		✓
Parents <u>did not</u> visit as a child (take children regularly)		✓
Parents <u>did not</u> visit as child (<u>do not</u> take children regularly)	✓	

- Representation of single parent families and BME within groups



Research Approach - Method

1

Pre-Visit Focus Group



2

Accompanied Site Visit



3

Post-Visit Focus Group

Held off site in local meeting rooms

- Separate groups for adults and children
- Includes structured questionnaire element
- Duration around 1 hour
- Video/audio recorded

Insights:

- Attitudes to heritage sites, +ve and -ve
- Impact of childhood behaviour (for adults)
- Impact of parents (for children)
- Potential 'hooks' to encourage visit

Bolsover Castle

- Two hour visit
- Free to visit as paying visitor would visit
- Notes by visitor on thoughts as visit progresses
- Vox Pops during visit

Insights:

- Key drivers of visit experience
- Key touchpoints – highs and lows
- ...for both adults and children
- Understand dwell times
- Parents and children interaction

Held on site immediately post visit

- Separate groups for adults and children
- Duration around 1 hour
- Video/audio recorded

Insights:

- Key drivers of visit experience
- Attitudes towards interpretation
- What made or marred the visit
- What was good/not so good about the visit
- Impact of visit on future heritage behaviour
- Impact of visit on parent/child relationship



Developing a family offer for lower socio-economic groups

Communications Messages

Product and Service Issues



Communication Messages – Summary of Themes

Overarching theme is 'about family' rather than 'about site itself'

Good value family ticket

Brings history to life

See tradesmen's skills

The outdoor experience

Keep children entertained

Get children away from TV, computer
etc.

Something for range of child age groups

Delivers unusual memories

Transport

It's fun!!

Spend quality time together

Social contact

Within comfort zone

Relaxing, stress free, no crowds

Beyond the school visit

English history more important than
'local'



Communications Messages – Good value family ticket

- English Heritage presents competitive offer
 - Visitor Survey strong evidence for this
 - 2 adults, 3 children especially appealing as often larger families
- Many can afford it – just priorities
- Demonstrate comparables
 - Versus bowling, Alton Towers etc.
- Full day out



Communications Messages – Brings history to life

- Imagine what it was like to live there
- Experience the same views as they saw
- Helps children understand how the past influenced today
- Helps children understand how difficult life was
- No computers, designer labels



Examples of Good Practice – Bringing History to Life

Whitby Abbey

- Imagine what was like when not a ruin
- Audio guide

Black Country Living Museum

Eden Camp

- Go back in time
- Imagine what life was like

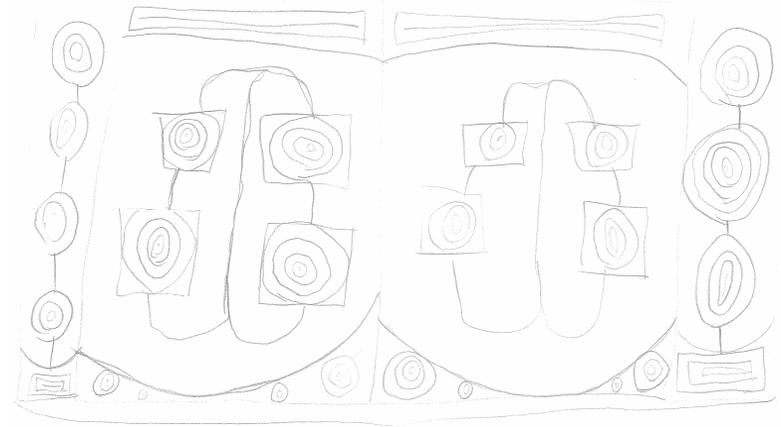
Museum of Childhood

- Children point things out



Communications Messages – See tradesmen’s skills

- High proportion of tradesmen in DE socio-economic groups
- Timber frames, joinery, welding etc.



Communications Messages – The outdoor experience

- English Heritage has inherent product to deliver (ruins = outdoors)
- Physical activity
- Exercise
- No concerns regarding touching things/breakages
- Open spaces to run around
- Beautiful views



Communications Messages – Keep children entertained

- Whether this means engaging them fully with the experience
-or more superficially keeping them occupied



Communications Messages – Get children away from TV, computer etc.

- These dominate many children's lives from this socio-economic group
- Many parents afraid of taking them out of this 'comfort' environment for fear of being blamed for 'boring' day out
- Appreciate that these consumables were not always around



Communications Messages – Something for range of child age groups

- Particular issue with this socio-economic group
 - Fragmented families, divorces, single parents, step-parents
 - Activities with extended families common
 - Often large families anyway
- We can offer something for all ages
- But ensure delivery first!



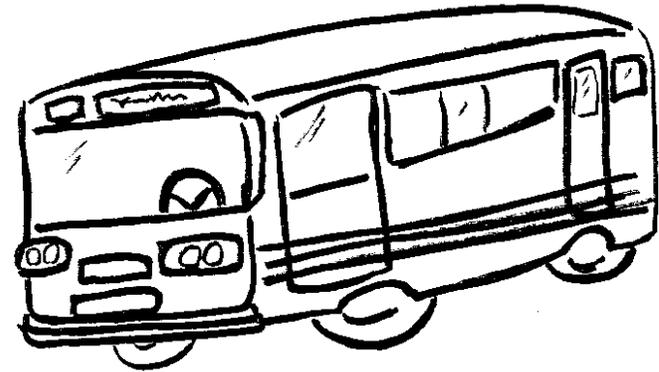
Communications Messages – Delivers unusual memories

- Children will tell school teachers and friends
- Will reminisce with adults they experienced with



Communications Messages – Transport

- Often no private car owned
- Perception that historic properties (especially English Heritage ‘castles’) are rural – poor public transport
- Can be turned into a positive – journey part of the experience (especially if used to this mode)
- Need to communicate:
 - Bus service timetables, frequency
 - Distances (including from drop off points to property itself)



Communications Messages – It's fun!!

- Whether 'pure' or 'through learning', this is universally important to this segment
 - Especially those who have never visited heritage properties – who perceive these visits as only 'to learn'
- Puts smiles on faces
- Creates 'buzz' within family



Communications Messages – Spend quality time together

- This segment often works long hours, with little time to spend with children
- Resulting desire to take part in activities alongside children



Communications Messages – Social contact

- This segment often has a relatively solitary life working long hours
- Resulting strong motivation for leisure time is to meet new people
- Coach tours appeal, for example



Communications Messages – Within comfort zone

- Tend to be more likely to be creatures of habit – holidays in similar destinations, local lifestyle
 - Out of necessity as well as choice
- Resulting small step to feel out of comfort zone
- Important that they are made to feel ‘at home’
 - Again, important to ensure delivery before communication – it’s all about the first impressions of the welcome



Communications Messages – Relaxing, stress free, no crowds

- Adults can relax, slow down - peaceful
- More sedate than usual leisure activities
 - Watching/playing football
 - Visiting theme parks
 - Bowling



Communications Messages – Beyond the school visit

- Some feel it is the school's sole responsibility to deliver heritage experiences/education
- Motivating message is that family visits allow freedom to independently discover



Communications Messages – English history more important than local

- Local angle not especially motivating
- The key is demonstrating the contribution the property made to English/British history
 - It gave us what we have today



Product and Service Issues – Summary of Themes

Audio guides

Physical activities

Live interpretation

Furnishing rooms – feeling of life

On Site Facilities

- Smokers
- Picnics
- Limiting illness/disabilities

Technology for teenagers

Fixed pre-conceptions of product

All inclusive admission

Lack of relationship with ‘characters’

Bolsover-specific hooks

- Terrace –ruins
- Kitchens
- Little Castle
- Fireplaces
- Star Chamber



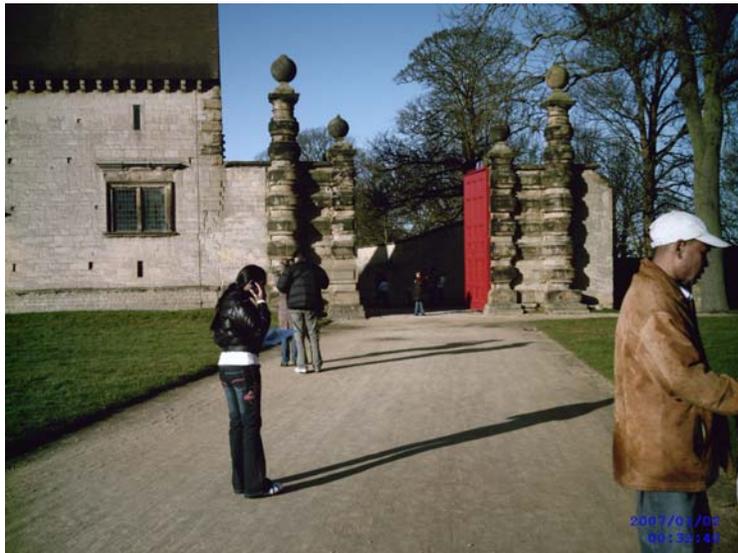
Product and Service Issues – Audio guides are key (I)

- Especially the children's version
 - Facilitates interaction with adults – ask adults questions, tell adults stories/facts
 - They are comfortable with technology
 - Limit reading requirements – either age or ability driven
- Must be flexible – allow children to explore where they want



Product and Service Issues – Audio guides are key (2)

- Must be included in admission fee
- Mixed view among adults
 - Some adults want to learn themselves (especially if non-heritage visitors)
 - Others feel they stop child:adult interaction
 - Also need to watch out for child safety



Product and Service Issues – Physical activities

- This segment tend to be outdoors focussed in lifestyle
- Running around in open spaces
- Play areas appeal – although desire to keep to authentic historical theme
- Also in the context of live interpretation events (see next slide)



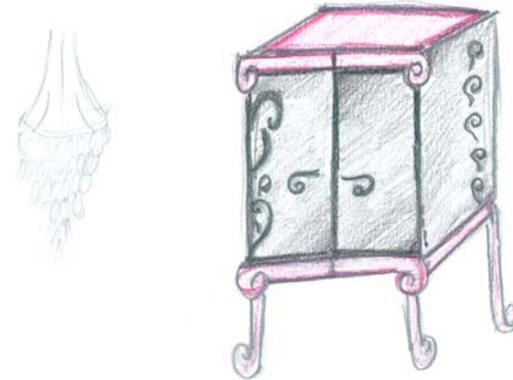
Product and Service Issues – Live interpretation

- Live interpreters to bring history to life
- Physical action important for this segment. Events such as:
 - Jousting
 - Sword fighting
 - Battle re-enactments
 - Real horses demonstrating dressage
- Participation also valued e.g.
 - Dressing up
 - Archery



Product and Service Issues – Furnished rooms for feeling of ‘life’

- Brings rooms to life e.g. table laid for a banquet
- Facilitates imagination
- Bolsover example of not delivering:
 - Could not relate to historical events and people
 - Leaves many unanswered questions about life in the castle
 - Felt empty, not lived
- Particular issue for lower socio-economic groups – often limited historical points of reference



Product and Service Issues – Facilities

- For smokers
 - Appreciate cannot smoke
 - But provide facility outside
- For picnics
 - Café is often out of price range (comparisons with McDonald's)
 - Picnics are the norm for this segment
- For limiting illness/disabilities
 - Over-represented within the lower socio-economic groups
 - Seats, ramps etc.



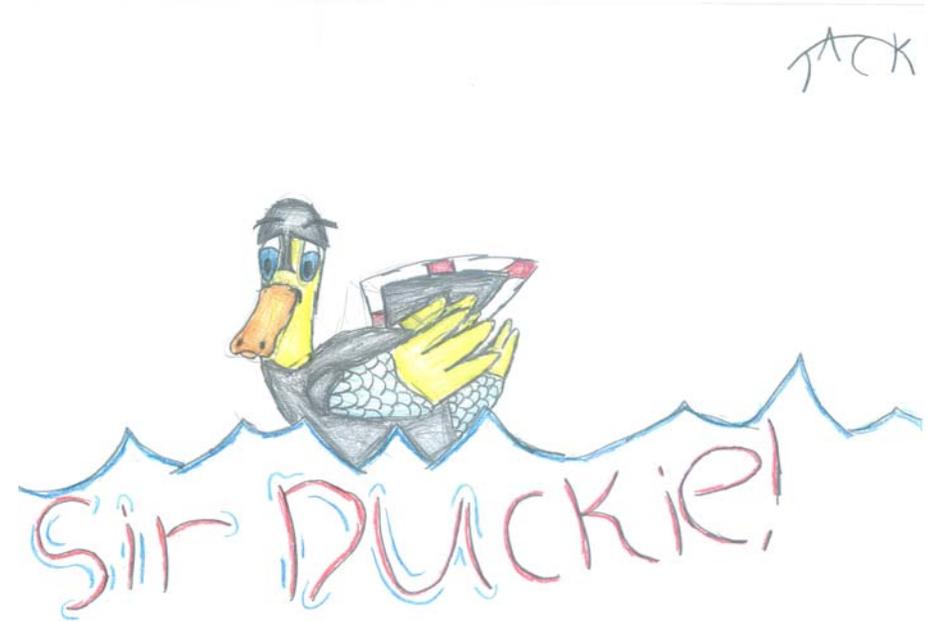
Product and Service Issues – Technology for teenagers

- Obsession with mobile phones, computers, MP3s, Nintendo DS, PSP etc.
- Mobile phone downloads ideal for engaging this segment?



Product and Service Issues – Fixed pre-conceptions of product

- For adults as well as children
- Preconceptions often fairly limited
 - Armour, knights, swords
 - Kings and Queens e.g. King Cavendish mentioned by one adult
- Desire to see 'typical' castle



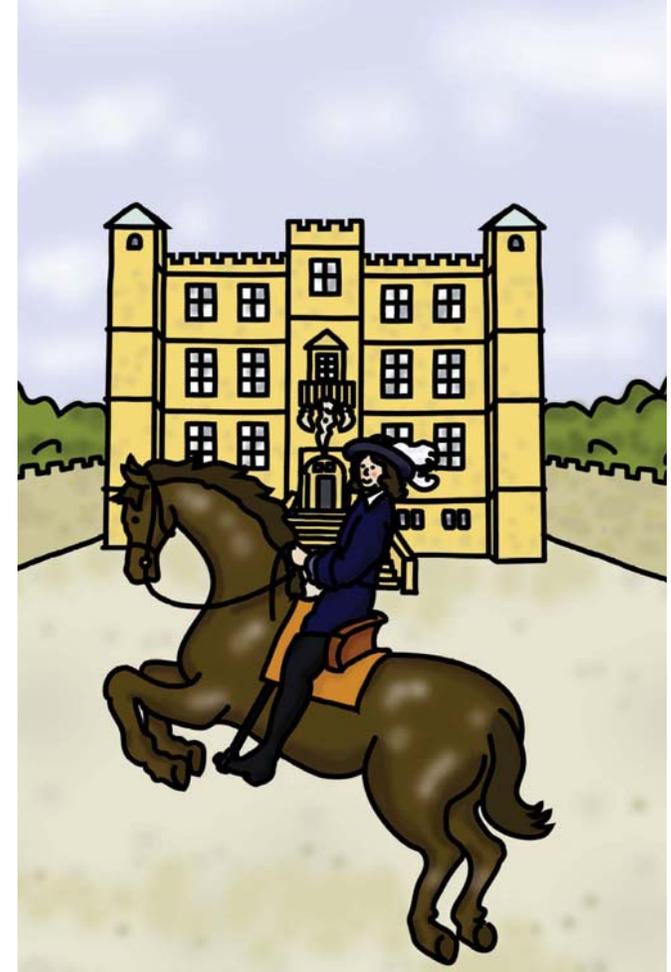
Product and Service Issues – All inclusive admission

- Many have set budget for the day out
- Do not want to let children down by inability to pay for hidden extras



Product and Service Issues – Lack of relationship with characters

- Low recall of specific characters, events that took place
- More interested in how people lived generally, lifestyles



Product and Service Issues – Bolsover-specific hooks (I)

- Terrace (ruins) fed imagination
- Kitchens
 - Can easily relate to today
 - Desire to see ‘working’ interpretation e.g. Tudor Cookery at Hampton Court Palace



Product and Service Issues – Bolsover-specific hooks (2)

- Little Castle
 - Finding the keys to Heaven
 - Star Chamber beautiful
 - Fountains also visually impressive
- Fireplaces



Relationship between childhood and adult heritage participation



Positive adult attitudes towards heritage and visiting heritage sites

STRONG AGREEMENT ACROSS ALL GROUPS

“I think it’s important that all children understand the history of this country”

“Visiting historic places helps us to understand our lives today”

“Historic places like castles and historic houses are fascinating places”

“I feel I should visit historic places as a family more often”



Widespread positive attitudes to value of heritage and desire to visit heritage assets



Evidence that adults see their children's attitudes as a barrier to visiting

17 out of 25 adults felt that they “enjoy visiting historic places more than their children do”



Reflects their own childhood attitudes
Much more likely to have enjoyed school trips (all agreed) than visiting with own family
(only 15 out of 22 agreed) - more freedom



Perception that their children must feel the same way as them, but have things changed?



Strong anecdotal evidence that key activity decision criteria is child enjoyment



It's also about making a visit seem 'fun'

Visited as children <u>and</u> as adults	"Visiting historic places is more about learning than fun"	<u>Not</u> visited as children and <u>not</u> as adults
Only 2 out of 8 agree		4 out of 5 agree

- How do we overcome the perception of 'lack of fun' for non-visitors from lower socio-economic groups ?



Overcoming perception of 'lack of fun'

- It's about perceptions rather than reality – most had a positive experience. Therefore about **communications** rather than product or service
- Effective actions likely to focus upon:
 - Generating confidence and self-esteem
 - Limiting the risk of a negative experience (among this highly risk averse segment)
 - Overtly communicated 'fun' events
- Generating confidence:
 - Group visits with like-minded peers – perhaps group visit offers communicated within appropriate environments such as sports/social clubs, benefit offices etc.
- Limiting risk:
 - Money back if they don't enjoy themselves?
 - Free DVDs in local press to convey 'fun'?
- Fun events – avoiding any emphasis on 'heritage'
 - e.g. Fool's School in local press



Understanding the childhood/adult relationship: – and how to break the cycle

Visited heritage sites as children,
now visit as a family



- What were positive childhood experiences that retain as parents?
- Are these the same reasons they now take their own family?

Did not visit as children,
not now as a family



- What were the reasons they never visited as a child?
- Are these the same reasons they now don't take their own family?

Did not visit as children,
now visit as a family



- Why do they now take their family?
- What happened to trigger their desire to visit?

Visited heritage sites as children,
not now as a family



- What were the negative childhood experiences?
- Are these the same reasons they now don't take their own family?



Visitor Groups – Pen Portraits

Visited heritage sites as children,
now visit as a family

- Enthusiastic about heritage
- Understand value of heritage to children
- Helps to appreciate their lives and where they are from
- Fosters sense of identity

Did not visit as children,
not now as a family

- Disengaged with heritage and lack of experience
- Lack of confidence and self esteem
- More comfortable, in control of other family activities
- Too much risk as never experienced (+ family/DE risks)

How do we break the cycle?

Did not visit as children,
now visit as a family

- Confidence, desire to give children what they didn't have (only school trips)
- Enough memories of school trips to want to compensate for lack
- But makes adults selfish in visit – they want to learn too
- Force children to visit

But there are dangers

Visited heritage sites as children,
not now as a family

- Enthusiastic about heritage
- 'Real' visit barriers – transport, financial, family
- Engenders feelings of guilt



Impact of childhood & family behaviour on perceptions and experience of HERITAGE sites (I)

Visited as children, Visit as family

Positive experiences as child

Understand from childhood that experience can be fun
Understand as parents that heritage can be a conduit to wider socio-economic benefits
– sense of place, identity, self-worth / confidence building, well-rounded people
Children tend to therefore be more engaged with life's experiences (and therefore heritage)

Communications messages

Helping your children to 'grow' as people
Helping children appreciate what they have and where they have come from

Visited as children, Do Not visit as family

Positive experiences as child

Understand from childhood that experience can be fun
Understand as parents that heritage can be a conduit to wider socio-economic benefits
...but feel it is schools responsibility to educate
Real financial / social or perceptual barriers to visiting - feel guilty can't take their children

Communications messages

Should be highly value for money focussed
Family visit can provide other benefits than school visits – quality time together



Impact of childhood & family behaviour on perceptions and experience of HERITAGE sites (2)

Did not visit as children, Visit as family

Adult learners

Not only want to educate children, but also themselves
Learned value of heritage as adult, want to share this with their children
Hope that their children will then want to show their children
Focus is on individual learning rather than fun
Children feel forced to learn – therefore rather disengaged

Communications messages/product

Encouraging adult and child shared participation activities
The best way to learn is through fun – be confident in this

Did not visit as children, Do not visit as family

Lack of confidence and self-esteem

More comfortable with other leisure activities
Least likely to venture out of their comfort zone (heritage is certainly 'uncomfortable')
More resigned to what life has dealt them
They do not belong with the society types that visit heritage sites

Communications messages/product

Encourage visiting with social peers
Heritage sites are welcoming



Visited heritage sites as children, now visit as family

What were positive experiences retained as parents? Why take own family now?

- Show children what you enjoyed
 - Local places
 - Show off knowledge to children
- Sense of responsibility to future generations
 - We must bring our kids or they won't bring theirs
- Encourages well rounded individual
 - Different experience from PSP, computer etc.



Did not visit heritage sites as children, not now as family

What were reasons they never visited as children? Why don't they now take own family?

- As child, did other activities with family (heritage considered less mainstream than today):
 - Sports, outdoors, seaside visits
 - Visits to extended family (BME)
- Other free time spent outdoors, at youth clubs
- As adult:
 - Lack of confidence, self-esteem
 - Too worried about risk
 - Tend to give in children's short term desires more
 - Giving children opportunities they didn't have are hobby/ activity club based. Heritage not priority
 -maybe more difficult personal circumstances



Did not visit heritage sites as children, now visit as family

What were reasons never visited as children? Why take own family now?

- As children, felt they missed out:
 - Financial issues for parents, large families made days out expensive
 - Difficult to organise, parents working hours
 - Different experiences mainstream in those days e.g. trips to the beach
- Give children what they did not have
- Compensate for lack of school trips today
- Overriding desire to be a good parent
 - Aware of cycle of parent:child non-participation relationship and want to break it
 - See how society has advanced, how we got to where we are
- Stimulated by mass media history e.g. TV programmes



Did not visit heritage sites as children, now visit as family

- But there is an inherent danger that this group will become a new type of ‘visited as children, but not as adults’ group
 - Adult learners sub-consciously disengaging their children from heritage
 - Forcing children to visit and then failing to engage with them during the visit



Visited heritage sites as children, not now visit as family

What were negative childhood experiences? Why don't take own family now?

- Not really due to negative childhood experiences
- More about current personal circumstances – financial or social
- Feelings of guilt

**MEGA
TITLES**



Children's school versus family preferences

- Strong tendency to feel that they prefer visiting with family than school
 - Different to how adults tended to feel about their own childhood experiences – more likely to prefer school
 - School trips used to be fun; now stymied by rules and regulations such as Health and Safety
 - Leisure time with parents now more scarce so appreciated more by modern children

