



Windows to the World

Impact Evaluation Report



Johanna Ungemach and Brendon Wilkins

Windows to the World

Impact Evaluation Report

Prepared on behalf of:
St Mary's Parish Church, Barnard Castle

Compiled by:
Johanna Ungemach and Brendon Wilkins

DigVentures

Witham Studios 5
Hall Street
Barnard Castle
DL12 8JB

hello@digventures.com
0333 011 3990
@thedigventurers



Purpose of document

This document has been prepared as an Impact Evaluation Report for The National Lottery Heritage Fund, St Mary's Parish Church Barnard Castle, and other stakeholders. The purpose of this document is to provide a comprehensive account of the heritage engagement programme undertaken at St Mary's Parish church as part of the Windows to the World project. DigVentures accepts no responsibility or liability for any use that is made of this document other than by the client for the purposes for which it was originally commissioned and prepared.

Carbon footprint

A printed copy of the main text in this document will result in a carbon footprint of 99g if 100% post-consumer recycled paper is used and 126g if primary-source paper is used. These figures assume the report is printed in black and white on A4 paper and in duplex. DigVentures is aiming to reduce its per capita carbon emissions.

Copyright

© DigVentures Limited 2022

Project summary

DV project code	SMB21
National Grid Reference	NZ 05126 16283
Borough/county	Barnard Castle / County Durham
Title:	Windows to the World Impact Evaluation Report
Author(s):	Johanna Ungemach MA Brendon Wilkins MSc MCIfA MIAI
Origination date:	01/12/2021
Circulation:	National Lottery Heritage Fund Windows to the World Project Partners
Reviewed by:	Manda Forster PhD MCIfA FSA Scot
Approval:	Lisa Westcott Wilkins MA MCIfA FSA



Executive summary

DigVentures was commissioned by St Mary's Parish Church Barnard Castle to deliver a programme of community heritage engagement activities, supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

The community engagement programme took place in two stages. An initial project delivery phase included community engagement activities planned through 2020, starting from January. With the emergence of Covid-19, the programme was put on hold and subsequently completed over an eight-month period from February to September 2021. In addition to the engagement programme, DigVentures also coordinated the development of a new church website, the installation of an external sign and interior information kiosk, a new leaflet and brochure, as well as the training of heritage volunteers. This project was designed to enable vast improvements to the visitor experience in the church as well as online, establishing St Mary's as a new heritage destination and unique historical resource. By removing perceived barriers of access, the project aimed to engage a wide variety of people with the heritage of St Mary's church, looking beyond its central role as a place of worship and reinforcing the Church as a focus for the town's community and custodian of a significant part of Barnard Castle's heritage.

This evaluation report presents the results of the engagement programme, describing the methodology, activities, and impact of this element of the project. The engagement programme was underpinned by seven distinct activity streams, forming a comprehensive activity plan. Each activity stream is discussed, exploring in detail what was initially planned, what happened and what worked, as well as identifying lessons learned. The resulting differences for heritage, people and communities are outlined, with a detailed analysis of the socio-economic distribution of visitors and participants, their motivation for participating, and what they took away from Windows to the World. The concluding project achievements note a change in people's perception of St Mary's church as a place to return to and show proudly to visitors to the town.

Overall, Windows to the World has managed to achieve its aims and objectives with a new church website with 8,047 users during its first year, an information kiosk in the church porch and a new welcoming external sign inviting visitors into the building. The project offered 26 different heritage events and activities and people from 27 different countries and five continents were engaged with the heritage of St Mary's. Almost 1,500 people signed up for virtual events, 639 people came to the Windows to the World festival in July 2021, and 21 people received skills training and contributed to the dissemination of St Mary's heritage. The report provides a summary of achievements, the lessons learnt from the project, and its legacy for the future.

The Windows to the World project was one of the first to win funding in the general grants pool after the closure of the dedicated 'Grants for Places of Worship' funding stream. As such, the project team are able to offer a useful case study in collaborative working, sharing the experiences of the partnership between DigVentures and St Marys Church and offering insights for those running similar projects in the future. Another key learning experience for the whole team was the pandemic, the impact of which went beyond project delivery itself. Windows to the World was postponed in 2020 and, when the delivery programme restarted, it was redesigned to suit government restrictions as well as the changed expectations of potential participants.



Acknowledgements

We would like to offer a sincere thank you to St Mary's Parish Church, in particular Rev Alec Harding and Robert Stenlake, for the support and enthusiasm given throughout the project. In addition, we would like to thank Zelda Baveystock and Gemma Haigh from the NHLF, all the staff and volunteers at St Mary's Parish Church and Nick Barron and the team at Pixel Parlour. The project was managed for DigVentures by Johanna Ungemach. The team comprised Chris Casswell, Ginny Cole, Stephanie Duensing, Maggie Eno, Jodie Hannis and Maiya Pina-Dacier. Lisa Westcott Wilkins acted as Project Executive.

Thanks also to the 639 visitors to the Windows to the World festival in July 2021, and to the 1462 digital event participants. The project would not have been possible without our project volunteers, consultants and delivery partners, so huge thanks go to: Anne Marie Ainsley, Dave Bailey, Edmund Barrett, Jade Beresford, Rosie Bradford, Liz Bregazzi, Samantha Brown, Judith Brown, John Castling, Kate Chapman, Sarah Cliff, Elizabeth Conran, Tristram Cooke, Ruth Cooke, Jonathan Cooke, Catrin Davies, Katie Day, Mike Drew, Chris Enticknap, Rachael Fletcher, Sally Fort, Sarah Gent, Peter Giroux, Rob Goffee, John Grundy, Kim Harding, Christine Hartas, Margaret Hedley, Simon Henderson, Karen Henderson, Rebecca Hercock, Iris Hillery, George Hodgson, Trevor Honeyman, Louise Hosey, Philip Howard, Tariq Imam, Allan Jones, Nicola Kantorowicz, Melina Katsoulakis, Geoffrey Knott, Elizabeth Lamont, Jenny Lawrence, Dawn Layland, Chris Lloyd, Gillian Lunn, Michael Lyons, Peter Martin, Douglas May, Jonathan Millar, Francesca Millican-Slater, Sandra Moorhouse, Walter Newton, Stuart Nicholls, Martin Paul, Jonathan Peacock, Diana Peat, Beverly Pilcher, Rachel Phillips, Michael Pritchard, Matthew Read, Jessica Richardson, Hannah Russ, Christian Ryan, Peter Ryder, Scaramella, Helen Scott, David Scurrah, Adam Stanford, Beth Stenlake, Frances Stenlake, Andrea Sutton, Rebecca Theaker, Graham Thorpe, John Trevett, Rachel Tweddle, David Walker, Margaret Watson, Jane Weatherall, Richard Welsby, Jennie White, John White, Jane Whittaker, David Williams, Sally Wilson, Peter Wise, Richard Witham and James Wright.



Contents

1	WHAT WE WANTED TO HAPPEN.....	8
1.1	Project aims and activity streams.....	8
1.2	The story of change.....	8
1.3	Background of the project.....	9
2	METHODOLOGY.....	9
2.1	Designing and delivering the project.....	9
2.2	Evaluation methodology.....	10
3	THE PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN CHURCH AND HERITAGE ORGANISATION.....	11
4	THE IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC.....	13
4.1	Pre-covid.....	13
4.2	Postponement.....	14
4.3	Delivery of engagement programme during a global pandemic.....	14
5	HERITAGE ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMME: A1 - HERITAGE SKILLS WORKSHOPS.....	15
5.1	What was supposed to happen.....	15
5.2	What actually happened.....	16
5.3	What worked well.....	16
5.4	What didn't work and why.....	17
6	HERITAGE ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMME: A2 - LEARN ABOUT HERITAGE.....	17
6.1	What was supposed to happen.....	17
6.2	What actually happened.....	17
6.3	What worked well.....	19
6.4	What didn't work and why.....	20
7	HERITAGE ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMME: A3 - DRAMA.....	21
7.1	What was supposed to happen.....	21
7.2	What actually happened.....	21
7.3	What worked well.....	21
7.4	What didn't work and why.....	22
8	HERITAGE ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMME: A4 - BLUE PLATES HERITAGE TRAIL.....	22
8.1	What was supposed to happen.....	22
8.2	What actually happened.....	22
8.3	What didn't work and why.....	22
9	HERITAGE ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMME: A5 – GAMES AND VR.....	23
9.1	What was supposed to happen.....	23
9.2	What actually happened.....	23
9.3	What worked well.....	24
9.4	What didn't work and why.....	25
10	HERITAGE ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMME: A6 – BEHIND THE RESTORATION SCENES.....	25
10.1	What was supposed to happen.....	25
10.2	What actually happened.....	26
10.3	What worked well.....	26
10.4	What didn't work and why.....	26
11	HERITAGE ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMME: A7 – REVIVE THE GRAVEYARD.....	26
11.1	What was supposed to happen.....	26
11.2	What actually happened.....	27



11.3	What worked well.....	27
11.4	What didn't work and why	27
12	THE DIFFERENCE MADE FOR HERITAGE.....	27
12.1	Restoration and conservation work.....	27
12.2	Website	28
12.3	3D models.....	29
13	THE DIFFERENCE MADE FOR PEOPLE.....	29
13.1	New recruits through Windows to the World	29
13.2	Social impact – volunteers	29
13.3	Social impact – Windows to the World festival.....	31
13.4	Social impact – schools	33
14	THE DIFFERENCE MADE FOR COMMUNITIES.....	34
14.1	Social impact – virtual participants.....	34
15	PROJECT REVIEW & CONCLUSIONS.....	36
15.1	Project achievements	36
15.2	Counterfactual.....	36
15.3	Lessons learnt.....	37
15.4	Legacy	38
15.5	Conclusions.....	39
16	BIBLIOGRAPHY	40

Figures

Figure 1.	Selection of newspaper articles about Windows to the World.....	41
Figure 2.	DigVentures' Theory of Change – Measuring impact.....	42
Figure 3.	DigVentures' Standards of Evidence	43
Figure 4.	Social Impact Methodology.....	44
Figure 5.	Heritage talks: Number of bookings compared to the size of actual audience	45
Figure 6.	Heritage talks: Socio-economic distribution of people who booked live events vs recording ..	46
Figure 7.	'Stained-glass windows' designed by visitors during the Windows to the World Festival	47
Figure 8.	Three new characters designed for Miracles to Medicine	48
Figure 9.	Examples from the new church website	49
Figure 10.	Heritage skills workshops: Socio-economic distribution and highlights.....	51
Figure 11.	Festival visitors: Socio-economic distribution	52
Figure 12.	Festival visitors: familiarity with St Mary's church	53
Figure 13.	Festival visitors: Change of ideas and actions	54
Figure 14.	Festival visitors: feedback and highlights	55
Figure 15.	Virtual participants: Socio-economic distribution	56
Figure 16.	Virtual participants: Worldwide distribution	57
Figure 17.	Virtual participants: Motivation and familiarity with St Mary's church	58
Figure 18.	Heritage talks: How long did people stay for virtual talks	59
Figure 19.	Windows to the World in images.....	60



1 WHAT WE WANTED TO HAPPEN

1.1 Project aims and activity streams

- 1.1.1 The *Windows to the World* project was funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund to deliver much needed restoration and renovation of the building fabric and windows of St Mary's church. Accompanying the building work, a programme of heritage engagement was designed to take place over the duration of a year, featuring workshops, talks, exhibitions and more. The overarching aim of the project was to guarantee the long-term preservation and stability of the Grade 1 listed building through its repair, conservation, and presentation. The activity programme was designed to further enhance the sustainability of the church through engagement and community research activities. This included removing perceived barriers of access to St Mary's Parish Church to show that it is not only an active place of worship, but also a valuable heritage asset of Barnard Castle, safekeeping centuries of town history.
- 1.1.2 The project has been a success, despite interruptions by the Covid-19 pandemic, delivering a programme of virtual and in-person talks, workshops, activities, and a two-weeklong festival. Through a series of workshops organised by DigVentures staff, volunteers were able to learn new skills in high-resolution photography and photogrammetry as 3D models of the church's key heritage assets were created. Volunteers were co-producers in the population of a new and comprehensive church website. The creation of new heritage leaflets and educational material for younger audiences (How to create your own stained-glass windows; how to build St Mary's church on Minecraft; how to identify diseases on bone) ensured that local children directly benefitted from the project. The website provides freely available heritage content to the public.
- 1.1.3 This document outlines how the project was delivered and includes evaluation data which demonstrates the impact the project has had. Key project achievements are articulated against the outlined project aims. Each activity is linked to one of the following seven activity streams, forming a comprehensive activity plan (Ungemach et al 2018):
- A1: Heritage Skills Workshops (see Section 5)
 - A2: Learn about Heritage (see Section 6)
 - A3: Drama (see Section 7)
 - A4: Blue Plates Heritage Trail (see Section 8)
 - A5: Games and VR (see Section 9)
 - A6: Behind the Restoration Scenes (see Section 10)
 - A7: Revive the Graveyard (see Section 11)
- 1.1.4 The seven activity streams were designed to provide a range of opportunities for local people to engage with and contribute to the preservation of St Mary's. The main activities were skills workshops (A1), heritage events (A2) and 'behind the restoration scenes' events (A6). Those main activities were supported by four smaller events and activities consisting of performances (A3), games and VR (A5), a Blue Plates Heritage Trail (A4), and a small project to revive the graveyard (A7). The design of the individual streams, what actually happened and what could have worked better are discussed in Chapters 4-10.
- ### 1.2 The story of change
- 1.2.1 In designing the project, DigVentures' own Theory of Change (see Appendix 2) was situated at the centre of the *Windows to the world* project. This helped shape the project around the people and



communities who would be involved in its delivery and is evidenced through the creation of a new church website with online resources which are available to anyone, and documents some of the heritage engagement activities that took place as part of the project. The story of change for this project, articulated through three key overarching aims, includes the following:

- To encourage more people to engage with the heritage of St Mary's and to provide them with new skill sets that will enable volunteerism and ownership of outcomes.
- To extend St Mary's position in Barnard Castle as a cultural focal point by increasing the amenity value and experience.
- To widen the range and diversity of potential visitors to the site and online.

1.3 Background of the project

- 1.3.1 DigVentures partnered with St Mary's Parish Church Barnard Castle to undertake a programme of heritage engagement activities as part of the interactive Windows to the World project. Windows to the World was funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund to revitalise St Mary's Parish church in Barnard Castle. A grant of £320,500 facilitated necessary building work to take place during 2020. A vertical crack extending the length of the west wall of the church was repaired and both the tower and west wall underwent repointing, masonry conservation and replacement. Access to the tower roof was improved. The south aisle window, the tower north and west windows, and the four south side clerestory windows and masonry underwent conservation repairs. Finally, the water damaged clock chamber ceiling was repaired and the belfry internally repointed.
- 1.3.2 To design and deliver an accompanying programme of heritage engagement activities, St Mary's Parish Church partnered with social enterprise DigVentures. Over the centuries, St Mary's Parish church had lost much of its use and importance within the community. As the town plan developed, its location was slowly forced back into an isolated position tucked away behind a row of houses, just one of many churches in town. Still used for church services, it was mostly ignored by those who don't actively practice the Anglican faith. DigVentures aimed to explore centuries of the town's colourful history, uncover hidden gems from its past, and share these discoveries with the world.
- 1.3.3 A heritage appraisal with an activity and audience development plan was developed by DigVentures in consultation with St Mary's Parish Church and the National Lottery Heritage Fund (Ungemach et al 2018). The delivery phase of Windows to the World took place during the Covid-19 pandemic, resulting in a substantial redesign of the activity plan. Changes to the programme were agreed in advance with the National Lottery Heritage Fund (see Section 4). The information contained in this report provides an account of all engagement works focused on growing and widening the church's heritage audience through a programme of talks, exhibitions, workshops, performances, and a brand-new website.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Designing and delivering the project

- 2.1.1 DigVentures ensures that their projects are innovative and creative, bringing heritage in need of protection to bigger, more diverse, and more engaged audiences. Projects are designed around DigVentures' Theory of Change, which provides a roadmap to achieving tangible outcomes for heritage, people, and communities at all stages (see Wilkins 2019). The community heritage programme was designed around the known heritage assets of Barnard Castle, which included several opportunities relevant to both the Church and its wider historic and landscape context (see Ungemach



et al 2018). Project delivery was therefore built around a robust infrastructure, with both a comprehensive heritage appraisal and audience strategy underpinning the activity programme and project aims outlined in Section 1.

2.1.2 To ensure the project was achieved effectively, the following steps were taken:

- The project aims were broken down into activity streams and then tasks, identifying how they would be achieved and who needed to be involved.
- A project manager was put in place during the development phase, providing a consistency and deep understanding of the key aims, activity streams, methodology and timescales.
- DigVentures used cloud-based project management software (Basecamp) to track progress and highlight issues or risks.
- Volunteers supporting the project were recorded using a cloud-based CRM system. This system logs data linked to an individual's level of participation, contact details and any evaluation data.
- Participant registration was confirmed by email and an information pack provided joining instructions.
- The project team set up essential webpages for participant and volunteer recruitment, using Eventbrite for all bookable events and activities. A project specific website provided information about upcoming events, and local newspapers and organisations were contacted to advertise activities through social and print media.
- Our project team worked with local stakeholders to ensure the project was embedded into pre-existing networks, whilst finding new audiences to bring into the heritage space.
- Project successes and challenges were evaluated regularly to inform project delivery.

2.1.3 The new church website was seen as a key delivery tool for much of the project, being a main hook for audience recruitment, communications and project legacy. As such, a key part of the methodology was to develop the web content and structure concurrently with programme delivery ensuring that aspects of the website were active and usable from an early stage. Since it was published in December 2020, the new church website [St Mary's Barnard Castle](#) was visited by 8,047 users and received 20,549 unique page views. People have been accessing the website not only from the United Kingdom, but also from the United States (547 users), China (327 users), Canada (112 users), Brazil (65 users), Australia (58 users), India (50 users) and another 113 different countries. The most visited pages besides the landing and the events schedule are the blog page ([Blog | St Mary's website](#)) and the history section ([History | St Mary's website](#)). The first blog about Richard III ([Barnard Castle Board Richard III | St Mary's website](#)) received a total of 239 unique views. Print media and the radio also covered the project with news stories published by BBC Tees and articles featured in the Teesdale Mercury, The Darlington and Stockton Times and the Northern Echo (see Figure 1).

2.2 Evaluation methodology

2.2.1 Evaluating the impact of heritage engagement is notoriously difficult; heritage is a complex discipline, and impacts are often abstract, intangible and difficult to attribute. As an organisation, DigVentures is working to address this challenge by drawing on the language of social impact investing. Exactly how a specific set of activities result in the achievement of desired goals is pictured as a Theory of Change (see Figure 2), detailing outputs, outcomes and impacts. This is linked to a Standards of Evidence framework (see Figure 3) designed to articulate and highlight the causal links between activity and change (see Figure 4).

2.2.2 In this framework, social impact can be conceived as the difference that activities make to people's lives over and above what would have happened in the absence of that initiative. Outputs are a measurable unit of product or service, such as a community excavation; outcomes are an observable



change for individuals or communities, such as acquiring skills or knowledge. Impact is therefore the effect on outcomes attributable to the output, measured against two metrics: scale, or breadth of people reached; and depth, or the importance of this impact on their lives. The credibility of a Theory of Change rests on the level of certainty that organisational activities are the cause of this change. For this certainty to be achieved, the correct data must be collected to isolate the impact to the intervention.

- 2.2.3 To attempt to quantify and better understand the motivations of participants, visitors and volunteers, an evaluation survey was completed for all groups. The age, gender and professional background was derived through digital analytics, with categories derived from the Office for National Statistics, followed by more in-depth analysis designed to reveal why people decided to join an event and what they were expecting. Questionnaires combined closed-end questions easily convertible to statistical data and open-ended questions designed to elicit extended responses which were then coded for statistical analysis or otherwise consolidated to address the observable implications. Questionnaires for festival visitors also combined closed-end questions easily convertible to statistical data and open-ended questions designed to elicit extended responses about whether people have learnt about heritage, developed skills, changed their attitudes and/or behaviour, and had an enjoyable experience.
- 2.2.4 Evaluation data was collected at different points during an event. Upon registration, participants' socio-economic information as well as their motivation for joining was gathered. Following the event, people were asked to give their opinion about their experience. A final project survey was circulated towards the end of the project. All collected data was coded for statistical analysis or otherwise consolidated to address the observable implications analysed. To make the data more accessible, data visualisation software *Tableau* has been used throughout the project delivery. A summary of the results is presented below in Sections 13 and 14, and reflections on the strategy and its success are discussed in Section 6.4. and Section 14.1.

3 THE PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN CHURCH AND HERITAGE ORGANISATION

- 3.1.1 Prior to the successful Windows to the World application, St Mary's applied to the NLHF's dedicated 'Grants for Places of Worship' funding stream for churches. They were refused in part because of the high number of applicants, but were encouraged and determined to try again. At this point, however, the dedicated funding stream was merged with general funding. As a result, St Mary's was in competition with heritage organisations, museums, and local councils, many of whom have trained and specialised staff or dedicated fundraising departments, unlike the church which is volunteer led. This new combined funding pool puts churches, and other small volunteer-led organisation, at a distinct disadvantage to the more well-resourced organisation with whom there are now in competition.
- 3.1.2 Many churches today are in the same situation as St Mary's at the time of application: led by a vicar and supported by a handful of dedicated and passionate volunteers. However, there is no guarantee that any of those volunteers have the kind of professional background needed to help the church access NLHF funding. Church volunteer committees are mainly structured around the usual needs of their church, which are rarely comparable to those of a refined and experienced organisation delivering professional activities on a day-by-day basis. Presenting existing church committees with several hundred thousand pounds worth of construction work can be problematic. Managing those budgets, as well as contractors and the physical work involved, and getting it all signed off is full-time job which



very few churches are capable of resourcing. Hiring in an external project manager still requires someone within the church who knows the process deeply and has the time to liaise and troubleshoot.

- 3.1.3 The NHLF Development office originally approached by St Mary's realised that they were ill-equipped to start the new grant process by themselves, not to mention deliver a substantial heritage engagement programme. This necessity was the seed that grew into the partnership between St Mary's church and DigVentures. It was suggested to the church that they find a partner, and since St Mary's is based in Barnard Castle, it would make sense to contact DigVentures, an archaeology company operating from the town.
- 3.1.4 DigVentures' initial role in the partnership was to help St Mary's understand and navigate the grant application process. The church was very lucky to have a treasurer in place with a professional background as an actuary, who was capable and willing to take on the responsibility of managing the extensive building works. But none of the St Marys team has experience in running large-scale heritage outreach programmes.
- 3.1.5 An added layer of complication for churches is that they need to coordinate every building decision with the Diocese and the DAC committee. The timelines required by the NLHF do not account for the stages required by the diocese, which is very difficult for churches to navigate, particularly if they don't have someone who can manage these details full-time.
- 3.1.6 In addition to these technical aspects, the partnership between St Mary's and DigVentures was interesting for both parties because of its novelty. They started with a Memorandum of Understanding, which outlined and enabled a very close working relationship. It was a true partnership in that both parties came together prior to the funding application and completed the project together. Despite St Mary's managing the building works and DigVentures managing the engagement programme, both stayed connected throughout the project instead of completing their respective milestones in isolation. Constant communication, updates and consultations kept the relationship active and healthy.
- 3.1.7 DigVentures realised quickly that working with and satisfying legacy outcomes for organisations like churches, needs a different approach than for other kinds of heritage organisations. As an example, to run a post-Covid engagement programme, one must go way beyond thinking about churches as just places. They must be digital. To be able to reach the outcomes required by the NLHF for the level of investment into Windows to the World, churches must be able to create an online offer as well as physical activities. There is no guarantee that face-to-face activities will ever be considered one hundred percent safe again, and that people will not be discouraged from participation if they are worried about getting sick. It is safe to assume that this change of attitude of potential participants is going to continue for a prolonged period in the future.
- 3.1.8 While trying to fulfil the legacy outcomes of Windows to the World, DigVentures encountered a situation where very hard work was needed to activate the necessary relationships to keep offering parts of the activity programme, as well as maintaining the website. Furthermore, DigVentures were faced with structural issues around who would be able to take on these tasks and responsibilities and manage them once the partnership had ended.
- 3.1.9 Another fantastic development of the partnership was that DigVentures were able to undertake an archaeological watching brief on the graveyard of St Mary's church 'in response to proposed works for the clearing and repair of blocked drains along the route of earlier drainage from the 20th century' (Noon and Swain 2020). DigVentures' familiarity with the church and its history by having worked with St Mary's on Windows to the World for several years at this point was a big advantage in conducting the watching brief.



- 3.1.10 As far as recommendations for other organisations beginning such a partnership, the most important stance is never to assume that churches operate like other culture or heritage organisations. It is tempting to make assumptions, stick to the well-trodden path and continue to plan and execute tasks as one is used to. It might be too late once it becomes apparent that both parties have been working from completely different spheres of understanding. One aspect might be standard procedure for a heritage organisation but terrifying or simply not an option for churches. The key is communication and to always clarify and not take common ground for granted. In the case of St Mary's and DigVentures, it proved helpful that English is not the first language of DigVentures' Project Manager, which meant that both parties anticipated and tried to avoid misunderstandings based on speaking different languages.
- 3.1.11 Although churches and their partners can work separately, a relationship based on regular communication should be required from any such partnership. Both partners need to be linked throughout the entire life cycle of the project.

4 THE IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

4.1 Pre-covid

- 4.1.1 The heritage engagement programme of Windows to the World started successfully in February 2020 (see Figure 19). By March 2020, when the Covid-19 pandemic hit and the country went into lockdown, the first events had taken place and several others were in planning, some of which were already taking bookings before they were postponed.

- Events that took place:
 - February 5th, 6th and 7th: Photogrammetry skills workshop (A1) - 8 participants
 - March 2nd: Talk 'Centuries of colourful history at St Mary's Parish church' (series of talks) (A2) - 41 participants
- Events open for bookings:
 - March 19th: Digitisation skills workshop (A1) - 8 bookings
 - April 2nd: Historical research skills workshop (A1) – 2 bookings
 - April 6th: Talk 'Signs and symbols on medieval grave covers' (series of talks) (A2) - 11 bookings
 - April 14th: Talk 'Douglas Pittuck from every angle' (A2) – 2 bookings
 - May 4th: Talk 'Ancient folklore of Teesdale and Weardale' (series of talks) (A2) - 14 bookings
- Events in preparation stage:
 - A series of monthly history and culture talks at St Mary's, with several speakers and topics already lined up until September (A2)
 - Miracles to Medicine sessions for local primary schools with several tentative dates booked in for one week each in July and October.
 - Richard III musical (A3): A play and songs were written to tell the story of young Richard III, and rehearsals started at Green Lane Primary school a performance scheduled for July 7th
 - Several heritage seminars and workshops with different experts were scheduled for summer and autumn, with child specific activities, such as a stone working workshop scheduled for the Easter holiday (A2)
 - A short film with Peter Ryder and John Grundy was made in January 2020, with a film launch with Q&A at St Mary's church planned for April 20th (A2)
 - Weekly guided tours were planned for Fridays 11am starting April (A2)
 - An exhibition about St Mary's through the centuries following the March talk (A2)
 - 'Teesdale Tracks and Derailing Dukes' with Chris Lloyd -Talk (series of talks) on June 1st (A2)



- 'The arrival of non-conformist religions in Barnard Castle' with Peter Ryder – Talk (series of talks) on October 5th (A2)

4.2 Postponement

- 4.2.1 With the impending lockdown, the following risk was identified: 'Depending on the length of the COVID-19 lockdown, it will be difficult to recruit and appropriately train additional heritage volunteers to support the existing small number of church volunteers. Training might be possible through digital services (depending on volunteers' digital skills), but recruitment would be difficult in the context of social distancing'.
- 4.2.2 A joint decision was taken between the St Mary's team, DigVentures and the NLHF to pause delivery at an appropriate breakpoint, and restart when the situation improved. The delivery programme was put on hold from April 2020 until October 2020, with project planning and communications picked up again in November 2020 with the hope that activities and events would be able to take place from January 2021 until September 2021. Whilst activities were able to take place, the situation around Covid-19 remained unpredictable throughout the 2021 delivery phase. A combination of rule changes, social distancing, school bubbles, remote teaching, local outbreaks, and individual fears of infection made it almost impossible for DigVentures to pick up where they left off. Additional problems also arose through the period of postponement, including:
- Illness within the extended project team, including experts central to the planned activity programme unable to take part after postponement.
 - All the initial restoration work took place before the restart of the engagement programme, which meant that opportunities for restoration related activities and events were lost.
 - A high percentage of the existing church and project volunteers fell within the Covid-19 risk groups, and lost confidence in attending in-person events or activities.
 - Momentum was lost with the extremely engaged and enthusiastic group of photogrammetry volunteers, and new technical skills were unable to be put into practice.

4.3 Delivery of engagement programme during a global pandemic

- 4.3.1 From January until September 2021, DigVentures delivered an amended engagement programme for St Mary's. Delivery was impeded by government restrictions that prohibited larger events in the North East. It was difficult to organise activities inside the church for significantly sized participant groups, and even when restrictions were loosened, potential participants were still careful and hesitant towards attending in person events.
- 4.3.2 Adapting to the situation forced by lockdown, St Mary's pivoted online, installing wireless internet access to offer live-streamed church services and providing a crucial link to their congregation. This enabled elements of the Windows to the World activity programme to also move online, and a number of planned in-person events were provided virtually, increasing the range and diversity of people who engaged with the church. One downside to online provision and access was digital fatigue; over the period of lockdown, potential users were overwhelmed by virtual content provided by many companies and organisations, which may have limited the success of some online offers for this project.
- 4.3.3 Throughout 2021, DigVentures were able to start organising in person events again, and as-such the activity programme was able to be delivered with a hybrid virtual and in-person approach. All in-person events were designed to be able to switch to virtual if needed, and sometimes needed to be cancelled at short notice. For example, in-person events planned for summer 2021, including a performance by renowned guitarist Giulio Tampalini scheduled for June 2021, had to be cancelled.



- 4.3.4 Planning and delivering events during a pandemic meant that DigVentures had to be flexible right up to the moment of delivery, which resulted in uncertainty for potential visitors. For example, hybrid events ran digital lectures with much reduced in-person capacity, to allow for safe indoor activities. As such, event descriptions for hybrid talks informed potential audience members of the possibility of additional last minute in-person spaces. Despite this, in-person attendance was disappointingly small, presumably due to a combination of people lacking confidence to attend in person, but perhaps also needing to be able to plan how they attend in advance.
- 4.3.5 In July 2021, DigVentures and St Mary's offered a 12-day long festival at the church, as a celebration of the project and to bring people together safely to enjoy some of the planned in-person activities that couldn't happen earlier in the year (see Figure 19). Despite the varied programme, visitor numbers were lower than expected, again the result of combined factors. Asking visitors to wear face masks in enclosed spaces discouraged some people from taking part in activities. To meet government guidelines for groups indoors, potential visitors were asked to book a place for group activities beforehand, which discouraged the informal drop-ins from passers-by interested in popping in. This reduced the opportunity to create links with new audiences within the town itself, who had not discovered the project or programme of events, or even had been aware of the church. Not everybody is able to commit in advance, and people who only learnt about the festival when passing by were discouraged to get involved, even if spaces were still available.
- 4.3.6 Overall, in-person events and activities had to be downsized, and the expected extent and range of visitors and footfall needed to be amended. Covid-19 presented DigVentures and St Mary's church with unprecedented challenges, but also opportunities that would otherwise very likely not have been taken advantage of.
- 4.3.7 The following seven chapters are structured to show the impact of the pandemic, as well as unrelated issues and experiences. Every activity stream is described as *what was supposed to happen*, followed by how the initial planning had to pivot to accommodate new circumstances and still function during the pandemic. Each chapter ends with an account of what worked well and what didn't.

5 HERITAGE ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMME: A1 - HERITAGE SKILLS WORKSHOPS

5.1 What was supposed to happen

- 5.1.1 The aim was to offer different heritage skills workshops led by experts, resulting in the creation of several dedicated volunteer groups who will be equipped with crucial heritage skills. With these new skills embedded, these engaged groups will be equipped to develop content for activities and the website and maintain aspects of the ongoing interpretation and public programme of the Church. They would also be able to continue certain aspects of the project, such as research and guided tours, beyond the duration of the project
- 5.1.2 During the project, the groups would be organised and supported by DigVentures staff and prepared to take on tasks after Windows to the World has finished to continue its legacy. The individual workshops include the following:
- Photogrammetry for content creation (delivered by DigVentures staff)
 - Archival research for content creation (delivered by the County Durham Record Office and supported by the VCH volunteers)
 - Digitisation for content creation (delivered by the County Durham Record Office and DigVentures Staff)



- Guided tours for activity delivery (delivered by DigVentures staff)
- Events planning for activity delivery (delivered by DigVentures staff)
- Website management for content creation and maintenance (delivered by DigVentures staff)

5.2 What actually happened

5.2.1 DigVentures tried to deliver all six skills workshops, but because of the situation surrounding Covid-19, not all workshops could take place and others were pivoted online. Despite extensive advertising, no participants could be found for the events planning workshop. Restrictions meant that workshops could not take place face to face for most of the time. The County Durham Record Office stayed closed to the public and delivering the digitisation workshop at St Mary's was not possible because of the lack of scanners. The following workshops took place:

- Photogrammetry, in-person workshop, 5th, 6th and 7th February 2020 (eight participants)
- Archival research, virtual workshop, May 26th, June 9th and June 16th 2021 (seven participants)
- Website management, virtual workshops for content creation and maintenance, four general sessions and five smaller personalised sessions throughout spring and summer 2021 (nine participants)

5.2.2 Constantly changing restrictions made planned regular and in-person guided tours impossible, similar to training volunteers in person. Tour content is best remembered and internalised when presented, but this was difficult under the circumstances. To mitigate, DigVentures recorded a virtual guided tour that can be accessed remotely or by visitors to the church: [Virtual Tours | St Mary's website](#). These videos, as well as the accompanying script can be used for future official tour guide training, or for self-education.

5.3 What worked well

5.3.1 The photogrammetry and the website workshops worked very well and resulted in tangible outputs. Several of the photogrammetry workshop participants kept returning to the church on their own to take photos and process them either themselves or send them to DigVentures for processing. This resulted in a collection of 3D models of a selection of different heritage assets at St Mary's church: [Windows to the World - a 3D model collection by DigVentures \(@digventures\) - Sketchfab](#) (see Figure 19).

5.3.2 Participants of the website workshop went on to become the St Marys Church volunteer website group and worked throughout the delivery phase, creating content for the new website, updating the events calendar, writing blogs, and populating pages: [St Marys Barnard Castle](#). Supported by DigVentures staff, the volunteers are now capable of taking over the management of the website. Sufficient training has empowered them to continue active dissemination of St Mary's heritage content beyond the duration of Windows to the World project.

5.3.3 The online format of the archival research workshop meant that participation was not restricted to locals. Participants joined from Barnard Castle and surrounding villages, but also from Wales and Canada. The workshop introduced people to the detailed history of St Mary's who would otherwise probably never have heard of the church. For the duration of the workshop, participants worked together, supported each other, and made use of their different backgrounds to create results which have been made available through the website.



5.4 What didn't work and why

- 5.4.1 After the six-month postponement, DigVentures had lost momentum with the photogrammetry volunteers. Many were part of the risk-groups and therefore careful. Similarly, it was difficult to keep the research participants engaged throughout the period of postponement. Digital meetings did not easily replace the face-to-face conversations and knowledge sharing that the group had enjoyed before. Whilst the group were initially enthusiastic and willing to continue research into the history of St Mary's, they trickled away one by one.
- 5.4.2 Following the initial period of lockdown, it became more difficult to establish new volunteer groups. The website group consisted of existing church volunteers, who already knew each other and had shared connections prior to the digital workshops. Engaging new individuals in volunteer roles was made difficult by lockdowns and ever-changing restrictions. With job losses, grief, existential fear, and fear of infection, committing time to heritage was probably not a priority for most.
- 5.4.3 Secondary school students were initially supposed to be engaged with research, tours, and event management, however despite initial enthusiasm of teachers, this was no longer possible through the schools. Class bubbles, remote teaching, and the fact that schools neither let their classes off their premises, nor outsiders come into the school, reduced the involvement of students to patchy digital engagement (see Section 9).

6 HERITAGE ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMME: A2 - LEARN ABOUT HERITAGE

6.1 What was supposed to happen

- 6.1.1 This activity stream was designed to deliver a series of heritage events and workshops touching upon a wide range of topics. They were aimed at engaging old and new audiences with St. Mary's. Some of these events were supposed to tie into other similarly themed happenings in Barnard Castle, such as a medieval weekend in collaboration with 'Making Barney Brighter', or the 'Barnard Castle Meet'. Most events would have been non-recurring, but some activities would have been offered on a regular basis as reliable draw for visitors to Barnard Castle.
- 6.1.2 With different things happening at the same time, the rarer bigger events such as the Heritage Open Day were designed to have more impact in drawing significantly more tourists to the town for this event. Smaller events such as exhibitions and talks were aimed at more local audiences. Individual heritage events included the following:
- Heritage talks and seminars
 - Hands-on heritage workshops
 - Guided tours
 - Temporary exhibitions
 - Barnard Castle Medieval History / Richard III Weekend (in collaboration with 'Making Barney Brighter' and The Barnard Castle Cultural Partnership)
 - Durham County Heritage Open Day
 - Northern Dales Richard III Group biennial study day

6.2 What actually happened

- 6.2.1 A programme of monthly talks was drawn up with speakers addressing different topics to an audience within St Mary's church. The first talk took place in March 2020, only weeks before the first lockdown.



The audience of 41 attendants was satisfying, considering it was the first talk, and people had already booked for upcoming talks as well. Several seminars and hands-on heritage workshops were planned with different experts, schools had agreed to work on exhibitions, and tentative conversations had been started concerning bigger cultural events.

- 6.2.2 With the arrival of Covid-19 in the UK, the scheduled talks were postponed, as was the organisation and planning of other events and activities. The series of monthly heritage talks was picked up again in February 2021 albeit in a different format. Most talks were entirely virtual, with speaker and audience joining from their homes. With restrictions easing in July and September 2021, participants were invited to come together at the church and watch the talk together. However, only a handful of people showed up in person. The option of having the speakers come to the church was dismissed due to a constant change in regulations and most of them feeling safer giving the talk from their own home.
- 6.2.3 The uncertainty of the situation and changing rules and regulations complicated planning and organising. Interactive seminars and workshops that included face-to-face interaction were not possible to offer online and not safe to offer in person. Larger events in Barnard Castle, such as the 1940's weekend, were cancelled, which made collaboration impossible. Similarly, guided tours were problematic due to the close proximity of tour participants needed to hear the guide.
- 6.2.4 Regular guided tours and exhibitions did not take place. Schools who initially signed up to prepare an exhibition had other priorities and productivity suffered from restrictions which impeded content creation.
- 6.2.5 To counterbalance this lack of in-person heritage events and activities during the first half of 2021, DigVentures and St Mary's church hosted the Windows to the World Festival. The festival took place over a duration of 12 days in July with last-minute planning and organisation due to the need of flexibility. With the aim of presenting potential visitors with many different offers to attract different audiences, the following was being offered:
- 'Journeys – Teithiau': a travelling exhibition by six contemporary stained-glass artists moving on from the national stained-glass museum in Ely Cathedral (approx. 639 visitors)
 - 'Psalms for the soul': a concert by a cappella group Scaramella (30 participants, 26 virtual tickets)
 - 'It fell on a summer's day': a concert by Peter Martin (lute) and Tristram Cooke (17 participants, 13 virtual tickets)
 - 'The house of life': a concert with Graham Thorpe (piano) and invited singers (22 participants, 17 virtual tickets)
 - 'Create your own stained-glass window': independent creative children's workshop (31 participants)
 - 'Ginny's gruesome graveyard tour': child-friendly history tour of St Mary's (6 participants)
 - 'DNA corner': children's workshop learning about Richard III and how to extract DNA from a banana (4 participants)
 - 'History cold case': Opportunity for children to solve historical medical mysteries (22 participants)
 - 'Found words': poetry workshop for adults (0 participants)
 - 'Fiction from Fact': writing workshop for adults (1 participant)
 - 'Afterlife': A creative memory workshop for adults by 'The other way works' (0 participants, 6 virtual participants)
 - A child friendly virtual tour for the year 5 and 6 local Greenlane primary school (62 participants)
 - Guided tours of the bell ringing chamber (8 participants)
 - Daily guided tours of the church and churchyard (35 participants)



6.2.6 Some events were daily (exhibition, stained glass workshops and guided tour), some were recurring (history cold case, DNA corner and Ginny's gruesome graveyard tour), and others one-off (concerts and workshops for adults).

6.2.7 During September 2021, St Mary's took part in the Heritage Open Days and welcomed 42 visitors to the church. They were able to access the church tower, but only few stayed to take part in a tour of the church afterwards. Most visitors were over 40 years old and not a single child attended the HoD at St Mary's.

6.3 What worked well

6.3.1 An unexpected positive effect of the pandemic was embracing the virtual component of the events and activities, which opened opportunities to engage a much wider and larger audience than would otherwise have been possible. Compared to 41 audience members in March 2020, the virtual version of the same talk in February 2021 resulted in 100 bookings and 61 attendees. The talk was fully booked and for the following talk in March, the total number of available spaces was increased by ten. Again, the talk was fully booked and the spaces for the following months' talks were increased to 300 and finally to 500 for the final talk in September 2021.

6.3.2 Figure 5 shows an increase in bookings from February to September 2021, but also the significant amount of people who chose the option of receiving a recording of the talk when this was offered. Rather than joining the talk at a specific time, they could watch it back at their own availability. One might expect that this offer was particularly taken up by people in full or part-time employment, or by participants joining from overseas.

6.3.3 However, Figure 6 shows that although 75% of people joining from Australia preferred the recording as opposed to the live ticket, this cannot be said for North and South America, and over half the people living in Europe favoured the recording as well. It was notable that retirees (60%) or long-term unemployed, carers or homemakers (55%), preferred the recordings, whereas half the full or part-time employees planned to tune in live. This was maybe due to time commitment or practicalities of attending live. The booking data collected from these two talks does not seem to show a conclusive pattern of preference. Nevertheless, it becomes apparent from Figure 5 that offering the additional option results in more bookings overall. The last talk in September is an outlier explained by the prominence of the topic and the speaker.

6.3.4 Both the increase in available spaces and the additional offer of sending out recordings, were the result of a steep learning curve in pivoting events designed to be face-to-face for an online audience. However, not all speakers provided permission for their talks to be recorded and distributed.

6.3.5 It also proved fruitful to have a number of activities happening at the same time, such as during the festival programme, rather than spreading them around the year. People who came to see the exhibition, sometimes also took part in a guided tour, or came back for one of the concerts. Although we had initially hoped for more individuals attending festival activities, achieving 639 people, and the depth of individual engagement was surprising, with several groups and individuals staying between 30 and 90 minutes, exploring the different opportunities and learning about St Mary's in conversation (see Figure 19).

6.3.6 The guided tours and the exhibition visits were often followed by deep conversations with staff and artists. The 'Create your own stained-glass window' activity for children was also done by several adults and resulted in individuals engaging with St Mary's on a personal level, learning about stained-glass and expressing themselves creatively without boundaries. One young boy, after noticing that all the



windows in the church featured only white people, decided to draw a self-portrait anyway (see Figure 7 – bottom left).

6.4 What didn't work and why

- 6.4.1 The main issue of both virtual talks and the festival were no-shows. Due to Covid safety measures, spaces in workshops and guided tours were limited. People were asked to sign up for events on Eventbrite, and 20% of spaces were held back for potential walk-ins, to keep the festival inclusive for people who hadn't heard about the event beforehand.
- 6.4.2 For the virtual talks, an average of 36% of people who booked a space did not attend the event (see Figure 5). In July and September, a small number of visitors were allowed to attend the talks at St Mary's, but of 41 people who booked a space in September, nobody showed up. Similarly, 42% of people who signed up for festival events, didn't arrive. Despite a plea to cancel bookings when not able to attend to allow other people to take the spaces, this rarely happened. It is safe to assume that potential participants didn't get a chance to attend fully booked events.
- 6.4.3 On the other hand, one festival visitor told DigVentures that he felt uncomfortable booking a space for something like a free guided tour on Eventbrite. Pre-pandemic, he could just have made up his mind on the day, walked up and joined the tour. It is further likely, that although spaces for walk-ins were reserved, most people didn't want to take the chance to make their way to the church just to be turned away, given the very strict participant numbers.
- 6.4.4 Besides no-shows and potential visitors shying away from the uncertainty of a space, or not wanting to sign up to something beforehand, the unexpected low number of total visitors might also be due to the good weather. On weekdays, there was an average of 50 visitors a day. With the expectation of significantly more visitors on the weekend, a wide selection of activities was scheduled, amongst them the flagship event 'Windows to Memory', a workshop inviting participants to think about and engage with their memories, with several other free and autonomous activities for people to join at their own volition throughout the day. Nobody took part.
- 6.4.5 From the data collected, it cannot be said why some activities (like the guided tours or the window painting) were popular, while others (like the poetry workshop or Windows to Memory) did not engage a single participant. The average visitor number of the weekend was 65, with 82 visitors on Saturday and 48 visitors on Sunday. This is low considering the visitor numbers on weekdays. A possible explanation could be weather; Saturday 17th July 2021 was the hottest day of the month in Barnard Castle, reaching temperatures of 26°C. It is likely that individuals and families sought the shade of their own house or spent the day off in the forest or at the beach, rather than visit the town and church. The wind may also have impacted numbers – on most days a gazebo was set up during the festival to increase visibility of the events for visitors and provide shade for the team. Strong winds on the Heritage Open Day prevented the Gazebo from being put up which might account for the relatively low visitor number on that day.
- 6.4.6 It also proved difficult to collect evaluation data regarding feedback from participants of virtual events. Whilst most provided their motivation and socio-economic information on registration, less than 3% completed the short feedback questionnaire circulated after the event. Similarly, when asked to respond to the final project evaluation survey towards the end of the project, only 8 people sent their replies.



7 HERITAGE ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMME: A3 - DRAMA

7.1 What was supposed to happen

- 7.1.1 St Mary's was supposed to become the host of plays once again, as it used to be during the medieval period. To remember this tradition, several performances relating to the history of St Mary's and Barnard Castle were supposed to take place during the delivery phase of the project, consisting of either newly written or existing plays, as well as shorter performances in the form of spontaneous excerpts or poems.
- 7.1.2 During spring 2020, a child friendly musical about the childhood of Richard III was written for Green Lane Primary School students with the intention of performing the play at St Mary's church. A play, previously performed at St Mary's church, 'Worlds of Light', that broached the Cholera epidemic of 1849, was supposed to be performed again with the current situation surrounding the Covid-19 pandemic shining a new light on the topic. Similarly, a concert by guitarist Giulio Tampalini was tentatively planned for June 2021, as well as a performance by Zest Theatre for summer 2021.

7.2 What actually happened

- 7.2.1 Rehearsals for the Richard III musical had begun by the time schools had to close in early 2020. The possibility of the performance taking place outside during summer 2021, were explored, but the implementation was down to safety measures of Green Lane School. Some of the students involved in the rehearsals had moved on to secondary school in 2021. The school also struggled with home schooling, bubbles, and Covid cases, which meant that rehearsing the play was neither possible nor a priority.
- 7.2.2 Plans for both the guitar concert and the performance by Zest Theatre were abandoned due to the uncertainty of the situation. Giulio would have travelled from Italy, and the performance by Zest would have included considerable travel and accommodation costs that would have been lost had the event been cancelled. Even if government restrictions would have allowed a sizable audience, singing was not advised as it enhances the spread of Covid-19. Similarly impossible are indoor performances without masks.
- 7.2.3 To avoid dropping Activity Stream 3 entirely, three concerts were organised. All were planned as hybrid models. The concerts took place in the church and virtual tickets were available, with the information that in-person tickets would be released closer to the performance date if government restrictions allowed. All concerts were live streamed with recordings available for 48 hours after the performance.

7.3 What worked well

- 7.3.1 The concerts had a combined audience of 125 people and all gave positive feedback apart from one couple who sat right behind the camera and screen for the live stream and one visitor who criticised the lack of diversity in the performances. Comments from in-person attendants include: 'I loved the opportunity to hear live music by accomplished musicians', having such concerts is a joyous experience. The fact that such different music is available is wonderful - especially as this is the first concert I have attended since the first lockdown', 'I liked the fact that it was streamed at the church as well as to people at home. It's an interesting way', and 'It was so good to hear excellent choral music sung by such a polished ensemble. Even more lovely after an 18-month gap'



- 7.3.2 The hybrid approach allowed the maximum audience size as everybody who was unsure about committing to a space inside the church, could enjoy the concert from home. The recordings provided a safety net in case of problems during the live streaming.

7.4 What didn't work and why

- 7.4.1 A problem that arose during the first concert due to staff not being used to the task, were technical difficulties that led to an interruption of the live stream. Fortunately, the issue could be resolved in the space of 15 minutes and the online audience was understanding. After the concert, the recording was repaired, and ticket holders could enjoy the concert in its entirety without interruptions. The following two concerts took place without technical complications.

8 HERITAGE ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMME: A4 - BLUE PLATES HERITAGE TRAIL

8.1 What was supposed to happen

- 8.1.1 The Blue Plates Trail was supposed to involve families with children, as well as schools and other groups in creating a new trail of blue plaques through Barnard Castle. The aim was to interrupt the traditional heritage discourse in favour of lesser-known aspects. Over a prolonged period, participants would have been invited and encouraged to hear stories, undertake research, and read about the history of St Mary's church, Barnard Castle and its people. Most of the material would have been the result of the trained research volunteers. Subsequently, individuals would have been able to choose which events, places, and people they seem worthy of being granted a blue plate.
- 8.1.2 The most engaging designs and most popular topics would have been turned into blue plates to be distributed around town in time for one of the bigger heritage events so visitors can follow this alternative to traditional history. The remaining entries could be turned into a temporary exhibition in the church or on the church website to show which elements of heritage are important in the eyes of local people.

8.2 What actually happened

- 8.2.1 Because of the restrictions surrounding Covid-19, it was impossible to arrange having materials available for a prolonged period of time. Due to possibility of spreading the virus, it was not advisable to lay out material in the church building for visitors to use on their own. After conversation with local teachers in 2020, the schools were happy to be provided with the material, make it available to their students and discuss it for the students to create their own blue plates. However, this arrangement would have only targeted one audience group and as mentioned above, the priorities of schools had shifted by 2021.
- 8.2.2 A final attempt to collect designs for blue plates was made prior to the Windows to the World Festival, with the plan to have the information available at the festival. Visitors would be provided with the materials to create their blue plates suggestions on the spot. In the end, activity stream 4 was abandoned entirely, and the resources originally ringfenced for activity stream 4 went towards the Windows to the World festival (activity stream 2).

8.3 What didn't work and why

- 8.3.1 Besides the restrictions through the Covid-19 pandemic, the main reason why the blue plates trail could not take place was the small number of archival research volunteers (see Section 5.4), and the loss of all existing research volunteers a few weeks after the end of their training. Despite their



awareness for the upcoming festival and the necessary material for the blue plates event, the research into the historical documents about St Mary's stopped. The existence of a dedicated volunteer coordinator could have counteracted, but when advertising for the role, nobody was willing to take it on.

- 8.3.2 From DigVentures' observation during the festival, it is further doubtful that many visitors would have taken the time to sit down and work through the provided material on their own. Only a limited number of people was allowed inside the church and masks were mandatory. Outside, the sun was rarely masked by clouds, and it was very hot. An unexpected wind channel demanded everything to be pinned down with rocks. Stacks of papers, or even folders, would not have stayed complete for very long.

9 HERITAGE ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMME: A5 – GAMES AND VR

9.1 What was supposed to happen

- 9.1.1 This activity stream has been developed for children aged 6 to 15 featuring two main activities: Minecraft and Miracles to Medicine, both disseminating St Mary's history in a playful and engaging way. Overseen by a DigVentures member of staff, children would have used the virtual reality game Minecraft to build historic St Mary's church. Introducing them to the buildings from a slightly new angle would have provided a special focus on historic elements utilising individual creativity and perspective. The results of this activity could have been shared online and used for a temporary exhibition.
- 9.1.2 Miracles to Medicine is a character-based archaeology game introducing children to medieval diseases and medicines while drawing parallels to modern issues of health and wellbeing. This educational session has been developed by DigVentures for school classes and would have been adapted to St Mary's and Barnard Castle's history. Additions would have included malnutrition, wounds as might have occurred in the First World War, and the pathologies discovered on King Richard III skeleton. This hands-on approach would have granted children a rare and exciting opportunity to handle real archaeological artefacts and exercise problem-solving as well as critical thinking skills.
- 9.1.3 Additional engagement specifically designed for children would have included a children's heritage trail.

9.2 What actually happened

- 9.2.1 Three new characters who are linked to the history of St Mary's church and Barnard Castle were developed for Miracles to Medicine: A young Richard III, First World War soldier Joseph, and poor weaver Henry. The three bones associated with these characters showed pathologies for scoliosis, a bullet wound and malnutrition, respectively (see Figure 8). In addition, a comprehensive arsenal of resources was created to accompany teenagers through building St Mary's church in Minecraft. The documents include a selection of old photos, drawings, and maps, and describe every single architectural aspect of St Mary's church and how it changed over the centuries – from the tower to the roof to the doors.
- 9.2.2 Before the postponement of the delivery phase, several sessions for Miracles to Medicine sessions were scheduled with local schools. By the beginning of 2021, schools were struggling with new infections, home schooling, class bubbles and a general uncertainty that made even short-term planning and commitment difficult. Neither was it possible for single classes to come to the church, nor were outsiders allowed into the schools. Similarly, taking students through the complex task of building the church in Minecraft in person, was impossible.



- 9.2.3 Determined to make the Minecraft experience happen for their students, both Teesdale School and Barnard Castle school organised lunch clubs with 15 students each. The plan was to provide teachers and students with the material, with DigVentures staff supporting the building process remotely, occasionally checking in via skype sessions. After half term in May, both schools were provided with access to the Minecraft server and a first virtual welcome took place with DigVentures staff talking about the history of the church and the goal of the Minecraft constructions. Hopes were high that first results could be seen in time for the Window to the World festival in July, with the possibility of a small exhibition.
- 9.2.4 One school would build the church as it would have looked like at around 1500, and the other would take on 1800. But by the end of the delivery phase, Teesdale School had dropped out and the students at Barnard Castle School had only come as far as the foundations. They are still determined to finish the task. To increase ongoing engagement with this aspect of the project, DigVentures have created a 'How to Build a Church' resource pack, which will be made available via the website. The resources, including a Minecraft world, step-by-step instructions and a short tutorial will be made available, so that anyone from anywhere with access to Minecraft can build St Mary's during different architectural phases. They will be encouraged to send their work in so the church can publish them on the website.
- 9.2.5 With in-person engagement at schools hindered, the Windows to the World festival provided a chance to engage children outside of the school context in various ways. Under the name of History cold cases, children were invited to figure out what ailed the characters like Richard, Joseph, and Henry and how their suffering would have been eased at the time. Afterwards, they could hold and explore the 3D-printed bone with the pathology, as well as fitting archaeological artefacts.
- 9.2.6 During 'Ginny's gruesome graveyard tour', children were taken through the church and the graveyard and learned in a child-friendly way all about the darker aspects of Barnard Castle's history, such as the cholera epidemic or the horrible living conditions during the 19th century. After seeing old drawings of the church, children were invited to draw the church as it looked like today and thereby leave their own contemporary record. Learning continued with the 'DNA corner' workshop, where children learned all about Richard III's involvement with Barnard Castle, and how science helped prove that the skeleton under the car park belonged indeed to the king. It finished with the hands-on task of extracting DNA from a banana (see Figure 19). A virtual version of the graveyard tour was given to year 5 and 6 of Greenlane Primary School.
- 9.2.7 A more creative educational approach was taken by letting children create their own stained-glass window designs. Equipped with a clipboard, a short workbook explaining the steps of stained-glass window design and instalment, paper and a pencil, children were sent into the church to explore the windows on their own. After designing their windows, they were given hard plastic sheets and colours and turned their design into reality, holding the finished sheets up into the sun to see the colours shine (see Figure 7).

9.3 What worked well

- 9.3.1 Despite not being able to interact with schools in person, 125 children were engaged with the heritage of St Mary's church through the context of the festival. This is lower than planned for, but provided an opportunity to achieve a slightly deeper engagement with individuals than individual activities may have allowed. Many of the children stayed for a considerable amount of time and were deeply engaged with the topic, designing and re-designing stained glass windows, or working through every single one of the nine historic cold cases.



- 9.3.2 Compared to the scheduled activities (DNA corner and Ginny's gruesome graveyard tour), the drop-in activities (Create your own stained-glass window and History cold case) saw 5 times more participants. They were not tied to a specific time and date and did not require a booking on Eventbrite. Children and families could take a workbook and clipboard and explore the church windows on their own without being led through by DigVentures staff or restricted by the needs or other participants. This not only saved staff resources, but this freedom is likely to have resulted in more creativity and individual engagement with the heritage topics (see Figures 7 and 19).
- 9.3.3 Both teachers and students were enthusiastic about the innovative idea of using Minecraft to build St Mary's church to explore different architectural phases, and to learn about its history in a playful way at the same time. Most of the participants from Barnard Castle School were boarders who had never been to the church and knew nothing about it, but by sifting through the material, they were presented with a wealth of information (see Section 13.4).
- 9.3.4 The resources for the Minecraft activity, the stained-glass window workbook, and the characters for the cold cases are still available and can be used by St Mary's during other events in the future, drawing in and engaging young people with the heritage of the church.
- 9.4 **What didn't work and why**
- 9.4.1 Neither of the Windows to the World activities for children were filled to capacity despite being widely advertised, also through schools. The possible reasons for this have already been described in Section 6.4.
- 9.4.2 The Minecraft activity was supposed to last for several months, but Teesdale School dropped out after the summer holidays and the students at Barnard Castle school were still not much further than the foundations by January 2022. Technical difficulties with Minecraft servers and Microsoft account delayed the beginning of the activity, and after the summer holiday, some of the momentum and initial excitement was lost. Further technical issues continued to interrupt what were meant to be regular sessions.
- 9.4.3 Communication between teachers and DigVentures staff took place via email and was often delayed and interrupted by school breaks (see Figure 19). Issues could not be as quickly resolved as would have been possible if DigVentures staff could have been present during the sessions. Similarly, motivation and purpose could have been conveyed easier and more reliably through direct in-person contact with the students.
- 9.4.4 At the same time, especially towards the end of September, schools were struggling with new infections and staff shortage, trying to juggle different priorities.

10 HERITAGE ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMME: A6 – BEHIND THE RESTORATION SCENES

10.1 What was supposed to happen

- 10.1.1 The conservation and restoration work happening at St Mary's church provided a unique opportunity to let people catch a glimpse behind the scenes of processes that usually happen behind closed doors. The plan was to have small groups of visitors meeting with specialists while the works were happening at the church. They could have watched them do their work and ask any questions. Watching the drone flight to record the building and using the scaffolding to experience St Mary's from a different angle were also possibilities.



10.2 What actually happened

- 10.2.1 Given that the restoration and conservation work was as good as completed by early 2021, this activity stream was reduced to blog posts on the website about the work that has been going on: [Stained glass restoration | St Mary's website](#). Additionally, stained-glass conservator Jonathan Cooke recorded his work on the last window from his workshop (see Figure 19). Interviews with both Jonathan and Alec Harding, St Mary's vicar, were recorded and published on the website and through the project newsletter, detailing the progress of the conservation work and their experience of doing these jobs during the pandemic: [Saving St Mary's Stained-Glass from Ruin | St Mary's website](#) and [What happened at St Mary's during lockdown? | St Mary's website](#).
- 10.2.2 The drone flight took place in summer 2021 and the church was recorded. However, because of the unpredictable weather, the flight had to happen very short notice and it was not possible to plan an event around it.

10.3 What worked well

- 10.3.1 Both the interviews and the blog posts turned out to be a good way of disseminating the results and stories of the restoration work to a wider audience. Although we were not able to host in person events and provide access to the works being done in person, the posts reached a far wider audience, with people accessing the videos for example from the United States and Australia. The videos are also resources that are now on the church website and can be used and accessed in the future.

10.4 What didn't work and why

- 10.4.1 The last window that was restored and recorded by Jonathan Cooke was a last-minute additional job, and DigVentures staff were not made aware of the timings with enough time to plan for a recording. The stained-glass conservation team did not have access to professional filming equipment – which could have been provided, along with support for planning and undertaking filming. Unfortunately, the lockdown meant that DigVentures staff were unable to travel and record the restoration works directly. The conservation team did capture some content using a smart phone and, whilst some guidance was provided, not all the material could be used afterwards. Unfortunately, this was a missed opportunity for the project to capture some great content about the restoration works which involved a single chance to record the skilled process of the stained-glass installation. With the right planning and resourcing, the material captured in the workshop could have been more comprehensive and impactful.

11 HERITAGE ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMME: A7 – REVIVE THE GRAVEYARD

11.1 What was supposed to happen

- 11.1.1 The graveyard is mostly used as a cut through for people making their way around the town and by dog walkers, but there are many little-known stories connected to the many graves and memorials. An existing graveyard survey and roll of honour information would have been digitised and made available on the St Mary's website. A group of creative people interested in the graveyard would have been connected with a professional artist, and together think of ways to reinterpret and illuminate all the fascinating aspects of this place to make them known and accessible to visitors.



11.2 What actually happened

- 11.2.1 Due to the difficulties with the digitisation workshop (see Section 5), only the existing graveyard survey could be integrated into the new website and is now available to access from anywhere in the world with internet access.
- 11.2.2 The uncertainty around Covid-19 made it very difficult to find an artist and organise a comprehensive workshop to recruit volunteers to then work together over a prolonged period to create a new interpretation content for the graveyard. The activity stream was therefore adapted to 'Windows to Memory', a workshop fusing live communal conversations and self-led creative exercises. It was planned as part of the Windows to the World festival in July and organised as a hybrid model for in-person participation at the church, but also allowed purely online delivery and participation. Midlands based theatre company The Other Way Works were commissioned to develop these activities as half-day workshops, with one session running on site and the other online.

11.3 What worked well

- 11.3.1 The Other Way Works designed a thoughtful and participatory online workshop which was attended by six people. The activity opened space for participants to explore their own auto-biographical memories and be guided through group creative exercises focusing on themes such as personal values, life purpose and meditative reflection.

11.4 What didn't work and why

- 11.4.1 For unknown reasons, the in-person offer of 'Windows to Memory' did not draw in any participants. This might be because of the day it was offered (see Section 6.4) or because the topic was too abstract. On reflection, the activities that seemed to work best catered to a 'drop-in' audience, allowing people to self-guide around the site and engage in varying levels of interaction with the church and DigVentures staff. The Other Way Works were able to quickly pivot their planned activities to a) shift to the front of the church rather than the graveyard to be more visible, and b) adapt the activity to a drop-in activity where people were able to build their own labyrinth and walk through it using the pre-designed audio-trails they had created.
- 11.4.2 A half-day workshop was perhaps too great a time commitment, especially during a period of fine weather. In this context, DigVentures have developed an understanding that self-guided activities or ones with an informal, drop-in structure would work more successfully for future events.

12 THE DIFFERENCE MADE FOR HERITAGE

12.1 Restoration and conservation work

- 12.1.1 The following restoration and conservation work that took place at St Mary's parish church as part of the Windows to the World project left the tangible heritage in better condition:
- Repairing the top to bottom crack through the west wall which was caused by settling of the tower pulling part of the west wall with it
 - Masonry conservation and replacement on the tower and west wall
 - Repointing the west wall and tower, including the belfry internally
 - Conservation repairs to the tour south side clerestory (high level) windows and masonry, as well as to the south aisle window and to the tower north and west windows.
 - Improvements to the access to the tower roof



- Repairs to the water damaged clock chamber ceiling.

12.1.2 The structural improvements and the restoration of the beautiful stained-glass windows are another step for St Mary's towards remaining a main heritage asset of Barnard Castle and a place where tangible and intangible heritage is not only protected, but also celebrated.

12.1.3 As part of works to repair and clear blocked drainage pipes that run through the graveyard (see Section 3.1.9), an archaeological watching brief was undertaken over four and a half days in July 2020. This was an interesting and unplanned outcome of Windows to the World and resulted in new information about the history and use of St Mary's graveyard. Besides several archaeological finds, mostly pottery, the watching brief also uncovered the foundation cut of one of the church buttresses and confirmed that original burials have probably been disturbed by earlier construction works in the graveyard. Findings were recorded and supported by a photographic record (see Noon and Swain 2020).

12.2 Website

12.2.1 The new church website with a dedicated section about the heritage of St Mary's parish church ([History | St Mary's website](#)) means that the wealth of heritage and knowledge has been identified and better explained for a wider audience. The information is no longer spread over different leaflets and booklets, in the memories of specific people, or hidden away in dusty folders and archives. Instead, the website serves as an accessible hub for information about the heritage and history of St Mary's church and Barnard Castle and can be accessed by anyone with an internet connection (see Figure 9):

- Overview – gives an overview over the history of St Mary's church and its relation to Richard III. This is also where new blogs about history and heritage can be found
- Timeline – gives information about different time periods in the life of St Mary's church
- Richard III – any information about Richard III and Barnard Castle and St Mary's church
- Virtual tours – a video tour taking viewers through the building and the churchyard, talking about the heritage, and pointing out different heritage assets. Viewers can choose between one full length video of 40 minutes, or 11 shorter clips focusing on one aspect each.
- 12 things to see at St Mary's – More detailed articles about some of the more interesting heritage assets at the church
- 3D models – for people who cannot make it to St Mary's church in person, but also to get a close-up look at some of the interesting features of the church, as well as a model of the entire building
- Downloadable History Guides – a collection of all the history guides, leaflets and booklets that have been written about St Mary's church, to have them all in one easily accessible place
- Downloadable educational pack to build younger versions of St Mary's church on Minecraft

12.2.2 Other information that is currently still privy to archives will gradually be added to the website by the church's website group. Kim Harding from the Northern Dales Richard III Group is finalising a paper with new findings about Richard III's connection to Barnard Castle in general and St Mary's parish church in particular. Once the paper has been published, this information will also be added to the website.

12.2.3 Before Windows to the World, few people outside of Barnard Castle knew much about St Mary's church. And even many long-term residents of the town didn't know much about the church's history, or even of its importance to Richard III. Because of many blogs and targeted search engine optimisation, the new website of St Mary's church is now on the first page of Google searches for 'Richard III Barnard Castle' – even ahead of the Richard III societies and the castle itself.



12.2.4 In January 2022, St Mary's church was contacted by David Wright, a curator from Durham University who is working on an online exhibition about the Colours of the Durham Light Infantry in collaboration with Durham County Council. Part of the exhibition is where the Colours can be found today and during their research the team discovered the new church website and discovered that some of the flags can in fact be found at St Mary's: [Durham Militia And 3rd Battalion Durham Light Infantry Flags | St Mary's website](#). Because of the visibility of the new website, the flags at St Mary's church will be part of the new online exhibition, which in turn will bring more attention to the church and hopefully more visitors.

12.3 3D models

12.3.1 The 3D models are a way to make the tangible heritage of St Mary's church widely accessible, especially architectural features which are high up in the building structure and cannot easily be seen from the ground. However, the models are also a way to preserve architectural features which are exposed to weathering and damage by erosion and atmospheric pollution resulting in constant deterioration. Especially Richard III's boar emblem which used to be inside the castle, is exposed as part of the ruin and has deteriorated significantly over the years making the boar unrecognisable for those who don't know what they are looking for.

12.3.2 The collection of 3D models presents an archive as well as a source and it is preserving the state of these architectural features. Even if Windows to the World could not improve the condition of all carvings and grave slabs, their condition has been preserved for the future: [Windows to the World - a 3D model collection by DigVentures \(@digventures\) - Sketchfab](#).

13 THE DIFFERENCE MADE FOR PEOPLE

13.1 New recruits through Windows to the World

13.1.1 Windows to the World intended to recruit heritage volunteers for the church and participants for events and activities. But the project also resulted indirectly in the recruitment of new choir members and two new bell ringers. The latter visited St Mary's during the Heritage Open Days and took part in one of the tours of the tower and bell ringing chamber. They were intrigued and are currently learning the basics of bell ringing. Learning about the tower and the bells lead to a change in their actions towards getting involved with St Mary's.

13.1.2 Similarly, the choir gained three new members who, after moving to Barnard Castle, looked around for ways to get involved with music. They came across the new website and joined the choir soon after.

13.2 Social impact – volunteers

13.2.1 Three skills workshops took place as part of Windows to the World, aimed at training participants in photogrammetry, archival research and website management, content creation and strategy, respectively. Each workshop spanned several sessions and participants were supported in their exercises and tasks in between and after the official sessions by DigVentures staff. Overall, 21 individuals took part in at least one of the workshops, with two people joining two different workshops. All participants committed to contributing to Windows to the World and helping St Mary's to discover and disseminate its heritage in their spare time once the workshops were completed.

13.2.2 Despite their small numbers, the heritage volunteers comprised a variety of people from different walks of life and not only from Barnard Castle. Gender profiles were broadly balanced with 43% female and 57% male, with the youngest participant aged 29 and the oldest 75. Examples of current and



professions before retirement included: Judge, train conductor, council clerk, medical and procurement professional, doctor, accountant, antiquarian book trader and ordinand (see Figure 10). This illustrates that the skills learning opportunities were taken up by a variety of people from different socio-economic backgrounds. Although 65% of the volunteers live locally in Barnard Castle, the remaining people joined from wider County Durham and different corners of the UK (Edinburgh, South Wales, Hereford and Carlisle) and internationally from Canada. It is therefore not surprising that 30% of volunteers had not been to St Mary's church prior to Windows to the World (see Figure 10). Especially the virtual format of the archival research workshop allowed participation of individuals for whom the distance to Barnard Castle would otherwise have been a deterrent. Participants had different degrees of pre-existing knowledge. Several had already collected experience in photography, historical research or had worked on the old version of St Mary's website. Others were completely new and were looking forward to learning a new skill and 'working with a team' or meeting 'like minded historians'. Many were looking forward to using their knowledge to enhance their own heritage projects as well. Some also saw it as a way to give back to their local area or to connect with Barnard Castle and St Mary's, like Mike, who stated as his reason for joining the research workshop: 'As a relative newcomer to the area, I would be able to find out more about the place I have made my home.'

- 13.2.3 The individual training sessions were very successful with knowledge and skills being transferred to the volunteers. In all three workshops, participants worked autonomously on different tasks to deepen their skills in between session, often giving and receiving help from their team members. Unfortunately, before tangible outputs were created, the enthusiasm of the archival research volunteers trickled away after the last official session, which was likely partially due to the physical distance between participants. But both the website and the photogrammetry workshops resulted in participants creating outputs that fed into the dissemination of St Mary's heritage: photogrammetry models as well as a growing and living website.
- 13.2.4 Post-experience 'exit' interviews were undertaken for all photogrammetry workshop participants, providing evidence for wider social outcomes, such as learning, skills acquisition and well-being. All eight participants stated that not only did they have a good time, but they also left the workshop having learnt something. Peter, a 67-year-old retiree from Darlington specified: 'In retirement it is my aim each year that I learn something new, so this was it'. Splitting the workshop into several sessions also helped participants notice their own progress and achievements since setting out to learn photogrammetry, as noted by George, another retiree from Peterlee: 'It was very frustrating yesterday because everything seemed to go wrong, but today I went out again and it was spot on'.
- 13.2.5 Participants were further asked to summarise their highlight of the project in their own words, with responses then codified into categories to visualise the results (see Figure 10). As expected, the most important consideration for half the participants was skills acquisition, supporting the outcome that '*participants will have developed skills*'. Philip, who lives locally said that he 'did 3D modelling several years ago but didn't realise all this was possible'. For David, a 48-year-old train conductor it was the moment when it all started to make sense: 'The last day was the best as all the pieces and understanding came together'. Closely related to this was the sense of achievement for one participant who described his highlight as being 'at home last night when I finally got a really good model'.
- 13.2.6 Nevertheless, learning and accomplishments were only secondary to the remaining participants who stated that the feeling of camaraderie made the experience worthwhile to them, showing that the Windows to the World skills workshops also created a 'sense of wellbeing' in participants. Peter particularly liked 'the friendliness of the group'. Despite everyone coming together as strangers, 'there was no trouble or arguments. It was a really good environment'. It was also the atmosphere that



highlighted the experience for PhD student Jade: 'Everyone was very nice. It is always a bit daunting when you come somewhere on your own'.

- 13.2.7 Half the participants also noticed, how their perception of the town and St Mary's changed over the course of the workshop. Visits to the castle and the Bowes Museum, as well as very close interaction with individual heritage objects at St Mary's church and learning more about their background and context sharpened their awareness of the wealth of history and heritage hidden in everyday surroundings. Douglas phrased it as 'one of the nice things about having [the workshop] in the church here is that I keep finding that there are even more interesting things to do in Barnard Castle'.

13.3 Social impact – Windows to the World festival

- 13.3.1 A combination of events and activities for people to learn about and engage with the heritage at St Mary's church in person was available from July 12th until July 23rd as part of the Windows to the World festival. They were designed to ensure that a wider range of people will be involved with St Mary's parish church. To help decrease perceived barriers to participation, pre-booked sessions were offered, but drop-in spaces also reserved. The activities included creative workshops for adults and various workshops for children, history tours of the church, concerts, an exhibition and more.
- 13.3.2 Of the 639 visitors to the festival, 232 visitors (36%) completed a questionnaire at the end of their visit, the results of which are further analysed. Gender profiles for those participants were broadly balanced, with 57% using the pronouns she/her, 41% using the pronouns he/him, and 2% using the pronouns they/them. Visitors ranged from toddlers visiting with their parents to people in their nineties, but 68% of respondents were over 55 years and 10% under 16 years old, which leaves a comparatively low number of young adults and middle-aged visitors. Respondents represented a variety of full-time occupations (34%) and retirees (47%). The remainder were students, either of compulsory educational age or those attending university (12%), full-time parents or carers (4%) and people in long-term unemployment (2%) (see Figure 11). Examples of part and full time professions included: Analytical chemist, archaeologist, artist, bio scientist, business service administrator, civil servant, court usher, company director, general practitioner, engineer, farmer, musician, NHS librarian, pharmacist, piano teacher, retail, social worker, teacher and veterinarian. This wide variety, as well as the breakdown shown in Figure 11, illustrate that the festival opportunities were taken up by a number of people with low income, as well as young people. Taking this into consideration, all age groups and socio-economic backgrounds were represented in the data, with a marked improvement on comparable projects, such as community archaeology groups where audiences tend to be typically retired, over 65 local civic society groups (Wilkins 2020: 33).
- 13.3.3 Over a third of respondents assessed it unlikely that they would have visited St Mary's Parish Church were it not for Windows to the World. A further 46% of respondents stated that attending the festival was their first ever visit of the church (see Figure 12), indicating that the project raised the site profile in local and regional networks. This included participants from the immediate locality (54% from DL postcode areas), regionally (almost three quarters of participants living no further than 50 miles from Barnard Castle), nationally (26% of participants taking part in the festival after having travelled more than 50 miles, from as far as for example Hertfordshire, Worcestershire, South London, Angus, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Wyre, West Yorkshire, Suffolk, Fife, Cumbria, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Tyne and Wear and Portsmouth) and even internationally with two visitors living in Egypt and the United States of America, respectively (see Figure 11).
- 13.3.4 In addition to widening the demographic and socioeconomic range of participation (when compared to existing community archaeology provision), over a third of festival visitors (38%) stated that they are unlikely to have visited St Mary's Parish Church, were it not for Windows to the World (see Figure 13).



An overwhelmingly large number of respondents did know little to nothing about the history and heritage at St Mary's. The questionnaires distributed at the festival asked people which of six given general facts about St Mary's church they knew before their visit to help understand visitors' familiarity with the church.

- 13.3.5 The results show that 35% of respondents knew none of the facts, not even how old St Mary's was, or that Richard III spent money on its improvement. Just 15% of respondents stated that they were aware of five or all six facts before their visit to the festival. As can be expected, people who have been to the church before are more likely to have some knowledge about it. Nevertheless, for 16% of people who stated that this was not their first visit to St Mary's, all given facts were still new. Contrarily, of those for whom the festival was their first contact with the church, almost 60% knew none of the facts, and none of the respondents knew more than three. None of the six facts stand out as comparatively well or less well known. All six facts were known by between 24% ('There is a cholera burial pit and memorial in the graveyard' and 'St Mary's has a lot of military history, including a war memorial, the colours of the Durham Light Infantry, and a registry of WWI soldiers') and 37% ('St Mary's offers community activities as well as church services') of respondents (see Figure 12). These results show the importance of disseminating the history of St Mary's widely through the website and future heritage events.
- 13.3.6 Festival visitors were also asked, how their initial perception has changed, providing evidence for wider social outcomes, such as learning, well-being and a change in ideas and actions. Respondents were asked how their impressions of St Mary's church and the local area changed, and to summarise what they liked or didn't like about their experience at the festival in their own words. Almost two thirds of respondents stated that their impression of St Mary's church has been changed by their visit, with 48% being more likely to come back and visit again, and 26% now more likely to recommend the church to visitors (see Figure 13). One retired local stated that from now on, he 'shall take visitors [to St Mary's] when they stay with me', and a piano teacher from Scotland said that she would 'return in the future'. Even though she was familiar with the building, another woman in her fifties realised that St Mary's 'is actually more beautiful' and that she 'like[s] it even more now'. It is this close and intense engagement with specific aspects of the church that widened people's perception of it. Especially locals who regularly visit the church for services or other events, seem to see the building as means to an end rather than perceive it as a heritage asset with so much more to offer than just a roof and walls. One local woman noted that she had 'never really looked at the stained-glass windows in depth' until she did the window activity with her grandchild.
- 13.3.7 As well as changing perceptions of the church generally, 51% of respondents also described an improved perception of the local area (see Figure 13), supporting the social outcome that *'the local area will be a better place to live, work or visit'*. One respondent clearly stated that the local area was 'more historically interesting than I knew!'. A retired visitor from Guisborough noted that the festival 'enhanced my visit' and a student from Scotland noticed the town as a 'new place to visit on holiday'. Locally, the positive impact of the project went even further and provided several visitors with a better understanding and increased awareness and appreciation of the local history. Furthermore, one of the local interviewees said that having the festival and learning about St Mary's gives 'another dimension to the area', and another one stated that it 'reinforced how interesting St Mary's and Barnard Castle are'.
- 13.3.8 When asked about what they liked or didn't like about their visit, only 8 people (4% of respondents) had something negative to say and half of those answers also included something positive (see Figure 14). The negative feedback was exclusively about technical aspects of the exhibition, the talk, or the concerts, such as 'smaller exhibition than expected', 'some exhibits are a bit low' or 'I would have loved to see more info about the artist'. The positive responses were codified into five categories to



visualise the results. The most important positive takeaway for 58% of respondents was the experience of one or several festival events, such as the exhibition, a concert, a workshop, or a guided tour. Closely related to this was 'learning something' for 16% of respondents, indicating that several participants left the festival having learnt something new and finding pleasure in it. A general feeling of wellbeing as a result of the festival was noted by 15% of respondents. The remaining interviewees with positive feedback were impacted by either the physical structure of St Mary's (9%) or by the atmosphere within the church (3%) (see Figure 14). A closer assessment of interviewees answers reveals that in addition to having a good time (such as 'Everything was spectacular'), more subtle impacts could be clearly discerned.

- 13.3.9 One woman who had been to the church before was surprised by the amount of heritage on offer: '[I am] recently retired and moved to the area – there is a lot more heritage to St Mary's than I realised'. Similarly, twenty respondents give specifically their newfound knowledge about the cholera burial and/or Richard III's involvement with St Mary's: '[I] have learnt a fantastic amount. I had no idea of the Richard III connection and his importance to the church and Barnard Castle'. But even people who have visited the building many times before discovered new aspects about it, such as a retired local woman who said that she 'had not previously noticed the corbel of Richard III'. Another local visitor expressed his surprise that he 'had visited the church previously but learnt many new facts'.
- 13.3.10 Several answers also cater to the outcome that '*participants will have developed skills*'. A recovery coordinator in her sixties judged the children's workshops as 'great for education. My grandchildren have enjoyed making their stained-glass windows. They have awareness now about the windows'. Another visitor stated that after their experience and the things they learnt, they 'shall look at the building in a completely different way, will be more observant in the future', and one woman realised how much she learnt about 'look[ing] out for information in the stone'. Overall, some of the perceived barriers of entry for religious buildings have been overcome with visitors being surprised that 'stained glass doesn't have to be religious', they had the 'freedom to walk around', and a parent stating that they 'have driven past the church and always wanted to look inside'. Windows to the World provided them with a reason to finally explore the church as a family, while taking part in some of the children's activities.
- 13.3.11 A number of respondents described experiencing positive mental benefits, aligning with the outcome that '*participants will have greater wellbeing*'. One middle aged interviewee found that 'the peace of a cool open church on a hot day can't be valued enough'. Several others mentioned the 'welcoming and engaging' atmosphere or the 'kind' and 'friendly' volunteers that managed to create a surrounding that visitors liked to spend time in. Similarly, a number of respondents mentioned the friendliness and willingness of the artists at the exhibition to answer any questions and share their knowledge and excitement of the art: '[The] artist was friendly and engaged with the children as well as the ones' with money to spend'. An NHS librarian in his late thirties also described the positive effect of the live concerts, especially considering the impact of Covid-19 as 'such a joyous experience. The fact that such different music is available is wonderful – especially as this is the first concert I have attended since the first lockdown'.

13.4 Social impact – schools

- 13.4.1 A lot was planned with local schools pre-Covid, from workshops and events to exhibitions, performances, being part of research groups and producing heritage content for St Mary's. Because of the pandemic, engagement with schools was very limited and of the 5 local schools that were initially a part of the project, only 3 remained: Teesdale School, Barnard Castle School and Green Lane Primary School.



- 13.4.2 In July 2021, 62 year 5 and year 6 students from Green Lane Primary School took part in a virtual tour of the church. Although all students had been to the church before as part of their regular school service, they learnt about the history and heritage of the building by listening to stories about the cholera epidemic of 1849, about the Victorian renovations, and about Richard III. Similarly, those students from Green Lane Primary School who were part of the initial rehearsals for the Richard III musical in early 2020, were engaged in depth with the topic of Richard III. Through the playful means of theatre and song, they learnt about history and the life of one of England's most famous kings.
- 13.4.3 Building a younger version of St Mary's church in Minecraft was a playful way for secondary school students to engage with the history and architectural changes of St Mary's. Only one of the 13 students from Barnard Castle who were part of the Minecraft club lives in Barnard Castle, and only three students had been to St Mary's before. It is not surprising that when asked what they know about the church and its history, eight students stated that they didn't possess any knowledge about it. Of the remaining five students, only three gave a correct answer: That it was 'Norman', that it was 'very old and historic', and that it was 'built in the 11th century after the Normans came to England'. One student was convinced that the church had been built in 1870 with gothic architecture. Another one, however, assumed the church was a little bit and instead 1000 years old.
- 13.4.4 The students were also asked which words they associate with St Mary's with the following results: Stone, gravestones, statues, bible, Jesus, big, complex, big spire, old, castle-like, dusty, fun, cross, big piano, nice gardens, majestic, holy, wooden, old textures, god, open space and place of worship. None of the students mentioned Richard III, Cholera, Reverend George Dugard, or the military flags and memorials. Only one of them mentioned 'stained glass'. But to build in Minecraft, the students needed to peruse the documents and information provided, thereby learning about the building. This knowledge was then consolidated by using it to make decisions about the extent of walls and floors, about the placement of doors and windows, the addition of rooms and decoration, and much more.
- 13.4.5 In January 2022, DigVentures received a short update about how the project impacted the students' relationship with St Mary's church and the history of the town. Since the beginning of the project, another four students have visited St Mary's church over the Christmas period and all students feel that they are more aware of its history. Apart from the answers given above, none of the students knew any history of St Mary's engaging with the Minecraft material. They have since learned more about its age, history and about the people that were buried there. Particularly interesting for all students seem to be the links to Richard III. Their teacher recounted how they were all delighted to share their new knowledge with their families 'when the boar went up on the wall on Christmas'.
- 13.4.6 Both the musical and the Minecraft project were not completed by the end of Windows to the World. However, both schools have assured that the engagement will continue. Students of Barnard Castle school will continue to dive into the architectural history of St Mary's church, and when it is safe again, students of Green Lane Primary School will continue their rehearsals and perform the musical about a young Richard.

14 THE DIFFERENCE MADE FOR COMMUNITIES

14.1 Social impact – virtual participants

- 14.1.1 To reach a wide audience despite the Covid-19 pandemic, a series of monthly virtual heritage talks took place from February until September 2021. They were supplemented by three live concerts that were streamed during the Windows to the World festival in July 2021 directly from the church, resulting in a total of 1462 bookings. When booking a virtual ticket, people were asked to complete a short



questionnaire to understand the socio-economic background of participants, as well as the impact the project had on the wider heritage community. When analysing the socio-economic background, it needs to be taken into consideration, that it might not be a true representation of the audience. The person who booked a space is likely to be the one who filled in their information, but they may have watched the event together with several other people – friends or family members – who would have provided different information.

- 14.1.2 The majority of people who booked tickets for virtual events used the pronouns she/her (65%). Similarly, 81% of tickets were booked by people aged 45 and older. The very low number of children can be explained by the talks not having been targeted at children, but even if children were interested in a topic, presumably a parent would have completed the booking process. The virtual audience members represented a variety of full-time occupations (43%) and retirees (45%). The remainder were students, either of compulsory educational age or those attending university (12%), or people in long-term unemployment, carers, or homemakers (5%) (see Figure 15).
- 14.1.3 Those in full time employment were divided into categories based on the Office of National Statistics (ONS) classifications, the breakdown of which can be seen in Figure 15 illustrating that the virtual opportunities were taken up by a significant number of people with lower income. Examples of professions included accountant, administrator, archaeologist, architect, artist, bit and bridle fitter, bookkeeper, business analyst, chemical engineer, chef, dentist, ecologist, farmer, folk musician, geologist, hotelier, illustrator, IT manager, lab technician, lawyer, librarian, marketing director, nurse, optometrist, paralegal, photography, radiology assistant, retail assistant, ski instructor and taxi driver. Taking this into consideration, all age groups and socio-economic backgrounds were represented in the data, albeit not equally. This is supporting the wider project outcome that a '*wider range of people will be involved in heritage*'.
- 14.1.4 The virtual component of the talks removed geographical barriers of access and made the experiences more inclusive, which is shown in 26% of the booking coming from outside the UK (see Figure 16). Overall, the virtual offers made people in all six inhabited continents aware of the existence of St Mary's church. Tickets were booked by residents of 27 different countries, namely Australia, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Malaysia, Montenegro, New Zealand, Norway, Austria, Poland, Romania, Singapore, South Africa, Switzerland, The Netherlands, Uganda, United Kingdom and the United States of America (see Figure 16). When booking for one of the virtual events, one audience member stated: 'I can't travel to St. Mary's, but I thought this might go some way to making me feel as though I am there.'
- 14.1.5 Due to the wide geographical spread of the audience, viewers were predominantly new to St Mary's with 75% of respondents stating that they had never been to the church before. Even though a physical visit in the future is unlikely for most of them, 69% of respondents said that they want to be informed about any upcoming heritage events at St Mary's church, forming the basis for future growth of St Mary's (virtual) heritage audience (see Figure 17).
- 14.1.6 To help understand why people had decided to take part in an online event of Windows to the World and to provide a baseline understanding against which the impact of the experience could be determined, responses given at the point of booking were coded into ten categories. While some 3.5% of people signed up for the event because they were already involved with the project, St Mary's or DigVentures, the results show that most respondents (60%) did so out of specific interest for either the topic, or the speaker or performers. Over a quarter of respondents (26%) gave a more general interest in history or musical performances as their reason for joining. However, 5% of respondents signed up to the event specifically with the aim of learning something (see Figure 17). Figure 18 shows



that most audience members stayed for the entire duration of the talks, which makes it safe to assume that most of them will have left the event having learnt something new about the featured heritage.

15 PROJECT REVIEW & CONCLUSIONS

15.1 Project achievements

15.1.1 Because of Covid-19, not all project aims and objectives were reached and not all activity streams took place in the form and depth they were initially planned. However, the delivery programme was substantially redesigned to ensure that the Windows to the World project did engage widely with the public and the community. As such, the project was able to achieve a lot despite the challenges it faced. Those achievements include:

- A new church website with a dedicated history section
- An information kiosk in the church with access to the church website
- A new external heritage sign
- A collection of 3D models of St Mary's physical heritage assets
- A new heritage leaflet
- A new history brochure with updated information in the making
- 21 people received skills training
- 639 people came to the Windows to the World festival
- 1462 people signed up for virtual events
- A total of 148 children were engaged with the heritage of St Mary's
- 26 different heritage events and activities took place during the delivery phase
- People from 27 different countries and 5 different continents were engaged with the heritage of St Mary's
- The church website appears as the first result on Google when searching for 'Richard III Barnard Castle'
- The church will be mentioned in a new online exhibition about the Colours of the Durham Light Infantry.

15.1.2 It was only possible to continue the project throughout the Covid-19 pandemic by pivoting most offers digitally. Reaching a larger and more varied audience than with the original activity plan was an unexpected side effect of this decision. It was quickly used to reach the project outcomes in a different way and formed a major achievement considering the circumstances. Not only did the virtual events of Windows to the World reach new groups and a bigger audience than face-to-face activities, but the process was also enhanced by a significantly steep learning curve. Every online event was more sophisticated, better thought-through and managed than the one before (see Section 15.3).

15.1.3 The relatively spontaneous organisation of the Windows to the World festival culminated in a 12-day long flurry of activities at the church in July 2021. Many people dropped in to make use of the different offers and having so many different things happen at the time made the individual activities and events look more interesting than if they would have happened one after the other over a prolonged period of time. Instead of a big local and small international audience, Windows to the World reached a very big international audience with some local engagement.

15.2 Counterfactual

15.2.1 Without the Windows to the World project, little of what has been described in this report would have happened. Although the church has some funds and received money for restoration works from other organisations like the Friends of St Mary's, the Ricardian Churches Restoration Fund and the Listed



Places of Worship Grant Scheme, these amounts are nowhere near the grant provided by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. Some smaller works at the windows or the repair of the clock chamber ceiling could have been funded through other means. However, the entirety of the improvements, particularly regarding the repointing masonry conservation and replacement would have been impossible to finance within the time frame to prevent further critical damage to the building. St Mary's can only share its tangible and intangible heritage with the wider public if the building is safe and comfortable to be in, which made Windows to the World so important.

- 15.2.2 One change that probably would have happened with or without the project, is St Mary's embracement of certain virtual possibilities. Although Windows to the World included plans to install WIFI at the church, this happened far earlier than planned and was put in place during the postponement period of the project in response to the Covid-19 lockdown. Online services and livestreaming became normality for the church and paved the way for the virtual events of Windows to the World.
- 15.2.3 Very little of the engagement programme would have happened at St Mary's church were it not for Windows to the World. The church has a considerable group of existing volunteers and does occasionally host secular events. The Northern Dales Richard III Group which was founded in Barnard Castle in 2013, meets regularly at the church and has organised several events as well. Nevertheless, although individuals are proud of the wealth of history at St Mary's and would like it to be wider known, the necessary resources have not been available. Windows to the world gave St Mary's the time, commitment, money, skills, ideas and staff needed to build and manage a brand-new website, to build an interested (worldwide) community around the heritage of the church, to offer a wide range of heritage events and activities, to provide professional advertisement and mainly getting the word out. The project enabled the church to explore new ways of working with volunteers, local schools and other organisations, and a means to communicate widely with new audiences.
- 15.2.4 It is because of Windows to the World, that St Mary's is being recognised as a heritage asset of Barnard Castle, with a curator contacting the church about adding its flags to an online exhibition about the Colours of the Durham Light Infantry. It is because of Windows to the World that a woman in Canada started archival research on a small market town church over 5000 km away that she never even set foot in. The project demonstrates how new opportunities, ways of working and innovative resources can open doors for people to engage in new ways with heritage and the church.

15.3 Lessons learnt

- 15.3.1 By delivering a project the size of Windows to the World, one is bound to learn from the experience and take this knowledge on to future projects, even if it hadn't collided with and been derailed by a pandemic. The lessons learnt from what worked and didn't work during the project have been explained in detail in Chapters 5 – 11, but three main insights can be summarised as follows:
- 15.3.2 **A virtual component is vital for audience growth in post-pandemic times:** It is impossible to know the number of participants and visitors Windows to the World would have engaged without Covid-19 and whether the project would have fulfilled its aims and objectives. Nevertheless, adding the virtual component to the engagement programme proved to be a win in terms of maximising width and breadth of engagement across the borders of the United Kingdom. In the future, digital offers will be expected by many potential participants who have grown used to the safety and comfort. With this expectance also comes the need to provide these opportunities in a professional and technically skilled manner, with audiences demanding not only good content, but also flawless broadcast, sound, video, and recordings.



- 15.3.3 **Volunteer recruitment and long-term engagement requires face-to-face interaction:** Virtual events are great for reaching large and scattered audiences, and zoom calls proved a good alternative when people were no longer allowed to meet in groups. However, when it comes to building new groups or engaging people long-term, then they are not enough. DigVentures experience with the Minecraft groups and trying to build a new group of archival research volunteers shows that face-to-face interaction cannot be entirely replaced by the digital world. It is safe to assume that the website volunteer group was successful because their members knew each other before the pandemic and therefore interacted outside the official meetings. Regular informal in-person meetings with the research volunteers, at least in the beginning, would have allowed them to build bonds and make them feel more like a team ready to face its tasks together. Similarly, although the students knew each other and were in the same room when working on Minecraft, DigVentures was not allowed in the school. Helping the students and keeping them engaged and interested while being confronted with so many technical issues, was very difficult and could have resulted in better results if it would have happened in person.
- 15.3.4 **Flexibility is key – especially during a pandemic:** The pandemic taught us all that even the best laid plans can be thrown over by external circumstances. To be too narrowminded and fixated on one single path is therefore not only counterproductive but can be dangerous for the entire project. A step further than mere risk assessment is to keep several options when planning events and activities and to stay flexible in their delivery. This goes for both organisers as well as attendees in terms of letting people know that more options might become available at a later date and preparing them to stay openminded.
- 15.4 **Legacy**
- 15.4.1 The legacy of Windows to the World lies mainly in raising awareness for the treasure trove of tangible and intangible heritage that is St Mary's, and for making it widely accessible. The new website using search engine optimisation as well as the new welcoming and visible external sign will increase the visitor footfall in the church. The new information kiosk in the church porch, the dedicated history section of the website, the new leaflets and the new history brochure are ready for people to use and learn about the history of St Mary's church and Barnard Castle (see Figure 19). The information is no longer buried only for people to access who know that it exists and whom they must ask for it. It has become a common commodity that has already shown effect in the new exhibition by Durham University and Durham County Council (see Section 12.2.4) and the new members who joined the choir after coming across the website (see Section 13.1.1).
- 15.4.2 St Mary's brand has been visually refreshed with a new style guide that has been used for the new website, leaflets and any additional printed and online material and will ensure a professional and cohesive image of the church. With the website volunteers, the legacy of the website continues to grow, and more history elements will become available to the public. Once a month, the website will feature a new history blog to keep followers interested, and once a month the local newspaper will publish a history piece to keep St Mary's value as heritage asset fresh in peoples' minds.
- 15.4.3 Several educational packages have been developed as part of Windows to the World that will be available to St Mary's for further use in the future, namely Minecraft, Miracles to Medicine and Create your own stained-glass window. Especially the latter is ready to use and can be implemented in any events without additional or trained staff as it is self-leading. The Minecraft material will be available on the website together with a detailed blog post and instructions encouraging children to engage with the history of St Mary's and getting involved through the playful means of Minecraft.



15.4.4 During the delivery phase, Windows to the World accumulated 800 followers who signed up to the newsletter and expressed interest in upcoming (virtual) history events. With the right incentives, this audience will share its interest in St Mary's with more people, slowly growing the looser heritage community around the church and resulting in more digital and in-person visitors.

15.5 Conclusions

15.5.1 Windows to the World was an ambitious project aimed at extending the position of St Mary's Parish church in Barnard Caste as a cultural focal point by increasing the amenity value and experience, resulting in widening the range and diversity of visitors to the church and online. Additionally, more people were supposed to be encouraged to acknowledge and engage with the heritage at St Mary's. Impeded by the emergence of Covid-19 and the resulting national lockdown in March 2020, Windows to the World had to be postponed.

15.5.2 While building work continued throughout the lockdowns, the activities only resumed in early 2021. The virus was not defeated, and the events programme needed to be adapted accordingly, resulting in last minute changes and a very flexible approach. Nevertheless, Windows to the World still managed to achieve most of its aspired outcomes for heritage, people, and the community, if not always to the aspired extent.

15.5.3 A wider range of people were involved in the heritage of St Mary's through virtual talks and the Windows to the World festival. This also included a significant number of children through liaisons with local schools. As a result of Windows to the World, St Mary's church has become more resilient by improving the building, but also by upskilling volunteers, embracing the digital world, and being locally recognised as a heritage asset. Participants taking part in the photogrammetry, archival research and website workshops developed new skill sets that enabled them to volunteer and take ownership of their contributions. Although it cannot be retraced to a larger group, several individuals have expressed greater wellbeing as a result of taking part in skills workshops and individual festival events.

15.5.4 By highlighting little known historical facts about the church and the town, and by emphasising their importance in the life of Richard III, Barnard Castle has become a better place to live and visit. The perception of the area has improved, locals voiced their pride and plans of sharing these new stories with visitors, and visitors are more likely to come back and visit the town themselves and to recommend it to other potential visitors. Participation in virtual as well as in person events and activities resulted in people learning about the heritage of St Mary's, some of which have also indicated that their ideas about and behaviour toward the church have changed in a positive way. Not only has the footfall to the church increased, but individuals have developed their understanding of it. The students delving into the Minecraft material started to acknowledge and appreciate the history and heritage of St Mary's and are readily sharing this with family and friends.

15.5.5 The condition of the church building, which comprises a large part of the tangible heritage of St Mary's church, was vastly improved by the intensive repairs and conservation work of Windows to the World. Several 3D models preserve the current state of the building and many stone artefacts that are likely to deteriorate over time. The existing tangible and intangible heritage have been identified, with research still ongoing to uncover forgotten stories, and have been updated and disseminated in the form of the website, the information kiosk, a new leaflet and booklet and other educational material such as the Minecraft documents and the children's windows activity booklet.

15.5.6 Windows to the World brought benefits not only to St Mary's church and its congregation, but also to the wider population of Barnard Castle and to the town, not to mention the several hundred people from all over the world who tuned in to the online events. This new found appreciation and awareness



of the historical wealth that is St Mary's Parish Church is the basis for a long-lasting legacy of Windows to the World.

16 BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Noon, S.; Swain, B. 2020. Church of St Mary's, Barnard Castle. Archaeological Watching Brief.
- Ungemach, J.; Westcott Wilkins, L. 2018. St Mary's Church Barnard Castle. Activity and Audience Development Plan.
- Ungemach, J.; Forster, M. 2019. St Mary's Church Barnard Castle. Heritage Appraisal.
- Wilkins, B. 2019. A theory of change and evaluative framework for measuring the social impact of public participation in archaeology. *European Journal of Postclassical Archaeologies*. 9: 77-100.
- Wilkins, B. 2020. Designing a Collaborative Peer-to-peer System for Archaeology: The DigVentures Platform. *Journal of Computer Applications in Archaeology*, 3(1), 33-50.



26 The Northern Echo

SATURDAY, JULY 17, 2011

EchoMemories

with Chris Lloyd

A festival of history, art and music provides a fine reason to tell the

From beyond the grave

Here stands my statue carved in stone
I'm vivid yet living, I am aware
He comes forth like a flower and is
seen
How those faithful souls of mine
Have grown those flowers of life

THIS is a message from beyond the grave from George Hoggar, who lies in an amazing tomb in Barwick Castle Churchyard, having died at the tender age of 28 in 1725. The church is currently housing a series of exhibitions in its history to commemorate the restoration of the stained glass windows - and George's tomb will feature in the Guesome Craveyard tour which is being held on Saturday and Theodora for the first time in the 100 years of the 19th century historical tour which is being held every day until July 22.

The poem is on the table top of George's tomb, and reminds the living that always, they can hear him 'winged cherub drawing me'.

Carving of George in the prime of life. When the carving was fresh nearly 300 years ago, it was painted in ochre and blue and yellow streaks and carrying a red rose which was clearly a reference to his show, and he is so much from below, and he is so much from below.

He was born in 1725, he was described as having 'cherry hair'.

But walk to the other end of the stone and you will find a very different glow. A carving shows him in a white robe, and now, instead of a rose, white - and now instead of a rose,

George Hoggar deeply depicted on his tomb as he was in life, in his black and yellow robes, and as he is now - gently depicted as he carries a sceptre, like a cherub. He looks a sceptre, like a cherub. He looks a sceptre, like a cherub. He looks a sceptre, like a cherub.

He was born as a sceptre, like a cherub. He looks a sceptre, like a cherub. He looks a sceptre, like a cherub. He looks a sceptre, like a cherub. He looks a sceptre, like a cherub. He looks a sceptre, like a cherub.

The south door of Mary's Church in Barwick, which was the site of Hoggar's tomb, is now a listed building. The south door of Mary's Church in Barwick, which was the site of Hoggar's tomb, is now a listed building. The south door of Mary's Church in Barwick, which was the site of Hoggar's tomb, is now a listed building.

George, and so, he was taken to tell on George's tomb. The point was, when the stone was carved, the stone was taken to tell on George's tomb. The point was, when the stone was carved, the stone was taken to tell on George's tomb.

He was taken to tell on George's tomb. The point was, when the stone was carved, the stone was taken to tell on George's tomb. The point was, when the stone was carved, the stone was taken to tell on George's tomb.

The tomb is now a listed building. The point was, when the stone was carved, the stone was taken to tell on George's tomb. The point was, when the stone was carved, the stone was taken to tell on George's tomb.

SATURDAY, JULY 17, 2011

ECHO MEMORIES

More than just a supplement

if you have any

Write: Chris Lloyd, The Northern Echo, Pri-

Call 01325-50-

story of a macabre carving on the side of an extraordinary

ONE hundred years ago this week, one of the region's most notable war heroes was celebrated in the town of Tickton in Richmond, and The Northern Echo was dedicated to the 7,500 officers and men from the Great War, which had been headquartered in the town, who had been killed.

During the First World War, 65,000 had served in the regiment, and now the programme began. The five engines were moved out, the west door was blocked off, the building was then closed, and the west door was then closed, and the west door was then closed.

The windows to the World Festival in Mary's Church, Barwick Castle, commemorates the restoration of the church's stained glass windows.

the skeletons sit a sobering reminder of the fleeting nature of life.

Chris Lloyd's tomb in the churchyard in Barwick Castle, Richmond, North Yorkshire

reckoned that about 9,000 of them never made it back to Richmond.

The windows to the World Festival in Mary's Church, Barwick Castle, commemorates the restoration of the church's stained glass windows.

the skeletons sit a sobering reminder of the fleeting nature of life.

Chris Lloyd's tomb in the churchyard in Barwick Castle, Richmond, North Yorkshire

due solemnly to the occasion," said the three men who were present at the service. The service was held in the churchyard in Barwick Castle, Richmond, North Yorkshire.

The windows to the World Festival in Mary's Church, Barwick Castle, commemorates the restoration of the church's stained glass windows.

the skeletons sit a sobering reminder of the fleeting nature of life.

Chris Lloyd's tomb in the churchyard in Barwick Castle, Richmond, North Yorkshire

When the Freigate was mentioned in this week, the D&S Times reported that the four beggars 'battered' played: The Last Post, Mourning, and the coverage 100 years ago.

When the Freigate was mentioned in this week, the D&S Times reported that the four beggars 'battered' played: The Last Post, Mourning, and the coverage 100 years ago.

When the Freigate was mentioned in this week, the D&S Times reported that the four beggars 'battered' played: The Last Post, Mourning, and the coverage 100 years ago.

When the Freigate was mentioned in this week, the D&S Times reported that the four beggars 'battered' played: The Last Post, Mourning, and the coverage 100 years ago.

When the Freigate was mentioned in this week, the D&S Times reported that the four beggars 'battered' played: The Last Post, Mourning, and the coverage 100 years ago.

When the Freigate was mentioned in this week, the D&S Times reported that the four beggars 'battered' played: The Last Post, Mourning, and the coverage 100 years ago.

Putting heritage in focus and saving church's west wall

PEOPLE in Barnard Castle are picking up technological skills and learning more about history while helping a church bid for Heritage Lottery cash at the same time.

The west wall of St Mary's Parish Church is under threat and about £300,000 is needed for vital repairs. Church treasurer Robert Stenlake says no one is sure what is causing a fracture in the wall but it might be the weight of the roof or pressure from the church tower.

He added: "It isn't subsidence. The key thing is to sort out the west wall. What we want the grant for is to stitch the wall together."

Work is also needed to replace stonework around some of the windows that Richard III paid to have installed and were last replaced during Victorian times.

The church has already made it through an initial round of its Lottery funding bid and has been granted £1,000 towards compiling its second round bid.

Mr Stenlake said community involvement in the heritage of the church is fundamental for the bid to be successful.

To achieve this they have teamed up with archaeology

cal group DigVentures to present a project that will give people new skills and inform them more about the church's heritage. About a dozen people attended an initial event at the church on Friday, January 4. Community archaeologist Johanna Ungemach, from DigVentures, said: "This is a pilot event to test the waters and to see what people in Barnard Castle want."

During the event people learned more about photogrammetry, a system that stitches a group of photographs together to make a three dimensional model of an object. People were guided by DigVentures' head of field archaeology, Chris Casswell, who helped as they took photographs of the church font, sarcophagi, gravestones and other features in and around the church.

Mr Casswell said: "We can take as many photos as we like of anything we like and turn it into a 3D model (using computer software)."

Ms Ungemach added: "By the end of the project we will put it all on a website then people all over the world can see the features of the church."

"People don't know these things are in the church and they don't know what they

mean. Some of the features are way up high and you can't see the inscriptions."

She added that drones and cameras on poles would be used later to capture those out of reach objects and features.

A wide range of people enjoyed the session including Douglas May, a fellow of the Royal Photographic Society.

He said: "It is a fascinating technique to create 3D imagery. I am interested in how it makes you look at objects differently."

Further events are planned. Visit digventures.com

TOWN HERITAGE: Community archaeologist Johanna Ungemach gives advice to Douglas May as he takes photographs with the aim of making a 3D model of gravestones in the grounds of St Mary's Church. Below, head of field archaeology for DigVentures Chris Casswell photographs the font at St Mary's Church. *TM pic*



Royal's £1 note

The Northern Echo

love LOCAL business

(News) Sport Teesside Nostalgia Business Opinion Culture Lifestyle Obituaries Announcements Photos

NEWS

31st January

Barnard Castle boars date back to King Richard III

By AndrewWhite | @apwecho
Multimedia Content Manager

Caption 3

" (2)

" ! # ! %0 comment

TODAY'S Object of the Week is actually a series of objects which can be found at different locations in a County Durham town.

If you've ever wandered through the historic streets of Barnard Castlewith open eyes, you just might have come across a mysterious carving of a boar.

There might have been many more at one time, but today there are thought to be four still in the town.

They are located at: The castle; Blagraves House – which dates back to the 15th century and is one of the oldest buildings in town; St Mary's Church; Bowes Museum (originally in Newgate).

The origin of the boars dates back nearly 600 years into the 15th century and Richard, Duke of Gloucester, more commonly known as the King in the

MOST READ COMM

1 North-East dad dies wi following t battle in h



Figure 2: DigVentures' THEORY of CHANGE - Measuring impact for both intrinsic outcome for archaeology and instrumental benefits for people and communities

	EXPECTATION	SUGGESTED METHOD	OUTCOMES FOR HERITAGE	OUTCOMES FOR PEOPLE	OUTCOMES FOR COMMUNITIES
	Providing an academically rigorous framework, whilst ensuring that impact measurement is appropriate to the stage of development of a variety of different products, services and programmes.	Steps needed to ensure correct evidence is collected to determine whether or not a venture is making a positive difference	Intrinsic benefits relating to the research dividend and evidence baseline required for successful management of archaeological sites and landscapes	Instrumental benefits for participants and platform users, enabling the voluntary sector to scale in a sustainable and ethically responsible fashion	Wider social impacts received by those who may not be direct participants, but benefit through increased amenity value, tourism and local distinctiveness.
Level One	A low threshold, appropriate to very early stage innovations, which may still be at the idea stage. Involving little more than a clear articulation of why the intervention is needed, what it will aim to achieve why this is better than what currently happens. Project owners will be able to give an account of impact, providing a logical reason why their intervention could have an impact and why that would be an improvement on the current situation.	A clear rationale to show why the product/service could have an impact, and why that would be an improvement on the current situation. Articulated as a theory of change and logic model, linking activities, outputs, outcomes to hypothesised impact.	A fully illustrated Project Design, signed off by statutory stakeholder, outlining key archaeological research questions, roles, procedures, stages and outputs.	A training or activity plan, linking activities to outputs, outcomes and impact, and an explanation of how the outcome could be measured.	A training, activity, audience development and/or heritage resource management plan, linking activities to outputs, outcomes and impact, and an explanation of how the outcome could be measured.
Level Two	At Level 2 projects will be gathering data that shows some change amongst those receiving or using the intervention. At this stage, data can begin to show that there is a change in the measure of the outcome among the recipients of the product or service, but this may not be sufficient to provide evidence of direct causality.	Pre and post–survey evaluation; cohort/panel study; and regular interval surveying.	Assessment Report; Management Report, base-lined against previous investigations	Evaluation survey for participants to quantify demographics, socio-economic characteristics and spatial data, followed up with a pre and post-survey qualitative evaluation using a separate questionnaire methodology to determine any changes as a consequence of taking part	Evaluation survey for site visitors to quantify audience demographics, socio-economic characteristics and spatial data, followed up with a qualitative study using a separate questionnaire methodology to determine any changes that took place as a consequence of the visit
Level Three	At Level 3 projects will be able to demonstrate that they are causing the hypothesised impact, by showing less impact amongst those who don’t receive the product/ service.	Robust methods using a control group, or evaluating a random selection of participants, begin to isolate the impact of the product/ service. All products/services at Level 3 will be well documented, with necessary skills, training (and other delivery requirements) outlined clearly, to enable effective replication in alternative places, situation, contexts etc.	Analytical report, synthesising specialist reports with previous work locally, regionally and nationally, to determine significance, importance and potential of the site.	Meta-analysis of evaluation results with those derived from projects delivering similar community-based activities, including archaeological/ heritage and other unrelated arts/ citizen science projects.	Meta-analysis of evaluation results with those derived from projects delivering similar community-based activities - including both archaeological/heritage and other unrelated arts/citizen science projects.
Level Four	At Level 4 projects can explain why and how the intervention is having the impact observed and evidenced so far, supported by an independent evaluation to validate the findings. This will also assess the extent to which the intervention can deliver impact at a reasonable cost, and whether it can be replicated and purchased in multiple locations.	Robust independent evaluation that investigates and validates the nature of the impact; this might include endorsement via commercial standards or industry kitemarks, underpinned by a documented standardisation of delivery and processes, data on costs of production and acceptable price point for customers.	Quality assured by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) under the Registered Organisation scheme, and involving independent site inspections and documentary audit.	External audit of quality of training programmes and activities by CIfA, The Archaeological Training Forum, Register of Professional Archaeologists, Skills Passport and National Occupational Standards.	External audit of community programming and impact by specialist consultancy, undertaken independently of project team.
Level Five	At Level 5, projects will be able to demonstrate that the intervention could be operated up by someone else, somewhere else and scaled up, whilst continuing to have positive and direct impact on the outcome, and whilst remaining a financially viable proposition. For a service, this will establish whether it can be delivered by different staff in different locations.	Evidence will be derived from multiple evaluations of the product/ service in different settings (at least two evaluations; one of which will be independent) to demonstrate that the product/service can be used in different settings (which could be in different settings geographically and/or with different types of product/service users). Appropriate methods at this level will include multiple replication evaluations; future scenario analysis; or fidelity evaluation.	An excavation manual, underpinned by a broader operations manual and ‘culture deck’, detailing how the DigVentures project model should be applied in differing contexts.	A syllabus and training manual, underpinned by a broader operations manual and outline spectrum of engagement, detailing the participant’s journey from digital supporter to experienced field digger.	An audience engagement and communications plan, underpinned by a broader operations manual and tailored ‘culture deck’, detailing how the intervention should be applied with clear and measurable benchmarks.

Figure 3 - DigVentures’ Standards of Evidence.

ACTIVITIES

the processes and tasks undertaken by the organisation



OUTPUTS

a quantifiable unit of 'product' or 'service' measurable once completed



OUTCOMES

Observable change for heritage, individuals or communities



STANDARDS OF EVIDENCE

Data collection and confidence rating demonstrating the positive difference made by an intervention



For Archaeology and Heritage

Six Research sessions with volunteers to identify, extract and analyse material for heritage dissemination
3D-modelling sessions with volunteers to photograph significant heritage assets of St Mary's
Conversation, Consultation and Collaboration with other related heritage organisations

Detailed educational Minecraft resources to learn about St Mary's church in a playful way
A digital information point in entrance of church facilitating access to heritage information for visitors
A new website highlighting the heritage assets and value of St Mary's church and disseminating information
New interpretation and signage to facilitate access to the church and disseminate the heritage, turning St Mary's church into a public house open to individuals and communities with the same heritage value as the castle and Bowes Museum
A virtual collection of 3D models to make St Mary's heritage accessible everywhere and highlight assets that are out of reach for visitors
A new leaflet and a new booklet highlighting the heritage at St Mary's church

Through out work, heritage will be:
in better condition
Identified and better explained

Level 1-2: Comprehensive desk-based assessment and heritage appraisal of existing heritage assets, their relation to other heritage sites, and the history of St Mary's and Barnard Castle

For Individuals

Minecraft sessions with two local schools
Three heritage skills workshops
Windows to the World festival
Three concerts
Twelve guided tours
Stained-glass exhibition
Three child-friendly educational activities
Guided tour for primary school students
Three creative workshops for adults

21 workshop participants gained new skills and a feeling of ownership
639 people visited the Windows to the World festival
63 children took part in the child-friendly festival activities and learnt about the heritage of St Mary's in a playful way
20 students took part in the Minecraft session
62 year 5 and year 6 student took part in a virtual guided tour of St Mary's learning about the history

By taking part in our work:
More people a wider range of people will have engaged with heritage
people have developed skills
people have learned about heritage leading to a change in ideas and actions
people will have greater wellbeing

Level 2-3: A training or activity plan, linking activities to outputs, outcomes and impact, and an explanation of how the outcome could be measured.
Evaluation survey for participants to quantify demographics, socio- economic characteristics and spatial data, followed up with a pre and post-survey qualitative evaluation using a separate questionnaire methodology to determine any changes as a consequence of taking part
Meta-analysis of evaluation results with those derived from projects delivering similar community-based activities, including archaeological/heritage and other unrelated arts/citizen science projects.

For Communities / Society

Media coverage of events
Live-stream of seven heritage talks and three concerts
Regular Windows to the World newsletter
Heritage Open Days

1462 people from 27 countries booked tickets for virtual heritage talks and concerts
235 people subscribed to the newsletter
8,047 users of the new website
20,549 unique page views of the new website
Coverage by BBC Tees, Teesdale Mercury, Northern Echo and the Darlington and Stockton Times
42 visitors as part of the Heritage Open Days

As a consequence of our work:
more people and a wider range of people will have engaged with heritage
the local area will be a better place to live, work or visit

Level 2: An activity or audience development plan, linking activities to outputs, outcomes and impact, and an explanation of how the outcome could be measured.
Evaluation survey for virtual participants to quantify audience demographics, socio-economic characteristics and spatial data

Figure 4 - Social Impact Methodology.

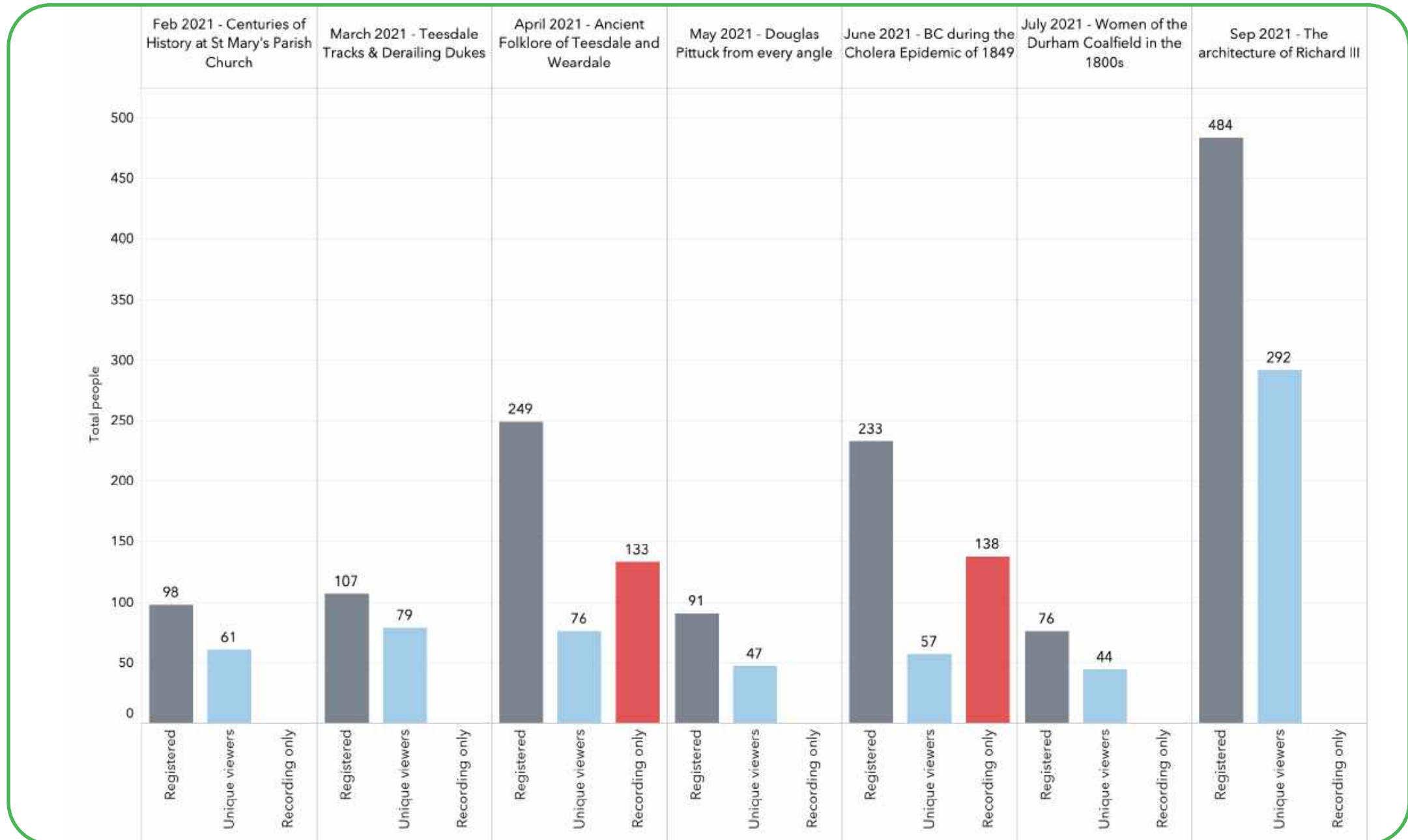


Figure 5 - Heritage talks: Number of bookings compared to the size of actual audience separated by virtual talks

Distribution of bookings for the virtual talks in April and June 2021 offering the recording option

Live event & Recording

Recording Only

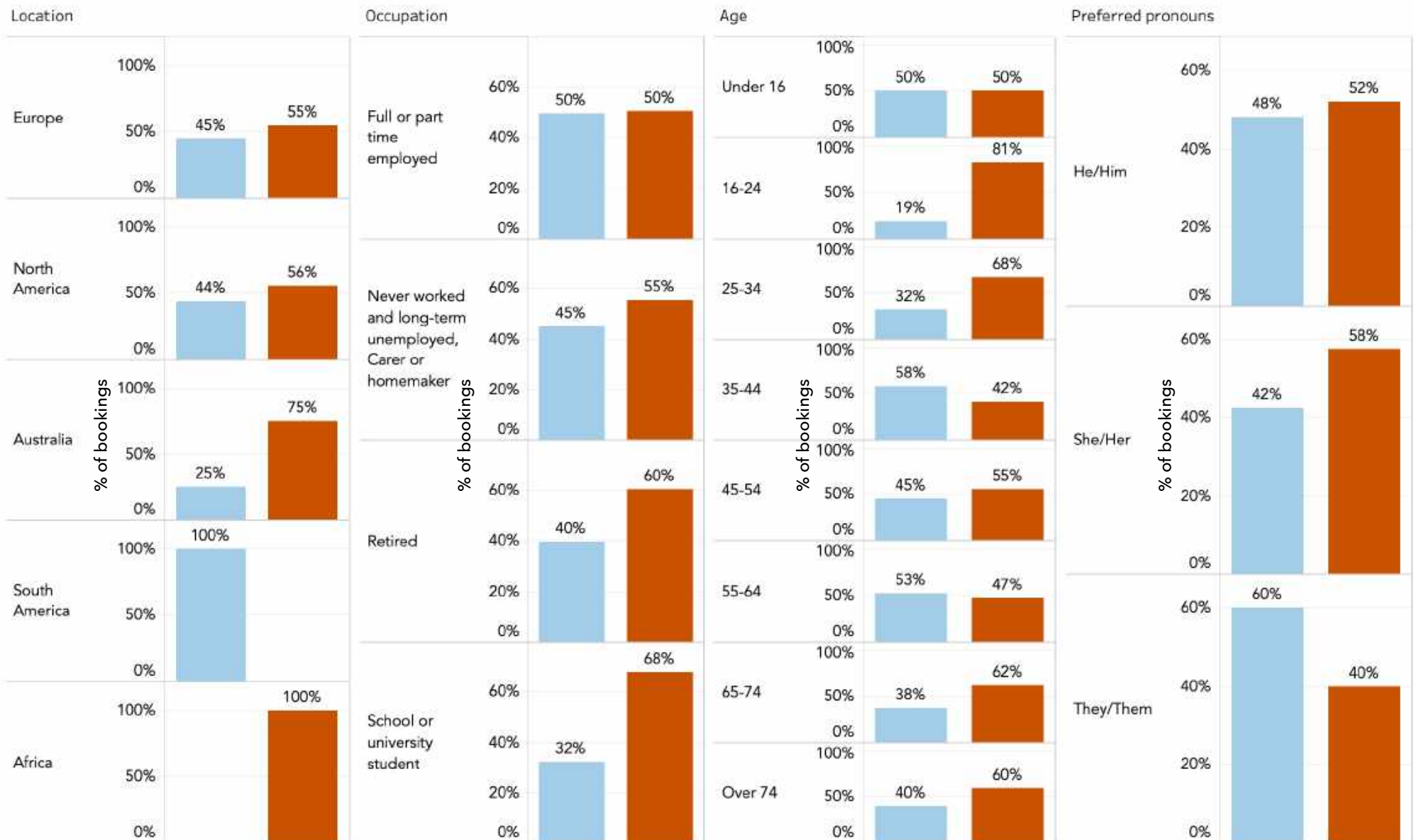


Figure 6 - Heritage talks: Socio-economic distribution of people who booked live tickets vs recording only



Figure 7 - 'Stained-glass windows' designed by visitors during the Windows to the World Festival

Richard, the young 15th century nobleman

I come from a very powerful family and have everything my heart desires

But some people make fun of the way I look

I have to wear special clothes to hide that one of my shoulders is higher than the other



At the end of a long day walking or riding my horse, my back hurts a lot

My grandfather had a similar problem

Can you help me?

What's wrong with me?

Henry, the 19th Century Weaver

I am very good at my job, but there is so much to do and so little pay

I work 15 hours a day for 6 days a week

The money I make is barely enough to pay for my house and I do not have a lot of choice when it comes to buying food.

Even though I don't eat much, most of the time I don't feel hungry anyway.

My neighbour noticed that I am very pale, but maybe I just don't get outside enough.

I am trying to keep a good appearance, but my nails keep breaking off.

I often suffer from headaches and feel very tired, even though I've slept for hours.

How will I be able to continue my work if I cannot stay awake?



Joseph, the World War I Soldier

I signed up to fight for my country in France, but I did not expect the war to be so horrible.

I spent all my time in the trenches, where it was very muddy, wet and cold.

We never knew when the next attack might be happening, all we ever heard was shooting.

Now I'm in a room I don't know, how did I get here?

It's difficult to breathe and my chest hurts a lot.

I think I am going to faint.

Why is my shirt feeling wet?



Figure 8 - Three new characters designed for Miracles to Medicine



[Welcome](#)
[History](#)
[Events](#)
[Visit](#)
[News](#)
[More](#)
[Safeguarding](#)
[f](#)
[Giving](#)

Welcome to St Mary's

Welcome to the website for the Church of England Parish of Barnard Castle with Whorlton in County Durham.

Welcome



Revd Canon Alec Harding | Vicar

As a traditional country parish we seek to be faithful in our worship of God as we know Him in Jesus and in sharing in His mission. We aim to embrace all with His love and can assure you of a warm welcome at any of our services. Our hope is that you will find here something of the atmosphere of prayer and thanksgiving which is so characteristic of our historic English churches if and when you visit us.

Both of our church buildings are much loved and full of the stories of the people and places in which they are set: we are proud of the inheritance of faith passed down to us by previous generations of Christians and, like them, seek to be faithful witnesses to Christ in our own lives.



Windows TO THE WORLD



Exploring the heritage of St Mary's

St Mary's Parish Church has partnered with DigVentures to launch Windows to the World, an interactive project funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund to revitalise the church.

Besides necessary restorations, the project aims at refocusing St Mary's position in the town and turning it into a heritage destination while still keeping its purpose as a house of worship.

Over the course of spring and summer 2021, we offered events and activities for people of all ages. We will be taking part in the **Heritage Open Days** on Saturday 11th September. Everyone is invited to join us in our exploration of the heritage and history of Barnard Castle's oldest church.

900 years is a long time and you are bound to learn things you didn't know before!

[Project update](#)



[Welcome](#)
[History](#)
[Events](#)
[Visit](#)
[News](#)
[More](#)
[Safeguarding](#)
[f](#)
[Giving](#)

History

St Mary's Parish Church has a unique place in the history of Barnard Castle. Founded in 1130, it sits at the heart of the town, and its story.

St Mary's – the historic heart of Barnard Castle

St Mary's Church has stood at the heart of Barnard Castle's story from the very beginning. When Bernard Balliol built his stone castle here in 1130, St Mary's Church was founded alongside it. As the castle grew, so too did St Mary's, positioned close to the marketplace in the centre of the new town, at the crossing of its two most important roads, and opposite the castle entrance, St Mary's was one of the first buildings visitors to the town would see. And while the castle, set high on a rocky crag, bears the stories of invasions, barons and kings, St Mary's sits proudly in the town centre, bearing witness to the everyday life of the town and its residents, from cradle to grave, for over 800 years.



[St Mary's Through the Ages](#)



12 Things to See When You Visit St Mary's

St Mary's stands at the very heart of Barnard Castle and all kinds of people share in its history – a medieval vicar chased up the church tower by ne'er-do-wells, soldiers from the town garrison, a priest who faithfully served his flock in a devastating epidemic, and a king who planned an amazing College here in the 15th century. Find out about more of the fascinating stories and amazing artefacts you can find at St Mary's.

[12 Things to See at St Mary's](#)



Richard III, Lord of Barnard Castle, and St Mary's Church

The chancel arch at St Mary's Church features the only known sculpted image of Richard's face, and his boar badge is also carved into the building. Why? Because when Richard Duke of Gloucester was made Lord of Barnard Castle in 1474, both the castle and St Mary's Church became of great importance to him. With his large grants of money, St Mary's grew in size and height, flooded with light from new windows. He even planned a large religious college based at St Mary's, with a Dean, twelve chaplains and numerous choristers.

Figure 9 - Examples from the new church website

[Welcome](#)
[History](#)
[Events](#)
[Visit](#)
[News](#)
[More](#)
[Safeguarding](#)
[f](#)
[Giving](#)

All News & Stories

How do I use the Labyrinth?
22nd January 2022

Our labyrinth is a beautiful sacred space - but how can we use it to spend time with God?

[Read more »](#)

Barnard Castle Christingle 2021
8th December 2021

On Sunday 5th December we welcomed over 150 people of all ages to St Mary's to celebrate Christingle.

[Read more »](#)

Creation and Climate Change Fair on 7 November
30th September 2021

The Eco-Church Team at St Mary's Parish Church, Barnard Castle are organising a fair on Sunday 7 November to celebrate creation and work for effective action on climate change. The event is timed to coincide with the major COP26 conference in Glasgow.

[Read more »](#)

Children's Summer Activities
21st July 2021

Join us on Facebook for some summer activity ideas

[Read more »](#)

How did Barnard Castle survive the Plague?
4th May 2021

In the 17th century, Britain was wracked by plague epidemics that devastated communities. When the plague arrived in Barnard Castle in 1653, the community needed to act fast to stop the disease from spreading. But how did they cope?

[Read more »](#)

Windows to the World – project update
27th April 2021

[Read more »](#)

Eco Church
21st April 2021

Climate change is a reality. We all have a responsibility to care for creation and for this world. There is still time but we must act now both as individuals and collectively as church. We are now registered as an Eco Church. But this is only a beginning for us.

[Read more »](#)

Overseas Mission
21st April 2021

St Mary's has always been mindful of the needs of others, and especially of those living in the developing world. In a time of pandemic we should continue to help where we can and not to lose sight of this important element of our mission.

[Read more »](#)

Living in Love and Faith
21st April 2021

All around us we see changing understandings of human identity, changing patterns in relationships and families and changing sexual attitudes and activity. What does it mean for followers of Jesus to walk in love, faith and holiness today?

[Read more »](#)

[Welcome](#)
[History](#)
[Events](#)
[Visit](#)
[News](#)
[More](#)
[Safeguarding](#)
[f](#)
[Giving](#)

Virtual Tours

Watch a Virtual Tour, take a close-up look at our favourite architectural features, or download a guide...

Video Tours

Watch a tour to follow our guide around the church. You can join us for the full 40-minute tour, or choose some of the shorter clips. If you enjoy it, why not make a donation?

[Donate](#)

Virtual Tour of St Mary's Church

Virtual tour - Full

Join us for this complete tour of St Mary's church and its graveyard. Learn about the history of the church from its humble beginnings to where it is today.

Early Barnard Castle and the origins of St Mary's Church

Virtual Tour - Early St Mary's and the origins of Barnard Castle

When was St Mary's built and why? Learn about the origins of the town and catch a glimpse of how medieval Barnard Castle might have looked like.

Inside the medieval tower

It might not look very old from the outside, but traces of its medieval origin are still visible inside St Mary's tower.

Traces of architectural expanse

Virtual Tour - Traces of architectural expanse

St Mary's wasn't built in a day. Expansions and changes took place over the course of several centuries and some of them are still visible in the stonework today - if you know where to look.

St Mary's & Richard III

Virtual Tour - St Mary's & Richard III

Before he became King, Richard III was Lord of Barnard Castle and he had grand plans for St Mary's. Stone carvings, windows and a little bricked up door are only a few traces left of Richard's involvement.

The north transept

Virtual tour - The north transept

The north transept is only one small area of St Mary's, but it has changed a lot over time and is home to many historical artefacts, from rare medieval stone slabs to a font with mysterious symbols. Have you seen them before?

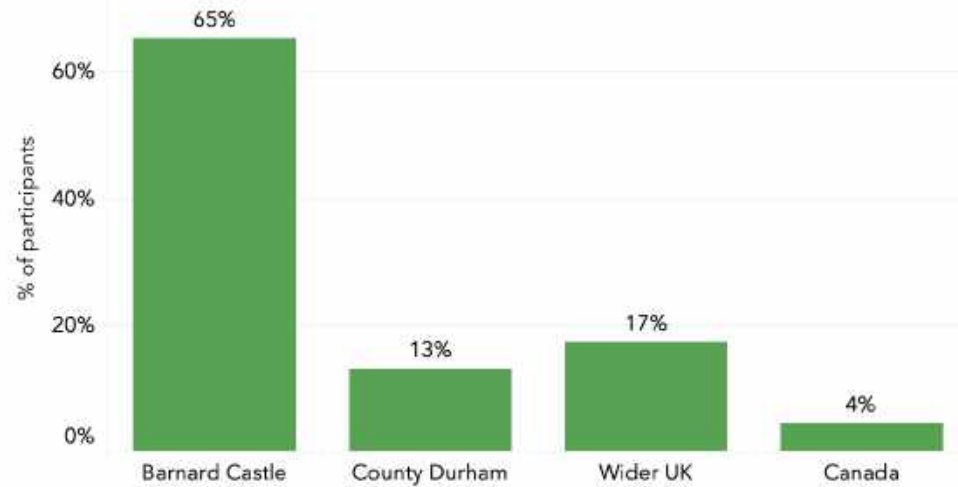
Victorian fittings at St Mary's

Medieval history of St Mary's

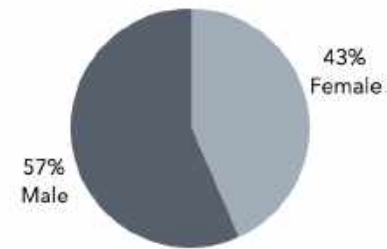
The north aisle

Figure 9 - continued

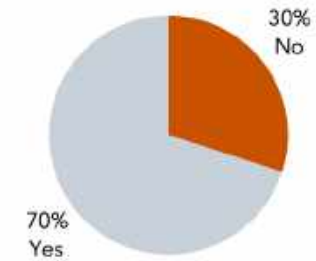
Place of residence



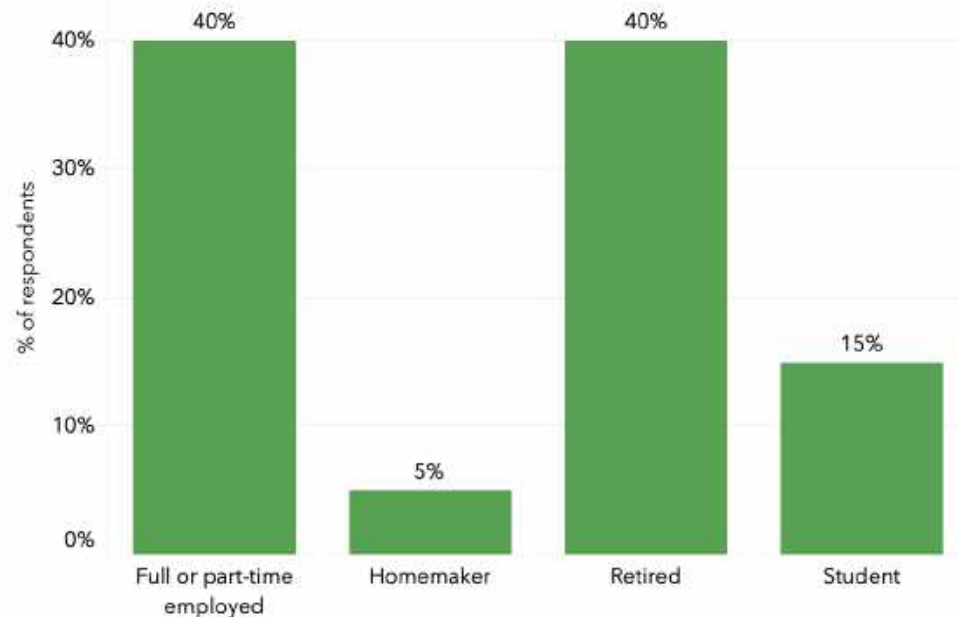
Gender



Have you been to St Mary's church before?



Occupation



Highlights of photogrammetry workshop participants

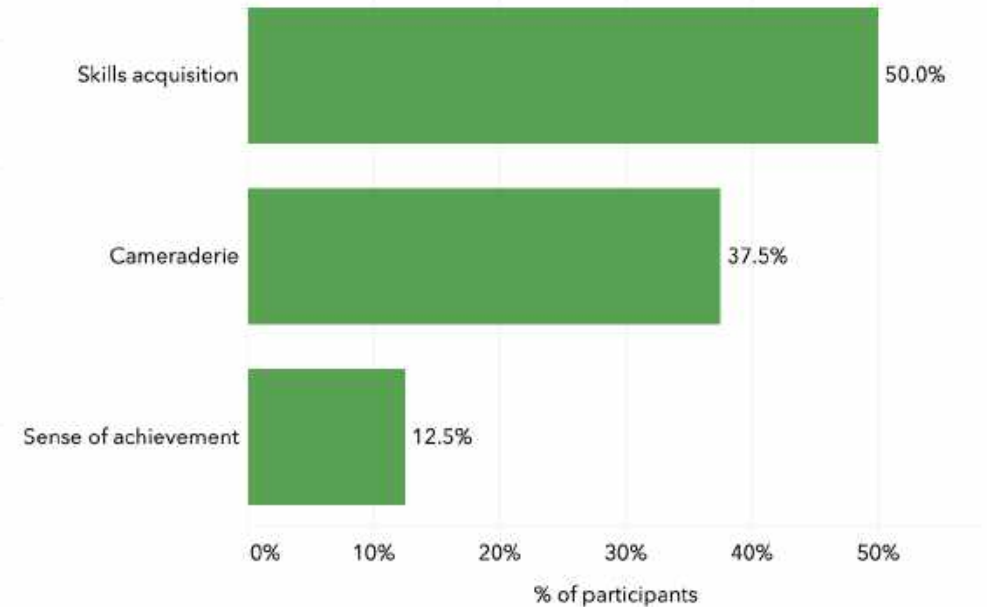
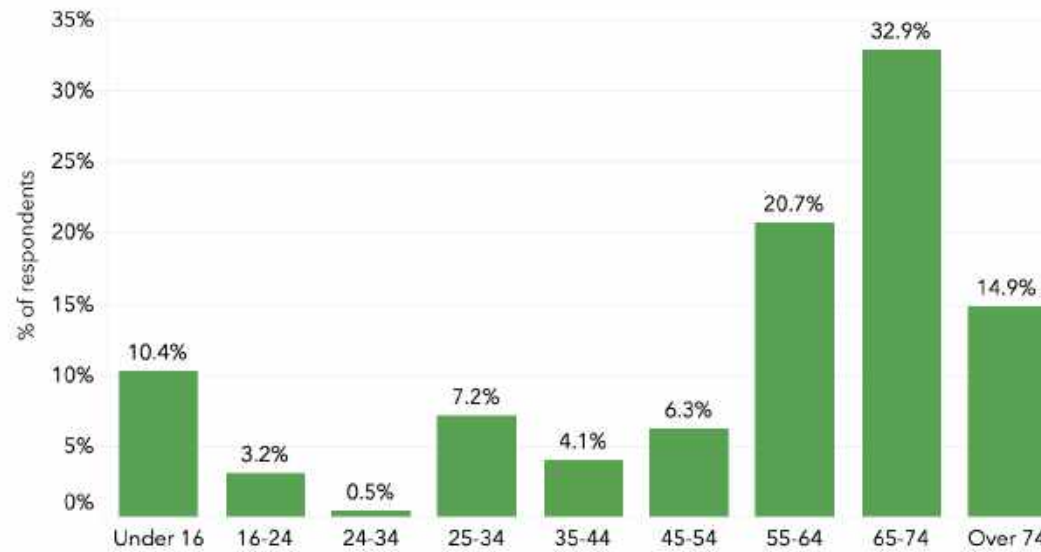
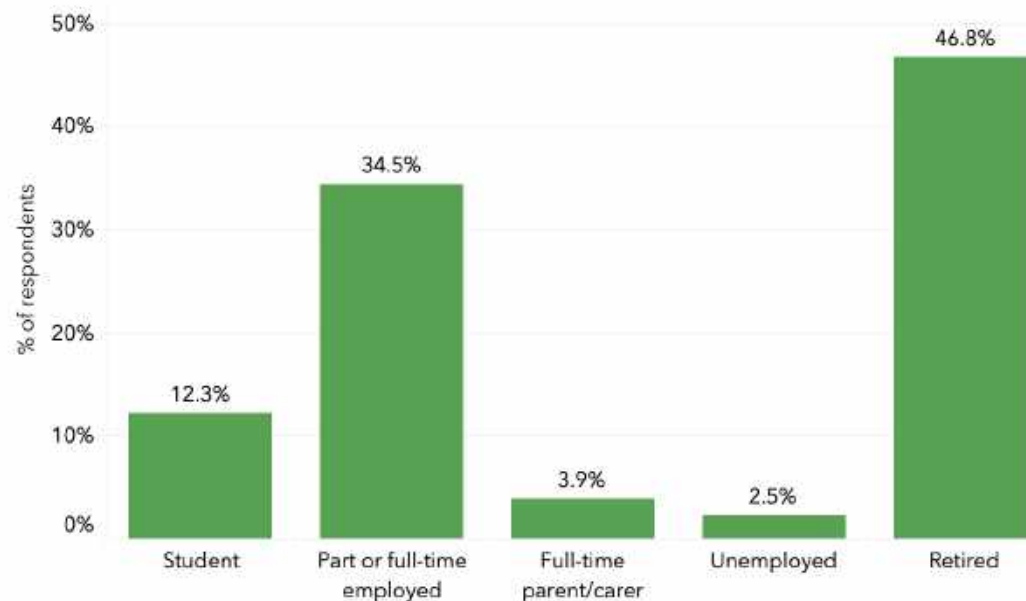


Figure 10 - Heritage skills workshops: Socio-economic distribution and highlights

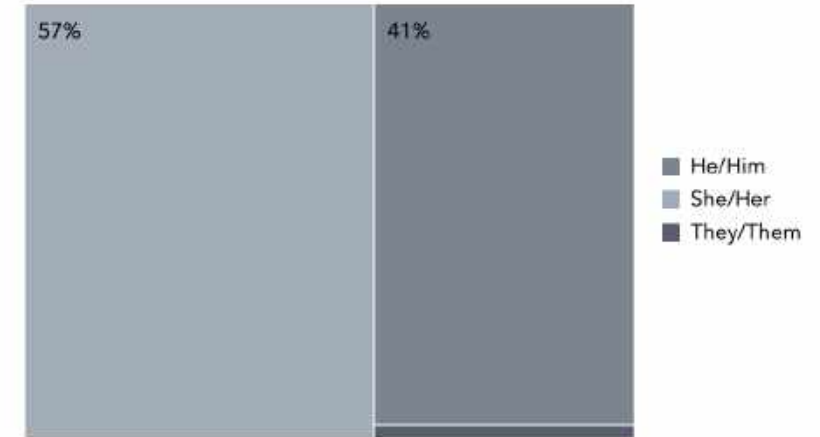
Age



Occupation



Preferred pronouns



Distance travelled

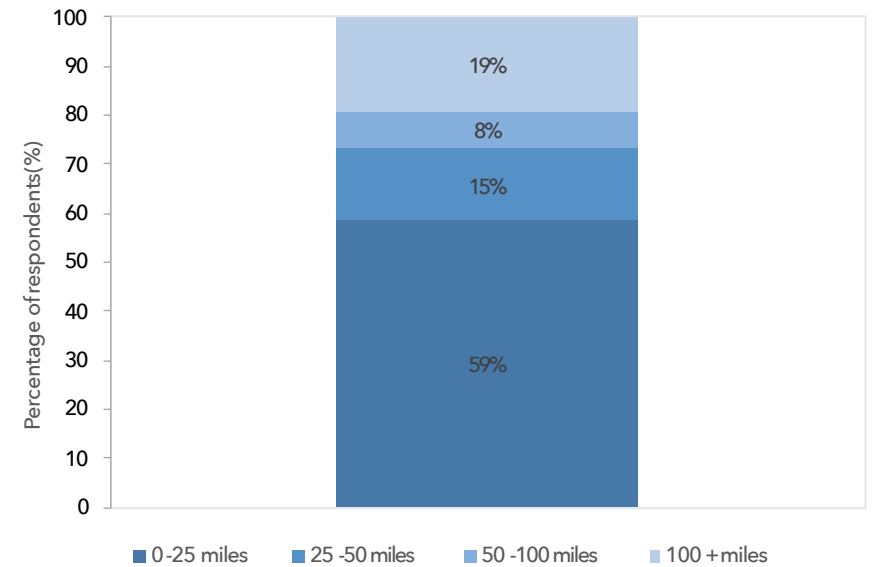
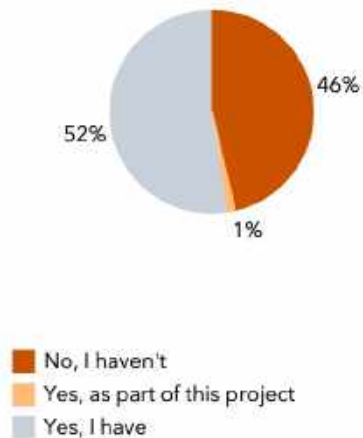
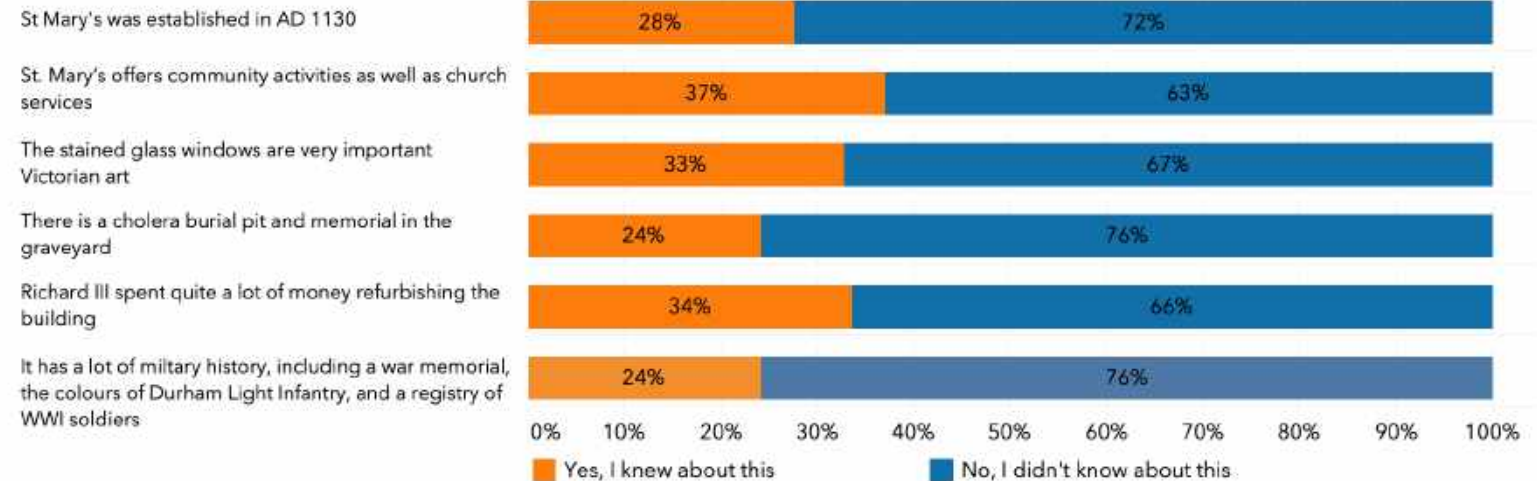


Figure 11 - Festival visitors: Socio-economic distribution

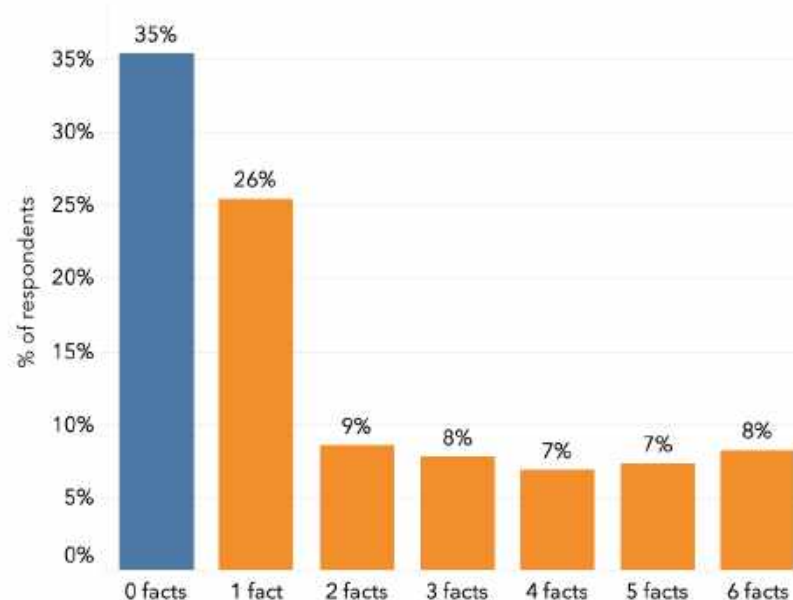
Have you been to St Mary's church before?



What did you know about St Mary's church before today?



Amount of facts known about St Mary's prior to their visit



Amount of facts about St Mary's known by individuals prior to their visit, divided by whether this was their first to the church or not

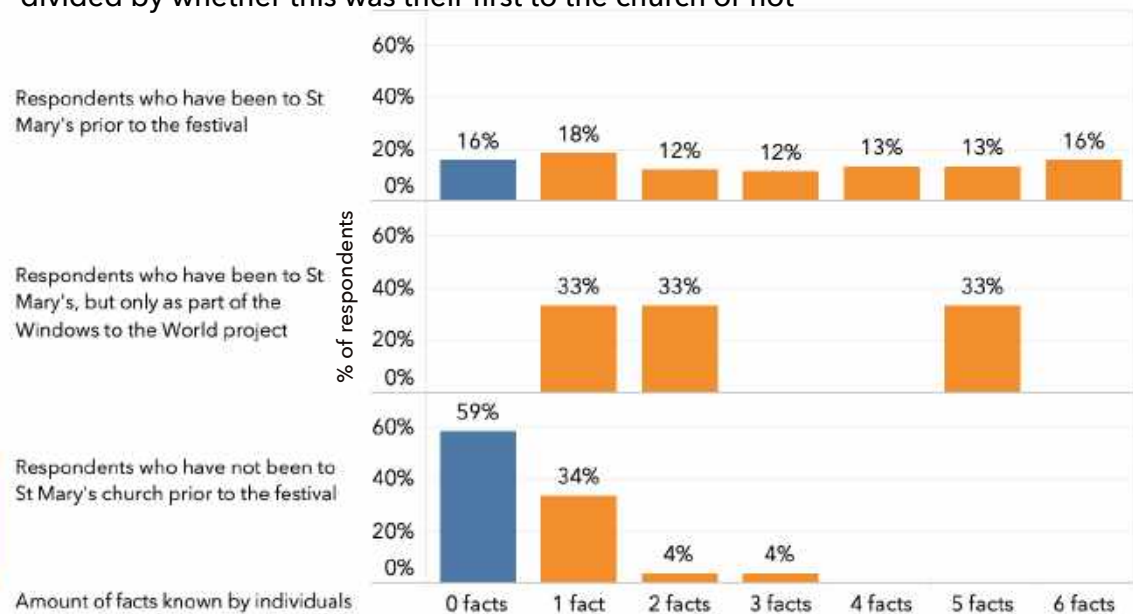
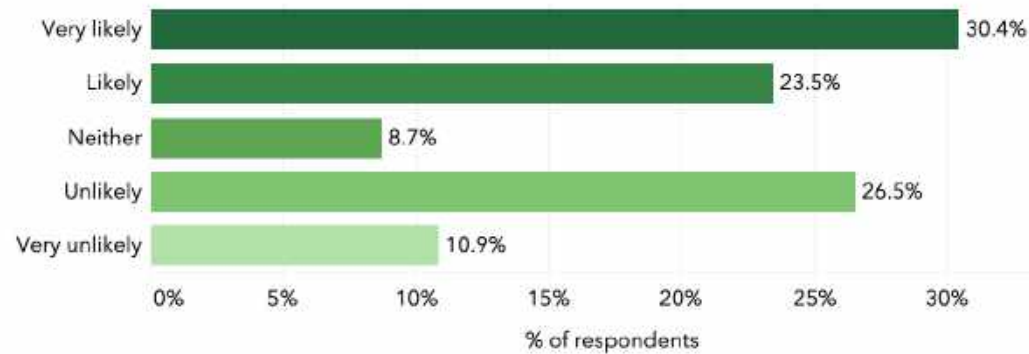
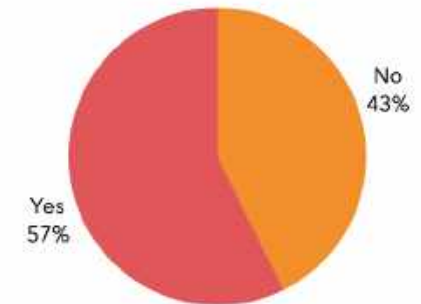


Figure 12 - Festival visitors: familiarity with St Mary's church

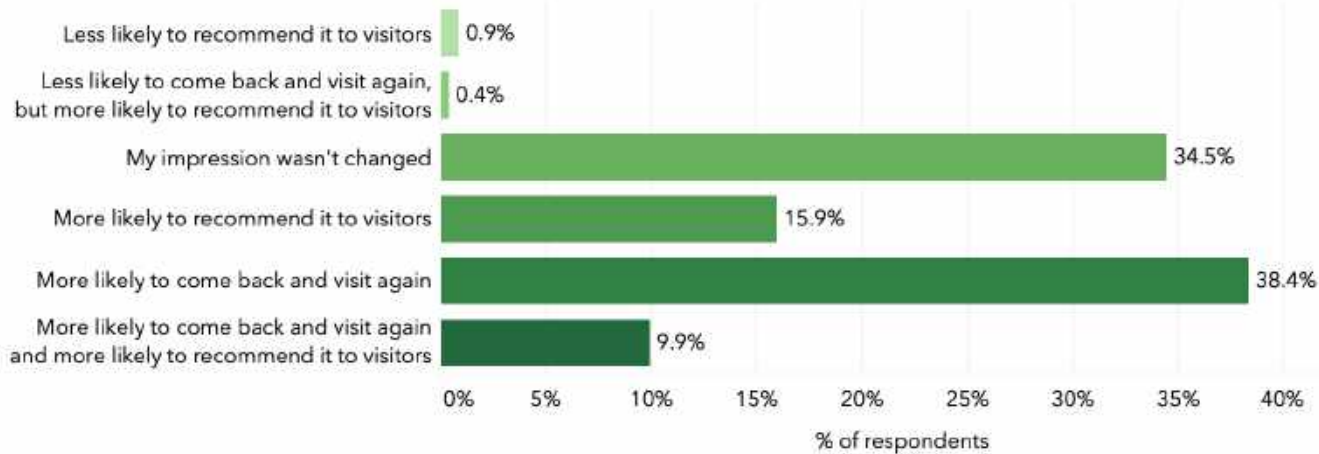
How likely is it that you would have visited St Mary's without the offer of Windows to the World?



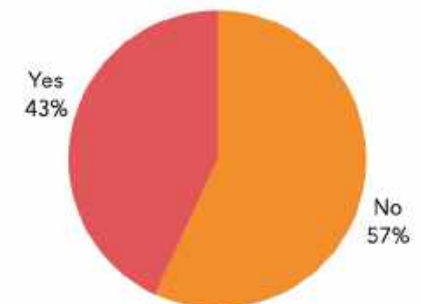
Have you learnt something or has anything taken you by surprise?



How has visiting today changed your impression of St Mary's church?



Have you learnt something specific?



Has visiting today changed your impression of the local area?

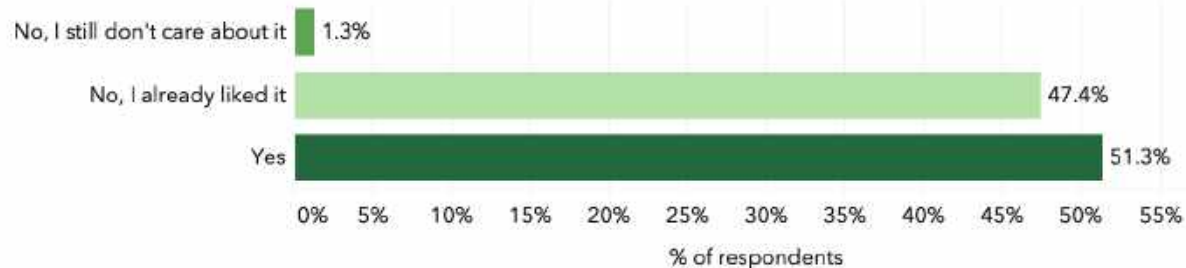
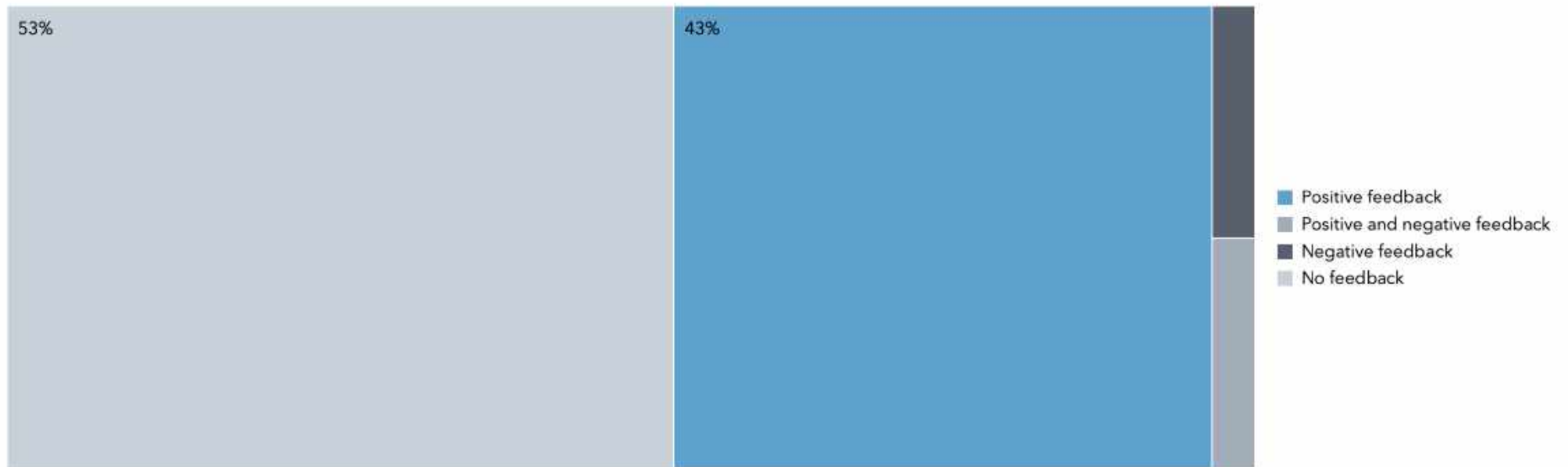


Figure 13 - Festival visitors: Change of ideas and actions

Was there anything you liked or didn't like about the festival?



What did you like about the festival?

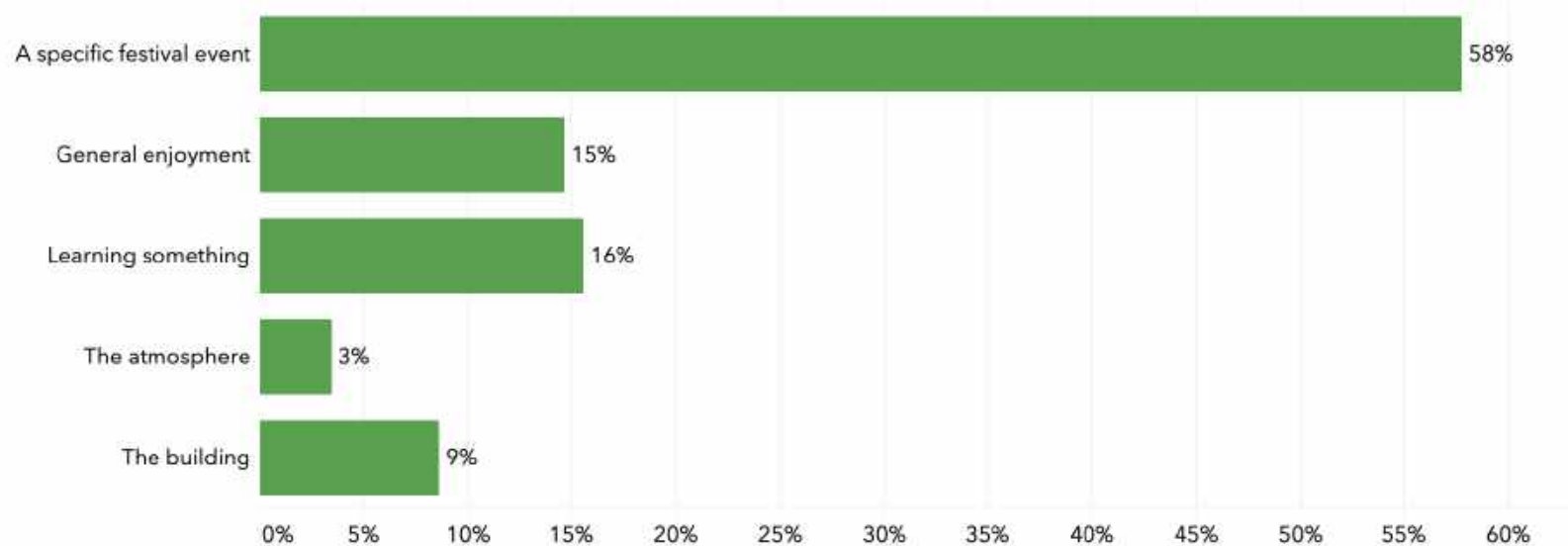
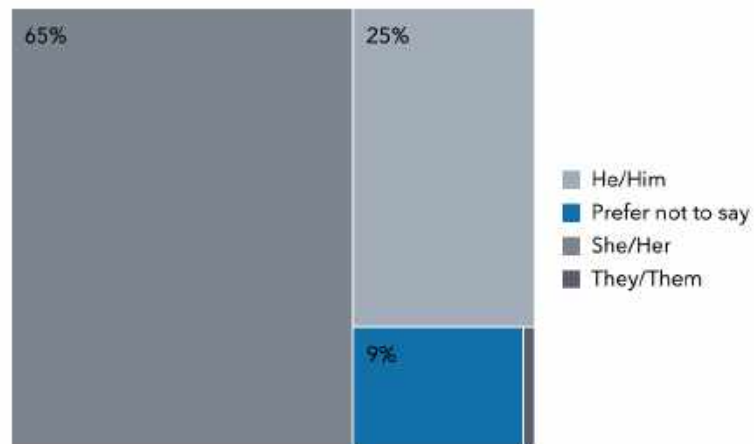
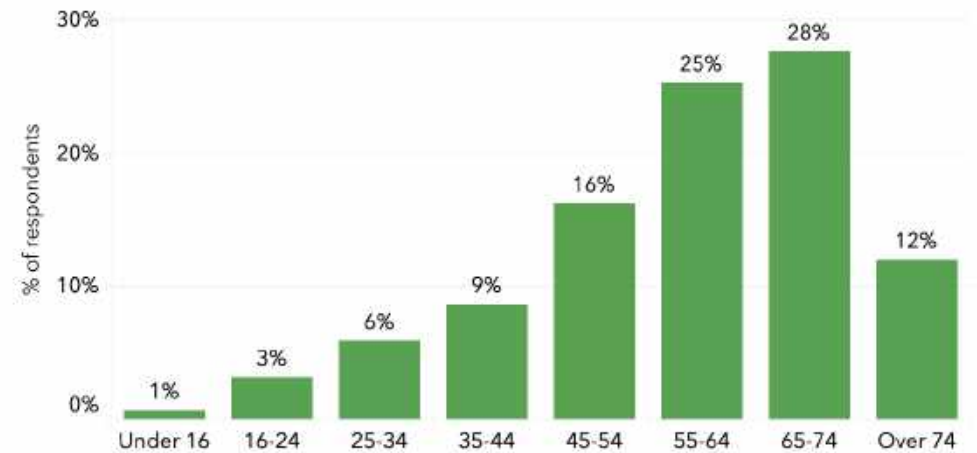


Figure 14 - Festival visitors: feedback and highlights

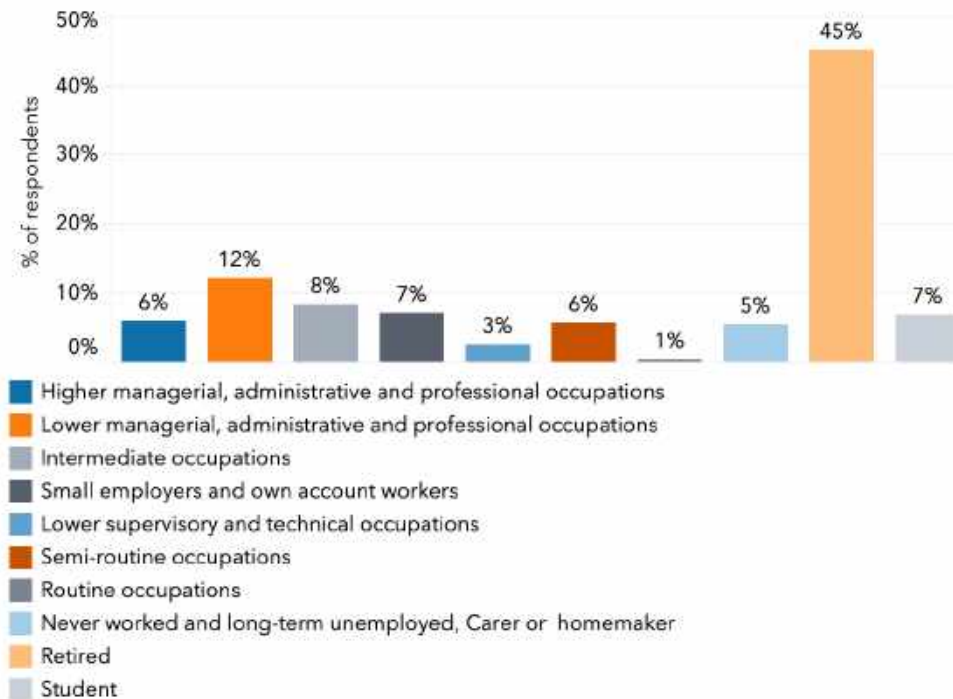
Preferred pronouns



Age



Occupation



Occupation summarised

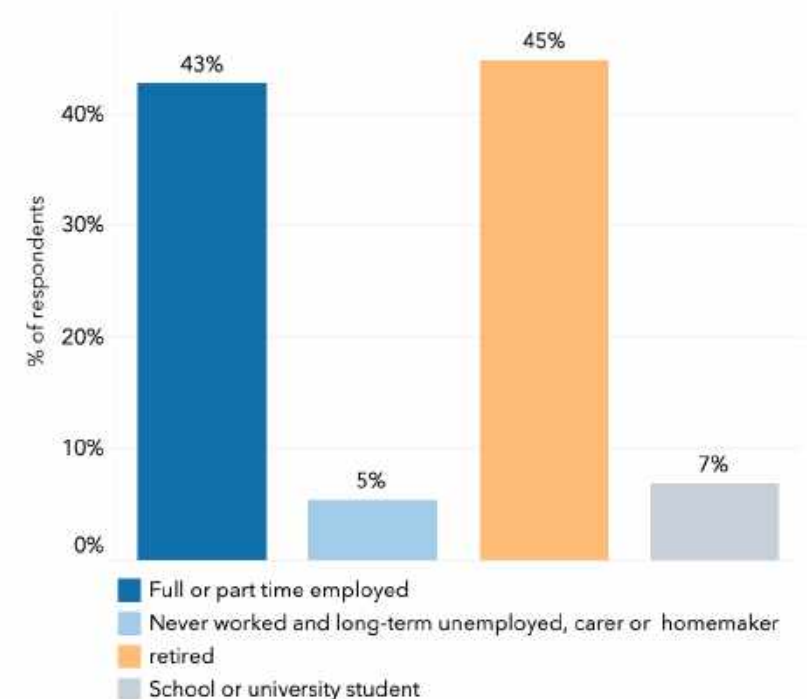
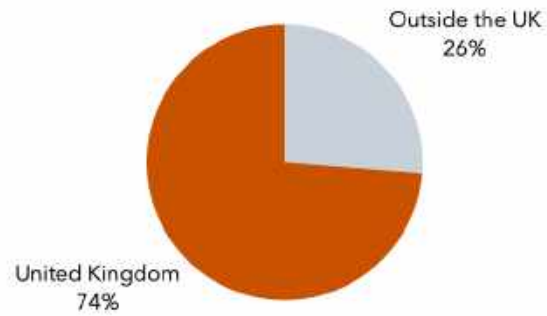
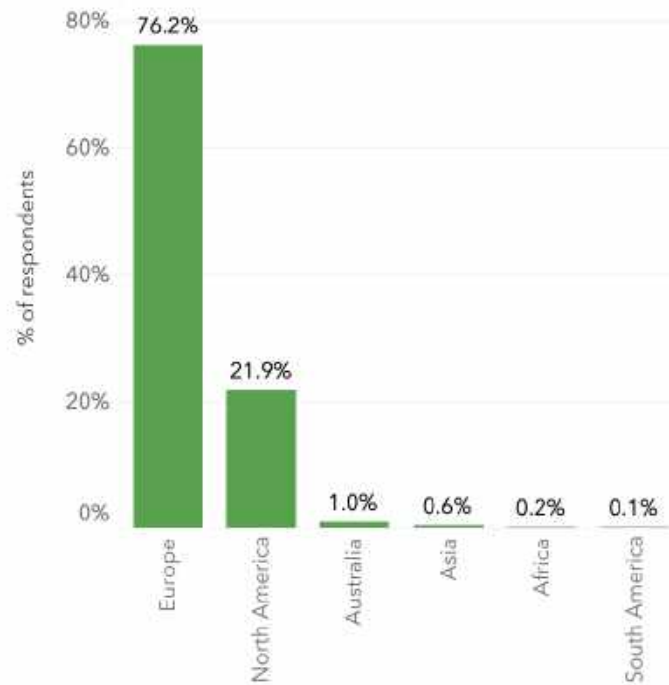


Figure 15 - Virtual participants: Socio-economic distribution

Amount of bookings from inside and outside the UK



Distribution of inhabited continents

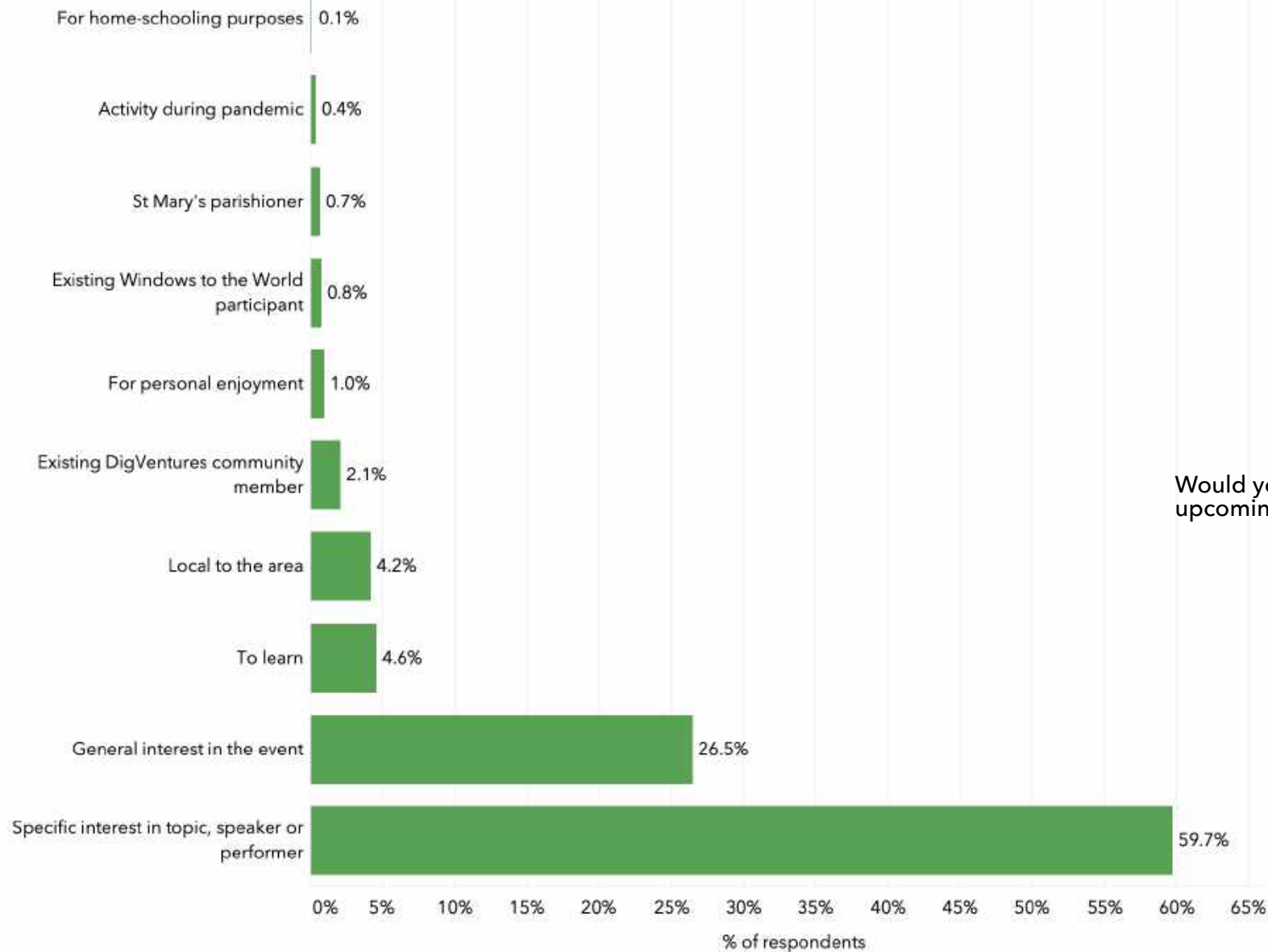


Home countries of virtual event participants

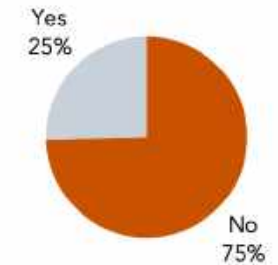


Figure 16 - Virtual participants: Worldwide distribution

Motivation for signing up to a virtual event



Have you been to St Mary's church before?



Would you like more information about upcoming history events at St Mary's?

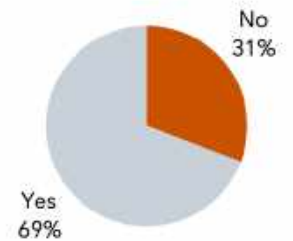


Figure 17 - Virtual participants: Motivation and familiarity with St Mary's church

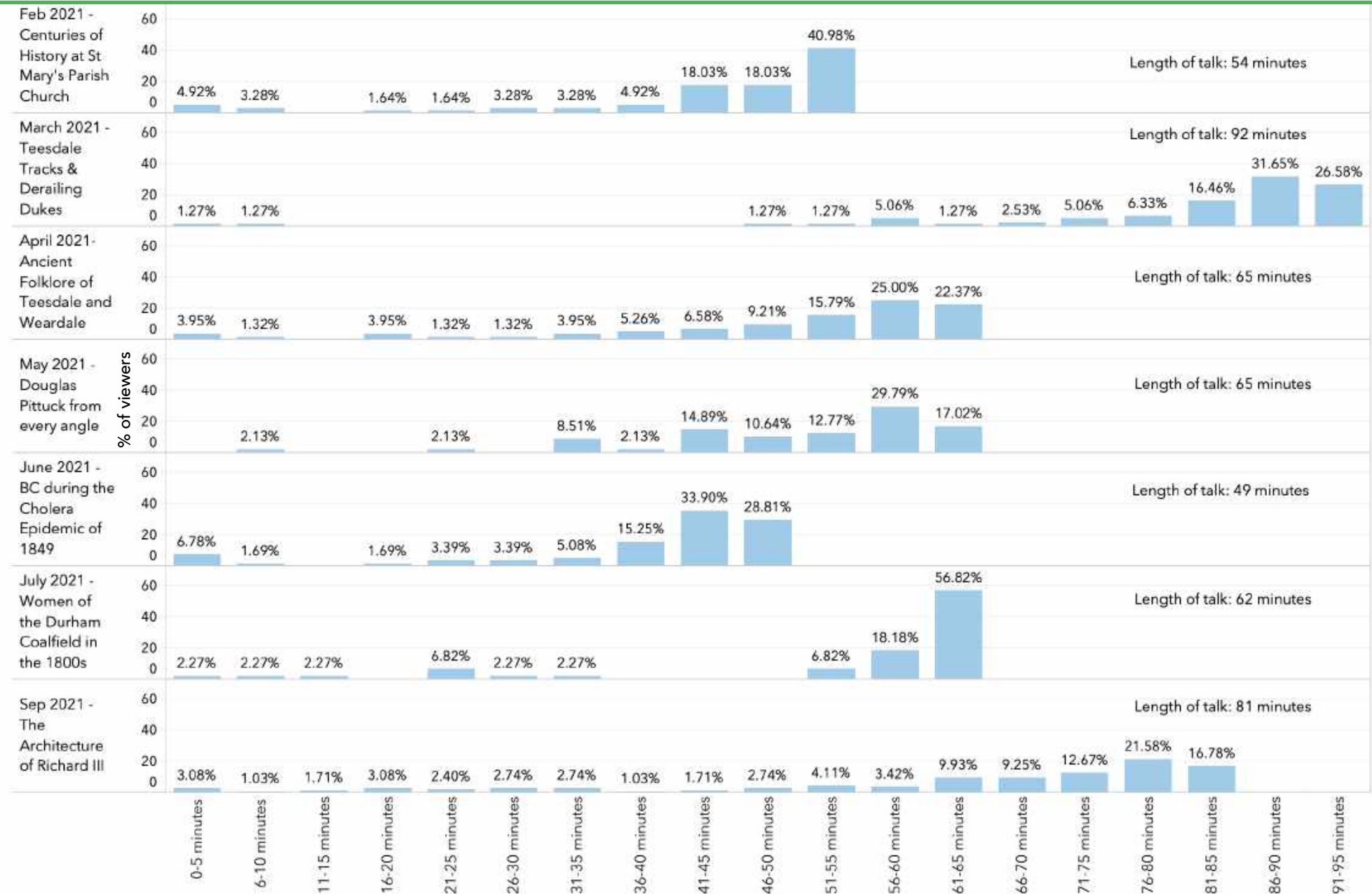


Figure 18 - Heritage talks: How long did people stay for virtual talks (shown as percentage of total audience size per talk)



The delivery phase in 2020 started with filming a short documentary of St Mary's church with buildings archaeologist Peter Ryder and local celebrity John Grundy.



In February 2020, a group of 8 volunteers joined DigVentures staff for a 3-day long photogrammetry workshop. They modelled heritage assets at the church and objects at the castle and the Bowes Museum that are connected to Richard III.



Most participants were full of enthusiasm. They continued to work on models of objects within the church and on the graveyard beyond the workshop and sent in further completed models.



The models form the Windows to the World collection on Sketchfab, where people all over the world can look at those special heritage assets up close.



On March 2nd 2020, the first heritage talk took place at St Mary's church and welcomed 41 people. The audience was very local and the median age group was 55-64.



With the arrival of Covid-19 in the UK and the national lockdown in March 2020, the delivery phase was postponed, but restoration work at the church continued...



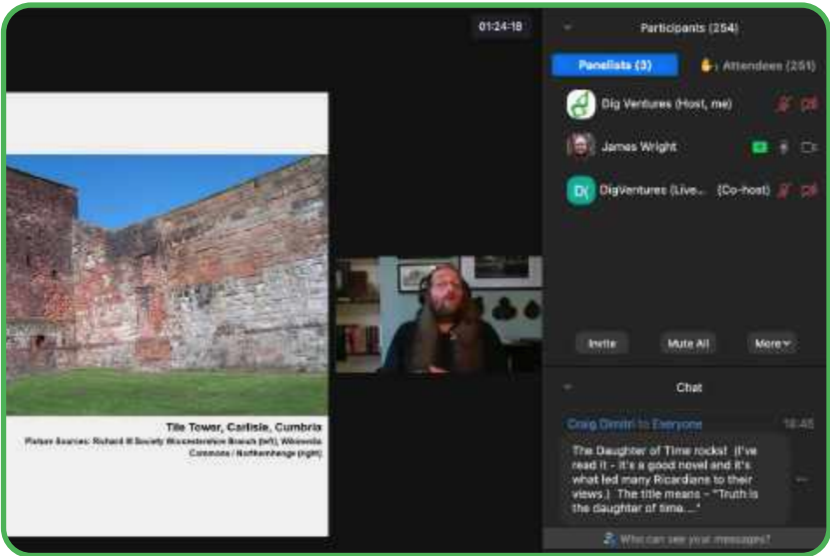
... several of the beautiful Victorian stained-glass windows were removed and taken to the workshop of conservator Jonathan Cooke, who cleaned and repaired them. The public was supposed to be engaged with the works, with the possibility of observing Jonathan's work and asking questions. But it became impossible.



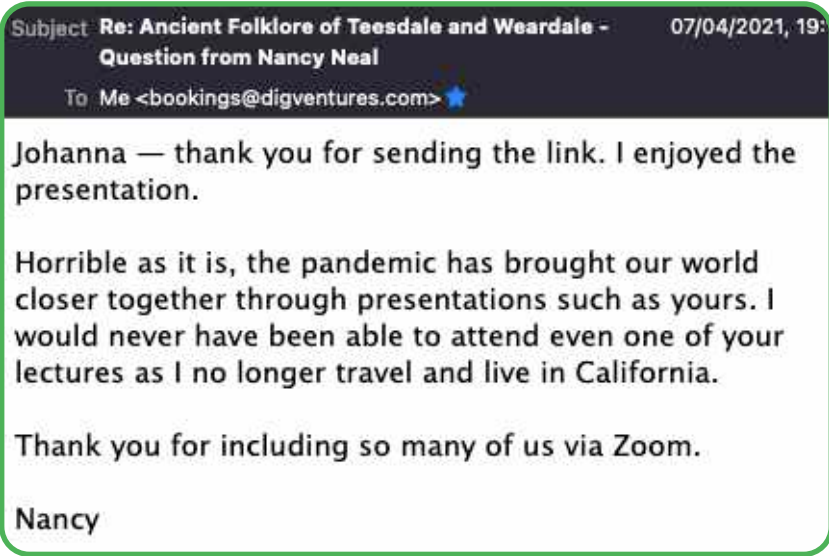
Instead, Jonathan's son Tristram filmed his father in his workshop. Every single step of Jonathan's work was filmed, with Jonathan explaining what he is doing, why he is doing it and what discoveries he made while taking the windows apart.



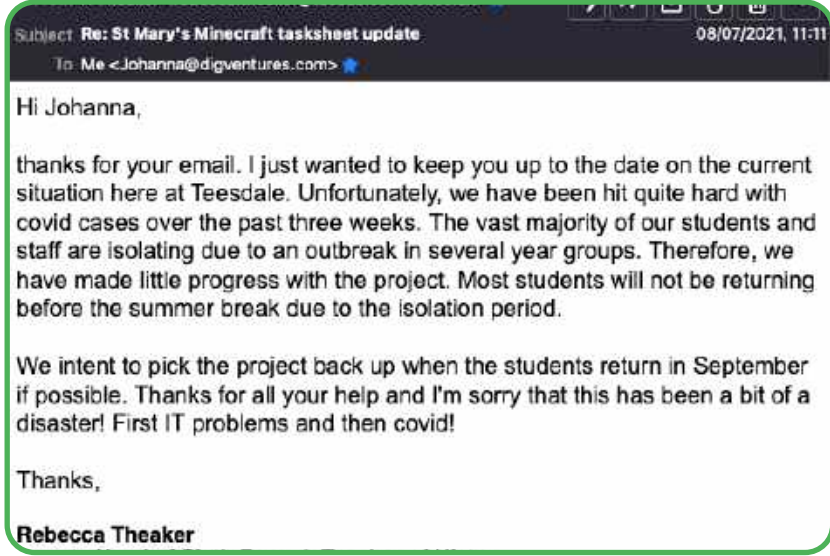
The delivery phase continued in February 2021 with heritage talk taking place once a month. But in contrast to the previous year, all talks were virtual, the speakers tuned in from their homes, and the church was empty.



Albeit strange at first, this new approach also brought advantages. Bigger audiences could be accommodated with more than 250 viewers joining the talk about Richard III in September. But the virtual talks also reached a broader variety of people ...



... with many people also joining from Australia, the United States or New Zealand.



Unfortunately, not everything that was virtual went smoothly. The Minecraft project with local schools could not be completed because of IT issues and isolation of students and staff.

Figure 19 - continued



With restrictions easing in July 2021, the 12-day long 'Windows to the World' festival was an attempt to offer as many different activities and events as possible, to finally draw people into the church in person.



A total of 639 people visited the festival – amongst them also many children. The children were invited to explore the stained-glass windows in the church and then create their own window design....



... the results were many colourful and very different designs.



Some were abstract ...



... others very articulated.



But the children's activities were not only enjoyed by children. Some adults discovered their creative side too.



Children were also challenged to solve some history cold cases. Every box contained a different case and children started out by being a medieval healer and being presented with a patient. After learning about their symptoms, they had to figure out what they were suffering from and how they could be helped...



... finally they got to be an archaeologist and take a close look at some of the possible 3D printed remains. Every bone showed a pathology, for example arthritis, scoliosis, the effects of malnutrition, a healed fracture, etc.



After being shown old drawings of the church, some children drew their own version of how St Mary's looks today. If we wonder in the future, how St Mary's looked like in July 2021, we will have records!



The scientifically interested children learned all about Richard III's involvement with Barnard Castle and how DNA is one of the reasons why we can be sure that the remains found under the carpark belong to the king. Then, they got to extract DNA from a banana.



During the festival, St Mary's also hosted 3 concerts. Every concert had a live audience at the church, but also a virtual audience who watched the musicians from the comfort of their own home.



Thanks to a drone flight, but also to all the different events and activities of Windows to the World, we managed to view St Mary's church from different angles in 2020 and 2021.



In March 2022, a modern digital information point with internet access was installed in the porch of St Mary's Parish Church. Visitors are invited to use it to explore the church website and make donations.



St Mary's website shares a wealth of information about the history and heritage of the building and the people of Barnard Castle. Users can watch short guided tours and explore the 12 things one must see at St Mary's Parish Church.



Upon entering the main body of the church, visitors are invited to take one of the new leaflets free of charge. They can use the map for their exploration of the building and the churchyard and take the leaflet home as a reminder of their visit of St Mary's church with the most important historical facts safely in their pockets.



New leaflets were also designed for the labyrinth, inviting visitors to relax their minds and use the space to go inwards.



March 2022 also saw the installation of a new, sturdy and very visible external sign outside St Mary's church. The location of the church is not very inviting to people just passing by on the street, but the sign has been created to remove perceived barriers of access. Every visitor is welcome to enter and use the building.



The vibrant sign entices visitors right from the street inviting them to explore the historic building. Pedestrians were trying to decipher the sign before it was even upright.

Figure 19 - continued