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Frontiers of the Roman Empire
inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2005

Frontiers of the Roman Empire World Heritage Site

Hadrian's Wall

Interpretation Framework

Primary Theme:
The north-west frontier of the Roman Empire

Public Engagement Appendix

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1. Public engagement research – methodology

1.1 Purpose and aims

Hadrian's Wall Heritage Limited (HWHL) commissioned the Centre for Interpretation Studies, Perth College-UHI and Zebra Square to carry out a programme of public engagement in association with the Frontiers of the Roman Empire World Heritage Site - Hadrian's Wall Interpretation Framework – the north-west frontier of the Roman Empire.

The purpose of the research was to explore and measure the views of a number of different audiences and stakeholders, all of whom are important to the future sustainability of Hadrian's Wall as an overall 'attraction' and to all of the individual sites.

As well as informing the development of the Interpretation Framework, it was hoped that the information generated through the research will be useful to individual sites along Hadrian's Wall.

The research, particularly in terms of target audiences, was informed by the market data and audience research already in existence. As such, the public engagement research aimed to add to existing knowledge, providing a greater level of detail than previously existed – particularly in respect of visitor and non-visitor perceptions of Hadrian's Wall and the visitor experience.

The four main aims of the public engagement were to:

- Identify needs across visitor and non-visitor groups at a site level (what do visitors want from sites?)
- Identify needs across visitor and non-visitor groups at a macro level (what do visitors want from a visit to Hadrian's Wall Country?)
- To understand how best to meet these needs
- Identify opportunities to broaden the scope of the interpretive offer thereby enhancing audience understanding of the World Heritage Site (WHS) and the potential for development of a differentiated and complementary visitor offer at different sites

1.2 Target audiences

Review of existing audience research, discussion with the site project teams (Housesteads, Tullie House Museum, Roman Vindolanda and Roman Army Museum), and wider consultation with organisations along Hadrian's Wall suggested that common key audiences are:

- Older people visiting with children
- Families

These audiences might be local, regional or national in origin.

A need for research to be undertaken with commercial group organisers, specifically coach operators, was also identified. Although walkers/ramblers were identified as a potential target audience, discussion with the Steering Group identified that walkers/ramblers were not a key focus of this project and therefore not a target audience for the research – an understanding proven during the research exercise.

1.3 Approach

The research was undertaken in two parts:

Part 1 – Qualitative research: In-depth qualitative research to explore current knowledge and perceptions of Hadrian’s Wall, reactions to the overall Interpretation Framework and audience responses and needs at a macro level.

Methods:

- Focus groups
- On-site interviews
- First-time visits
- Telephone interviews
- Stakeholder consultation

Part 2 – Quantitative research: Measuring reactions to the themes in the Interpretation Framework, awareness, knowledge and perceptions. Methods:

- Telephone survey

1.3.1 Part 1 – Qualitative research

Aim: To better understand the site and its offer/proposed offer from the perspective of visitors and potential visitors.

Focus groups

It was originally proposed to conduct six focus groups – four on-site and two off-site. However, due to difficulties in recruiting to the on-site focus groups from both within and outside the local area (as was required by the project), the approach was adjusted to four off-site focus groups held in Newcastle (x2), Manchester (x1) and Edinburgh (x1).

All off-site groups used display boards depicting Hadrian’s Wall, World Heritage Site status and visualisations of the proposed themes to stimulate responses. A discussion guide was developed in conjunction with the Steering Group to direct the focus group discussions.

Participants

Participants were parents who had children older than 9 years of age and older people with grandchildren. All regularly visited heritage sites for day trips or weekends away. Three of the groups (Newcastle (x1), Manchester (x1) and Edinburgh (x1)) had never visited Hadrian's Wall before, or had not been for many years. Participants in one group (Newcastle (x1)) had visited Hadrian's Wall within the last two years.

On-site interviews

As a result of difficulties in recruiting to on-site focus groups, on-site interviews were identified in consultation with the Steering Group as the most effective alternative means by which to collect both the qualitative and quantitative data required. Given the development stage of various projects along Hadrian's Wall, Housesteads was selected as the most appropriate site for this research. Participants were recruited on-site.

First-time visits

In addition to on-site interviews of visitors to Housesteads, a small sample of people who had not previously visited Housesteads were asked to visit and provide feedback.

Telephone interviews

In addition to the above visitor and non-visitor research, it was identified that research should be undertaken with a key 'customer' and target audience for Hadrian's Wall – coach operators. Telephone interview was identified as the most appropriate method to source qualitative feedback from coach operators. This research was undertaken following completion of the visitor and non-visitor research.

Stakeholder consultation

Throughout 2009-10 a series of 1:1 meetings took place with staff in stakeholder organisations with responsibility for the conservation, presentation, management and marketing. The purpose of these meetings was to ascertain staff perceptions of existing arrangements and issues. In early 2010, two workshops were held (18 and 25 February) to feedback the results of the public engagement exercise and to secure support for the Interpretation Framework.

1.3.2 Part 2 – Quantitative research

Aims: To measure the potential impact of changes to sites and to all aspects of the visitor offer in terms of likelihood to visit;
Which proposed changes/aspects of the offer would be most popular amongst visitors/potential visitors?

In order to measure interest in the proposed Interpretation Framework themes and to measure more general issues such as awareness and perceptions of Hadrian's Wall, knowledge of the 'Romans' and interest in different forms of interpretation, a telephone survey was undertaken.

The target was to gather a large and robust sample of between 300-400 completed interviews. This enabled data to be analysed according to various visitor and potential visitor types.

Participants were selected based on the current and desired visitor profile – families and older people. A mixture of visitors and non-visitors was selected.

The following sections provide summary results and findings of the research.

2. Public engagement research – key findings

2.1 Introduction

Findings from the qualitative and quantitative research are summarised in the following section. Taking an issues-based approach, it explores the main findings of the research and identifies key issues to be addressed through the Interpretation Framework.

2.2 Audience perceptions of Hadrian's Wall

Hadrian's Wall is not well known and is not perceived as an attractive or easy place to visit.

Consultation with those working in organisations along Hadrian's Wall revealed a commonly held assumption that the general public knows about/is familiar with Hadrian's Wall – what it is, where it is and its historical importance. The research findings strongly contradict this.

The majority of non-visitor participants in the focus groups and telephone survey demonstrated little knowledge of Hadrian's Wall, best demonstrated by responses to question 8 of the telephone survey:

"I am going to say a name of an area in Britain and I would like you to tell me what words or images come to mind when I say it: Hadrian's Wall:"

"Scotland. The wall dividing Scotland from England"

"Romans"

"You can see it from space"

"I didn't realise that there were different places along it to go to. I thought it was all just the same"

"The edging around Scotland"

"I don't know what there will be there I imagine there will be a few bits of wall and a few plaques"

"I imagine I will get there and there will just be a bit of wall – after driving 100 miles. I don't know how you will go and see it. Where do you park?"

"Ancient monument"

"Nothing"

"Never heard of it"

Although some visitor and non-visitor participants in the two Newcastle focus groups were more aware of Hadrian's Wall, the majority of visitor and non-visitor participants in the focus groups and telephone survey were unaware of Hadrian's Wall and the various attractions along its length, many describing it as "a wall".

However, when informed of the various sites to visit and things to do along Hadrian's Wall, both focus group and telephone survey participants responded very positively. Some 43% of telephone participants knew that there were different sites along

Hadrian's Wall. Of those unaware of this, 77% thought this was a motivating reason to visit.

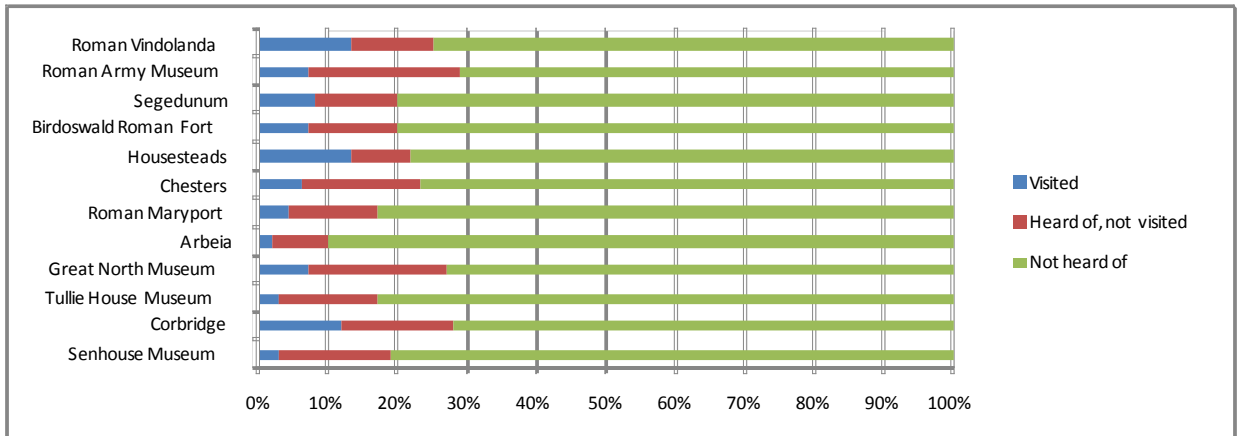


Figure 1: Usage and awareness of sites along Hadrian's Wall (base 307)¹

The name of the monument, Hadrian's Wall, and the use of this name (without any other descriptor or qualifier) in marketing and wider communications appears to play a role in audience perceptions of the Hadrian's Wall visitor offer. Many focus group participants questioned why they would be asked to visit a wall, the name clearly giving the impression there is little to attract or do once there.

Together with a further group of responses to question 8 of the telephone survey that demonstrate general audience perceptions of the Hadrian's Wall environment (listed below), it is clear that Hadrian's Wall has a number of barriers to overcome if audiences are to be developed and visitor numbers increased.

- "Open spaces"***
- "Bleak landscape"***
- "Remote"***
- "Old"***
- "Stone and ruins"***
- "Desolate"***
- "Windy"***
- "Cold and bleak"***
- "Wild, open spaces"***
- "Rolling hills"***
- "Long"***
- "Green fields"***
- "Moorland"***

A review of marketing literature produced for Hadrian's Wall, the north-west and north-east, including print, advertisements and websites, reveals the dominant use of images

¹ Results for Arbeia were unexpectedly low and may be linked to the renaming of the site, formerly known as South Shields, 20 years ago. Although an historic name change, it appears that people's knowledge of Roman history gained through their early year's education may still be having an impact on current site knowledge and visitation.

reflected in the telephone survey responses – open, empty and wild landscapes with no human settlements, activities, things to do or people.



Milecastle 37 and Crag Lough, Milecastle 39, Hadrian's Wall, Northumberland
© Roger Clegg

Although such images and landscapes will appeal to some audiences, for example, walkers along the Hadrian's Wall Path, for the target audiences of this research and the sites along Hadrian's Wall, it is clear that lack of awareness of Hadrian's Wall and its associated sites, perceived absence of attractions and things to do and poor perception of the environment combine to mean that a visit to Hadrian's Wall is expected to be "hard work", with other locations being easier to visit.

In spite of this, this research has identified that improved awareness of the various attractions has a significant impact on motivation to visit. In particular, participants of the focus groups expressed surprise that they were not made more aware of the various attractions and the variety of things to do along Hadrian's Wall.

In order to address these issues, the Interpretation Framework for the north-west frontier of the Roman Frontier should:

- Identify ways in which the interpretation of Hadrian's Wall can better promote awareness of the wider Roman Frontier sites and stories thus broadening the appeal and changing the perception of Hadrian's Wall
- Indicate that marketing, advertising, public relations (PR) and wider communications should highlight the breadth of the Hadrian's Wall visitor offer and the many sites along the Roman Frontier
- Understand that marketing strategies and campaigns need to be targeted at all relevant target audiences so that the interests of all businesses and communities along Hadrian's Wall are met in a balanced way that supports the delivery of the World Heritage Site Management Plan
- Make clear proposals for new photography of Hadrian's Wall, to include:
 - Year-round images of the sites and landscape which show the environment in all weather conditions
 - Images of people of all ages at sites and within the landscape

2.3 The opportunity

Widening the interpretive offer to encompass the story of the Roman Frontier provides a clear opportunity to broaden the visitor offer and start to address issues of perception, appeal and visitor numbers.

In 2005, Hadrian's Wall became part of the transnational Frontiers of the Roman Empire World Heritage Site, currently comprising Hadrian's Wall, the German Limes and the Antonine Wall. The Hadrian's Wall element extends over 118 km and includes the Wall itself with directly associated features, the frontier defences extending down the Cumbrian coast and several outpost forts to the north. In effect, Hadrian's Wall forms "the north-west frontier of the Roman Empire".

Consultation with staff in organisations along Hadrian's Wall revealed that some individuals were unaware of the change and its implications for the presentation and interpretation of Hadrian's Wall.

This lack of knowledge was reflected in focus group participants for whom on first mention "the north-west frontier of the Roman Empire" was not a known term and nor was Hadrian's Wall understood as a frontier or an edge of the Roman Empire:

"So there weren't countries or people outside the Wall? So the countries were different to how it is now?"

"I just thought that you were in the Roman Empire wherever you lived."

"So was it different for people inside the Empire compared to people outside?"

Significantly, when explained, the idea of Hadrian's Wall forming part of a frontier between the Roman Empire and the non-Roman world held immediate fascination for all focus group participants. Unprompted, participants compared Hadrian's Wall to known modern frontiers, walls and barriers built to separate people for political, social and financial purposes; participants were able to relate contemporary issues and troubles to the past and, in doing so, could see the Roman world as complex and many-sided – just as they view twentieth-century history and the modern world as studied at school and college.

This immediate and significant change in participants' knowledge and perception of Hadrian's Wall suggests how public knowledge and appreciation of the Hadrian's Wall WHS might be improved through site presentation and interpretation. By interpreting Hadrian's Wall and its associated sites as the north-west frontier instead of a narrow focus on the Wall and its archaeology, the visitor offer is immediately enlarged. Thereafter, through the development of new and/or refreshed attractions that focus on broadening the themes and stories that can be experienced, the Hadrian's Wall visitor offer will be significantly improved. These new experiences will deliver a more appealing, differentiated visitor offer, adding value and motivation to visit Hadrian's Wall. At the same time audiences will have the opportunity to understand the 'bigger

picture', empowering them to make sense of Hadrian's Wall, its many sites and the history and events that left a legacy now celebrated in WHS status.

It follows that if sites were interpreted to better communicate the story of the north-west frontier, wider communications, marketing and PR activities would need to adapt to reflect this focus. Thus, whilst retaining the name of Hadrian's Wall and Hadrian's Wall Country, future communications and PR activities should promote the wider story of the north-west frontier and the multiplicity of stories this encompasses that will appeal to the widest possible audiences – local, national and international.

Over time, the commitment by all those with an interest in the conservation, presentation and interpretation of Hadrian's Wall to the development of public understanding of the north-west frontier could lead to a significant change in public appreciation, visitation and valuing of the Hadrian's Wall, helping achieve the universal values that underpin the inscription of the site and the objectives of the WHS Management Plan.

In order to address these issues, the Interpretation Framework for the Roman Frontier should:

- Identify how the interpretive concept of the north-west frontier can be embedded into the interpretation of Hadrian's Wall, its associated sites and the wider landscape

2.4 Awareness of World Heritage Site status

World Heritage Site status is not widely known, understood or valued.

Focus group and telephone survey responses suggest that World Heritage Status is not fully understood and is generally linked to attractions outside of the UK:

"If you are on holiday and you see that there is a World Heritage site, you would want to go and see it and you do think it will be something special. But I don't think of sites like that as being in the UK."

- 55% of respondents in the telephone survey were aware that Hadrian's Wall is a world heritage site; 62% who were unaware thought that this might encourage them to visit
- 22% knew that more Roman objects had been excavated along Hadrian's Wall than anywhere else in Britain, including some of the most important finds in Europe. Of those unaware of this, 72% thought it a motivating reason to visit

Whilst these figures demonstrate a general lack of awareness of the heritage assets and their significance, the impact of increased awareness is clear. This data challenges traditional assumptions that people are aware of and know of the historical importance of Hadrian's Wall. The issue is one of ensuring that a larger population of potential

visitors (and non-visitors) are made aware of Hadrian's Wall's WHS status and its significance.

In order to address these issues, the Interpretation Framework for the Roman Frontier should:

- Identify how the universal values implicit in the World Heritage Site designation can be better communicated and promoted through site presentation and interpretation and wider information and marketing materials

2.5 Knowledge of Roman history is a key factor

People's knowledge of Roman History appears to be shaped by early years education and this has an impact on their understanding, perception of and likelihood to visit Hadrian's Wall.

The public engagement exercise revealed that participants had a limited knowledge of Roman history, including why the Romans came to Britain, why Hadrian's Wall was built and what life was like before and after the Romans:

"I know that the Wall was built to keep out the Scots but I have never thought about why the Romans came or what was here before."

"Where does it run from? What did it look like? I am ashamed to say that I don't even know the basics about Hadrian's Wall."

Although this lack of knowledge was common in non-visitor participants, it was echoed to a lesser extent in participants who had visited Hadrian's Wall. Participants in the Newcastle focus groups demonstrated the most knowledge although this did not equate to visiting Hadrian's Wall.

In addition, focus group responses suggest that Roman history is understood as facts rather than different viewpoints, ideas or people:

"Maybe it's the age you get taught the Romans – in primary school. When you are older and you learn about the Second or First World War you have discussions and you get to know the different reasons why people did things and all the different viewpoints. In Roman history, it is 'this happened' and 'so-and-so did that'."

It appears that having studied Roman history early within their education, participants (now parents and grandparents) remembered very little, viewing Roman history as a very long time ago, and encountered in a distant and largely forgotten part of their schooling. As such, the majority of participants found it difficult to relate to Hadrian's Wall. So distant is their learning, and the Roman period, that combined with limited awareness raising opportunities, it appears not to enter their minds to visit.

“It was all so long ago. Battles and armies and not the people. I don’t think knowing about the Romans tells you much about life today.”

“It is only now that we have talked about this that I have thought about the Berlin Wall. I never thought about Hadrian’s Wall in the same way because it is from so long ago.”

In order to address these issues, the Interpretation Framework for the Roman Frontier should:

- Recognise that people’s knowledge of Roman history might be limited and that interpretation should seek to create a framework in which knowledge can be gained, synthesised and developed across the broadest range of audiences

All proposed themes for the Interpretation Framework tested well with focus group and telephone survey participants as well as with community and organisation consultees. Research participants and consultees tended to suggest that each theme was interrelated and should be communicated through stories of people so that they could better relate to and understand each theme. Media was also felt to be an important factor in the delivery of each theme.

In the telephone survey, all themes scored highly with respondents saying each theme was a good idea and would encourage them to visit or come back to Hadrian’s Wall – higher than is generally found in such research. However, themes of Frontier Lives and Before and After had the most universal appeal across the sample.

In the focus groups, whilst all themes had appeal, some were more immediately appealing, with others becoming more appealing and attracting stronger interest with increased awareness. This seems to reflect the general lack of awareness of Roman history, of Hadrian’s Wall and its sites, and the need for sites to provide a range of themes and experiences that reflect the range of audiences and their needs.

Overall, the themes of Walls and Barriers and Edge of Empire appealed most to older respondents who were more likely to have previously visited Hadrian’s Wall, echoing focus group participants who thought these themes would appeal best to adults and older children. This finding suggests the suitability of these themes for Housesteads, whose visitors are older and may be English Heritage or National Trust members.

The Edge of Empire theme, in particular, attracted strong responses in the focus groups:

“I think this is a really good idea to make you think of the Wall as part of a bigger picture.”

“That is really fascinating!”

“It’s a brilliant concept.”

“I like things to be quite thought provoking, to make me think.”

“I like this idea: the Romans around the world.”

Given that participants were also interested in themes of Before and After and Walls and Barriers, it appears that the idea of a frontier, of dividing people and of conquest is interesting to people but not the bare facts about frontiers of the Roman empire. There is evidence that people do engage emotionally with the idea of a lonely, cold Roman looking out across the empty landscape as evidenced by W H Auden’s 1937 poem *Roman Wall Blues*. However, the issue is one of how the idea of a frontier can be interpreted in an engaging way. This is especially important given the positive responses to this theme gathered at Housesteads where this theme might be concentrated.

The focus groups highlighted that all themes are interrelated and that it is not the theme alone which determines their appeal. Participants felt that all themes could be highly appealing if presented well and interactively. Using ‘People’ and examples of Before and After helped respondents to connect with all themes. This shows that presenting themes that enable people to connect with their own life experiences are most effective and accessible – confirming the importance of adopting fundamental principles of good interpretation within the Interpretation Framework and its implementation.

Figure 2, below, shows the percentage of telephone survey respondents who said each factor was a good idea and would encourage them to visit or come back to Hadrian’s Wall. All scored highly, but “having different experiences and different stories along the Wall” and “focusing on people, lives and the evidence left behind” scored most highly. These results support the principles of clearly differentiating each site along Hadrian’s Wall and presenting themes that connect with visitors, for instance by focusing on stories of people and life along the frontier as opposed to objects, sites, and archaeology.

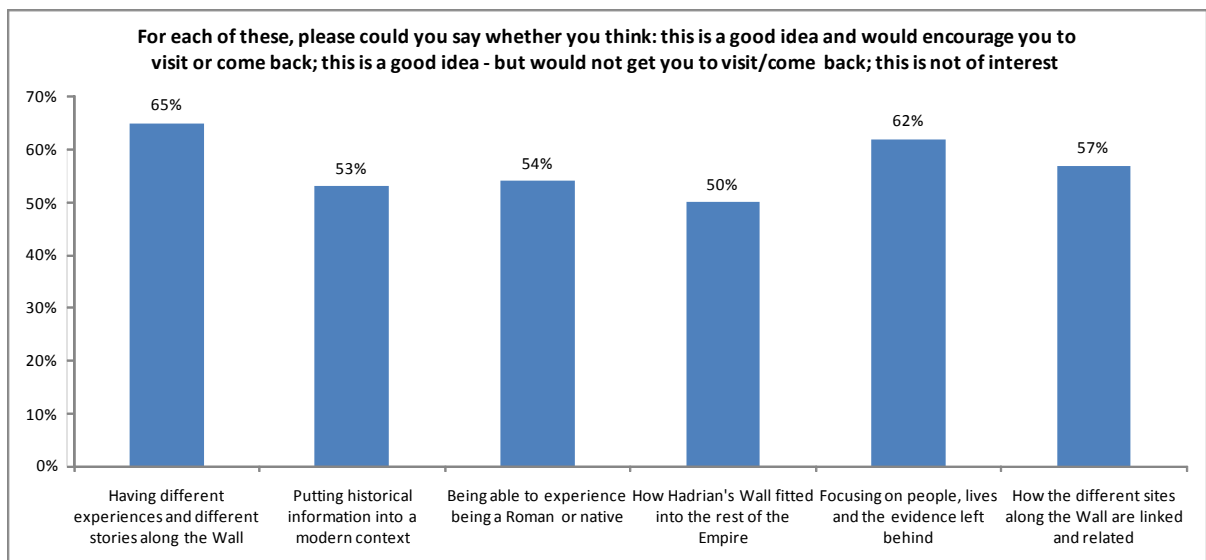


Figure 2: Reactions to the principles of the Interpretation Framework

Telephone survey responses suggest that a wide range of media was liked. Visitors with children under 16 were much more likely to want events, costumed interpreters, hands-on activities and children’s trails. The ideal ‘offer’ would be a combination of different media that provided interest for all the family.

The data is interesting in that responses reflect the media principally used to interpret historic and archaeological sites and belies the popularity of reconstructions at sites such as Roman Vindolanda, Arbeia and Segedunum and sites that have recently introduced multimedia technology such as Culloden. Therefore, familiarity with various media may have had an influence on responses.

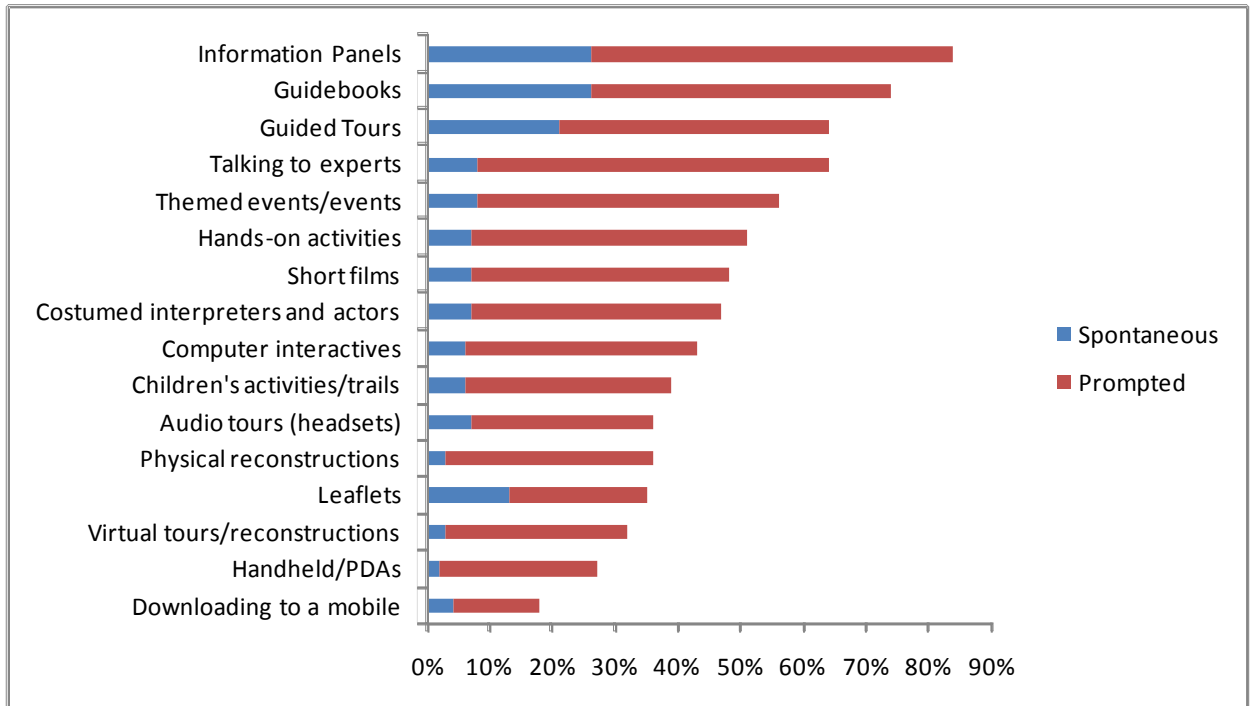


Figure 3: Responses to interpretive media

2.6 Research with visitors and non-visitors is needed

Research with non-visitors to Hadrian’s Wall has produced findings that challenge existing audience research.

Two types of research were undertaken at Housesteads: on-site interviews with visitors and first-time visits with non-visitors. Whilst the results of the former mirrored those of English Heritage visitor surveys over past years, the latter revealed clear issues with existing site management, presentation and management arrangements.

This has highlighted the need for organisations looking to develop audiences for the historic environment and Hadrian’s Wall to undertake research with non-visitors to identify their knowledge, perceptions and needs. Only if these are better recognised and understood can an audience development agenda be pursued along Hadrian’s Wall. Given the decline in existing visitor numbers, it is vital that all organisations along Hadrian’s Wall better recognise and respond to the needs of all audiences if new and future audiences upon whom the long term sustainability the World Heritage Site depends are to be encouraged to visit Hadrian’s Wall.

3. Focus group research

This section provides a summary of the focus group research and includes four reports for the individual focus groups.

Names of participants have been replaced with a participant number system.

3.1 Summary and key findings

3.1.1 Respondent profile

Four focus groups took place at three different locations. Manchester (x1), Edinburgh (x1) and Newcastle (x2).

- Participants were parents who had children older than 9, and older people with grandchildren
- All regularly went to heritage sites for day trips or weekends away
- Three of the groups had never visited Hadrian's Wall before, or had not been for many years
- Respondents in one group had visited the site within the last two years

3.1.2 Context

In all of the groups, respondents had limited knowledge of the Roman history surrounding Hadrian's Wall. There was a lack of understanding of why Hadrian's Wall had been built and what happened along it.

"I feel ashamed I don't know much about this at all."

- Respondents were unaware that within Roman history there were different viewpoints and different stories. Most people had experienced Roman history at school as a series of facts lacking any discourse
- Participants hadn't made any connections with Hadrian's Wall and how it relates to modern ideas of barriers or modern empires
- Most respondents thought that Hadrian's Wall had been built to keep out the Scots
- None of the respondents had any clear understanding of why the Romans came to Britain and how long they stayed

"The Romans built the wall to keep out us Scots, I don't know what they came over for in the first place. I'd never really thought about it!"

- There was a general lack of awareness of the different sites along Hadrian's Wall, and what they had to offer:

“I just thought it was a wall and a bit boring, I didn’t realise there were different places to go, I thought it was all the same.”

“I don’t know what there will be there, I imagine a few bits of wall and a few plaques.”

- Respondents were also confused about how they would find the different sites and where they could access information from:

“Is it signposted off the M6? I don’t think it is, you just drive right past it. There’s a bath house, I’m sure it’s called Housesteads or something, but I don’t think it’s signposted.”

3.1.3 Preferences

- The vast majority of respondents had an interest in ‘hands-on’ learning activities
- Participants had a preference for interactive exhibitions, this was particularly important to those with children:

“Keeping the children occupied is key. There needs to be things to do to stop them getting bored.”

- Respondents also cited costumed actors and interpreters as a good way of receiving information
- Participants enjoy seeing short films and computer reconstructions when at heritage sites
- The majority of participants did not enjoy many traditional ways of receiving information, such as reading information panels and audio guides. They were seen as “boring”, and not engaging for adults or children:

“There’s nothing worse than displays in glass cases.”

3.1.4 Themes

Frontier Lives

Prompt: This theme shows how through the amazing personal stories revealed by the writing tablets from Roman Vindolanda and Carlisle and through the wealth of inscriptions available, we can become personally involved in the daily lives, emotions and cares of individual Roman citizens.

- This idea was one of the most popular amongst respondents; it was seen as something which people could relate to:

“This idea really works, it’s really good to hear about people and how they lived.”

“It brings it to life doesn’t it? What’s gone on before you in the same area you’re standing in.”

“It’s better because it’s more personal, it’s true history coming to life. What we want to hear about.”

- Respondents did question how the information would be delivered; several people were positive about the theme dependant on its format:

“I think if you had people doing it, otherwise you’re just looking at something they’ve dug up.”

“I think it would be good if they could have these ideas, but done in a really interactive way.”

- Although this theme was popular amongst participants, the majority of respondents said it would not be sufficient on its own to encourage them to visit Hadrian’s Wall.

Edge of Empire

Prompt: Hadrian’s Wall became the centre piece of the north-west frontier of the Roman Empire, created by the Emperor Hadrian. These frontiers symbolise the military power of the Empire and the brutal imposition of military occupation.

- This idea received a mixed reaction from respondents. The majority of people described the idea as difficult to understand and of no immediate interest to them:

“I think the average person who hasn’t read history would be bored out of their mind... things like this are only of interest to people who really like history.”

“I think this idea is a bit dull really.”

“Some people might find that hard to understand.”

- Participants also struggled to see the relevance of the theme to Hadrian’s Wall, and felt it was something that could be seen at any site of Roman heritage:

“This is more about the history of the Romans rather than the history of Hadrian’s Wall.”

- Some respondents felt that the idea alone wouldn’t be sufficient to sustain its own exhibition:

“There’s nothing interactive with it, this would be a two minute thing.”

“If this was part of something else, it would be interesting, but it wouldn’t make me go.”

- However a number of respondents did like the theme. They liked the idea of learning about Hadrian’s Wall in its wider context:

“I think it’s a really good idea to make you think of the wall as part of a bigger picture.”

“That’s really fascinating!”

- These reactions emphasise that it is the way the theme is presented that is important. Participants were also interested in Before and After and Walls and Barriers themes. As such, the idea of the frontier and dividing people and conquest is interesting to people but not the bare facts about frontiers of the empire.

The Imperial Province of Britain

Prompt: Britain was a military province of Rome and for centuries had the greatest concentration of troops anywhere in the Empire. Why was this? Was it because of unruly locals or because of the need to control the plentiful mineral resources? There are many aspects of the story to tell – including the development of commerce, citizenship and politics and relations between Romans and natives.

- This theme was popular amongst participants, the ideas were seen as something they hadn’t heard before and they were keen to find out more:

“This is really interesting; there must be a lot to find out about. There must have been some good stuff to keep them there in winter when it’s really cold.”

“Well, I never knew any of this, about the minerals and the rest.”

- However, participants were unsure about whether the subject would appeal to children and families. It was seen as something which would primarily appeal to adults:

“I’m not sure, my children won’t like it, it’s more for adults.”

“They need to work on the idea and how they can present it in a way which appeals more to families.”

The Roman Army

Prompt: The Roman Army was an important instrument in establishing and maintaining the Roman Empire and fulfilled its roles through a range of duties and functions. It operated as a brutal military machine, but its soldiers were also administrators, engineers, a police force and loyal citizens in retirement. As well as being multi-skilled, the Roman Army was multicultural and depended on a complex network of communication and supply.

- There were a number of respondents who were very positive about the idea:

“I think this information is brilliant, when you think of it, the logistics and everything are amazing.”

“I think that would be a brilliant idea.”

- This theme was most familiar to respondents, because it was something everyone learnt at school as a child. All participants had some experience of learning about the Roman Army:

“To be fair, I’ve seen all these things before.”

“This is more the kind of thing we learnt at school. We’re much more familiar with these sorts of ideas.”

- This idea was seen by some respondents as only appealing to certain groups of people, those with an interest in the military and boys predominantly:

“If I was to go I’d really enjoy it, but my kids would have a terrible time, and would hate it.”

“I think if you’re interested in armies and things like that, something like this would be really good, But if you’re not interested then...”

- Participants did feel that if the information was presented in an interesting, interactive way then this would widen the appeal of the subject:

“It would appeal to my granddaughter, if it was told in an interesting way, if it was just reading it, it wouldn’t.”

- The idea of the Roman Army as multicultural was of interest to the vast majority of respondents who weren’t aware of this and wanted to find out more:

“That’s something we didn’t learn at school, I would be interested to find out more.”

Conquest and Legacy

Prompt: Before and after the Roman occupation of the north-west frontier, the area was occupied by native tribes. Archaeology is gradually revealing more about these native people; who they were and where and how they lived before and after reveals Rome's lasting legacy on the people, culture and environment and ties modern Britain to its European neighbours.

- This idea had popular appeal amongst respondents. It was the kind of information that they had expressed an interest in finding out about:

"I didn't know any of this at all, I didn't have a clue about how we used to live before and after the Romans, but I've always wondered."

"I think it's fascinating to see the wider implications of the Roman Empire."

- The theme was popular because it was seen as relating to people's personal lives and how it affects society now:

"This is of more interest than the previous ideas, how it affects modern Britain."

- The popularity of this idea with respondents is based on learning about the stories of individuals. Throughout the research, it was clear that what is central to respondents is the idea of history being personal, both through people's individual stories and how the information is communicated.

Exploration, Discovery and Values

Prompt: How do we identify and make sense of the stories and objects around Hadrian's Wall? The archaeological and historical evidence that enables us to explore the story of the north-west frontier is revealed through scientific research.

- This idea received a mixed response from participants. Some respondents really enjoyed the idea of finding out about the archaeology of the site and being involved in that, and felt that the idea worked for both adults and children:

"That sounds really exciting, we would really enjoy doing that, it sounds good fun!"

"Some of the boards you've shown about the economics and what the Romans brought to the area are maybe more of interest to historians or adults. My kids would probably hate that, but this would appeal to adults and children. I could really sell this to them. It would seem a lot more exciting."

- Participants were also very interested in the idea of the archaeology as an ongoing process, in which there is still a huge amount to discover:

“The idea that things are still ongoing is really interesting, it goes against the idea that a wall is a wall, it’s a process that is still ongoing.”

- Respondents liked this idea as it seemed to be more interactive and gave them more opportunity to get involved:

“This would get me to visit a site, it’s interactive.”

“If you know the kids will be occupied, it’s good!”

- Those participants who did not like the idea cited the weather as being a potential problem and that the theme was just not of interest to them:

“This wouldn’t appeal to me at all.”

“I must admit, this is the side that I’d find least interesting. I want to see the results, but not the process.”

Walls and Barriers

Prompt: Other walls and barriers in history and in the modern world: Exploring what it might feel like to have your country divided like this, including being able to experience going through a checkpoint in the Wall.

- Respondents were on the whole interested in this idea. The idea of modern walls was not something they had linked with Hadrian’s Wall before and participants liked the idea of comparisons:

“That gives you a better idea of why it was there and the symbolism of what it was trying to achieve.”

“I think it helps put things in context.”

- The idea of having a checkpoint to go through, to experience what it feels like, was very popular with participants, especially as a way of keeping children occupied:

“That’s something the kids would particularly enjoy.”

- However, some participants felt that the concept would be difficult for children to understand:

“I think it would be a bit boring for children, it might be interesting to us, but the younger children wouldn’t get it.”

- Respondents also were critical about whether this idea was enough to attract them, and whether it would sufficiently ‘fill’ a site:

“This is just a two minute thing, you couldn’t spend any length of time finding out about this.”

Citizens of Empire

Prompt: Rome the conqueror was multicultural and as concerned with citizenship, identity and belonging as we are today. The Roman Empire brought together lots of different people from around the world.

- Respondents found this concept quite difficult to visualise in the form of an exhibition:

“This might be interesting if it was displayed in the right way, I’m just not sure how they could go about doing this, in a way that would be engaging.”

- The theme incorporated ideas which most respondents had never heard of before, and it raised a lot of questions for participants:

“This is a really interesting idea, it makes you think. Were there language barriers?”

“That’s definitely of interest to me, it relates to the British Empire.”

- Respondents liked the idea of learning about Roman citizenship. Some participants thought that it tied in neatly with modern ideas of citizenship on the school curriculum
- Participants also thought that this theme had many similarities to Frontier Lives and found it hard to identify the differences

3.2 Focus group 1 – Newcastle

Participant 1 – married, insurance broker, two girls – 12 and 9 – likes football and sport

Participant 2 – married, two daughters, interested in music

Participant 3 – quality analyst for a pharmaceutical company, two teenage children

Participant 4 – single, retail manager, two children – 24 and 15

Participant 5 – retired, two children, six grandchildren, likes walking

Participant 6 – retired, five grandchildren, very busy, likes walking

Participant 7 – married, works part time, two boys – 13 and 15 – has a dog

Participant 8 – married, two boys – 13 and 15 – runs the boys' football teams, plays golf

Questions

Do you like going for days out to heritage sites?

- I dragged the children up to a castle near Craster. It's quite a walk from the village, the kids hate walking. We went to Alnwick castle recently and we had a great time. The kids really enjoyed the quiz they gave with all the clues around the site.
- We're always up in Northumbria at all the castles.
- We're members of the National Trust, that takes us to places like Cragside, we have also been to Cornwall and visited some fantastic places, having a dog means we do a lot of walking.
- I'm from Dorset, but I like Alnwick castle. I have been to Hadrian's Wall as well.

What makes a good place?

- The quiz that participant 2 mentioned, keeping the children occupied is key. There needs to be things to do to stop them getting bored.
- Sometimes we go to Jedburgh and they have colouring rooms and things to find on a trail for the kids.
- We went to Cragside earlier in the year and it was an absolute revelation, I thought the children would be really bored, but they loved it. I couldn't get them away. They loved all the old things, they were amazed by it all, and we were the last people to leave!
- My grandchildren love Beamish; I love all the stuff there, the kids love it, the dentist, the horses and all the people dressed up. The events are great as well. It's fantastic to see how people used to live. We're also a member of the National Trust, we go all over.
- I love Cragside as well, the vision he had to build his house there. We keep going back, because there's so much to see and do. It's beautiful up there. We like walking around the grounds with the dog.
- I think Warrington is great as well, the gardens are beautiful.

What's the best way of getting information at a place?

- Interaction, you've got to keep children occupied. Beamish is great for that, like watching them making sweets.

- Just being involved in what's happening.
- My children spend too long on computers; those sorts of interactives are not the same as real life things. They don't like them, I hate it as well when the machines are all broken, that happens quite often and it's not good when the museum is reliant on them.

Is it important to see things you wouldn't see anywhere else?

- Yes, at Beamish it's the history coming to life, which is great.
- Sometimes children enjoy stuff where you can just walk around and look.
- The kids always enjoy getting dressed up.

What about for you as adults, what do you like?

- We had an arranged guided tour at Bamburgh Castle; the kids had a great day. I don't think you enjoy it as much – wandering round reading.

Do other people like that?

- Yes, reading can be a bit boring, the kids get fed up.
- In the half term we went somewhere and had a tour, the boys didn't want to, but they really enjoyed it in the end, it kept them engaged.
- It depends on the person doing it though, it can be really boring.
- I don't like audio guides; I prefer to be part of a group.

What about videos?

- It depends what it's on, and whether it captures your imagination.

We're here tonight to talk about Hadrian's Wall. What do you think of when I say that?

- (All) Romans!
- Roman Vindolanda and Housesteads
- Segudunum
- Arbeia
- Chesters

Are there any reasons you haven't been back/don't think about going?

- You go at school and never go back. I think once you've been and seen it, there's nothing to make you go back. I love Roman history as well.
- When the weather's not good you don't want to go.
- Yes, once you've been, you've been.
- You don't see it advertised anywhere, you don't know about it really.

These are all places along Hadrian's Wall. What they've found is that people don't know about places to visit and all the sites say the same thing... These are some ideas that they may have on the sites. The Roman Army...

- I think the army will be really interesting, I didn't know about the Nazis and the stuff about tanks and strategy.
- It might be good if people could dressed up and have a mini battle.
- I think the army stuff is very interesting especially if you compare it to modern day stuff, I think it's a great idea.
- I like the strategy games idea.
- It would appeal to my grandchildren.
- I think there needs to be different things going on.
- You go on the internet on bank holidays and stuff, it would be good if they had special events.
- I think that this is really relevant because of where we live, but the kids do a lot of this stuff at school.

Is this idea of having a map of all the different places to see along Hadrian's Wall, is that a good idea?

- There's a bus that goes all the way, I thought about doing, but then I thought, it will all be the same!

Would this get you there?

- I do think it would be a good idea to show the relevance of the history to today.
- It does seem a little bit more geared up to boys.
- My daughter's more interested in archaeology.

This next idea is all about Citizens of Empire...

- These ideas are they thinking of putting these out?
- I think that's great I bet most of us didn't know a lot of this information.
- How did these people live on the Wall?
- How did they get there?
- I would like to see some reconstructions to bring things to life.
- I didn't know the Roman Empire was multicultural.
- I'd like to know where the settlements were. How did they live? What did they do?
- My children are more interested if there's a story behind it, people's experiences; it really captures their imagination, something to relate to. The story of someone's life would be great.
- It's really hard to imagine what it would look like when the Romans were here. It would be great if children could imagine themselves there. The Jorvic Centre is brilliant at that.

Is the modern day comparisons idea interesting?

- Yes it really is, the idea of multiculturalism then and now.
- I would really like to see how it was – in models or a reconstruction.

Does that theme of empire and multiculturalism work?

- Yes, definitely - it really makes you think.
- Yes, I'd like to know what were happening in other countries around the world.

Is it important to see the objects?

- Yes, it makes it more real, you get a proper feel for it.
- For me, the most important thing is keeping children happy, a trail would be a good idea, about how it came to be.

Is this more for adults this theme?

- Yes, I think so.
- This idea wouldn't get me there, it's interesting but I wouldn't go because of it.
- They never advertise it as well, I remember going with school, and that was enough.

This next idea is called Frontier Lives...

- This seems like part of a larger exhibition.
- This would be interesting to see on a video.
- It would be good if you could follow someone's life throughout. I think videos would be a good idea as well.
- The crafts are good as well, if they have someone making shoes or things this would appeal to everyone.
- I think it's a great idea, because what we see is a wall, we don't have any idea of the people there or how they lived.

What would make you go to Hadrian's Wall?

- They should publicise it more.

So would this idea work, if it was presented the right way?

- Yes but I do think you have to offer something new. I've seen this stuff before.

The next idea is called The Imperial Province of Rome...

- I would expect this to be there already.
- Yes, so would I.
- This wouldn't persuade me to go.

- It does amaze me how they did it, they were so clever and organized, everything was logged. It is fascinating.

Could they make this come alive better?

- I do think there should be one central point where you can go first to find out about everything.
- It is a good idea for a theme, it brings Roman life to life.
- I would like to see more arts and crafts and things like how they prepared their food, and that they learnt from the local people. That would be interesting.
- Did they get on with the local community?
- Yes, we don't know how it affected the lives of the people around.

Do you know this stuff already?

- No, I didn't know the details.

This theme is about before and after the Romans came – Conquest and Legacy...

- I knew little bits about this, but not much.
- This is something I didn't know about, how we lived in hill-forts.
- This is of more interest to me than the previous ideas, how it affects modern Britain.
- I think this would get me to go and have a look there. I've always wondered why they left, what happened here.
- This would be interesting when you got there, but I think you need something to get people there, something that appeals to everyone.

The next one is called Edge of Empire...

- I think this is a really good idea to make you think of the Wall as part of a bigger picture.
- That is really fascinating!
- If they could do that in some sort of 3D illustration or something.
- It's a brilliant concept!
- I like things to be quite thought provoking, to make me think.
- All these rooms – it would be great to see what they looked like.
- I like this idea: the Romans around the world.
- I would like to see how far it extended and what they got from different places.
- I'd like to know how much hostility was around, how much they fought.
- If you go to other places abroad you can walk around the rooms, you can't do that here.
- I think this would help get me there.

This one is called Walls and Barriers...

- This is very interesting thinking of it in comparison with modern walls.
- I wouldn't have thought of it in those ways.
- I'd like to know where people were coming and going from, why they had checkpoints.
- It would be a good idea to have a checkpoint, to experience how it feels.
- I think all these things together would be great.
- I think there needs to be a lot of different things going on.

How do you like the idea of having a trail?

- That would be fantastic!

The final one is called Exploration, Discovery and Values...

- This is of real interest to me, how they got the stuff.
- I bet things are really scientific now and I think it would be really good with computers.
- This wouldn't appeal to me at all.
- I think my girls would really enjoy it, but if the weather was quite bleak, they wouldn't be up for it.

Does this work as a theme?

- Yes, I think so.

Out of everything, what would make you go?

- I think there should be one big centre, there should also be screens showing reconstructions, and information about the settlements so you can imagine it.
- I like the idea of how you can relate the Romans to today, and the lessons we've learnt, but it's knowing where to find where will it be shown.
- To me, the size of the empire is really interesting and the idea of different walls around the world now is brilliant.
- I don't know how you would get people to go because there's nothing left.
- All those sheets were interesting to me.
- I think it would be good to have lots of different events going on.
- If you think of Bath, how many people go back?
- I think if you've been once you've seen it all, I've been to Rome but I wouldn't want to go again.

How can they get you to go?

- You don't get to see anything that resembles the original article, that's what you need. The remains are so eroded it doesn't create much of a story.
- These stories do give you a sense of what it was like to be around there.

What could they do? If there were interactives and people dressed up and the information presented in interesting ways would they be good ideas?

- Yes, I think that it would be interesting.
- A passport to get stamped is a really good idea, to get you to go to different sites.
- I think there is a bit of a stigma attached to the wall, they should have a big advertising campaign.
- They could make it part of a group where you can get a ticket for all the sites.

Does it make a difference that Hadrian's Wall is a World Heritage site?

- Look at it compared to all the other places on your board. It doesn't really match up to the others does it? There's nothing there!
- The best way of getting us to go is to give us more information about what is there, and some special offers with money off.
- I think they should have a good website so you can see where to go and where things are.
- Yes, I think the biggest problem is lack of awareness and people not knowing what is at each site.

3.3 Focus group 2 – Newcastle

Participant 1 – civil servant, three boys – 15, 11 and 10 – likes football – Newcastle United season ticket holder

Participant 2 – teacher, two daughters – 12 and 7

Participant 3 – retired, four grandchildren, used to work for British Rail, lots of hobbies including sailing, cycling, photography and walking.

Participant 4 – aged 45, self employed, one son, does a lot of walking, has two dogs

Participant 5 – retired police officer, two sons – 15 and 12 – two grown-up step children, two grandchildren, very into sport, travels a lot taking sons to games

Participant 6 – married, two boys – 25 and 13 – works as a support assistant for special needs children

Participant 7 – retired, three children, three grandchildren, has an allotment and runs art group, has a caravan

Questions

Participant 7 – Are there any places round here you particularly like?

- Well, we've got a caravan, so we go all over the place.

If I say things like heritage and history, what does that mean to you?

- Northumberland, Bamburgh Castle, all that coastline, Lindisfarne. The places we go to quite regularly are Craster, Hexham and round the Roman wall. Some of the sites on there are amazing. When I was at school we were taught Roman history and I loved it. I'm still interested.

Participant 3 – where do you like to go?

- I've travelled all over; I go for walks every Friday. Northumberland is great as well. One of my favourites is Stanhope.

If I say heritage to you what do you think of?

- I like Stanhope and Consett because I like walking down the railway track.
- I like it there because it doesn't get too busy. I like the scenery and walking.

Participant 4 – where do you like to go?

- My favourite place to go is Cragside. It's beautiful there (everyone voices their agreement). It's the first place in the world that ever had electricity, it's hydro-powered, it's got beautiful gardens, there's lots to do there. I also do a lot of walking up in the Cheviots. Sometimes we go to Hadrian's Wall, but I haven't done all of it! I like going to castles, my dad's researched our family history and found we have ancestors in Scotland. So we have visited the castles up there.

Participant 5 – where do you go?

- We were at Craggside earlier in the year. I like Alnwick Castle. They seem to be expanding all their ideas there. They also have themed events, they're always really good. That's the sort of thing that keeps you going back somewhere. When my boys were younger, they used to like Beamish. Now they're older, they are more interested in the history of things but when they were little, they liked to be more hands on.

What about you?

- I like Beamish as well, you can get involved there. I also like Durham, the Cathedral and the coastline.

What about you Participant 2?

- My girls like Beamish. If I say "where do you want to go today?" it's Beamish every time. They never get sick of it, there's so much to do. You can never do the full place in one go, you tend to do half one day and half another.

Does it change all the time?

- No, not really, at Christmas they do some special events and we always go but usually it's all the same. We have a family pass, so we go free now. We love Preston Hall as well and Bamburgh.

Participant 1 – what sort of historical places do you like to visit?

- I also like Craggside and visiting various castles. We are members of the National Trust so we do go to a lot of their places. It tends to be more outside activities; my boys wouldn't really enjoy walking round reading information. They like to be active.

What makes a good place to go to?

- It's having a bit of everything. Somewhere outside they can kick a ball round and interesting things inside.
- And somewhere you can get a bit of shelter as well.
- It needs to be somewhere you can spend the whole day, where you can take a picnic, run about outdoors and get a bit of history. If it's expensive to get in then you need to be able to stay all day, not just go for half an hour and then get bored.

Is that something you always think about, the cost?

- Yes, places with season tickets are really good, you get your money back. For example, Alnwick gardens, you can keep going back, it's always changing and there's loads to do there.

- It's got to be a family day out, to make it attractive. It's got to keep you there.

So thinking particularly about heritage, history, those sort of places, what makes it a good experience?

- The children enjoy Beamish because it's history brought to life, the shops, the rooms as they were in Victorian times. Cragside's the same - they've got a kitchen with all the machinery and people are dressed up, so it makes it more interesting and believable so the children can ask questions.

Is that good for adults as well?

- We're all children at heart anyway, we all love it.

So doing and seeing, things being brought to life. Is there anything else?

- I like Housesteads. If it's a nice day because the views are fantastic.
- What else is there at Housesteads? Is it just the walk?
- It is the walk really. They do have stuff going on, people dressed up and things, and they've got the long toilets and the garrison with the under-floor heating, and you can get information about Roman engineering.

Is it important to find out new information about these places?

- I think before you go you need to read up, because there's too much information, especially for children. We tend to get a bit bored after about an hour and a half. There's just lines of bricks, it's OK for adults. You couldn't keep children occupied there for a full day. It's alright if you like a walk.
- I think my boys like really gruesome stuff, so it would be good for them to learn how the Romans killed people, stuff like that.

Talking about getting information, is there any other way you like to get information from these sites?

- I like the little interactive touch-screen things like maps and recreations of how things used to look.
- I went to the Great North Museum recently and they've got touch screens with info. That was brilliant.
- I like to see people dressed up in costume that gets the kids' attention. The interest goes when you've got to look at a pile of bricks.
- There's nothing worse than seeing things in glass cases.

Tonight's research is about Hadrian's Wall. What does it make you think of?

- Countryside
- When you see what they did it's mind blowing, when you find out what they did.

Is it something you know about?

- I went years ago when I was at school – I think we all did.
- I've been to Housesteads twice this year, I really like it there.
- It's a World Heritage Site isn't it?

Does everyone know that?

- Murmurs
- Roman Vindolanda and all the others are really good to see. It must be one of the biggest attractions in the north-east?

Do you think of all these different places, are you all aware of them?

- I would say I don't know enough, I don't think it's celebrated enough.
- Yes, because it's on your door step, you don't really go.
- It's not really advertised enough.

Lots of people say that once you've been once you've seen it all. Tonight we're looking at some different ideas... Different sites would have different ideas... The first idea is called Citizens of Empire...

- I think that's really good, the idea about multiculturalism going back to Roman times.
- I didn't really know that, I'm not sure if it would be that interesting.

Is this of interest to you all?

- Yes (lots of agreement)
- I think this should be told with interesting characters to grab children's attention.
- It would be nice if they did little plays and things for families.

Does the idea of taking the Roman bit and modern stuff and comparing work?

- Yes, I definitely think for children it would help them understand.
- I didn't know about it all.

The next one is the Roman Army...

- There's a thing at the Great North Museum where you can track people right the way through – that is amazing.
- I think that would be a brilliant idea.
- It would appeal to adults and children.
- I think this sort of information is brilliant, when you think of it, the logistics and everything are amazing.

Would this work as a story?

- I think it would definitely appeal to boys – I don't know about girls.
- It would appeal to my granddaughter, if it was told in an interesting way. If it was just reading she wouldn't.

Is there anything missing from this story?

- I would like to find out about strategy and how they planned.

Do the links to the Nazis and other armies work?

- Not for me! You should lose the Nazi stuff.
- So does this idea for a theme appeal to you all as something you'd like to see?
- Yes (everyone concurs).

The next one is called Frontier Lives... About the personal lives of Roman citizens...

- I don't know if this would work for children, it's much more for adults.

Would you all be interested?

- Yes!
- I can't see how they could make that interesting. It would be good if they could transport you back in time.
- Yes, it would be good if they could do it like at the Jorvik Museum.
- It's good when the children can dress up.

Is it good for you to experience the objects, to be able to handle them?

- Yes, I really like it. I think it's great to be able to handle things – it gives you a real feel for things.
- This to me seems just like what you see everywhere. This would be a bit dull for me.
- Yes, this wouldn't get me there.
- I'd prefer it much more if they have people in character to get the information across. This seems really dated.

This one is called Imperial Province...

- This is really interesting. There must be a lot to find out about, and there must have been some good stuff to keep them there in winter when it's really cold.

Does this really interest you the trading routes... Is this new to you?

- Well, I never knew any of this, about the minerals and the rest.
- I didn't know about all this either.

Would this work as a story?

- Oh yes, definitely!
- I'm not sure, my children won't like it, it's more for adults.
- I like it – I feel ashamed I don't know much about all this.
- This wouldn't get me there. I'd have a look if I was there but it wouldn't make me go.

Do you know the differences between the places on Hadrian's Wall?

- I would need some more information about all the sites.
- I think the kids would get really bored, they would be fed up straight away.
- They do school trips and they're fantastic. They need to make it as good for families visiting.
- They need to work on the idea and how they can present it in way which appeals more to families.
- A treasure hunt might be a good idea.

This one is another idea – about the north-west frontier... It's all about what people were like before and after the Romans...

- That's really interesting – so you can compare things from today.
- Did you know this stuff?
- It's out there but I don't know how many people are aware of it.
- I think that's a great idea!
- This wouldn't be enough on its own to get me there. I would enjoy it while I was there but it wouldn't get me specially.
- It would be a good idea to have audio stuff going on that you could walk through, a story of how someone lived through the invasion. That would be good.
- It would be good if the kids could make a Roman pot or something and take it home.

Is this idea a good one?

- Yes, I like the idea of it, but I think the kids want to be climbing around.

Is it important that you learn something when you go for a day trip?

- Yes, I like to find things out as well.
- I just think there needs to be a centralised place.
- Would you like it if you could find out more information about where to go and if all the sites were linked?
- Yes, it would be really good if the kids could get a passport stamp from each site. That would make it good.
- I'd like it if you had somewhere to go to help you know where the places of interest are.

Are family passes important?

- Yes, definitely, because things can be very expensive when you've got a family.
- I think if you've got a year pass to somewhere, you're much more inclined to go and visit. Paying individually works out very expensive.

The next idea is Edge of Empire...

- I think the average person who hasn't read history would be bored out of their mind. All most people want is toilets and a cafe. Things like this are only of interest to people who like history.
- I think it's really important to get the young people involved in local history. If you can capture their imagination.
- I think this idea is a bit dull really.
- If this was just part of something else, it would be interesting but it wouldn't make me go.
- This is just an extra bit of information, it's not that interesting.
- It would be good if this could be shown with computer graphics.
- You ask yourself what this has got to do with the Roman wall here. It doesn't have anything!
- This doesn't interest me at all.

This next one is about Walls and Barriers...

- Well, I'm really interested in that – I don't know if the children would be.
- I think that's a really good concept.
- I like the idea of it being linked to other walls – that's a really good idea.
- I think the older children would be interested in this.
- I like the idea of a checkpoint.
- I'm not sure if this would get me to go, it would just be something else that's there.
- I like the idea of all the different concepts being linked together, the more I've seen of them, but to go to one particular site to see it wouldn't be great.
- I would like everything in one place, but none of these would draw me on its own.

The last one is Exploration, Discovery and Values...

- I think what they would have to do is have a dig for children, with replica objects, so the children could find stuff and have someone there to identify what it is. That would keep them occupied.
- They've got something like that at Disney, the children go panning for gold and it's brilliant they get really excited.
- Yes, it captures their imagination.

Is this of interest to adults?

- Oh yes, without a doubt.
- Yes, I would really enjoy this.

- This would get me to visit a site – it's interactive.
- I think if you know the kids will be occupied it's good.
- As I'm getting older I'm getting more interested in history.

Out of everything you've seen would any of this stuff get you there?

- Not really no, unless there were some people actually digging – I would like to see that.
- Obviously the last one, it has to be something interactive, and because the weather's often bad it has to be something you can do indoors.
- I like the idea of what it was like before and after the Romans, but I would need there to be stuff there to keep the kids entertained.
- I love that idea as well, it would definitely get me there, and the excavation.
- The army stuff really appeals to me, but for the children there needs to be people in costumes and interactive things. I also think you need one central core to get people to go. You need to go there and be directed to what's of interest to you.

3.4 Focus group 3 – Manchester

Participant 1 – aged 50, legal executive, daughter aged 16, likes walking, playing golf and visiting places, likes the Lake District, Scotland etc.

Participant 2 – aged 45, works in the print industry, three teenage children, children don't like going out so much any more

Participant 3 – IT auditor – two boys – 12 and 9 – all enjoy visiting places of interest

Participant 4 – married with two children – 15 and 19 – works part-time in an estate agency, likes to go for mini breaks

Participant 5 – three grandchildren, dog, likes day trips

Participant 6 – project manager for a local authority, likes walking, mountain biking, walking

Participant 7 – aged 38, three children, likes taking the children out for day trips

Participant 8 – married, 12-year-old boy, works for probation service, likes day trips – is going to Bletchley Park soon

Participant 9 – observer from Hadrian's Wall Heritage Limited

Questions

What makes a good historical place to go?

- It has to be real rather than imaginary, not just two bricks on the floor.
- We took the kids to Skipton Castle and did a trail, and that was really good fun interacting. The kids would get bored just reading signs.
- I think with the children there's got to be something there to keep them amused. There has to be lots of things to see and do, interactive things.
- We took the kids to the War Museum and they had two old ladies who had lived there during the bombing. That was brilliant – it really brought things to life. That emotional aspect makes things much more interesting.
- The War Museum was great when we went.
- The Science Museum is good in Manchester. My son loves the original drains – he looks for rats.

What's the best way of getting information across?

- I like guided tours, I like to have someone explaining how things really work.
- I'm a button presser; I don't like looking at stuff in cabinets, I like to get involved. We went to Clitheroe castle – they had a really good film to watch.
- I've been to Florida a few times; they have things like a cinema with all the audio visual stuff that makes things interesting.

Does there have to be an element of doing?

- Yes, definitely. Looking around but then doing as well, it brings it alive.

What about places where they link history with modern themes?

- That would be really good for the kids to get them interested – they learn without knowing then.

What about things for you, is it more about keeping the kids occupied? Or do you like different things?

- It's a bit of both really. I like Warwick Castle because there's a really good mix of things to see and hear and touch.
- I think if you've got everything, it appeals to all kinds of people.

What particularly interests you about a historic site?

- I like the outside of the building and the grounds, I find that more interesting. I like the way they project things on walls or show films about what it used to look like. I get bored by signs to read.

Any other types of information?

- The Rylands Library is great. It is a brilliant building, it has a fantastic feel about it.
- I took my daughter to Warwick Castle and they do lots of shows. There were lots of people dressed up and cooking the food they used to eat and things. My daughter loved it.
- I think it's great to get a feel for what they used to do.
- I like it when there are people around to ask questions of.
- I like it when you get a sense of the people who were there. When people are dressed up and seeing what they used to do.
- Yes, you lose interest in looking at written information. It all starts to get really repetitive.
- I don't really use audio tours. I did it at Edinburgh Castle, I enjoyed it but it took ages.

Has anyone been to Hadrian's Wall?

- I went years ago, when I was at school.
- There's a trail there now, I read about it recently.

What do you think of when you think of Hadrian's Wall?

- Romans! (Everyone).

Does that mean it's interesting?

- Yes – I think it's amazing.
- It's like when you go to Chester or York, it's really interesting.

Is there a reason why you haven't been/not been for ages?

- Because in my head I think what's there – imagine I will get there and there will just be a bit of wall – after driving 100 miles. I don't know how you will go and see it.
- Yes, I don't know what's up there. What do you do?
- There are different places to see, aren't there?
- I think if I was going to go now, what I would do is go along the trail.
- I imagine it goes on forever, I don't know what there is.
- I don't know what there will be there. I imagine there will be a few bits of wall and a few plaques.
- I couldn't name any places along the wall.
- I saw it on telly and it's quite substantial.
- We went on a field trip at school – that's all I can remember.

This research is for Hadrian's Wall, here are some of the sites you can see and this is how long it is ... They are trying to have different stories and themes across different places. Does that sound interesting?

- Yes, I think so, but I'm not sure what there is.
- What I would really like is if someone who knew all about it could give me some advice about where the best starting point is and what there is to see. I don't have a clue.
- There should be more guidance; I would expect this to be on the internet and leaflets.
- Is it signposted off the M6? I don't think it is, you just drive past it. There's a bath-house I'm sure, called Housesteads or something, but I don't think that's sign-posted, you just drive right past.

I have lots of things to show you about different ideas – the first is called Frontier Lives. This is all about the things they have found from people who lived there... Does that sound interesting?

- Yes, it makes things more real doesn't it? It's something concrete.
- How would these be displayed? A lot is to do with how it's shown.
- The idea works. It's really good to hear about people.
- Yes, if they had an interactive button, telling you about it. It's quite interesting to find this stuff out.
- Yes, this would be great to see actors talking about how people lived.

Does this idea make things seem more real?

- I think if you had people doing it, otherwise you're just looking at something they've dug up.
- I think it would be good if they could have these ideas but done in a really interactive way.
- I think if you compare it with Chester Walls, you don't know where you're going.
- You could have information about different objects across the wall.

- Would the ideas reflect the differences in culture of the different people in different areas? Will it all be repetitive?
- I'd quite like to find out about the different people who lived along the wall.

Are you aware of what the Romans did and how they lived?

- When I was young, you did the Romans when you were at primary school. But you don't critically analyse it, like you do more modern history.

When you go to historic sites, do you want to go and be provoked into thinking things?

- Yes, I like to think about things and relate to things. And it's really good to visualise things. It's difficult to do that with the Romans.
- I just like to enjoy things.
- I think it depends on what sort of person you are. There aren't lots of places to go to learn about the Romans. I wouldn't know where else to take my kids to tell them about Romans.

Is there a good way of showing you objects?

- I like looking at authentic objects.
- I don't mind looking at replicas if the real things aren't available, or a representation of them.

Is this idea of Roman people enough of a draw to get you to go?

- Yes, I like the idea behind it. It might be quite good to have some real objects and then some representations of them.

OK, this idea is called Citizens of the Empire... Rome the conqueror was multicultural... the idea is what makes a citizen, and all different people were citizens, because it could be earned...

- I didn't know that all (all concur).
- I really like the idea of how that fits – children do citizenship now and that's a good idea.
- That's definitely of interest to me – it relates to the British Empire.
- It makes you wonder about the language barriers.

Would this get you there?

- It's always good to go somewhere and learn a bit of information, but I wouldn't really go for that. To tell you the truth, I'm not that interested in the Romans, I'm more interested in modern history. I wouldn't go in to a visitor centre and study it in any great depth.

So would you dip in and have a look at the stuff that interests you?

- Yes. I'd read a bit of stuff, but to be honest I'd probably keep walking!
- Will they teach you about what happened to the Wall and not just the Romans?
- I might look at something and think, oh I'm not interested in that part, but I am in that so I'll get in the car.

So is this one to think about?

- I class this as very similar to the first board.
- But this doesn't really tell about their personal lives. This could be in any part of the country that the Romans went to.

Is there anything missing or you would like to know?

- I think you would struggle to make that the theme of a visitor centre, I'd be like "what's next?"
- I've been to Pompeii and I think they'd struggle to make it as interesting here.
- The theme is OK but it doesn't relate to the wall really. You could have it anywhere really.
- It would be good if they related it to the Wall.

This next one is Edge of Empire.

- That's not doing it for me really.
- What's it trying to say, from whose perspective is it?
- I think it would be good because that would be where all the battles took place.
- It would be good if there were models of buildings you could walk round and touch.
- There's nothing interactive with it, this would be a two-minute thing again.
- It would be nice to see what was going on on both sides – how their lives are different.

How could they get that across?

- How structured was life like inside the empire. I don't think you could show it really in pictures. What difference does it make to people?
- Why did they stop there?
- You could make a point of that.

Anything else?

- We're struggling to get this idea on its own. Without telling you about people.

The next one is the Imperial Province of Britain...

- I didn't know that there were the most troops here at all.
- I don't think we know much about Romans at all!

- It makes you think, why would that be? It throws up lots of questions.
- It's a massive part of history and once you hear about it, you want to find out more.
- That's interesting, the whole idea about minerals, why did they stop here? It can't be that different the minerals here to in Scotland.
- What does that red flag on the map mean?

That's mainly precious metals

- That's interesting, about where things came from and what they wore.

There are a lot of detailed records about what they found along Hadrian's Wall.

- That's quite interesting.
- I'd like to know if people were forced to make the Wall, and what they really thought.
- There are lots of things I'd like to find out.
- I find it very interesting – when you compare it with the EU now.
- I'd be interested to know if you got sent here as a soldier, would you be unhappy about it, was it seen as the middle of nowhere?
- It doesn't make any sense to me, not wanting to expand.
- There must have been a strategic reason why they didn't go any further.
- If you're going to go to the Wall, you know it's part of the Romans so you would want to find out more.
- I'm not sure if this would encourage me to go – it depends what the visitor centre would be like. If I got there and it was rubbish with nothing to see, I'd need to know more before I went.

The next theme is the Roman Army...

- I think if you're interested in armies and things like that – because I know my son is mad on armies – something like this would be really good. But if you're not interested then...
- And how they are linked together and presented is key.
- If I was to go I'd really enjoy it, but my kids would have a terrible time and would hate it. I think it's really interesting the way it could link up with what's happening now in Afghanistan and Iraq.
- Even seeing the different uniforms.
- How is it presented? Because the children love to see displays and people dressed up.
- Strategy games would be good, but I think it has to be real, it needs the people element.
- Is this going to be in a fort or something?
- If they rebuilt that tower or something that would be really good.
- There's got to be things going on, not just reading.

Is that all stuff you knew?

- Yes, I think everyone knows a bit of Roman history.
- I think all the stuff about the roads, that's really interesting to me.
- I don't think it would be that interesting to children.
- Yes, but it's not all about that.

This one is about Conquest and Legacy... did you know this information?

- I think it's fascinating and it would be really interesting to go. I do get the feeling that they are latching onto the Roman idea, this could be anywhere. The Wall hasn't got anything to do with what happened in Italy and Germany. They're just trying to get people to go.

All the objects and evidence was found along Hadrian's Wall so it does all really link in.

- I went to the Berlin Wall when I was at school; that was interesting. It would be good if they could make you think of it like that.
- I think it would be good if they had checkpoints where you could go through like they have where you have to show an ID card or something to be allowed in.
- I think this is a good idea because it demonstrates how important the Wall was.

So this is interesting?

- Yes, definitely! (all agree).

The next one is called Walls and Barriers...

- That's something the kids would thoroughly enjoy.
- That gives you a better understanding of why it was there, and the symbolism of what it was trying to achieve.
- The checkpoint idea is really good.
- I think it helps put things in context.
- The modern ones we know about: who they were keeping out, and why. They would need to explain all that.
- I think it would be a bit boring for children; it might be interesting to us. To the younger children they wouldn't get it.
- I don't know there are a lot of modern walls really.

So do you think this would appeal to children or only to adults going without children?

- I think it depends. My grandson went when he was 10 he was really interested in it.
- I think it could be for adults and children.
- I think you need to have something there for children, even if it is aimed at adults. You've got to have a mix, there's got to be something there to appeal to everyone.

Do you think the ideas we've showed you are mainly of interest to adults?

- Yes, I think so, unless the children are slightly older, then they might get something out of it, but otherwise I think you would have to make it more interesting and have more for them to do.

Could they take these ideas and make them more child friendly?

- Yes, but you don't want to make it too child orientated.

OK, the next idea is Conquest and Legacy... You were asking how people lived before and after the Romans...

- What about why they left?
- The empire was collapsing wasn't it?
- It'd be good if they had a model village.
- I think it's interesting seeing what they left behind – it links things with what happened centuries ago with now.
- If there wasn't something there for kids I wouldn't go.
- I think it would be a great idea to have passport where you can get it stamped along the way at different sites.

This next one is Exploration, Discovery and Values...

- Is this where you can see what they're doing at the moment?
- And is this happening now, the excavation?
- I think the adults and children would both enjoy it.
- My kids would love to go along and have a dig, they'd think it was great.
- I must admit, this is the side that I'd find least interesting. I want to see the results but not the process really.

Does anything stand out as interesting?

- I think it would be good if you left wanting to know more.
- I would definitely go and see it now.
- How the Wall affected people really interests me.
- How they lived and the impact of before and after interests me.
- I find it all really interesting, I didn't know any of it.
- I'd like to know why they built the Wall.

- I like the idea of what it was like to be on each side of the Wall.
- I'd like to do the whole Wall now.
- For me, the people and culture of it is most interesting.

What can they do to get you to go?

- They need to advertise more, to let people know what's going on.
- They could have supplements in the Sunday paper.
- I'd like to know how to get there!
- I'd look for information on the internet (all agree).
- I'd like to know about where you need to stay if you go for a weekend.
- A website with all the information about the area as a whole would be great with all the info about pubs and restaurants.

Does the phrase World Heritage Site mean anything to you?

- It's a government thing isn't it?

Did you know Hadrian's Wall was a World Heritage Site?

- I didn't know that (All agree).
- Does it mean it's got historical significance?
- I've been to those mills near Bradford, there wasn't much there but you can see why it is.
- It just worries me that I don't know what's there. I don't want to turn up and there be nothing there. I have visions of it being really rainy and bleak and nothing there.
- You could market it like the Yorkshire Dales, as a whole area to go to with lots going on.

3.5 Focus group 4 – Edinburgh

Participant 1 – married, works part time, one son – 16 – likes to go on lots of day trips, gets ‘cabin fever’ if she’s stuck at home, likes to take the dog for a walk around the countryside

Participant 2 – married, works as a dental nurse, daughter – 12 – and son – 17 – likes walking and has a dog

Participant 3 – married, three children, lots of grandchildren, takes the children for days out

Participant 4 – married, two children – 15 and 12

Participant 5 – married, two girls – 14 and 17 – don’t want to do too much with me

Participant 6 – two children, five grandchildren, takes them out all the time

Participant 7 – married, two children – 17 and 21 – likes going out on day trips but the children aren’t so keen now

Participant 8 – married, two children – 15 and 17 – likes cycling and skiing

Questions

So, tonight’s about heritage sites and historical sites and things. Has anyone got any favourite places they like to visit?

- St Andrews is my favourite place to visit. I love going there for the day. I could spend all day there. There’s so much to do. I love spending time there.

What is there to do?

- There’s a museum, there’s golf, and there are some galleries. It seems that there’s always a buzz there because there are a lot of visitors all the time.

Where do you like to go [Participant 5]?

- I like to go up to Inverness. It’s beautiful up there. The Black Isle, I had my honeymoon there so I really like to go up in autumn. We like Cawdor Castle, and the scenery is beautiful as well. I really enjoy going to Pitlochry, we had a look at lots of historical parks.
- I like Dunnottar Castle, it’s built on the cliff. It is really beautiful there, I’m not sure where it is exactly but I really enjoy spending time there. It’s very near Stonehaven. I’ve also like the one that’s on the way to Skye – Eilean Donan Castle I think it is. I also really enjoy spending time at Edinburgh Castle, walking round. That’s also really beautiful.
- Yes, I really like Edinburgh Castle as well, it’s very nice though.

Those castles you mentioned, is it what's up there or the scenery?

- It's a bit of both really, the scenery and the history. At Eilean Donan castle, there was an interactive thing going on that was brilliant; they had people there answering questions and things. We really enjoyed that.

What about you participant 7, do you have a favourite place you like to go?

- I really like Perthshire, there's lots to see there. I'm really into castles, there's quite a lot around here. I like Stirling Castle as well, and Argyllshire – I have had some really good times at Fort William and all around that area.
- I like Aberfeldy and Perthshire, it's the history of the place that I like, and I've also visited Lincoln Cathedral this year.

What makes a good visitor attraction?

- I went to York Minster this year, on a coach trip. I thought York was great; we went up on the roof That was great, it made it a really good day, and only two of us did it. I loved it.
- It's the atmosphere that makes a place.

But what makes a good atmosphere?

- It's the history – like Lincoln, we had a magical feeling, the place was wonderful.
- I went to Hexham Abbey recently and it was wonderful. It's very historic and beautiful. That has a lovely atmosphere as well.

When you're going around somewhere, how do you get information?

- A bit of everything really – audio guides, reading, everything.
- When I went to Edinburgh Castle recently, I was stopping and listening to the audio tour when I got to interesting bits, but the kids don't like it. They get really bored. They always want to keep moving.

What about information on sites, does that make it good?

- I think sometimes, if you have someone there talking about the place who knows all about it, if they have a personal interest and they're telling you lots of things you've never heard before, that just makes it really interesting.
- I remember going to Parliament recently and we knew someone there who showed us a beautiful chapel. It made it more special having someone showing you around who knows all about it.
- Yes, I think it's fine to have leaflets, but the information doesn't really go in. You never remember it later on; the leaflet just goes in the bin.
- I was really impressed in London at Churchill's Bunker, it really gets to you. They don't have much there but when you see the phones and everything else, you get

really into it. I think it's because it's the real objects. You get a good sense of what it was actually like. It's stuck in time.

- When we went to Culloden, we went on the tour. I prefer someone telling me about places than reading.
- I prefer someone giving you a tour or telling you things because when it's just there in black and white, it's not as interesting. We went to Hopetoun House recently and because it was quiet the man there spent a lot of time with us and it was fascinating.
- Yes, we got a great tour at the House of the Binns – that was great.

What do you think about costumed actors?

- There were some at Culloden when we were there. They were fantastic, we really enjoyed that.
- It depends on the age of the kids, but it's good to have it there.
- Yes, we like that. It makes things more interesting.

What about touching objects and artefacts; do you like that?

- Yes, I always find stuff like that really interesting. I like to look at artefacts, that's always interesting.
- It's really good to put yourself into the history of the place.
- Yes, I really enjoy feeling and having a good look at artefacts.
- I think that doing things like that really brings history to life and helps you visualise things much more.
- Stuff like that is good for younger children. It gets them involved.

Is it good for you as adults as well?

- Yes, I really like it.

Tonight we're going to be discussing Hadrian's Wall

- Oh (in very uninterested manner, everyone)
- The last time I went to Hadrian's Wall was with school. Many years ago - we didn't walk it though.

Anyone else been?

- I think we passed it a few years ago when we were in Newcastle; we didn't go and see it. I've heard of it though.

What do you think that Hadrian's Wall is like?

- Ruins, not much there really.
- Boring

Has anyone heard of any sites along Hadrian's Wall, there are different sites with different things to do?

- I just thought it was a wall and a bit boring. I didn't realise there were different places along it to go to. I thought it was all the same.

Has anyone – out of interest – heard of the Antonine Wall?

- Yes!
- Yes, I've heard of that, it's north, isn't it, of here?

Do you see Hadrian's Wall and the Antonine Wall as linked together at all?

- Not really no, I'd not really thought of it.

Would it be a place you would think about going to?

- No, not really.
- I think it would be quite boring!
- I think it's a place you just bypass.

I've got some boards to show you about Hadrian's Wall and how far it stretches, and these places Arbeia, Segedunum, these are all places you can see along Hadrian's Wall. And these are mile castles that you had to go past if you wanted to get to places. Sometimes you would get charged a tax if you wanted to get through. But, this shows you how far it stretches. It runs for 80 miles

- You see I like all stuff like that.

It was the most heavily fortified border in the Roman Empire.

- So who were they keeping put?
- Us!
- Oh yes, us!

Does this feel like it's not an attraction you want to go and see? Does it feel like English history?

- I'd not really thought about it, you see I'd always thought it was Scots.
- I don't think of it as either English or Scottish, it is in England though isn't it?
- You've got to think of why they built it, they obviously couldn't convert them, and they were heathens!
- Where does it come up to?

Along Hadrian's Wall there are lots of things to see and do.

- Can you go and dig there, because I'd love to go and do that!

You can actually – at Roman Vindolanda. The reason why we’re doing this research is because, although people have heard of Hadrian’s Wall, they don’t know a lot about it. They think it’s just a wall and there’s nothing there. Secondly, they might have been to one bit and then think it’s all the same. I’m going to show you some different ideas for themes along Hadrian’s Wall at different places. You can go to anywhere along Hadrian’s Wall and get the basic history, but at different places there might be different stories and information. I’ve got some stories here to test with you. You might go here, for example, and find out something different to here.

- It might be a nice idea to go for a week to all the different places.

If you’re looking for information about Hadrian’s Wall Country for example, where would you go?

- The internet (everyone)
- I don’t think you’d be able to pick up information from anywhere else really, especially in Scotland.

One of the ideas for a story is the idea of empire, the idea here is that the Roman Army was multicultural, Roman soldiers from around the world were stationed at Hadrian’s Wall. ... they have found different objects along Hadrian’s Wall. One of the themes they’re looking at is what it meant to be Roman. Like Britain today that lots of people live here. What do you think of that idea?

- Very interesting
- I didn’t know that at all, it’s not what you really think.

Would this be of interest and make you want to go?

- Well, I’ve learnt something already.
- Yes
- I don’t know, it’s interesting that the Romans were more multicultural than I thought, but that’s not enough to make me want to go and visit it. For me to want to go I’d want to know where it stretches to, what places it passes and where are the best places to see. Where the castles and forts are.

Yes, this is just to test some ideas about what they might tell people at different sites and what’s of interest.

- It is of interest to me, it’s near enough for a day trip, for us to go down.
- Yes, personally I think that’s an interesting bit of information, but that wouldn’t be the trigger to make me go. But it would be interesting when I got there to find out about.

If this info was at a site, what would be the best way of putting this across, what can they do?

- I'd like to see as you walked along the Wall, where things were dug up and what was found at each particular part.

They have linked the ideas with modern ideas, for example what citizenship is like. Does that work, comparing modern ideas with what it's like now?

- I like to learn about the historical aspects.
- I'd like to find out more about the cultural side of how they lived.

What they're trying to do is compare with how we live now, with life then, so people can understand it.

- Yes, that's quite interesting but it's still not a big pull for me.

This one is called Frontier Lives – it's unique to Hadrian's Wall. Along Hadrian's Wall they have found lots of letters which have helped them really understand what the people were like, they've found things like receipts, IOUs, party invitations...We can actually find out about people's lives. Does that interest you?

- Yes, it brings it to life doesn't it, what's gone on before you in the same area you're standing in.
- It's better because it's more personal, it's a true history coming to life, what we want to hear about.

Is this the kind of thing that would make you visit?

- Yes, it's really interesting. I always did like that programme – 'What the Romans did'.

Are there any questions, things missing?

- It's well covered the Roman story, you need something.
- Yes, I think it might be quite interesting to see things like the letters, if they don't have them anywhere else.

What would you look at if there were things to interest you at a particular site, if you were choosing somewhere to go?

- I would first look at places where I would like to stay and then see what's on offer there.

What kind of things would you want see?

- I like to see artefacts and clothing and things.

Thinking about all the things there are, what would get you to come and visit Hadrian's Wall?

- You'd have to be honest and say this is what we've got and this is where it is.

Is this the kind of thing that would get you going?

- If I was round the area, I might go along, but it's not the kind of thing that would make me go.

So this is interesting?

- Yes, I would go for a day trip.
- Are there any castles along the way? I would like that.
- It needs a good visitor centre with a café.

Going back to our plan – this is where Hadrian's Wall stretches and these are the different attractions along it. Do you think you need some more information about what you can do there? You've got Roman Vindolanda, Housesteads...

- You should have a trail that you can follow.

Would this be more of a weekend away, than a day trip?

- I think so.
- And how far away from the actual Wall are these places? That looks about 20 miles away from the Wall.

So this personal lives theme, this is of interest with the real objects and the stories of people who were stationed here?

- Yes!

This next one is called Edge of Empire. Hadrian's Wall was the centrepiece of the northern frontier. These frontiers symbolised military and economic power of the empire. One of the sites, for example, might have a story or theme about what it was like to be at the edge of the empire. Outside the empire is nothing.

- I don't know anything about that, so it would be interesting.

These are all Roman frontiers around the world, so the idea is how does it feel to be on the edge. Does that work, is it interesting?

- All these other places look very grand, very interesting.
- What happened to Hadrian's Wall to make it a ruin?

It was just abandoned really.

- That would be interesting.
- This is more about the history of the Romans rather than the history of Hadrian's Wall.
- There's a lot on the news just now about the collapse of the Berlin Wall, it's a missed opportunity really to compare another wall that fell.
- A lot of people look at Hadrian's Wall as something that divides the Scottish and the English.

Bringing it up to date, is that something you think is a good idea?

- I'd still like to learn more about the history of the Wall and what went on, something big must have happened.
- There was no way they were going to tame us!

What they are trying to do here is that people say "Hadrian's Wall is just a wall" but they're trying to show it was part of an empire and it was at the edge of that empire. Does that work?

- I've never thought about that before.
- I think for some people, some people might find that hard to understand.

Is that of interest, that sort of bigger picture?

- I'm interested in what the Romans did in Britain.

Is this European perspective of interest to anyone?

- Yes!
- It would be of interest when we got there, but it wouldn't encourage me to go.

This is about the Roman Army, being multi-skilled and multicultural. They had many different roles... you can even track down where individual soldiers were stationed and travelled because they left such detailed plans and documents. Did you know that Roman military strategy is still used today?

- This is more the kind of thing we learnt at school. We're much more familiar with these sort of ideas.
- To be fair, I've seen all these things before. I like to see computer recreations of how things used to look.

Do you like information presented like that?

- Yes (lots of agreement)

So you would like to see all sorts of information presented as video pictures?

- Yes (lots of agreement)
- It's nice to see a computer-generated image of what a place would have looked like years ago.
- I think I would've quite liked that in York, because we were looking at the floor plans of the Minster and I found that quite hard to understand.
- Yes, they do that in *Time Team*, you get to see what it would've looked like, bit by bit.

Because this subject is more familiar, is this not of interest? Or are you still quite interested?

- Yes, I quite like it still.
- It would be good if you could have big screens showing pictures of how it would have looked like from the air.

Because the Roman Army's strategy was very good and is still used today, do you think it might be good to have strategy games?

- Yes, it might be good to show people how your culture was eradicated. And how everything changed. They were very intelligent and ahead of us. I guess that kind of ties in with the last thing, which was outside the frontier there was nothing and this was the beginning of technology.

Would an exhibition about the Roman Army get you to Hadrian's Wall or be of interest once you were there?

- Yes it might be quite good if they sold it as 'come and have a Roman experience'.
- I think it would be a really good idea if you could get information in a package about what happens on particular days and where to stay and eat, that sort of thing.
- It would be a good idea.

This is called Imperial Province of Rome. The reason why the Romans came was because of the minerals and the resources. There are lots of stories about how commerce developed and why they kept such a lot of their army here.

- Yes, that's more interesting.
- I think this would be good to learn about.
- Can you get onto all these things here – how accessible are these different spots on the Wall?
- Between each centre how far apart are they?
- That would probably interest my husband. He would find this stuff interesting.

This next one is called Exploration, Discovery and Values and this is all about how do they know what the objects were and what they were used... It explains how they used science to find out all about the objects they were...

- Does that mean you can go and dig stuff up yourself?
- That sounds really exciting; we would really enjoy doing that. It sounds good fun!
- So can you do that?

Yes. You can go and dig at Roman Vindolanda. Is that something that interests you?

- It would be really good to go for a weekend and have a good dig!
- That's really interesting, when you think of historic sites; you think they've already found everything there is. You don't think there's still stuff under there and you don't think you would be able to get near it all.

Is that the sort of thing that would make going to Hadrian's Wall a bit different?

- Yes, because a lot of the other stuff is quite familiar, but you don't really ever get to have a go of things like that. You just assume it's only people who know what they are doing who are allowed near digs.
- The idea that things are still ongoing is really interesting; it goes against the idea that a wall is a wall. It's a process that's still going on.
- Some of the other boards you've shown about the economics and what the Romans brought to the area are maybe of interest more to historians, or adults. My kids would hate that probably, but this would appeal to adults and children. I could really sell this to them. It would seem a lot more exciting.

Are you interested in how the archaeologists work out what the stuff they dig up is and how they know what it was used for?

- Yes – how they piece it together, a bit of *CSI* – that would be really good.
- It would be of interest to lots of people, I think, to see how that works.

This is the last board and this is called – Walls and Barriers. This is comparing walls and barriers in a modern context. Is thinking about these things interesting?

- It would be interesting but it wouldn't make me go.
- I think the pictures are quite good, to imagine what it would have been like.
- It would also have been good for people to have a recreation of a checkpoint you have to go through, have a big Roman centurion with a knife waiting at the other side.
- That would make the visit interesting and dramatic, and it would be good for the younger generation.
- I don't like it as much – I prefer the historic stuff.
- It seems a bit political to me.

Do you have any thoughts about anything we've looked at so far?

- I think they should have a bit more about it on television, like on that programme *Coast* – that would be good to see.

Has any heard of World Heritage Sites?

- It seems as if it's of significant historical importance, but it wouldn't be something to make me go
- I wouldn't think Hadrian's Wall is as grand as these other places.
- Yes, it's not really the pyramids in Egypt, is it?
- It wouldn't make me go.

Is there anything that Hadrian's Wall Heritage Limited could do to make you want to go?

- You don't see enough about it. I think most people think there's nothing there.
- Advertising would be a good way of selling it? On the internet, or special offers to encourage you.
- Yes – more advertising on TV and local papers, more along the lines of what we've heard about tonight. The things we didn't know about.
- It is of interest to me, but I can't imagine my friends wanting to come down for the weekend.
- I'm just amazed at the size of it. It's just too big. I would have to be down that day, I wouldn't go specially.
- It's just not got the visual impact. But also I would want to know, where do you stay?
- I like the idea of the archaeology. I was just thinking about Pitlochry where they light it up at night time that would be a really good idea, to get the atmosphere.
- Re-enactments are a good idea.
- Yes – some Roman soldiers – and a bus that takes you along.
- I think before I came tonight I had no idea it was more than a wall. But it would be good if they created some encampments. I would need some advice about how to get there.
- I would need information about where all the different places are, how to get there, restaurants.
- The dig would be a really good thing to encourage people to come to the Wall.
- And would you be able to cycle along the Wall?

Participant 9 joins the group – lots of explanation. Poses questions.

So if you had some more information about what Hadrian's Wall had to offer would that make you go?

- I wonder about the cost of it, though. Do you have to pay to go to each different site individually or can you get a special ticket that you can use in all the sites, because otherwise it would end up being quite expensive.

So if all the practicalities could be sorted out – what would you like to see at the sites?

- Just the sort of things we've been looking at today really, I would expect to see all that.
- Yes, all that sort of stuff. You don't really go to these places to be excited. When I went to York I thought it would just be a boring old building, but I found it really interesting. It surprised me.
- Yes, I do find everything very interesting, but I still wouldn't go and visit unless I was in the area for something else.

4. On-site interviews – Housesteads summary report

Background

Forty four visitors were interviewed at Housesteads on Thursday 18 and Friday 19 February. The majority of respondents (40%) said that their reason for visiting that day was to show children the site. Many of the children were learning about Romans at school and had come along to learn more for a project. All participants were positive about the site, nobody expressed any dislikes. However, the vast majority of respondents were very keen on the suggested themes for interpretation to develop the site. These people were happy for any ideas to be implemented because there was a feeling that there is nothing there at the moment.

There was a small contingent of people (7%) who preferred to *“just wander round”* and look for themselves. These respondents felt it was *“unnecessary”* or *“vulgar”* to introduce any type of interpretation. These people tended to be older and members of both English Heritage and National Trust.

Respondent Profile

Most of the respondents said that the main reason they were visiting was because they were bringing either their own children, or grandchildren (40%).

- Nearly a third of participants (30%) said they were there because they had a general interest in Roman history
- 23% of those questioned were visiting as part of a day out/visit to Hadrian’s Wall
- 11% of participants had heard about the site and wanted to visit
- Some of the respondents (7%) had a specific interest in the site or part of the site and this had prompted their visit
- A further 7% were regular visitors
- “Just passing” was the reason cited by another 7% of respondents
- 2% of respondents were visiting as part of a walk
- 2% were visiting relatives nearby who had brought them along
- 66% of respondents were visiting with children under 16, although it is worth noting that the research took place in the school half-term holidays
- 9% of those interviewed had a child over 16 with them
- 23% were with another adult/partner
- 2% had come to the site alone
- None of the respondents were under 25, and only 2% were aged between 25-34
- The majority of respondents (41%) were aged between 35-44
- 36% of those interviewed were aged between 45-54
- A further 11% or respondents were in the 55-64 age range
- While 9% were over 65 years of age

A third of visitors (34%) had been to Housesteads before, but for 60% this had been some years ago, typically on a school trip.

- 20% of those who had been before had visited in the last 6 months
- Another 13% had visited in the last 6-12 months
- 7% of respondents had visited in the previous 1-5 years
- 65% of those who had visited before had only been once

Many of the visitors were members of a heritage organisation

- 25% of respondents were members of the National Trust
- 14% of participants were English Heritage members;
- A further 14% of those interviewed were members of both the National Trust and English Heritage
- 2% of respondents were members of the Sealed Knot

What do you like best about Housesteads?

When asked what particular aspects they liked best at Housesteads, 20% of respondents answered ***“the fort”***.

- Another 20% answered ***“everything”***
- The views and scenery were a favourite of 18% of respondents
- 9% of participants said the latrines were a highlight
- A further 9% cited the history of the site ***“It’s interesting to see how they lived”***
- 4% liked the fact it was ***“very educational”***
- 2% preferred the museum
- The ***“wide open spaces”*** was cited by another 2%
- The helpful staff (2%)
- Another 2% enjoyed the walk the best

Which aspects of the site do you dislike?

The vast majority of respondents didn’t have any criticisms of the site however, one of the older respondents complained of the long up-hill walk to the fort. And two mothers with young children felt ***“there should be more toilet facilities at the top of the site”***. A further two respondents wanted to see more information about the history of the site ***“Some of the information seems quite dated, it would be good to have more of the history.”***

Did you visit the Museum?

98% of respondents visited the Housesteads museum whilst they were on site. Overall, the majority of participants were very positive about what it had to offer:

- *“It was very interesting and well laid out”*
- *“We really enjoyed having a look round”*

The children’s area with dressing up was particularly popular:

- *“We thought the museum was great, it was very child friendly”*
- *“We really liked the museum, the kids enjoyed dressing up like Romans to have a look around the fort, because they’re quite young it helped them to understand a bit more about where we are”*

What did you expect your visit to Housesteads to be like?

Respondents who hadn’t been to Housesteads before were asked what expectations they had of their visit. The majority of people questioned didn’t really know what to expect, although 14% said that they expected it to be *“just as it is”*.

- 10% of respondents said they had expected to learn about how the Romans at Housesteads lived and organised things
- Another 10% of participants expected it to be *“bleak”*. However, these respondents went on to say that the reality exceeded their expectations

None of the participants stated that the visit did not live up to their expectations. Around 15% of respondents said that it was better than they had expected, particularly because of the *“spectacular views”*.

Interpretation

Respondents were asked how they liked to receive information when they visit heritage sites. Participants were initially asked for their spontaneous response, if a particular method of interpretation was not mentioned, they were then prompted and asked if they would like it.

Media	Spontaneous	Prompted	Total
Information panels	73%	27%	100%
Short films	-	70%	70%
Costumed interpreters and actors	5%	55%	60%
Hands-on activities/‘doing’ – e.g., crafts, objects to touch, archaeology	7%	48%	55%
Guidebooks	20%	32%	52%
Themed events/events	2%	48%	50%
Guided tours	4%	39%	43%

Children’s activities/trails	-	36%	36%
Reconstructions – physical reconstructions/models	4%	27%	31%
Audio tours (headsets)	9%	20%	29%
Computer interactives e.g. touch screens, games	2%	23%	25%
Reconstructions and virtual tours on computers	-	25%	25%
Like to wander round rather than access information	11%	9%	20%
Talking to/asking questions of experts/knowledgeable people	-	18%	18%
Downloading information to a mobile phone	-	2%	2%
Hand-held audio-visual guides/pda	-	0%	0%

Respondents displayed a lot of resistance to the suggestion of hand-held audio-visual guides/PDAs; a number of reasons were given. Younger respondents said they would be impractical to use when visiting with small children and would not enhance the family experience. Several respondents described going to places where there was a reliance on technology and often ***“things weren’t working properly”***.

Themes for interpretation

Different themes and ideas for interpretation were tested with the respondents.

- 93% of respondents agreed that it would be a good idea for different stories to be told at Housesteads
- The theme Edge of Empire was most popular amongst respondents with 91% of participants agreeing that they were interested in the idea
- ***“This sounds really interesting, I think it would be really help to see things in context”***
- ***“I think this would really appeal to the kids”***
- Some respondents did express reservations about how the information would be delivered
- ***“It sounds good, but it would depend on how it was presented. They would have to make it engaging for children”***

Respondents were asked their views on the theme Walls and Barriers. This idea polarised opinions. 86% of participants agreed that this was a theme they would like to see explored at Housesteads. The idea generated a lot of enthusiasm from those who were in favour:

- ***“That’s an excellent idea, it really makes you think. I was talking to my daughter about the Berlin Wall yesterday and comparing it with here. I think the checkpoint idea could really teach people a lot”***

- ***“I had never made the connection before about modern day walls. I think that’s really good. It would make the place seem a bit more relevant”***

There were, however, a small number of respondents who were firmly against the idea. Some saw it as being ***“too political”***. One respondent stated that ***“history should be treated as something in the past and you shouldn’t try to bring in modern day comparisons. To do so would show a complete misunderstanding of what happened here two thousand years ago.”***

Almost all participants (93%) were strongly in favour of having more information on site about the people of Housesteads. Respondents felt that this idea would appeal to both adults and children:

- ***“My daughter is always really interested in the social history aspect of things. It’s that sort of information that really brings a place to life”***
- ***“I would love to see that. As I’ve been walking round today I kept thinking ‘I wonder what people thought of being posted here, in the cold’ that’s the kind of stuff I’d like to find out about”***

Respondents were questioned about whether they would like to receive information about the different themes through information downloaded to a mobile phone or a small hand held computer (PDA). Again this idea was almost universally unpopular with only 2% of respondents agreeing that this was a good idea.

5. First-time visits – Housesteads summary report

Background

- Eight people who had never previously been to Housesteads were asked to visit and to provide feedback
- The participants arranged their own transport and visit, and expenses were reimbursed
- All participants were interested in history and visited historic sites
- The sample of mystery visitors were:
 - A family; one male parent and two young people (a girl aged 10 and a boy aged 15). This group had not previously visited Hadrian's Wall
 - One single female aged 30 who had not previously visited
 - One single female aged 40 who had previously visited Roman Vindolanda and Segedunum
 - One older couple (55+) with a grandson (aged 12) who had not previously visited

Key findings

- Everyone felt that they knew “something” about the Romans. Key associations were: gladiators, centurions, battles, invasions, coins and feasts and food. Interestingly, these were generally colourful and/or active associations – the opposite of the associations that participants later had with Housesteads
- Awareness and perceptions of Hadrian's Wall were mixed:
 - The two youngest participants had not heard of Hadrian's Wall; when prompted they expected simply a wall, and did not expect to enjoy the experience
 - Most of the adults thought that Hadrian's Wall had been built to defend against the Scots
 - Two participants had undertaken some research before visiting. They had the highest expectations of the sample, and were, overall, the most disappointed:

“I got to know a little about Housesteads and Hadrian's Wall. I was hoping to find out more about what happened at this part of the Wall, and about the whole of the Wall. I was expecting a museum or visitor centre, something that would bring the site to life.”

“Prior to visiting Hadrian's Wall, I had positive expectations as to what to expect. I knew that the Wall itself was just a wall but I thought that forts like Housesteads would be a lot more interesting than the Wall. I also knew that Housesteads had a

museum which I hoped would not only explain information about the fort itself, but about life in Roman Britain and other things such as the Roman empire, Roman soldiers etc.”

- As there is no linking of other sites from Housesteads, participants expected the site to inform them of the “whole story” of the Wall in a wider context:

“If this is all you see of Hadrian’s Wall, I think you will be disappointed. I have been to Vindolanda, which is very different. But there is no reference to Vindolanda or any of the other places along the Wall so I would be worried that visitors would come here and think that all of Hadrian’s Wall is like this, whereas in reality, you can do different things along the Wall.”

- Most participants did not know what to expect in terms of Housesteads specifically, but they all expected ‘a good day out’, a tea room, clean toilets and a shop (with merchandise which reflected the site)
- Participants expected a full day at Housesteads, especially as they travelled around 90 minutes to reach the site and because of the admission cost. In practice, however, they felt that they struggled to stay at the site for longer than 90 minutes on average:

“It isn’t worth the travel time from here [Thirsk]. It is a nice drive and all that, but I would like at least 3 or 4 hours somewhere for the price of that petrol and the admission ticket. If they gave you money off somewhere nearby, that would help, if they can’t add more to Housesteads.”

“I liked the countryside setting of the place, it was stunning. That was the best bit of the visit. But how did people who lived here think about the countryside. To me, it is beautiful because I live in a city but did they feel isolated or homesick? What about people outside of the Wall? I would like that sort of information covered, even though we wouldn’t know the facts for sure, we could all have a view.”

“The fort itself was just walls, and I couldn’t really imagine what it used to be like. I didn’t know what any of the different walls were, even after I looked round.”

- Respondents struggled to see Housesteads as a ‘destination’ as they did not feel that there was a sufficient attraction or offer at the site:

“It wasn’t bad, just a bit pointless.”

“There isn’t enough here. You would have to combine it with something else.”

- Some tried to buy tickets to the site in the shop and were confused when they could not do so. The staff in the shop were not necessarily seen as ‘helpful’. Generally, participants did not like approaching staff for information about the site

because they a) felt that they did not know what questions to ask; and b) they did not want to appear stupid. There was also a perceived lack of staff around the site:

“The vast majority of staff were polite and helpful. However, one member of staff seemed quite rude when we asked to buy tickets at the gift shop. There were no clear notices telling us we had to pay in the museum, yet she bluntly and rudely told us ‘Not here, up there’.”

“I did wonder if it was just me who couldn’t make sense of it here. I thought that maybe I should know this, and I guess that’s why I didn’t really want to ask any questions.”

“I didn’t see any staff to ask anyway.”

“I like all history and I go to a lot of sites, but this one has made me feel inadequate. I don’t get a sense of the history here because it is so difficult to connect with the information here. I left feeling quite deflated.”

The Museum

- Smaller than expected (***“Too small really”***)
- Well organised and staffed
- Not young person/child friendly (***“My daughter got bored really quickly and that made it difficult for me to spend time in there”; “It’s just for adults, not young people”***)
- Old fashioned feel



“The information boards were very clear and easy to read- we found out some interesting stuff”



“This model didn’t really bring things to life. I was looking at it for ages, but I couldn’t connect it in my mind to what was actually on the site”

Gift Shop

- Mixed views from “average” to “good”
- Good selection of books
- Some felt that it was not specific enough to Housesteads

The Fort

- Very difficult to interpret due to the perceived lack of information
- The existing information was thought to be “cold” and functional and did not bring the site to life
- Participants could not imagine a real, working fort
- Participants with children struggled to engage them; they felt that they could not answer their children’s questions and they could not make it exciting because they did not have the necessary knowledge
- Participants felt that they came away from the visit knowing “very little” about Housesteads and Hadrian’s Wall
- Writing was small on the boards

“I found the site itself a little bit disappointing. It was hard to get a sense of what used to be there, and it was difficult to see more than a series of small walls. While it was interesting to see the Wall and the fort, it was not very exciting.”

“The children were underwhelmed. At other sites, it is easy to keep their attention by explaining what they are looking at and describing events that have happened. I found it hard to do that here, as there was a lack of information on the site. The information boards that we found were not very inspiring.”

“The boards don’t explain anything very well.”



“We had no idea what this was, it looked really interesting, but we just couldn’t work it out.”



"I really couldn't understand this, the sign had no information and didn't seem to relate to anything!"



"The latrines were our favourite bit. You could actually imagine, how the soldiers used to live."



"It would have been good to have some more information about the wall."



"The scenery was breathtaking, that was one of the things we loved the most about our visit."

Suggested improvements

- All of the participants mentioned the need to bring the site “to life”; the most frequently made suggestion was through re-enactments and costumed interpreters. Most participants also suggested a guided tour (They did not mind whether this was carried out by paid staff or by volunteers). Activity back-packs for children were also suggested:

“It would be good to have a funny, exciting guided tour. It would have to be someone good doing the tour like the ghost of a dead Roman soldier or an English person who lived near the Wall. At other places I have seen battle re-enactments and that would be good here too. I think I would enjoy it more if they did things to bring the past back to life.”

“The main problem I found at Housesteads was that it didn’t really ‘come to life’. Other historic sites, such as Jorvik, do more to re-enact the past, and I think Housesteads would be really good if it did more of that. Housesteads would be better if they had things like historic re-enactments, character actors, guided tours, an interactive museum etc.”

- Suggested improvements to the museum included interactives, children’s information, a larger model of how Housesteads looked and a short film recreating the site
- Participants wanted more information at the site; they wanted this to be clear and easy to read and to include some fun or unusual facts:

“More information definitely, but not the way it is written now. It needs to make you want to read it. All of the panels looked the same to me, and were all a bit boring.”

“Horrible Histories is one of my favourite programmes and I would like some horrible facts about Romans here.”

- Information which participants wanted to know included:
 - What it was like to live at Housesteads and how this compared to living outside
 - What it was like to be a Briton in Roman Britain
 - Who lived at Housesteads
 - Why Hadrian’s Wall was built

“I thought information about the whole Wall was missing. Housesteads is just one point along a long wall and I would like more information about what happened along the rest of the Wall. The bus service A.D.122 had a commentary from the driver about the points of the Wall that the bus was passing. I found this very informative, and

helped me get a sense of the whole Wall. A proper guided bus tour would be a great way of seeing the Wall”

- In the shop, participants wanted more products which specifically related to Housesteads

The Interpretation Framework

- Participants liked the idea of Housesteads connecting to the wider Wall, and to other sites along Hadrian’s Wall. They felt that this would equip them with information to help them decide where else to visit on their trip:

“It would be good to get ideas of where to go from Housesteads. Something which tells you to come here to get X about the Wall, or go there for information about a different subject. I like that, because I would plan to go to two sites in one day.”

Walls and Barriers

- Respondents were also asked their views on the theme Walls and Barriers. This was a theme they would like to see explored at Housesteads because of its location and because they felt that it needed a more compelling reason to visit:

“It is a different reason to come. You can see the Wall and understand a completely different subject. I would then go to another attraction on the Wall for a different story.”

6. Community consultation – summary report

Two community drop-in sessions were arranged during May 2010:

- Monday 24 May, Brampton Community Centre (west Hadrian's Wall)
- Tuesday 25 May, Beaumont Hotel (east Hadrian's Wall).

The two sessions were advertised in the local press as well as through email contact lists of Hadrian's Wall Heritage Limited.

The purpose of the sessions was to provide an opportunity for people to learn about the Interpretation Framework and current and potential projects along Hadrian's Wall. Each session provided opportunities to view display panels that illustrated the project; to hear about the responses from the focus group and telephone survey research; to talk to the project team; and to input their experience and ideas into the project.

Short presentations (15 minutes) summarising the project were provided, followed by open discussion.

The sessions attracted participants from several communities along Hadrian's Wall:

- Longtown
- Corbridge
- Stocksfield
- Hexham
- CA87HN
- Carlisle

All participants had an active interest in Hadrian's Walls and were, for example, National Trail Volunteers, bed and breakfast operators, local business owners, an ex-school teacher, etc.

All attendees expressed appreciation and thanks for the opportunity to learn about and be involved in the Interpretation Framework project. On a feedback form, one attendee wrote: ***"It is good to think that times are moving in the heritage field and involving the public in their expectations."***

All attendees expressed strong support for the proposed Interpretation Framework project and to new approaches to presenting and marketing Hadrian's Wall. On the feedback form, one attendee wrote: ***"There appears to be a lot of common sense in this approach – the importance of focusing on what people want to know rather than what we want them to know. People want to know about people."*** This was echoed in the feedback of another attendee who wrote: ***"People relate to people, not to objects."***

Attendees expressed support for the proposed themes of the Interpretation Framework. On a feedback form, one attendee wrote: ***“I liked the concept of putting forward the wider aspects of the Roman Frontier and its modern counterparts.”*** Another attendee wrote: ***“Iraqi Arabs (Arbeia and Segedunum) – Muslims, Romans, barbarians and auxs living side by side. Emphasising good story of Arabs rather neg. story of wars. (Ref. Bethany Hughes telling the story of Islamic Empire extending into Spain/France and what Islamic Empire brought into and gave Western Europe).”***

Attendees expressed support for the audience development and interpretation principles and approaches in the proposed Interpretation Framework. In particular, attendees supported the need to invest in Hadrian’s Wall, its sites and their presentation and interpretation. On a feedback form one attendee wrote: ***“There is a need to bring the Hadrian’s Wall corridor into the 21st century. Local people are very passionate and protective about the area and its features and sites. We have to understand that visitors and particularly the younger visitors need to have an up-to-date experience of Hadrian’s Wall. This up-to-date experience needs investment in the sites along the Wall. ‘Old style’ museum exhibits in cases is not the way forward. Visitors need to be inspired with new forms of information relating to the Wall and the lives of people who were stationed and worked there. Information and communication technology is the way forward with the provision of an experience for the visitor. The Interpretation Framework produced is going to provide the main features to concentrate on providing a ‘wow factor’ experience for visitors and local people who may not have been to the sites for some time. For families with the different age ranges, there has to be something that engages them with history and immerses them into the site of place visited but at the same time keeps them rooted in contemporary situations.”***

Some attendees identified the need for investment in wider facilities. On one feedback form one attendee wrote: ***“...the ‘visitor experience’ needs the services i.e. toilets, easy disabled access, picnic facilities.”***

Several attendees raised complaints about the condition of interpretation panels at English Heritage sites. Two attendees made specific comments on the feedback forms: ***“The interpretation panels provided by English Heritage are a disgrace and an embarrassment for a World Heritage Site”*** and: ***“The interpretation boards at various [English Heritage] sites along Hadrian’s Wall are in a very tatty state – lamination peeled off.”***

One attendee raised the need to provide information in other European languages.

Several attendees who were National Trail Volunteers suggested that Trail walkers do not visit sites along Hadrian's Wall. One attendee wrote on a feedback form: ***“Trail walkers do not necessarily have time to visit many sites but could be tempted to return to the region another time.”***

Several attendees raised the need for better use of incentive and discount schemes along Hadrian's Wall. One attendee proposed an accommodation voucher for Hadrian's Wall and suggested that this could be linked to the forts. There is a clear interest from business providers to see more cross-selling and shared benefits between the public and private sector.

7. Coach operator telephone interviews – summary and key findings

Consultation with organisations along Hadrian's Wall identified coach tour operators as an important organiser of visits to Hadrian's Wall and a key route through which older visitors access Hadrian's Wall.

Similar to general visitor numbers, organised coach tour visits have declined over recent years. In order to assess the reasons underpinning this decline, 15 telephone interviews were undertaken with coach tour operators.

General findings

The following sections summarise the general findings from the interviews in four sections:

Section A – What influences coach tours and visit to places and sites

Section B – Knowledge and perceptions of Hadrian's Wall

Section C – Responses to the Interpretation Framework

Section D – Feedback on interview

Section A – What influences coach tours and visit to places and sites

Coach tour customers

Operators confirmed that typical customers tend to be senior citizens – between 50 and 60 years of age. Some operators organise family/children-orientated excursions but these are infrequent.

Generally take a full coach of people – around 30 people.

Organisation of trips

Operators tended to plan between 2-500 trips (day trips) per year. Overnight trips are planned a year in advance; daytrips are planned several months in advance.

No operators interviewed set a travel time or limit to the number of trips organised.

Decision-making process

Operators identified a series of factors that influenced a decision to visit a place/site:

Sources of information and marketing influencing a decision to visit

- Generally, operators source information from either a) destination website or b) personal visit to the area. Key information sought relates to opening hours/times for specific attractions

- Previous experience of visiting certain destinations
- Customer feedback is used to a) measure the success of a trip (both orally and in writing i.e. completing questionnaires), and b) to plan future trips

Incentives

On the whole, operators are not motivated by incentives but rather by customer needs. They appreciate benefits for coach drivers but don't make decisions based on those benefits.

Selection of destinations

Operators determine and select destinations based on the following key factors:

- Customer feedback
- Driver feedback
- Decent hotel/accommodation
- Previous experience
- Time of year

Attractions and facilities

Operators identified a series of characteristics that made places/sites suitable for their customers:

- Facilities and attractions need to be easily accessible to customers – some of whom have mobility problems
- Facilities and attractions need to have convenient drop-off and collection points for coach drivers
- Toilet facilities
- Refreshments
- Quality accommodation/hotels

Operators generally identified the need to devise day trips that could take in 2-3 attractions.

Operators identified that rude or uncooperative staff would put them off visiting a site again.

Historical setting

Asked whether historical setting influenced their selection of places/sites to visit, operators identified that although not a necessity, historical settings are popular with their typical customers.

Section B – Knowledge and perceptions of Hadrian’s Wall

Most operators were aware of Hadrian’s Wall and offered positive responses; many already organised trips to and visited Hadrian’s Wall. Only one operator contact had not heard of Hadrian’s Wall. Of those who visited, all believed it to be popular amongst customers.

Question: What immediately comes to mind when you think of Hadrian’s Wall?

- English heritage
- Romans, countryside, great views
- English heritage
- Remote, inaccessible, walks/walkers
- Viewpoints
- English history
- Not heard of Hadrian’s Wall before
- Historical and interesting
- English history and heritage, castles and museums
- Historical, large and interesting
- Housesteads, Wallsend, Carlisle
- North-east, can walk along and visit places along it
- Forts, isolation
- Romans, Scots, English, Newcastle, Carlisle

Operators also gave the following spontaneous responses:

- Popular place to visit, do organise trips to Hadrian’s Wall. Had six or seven trips to Hadrian’s Wall last year
- Previously been to and organised trips to Hadrian’s Wall
- Organised trips to Hadrian’s Wall
- Have organised trips to Hadrian’s Wall in the past
- Not sure if organised trip there
- Not organised a trip there previously, not heard of before
- Have organised a trip to Hadrian’s Wall and visited within last 12 months
- Have visited in the last 12 months
- Lovely countryside in Cumbria, appealing to all and very good sites. Have organised trips to Hadrian’s Wall and last visited two months ago
- Visited Hadrian’s Wall 18 months ago
- Not organised trips to Hadrian’s Wall before because haven’t got round to it. From tour operator’s point of view, profit margins may not be great though. Have been to Hadrian’s Wall previously, seven years ago
- Have organised trips to Hadrian’s Wall previously, specifically for school daytrips
- Organised last trip to Hadrian’s Wall about a year ago. Have had some requests so will be booking more trips in the future
- Have organised trips to Hadrian’s Wall, about four years ago

	Already	Didn’t know and	Didn’t know
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	knew	might encourage to visit	and wouldn't encourage to visit
Along Hadrian's Wall there are lots of different sites such as forts, miles castles, turrets, temples, museums and visitor centres	86%	7%	7%
Hadrian's Wall is the greatest and best-preserved of all the frontier defences that once protected the Roman Empire	72%	14%	14%
More Roman objects have been excavated along Hadrian's Wall than anywhere else in Britain, including many of the most important Roman finds in Europe.	14%	50%	36%
Hadrian's Wall is a World Heritage site	86%	7%	7%
Base	14	14	14

- Most operators were aware that there are lots of different sites along Hadrian's Wall (86%) and it is recognised as a World Heritage site (86%)
- The most popular site visited by tour operators was Chesters (50%)
- Sites where no trips had been organised were: Roman Maryport and Senhouse Museum with Roman Maryport being the least recognized of all the sites (79%)

Section C – Responses to the Interpretation Framework

Interpretation Framework

- 93% of respondents were in favour of the overall idea of an Interpretation Framework

Reactions to ideas for interpretation – draft interpretation principles

	This is a good idea and would encourage me to organise a trip	It is a good idea – but would not encourage me to organise a trip	This is not of interest
Putting historical information into a modern context – so, for example, comparing life on the Roman Frontier to how it feels to live in a country divided by a wall in today's world	57%	29%	14%
Being able to experience what it was like to be a Roman or a native –	43%	43%	14%

perhaps by wearing replica clothing or doing or seeing traditional crafts			
How Hadrian's Wall fitted into the rest of the Roman empire	64%	22%	14%
Focusing on the people, their lives and the evidence they left behind	79%	21%	-
How Hadrian's Wall and its different forts, temples, turrets and mile castles, played a role in defending the frontier and are linked and relate to each other	71%	22%	7%
Base	14	14	14

- Coach tour operators responses highlight the importance of those interpretation principles that:
 - Focus on people, lives and the evidence left behind (+17% on quantitative telephone survey responses)
 - Focus on making sense of the frontier, its parts (and sites) and how they relate to each other (+14% on quantitative telephone survey responses)
 - Focus on setting Hadrian's Wall into the context of the Roman Empire

Collectively these responses suggest that tour operators seek an experience that enables visitors to make sense of Hadrian's Wall, by linking sites and setting the wider context for the WHS. This may reflect the fact that operators seek to link 2-3 sites in a tour and that the interpretive principles may support coach tour operators in planning trips to Hadrian's Wall. HWHL might consider creating sample itineraries for operators and promoting these via its website.

Here are some of the ideas for the different themes for sites. What do you think of these?

	Good idea and would encourage you to organise a trip	Good idea – but would not encourage you to organise a trip	This is not of interest
Tracing the personal stories of people who lived along Hadrian's Wall – soldiers, wives, children – using their personal objects. For example, along Hadrian's Wall objects such as party invitations, letters home from soldiers asking for their families to send them warm clothes, and IOUs have been found	71%	29%	-
The archaeology, science and history behind the objects that tell us what the objects are,	36%	57%	7%

who made or owned them and where people travelled throughout the empire			
Other walls and barriers in history and in the modern world, and exploring what it might feel like to have your country divided like this, including being able to experience going through a check point in the Wall	36%	57%	7%
How the Roman Army was organised and what role it played in creating and maintaining the empire, e.g. Roman battle strategy, the other roles that the soldiers carried out (policemen, engineers, craftsmen, builders, farmers, couriers etc.)	57%	43%	-
Finding out about the different people within the Roman Empire. The Roman Empire brought together lots of different people from around the world. The troops stationed at Hadrian's Wall came from as far away as North Africa, Iraq, Romania and Germany	50%	50%	-
'Before and after' the Romans came – so, looking at how the local natives lived, their religions and crafts, and how the Romans changed this, plus all of the things that the Romans left behind (for example, Christianity, cats, architecture, roads)	64%	36%	-
How the Roman Empire was organised and administered in order to extend across such a vast area and exploit resources from around the world	50%	50%	-
Base	14	14	

- The most appealing themes to coach operators were the Roman Army (57%), personal stories/Roman Lives (71%) and the Roman Empire (71%), all achieving higher percentages than in the quantitative telephone survey
- The least appealing themes to coach operators were archaeology (36%), walls and barriers (36%). These responses seem to suggest that coach tour operators are more interested in history-focused sites

Reactions to interpretive methods and media

	Yes	No
Information panels	79%	21%
Short films	71%	29%
Costumed interpreters/actors	93%	7%
Themed events/events	86%	14%
Hands on activities/'doing'	21%	79%
Guided tours	93%	7%

Talking to/asking experts questions	86%	14%
Audio tours (headsets)	64%	36%
Downloading information to mobiles	7%	93%
Computer interactives, e.g. touch screen, games	36%	64%
Reconstruction/virtual tours on computers	21%	79%
Physical reconstructions/models	64%	36%
Hand-held audio-visual guides	43%	57%
Children's activities	29%	71%
Guidebooks	71%	29%

- Coach operators consistently gave preference to personal interpretation, identifying guided tours, talking to knowledgeable people, costumed actors and themed events as very popular and appealing to their customers (generally adults; slightly older)
- In contrast, operators saw “hands-on” and computer-related activities as not having the same draw, with age of customers and lack of awareness being given as the main reasons
- Children's activities were deemed not applicable in most cases given operators' typical customer base

Responses to guided tours of Hadrian's Wall

HWH Limited has recently introduced a guide programme along Hadrian's Wall. Responses were sought in relation to this initiative, specifically:

- Are you interested in guided tours of Hadrian's Wall?
- Would you pay for a guide tour of Hadrian's Wall?
- 79% of respondents were interested in guided tours of Hadrian's Wall. This high response reflects the preference for personal interpretation identified above. Of those expressing interest, the following spontaneous responses were collected.

COMMENTS
Interested in tour, not so much walks because of our customer group age.
Would depend on the amount involved. Willing to pay up to £100 per group.
Have a guide when we go anyway, easier for us if it's all-inclusive i.e. included within cost of trip.
Some would be interested, not all. Usually pay between £5-10 for visits in general and if all-inclusive within that price, then great.
Try to include cost of tours within trip anyway. £100 pounds for a couple of hours per group would be reasonable.

<p>Cost depending. Would have to evaluate how many sites would be included before price is determined.</p> <p>Most are interested and something we already do. Most only walk along some and not all sites. Tours are included within cost of trip anyway, usually between £150-£200 per group.</p> <p>Include cost of tour within cost of trip anyway.</p> <p>Yes, possibly, but it would be targeted for a certain market. Would be roughly willing to pay £3 per head but would depend on how many people we were taking.</p>
<p>Would be more interested in visiting specific/most popular sites, not all. Good idea if it's all inclusive. Depending on how good the walks/tours are, would be willing to pay £7-8 per person.</p> <p>Not sure, it would have to be for specialist groups. I would have to consider the customers though, i.e. the amount of walking that would be required. Maybe specific sites where not a lot of walking is required.</p>

Coach tour operator information needs

COMMENTS	TOTAL
More information in foreign languages needed at museums, to appeal to those who speak another language.	7%
COMMENTS	TOTAL
The more information on one website about Hadrian's Wall, the better.	72%
Would prefer to get information through the post, hard copies, as opposed to other means for trips and excursions.	
COMMENTS	TOTAL
Don't know that much about Hadrian's Wall.	21%
Not looked at it for a while, so not qualified to answer.	

- 93% of respondents would like to see one website containing all the information they needed about planning a trip to Hadrian's Wall

COMMENTS
Would be very helpful.
Very beneficial.
A lot easier if there's just the one site.

Would be easier but needs to be put into a trade section on the website.

Less hassle if all information needed was on a website.

Definitely make information easier to access.

Would definitely help.

Would be helpful.

A general website with links to other sites would be fine.

Best way to do it.

Section D – Feedback on interview

Likelihood of organising a trip to Hadrian’s Wall having participated in the interview?

Tour operators gave positive responses to Hadrian’s Wall. Many had already organised trips there in the past. The suggested Interpretive Framework was popular amongst respondents, with many saying it would encourage them to organise a future trip.

COMMENTS
Very likely, have learnt about different aspects which could be included in our itinerary.
Very likely – already got one booked and learnt more information which could be included. Good to know they’re making things easier for us.
Very likely – good that they’re being innovative and trying to introduce new ideas which would appeal to more people.
Likely – do trips to Hadrian’s Wall anyway but these new ideas mentioned seem very positive.
Probably organising one for within the next two years. More likely to organise after hearing about these new initiatives.
But...
Great to hear they’re trying to add new things but not sure how relevant all these new ideas will be to our typical customers as many would not prefer to walk long distances. Would probably look to visit a couple of the more popular sites.
Although popular amongst some, the amount of walking required not always a selling point for our typical customers as mobility is an issue for some (age).

Some signs are dated and old, could be updated to look “fresher”.

Would have to consider financial benefits and return.

8. Stakeholder consultation – summary report

Throughout 2009-10, a series of 1:1 consultation meetings took place with a number of staff in stakeholder organisations having responsibility for conservation, presentation, management and marketing. The purpose of these meetings was to ascertain staff perceptions of existing arrangements and issues in relation to the interpretation of Hadrian's Wall.

These meetings were followed by two workshops held on 18 and 25 February, 2010. The purpose of the workshops was to feedback the results of the public engagement exercise to stakeholders and to secure their support for the Interpretation Framework.

The agendas for the two workshops are located at the end of this section.

Consultation meetings

Consultation meetings and telephone discussions were held with the following individuals during 2009-10:

Lindsay Allason-Jones	Director of CIAS, University of Newcastle
Martin Alfrey	Head Curator of Collections, English Heritage
Emma Anderson	Renaissance North West Manager, Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums
Roy Bearpark	Learning Officer, Great North Museum
Dirk Bennett	Acting Head of Interpretation, English Heritage
Nicola Bexon	Marketing Manager, English Heritage
Maggie Birchall	Learning Officer, Segedunum Museum, Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums
Patricia Birley	Director, The Vindolanda Trust
Dr David Breeze	
Nick Brooks-Sykes	Head of Tourism Marketing, North West Development Agency
Emma Carver	Head of Interpretation, English Heritage
Jo Foster	Interpretation and Education Manager, National Trust
Nicky Grace	Regional Director, National Trust
Bill Griffiths	Regional Hub Manager, Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums
Professor Ian Haynes	Professor of Archaeology, University of Newcastle
Alexandra Markham	Outreach Officer North East, English Heritage
Gillian Mason	Learning Officer, Great North Museum
Dr Nigel Mills	World Heritage and Access Director, Hadrian's Wall Heritage Limited
Lynne Minett	Education Manager Northern Territory, English Heritage
Thorsten Oppen	Curator Greek and Roman Sculpture, British Museum
Tim Padley	Keeper of Archaeology, Tullie House Museum & Art Gallery
Andrew Poad	Estate Manager, National Trust
Richard Polley	Regional Operations Director, English Heritage
Katie Read	Tourism Director, West Lakes Tourism
Laury Redman	Partner, Redman Associates

Jeremy Reed	Visitor Operations Director, English Heritage
John Scott	Management Plan Co-ordinator, Hadrian's Wall Heritage Limited
Mike Spearman	CMC Associates
Professor Peter Stone	Professor of Heritage Studies, University of Newcastle
Ian Thilthorpe	Senior Manager, Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums
David Thomas	Interpretation Officer, English Heritage
Dr Hilary Wade	Director, Tullie House Museum & Art Gallery
Humphrey Welfare	Territory Director, English Heritage
Duncan Wise	Visitor Development Manager, Northumberland National Park
Julie Wooding	Learning and Access Manager, Tullie House Museum & Art Gallery
Geoff Woodward	Manager, Segedunum Museum, Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums
Dr Chris Young	Head of International Advice, English Heritage

The meetings highlighted a series of common interests and concerns that can be summarised as follows:

- Audience development is a term understood by many staff in organisations along Hadrian's Wall. However, it is better understood in some organisations than others and existing staff numbers reflect the emphasis placed on this work. Staff in Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums demonstrate particular sensitivity to the needs of local people and their individual responsibilities in regards to audience development and the role of material culture and heritage in such efforts.

Staff in organisations that are required to balance audience needs with a commercial imperative showed a lesser focus on audience development. The Vindolanda Trust is particularly successful in balancing its active engagement with audience development, outreach and volunteering, with the need to generate income through visitors to its two sites – Roman Vindolanda and The Roman Army Museum

- Interpretation is a term that is widely known by staff in organisations along Hadrian's Wall. However, it is clear that staff and organisations define and understand interpretation in different ways and have put in place different processes for planning interpretation; they also have different understandings of what constitutes good practice.

In order to achieve the audience development aims of the Interpretation Framework, it will be important that all organisations develop a common understanding of interpretation, interpretation planning and interpretation good practice for Hadrian's Wall. This staff development need presents an ideal opportunity to bring together staff who share a common commitment to Hadrian's Wall in a Wall-wide training and development programme that may also realise benefits in terms of creating networks of staff and skills along Hadrian's Wall.

- Many staff involved in front-line delivery of customer services and provision highlighted concerns with the length of time taken to implement maintenance, the provision of refreshments and projects on the ground. Organisational structures,

procedures and staff with responsibilities for large geographical areas were given as three key reasons for the absence of and delays in action.

This aligns with the findings of the community consultation exercise in which several participants highlighted concerns with the condition of some of the existing interpretation at sites along Hadrian's Wall. The non-staffed sites in the care of English Heritage came under particular criticism, whereas Northumberland National Park was praised for its innovation and the condition of its interpretation and signage.

This suggests that a greater level of devolved regional responsibility may assist in enhancing interpretation and audience development along Hadrian's Wall

- Many staff highlighted issues with the sharing of visitor data and other information between sites along Hadrian's Wall and openly expressed a desire to share such information more openly so that all organisations could benefit from access to and use of such data
- Most staff demonstrated a good knowledge of their own organisation, its mission and activities and their specific role. Many expressed a real passion for their work and for Hadrian's Wall. In contrast, many staff demonstrated a more limited knowledge of other organisations operating along Hadrian's Wall, their mission and activities. This lack of knowledge and understanding limits the opportunities for joint working and the sharing resources and hampers the development of a "joined-up" approach to audience development and interpretation. Moreover, the resulting focus on organisation-specific interests and activities, in turn, removes focus from a Wall-wide vision and strategy for audience development and the delivery of maximum value for money to the public purse. Given the current financial environment, there is an imperative for greater levels of partnership working, shared services and joint delivery
- Senior staff in organisations along Hadrian's Wall are very aware that they are competing for the same visitors and this has a direct impact on sharing information, joint working and collaboration. Organisations view each other as competitors – particularly those that charge for admission

Workshops

Two workshops were held on 18 and 25 February, 2010. The workshops were attended by the following participants:

18 February, 2010

Genevieve Adkins	Director, Centre for Interpretation Studies, Perth College-UHI
Maggie Birchall	Learning Officer, Segedunum Museum, Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums
Kevin Booth	Senior Curator Northern Territory, English Heritage
Nick Brooks-Sykes	Head of Tourism Marketing, North West Development Agency

Dr David Breeze	
David Brough	Management Consultant
Helen Bull	Tourism and Marketing Manager, One North East
Neil Carney	Marketing and Communications Manager, Hadrian's Wall Heritage Limited
Nicky Holmes	Managing Director, Zebra Square
Carolyn Lloyd-Brown	Consultant
Chris Little	Tourism and Culture Investment Manager, One North East
Richard Polley	Regional Operations Director, English Heritage
Alexandra Markham	Outreach Officer North East, English Heritage
Dr Nigel Mills	World Heritage and Access Director, Hadrian's Wall Heritage Limited
John Scott	Management Plan Co-ordinator, Hadrian's Wall Heritage Limited
David Thomas	Interpretation Officer, English Heritage
Linda Tuttiett	Chief Executive Officer, Hadrian's Wall Heritage Limited
Humphrey Welfare	Territory Director, English Heritage
Alisdair Wilson	Manager, South Tyneside Museums, Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums

25 February, 2010

Genevieve Adkins	Director, Centre for Interpretation Studies, Perth College-UHI
Emma Anderson	Renaissance North West Manager, Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums
Roy Bearpark	Learning Officer, Great North Museum
Dirk Bennett	Acting Head of Interpretation, English Heritage
Mike Collins	Historic Environment Advisor, English Heritage
Jo Foster	Interpretation and Education Manager, National Trust
Cath Hindle	Head of Tourism Development, Tourism Tyne & Wear
Nicky Holmes	Managing Director, Zebra Square
Jude Leitch	Marketing Manager, Northumberland Tourism
Carolyn Lloyd-Brown	Consultant
Gillian Mason	Learning Officer, Great North Museum
Dr Nigel Mills	World Heritage and Access Director, Hadrian's Wall Heritage Limited
Andrew Poad	Estate Manager, National Trust
Katie Read	Tourism Director, West Lakes Tourism
Bryan Scott	Sustainable Access Officer, Hadrian's Wall Heritage Limited
Kerry Shaw	Volunteer Co-ordinator, Hadrian's Wall Heritage Limited
Professor Peter Stone	Professor Heritage Studies, Newcastle University
Tony Wilmott	Senior Archaeologist, English Heritage

The workshops provided an important opportunity to bring together interpretation and operational staff and key economic stakeholders along Hadrian's Wall. The workshops were designed to give sufficient time for all attendees to network and get to know each other, to explore interpretation, to share their expectations of a good visitor experience, and to share the results of the public engagement research.

Key elements of the workshops included facilitated discussion about different approaches to and understanding of “interpretation”, the meaning of “interpretation” as used in the Interpretation Framework and sharing the results of the public engagement research. Following discussion, at the end of each workshop all participants were invited to endorse the purposes, principles and themes of the Interpretation Framework and to act as ambassadors for the Interpretation Framework within their own organisations. Support was unanimous.

The principal outputs of the workshops were:

- The shared definition of an ideal visitor experience and therefore a vision for a visitor experience of Hadrian’s Wall and its sites
- The endorsement of the purposes, principles and themes of the Interpretation Framework and a commitment to support its implementation

**Hadrian's Wall Heritage Ltd.
Hadrian's Wall Interpretation Framework Workshop
Programme**

Location: Great North Museum

Date: 18 February

1	Arrival and coffee	All	10.30-10.45
2	Welcome and introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The HWIF project – aims and outputs ▪ HWIF process – research, consultation, engagement ▪ Purpose of the workshop – share our thinking and findings ▪ Outline of workshop agenda 	NM	10.45-11.00
3	What is interpretation? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Exploring the purposes of interpretation ▪ Benefits of taking an interpretive approach 	CLB	11.00-
4	Break-out session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Exploring interpretation 	All	-12.30
5	Lunch	All	12.30-13.30
6	The Interpretation Framework <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A framework ▪ Approaches and principles ▪ A co-ordinating concept ▪ Themes 	GA	13.30-14.00
7	What the public thinks... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Feedback on qualitative and quantitative research 	NH	14.00-14.30
8	Break-out session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Exploring issues and opportunities 	All	14.30-16.00
9	Tea break	All	16.00-16.15
10	Open discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Comments and endorsement of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interpretation Framework ▪ Approaches and principles ▪ Co-ordinating concept ▪ Themes 	All	16.15-16.50
11	Taking things forward End	NM, GA	16.50-17.00 17.00

**Hadrian's Wall Heritage Ltd.
Hadrian's Wall Interpretation Framework Workshop
Programme**

**Location: Great North Museum
Date: 25 February**

1	Arrival and coffee	All	10.30-10.45
2	Welcome and introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The HWIF project – aims and outputs ▪ HWIF process – research, consultation, engagement ▪ Purpose of the workshop – share our thinking and findings ▪ Outline of workshop agenda 	NM	10.45-11.00
4	Visitor perceptions	NH	11.00-11.15
3	What is interpretation? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Exploring the purposes of interpretation ▪ Benefits of taking an interpretive approach 	CLB	11.15-
4	Break-out session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Exploring interpretation 	All	-13.00
5	Lunch	All	13.00-14.00
6	The Interpretation Framework <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A framework ▪ Approaches and principles ▪ A co-ordinating concept ▪ Themes 	GA	14.00-14.45
7	What the public thinks... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Feedback on qualitative and quantitative research 	NH	14.45-15.45
9	Tea break	All	15.45-16.00
10	The Interpretation Framework going forwards <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Wider Wall experience ▪ Comments and endorsement of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interpretation Framework ▪ Approaches and principles ▪ Co-ordinating concept ▪ Themes 	All	16.00-16.20
11	Next steps End	NM	16.20-16.30 16.30

9. Telephone survey research – summary and key findings

- Telephone interviews of 20-25 minutes
- 307 interviews conducted in total; to be eligible to participate respondents had to:
 - Go on at least 2 day trips or visits per year
 - Be a decision-maker regarding choosing destinations
 - Go to a museum, stately home, castle or other heritage site at least once every six months
- Participants were drawn from across the UK

General findings

- 56% of respondents said that they had a ‘favourite’ heritage site or museum; these were wide-ranging and often in the region in which respondents lived:
 - The main reason for a site being a ‘favourite’ was that there was “always something different to see or do” (40% of respondents gave this as a reason). Another key factor was that it was close by

Why is this site your favourite?

Response	%
Always something different to see/do	40%
Close by/local	35%
Events/activities	26%
Children like it	26%
Familiar objects/like seeing specific aspects	20%
Quiet/peaceful	19%
Space for children to run around	15%
The history/culture	10%
Children-specific events	9%
Have a year-long pass	3%
Base	172

- Respondents had few associations with Hadrian’s Wall – see detailed list of responses below. Key words were “Romans” and “stone”. Hadrian’s Wall was thought to have been built to “keep out the Scots” or to divide Scotland and England. There was confusion about the location of Hadrian’s Wall, with respondents believing it to have been built in North England, Scotland and even Wales
- Not surprisingly, visitors were more likely than non-visitors to be aware and to be able to cite associations with Hadrian’s Wall
- The majority of respondents had never visited Hadrian’s Wall. Around 1 in 6 (16%) had visited within the last five years

Have you ever visited Hadrian’s Wall?

Response	%
Never visited	65%
Visited more than 10 years ago	14%
Visited 5-10 years ago	5%
Visited 2-5 years ago	6%
Visited 1-2 years ago	5%
Visited within the last 12 months	4%
Respondent describes themselves as a regular visitor	1%
Base	307

The Interpretation Framework

<p><i>People in other research have said that they do not know about these sites or about the differences between them. There is a feeling amongst some visitors that once they have visited one of the sites they have visited all of them because they are thought to be very similar. Our client, Hadrian’s Wall Heritage Limited, is looking at ways to encourage visitors to go to Hadrian’s Wall and to visit more of the sites along it.</i></p> <p><i>Their idea is to have different visitor experiences and different stories being told at each site, in addition to the general information about Hadrian’s Wall (like who built it, how long it took, etc). Is this:</i></p>	
A good idea and would encourage you to visit or come back	65%
A good idea – but would not get you to visit or come back	24%
Not of interest	3%
Don’t know	8%

Reactions to ideas for interpretation – draft interpretation principles

	This is a good idea and would encourage me to visit or come back	It is a good idea – but would not get me to visit or come back	This is not of interest	Don't know
Focusing on the people, their lives and the evidence they left behind	62%	31%	6%	1%
How Hadrian's Wall and its different forts, temples, turrets and mile castles played a role in defending the frontier and are linked and relate to each other	57%	34%	7%	2%
Being able to experience what it was like to be a Roman or a native – perhaps by wearing replica clothing or doing or seeing traditional crafts	54%	30%	15%	1%
Putting historical information into a modern context – so, for example, comparing life on the Roman Frontier to how it feels to live in a country divided by a wall in today's world	53%	34%	13%	-
How Hadrian's Wall fitted into the rest of the Roman empire	50%	39%	10%	1%

Here are some ideas for the different themes for sites. What do you think of these?

	This is a good idea and would encourage me to visit or come back	It is a good idea – but would not get me to visit or come back	This is not of interest	Don't know
Tracing the personal stories of people who lived along Hadrian's Wall – soldiers, wives, children - using their personal objects. For example, along Hadrian's Wall, objects such as party invitations, letters home from soldiers asking for their families to send them warm clothes, and IOUs have been found	67%	29%	4%	-
'Before and after' the Romans came – so, looking at how the local natives lived, their religions and crafts, and how the Romans changed this, plus all of the things that the Romans left behind (for example, Christianity, cats, architecture, roads)	66%	27%	6%	1%
The archaeology, science and history behind the objects that tell us what the objects are, who made or owned them, and where people travelled throughout the empire	56%	35%	9%	-
Finding out about the different people within the Roman Empire. The Roman empire brought together lots of different people from around the world. The troops stationed at Hadrian's Wall came from as far away as North Africa, Iraq, Romania and Germany	54%	34%	11%	1%
How the Roman Army was organised and what role it played in creating and maintaining the Empire e.g. Roman battle strategy, the other roles that the	49%	38%	13%	-

soldiers carried out (policemen, engineers, craftsmen, builders, farmers, couriers, etc.)				
How the Roman Empire was organised and administered in order to extend across such a vast area and exploit resources around the world	47%	38%	14%	1%
Other walls and barriers in history and in the modern world, and exploring what it might feel like to have your country divided like this, including being able to experience going through a check point in the Wall	48%	37%	14%	1%

Which of these different sites along Hadrian’s Wall have you visited, heard of but not visited or not heard of?

Site	Visited	Heard of but not visited	Not heard of
Roman Vindolanda	13%	12%	75%
Roman Army Museum	7%	22%	71%
Segedunum	8%	12%	80%
Birdoswald Roman Fort	7%	13%	80%
Housesteads	13%	9%	78%
Chesters	6%	17%	77%
Roman Maryport	4%	13%	83%
Arbeia	2%	8%	90%
Great North Museum	7%	20%	73%
Tullie House Museum	3%	14%	83%
Corbridge	12%	16%	72%
Senhouse	3%	16%	81%

- It is clear from the results that an overwhelming number of respondents are not aware of the different sites along Hadrian’s Wall. This demonstrates there is a definite need for the Interpretation Framework

Q8 I am now going to say a name of an area of Britain and I would like you to say what words or images come to mind when I say this: Hadrian’s Wall.

- Never heard of it
- Scotland
- Open spaces
- Walking
- Up north
- Bricks, green, cold, walking, castles

- Walking, tours, Scotland
- Castle, wall, grass, king, fighting, cannons
- Open space, windy
- Castles, knights
- Hills, open spaces
- Borders
- Roman history
- Scotland
- Scotland
- Bleak landscape
- Don't know
- Scotland, bleak, remote
- Been there on a school trip once, I remember a big field and a wall falling to pieces. Plus, lots of walking
- Nothing
- Open
- Open air, walls, north-east, battles and ruins
- Roman Wall, battles, hard labour and armies
- Walking
- Historic, very cold and picturesque
- War – old ruins
- Stone and ruins
- Stark, desolate
- Countryside, scenery, peaceful and walking
- School trip
- Roman empire, windy, open spaces
- Country side, National Trust car park
- Romans, history, splendour, Northumberland
- Old wall, Romans, ruins
- Breathtaking, fascinating
- Big wall
- Wall
- Stone
- Cold, bleak
- Wall, Scotland, cold, history, beautiful, green
- Cotswolds, archeology, hippies, people gathered round a wall
- Scotland, Romans
- Stone
- Scotland
- North England, cold/wet
- Scenery, history
- Wide expanses, Romans, Hadrian
- Scotland
- Wall, Scotland
- Gateshead
- Whin Sill, mile castles, the customisation of carts to one size in order to fit to the

- ridges of the walls, excavations
- Windy
- Wall , cold and windy
- Big wall
- York, rural, brick, stones
- The wall built by the Romans between the border of Scotland and England
- Wall that was built a long time ago
- Cold
- Border of Scotland and England
- Scottish border
- Romans built it I think
- Between Yorkshire and Lancaster
- Stone, Romans
- Wall that is in Scotland
- A wall that divides England and Scotland
- Heritage.
- Been there, done it and will go again. It was a wall built to divide England from Scotland
- Border between Wales and Scotland
- Border between England and Scotland
- Border between England and Scotland
- Open spaces
- Border between England and Scotland built by the Romans
- Wild, open spaces
- Wall, Scotland
- Bleak, history, countryside, walking
- Roman Wall in Scotland
- Home, film, Northumberland
- Countryside, beautiful photo opportunities, history, big landmark
- Romans, battles, Northumberland, soldiers
- Old, walk, pictures, history
- Wall, cold
- Roman, Newcastle to Carlisle
- Wall, Scotland
- Scenic, wall, history
- Ancient history
- Romans, wall, keeping out the Scots
- Scotland, never been there, long wall?
- Bleak, historic, Roman, desolate
- Battles, scenery, north-south divide
- very old wall, people dressed in old uniforms
- Countryside, long walks, history
- Romans, Roman Army, centurions, scenery
- Romans
- Kielder Water
- Border

- Border
- Battles, old
- Famous wall and border
- Built by the Romans
- Hexham
- Wall built by the Romans
- World Heritage Site
- Old relic, meaningful
- Rolling hills, bleak
- Site to visit, general, Roman imagery
- The border between Scotland and England, mini Wall of China
- Don't know where it is
- None
- Think it was in the Roman times
- One of Britain's historical sites
- Historic and Roman Empire
- It was built to keep the Scots out, big wall,
- Old, Roman, huge
- None
- Romans, old, historic
- Vindolanda, I been to most of the forts. They're still finding more material
- The big wall, the ruins of the old forts
- Romans, divide, history
- Romans, old and history
- The connection with the Roman, a nice long-distance walk
- Romans, divide, old
- The Roman wall, I used to live nearby, the ancient walls
- None
- Romans, historic, barrier
- I've heard the name, but know nothing about it
- Historical site
- History, dramatic, cold and bleak, beautiful
- Dales, Peak District
- Historic, important, Roman
- Romans, big and old
- Romans
- Old, Romans, ancient and important
- Historic and Roman
- Ancient, Romans and bricks
- Romans, history
- Romans, important history
- Historic, Roman, ancient
- Green fields, walking
- Carlisle
- Ruins, history
- Roman

- Romans
- Stone wall
- Old wall
- Soldiers, Picts
- Men with painted faces
- Coastal, fields
- Countryside, green belt
- Wall, moorland, Saxons, Roundheads, tapestry, sheep
- Cold, long
- Fantastic historical landmark
- Fort
- Saxon and Normans
- Wall
- Never heard of it
- Walking
- Scenery , gales, history
- Old ruins, landmark
- Long wall, good walks
- Don't know
- preserved and protected, famous landmark
- Old historical site, miles long
- Newcastle
- Stone
- Never been there but I'd like too
- Boundary
- Long walking
- Romans, landscape, history, walking
- Long wall, Romans
- Old ruin, Romans
- Castle
- Hand built wall, very long
- Long
- Wall and plenty of grass
- Quiet, serene, thoughtful
- Scots in kilts
- It's part of my upbringing, I live nearby, I used to go as a child, history
- Years since been, open area, grass and hills
- Bleak, cold, wet, Scotland
- Nothing, but would like to visit
- Open countryside, bricks
- Old wall, North England, Romans
- Roman wall
- Wall, Hadrian, divide England and Scotland
- A big wall near Scotland
- Country walks, Cumbria, incomplete, long walks
- Carlisle

- Finishes at– Wallsend, Newcastle, divides
- Cold, windy, North Yorkshire, divides England from Scotland
- North Country
- In England, built to keep people out
- It's a wall built by the Romans
- Dividing the country
- Bleak, cold, green fields
- Roman wall built to keep the countries separate
- A wall that divides England and Scotland
- Northumberland
- I've just heard of it, know nothing about it
- Scottish wall
- Scotland
- Just a Roman built wall – North England
- Scotland, countryside, Romans
- It's in Wales, can be seen from space
- Scotland, sheep
- A wall built by the Romans
- A wall
- Moorland, not much to see
- A Roman-built wall
- Roman-built wall that divides Scotland
- Scottish landmark
- Roman wall in Scotland
- Scotland, big wall built by the Romans
- Roman-built wall dividing Scotland and England
- Interesting, up north between borders of Scotland and England
- Romans, north
- North of England, wall built by the Romans
- Roman wall
- Romans, ancient
- Stone, countryside
- The wall
- Roman wall
- Old, countryside, Romans
- Bleak
- Old, historic, well known
- Walking, fields, pubs
- Interesting wall, Roman ruins
- Cornwall
- Historic landmark
- Wall, Romans, well preserved
- Landmark
- Nothing
- Nothing
- Sorry, no idea

- A massive wall right across the countryside, vast, the scale of it
- Not a lot, you think of what it took to build all those years ago
- Nothing really
- Built to keep the Picts out of England, it didn't work
- The Romans, their history here, I used to go with the school and I've been back several times
- Nothing
- Not a lot really, can't think
- Don't know
- War
- Long
- It goes back to the Romans
- Nothing much
- A big wall, that's all
- It's so historic, the age of it
- Wall that runs across top of England on the Scottish border
- In Scotland, it divides England from Scotland
- North of England, a Roman ruin, wall
- Romans built it to keep the Scots out of England
- Romans, a wall
- Saw a bit when I was a small child and found it really boring
- Cold, bleak, Roman history
- Romans
- Historic, northern
- Built by the emperor Hadrian
- Beautiful countryside, historic
- Scotland, Romans
- A wall, soldiers
- Roman soldiers
- Built to keep the Scots out
- Romans, northern
- Very long, bit dull
- Always meant to visit, Romans
- History, Romans
- Romans
- Old Border
- Roman Army, Northumbria
- Ruins, middle of nowhere
- A wall, countryside, Romans
- Long and old
- Roman history
- Bleak, desolate
- Don't know
- Old ruins
- You can see it from space, like edging along Scotland
- Scotland

- A wall, only heard of it as that
- An old wall
- Nothing really
- Don't know
- Romans, battles
- Roman centurions, long
- A wall, don't really know
- Middle of Scottish border
- A big wall going across Northumberland
- Romans, listed monument
- A very long high wall, stretches right across the north of England
- It was built to protect the English and the Romans from the Scots
- Nothing
- No idea
- North, old, protected
- Scots, fighting
- Miles of wall, it's so high up
- Nothing really
- A massive wall, don't know what's left of it
- It's to do with the Romans, they built it
- Roman wall, Northumbria
- The Roman built wall that divides Scotland

Hadrian's Wall Heritage Ltd
East Peterel Field, Dipton Mill Road
Hexham, Northumberland, NE46 2JT

T 01434 609700
E comms@hadrianswallheritage.co.uk
W hadrians-wall.org

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