

Jenesys
Associates

The Popularity of Museum Galleries Evaluation for Natural Sciences Collections Association

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Contents

1 Executive summary..... 1

2 Introduction..... 5

 2.1 Evaluation aims 5

 2.2 Evaluation methodology 5

 2.3 Data handling and reporting 6

 2.4 Acknowledgements..... 6

3 Data collection metrics..... 7

 3.1 Museums and galleries 7

 3.2 Survey responses..... 10

 3.3 Visitor interviews..... 12

4 Gallery preferences 13

 4.1 Who visits different types of galleries?..... 13

 4.2 Which galleries are most and least popular?..... 18

 4.3 Who prefers different galleries? 21

 4.4 Why are particular galleries preferred?..... 25

5 Conclusions..... 38

 5.1 Presenting different galleries 38

 5.2 General conclusions 41

6 Appendix A – Participating Museums 42

7 Appendix B – Evaluation Materials..... 43

1 Executive summary

The Natural Sciences Collections Association (NatSCA) is a UK professional organisation, Subject Specialist Network (SSN) and charity that represents natural science collections and associated staff. With the support of public funding from Arts Council England, NatSCA commissioned a study to evaluate audience preferences for particular galleries or display themes in museums with mixed collections.

Evaluation aims:

- To collect information from visitors relating to their experience of museums with mixed collections.
- To assess the relative popularity of different galleries in these museums.
- To explore audience profiles for different galleries compared to museums as a whole.
- To explore the reasons why particular galleries are popular with their dominant audiences.
- To identify opportunities to present and market natural sciences to greatest effect.

10 museums participated in the study. They were selected to be representative of mixed museums throughout the UK. An e-survey questionnaire was taken by 534 visitors across all museums and 253 face-to-face interviews were conducted with visitors to 6 museums.

Which galleries are always and never visited?

Survey respondents and interview subjects reported that they visit a number of different galleries when they go to their respective museums. It was suggested that the variety of galleries is an important feature in mixed museums.

Survey respondents were asked which galleries they always and never visit during a trip to the museum. The types of galleries that respondents reported they were most likely to **always visit** were **live animals** (always visited by 59% of those who could select this option), **natural sciences** (54%) and **ancient history & archaeology** (45%).

Respondents were most likely to **never visit discovery zones** (25%), **history of collectors/collections** (18%) and **world cultures** (7%).

Which galleries are most and least popular?

Survey respondents and interview subjects were asked to select their most and least favourite gallery. The **most favourite** types of galleries were: **natural sciences** (chosen as favourite by 41% of those who could select this option), **art** (30%) and **live animals** (25%).

The **least favourite** types of galleries were: **art** (chosen as least favourite by 43%), **natural sciences** (25%) and **local history** (18%).

32% of visitors who selected the most popular type of gallery, i.e. natural sciences, as their most favourite also selected the least popular type of gallery, i.e. art, as their least favourite.

Conversely, 28% who selected art as their most favourite also selected natural sciences as their least favourite.

The following types of gallery were more likely to be named as 'most favourite' than 'least favourite':

- Ancient history & archaeology
- History of collectors/collections
- Live animals
- Natural sciences
- World cultures

The following types of gallery were more likely to be chosen as 'least favourite' than 'most favourite':

- Art
- Discovery zones
- Local history

Who favours different types of galleries?

The demographic profiles of survey respondents who cited each type of gallery as their most favourite were compared with one another and the whole survey cohort. **Art, local history and live animals** galleries were most likely to be the **favourite** of **older** respondents.

Conversely, natural sciences and world cultures galleries were more likely to be preferred by younger respondents.

Live animals and **natural sciences** were most likely to be the **favourite** of **female** respondents. Ancient history & archaeology and world cultures were favoured by a higher percentage of males than average for the whole cohort

Natural sciences and **live animals** galleries were most likely to be the **favourite** of those who usually **visit with children**. Art, ancient history & archaeology and world cultures were least likely to be the favourite of those who visit with children.

World cultures, art and **local history** were most likely to be the **favourite** of those who usually **visit their museum alone**. Natural sciences galleries were least likely to be the favourite of those who usually visit alone.

Why do different galleries appeal to and deter visitors?

The most common explanation cited for choosing **ancient history & archaeology** galleries as most favourite was interest in the subject. The next most common explanation was these exhibits and galleries being well-presented or well laid out. The third most common explanation was the local nature of some exhibits in these galleries. For some children and adults their preference for the subject matter in ancient history & archaeology galleries was linked to study or hobbies.

The main explanations for ancient history & archaeology galleries being least favourite were not being interested in the subject matter and the collections being too small. The next most

common reasons were these galleries not being attractive to children or younger people and the presentation being poor.

The most common explanation for favouring **art** galleries was having a general liking for art. The second most common explanation was a specialist interest through teaching, study or pursuing art as a hobby. The joint-third most common explanations were the variety or diversity of exhibits and collections and the scope for art galleries to house temporary exhibitions. Adult interview subjects without children indicated that they enjoyed the peaceful atmosphere in art galleries. In contrast, most adults with children described how this characteristic often meant that these galleries were difficult for them to visit with their children, even though the children might like to.

The most common reason for art being least favourite was a general dislike of art. This was followed by subjects who visited with children and thought these galleries were not child-friendly. The next most common reason for art galleries being least favourite was a dislike for a particular type of art.

Everyone who selected a **discovery zone** as their favourite gallery explained that they made this choice because of these galleries' interactive nature and appeal to children. The only explanation given for choosing discovery zones as least favourite was not being in the target audience group for this gallery type.

Everyone who selected a **history of collectors/collections** gallery as their most favourite indicated that they liked the mix of objects that were displayed. All those who selected one of these galleries as their least favourite and who visited with children explained that the exhibits in these galleries did not appeal to their children. Some adult interview subjects visiting alone or with other adults indicated that they found the mix of exhibits in these galleries to be unappealing.

Two equally common explanations were cited for choosing **live animals** galleries as favourite. They were visual appeal and fascination with live animals. In interview, adults indicated that these areas had strong appeal for children. Children reported that they enjoy seeing live animals. The only explanation for live animals galleries being chosen as least favourite was them having less variety than zoos or animals parks.

Everyone who chose **local history** as their favourite gallery type described a personal relevance or local connection as their main reason. Most of those who chose a local history gallery as their least favourite said they just did not like the content. This included people who live near their museum. Other reasons were there being alternative places to see local history and one visit being enough to experience these galleries

The most common reason for **natural sciences** galleries being most favourite was described as the family-friendly nature of these galleries. The second most common explanation was interest in the subject matter. Other explanations were the presentation of exhibits, their usefulness as a study or work resource and the exciting nature of the content.

The most common explanation for choosing natural sciences galleries as least favourite was being less interested in the subject matter than others. The second most-common reason

overall, and the most common for some museums was that the natural sciences displays need updating or investment. Other explanations for not favouring natural sciences galleries were other aspects of presentation, such as galleries not being big enough, visitors being scared of exhibits (e.g. stuffed animals and insects), and spaces being perceived to be more suited to children than adults.

The most common explanation for choosing **world cultures** as most favourite was the unusual nature of the objects and content. The second most common explanation was the quality of the presentation or explanations in these galleries. The only other explanation was that these galleries looked modern or had recently been updated.

The most common explanation for choosing these galleries as least favourite was being less interested in this subject than others. The next most common reasons were these galleries being poorly located and having less interactive content than other areas in museums.

Conclusions

Mixed museums appeal to a wide range of visitors and it is important that their potential to have broad appeal is fully exploited. There is scope to increase the cross over between visitors to different types of galleries. There are specific opportunities to extend the appeal of particular galleries, such as art galleries to younger visitors and families and to present discovery zones as being for all ages.

The evaluation suggests that the more significant areas in museums are more frequently visited and more popular. These include larger galleries and those in the most visible or accessible locations. Galleries needs to be presented in such a way that visitors understand that being small or less visible does not equate to less significant.

The traditional nature of some collections and displays is not regarded as a weakness. However, some visitors are deterred by galleries that appear to be neglected or lacking investment, especially when these compare unfavourably with other areas in their museum.

2 Introduction

The Natural Sciences Collections Association (NatSCA) is a UK professional organisation, Subject Specialist Network (SSN) and charity that represents natural science collections and associated staff. It provides advocacy, advice and training and promotes best practice within its network of members and affiliated institutions. With the support of public funding from Arts Council England, NatSCA has commissioned a study to evaluate audience preferences for particular galleries or display themes in museums with mixed collections. In July 2013, NatSCA appointed independent consultants Jenesys Associates Ltd to carry out the evaluation and the findings are documented in this report.

The evaluation research sought to collect unbiased information and provide an objective understanding of how different galleries are regarded by public visitors to museums that display mixed collections. This was done with a view to informing museum practice for all subject areas and particularly for understanding how audiences engage with natural science displays.

2.1 Evaluation aims

The evaluation had the following aims:

- To collect information from visitors relating to their experience of museums with mixed collections.
- To assess the relative popularity of different galleries in these museums.
- To explore audience profiles for different galleries compared to museums as a whole.
- To explore the reasons why particular galleries are popular with their dominant audiences.
- To identify opportunities to present and market natural sciences to greatest effect.

2.2 Evaluation methodology

Participating Museums

10 museums participated in the study. They were selected to be representative of mixed museums throughout the UK and a list of participating museums is available in Appendix A.

Visitor survey

An e-survey questionnaire was taken by 534 visitors to the 10 participating museums between 5 August and 13 September 2013 (the school summer holidays in England and Wales). The survey was publicised via the participating museums' mailing lists, websites, Facebook pages and Twitter feeds for respondents to complete it online. A tablet computer was also used during interview visits (see below) to 6 museums to collect responses off-line. 10 versions of the survey were developed enabling visitors to each museum to select relevant galleries. The survey automatically pre-selected appropriate questions according to respondents' age etc. entered at the start.

Visitor interviews

253 face-to-face interviews were conducted with visitors to 6 museums between 7 August and 13 September 2013. The interviews were audio-recorded and aimed to capture more detailed information regarding visitors' reasons behind their gallery preferences.

Schools data

7 museums provided details of school bookings for workshops and gallery visits categorised by subject or theme.

Evaluation materials

Copies of the questionnaire template and visitor interview schedule can be found in Appendix B. All data were collected according to standard ethical procedures for obtaining informed consent and ensuring any personal data is suitably protected. Additionally, parental or carer consent was obtained for any participants aged under 16 prior to them being interviewed. All quotes and responses within this report are anonymised in order to protect individuals' confidentiality.

A prize draw (to win £50 of shopping vouchers) was offered to encourage visitors to participate in the survey. Small fliers were distributed by some museums to publicise the relevant version of the survey.

2.3 Data handling and reporting

Survey respondents were not forced to answer all questions and whether or not they answered some questions was dependent on responses to earlier questions. Therefore sample sizes differ and this report shows the number of respondents (n=) for each survey question. Percentages have been rounded and may be greater or less than 100 when totalled.

2.4 Acknowledgements

Jenesys Associates would like to thank staff at all the participating museums, survey respondents and interview subjects for their input to this evaluation. NatSCA would like to thank Arts Council England for their support.

3 Data collection metrics

3.1 Museums and galleries

The 10 participating museums can be categorised as:

- 5 x local authority museums
- 1 x local authority and university museum
- 1 x university museum
- 1 x trust museum
- 1 x UK National museum
- 1 x devolved administration National museum

The names of 4 museums include the words 'and Art Gallery' and another houses a national museum of art. The others do not house permanent art collections.

9 museums are free admission and 1 has an admission fee, but is free to children under 4. The focus of the study was permanent galleries. In free museums which charge for specific galleries, such as aquaria and planetaria, only the free galleries were included in the study.

During the period of the study, the participating museums housed a total of 84 named, permanent gallery areas and the number of named galleries ranged from 5 to 14 per museum. The 84 galleries were categorised by subject type as shown in fig. 1. Museology practice differentiates between live animals and natural sciences, even though live animals may be regarded scientifically to be part of natural sciences, therefore they are considered as separate type of gallery throughout this report.

Fig. 1. Categorisation of galleries

Subject Type	Number	%
Natural sciences	29	34
Ancient history & archaeology	15	18
Art (incorporating decorative arts ceramics, silver, jewellery etc.)	14	16
Local history	6	7
World cultures (Africa, Asia, Americas, Oceania)	5	6
Miscellaneous	5	6
Discovery zones	4	5
History of collections/collectors	4	5
Live animals	2	2
TOTAL	84	100%

The 'miscellaneous' category comprises galleries which are specific to a single museum and are not found in other museums. None of these are natural sciences galleries. As each of these galleries is unique and they do not share any characteristics they have not been included in the analysis presented in this report.

The number of named natural sciences galleries housed in each museum ranged from 1 (4 museums) to 8 (1 museum). Natural sciences galleries that contain a small number of live animals alongside other exhibits were not defined as live animals galleries. The subjects displayed in the 29 natural sciences galleries include taxidermy, natural history, geology, dinosaurs, natural world, evolution, botany, ecology, climate and planets. Based on the descriptions given by survey respondents and interview subjects, these galleries have been sub-categorised as shown in fig. 1a.

Fig. 1a. Sub-categories of natural sciences

Subject Type	Number
Mixed natural sciences	11
Animals and wildlife	5
Geology (rocks, gems, minerals, fossils)	5
Dinosaurs	4
Ecology, climate	2
Planets	2
TOTAL	29

Ancient history & archaeology galleries and art galleries have been sub-categorised in the same way as shown in figs. 1b and 1c below:

Fig. 1b. Sub-categories of ancient history & archaeology

Subject Type	Number
Egyptians	5
Archaeology	3
Romans	3
General ancient history	2
Greeks	1
Anglo Saxons and Vikings	1
TOTAL	15

Fig. 1c. Sub-categories of art

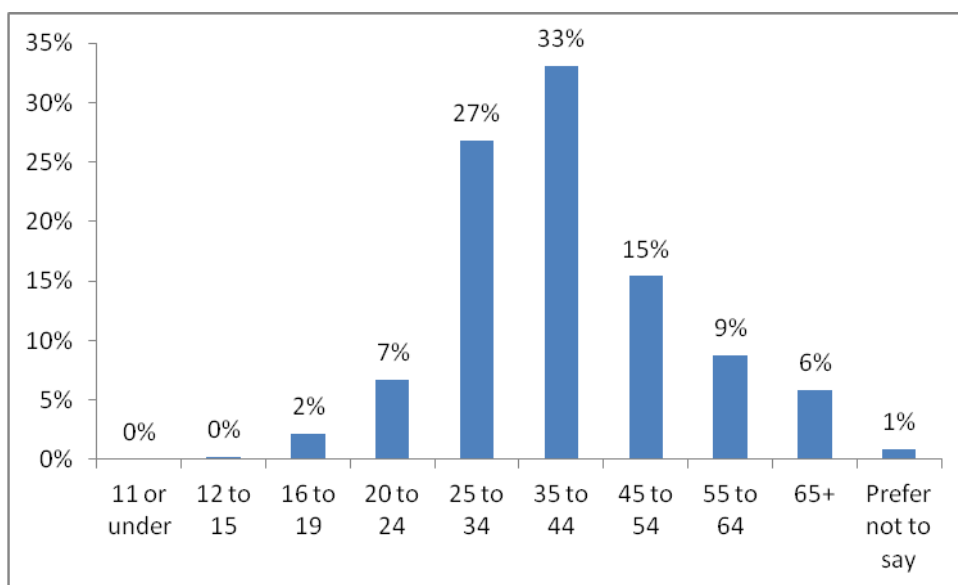
Subject Type	Number
Fine arts	4
Ceramics, china, pottery	4
Other decorative art	3
General mixed art	2
Modern/contemporary	1
TOTAL	14

3.2 Survey responses

The demographic profiles of the respondents were the same for all the participating museums. No-one age under 12 took the survey, even though it was open to them.

The age profile of all survey respondents is shown in fig. 2. 60% were age between 25 and 44. This is unsurprising as the survey was mainly open during the school holidays, (for between 4 and 5 weeks out of the 6 weeks the survey was open, depending on location). At this time many visitors were families or other groups with children and it is reasonable to expect that parents of school-age children would be a dominant visitor type.

Fig. 2. Ages of survey respondents n=534

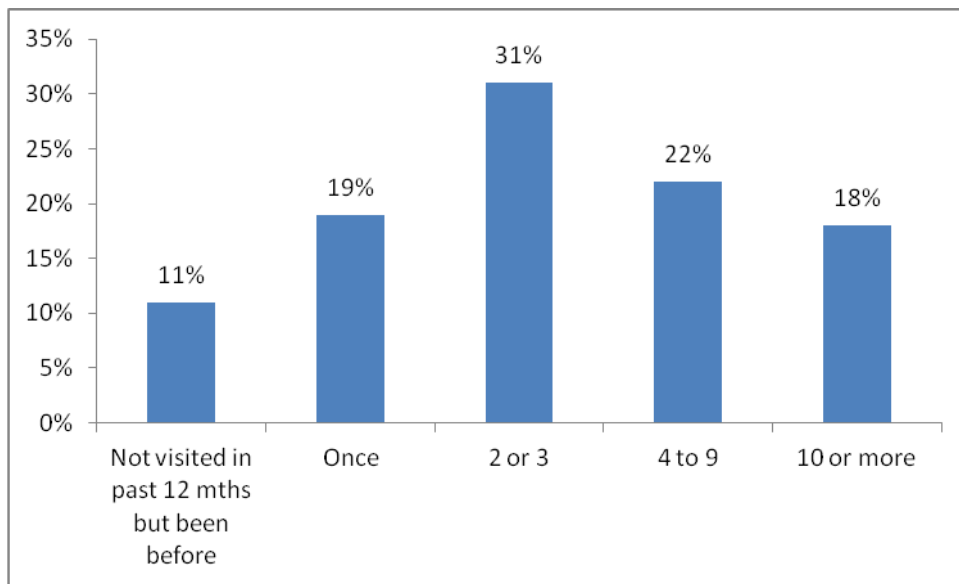


There was a predominantly female **gender** balance, with 74% of respondents selecting female, 25% selecting male and 1% preferring not to say. The percentage of females was higher than that observed during the interview visits, where two-thirds of visitors were estimated to be female.

68% of respondents **live** 10 miles or less from the museum about which they answered the survey. 23% live between 11 and 50 miles of the museum. These figures are consistent with most visits being short visits or day-trips.

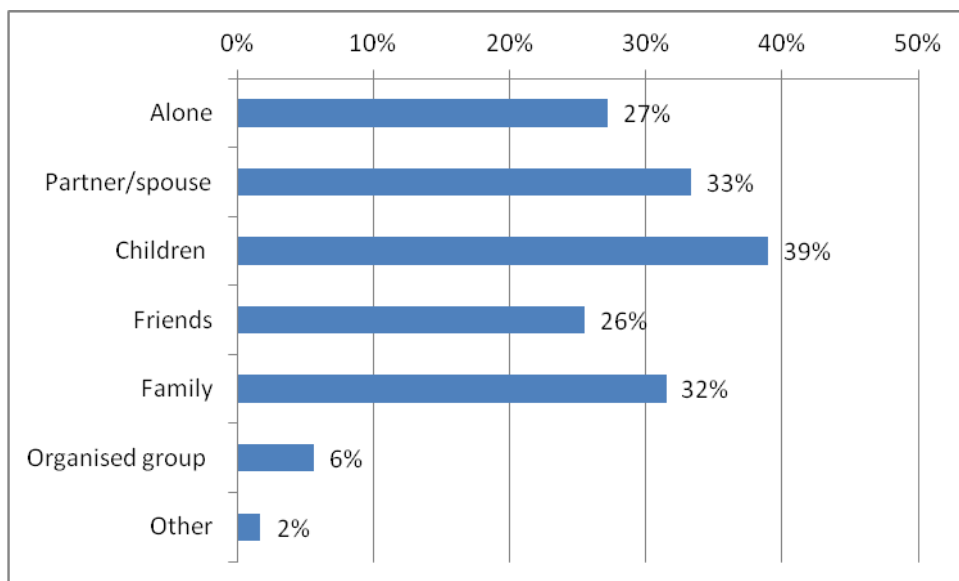
As fig. 3 overleaf shows, 89% of respondents had **visited the museum in the past 12 months**. 11% had not visited in the past 12 months but had visited before. 40% had visited 4 times or more suggesting that many respondents were regular visitors to their respective museum.

Fig. 3. Number of museum visits in past 12 months n=534



Respondents were asked to select all those groups they **usually visit the museum with**. Respondents could select more than one answer and their responses are presented as a % of the total number of respondents. 39% said they usually visit with children, 33% with a partner or spouse and 32% with family. The number visiting with organised groups was 6%, which may be a factor of the survey being open during a school holiday and the first two weeks of the school term. It could be higher at other times of the year. Descriptions for 'other' visitor types included visiting with the Open University and to attend workshops.

Fig. 4. Nature of usual visitor groups n=534



3.3 Visitor interviews

253 individuals were interviewed over 11 days during visits to 6 museums. The interviews were conducted in neutral areas of museums, such as entrances and café areas, to minimise bias towards particular galleries or display themes. None of the interview subjects had taken the survey.

Fig. 5 summarises the demographic profile of interview subjects. Comparing their demographic profile with those from the survey suggests that the interview cohort contained more children and males, despite one museum having a policy of only interviewing those aged 16 or over, which was adhered to. Otherwise, the emphasis on children and males was a deliberate decision by the research team, as it was judged that children were an important visitor type that was not represented in the survey and that the survey cohort contained a higher proportion of females than were observed during the interview visits.

Half of the adult cohort was visiting museums alone or with other adults and half were visiting with children. Again this was a deliberate decision by the research team to ensure that they obtained the views of both lone adults and those in mixed age visitor groups.

Fig. 5. Demographics of interview subjects n=253

Subject Type	Male	Female	Total
Adult (18 or over)	19%	34%	53%
13 to 17	8%	9%	17%
12 or under	15%	15%	30%
TOTAL	42%	58%	100%

4 Gallery preferences

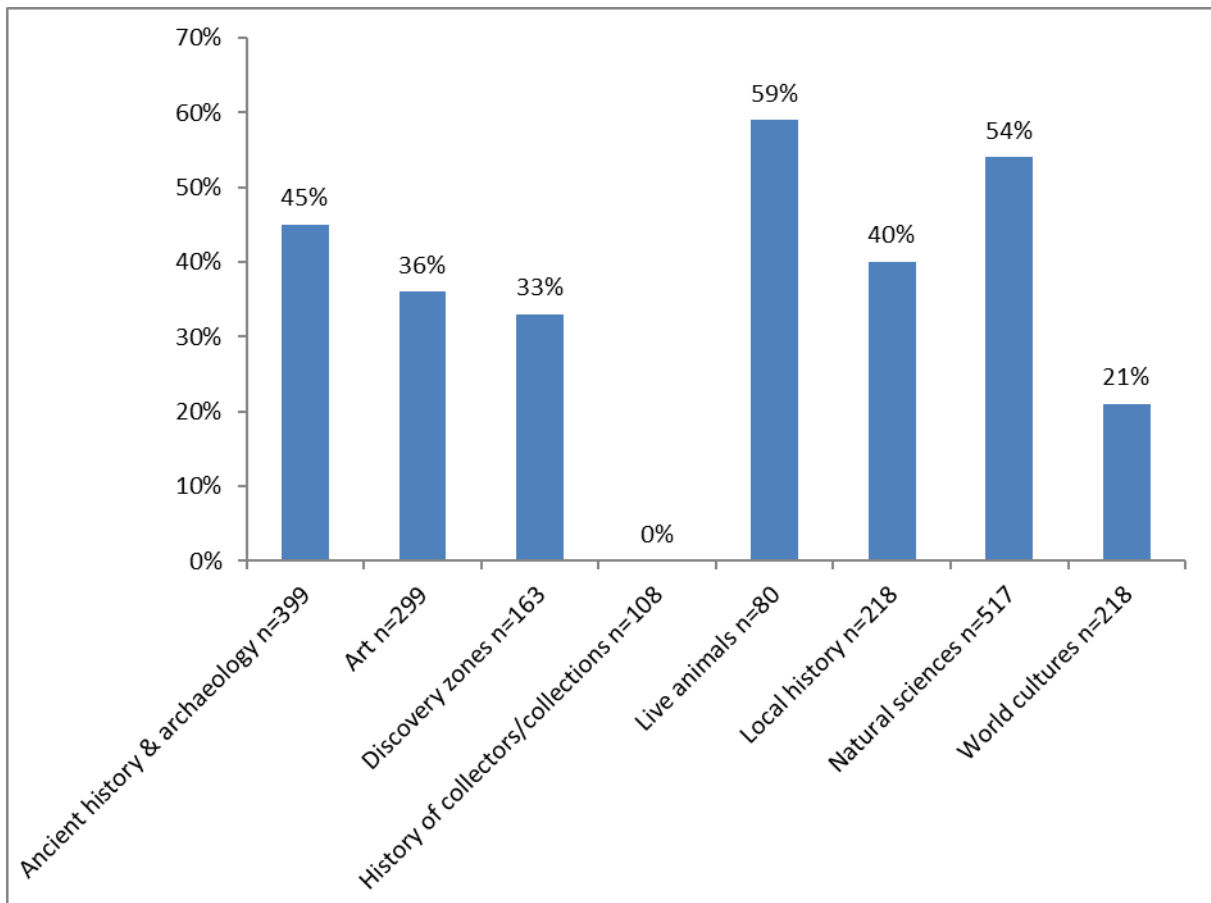
In line with the main aims for the evaluation, this section is broken down into four areas of focus. Firstly, it describes who does and doesn't visit different galleries. Secondly it examines the popularity of different galleries. Thirdly, it profiles those who favour particular galleries. Finally, it explores the reasons behind museum visitors' preferences for different types of galleries.

4.1 Who visits different types of galleries?

Survey respondents were asked to select the galleries they always and never visit when at their respective museums. 517 respondents answered this question and this section of the report presents the numbers of respondents who always visit and never visit each type of gallery. It then summarises how the demographic profiles of those who always and never visit different galleries compare with the demographic profile of the whole cohort who took the survey.

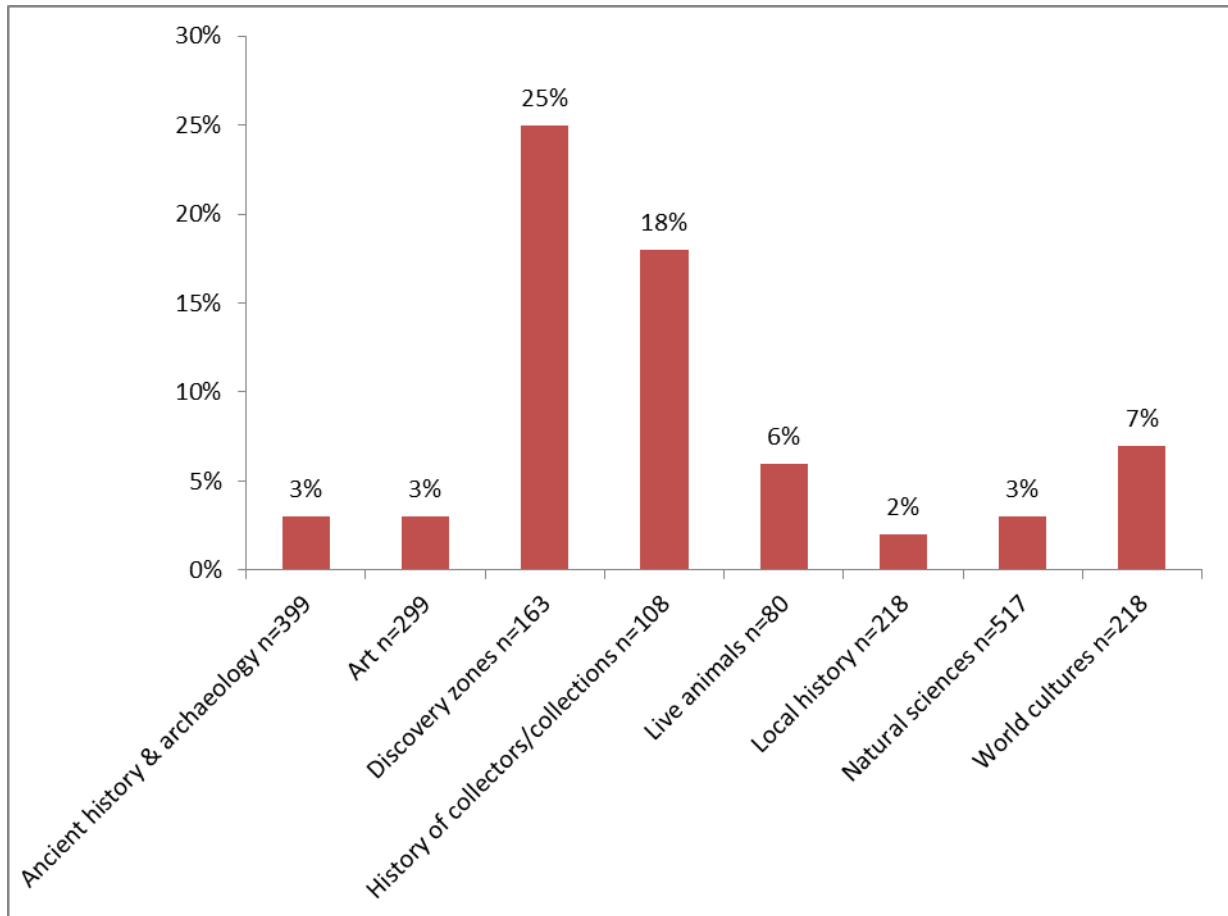
Figs. 6 and 7 below show the numbers of respondents who reported that they always and never visit each gallery type expressed as a percentage of the total number of respondents who had the option to visit each type of gallery. This presentation of the data recognises that not all the museums house each type of gallery.

Fig.6. Percentage of respondents who always visit different galleries



As shown above, the types of galleries that respondents reported they were most likely to visit always were live animals, natural sciences and ancient history & archaeology. As shown in fig. 7, respondents were most likely to never visit discovery zones, history of collectors/collections and world cultures.

Fig. 7. Percentage of respondents who never visit different galleries



Generally, most respondents indicated that they visit a number of different galleries when they go to their respective museums. Interview findings supported this, with almost all interview subjects describing how they go to a number of different galleries during each museum visit. A number commented on the variety of galleries being an important feature in mixed museums.

That's what we like about this museum – there are lots of different things to see. We might not go to all the galleries every time, but we have visited them all. (adult male with children)

It's not like going to a themed museum – like the Natural History. We come here to see a range of things, including stuff that is of local interest. Depending on how much time we have we might go to everything. (adult female with friend)

Today we haven't got time to see everything, so we've been to [natural science gallery] because the kids love that and [local history gallery] because that is my favourite. (adult female with children)

4.1.1 Who visits ancient history & archaeology?

In museums with ancient history & archaeology galleries, 45% of respondents (179) reported that they always visit at least one of these galleries. This was the third highest response for 'always visit'. These respondents' age and gender profiles, frequency of visits and those they usually visit their museum with were similar to the whole cohort. 15%, compared to 8% for the whole cohort, live more than 50 miles from their museum.

10 respondents (3%) in museums with these galleries reported that they never visit them, which, with art, was the joint second lowest response for 'never visit'. Of these respondents, 8 were age 35 or over, 9 were female and half had visited their museum more than once in the past year. 4 indicated that they usually visit alone and 5 said they usually visit with children. All reported that their reason for not visiting these galleries was not being interested in the subject.

4.1.2 Who visits art?

In museums with art galleries, 36% of respondents (108) reported always visiting at least one of these galleries. 44% of these respondents were age 45 or more, which compares to 30% for the whole cohort. 41% said they visited alone, compared to 27% for the whole cohort. 26%, compared to 39% for the whole group, said they visit with children.

10 respondents (3%) in these museums never visit any of the art galleries. This was the joint second lowest response. Half these respondents were female and half were male. Half, compared to 9% for all respondents, live more than 50 miles from the museum. 4 had not visited in the past 12 months and 3 had visited the museum more than once in the same period. Their visitor groups were similar to the whole cohort. All reported that they were not interested in the subject.

4.1.3 Who visits discovery zones?

In museums with discovery zones, 33% of respondents (53) reported that they always visit one of these galleries. 87% of these were age 25 to 44, in comparison to 30% for the whole cohort. 19%, compared to 9%, live more than 50 miles from the museum. 53%, compared to 39%, said they visit with children.

This type of gallery had the highest response for 'never visit'. 41 respondents (25%) in museums with discovery zones reported that they never visited one of these galleries. 33 (80%) of these were age 25 or over, 17 (42%) visited alone and 8 (20%) visited with children. The equivalent figures for the whole cohort were 63%, 27% and 39%. All indicated that they never visited because they thought these galleries were not aimed at them, *'I don't think I*

am part of the target audience as I am not a child'. This included respondents who visit with children and who explained that they thought these galleries were aimed at a different age group to their own children, for example *'The kids get bored here as they are still a bit young'*.

4.1.4 Who visits history of collectors/collections?

In museums with history of collectors/collections galleries, no respondents reported that they always visit a gallery of this type, making it the lowest response for 'always visit'

19 respondents (18%) in museums with these galleries said they never visited one, making it the second highest response. All these respondents were age between 25 and 44, 16 were female and 10 reported that they usually visit with children and 12 with a partner or spouse. Half said they were not interested in the subject of these galleries and half said they did not enjoy the variety of content in these galleries, for example they described them as *'too eclectic'* or *'lacking cohesion'*.

4.1.5 Who visits live animals?

This type of gallery had the highest response for 'always visit'. In museums with live animals galleries, 59% of respondents (47) reported that they always visit one. 28% of these respondents were age 24 or under in comparison to 10% for the whole cohort. 83%, compared to 68%, reported that they live within 10 miles of their respective museum. 53% said they visit with children in comparison to 39% for the whole cohort.

5 respondents (6%) reported never visiting a live animals gallery. None had visited the museum more than once in the past 12 months and 4 explained they had visited their museum only when the live animals gallery was closed in one museum. The other was not interested in the subject. All were age 35 to 44 and lived more than 50 miles from the museum.

4.1.6 Who visits local history?

In museums with local history galleries, 40% of respondents (88) reported that they always visit a gallery of this type. 91% of these respondents reported living 10 miles or less from their museum, which compares to 68% for the whole cohort. Other aspects of their demographic profiles are similar to those for the whole cohort.

4 respondents (2%) in museums with a local history gallery said they never visited this type of gallery, which was the lowest response for 'never visit'. All lived within 10 miles of their museum and indicated they were not interested in the subject.

4.1.7 Who visits natural sciences?

In museums with natural science galleries, 54% of respondents (280) indicated that they always visit at least one of these galleries. This was the second highest response for 'always visit'. 21% of these respondents were age 45 or more in comparison to 30% for the whole survey cohort. 46% reported that they usually visit the museum with children, which is a higher percentage than the 39% for the whole survey cohort. 16% visit alone, compared to 27% for the whole cohort.

13 respondents (3%) indicated that they never visit any of the natural science galleries. This was the joint second lowest response for 'never visit'. The respondents' demographic profiles were similar to that of the whole survey. 9 were male and 11 were in the age range 35 to 44. 7 said they usually visit the museum alone or with a friend or spouse/partner and 4 usually visit with children. They all indicated that their reason for not visiting the natural sciences galleries was not being interested in the subject.

4.1.8 Who visits world cultures?

In museums with world cultures galleries, 21% of respondents (46) reported always visiting a gallery of this type, meaning it was the second lowest response. 56% of those who always visit, compared to 71% for the whole cohort, reported that they had visited the museum more than once in the past 12 months. 57% said they visited with children, compared to 39% of the whole cohort.

16 respondents (7%) in museums with world cultures galleries reported that they never visit any galleries of this type, making it the third highest response. 14 of these respondents were age between 25 and 54 and none lived more than 50 miles from the museum. 2 said they usually visited the museum alone. All said they were not interested in the subject of these galleries.

Interview findings were consistent with the survey responses. Adult interview subjects were asked which areas of the museum they always visit. All subjects with children said they always visit at least one of the natural sciences galleries. Generally, they indicated that subject interest was the most common reason they chose to visit or not visit galleries, with some parents and carers suggesting that they visited the galleries which were of greatest interest to their children.

Other than not being interested in a subject, reasons given by interview subjects for never visiting galleries were lack of time and the nature of a building layout, where '*side areas*' or those on '*upper floors*' were often not visited or remembered. In museums with art galleries, a small number of adult visitors said they only came to see the art. Some adult visitors said they never visited discovery or hands-on areas as they did not visit the museum with children and they thought these areas were not for them and aimed only at children.

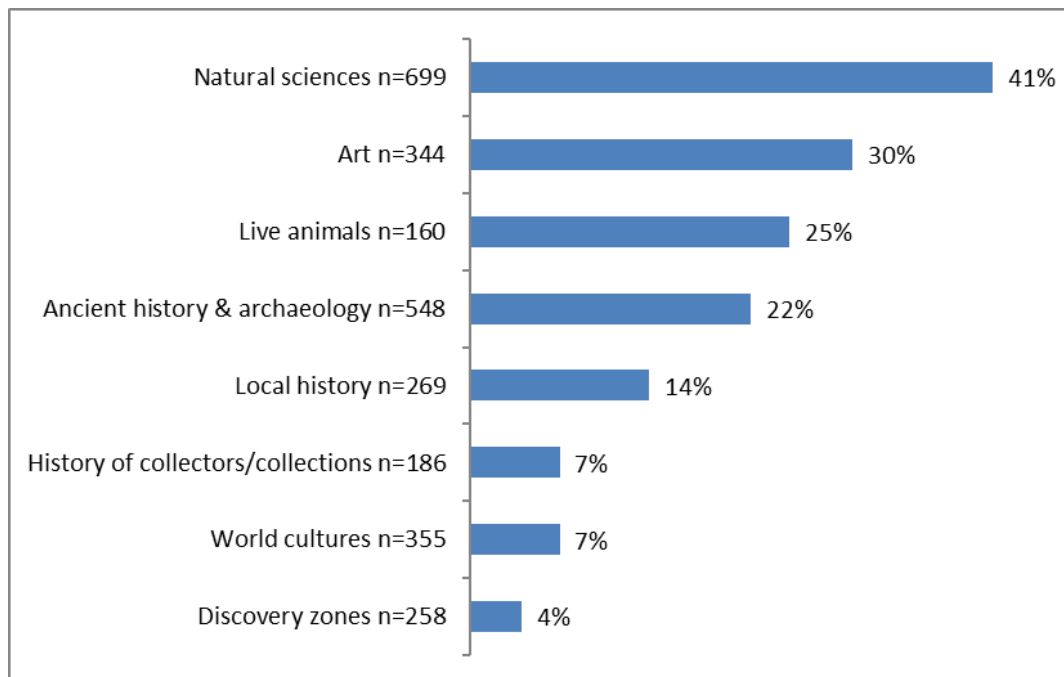
4.2 Which galleries are most and least popular?

Survey respondents and interview subjects were asked to select their most and least favourite gallery. The questions were the same for both groups and this section of the report presents their combined answers.

4.2.1 Visitors' favourite galleries

In total, 699 visitors answered when asked to select a **'most favourite'** gallery, including 6 interview subjects who reported that they like all galleries equally. Fig. 8 presents all other choices expressed as a percentage of the number of people who had the option to select each gallery type, e.g. 41% of visitors who could choose a natural science gallery selected one of these as their favourite. As in section 4.1, this presentation accounts for the fact that not all museums house each gallery type.

Fig. 8. Most favourite gallery types

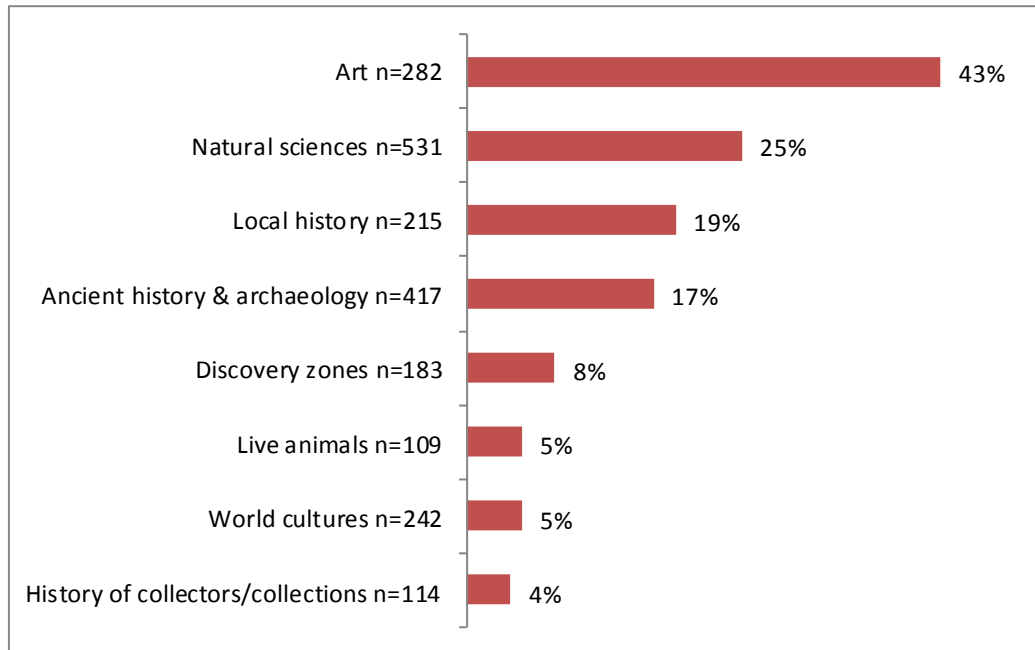


The most frequent choice of 'most favourite' gallery was natural sciences in 5 of the 10 museums. Other most frequent choices by museum were art in 2 museums and local history, live animals and ancient worlds in 1 museum each.

4.2.2 Visitors' least favourite galleries

A total of 531 visitors answered the question about their '**least favourite**' gallery, including 49 (9%) who said none. All other answers are shown in fig. 9 expressed as a % of the total number of people who had the option to select each gallery type.

Fig. 9. Least favourite gallery types



When compared across museums, the most frequent choice by survey respondents for 'least favourite' was art in 3 museums, world cultures in 2 museums, one of the miscellaneous galleries in 2 museums and a discovery zone and none in 1 museum each. In 1 museum, two galleries - art and ancient history & archaeology were equally the most frequent choice for 'least favourite'.

4.2.3 Comparison of most and least favourite

8% of survey respondents and interview subjects who chose a natural science gallery as their most favourite also chose a natural science gallery as their least favourite, e.g. animals and wildlife as their favourite and geology as their least favourite or vice versa. No one who chose an art gallery as their favourite also chose an art gallery as their least favourite.

32% of visitors who selected the most popular type of gallery, i.e. natural sciences, as their most favourite also selected the least popular type of gallery, i.e. art, as their least favourite. Conversely, 28% who selected art as their most favourite also selected natural sciences as their least favourite.

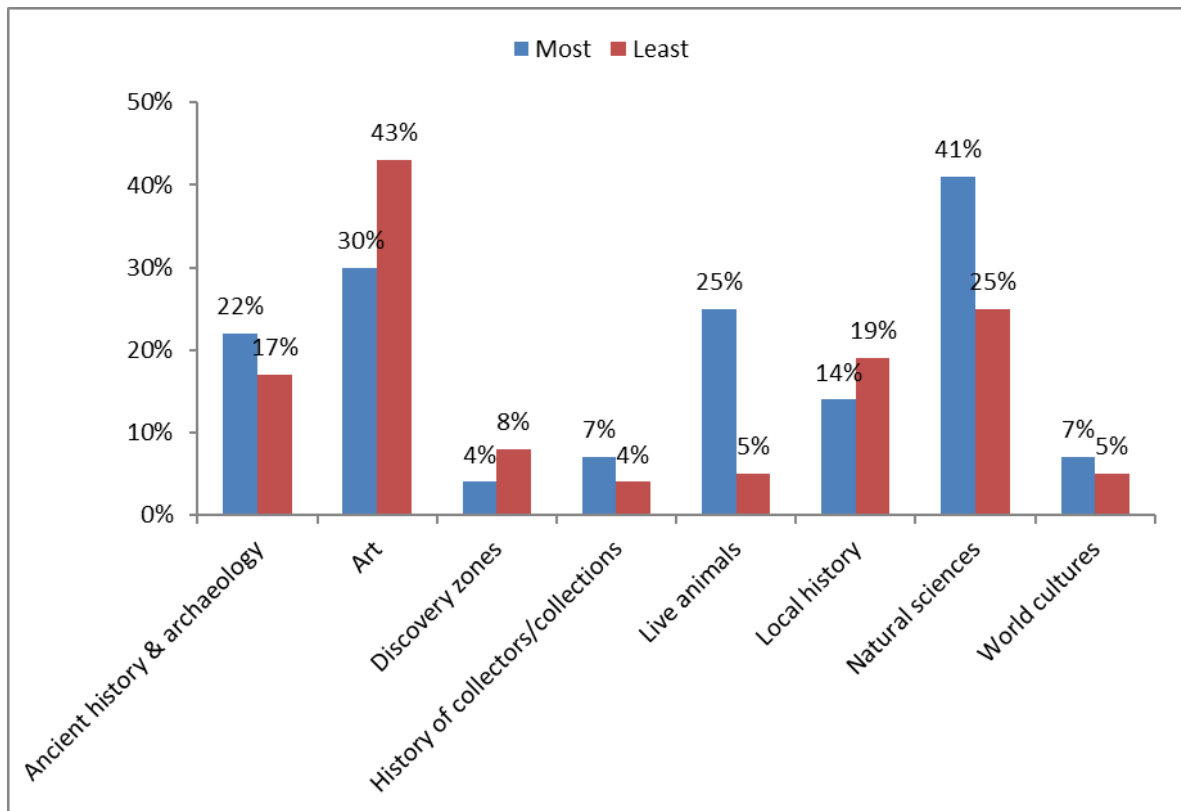
Fig. 10 below compares the results from figs. 8 and 9. It shows that the following types of gallery were more likely to be named as ‘most favourite’ than ‘least favourite’:

- Ancient history & archaeology
- History of collectors/collections
- Live animals
- Natural sciences
- World cultures

Three types of gallery were more likely to be chosen as ‘least favourite’ than ‘most favourite’:

- Art
- Discovery zones
- Local history

Fig. 10. Comparison of most and least favourite gallery types



4.2.4 Schools' preferences

The nature of the data that were available varied in its type and level of detail, which meant it was not possible to draw direct comparisons across the museums. The data from 4 museums suggested that Ancient Egypt was the most popular schools workshop. 3 other museums' data indicated that combined topics or subjects were the most popular. It is hard to draw conclusions from such data as they are influenced by the extent to which museums offer different individual workshops and combinations of workshops. However, it was explained

that offering combined topics or subjects was popular with schools as this enables them to maximise the value of a single visit to a museum.

4.3 Who prefers different galleries?

This section describes the demographic profiles of the *survey respondents* who selected each type of gallery as their most favourite.

The 3 survey respondents who chose a history of collectors/collections gallery as their most favourite were all female. They were age between 25 and 44 and all had visited the museum more than four times in the past 12 months. None reported that they visit their museums with children.

The 4 survey respondents who chose a discovery zone gallery as their most favourite were 2 females and 2 males. They were age between 25 and 44. All reported that they visit their museum with children and had visited more than once in the past 12 months.

The demographic profiles for those who favoured all the other types of galleries are presented in tables below. Variances that are greater than +5% or -5% from the equivalent figure for the whole cohort are highlighted in blue and pink respectively.

4.3.1 Age

As fig. 12 shows, respondents who selected art, local history and live animals as their most favourite gallery were likely to be older than the whole cohort with 52%, 46% and 40% respectively being age 45 or more, in comparison to 30% for all respondents. Conversely, 20% and 13% of those who favoured natural sciences and world cultures were age 45 or more, suggesting these galleries were more likely to be preferred by younger visitors.

Fig 11. Ages expressed as % of the survey respondents who favour each gallery type

Gallery type	Under 16	16 to 19	20 to 24	25 to 34	35 to 44	45 to 54	55 to 64	65+	Prefer not to say
Whole cohort n=534	1%	2%	7%	27%	33%	15%	9%	6%	1%
Ancient history & archaeology n=78	1%	1%	15%	27%	21%	19%	6%	9%	
Art n=78		1%	6%	15%	23%	19%	21%	12%	3%
Live animals n=20		15%		20%	25%	40%			
Local history n=30		3%	3%	13%	30%	30%	13%	3%	3%
Natural sciences n=171		1%	7%	31%	41%	10%	7%	3%	1%
World cultures n=15		13%		60%	13%	13%			

4.3.2 Gender

Fig. 12 shows that survey respondents’ gender profiles were similar to the whole cohort for two of the gallery types. The greatest variation was for live animals, where 90% of those who selected this gallery as their favourite were female, compared to 74% for the whole cohort. Other variations were ancient history & archaeology, world cultures and natural sciences where 63%, 67% and 81% respectively were female.

Fig. 12. Gender as a % of the total who favour each gallery

Gallery type	Female	Male	Prefer not to say
Whole cohort n=534	74%	25%	1%
Ancient history & archaeology n=78	63%	36%	1%
Art n=78	76%	24%	
Live animals n=20	90%	10%	
Local history n=30	70%	27%	3%
Natural sciences n=171	81%	19%	
World cultures n=15	67%	33%	

4.3.3 Home location

World cultures, local history and live animals were most likely to be favoured by respondents who live close to their museums, with 100%, 97% and 90% respectively of those who chose these galleries as their favourite reporting that they live within 10 miles of the museum.

Fig. 13. Home address distance from museum as a % of the total who favour each gallery

Gallery type	10 miles or less	11 to 50 miles	51+ miles in UK	Outside UK
Whole cohort n=534	68%	23%	8%	1%
Ancient history & archaeology n=78	58%	27%	13%	3%
Art n=78	58%	33%	9%	
Live animals n=20	90%	10%		
Local history n=30	97%	3%		
Natural sciences n=171	67%	22%	11%	

World cultures n=15	100%			
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4.3.4 Frequency of visits

Respondents who favoured world cultures galleries were most likely to have visited their museum 10 times or more in the past 12 months, with 60% selecting this option.

Respondents who favoured local history and live animals were also frequent visitors, with 60% and 50% respectively, compared to 40% for the whole cohort, reporting that they had visited the museum more than four times in the past year.

Fig. 14. Frequency of past year’s museum visits as a % of the total who favour each gallery

Gallery type	Never but been before	Once	2 or 3	4 to 9	10 or more
Whole cohort n=534	11%	19%	31%	22%	18%
Ancient history & archaeology n=78	14%	27%	33%	12%	14%
Art n=78	8%	15%	42%	27%	8%
Live animals n=20	15%	15%	20%	25%	25%
Local history n=30	3%	7%	30%	37%	23%
Natural sciences n=171	6%	23%	30%	18%	22%
World cultures n=15	0%	0%	27%	13%	60%

4.3.5 Visitor groups

As shown in fig. 15, respondents who favoured natural sciences and live animals galleries were most likely to visit with children, with figures of 53% and 45% respectively. Those who favoured art, ancient history & archaeology and world cultures were least likely to visit with children, and their equivalent figures were 27%, 21% and 13% respectively.

Respondents who favoured world cultures, art and local history were most likely to visit their museum alone, with 60%, 46% and 40% respectively selecting this option in comparison to 27% for the whole cohort. In contrast, 21% of respondents who favoured natural sciences reported that they usually visit alone.

Fig. 15. Usual visitor groups as a % of the total who favour each gallery

Gallery type	Alone	Partner/ spouse	Children	Friends	Family	Group	Other
Whole cohort n=534	27%	33%	39%	26%	32%	6%	2%
Ancient history & archaeology n=78	31%	31%	21%	18%	44%	3%	1%
Art n=78	46%	33%	27%	30%	27%	9%	5%
Live animals n=20		35%	45%	40%	40%		
Local history n=30	40%	40%	37%	33%	30%	3%	3%
Natural sciences n=171	21%	32%	53%	24%	27%	8%	1%
World cultures n=15	60%	27%	13%		13%		

4.4 Why are particular galleries preferred?

To find out what does and does not appeal about different types of galleries, **survey respondents and interview subjects** were asked the reasons for their most and least favourite gallery choices. Their explanations are reviewed in this section.

4.4.1 What appeals about ancient history & archaeology?

For survey respondents and interview subjects, the most common explanation (given by 39% of all those who explained why they favoured this gallery type) for ancient history & archaeology galleries being their favourite was interest in the subject.

Archaeology is a particular interest of mine and the displays contain some fascinating objects. (adult male)

Our family's greatest interest in archaeology makes it the most appealing gallery for us. (adult female)

The next most common explanation (20%) was these exhibits and galleries being well-presented or well laid out. All of these explanations, except one, referred to galleries that present ancient peoples (e.g. Romans, Greeks, Egyptians).

The whole lighting and atmosphere is really good which makes it stand out from the others. (adult female)

Sleek, well laid out and well put together exhibit with lots of information. (adult male)

This exhibition is fantastic due to the sheer amount of work gone into the design and the thought process in making it interesting. (adult female)

The third most common explanation (15%) was the local nature of some exhibits in these galleries.

I am interested in Roman sites in the local area and some of them are represented here. (adult male)

The displays contain some fascinating objects excavated locally. That is what I find most fascinating. (adult female)

The local detail – something that is specific to the area and you won't see in any other museums in the same context. (adult female)

Comments from interviews indicated that for some children and adults their preference for the subject matter in ancient history & archaeology galleries was linked to study or hobbies.

One of them [daughter] has studied the Egyptians at school. She brought us along the first time and now we all love them. (adult male with children)

I am an archaeology student and archaeology is my passion. I enjoy the displays on the Romans and the local archaeology finds best. (female adult)

I am fascinated by how the Egyptians live. We did them at school, but to come and see all their stuff here is just amazing. (female 14 year old)

I've done them [Romans] at school, so I knew something about it. (female 12 year old)

Interview subjects also highlighted the potential for these galleries to appeal to visitors who are primarily interested in local and social history.

The kids and I are really fascinated by how people lived, but I don't think this aspect is emphasised. The real-life implements and things that people actually used – you could do more to present that. (adult female with children)

These people actually lived here. That's the best part- finding out about their everyday lives and how they existed where we live now. (male 17 year old)

The jewellery, clothes and stuff like that is amazing and I can kind of relate to it. But that's not what you always think of when someone says ancient history, so I've only just realised how interesting it is. (female 15 year old)

Other explanations for the popularity of ancient history & archaeology were being interested in a particular period of history (10%) and the large number of objects on display in these galleries (10%).

4.4.2 What deters visitors from ancient history & archaeology?

The main (25% each) explanations for ancient history & archaeology galleries being least favourite were not being interested in the subject matter and the collections being too small.

I am just less interested in it and there doesn't seem to be much there. (female adult)

It is a little sparse for those hoping for an in depth look. (male adult).

There just isn't very much there. It seems less important than other parts of the museum. (female adult)

The next most common reasons (12% each) were these galleries not being attractive to children or younger people and the presentation being poor.

My children are just too young to appreciate it yet. (female adult)

The subject doesn't interest me ... at the moment. (female 16 to 19 year old)

It is bitty and overcrowded and the themes are superficial and not at all clear. (female adult)

I feel it is just all a bit too cluttered. The presentation needs thinking through. (male adult)

Interview subjects indicated that they thought it was necessary to present ancient history & archaeology galleries clearly, without trivialising the content and ensuring they appear significant alongside other galleries.

I think that you can go somewhere like the British Museum if you want to see this done really well. Here it is quite small and just a lot of corpses. (female adult with children)

It's a bit of an afterthought. It's easy not to know it's there unless you specifically look for it. (female adult with friend)

If you don't know what to look for it can just look like a lot of very old stuff. However, I would say there is a balance between providing context and making it attractive and patronising those who are already interested. (male adult with partner)

4.4.3 What appeals about art?

The most common (31%) explanation for favouring art galleries was a general liking for art.

The second most common (21%) explanation was a specialist interest through teaching, study or pursuing art as a hobby.

I recently completed my degree in art and I am very interested in the subject. (female adult)

I make my own pottery as a hobby so of course this is my favourite. (male adult)

The joint-third most common (14% each) explanations were the variety or diversity of exhibits and collections and the scope for art galleries to house temporary exhibitions.

To have access to works by such a diverse range of artists is a privilege to have locally. (female adult)

I enjoy seeing all the different styles and techniques which catalogue changes in art through the years. (male adult)

The depth and breadth of the collection – it's amazing. (male adult)

The excellent special exhibitions stand out to me. (male adult)

Art exhibitions change the most frequently. (female adult)

There are some excellent temporary exhibitions curated at the museum and on tour from other places. (female adult)

Other explanations were the emotions provoked by art exhibits (10%); a liking for a particular period or type of art (10%); and the quality of specific collections (9%).

Some of the works are so beautiful and evocative I just love it. (female adult)

The link with moods and emotions. (male adult)

I just love modern art. (female 16 to 19 year old)

Excellent collection of often world renowned art. (male adult)

Many interview subjects linked their interest in art to study or hobbies and the beauty of individual pieces or works and entire collections.

I am studying fashion and I come to look at the clothes in the paintings. It is just my favourite room. (female 17 year old)

I am studying art A level and I particularly wanted to see some of the older paintings. (male 16 year old)

I paint myself and I enjoy seeing how others have approached different subjects. (female with partner)

The things in that room are just so beautiful I can spend hours looking at them. (female adult alone)

Adult interview subjects without children indicated that they enjoyed the peaceful atmosphere in art galleries. In contrast, most adults with children described how this characteristic often meant that these galleries were difficult for them to visit with their children, even though the children might like to.

The atmosphere is wonderful, it's not overcrowded like London galleries. There is plenty of time and space to really study your favourites. (male adult with partner)

It's a bit formal for the children – they're 9 and 7. I do enjoy visiting when I come on my own. (male adult with children)

We just aren't that comfortable going in there as a family. There is not much for them to interact with and I am worried they'll disturb other people. (female adult with children)

4.4.4 What deters visitors from art?

The most common (33%) reason for art being least favourite was a general dislike of art.

30% of subjects explained that they visited with children and that they thought these galleries were not child-friendly.

A little repetitive. I visit with my children most of the time and it doesn't hold their interest. (female adult)

It is just not interesting to me and my boys. (female adult)

These areas, whilst full of rare and unusual pieces, are of no interest to my young children. (male adult)

The next most common (21%) reason for art galleries being least favourite was a dislike for a particular type of art.

I just hate modern art. I don't understand it at all. Personal taste. (female adult)

Impressionists are not my cup of tea. (male adult)

I'd like to look at modern art, not the historic stuff. (female adult)

I am not into ceramics so it doesn't interest me to go and see it. (female 16 to 19 year old)

I don't have a particular interest in metal ware. (male adult)

18% of subjects said these galleries were boring for adults, which was attributed to the content not being sufficiently diverse to hold attention.

One viewing was enough. There isn't enough variety to draw me back. (female adult)

The paintings are all too samey and not inspiring. It's just a bit meh. (male adult)

The china and pottery all looks the same, it's a bit boring to my mind. (female adult)

Other reasons for art galleries being least favourite were them being poorly curated (8%) and the contents not changing frequently enough (6%).

I find it hard to understand if there was any particular theme or reason behind the selection. (female adult)

I would prefer it if there were fewer pieces in a more effective space with greater information about their context. (male adult)

I think the same paintings have been displayed since I was a child and I've seen them many times. (male adult)

The contents never change. There is the potential to have more frequent changing of exhibitions to create a more dynamic space. (female adult)

In interview, adults with children commented on the challenges of visiting art galleries when accompanied by children, who often want to interact with exhibits and can be noisy.

Some adults without children who said art galleries were their least favourite suggested that providing introductory events and context could help to increase the appeal of these galleries. However, they stressed the importance of ensuring such activities were accessible and appealing to those without existing knowledge.

I know least about it but I'd be keen to visit the section if there was an introductory talk for absolute art numpties – so long as it didn't make me feel like a numpty. (female adult with children)

You need to make me care about it. I think I would be more interested if they gave the whole thing some context. Like why is it in [here]? What is the local connection? You'd have to do it carefully – I don't want some expert making me feel like an idiot. (male adult alone)

I know I should like it, but because I know nothing about art I feel I am expected to like or dislike certain things. An idiot's guide would be good, but don't call it that or an 'Introduction to...' that would make me feel stupid. (female adult with friend)

4.4.5 What appeals about discovery zones?

Everyone who selected a discovery zone as their favourite gallery explained that they made this choice because of the gallery's interactive nature and ability to appeal to children.

I have small children. They love the hands-on displays and the games and activities in there. (male adult)

It's just brilliant for kids. The staff are friendly, great activities – a real gem! (female adult)

There's lots for kids to do and see. The surroundings stimulate children's imaginations to ask lots of questions. (female adult)

Comments from interview subjects reinforced the importance of having interactive areas and activities in museums. They also suggested that it was important for these types of activities and areas to be distributed throughout different galleries to maximise their appeal to adults and children of all ages who may feel that specific galleries are not targeted at their age group or visitor type.

To break up the hands-on with conventional exhibits actually makes a difference. We can all enjoy it because it's not on the ground floor next to the entrance – like most of them. Having it between different galleries doesn't mark it out as just a kid's area. (female adult with family)

I love the way there is interactive stuff in two main areas. There's one part that is clearly for little kids, but the other bit we can all have a go at. (male 14 year old)

4.4.6 What deters visitors from discovery zones?

The only explanation given for choosing discovery zones as least favourite was not being in the target group for this gallery type.

I have found no use for it as I don't have children. It would be good though if I had kids. (female adult)

I am not really in their target group. I don't come to the museum with children and I am too old myself. (male adult)

I have kids but they are too old for it now. They don't seem to do stuff for adults there. (female adult)

Interview subjects who described this reason included children aged 12 or over, who said they were too old for these galleries, and adults who said their children were not in the target age range for these galleries.

I liked it when I was younger, but there is nothing that makes me want to go there now. (male 12 year old)

I am too old for it now, but it would be good if they could do something specifically for our age group for teenagers only. (female 15 year old)

There is nothing for my kids to do as they are still a bit young for it. (female adult with children)

My kids are a bit too old now they are in secondary school, which is a shame for me as I quite liked going there with them. (male adult with family)

4.4.7 What appeals about history of collectors/collections

Everyone who selected this type of gallery as their most favourite indicated that they like the mix of objects that were displayed.

It's a load of different objects and artefacts from different times in history. I just like that eclectic thing. (female adult)

Quiet, atmospheric, lots of fantastic objects all gathered together like a cabinet of curiosities. Such a powerful space (adult female)

The mix of different objects and how they came here is most fascinating. (male adult)

Some adult interview subjects said they chose one of these galleries because it contained objects that appealed to their children.

I know exactly what our favourite is. It's the part where they tell you how all the different objects came to be here. I like the variety and there are 2 things they make a beeline for. (male adult)

4.4.8 What deters visitors from history of collectors/collections?

All survey respondents who selected one of these galleries as their least favourite visited their museum with children. Adult interview subjects with children who chose this type of gallery as their least favourite explained that the exhibits in these galleries did not appeal to their children.

My children choose not to go in so it's our least favourite. They find it boring as there is not much for them to do and there are no big, attention grabbing exhibits. (female adult)

The kids just don't relate to it or the man who started the collection. (male adult)

Some adult interview subjects visiting alone or with other adults indicated that they found the mix of exhibits in these galleries to be unappealing.

It's all a bit confusing and a mish-mash of objects. It's not appealing enough for me. (female adult alone)

I know it is supposed to provide a context for the whole idea of a museum. But it comes across as a lot of disconnected objects, which I struggle to make sense of. (male adult with children)

I prefer to look at one thing and concentrate on one topic. I prefer the much more structured exhibits. (female adult with friend)

4.4.9 What appeals about live animals?

Two equally common explanations were given for choosing live animals galleries as favourite. They were visual appeal and fascination with live animals.

The colour and beauty make this area my favourite. (female adult)

Just the way it looks is beautiful. The effort made to make each part look different, so you really get to experience these creatures in their natural habitats. (female adult)

Seeing living creatures is fascinating and holds my attention. (male adult)

It is just fascinating to see these creatures for real as well as read about them. (female adult)

In interview, adults indicated that these areas had strong appeal for children. Children reported that they enjoy seeing live animals.

I like the way you've got the live animals so they can see them at first hand. He always wants to go in there. (female adult with child)

He really likes it best and he's grown up visiting it. That's why it's my favourite. (male adult with child)

That they were alive, that was very interesting, because most of the animals you see in museums are dead. (male 12 year old)

Interview subjects and survey respondents also reported they enjoyed the small numbers of live animals that were housed in some natural sciences collections.

I really like the fact that we've got live animals as well as the stuffed ones. It just shows that they actually still exist and a lot of kids will not have seen the different animals and it's really important. (female adult with friend)

4.4.10 What deters visitors from live animals?

The only explanation for live animals galleries being chosen as least favourite was them having less variety than zoos or animals parks.

There really needs to be more tanks and more fish. The zoo is a much better place to see live animals. (male adult)

There's just not that much of it. It's a bit sad compared to other parts of the museum. (female adult)

Live animals in zoos and sanctuaries can provide a more eclectic and varied experience. (male adult)

4.4.11 What appeals about local history?

Everyone who chose local history as their favourite gallery type described a personal relevance or local connection as their main reason.

It is most relevant to me and I'm able to explain it to my grandchildren. (male adult)

It's specifically local to the area where I grew up. Plus, the other topics you might see in other museums elsewhere, so it is unique. (female adult)

In interview, some parents and grandparents with children indicated that these galleries helped their children to understand where they live. Tourists liked these galleries because they gave them an understanding of the place that they were visiting.

It helps the children to understand the area they live in and learn about things connected to the families' histories. (female adult with children)

Actually looking at the old maps and seeing where our house is helps the children to understand their own history and I think helps them learn why history is generally important. (female adult with children)

I came specifically to find out more about this area. I read about it before I came, but this adds another layer to my knowledge. (male adult alone)

4.4.12 What deters visitors from local history?

60% of those who chose a local history gallery as their least favourite said they just did not like the content. This included people who live near their museum. Other reasons were there being alternative places to experience local history (20%) and one visit being enough to experience these galleries (20%).

4.4.13 What appeals about natural sciences?

The most common reason (37%) for natural sciences galleries being most favourite was described as the family-friendly nature of these galleries.

My sons love it, there are things to look at and interactive things – they love the HUGE spider and love discovering the butterflies etc. (female adult)

The kids love to see the diversity of life via the exhibits on display – even if they are decrepit examples. (female adult)

Interesting for smaller children. My son loves dinosaurs and the smile on his face when he sees them makes my day. (male adult)

The second most common (36%) explanation was interest in the subject.

Personal interest in geology and palaeontology. (male adult)

I love dinosaurs. It's a really interesting section. Lots of awesome stuff to see. (female adult)

I love wildlife, interested in all aspects of this, but especially the animals. (female adult)

Other explanations were the presentation of exhibits (13%), their usefulness as a study or work resource (7%) and the exciting nature of the content (5%).

Well laid out, factual, represents the subject well. (female adult)

I draw and photograph the rock collection as a resource for my work. (female adult)

It's just amazing to see the size of some these animals in perspective to yourself! (male adult)

The interviews focused on obtaining explanations for reasons other than subject preferences and what can be described as an innate interest in animals and dinosaurs. In terms of natural sciences galleries appealing to children and families (including adults) answers from visitors of all ages highlighted the visual appeal of large objects and the opportunity for adults and children to see at first-hand things they could not see elsewhere.

I think it just that they - some of the animals - are so big. You remember them and the kids love them. (male adult with children)

The dinosaurs are spectacular – they are huge. I'm always amazed to think that they were once where we are stood now. (female adult alone)

You get to see things close up – much closer than at a zoo. None of us can see that anywhere else. (male 16 year old)

Adults and older children highlighted the variety and beauty of exhibits in natural sciences galleries.

The gems and rocks. There are so many of them and they are the most beautiful things here. I really like the way they stand out in the dark background. (female 15 year old)

There's just so much to see. You can come back lots of time and see something new. An animal or fossil you haven't seen before. (female adult with friends)

It is something to do with the scale. You have tiny microscopic things and massive dinosaurs and trees. (male 14 year old)

The traditional presentation of natural sciences galleries was considered to be a strength by adults and some older children who chose these galleries as favourites. However a distinction was made between galleries being traditional or old-fashioned and being neglected or tired.

We love how it is old-fashioned. It's good for the kids just to stop and read things. After all it is a museum, so it doesn't have to be all wiz-bang interactive. (female adult with children).

I like the smell. It smells old. I don't mind that it is not newer-looking. (female 15 year old)

I like that it is old-fashioned, it IS a museum. It looks well-maintained and the cabinets are beautiful. The exhibits are what they are. I bring my nephews and it's their favourite too. (male adult with partner)

Look it is old, but that's OK. I love what is in there and it shouldn't be too modernised. Just don't let it get scruffy or neglected, otherwise the other areas will seem better. (male adult with family)

Parents indicated that they thought the interactive nature of some exhibits was an important factor in galleries appealing to their children, although very few children mentioned this.

4.4.14 What deters visitors from natural sciences?

The most common (27%) explanation for choosing natural sciences galleries as least favourite was being less interested in the subject matter than others.

Personal preference. I am just not that interested in geology/palaeo stuff. I just prefer to spend my time in the art and ceramic exhibitions. (female adult)

I'm more interested in the historic and art. (male adult)

Personal choice I am not very interested. (female adult)

The second most-common (16%) reason overall, and the most common for some museums was that the natural sciences displays need updating or investment.

I don't like the way it is displayed – old fashioned and very dull. Even a bit creepy. (female adult)

It's very much in need of investment (male adult)

This area has been somewhat neglected, both in the exhibits and the funding that appears to have been provided for the presentation of the areas. (female adult)

Other explanations for not favouring natural sciences galleries were other aspects of presentation, such as galleries not being big enough (10%); visitors being scared of exhibits (e.g. stuffed animals and insects) (8%); and spaces being perceived to be more suited to children than adults (6%).

For adult interview subjects a need to update or signs of under-investment were the main reasons for not favouring natural sciences galleries.

This area has been somewhat neglected, both in the exhibits and the funding that appears to have been provided for the presentation of the area. It's very much in need of investment. (female adult with family)

It just disappoints every time. It's tired and uninspiring. I think a good clean and re-labelling would make it much more appealing. (male adult alone)

The content needs updating. It looks like no-one has spent anything on it, unlike some of the other bits. (female adult with friend)

For the small number of younger children who did not like natural sciences galleries, being scared of some of the exhibits, such as insects or stuffed animals, was the main reason for their dislike.

Some teenagers suggested that they liked these galleries more when they were younger.

I still quite like it. It's just I've been loads of time and it's always the same. I suppose it is more for little kids. (female 14 year old)

I've been coming here forever, and it's always full of little kids. I think they should do something there just for us. (female 15 year old)

4.4.15 What appeals about world cultures?

The most common (50%) explanation for choosing world cultures as most favourite was the unusual nature of the objects and content.

The content is most interesting because I'll never get to see those objects anywhere else. (female adult)

They are wonderful artefacts – they are amazing. (female adult)

The second most common (33%) reason was the quality of the presentation or explanations in these galleries.

It is the best explained part of the museum and the collections are unusual - to me anyway. (male adult)

It is really well done. The explanations are so clear. (female adult)

The only other explanation was that these galleries looked modern or had recently been updated.

It's the most recently updated part and is very engaging. (female adult)

In interview, adults mentioned the unusual nature of the exhibits and high quality presentation as being the most appealing aspects.

I enjoyed the Indian bit because that is so different, you're not going to find that anywhere else. (male 12 year old)

Seeing the different masks and other unusual things – it was most interesting. (female with friends)

For us it was world cultures - that was very high quality in terms of the presentation. (female with partner)

4.4.16 What deters visitors from world cultures?

The most common (41%) explanation for choosing these galleries as least favourite was being less interested in this subject than others.

The next most common (24% each) reasons were these galleries being poorly located and having less interactive content than other areas in museums.

The exhibition feels like it's less hands on and not as well created or designed as some of the other exhibitions throughout the museum. (female adult)

We are led by the children and they tend to stick to the main rooms, and not visit the side rooms. So we don't often get to see the world cultures. (male adult)

It's out of the way and only small selection of 'World Cultures' displayed. (female adult)

In interview, adults said their children were not interested and these galleries were smaller or less significant when compared to other areas in the museum.

5 Conclusions

This section addresses the evaluation aim to identify opportunities to present and market natural sciences to greatest effect. However, as the evaluation has documented findings about some other galleries, it also describes opportunities for other specific types of galleries. It then summarises some general conclusions.

5.1 Presenting different galleries

This section presents some key factors for each gallery type, and where relevant to the findings, highlights some opportunities for presenting galleries.

5.1.1 Ancient history & archaeology

The evaluation has found ancient history & archaeology galleries to be the fourth most favourite type overall. Survey responses indicated that they were the third most likely to be always visited. These galleries were more likely to be the favourite of men and visitors without children than other types of gallery.

Clear, uncluttered, accessible presentation is a significant success factor in this type of gallery. However, it is important that presentation is not overly minimalist in order to avoid the criticism of appearing empty.

Opportunities exist to emphasise the local content and social history aspects of the galleries in order to appeal to visitors who are not specifically interested in archaeology or the periods of ancient history that are featured. There is also potential to appeal to those who are studying relevant subjects at school, college or university. The popularity of ancient Egypt workshops with schools is a potential opportunity to encourage school children to visit these galleries with their families.

5.1.2 Art

Art galleries were the second most favourite type of gallery overall and the most favourite in 2 museums. They were the least favourite type overall and were the least favourite choice in 3 museums.

Survey respondents who always visit these galleries were likely to be older and to visit alone and without children. These galleries were more likely to be the most favourite of older visitors who visit alone than other gallery types.

Art galleries appeal to visitors with a general interest in art and particular interests based on professions or hobbies. Professional or hobby groups are therefore a potential target. This finding can be interpreted as art galleries having limited success in attracting visitors without an innate interest in the subject. Success factors include the scope for these galleries to house diverse collections and temporary exhibitions.

Visitors with children can find art galleries challenging and some adults without children also find the content boring. It may be possible to promote these galleries as more dynamic spaces, at least at certain times, in order to address these challenges. Adults may enjoy introductory events and activities, provided these are accessible and enjoyable.

5.1.3 Discovery zones

Discovery zones were the most likely type of gallery to be never visited by survey respondents. Most of those who never visit are age 25 or over and are likely to be visiting with children or families. These galleries were a most favourite choice of both children and adults visiting with children.

The challenge with discovery zones is that adults and some age groups of children feel these galleries are not for them, and are targeted at specific age groups. It may be possible to hold events in these galleries targeted at those who feel excluded to show that they are open to all visitors.

5.1.4 History of collections/collectors

No survey respondents reported that they always visit these galleries. They were enjoyed by those visitors who like a diverse range of objects, but their mix of content can also be unappealing. There may be scope to increase their appeal to those with children and families, by ensuring they house hands-on or interactive exhibits.

5.1.5 Live animals

Survey respondents reported that live animals galleries were most likely to be always visited local people and visitors with children. The temporary closure of a gallery in one museum was the main reason for never visiting this type of gallery. 90% of those who chose them as their most favourite were female and lived 10 miles or less from their museum. No one who visited alone chose them as most favourite. Live animals were also enjoyed within natural science galleries.

There is a suggestion that the variety and extent of the content in live animals galleries is not fully recognised by some visitors.

5.1.6 Local history

A majority of survey respondents who always visit local history galleries live within 10 miles of their museum. Personal connection and relevance were important success factors for these galleries. Parents and other carers enjoyed visiting them with children in order to explain aspects of their own families' histories.

Local history galleries can also appeal to people who live outside a local area but want to find out about the area they are visiting.

5.1.7 Natural sciences

Natural sciences galleries were the most favourite choice overall and the most frequent 'most favourite' choice in 5 museums. Those who favoured these galleries were likely to be younger than average and 81% were female. They were most likely to visit a museum with children compared to those who favoured other types of gallery. This type of gallery was the second most likely to be always visited by survey respondents.

Many visitors of all ages have a general and strong interest in animals and dinosaurs, which can be exploited when promoting these galleries to families and adults.

The variety of scale and the appeal of very large and very small objects found in natural sciences galleries are other features that can be exploited when promoting the 'something for everyone' appeal of these galleries.

The historic nature of these collections and spaces in which they are housed are other attractive features. Adult visitors differentiate between traditional spaces and those that appear to be neglected or lacking investment. It is important that collections are well presented and well maintained, without their inherent character being lost, to ensure that their broad appeal is retained.

It is important that teenagers do not feel that natural sciences are only for younger children. They retain an interest in the content and subjects, but, perhaps because they have visited since a young age, they can often be looking for something different or new or targeted specifically at them in these collections.

Parents welcome the interactive elements that have been incorporated into some natural sciences galleries. They feel that these elements are enjoyed by their children. However it is important that these elements appeal to a wide range of ages and do not deter adults and older children as well.

Natural sciences galleries appeal to children, but it is important for adults who visit without children that they do not feel excluded or that these galleries are not for them. The introduction of adult-only sessions or adult-themed talks about the natural sciences can help, but these need to be inspiring and different from traditional talks or lectures to emphasise the up to date nature of these galleries.

5.1.8 World cultures

Survey respondents who reported that they always visit a world cultures gallery were least likely to have visited their museum in the past 12 months and were likely to visit with children. Everyone who chose a world culture gallery as their most favourite lived within 10 miles of their museum.

The unusual nature of objects and exhibits in world culture galleries and high quality presentation are attractive to adults and children. However, it is important that these galleries are not perceived to be less significant than others, e.g. due to their location or size.

5.2 General conclusions

It is clear from this evaluation that mixed museums appeal to a wide range of visitors and it is important that their potential to have broad appeal is fully exploited. There is scope to increase the cross over between visitors to different types of galleries. There are specific opportunities to extend the appeal of particular galleries, such as art galleries to younger visitors and families and to present discovery zones as being for all ages.

The gallery types that are most likely to be visited always are:

1. Live animals
2. Natural sciences
3. Ancient history & archaeology

The gallery types that are most likely to be visited never are:

1. Discovery zones
2. History of collectors/collections
3. World cultures

The most favourite gallery types are:

1. Natural sciences
2. Art
3. Live animals

The least favourite gallery types are:

1. Art
2. Natural sciences
3. Local history

The evaluation suggests that the more significant areas in museums are more frequently visited and more popular. These include larger galleries and those in the most visible or accessible locations. Visitors need to understand that being small or less visible does not equate to less significant.

The traditional nature of some collections and displays is not regarded as a weakness. However, some visitors are deterred by galleries that appear to be neglected or lacking investment, especially when these compare unfavourably with other areas in their museum. This was highlighted particularly with regard to natural sciences galleries.

Repeating the evaluation in term time and incorporating schools visitors would provide a more complete picture of visitor preferences.

6 Appendix A – Participating Museums

The participating museums are listed below in alphabetical order. * indicates those museums where visitor interviews took place.

Bristol Museum and Art Gallery
Great North Museum: Hancock *
Horniman Museum and Gardens *
Leeds City Museum
Manchester Museum *
National Museum Cardiff *
Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery
Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery *
Potteries Museum & Art Gallery
World Museum Liverpool *

7 Appendix B – Evaluation Materials

This appendix contains a template of the survey questionnaire and the interview schedule. A simpler version of the questionnaire was made available to those age under 12, although no-one in this age group took the survey.

Museum Galleries Survey - 12 and over

Introduction

Please take a few minutes to complete this short survey about what you think of the various free, permanent gallery areas in the [Name of MUSEUM] for a chance to win £50 of shopping vouchers of your choice. Those aged under 16 will require an adult's permission to enter the prize draw for shopping vouchers.

This survey is being conducted on the museum's behalf by Jenesys Associates who are independent researchers and all your responses will be completely anonymous. If you have any questions about the survey please email sarah@jenesysassociates.co.uk

You can move through the survey using the NEXT and BACK buttons and can return to the survey at any time to complete it before it closes on 13 September 2013.

Thank you for your feedback.

Age category

Firstly we'd like to know some information about you and your visit(s) to the museum

1) Please select your age category from the list below.*

- 11 or under
 - 12 to 15
 - 16 to 19
 - 20 to 24
 - 25 to 34
 - 35 to 44
 - 45 to 54
 - 55 to 64
 - 65 +
 - Prefer not to say
-

12 and over demographics

2) Are you?*

- Female
- Male
- Prefer not to say

3) Approximately how far away from the [Name of Museum] do you live?*

- 10 miles or less
- 11 to 50 miles
- 51 miles or more in the UK
- Outside the UK

4) How many times (approximately) have you visited the [Name of Museum], including your current visit if you are answering this survey during a visit?*

- Never visited at all
- Not visited in past 12 months but visited before that
- Once in past 12 months
- 2 or 3 times in past 12 months
- 4 to 9 times in past 12 months
- 10 times or more in past 12 months

16 and over visited with

5) Who do you usually visit the [Name of Museum] with or are you visiting with today? (select all that apply)

- Alone
- With partner/spouse
- With children
- With friends
- With family
- As part of an organised group (including school groups)
- Other (please describe)

12 to 15 visited with

6) Who do you usually visit the [Name of Museum] with or are you visiting with today? (select all that apply)

- Alone
 - With friends
 - With family
 - As part of an organised group (including school groups)
 - Other (please describe)
-

12 and over areas visited

7) Which of the following areas in the [Name of Museum] have you been to, including today, if relevant?*

	Every time I visit the Museum	Most times I visit the Museum	Occasionally when I visit the Museum	Never when I visit the Museum
[Name of Gallery]				
[Name of Gallery]				
[Name of Gallery]				
[Name of Gallery]				
[Name of Gallery]				

16 and over reason for never visiting

8) Please select your main reason for never visiting any of these areas.

If you choose 'Other reason' for any of the areas please describe your reason in the comments box.

	I'm not aware of it	I've not found it	I am not interested in its subject	It does not look attractive	Other reason
[Name of Gallery]					
[Name of Gallery]					
[Name of Gallery]					
[Name of Gallery]					
[Name of Gallery]					

Comments:

under 12 gender, nature of visits

9) Are you a?*

Girl

Boy

10) Who have you visited the museum with? (select all that apply)

School

My family

Friends

Other (please describe)

12 and over opinions on areas

Finally we'd like to find out what you like or dislike about the different areas you have been to in the [Name of Museum].

12) Which area that you've been to in the museum is your MOST FAVOURITE? (select one)*

[Name of Gallery]

[Name of Gallery]

[Name of Gallery]

[Name of Gallery]

[Name of Gallery] Other (please describe): _____

13) Please tell us why you have chosen this area as your most favourite.

14) Which area that you've been to in the museum is your LEAST FAVOURITE? (select one)*

[Name of Gallery]

[Name of Gallery]

[Name of Gallery]

[Name of Gallery]

[Name of Gallery]

Other (please describe): _____

15) Please tell us why you have chosen this area as your least favourite.

16) Any other comments about areas or galleries in the [Name of Museum]?

Under 12 opinions on areas

To end, we'd like to find out what you like or dislike about the different areas you have been to in the [Name of Museum].

17) Which area in the museum is your MOST FAVOURITE? (select one)*

[Name of Gallery]

etc.

Other (please describe): _____

18) Please tell us why you have chosen this area as your most favourite.

19) Which area in the museum is your LEAST FAVOURITE? (select one)*

[Name of Gallery]

etc.

Other (please describe): _____

20) Please tell us why you have chosen this area as your least favourite.

Thank You!

Thank you for taking our survey. Your response is very important to us.

Interview schedule

IF under 16, ask parent/carer to sign permission form

[Introduction]

We are carrying out some research which is being sponsored by the Arts Council England for the Natural Sciences Collections Association to find out what visitors like or dislike about the different areas or galleries in this museum.

This will help us compare the popularity of the different galleries and find out reasons for visitors likes or dislikes.

We would like to interview you for a few minutes and record the interview. All recordings and transcripts will be kept anonymous and you will not be identifiable in our report.

Are you willing to be interviewed for the evaluation? /Are you willing for your child to be interviewed?
OBTAIN CONSENT FOR UNDER-16s

Intro Questions

1. Why have you chosen to come to the *Museum* today?
2. Who are you visiting the Museum with today?
3. How often do you visit the Museum?
4. IF CHILD: how old are you?

Areas visited

5. What areas of the Museum have you been to or seen?
6. Why did you choose those particular areas to visit?
7. Are you going to go to other areas of the Museum?
 - a. If yes, what areas are you going to visit?
 - b. If no, why are you not going to visit the other areas?

Opinions about galleries

8. What is your FAVOURITE gallery in the Museum?
9. What is your LEAST FAVOURITE gallery in the Museum?
10. What do you LIKE about your favourite gallery and why?
11. What do you DISLIKE about your least favourite gallery and why?

Close

12. Is there anything else you would like to say about what you like or dislike about the different galleries in the museum?

THANK YOU!