

Enhancing Visitor Interpretation at the Walthamstow Pumphouse Museum

James Clemente, Stephanie Reis, Will Ryan, & Brooke Schoen

*Interactive Qualifying Project
24 April 2023*



WPI



Walthamstow
Pumphouse
Museum

Walthamstow Pumphouse Museum



Walthamstow Pumphouse Museum

Current Text Panels



AEC factory, Blackhorse Lane, Walthamstow

In 1905, a stockbroker named Arthur Salisbury Jones started the London Motor Omnibus Company in Walthamstow, initially in a tin hut in Hookers Road, but later expanding into a large factory on a nearby site. He produced a few vehicles but mainly purchased buses made by other manufacturers in order to provide a public transport service. The company was taken over by the long-established London General Omnibus Company in 1908, who began manufacturing buses in the factory on the corner of Forest Road and Blackhorse Lane. The LGOC were then taken over by the Underground Electric Railways group and in 1912, the vehicle construction side of the business was separated off and the Associated Equipment Company, or AEC, was formed.



John Kemp Starley (1854-1901) was born in Walthamstow but later moved to Coventry to work with his uncle James. John set up his own company in 1877 and was the inventor of the "safety bicycle", which had two same-sized wheels and was much safer to ride than the penny farthing. He branded his bicycles "Rover" and eventually his company became known as the Rover Cycle Company. After his death, Rover began making motorcycles and eventually cars.

John Fieldhouse was the chief engineer at the Pumphouse for many years when it was an operational sewage works. You can see him listed on the census pages from 1901 and 1911 on the display nearby. He was born in Leeds but ran away from home at the age of 13 and studied physics and chemistry. He married Betsy in 1885 and they had two sons, Hawthorne and Stanley, and a daughter, Ethel.

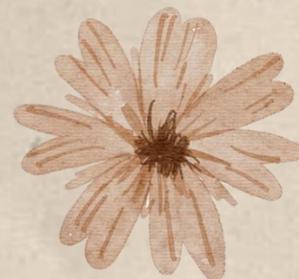
He worked as a filter mechanic in Yorkshire, and later at the King George V Reservoir in Chingford in a supervisory capacity, analysing water for microscopic germs. As his grandson recalled, "*John invented the Fieldhouse Septic Tank, but as this was done in work time, he claimed no remuneration, which was typical of the man.*"

John Fieldhouse also made headlines when he had a cataract operation in his nineties, which was very unusual in the 1950s. He lived to be 95.

Walthamstow Pumphouse Museum



Project Goal: Assist the Walthamstow
Pumphouse Museum in developing
innovative approaches to
interpretations that are more
appealing, accessible, informative, and
engaging for its target audiences



Project Objectives

Identify best practices in exhibit interpretation

Objective 1

Evaluate the demographics, interests, preferences, and behaviors of visitors

Objective 3

Objective 2

Gather and collate archival materials

Objective 4

Solicit feedback from staff and volunteers about interpretive approaches

Best Practices in Interpretation



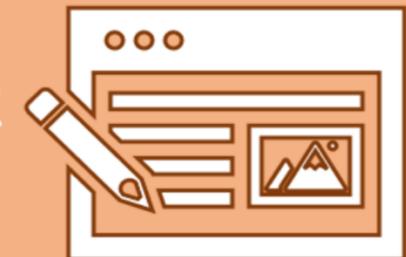
The British
Museum

SCIENCE
MUSEUM



1. Mix of
interpretive
devices

2. Highlight
Key Items



3. Develop a
Master Plan
and
Learning
Hierarchy

Materials for Reinterpretation

Archival Research



Oral Histories

The Engineer



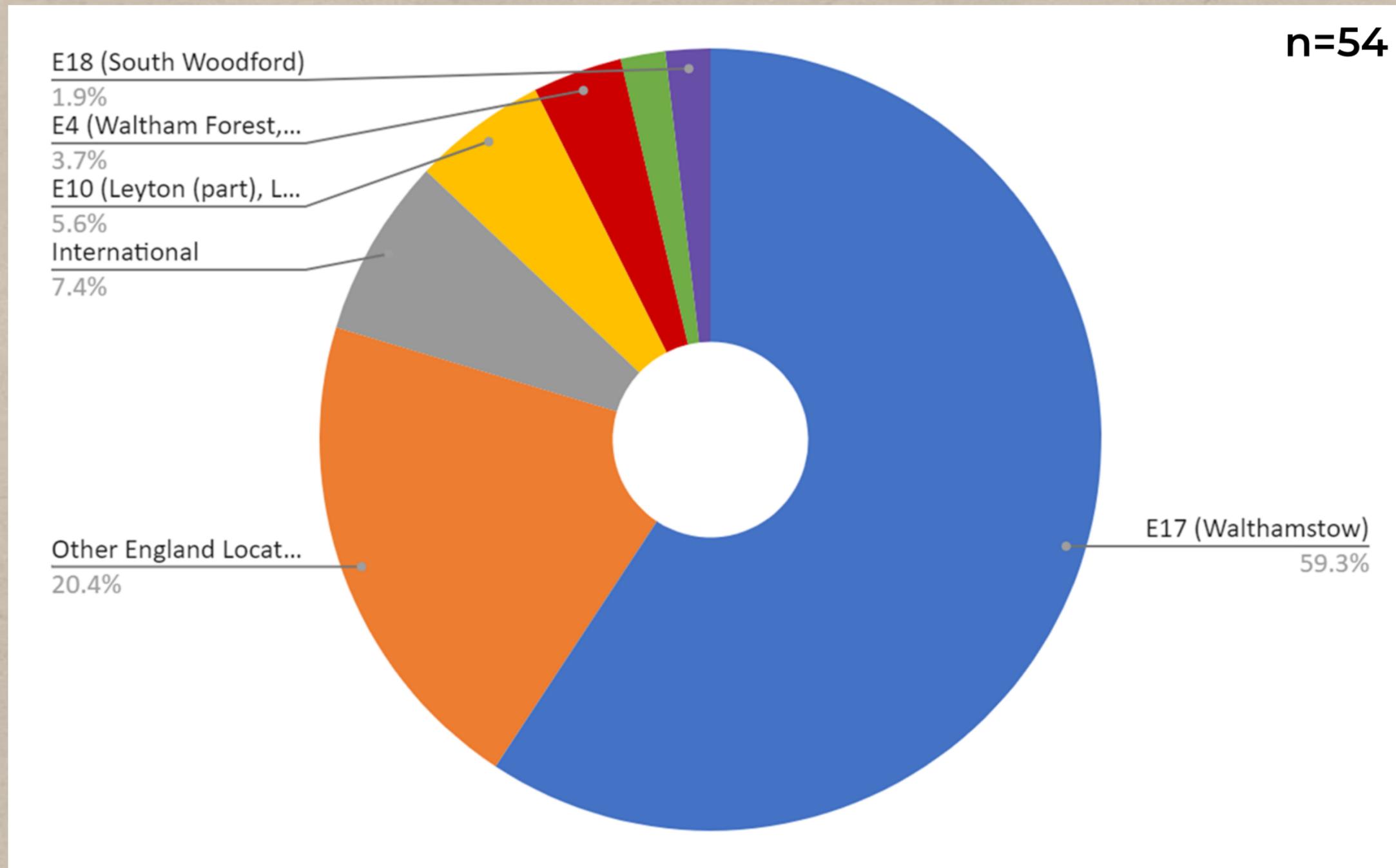
The Firefighter



The Community Member



Visitor Demographics

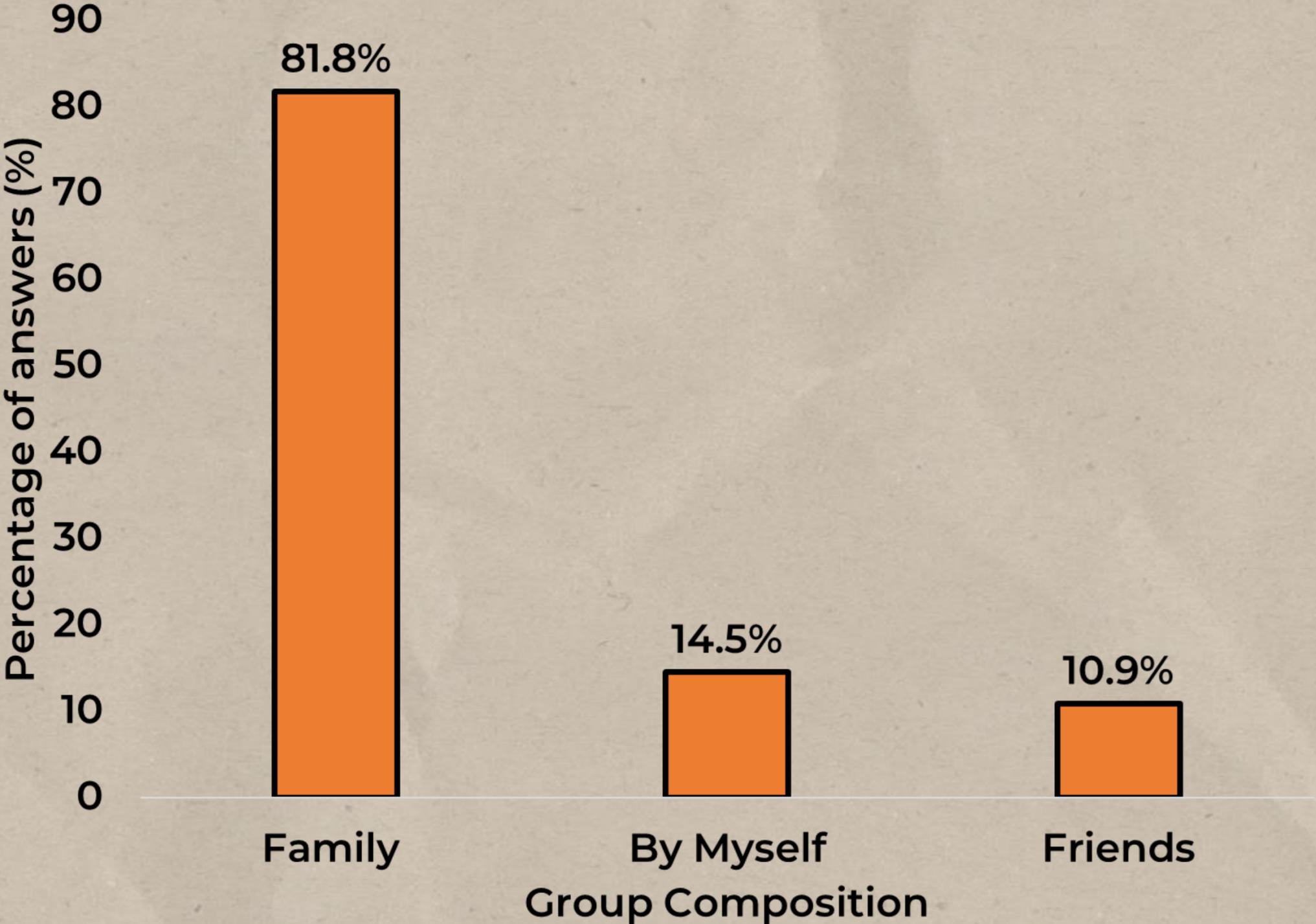


The majority of respondents were from the local community



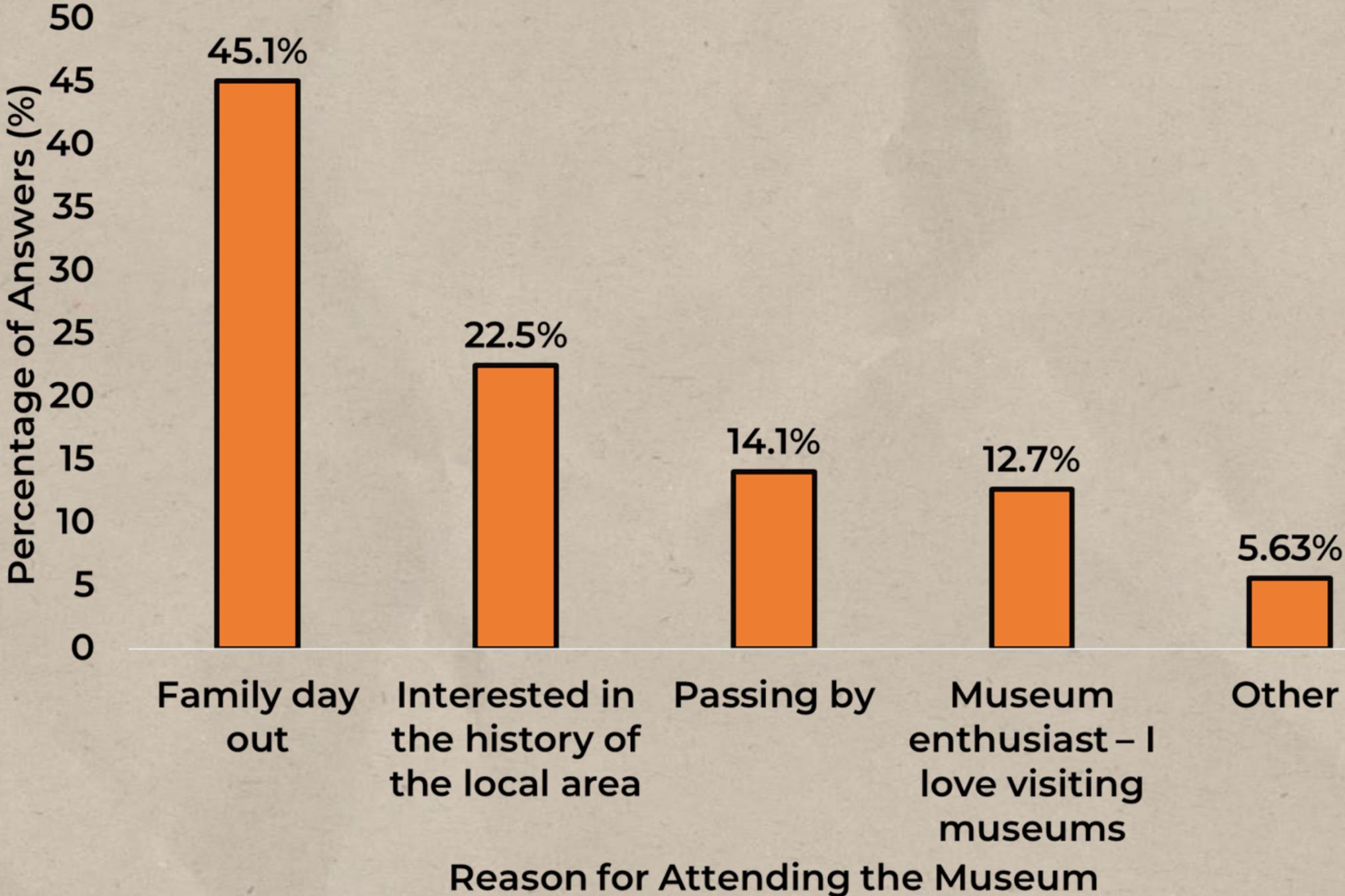
Visitor Group Composition

Most visitors attended the museum with their family

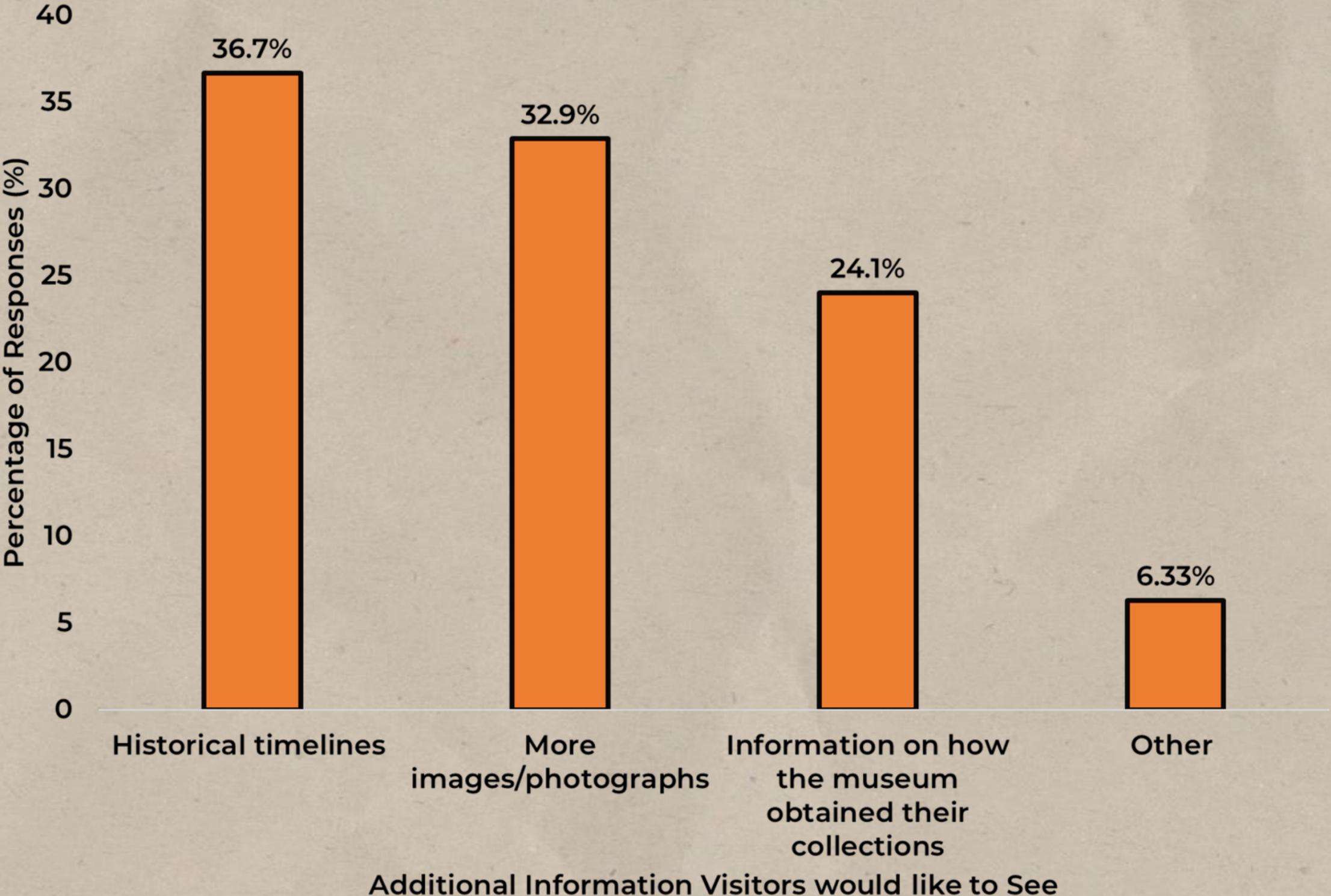


Visitor Group Composition

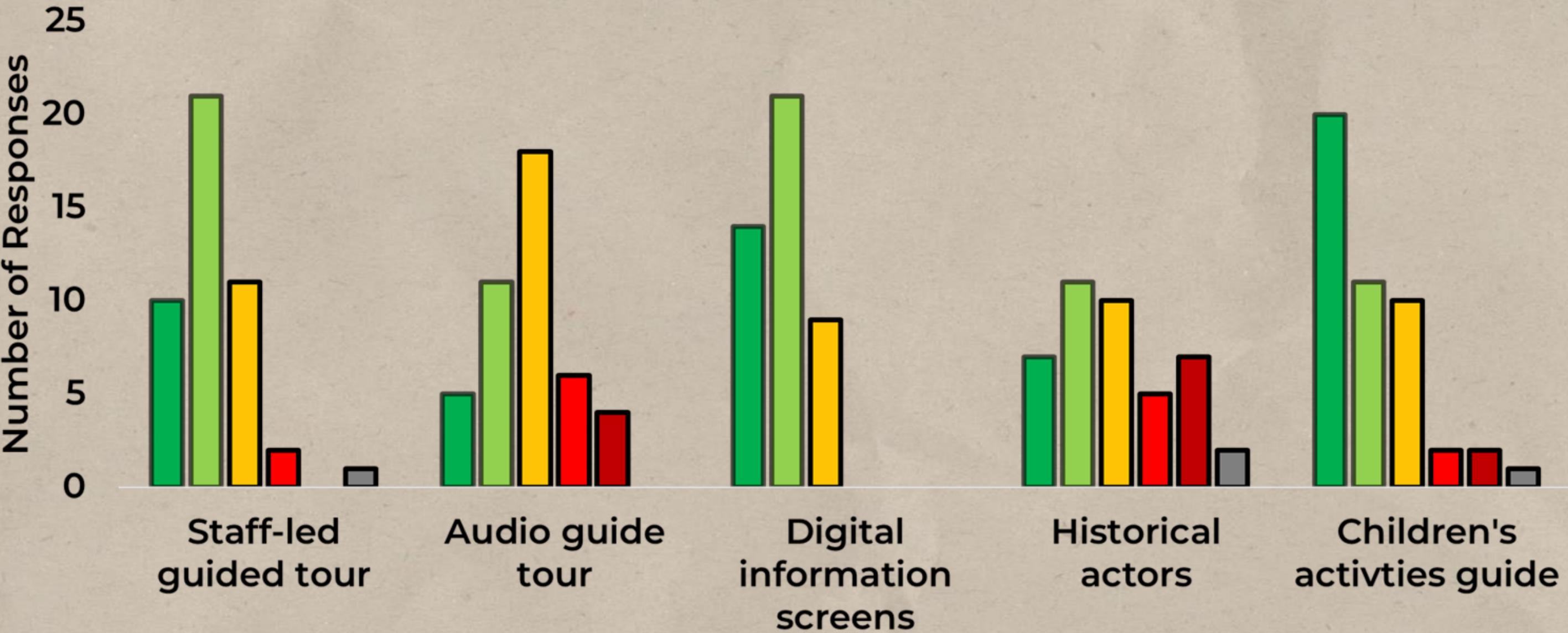
Most visitors attended the museum with their family



Additional Historical Information



Additional Interpretive Devices



Visitor interest in new interpretive devices (n=46)

Very Likely Likely Neither Likely or Unlikely Unlikely Very Unlikely Unsure

Focus Group Findings

The Story of the Land: Low Hall Farm

Did you know that the area you are in right now used to be farmland?

The land in which the Pumphouse stands was once a part of Low Hall Farm and Manor in mediaeval times.

The area of the Pumphouse once formed part of Low Hall Farm, which took its name from the nearby Low Hall Manor, a 14th century moated country house. In Mediaeval times, Low Hall manor and farm land were considered *demesne lands*, meaning they were lands that were managed by the lord of the manor. Over the years, ownership of the land was changed multiple times. Walthamstow Urban District Council was able to obtain the land in 1877 from the *Bosanquet family* who were the lords of the Low Hall manor at the time.

Text Panels

- Current -> Not uniform, unprofessional
- Prototype -> Too simple, concern on content

The Walthamstow Pumphouse Museum

FAMILY & CHILDREN'S MUSEUM GUIDE



Children's Activity Guide

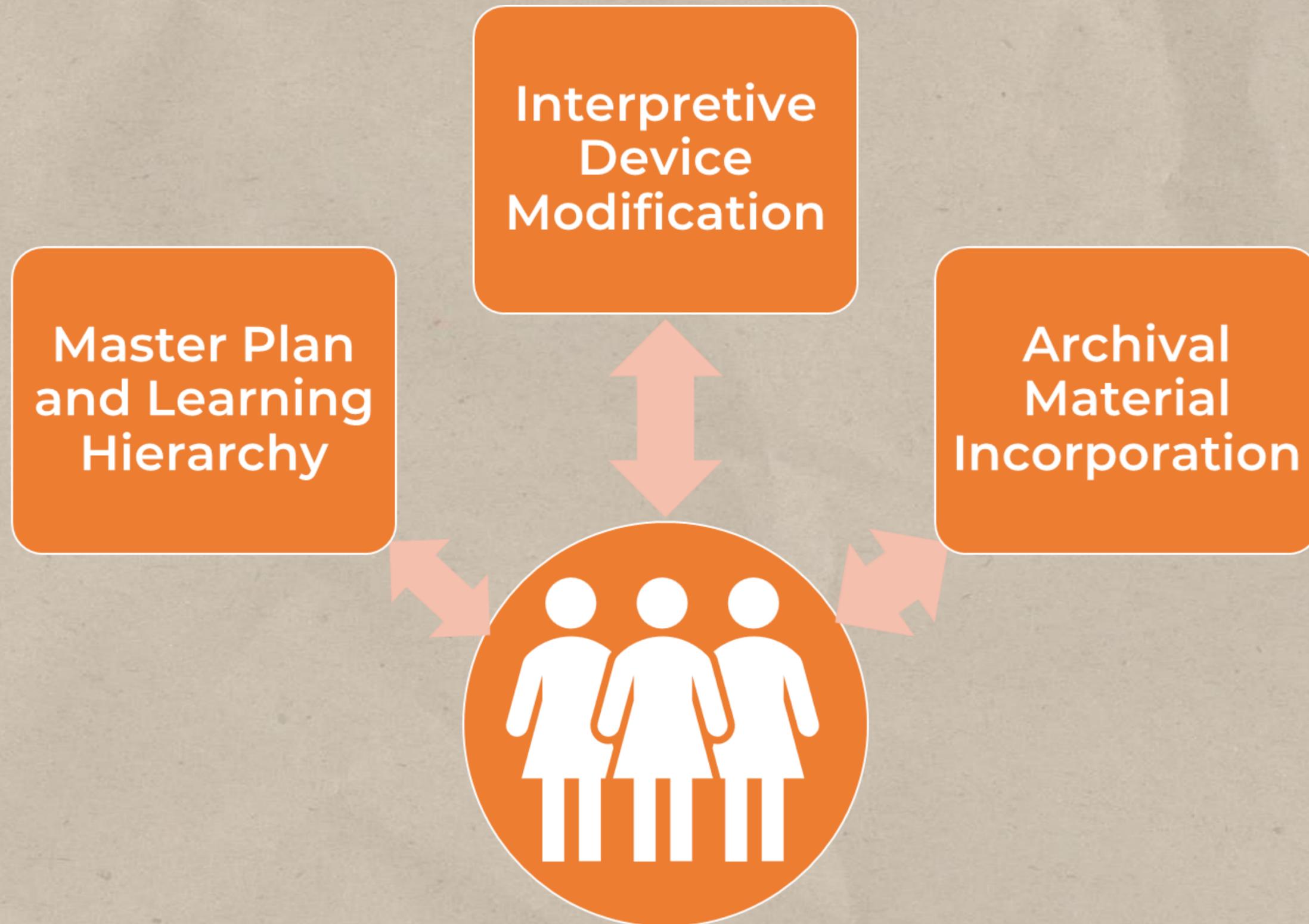
- Wanted for a long time
- Prototype -> simplistic
- Concern of losing engineering focus



Overall Findings

- Concern over losing community spirit
- The unique nature of the museum gives it charm

Recommendations



Master Plan and Learning Hierarchy



Master Plan and Learning Hierarchy

Learning Hierarchy Worksheet



Level 1: The Main Message

What is the overarching takeaway that visitors should leave the exhibit knowing?

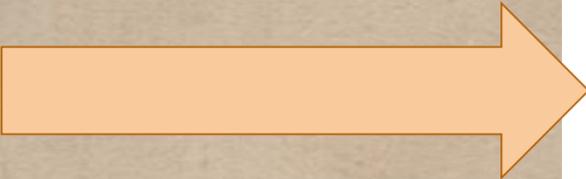
Response in 1-2 sentences:



Level 2: Themes throughout the Exhibit

What are 4 to 5 major themes that are present in the exhibit? What are the major takeaways from these themes?

1. Theme 1
 - a. Takeaway
2. Theme 2
 - a. Takeaway
3. Theme 3
 - a. Takeaway
4. Theme 4
 - a. Takeaway
5. Theme 5
 - a. Takeaway

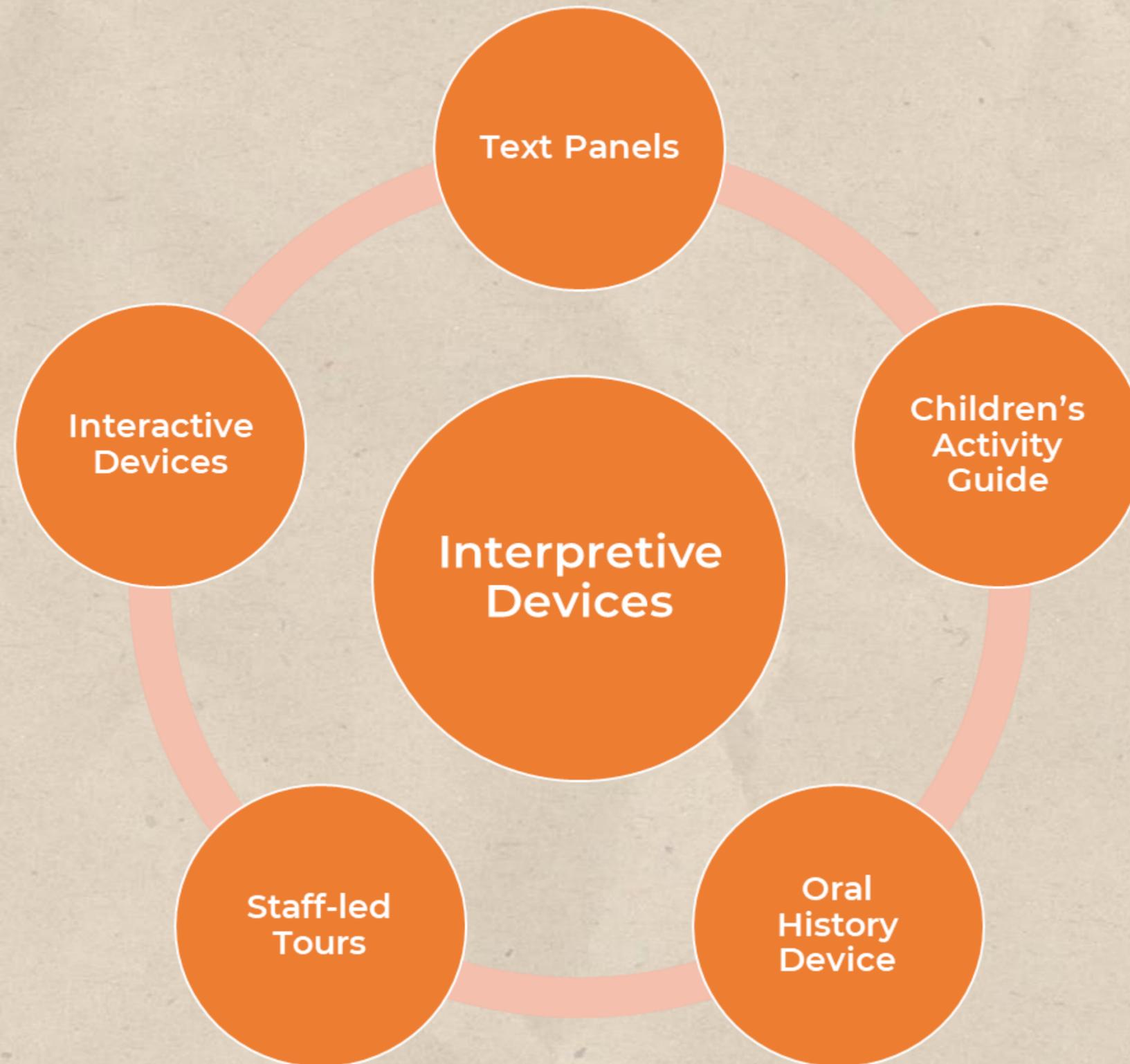


Level 3: Exhibit Sections

What are the more specific sections of the exhibit, and what are 3-5 major takeaways from these sections?

1. Section 1
 - a. Takeaway 1

Interpretive Devices



Archival Materials

We recommend staff return to previously visited archives

London Metropolitan Archives

Document reference number:

ACC/2558/EL/A/02/A48/006/33

Summary of document:

One thing of potential relevance is a map of Low Hall Farm and the River Lea, early 1900s. There's also a lease for a Rev. Thomas James Thirlwall for 32 Bedford Row #6 that seemed interesting to look at. The text was difficult to read because of the handwriting, but might provide some insight into ownership of the land.

Document #2 reference number:

ACC | 2423 | R | 51

Summary of Document:

Walthamstow Bill 1934: maps of the Lea Valley from Tottenham to the Thames, and Walthamstow, showing watercourses. Marks off an area called "Sewage Works and Farm (Now Disused)". Included various maps of waterways in 1934.

Document #3 reference number:

ACC | 2423 | PP | 17

Summary of Document:

Railway Construction Maps. Showcases Map of where they planned to put the railways and stations in Walthamstow. North East London Rail Planning 1901.

Prototypes Text Panels

The area now occupied by the Pumphouse once formed part of Low Hall Farm, which took its name from the nearby Low Hall Manor, a 14th century moated country house. Nothing now remains above ground of the manor house, nor of the 17th century building that succeeded it. Both were destroyed by a VI flying bomb in 1944. A full-size model of a VI, also known as the FZG 76, can be seen above your head.



The Story of the Land: Low Hall Farm

Did you know that the area you are in right now used to be farmland?

The land in which the Pumphouse stands was once a part of Low Hall Farm and Manor in mediaeval times.

The area of the Pumphouse once formed part of Low Hall Farm, which took its name from the nearby Low Hall Manor, a 14th century moated country house. In Mediaeval times, Low Hall manor and farm land were considered **demesne lands**, meaning they were lands that were managed by the lord of the manor. Over the years, ownership of the land was changed multiple times. Walthamstow Urban District Council was able to obtain the land in 1877 from the **Bosanquet family** who were the lords of the Low Hall manor at the time.

Prototype Activities Guide



There's a car engine in the Pumphouse! Find it and push the button to see how it works.

How do engines work?

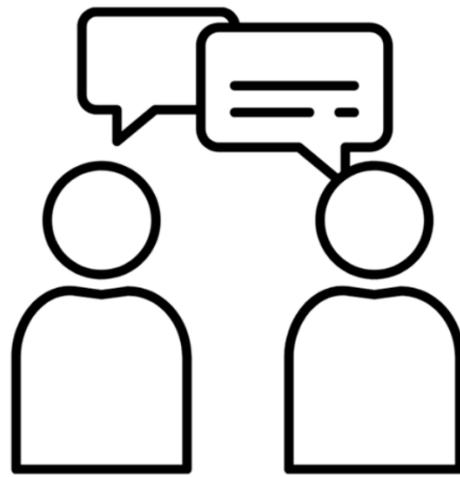
The engine consists of a fixed cylinder and a moving piston. The expanding combustion gases push the piston, which in turn rotates the crankshaft. Ultimately, through a system of gears in the powertrain, this motion drives the vehicle's wheels

What kinds of things can you hear? What can you see?



What did you learn about engines today?

Can you name two things an engine is needed for?

A large, empty rounded rectangle with a black border, intended for a drawing of a favorite exhibit.

Create your best drawing of your favourite exhibit, and tag our Instagram!



@walthamstowpumphousemuseum

Conclusion

Focus on interviews with local museum curators

Conduct interviews with more museum curators

Adjust survey for higher completion rate



**Future
Researchers**

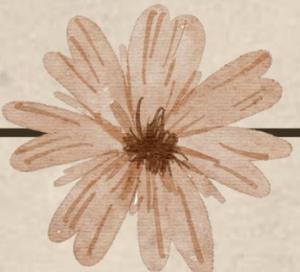
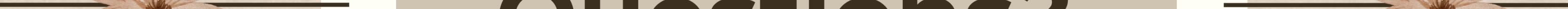
THANK YOU!
Special thanks to



WPI



Walthamstow
Pumphouse
Museum



Questions?

Resources

[British Museum Symbol]. (n.d.) The British Museum. <https://www.britishmuseum.org/>.

[London Metropolitan Archives Symbol]. (n.d.) London Metropolitan Archives.

<https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/things-to-do/history-and-heritage/london-metropolitan-archives>.

[London Museum of Water & Steam Symbol]. (n.d.) London Museum of Water and Steam.

<https://waterandsteam.org.uk/>.

[London Science Museum Symbol]. (n.d.) London Science Museum.

<https://www.sciencemuseum.org.uk/home>.

[National Archives Symbol]. (n.d.) The National Archives. <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/beta/design-guide/images/logos-branding/>.

[Vestry House Museum Symbol]. (n.d.) Vestry House Museum. <https://vestryhousemuseum.org.uk/>.

[Walthamstow Pumphouse Museum Symbol]. (n.d.) Walthamstow Pumphouse Museum.

<https://walthamstowpumphouse.org.uk/explore/pumphouse>.

Children's Guide #1

WALTHAMSTOW PUMPHOUSE MUSEUM

Children's Museum Guide

Exhibit Maps

The Pumphouse

Map(s)



There's a car engine in the Pumphouse! Find it and push the button to see how it works.

How do engines work?

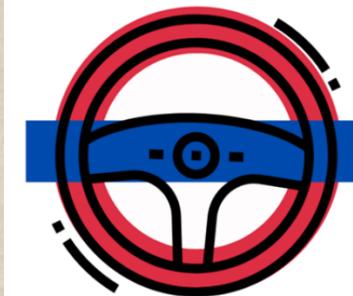
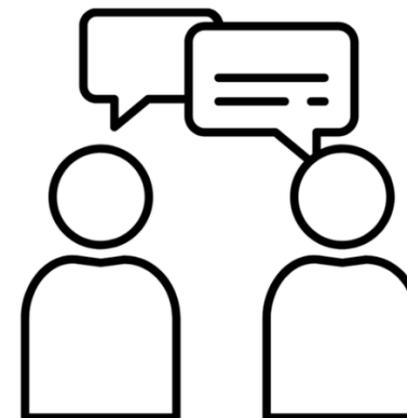
The engine consists of a fixed cylinder and a moving piston. The expanding combustion gases push the piston, which in turn rotates the crankshaft. Ultimately, through a system of gears in the powertrain, this motion drives the vehicle's wheels

What kinds of things can you hear? What can you see?



What did you learn about engines today?

Can you name two things an engine is needed for?



Have you ever driven a train? Take the Victoria line tubes for a spin!

The first full-scale working railway steam locomotive was built in the United Kingdom in 1804 by Richard Trevithick, a British engineer born in Cornwall. This used high-pressure steam to drive the engine by one power stroke. The transmission system employed a large flywheel to even out the action of the piston rod.

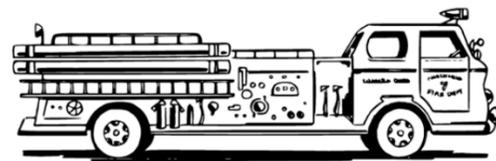
Children's Guide #1



Talk to the volunteers in the fire station to learn all about firefighting!

List three things you learned about the fire station:



A large, empty rounded rectangle with a thin black border, intended for a drawing.

Create your best drawing of your favourite exhibit, and tag our Instagram!



@walthamstowpumphousemuseum

Children's Guide #2

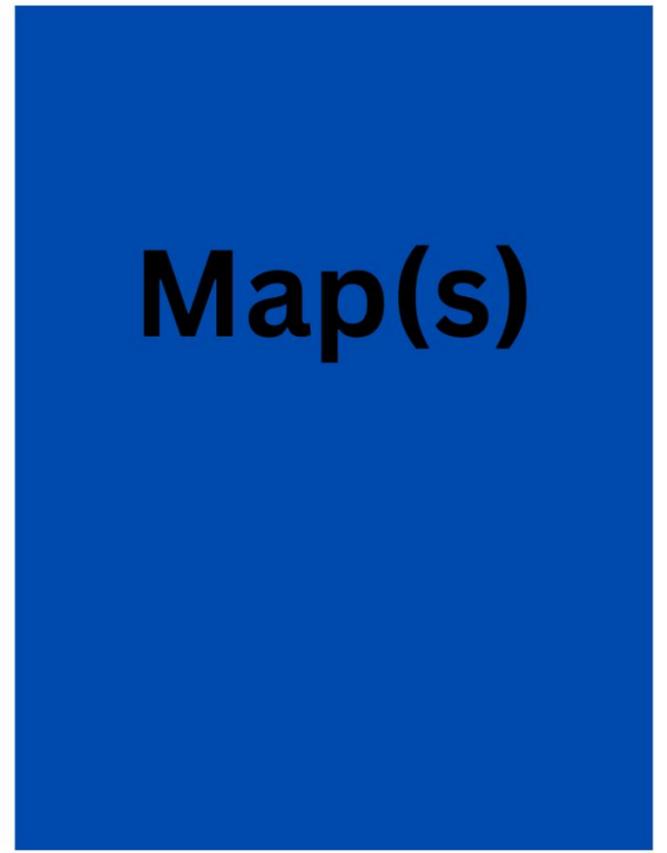
The Walthamstow Pumphouse Museum

FAMILY & CHILDREN'S MUSEUM GUIDE



Exhibit Maps

THE PUMPHOUSE



THERE ARE SEVERAL ENGINES AND OTHER SIMILAR MACHINERY AROUND AND IN THE MAIN BAY OF THE PUMPHOUSE. THE IMAGE ON THE LEFT IS A CAR ENGINE.

SEE WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU PUSH THE BUTTON NEXT TO IT!

SHOWN BELOW ARE THE PUMPHOUSE'S MARSHAL STEAM ENGINES. THEY ARE THE ONLY SET OF STEAM ENGINES MADE BY THIS COMPANY IN THE WORLD TO BE TOTALLY PARALLEL IN DESIGN.



Children's Guide #2

ALL OF THE EQUIPMENT AND EVEN THE FIRE ENGINE HAS BEEN BROUGHT TO THE MUSEUM BY ONE OF THE BELOVED VOLUNTEERS, FRANK.

THERE ARE MANY PIECES OF FIRE FIGHTING HISTORY HERE AT THE PUMPHOUSE, INCLUDING A REAL FIRE ENGINE THAT WAS ONCE IN USE!



IN THE FIRE STATION, THERE ARE MANY PIECES OF EQUIPMENT. SOME OF THE UNIFORMS, SUCH AS THESE SHOWN TO THE RIGHT, ARE FROM DIFFERENT COUNTRIES!

THESE UNIFORMS TO THE RIGHT ARE FROM AMERICA. GO INTO THE FIRE STATION TO SEE MORE!



HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED WHAT HAPPENS TO DECOMMISSIONED TUBE CARRIAGES?

SOMETIMES, MUSEUMS LIKE THIS ONE TAKE THEM!

THESE VICTORIA TUBE CARRIAGES WERE ORIGINALLY PUT TO USE IN 1967!



WHY DO THESE CARRIAGES LOOK SO DIFFERENT?

BOTH CARRIAGES ARE FROM THE SAME YEAR AND THE SAME LINE, BUT ONE OF THEM WAS NEVER REFURBISHED!

THE MORE MODERN LOOKING CARRIAGE WAS DECOMMISSIONED IN 2011, WHILE THE OLDER LOOKING ONE WAS TAKEN IN AFTER A CRASH.

Archival Materials

London Metropolitan Archives

Document reference number:

ACC/2558/EL/A/02/A48/006/33

Summary of document:

One thing of potential relevance is a map of Low Hall Farm and the River Lea, early 1900s. There's also a lease for a Rev. Thomas James Thirlwall for 32 Bedford Row #6 that seemed interesting to look at. The text was difficult to read because of the handwriting, but might provide some insight into ownership of the land.

Document #2 reference number:

ACC | 2423 | R | 51

Summary of Document:

Walthamstow Bill 1934: maps of the Lea Valley from Tottenham to the Thames, and Walthamstow, showing watercourses. Marks off an area called "Sewage Works and Farm (Now Disused)". Included various maps of waterways in 1934.

Document #3 reference number:

ACC | 2423 | PP | 17

Summary of Document:

Railway Construction Maps. Showcases Map of where they planned to put the railways and stations in Walthamstow. North East London Rail Planning 1901.

National Archives

Document reference number:

MH13/242

Summary of document:

These documents cover a diverse range of the sanitary proceedings of various boroughs in London. There is a drawing of a sewage storage system present in this document, "sketch of a common privy constructed to meet my views. It would cost very little more than as of present constructed and if attended to for a few minutes every day all danger and nuisance would be removed and a great evil remedied" - May 26th 1869 Cinderford Medical Officer of health Heane. Also there was a focus on Walthamstow in regard to the Sanitary Act of 1866. In 1868 the Special Drainage District in Walthamstow was formed.