



The Usual Suspects: How diverse is the audience for heritage?

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- What are our perceptions and preconceptions of diversity?
- How do we define the audience for heritage?
- What does the evidence tell us?



Diversity seems to mean:

- Disability
- Ethnicity
- Youth

What defines any one person / group as diverse?



- Users and non-users - those who currently visit or do not visit
- Under-represented - groups who do not feature in a user profile to the extent that they should, eg compared to local population profile
- Excluded - unable to or prevented from access to heritage
- Target audiences - identified through research as the focus for audience development activity

These frame our understanding of diversity in the audience for heritage



Evidence can confirm suspicions but also surprise

- Visitors primarily local but they need to have access to a car
- Women were at least half or more of the audience!
- Vast majority were white British, but non-white ethnic profile was over-represented compared to local population
- Young people are under-represented in the audience profile BUT the industrial heritage site has a youth team of volunteers



Existing outreach work in landscape area targeted young people and ethnic minority groups

What does an understanding of local population profile and background identify?

- Higher than average level of second home ownership
- Population older than national average
- Polish immigrant community / seasonal workers

Suggests a need to think outside the box about diversity



- Socio-economic status and educational attainment over-ride all other profiles
- Regional museums still attract higher proportions of women, people aged 35-54, AB social class, white ethnic origin, educated to degree level and without a disability
Renaissance in the Regions Visitor Exit Survey First National Report for MLA (2005)
- The type of heritage is important
- Some surprise under-represented audiences eg young professionals

*Developing New Audiences for the Heritage, PLB Consulting Ltd, (2001)
for Heritage Lottery Fund (www.hlf.org.uk)*

DCMS and National Statistics National Survey of Culture, Leisure and Sport (2006)

How diverse is the audience for heritage?



PLB | Embracing Difference Heritage Link Diversity Programme

- The evidence base needs to inform our judgment
- Local context is important - what is diverse to one may be the norm to another
- We shouldn't feel bound by government measures and agendas
- Barriers that prevent engagement can affect us all



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