Public Engagement in Cultural Heritage Conservation:

An Investigation of Museum Visitors' Views

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ABSTRACT

This research study examines the impact of conservation-related engagement events in the museum environment. In particular, it investigates the predominant views of museum visitors around heritage conservation in response to each event and captures the perception changes that occur (or do not occur) during visiting conservation exhibitions, viewing conservation demonstrations, interaction with conservators, and hands-on participation.

Findings are based on the integrated analyses of data sourced from four principal case studies: an adult learning event at the Yorkshire Museum entitled *Conservation Workshop: Pieces Of The Past*; a temporary exhibition at the British Museum entitled *Conservation in Focus*; interpretation of conservation projects at Knole House, National Trust; and finally a permanent exhibition at the Ashmolean Museum entitled *Conservation Galleries*.

The principal aim of this study is to provide an insight into public engagement in cultural heritage conservation and specifically into how this is received by heritage audiences in order to inform policy and practice on future projects as well as their evaluation.

The total sample consists of 271 questionnaire responses and 63 interviews with museum visitors on from which both qualitative and quantitative data is sourced and analysed using a mixed-methods approach. A typology of engagement events has been developed to assist the analyses.

Research findings show that each one of the events investigated has had a significant but at the same time different impact on visitors' views on the condition in which museum exhibits are presented and their views on heritage conservation practice. Findings also suggest that cultural heritage conservation is held in very high esteem among museum visitors and there is an overall positive disposition to find out more about it. This notion of conservation's importance is shown to be associated with values that visitors consider inherent to the work of conservators. Moreover, this study captures prevailing views on what visitors currently consider as good practice in conservation, demonstrating an overall inclination towards preventive conservation rather than restoration, and towards being offered more information about conservation work rather than participating and engaging through more active forms of involvement. The study also demonstrates how notions around the concepts of authenticity, originality, integrity impact on the visitor experience, forming a key element of the attraction for museum visiting. It illustrates the existence of multiple understandings of access among visitors, with physical access to heritage material being highlighted as the most enjoyable aspect of the museum experience. Finally, the study also reveals some aspects of professional attitudes towards public engagement. Together with the principal findings, these insights can be a useful resource for conservation practitioners and policy makers involved in public engagement.

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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

Some of the ideas presented in Chapters 3 and Chapter 4 will be published as *Developing evaluation strategies for engagement projects in conservation* in the forthcoming volume of edited papers *Heritage, Conservation and Communities* to be published by Ashgate & Gower.

I declare that this dissertation is a record of the research carried out in the Department of Archaeology at the University of York during the period from October 2011 to March 2015 and is original in content except where otherwise indicated. All sources are acknowledged as references. It is being submitted for the degree of Master of Philosophy at the University of York. It has not been submitted for any other degree or examination in any other University.

Chapter 1. Introduction

The idea for this research project had its origins in discussions with colleagues after seminars and lectures at the Centre for Conservation Studies at the University of York during the years 2010-11. Many of these friendly and yet fierce debates revolved around the experience, expectations and motivations of people visiting museums and heritage sites. Instead of resulting in conclusions and solutions, it was usually the case that these discussions would generate even more questions such as: What is the risk of misinterpretation of heritage material by non-trained audiences due to the lack of information on conservation? Who are the 'heritage experts' and what are their roles in relation to the recent shift towards values-based heritage management? How can the role of conservators evolve and adapt to these developments?

However, it was the 'discovery' of a Demos publication entitled *It's a material world: Caring for the public realm* by Samuel Jones and John Holden (2008) that played a critical role in the broader realisation of the subject area for this research. Jones and Holden advocated the social value of the conservation profession and the need for bringing together policy-makers, heritage professionals and the general public. Coming across this call for action and, later on, consulting colleagues in conservation and research about the utility of an investigation of the interface between conservation and people, led to some further exploration of recent debates and developments in the field, and eventually played a major part in shaping these preliminary thoughts into a research proposal on the topic of *Public Engagement in Cultural Heritage Conservation*.

The scope of this research study is to explore conservation's potential for widening engagement with heritage, recreation, learning and participation, concerning its public face. More importantly, perhaps, this study began from an aspiration to consider the implications of approaching conservation not as a purely technical/scientific domain (which would imply a certain degree of 'neutrality' and objectivity in its principles), but as a phenomenon fundamentally rooted in people's views and ultimately in social values (also see discussion in Avrami 2009). From this perspective, the remarkable diversity in conservation philosophy and practice internationally is not only explained but also legitimised. Conservation's principles, as in fact its very existence as a human activity, depend on what people think and thus can be shaped through communication and interaction. Unfortunately, while the word 'people' is used here in the sense of society, due to obvious research limitations detailed in Section 3.11, the scope of this study had to be significantly narrowed down. For this reason, it was decided to begin tackling this vast field of enquiry by focusing on the study of the views of heritage audiences and more specifically on those of museum visitors. However, the underlying question remains, as was accurately phrased in the homonymous paper: *Is conservation a scientific practice or a social process?* (Pye 2009).

In addition to the fundamental issue of exploring the essence of the public and social aspect of conservation and its potential development, this study also deals with issues associated with the roles and responsibilities of museums (see for example Grammatikou 2013) and other heritage institutions that are inherent to the subject of public engagement. These include matters of transparency and public/community participation in decision-making, as well as the public understanding of cultural heritage material and history, regarding the impact that conservation has on the presentation and interpretation of the past through material remains.

The primary focus of this research is the study of people's views about the conservation of material culture in the museum context. As stated above, due to practical reasons including the given time frame and resources, as well as the scarcity of previous research on the subject, it was decided to take a pragmatic approach when determining the overall scope. In respect of the human sample employed in the research, the scope includes a sample taken from the body of museum visitors, and more specifically, those attending conservation engagement events. Meanwhile, concerning the physical material involved, the focal point concerns a particular section of the cultural heritage entity that only includes material culture curated in museum collections.

Finally, the overarching rationale behind the framework for this research project regards developing a further appreciation of how sociocultural factors interrelate with the field of cultural heritage conservation. Therefore, without understating the imperative need for research in other directions, for example concerning the physical fabric, conservation materials, methods and techniques, or history, the emphasis of this study is placed on conservation's position in the public sphere. Due to the considerable shortage of previous relevant research in the field, several possible parallels and valuable lessons are drawn from other, comparatively more developed, analogous fields, such as that of public engagement with science, public archaeology and community archaeology, and public involvement and consultation in the planning context. An account of the motivating factors and previous experiences that brought about the decision to take up a research project in this subject area is set forth below, in Section 1.2.

1.1 Background and Motivation

My interest in conservation's public aspect developed from my previous work on the MA course in Conservation Studies (Historic Buildings) at the University of York. A few months before my encounter with the Demos publication, I completed a dissertation that examined visitors' reactions to the exhibition of the conservation laser cleaning of the Caryatid sculptures in the new Acropolis Museum in Athens (Koutromanou 2011). That small-scale study revealed that the majority of museum visitors demonstrated positive attitudes towards the exhibition of conservation treatments within the archaeological museum environment and also perceived this display as a learning experience. Also, it was shown that a significant number of people considered conservation work

on display as a reason for revisiting the museum. Furthermore, the study indicated that the majority of visitors who participated in the survey expressed a preference for having the experience of viewing conservation treatments within the museum context rather than on the archaeological site, in that particular case the archaeological remains on the Sacred Rock of the Acropolis of Athens.

The aim of that work was to explore the learning potential of displays of conservation for museum visitors, and the primary case study that was the focal point was, in fact, an evidently random circumstance. The reason for this was that the display of conservation work had not occurred as a purely intentional attempt to engage the museum's visitors with conservation work, but rather as a practicality in the sense that the popular Caryatid sculptures would remain in the exhibition galleries' space. Reflecting on the subject of that study, it subsequently became more and more apparent to me that the most prominent issue revealed by the findings of that research had not simply been an understanding of how viewers of that particular display reacted as learners or as cultural heritage consumers. It became evident that the key issue was to investigate the reasons why that display was received so positively, and even more to explore whether the unexpectedly approving response could have been interpreted as a need for a shift in the perceived role of conservators.

1.2 Aims and Objectives

The principal aims of this research study are twofold:

Aim 1: The primary aim of this research study is to inform future efforts of public engagement with conservation. Specifically, with the purpose of bridging the gap between a piece of academic research and professional practice, it aims to devise guidelines for the design of successful communication events. It is hoped that the proposed guidelines will provide a framework to help practitioners systematise their efforts to engage 'non-specialist' audiences with conservation effectively. In the long term, this is intended to help promote public awareness of what conservation work involves and where its significance may lie, facilitating a more meaningful and equal dialogue between conservators and the general public. It is also hoped that this will assist the development of a more critical understanding and appreciation of the evolving role of conservators as specialists and efficient communicators.

Aim 2: The secondary aim concerns the evaluation of the efficacy of different models of public engagement with conservation in the museum environment. Through the development of an appropriate methodology for evaluation, this study aims to investigate how museum visitors perceive cultural heritage conservation as a professional activity. More specifically it is intended to explore prevalent perceptions among museum visitors of the importance of conservation and notions around what constitutes good practice, as well as their approaches to conservation-related

concepts such as authenticity, originality, and integrity. Finally, this study considers issues around the interpretation of heritage material, explores the process of conservation decision-making, and addresses the question of participation through the perspectives of museum visitors.

The above aims will be accomplished based on the research objectives detailed below:

Objective 1 is to undertake a literature review for key issues around the subject of public engagement with conservation, as well as past and ongoing examples, available reviews, and visitor surveys of previous engagement projects in the museum context; and to determine the extent of the identified gap in research on visitors' views about conservation.

Objective 2 is to design instruments and identify appropriate methods for data collection in order to capture visitors' notions of the concepts of the authenticity, originality and integrity of heritage material as these emerge through their interaction with conservation, and recording their views on the perspective of increased informational access and public participation in conservation decision-making.

Objective 3 is to collect primary data from ongoing engagement projects, selected from different museum contexts that broadly correspond to distinct approaches to communicating conservation to 'non-specialist' audiences. The data collection includes visitor surveys and interviews principally with museum visitors and, wherever possible, also capturing the perspectives of conservators. Also, a detailed analysis of each event will be provided, as well as a comparison between the aims of the conservators who devised the events and the reactions of the visitors.

Objective 4 complements the previous in the gathering of available data on additional types of engagement projects that have either taken place in the past or are not possible to survey during the time frame for this study but are nevertheless necessary to include because they illustrate alternative approaches to engagement.

Objective 5 is the analyses and interpretation of the data sourced from all the projects included as case studies. These analyses will be carried out after identifying appropriate methods, techniques, and suitable software tools for the manipulation of qualitative and quantitative data. At this stage, meaningful conclusions will be drawn, providing the foundations for a critical and evidence-based discussion of the subject.

Objective 6 concerns ensuring the impact of this study on the conservation sector, by proposing a set of guidelines for devising communication events, which will be tested and refined through consultation with conservators.

1.3 Problem Statement

It has been suggested that the driving force behind the trend for communicating heritage conservation to the public is that conservation, both as a profession and as a meaningful service to museums, is being increasingly challenged, as it is often felt that the high cost of conservation is not justified by the benefits it brings to museums and institutions (Wadum 2003, 3). This thesis sets out to address this challenge observed in the field, concerning the ways conservation policy and practice are communicated by heritage institutions and perceived by audiences. As discussed above, this study examines the impact of some engagement events on a particular audience - museum visitors, and by doing so, seeks to contribute to the better understanding of the dynamics of communication between conservators and the public.

As a relatively young profession, conservation has primarily been concentrated on the struggle for self-definition, the development of professional standards and the establishment of its fundamental principles and ethics, while at the same time seeking to achieve recognition as a science-based field see 2.2 - 2.4). As a result, for a long time conservation has remained behind the scenes, isolated and detached from the public view and attention (Jones & Holden 2008, 9). Until recently, the focus of conservation has been on the physical aspects of heritage material, and efforts to communicate and engage with the public have been relatively sporadic (CAC 2010). Even though during the past two decades or so there has been a gradual shift towards public engagement stemming from the public value debate in the early 2000s and its impact on current thinking and practice in heritage-related professional fields (see 2.5 and 2.6), effective communication remains an issue in conservation. Brooks, one of the first conservators to curate an exhibition on museum conservation (see 2.5), was also one of the first researchers to look into this in her paper *Talking to ourselves: why do conservators find it so hard to convince others of the significance of conservation?* (Brooks 2008), focusing on the reasons behind the problems which conservators face when communicating their work to others.

'Public engagement' is a term more and more frequently encountered within the academic sphere, as well as in various other professional contexts. According to a definition provided by the UK's National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement, the term refers to 'the myriad of ways in which the activity and benefits of higher education and research can be shared with the public. It is by definition a two-way process, involving interaction and listening, with the goal of generating mutual benefit' (2012). Arguably, that the main principles described in the above statement might also apply to museums and other heritage organisations and institutions which inherently involve various forms of communication with their visitors and at the same time also see themselves as facilitators of informal learning experiences (Kelly 2007, 2).

It has been established that museums are not only protectors of heritage but also communicators (Hooper-Greenhill 2008, 53). So, in essence, public engagement as a notion is not a new challenge

for heritage institutions. As communicators, museums are already committed to presenting accessible and truthful information to their audiences (also see discussion in Cameron 2007). Thus, the dissemination of the conservation process and ethics to the wider public is, arguably, something that one would normally expect of heritage institutions.

More specifically, the reason is that museum objects can convey a certain amount of information about various aspects of history, culture and everyday life in the distant or more recent past, which arguably justifies their inclusion in contemporary museum collections. However, this source of knowledge is not always fully accessible to everyone but often remains restricted to experts and heritage professionals. For the artefacts to become available and 'presentable' in exhibitions and publications, many stages of processing and decision-making need to occur. At the same time, visitors are often thought of as the consumers of the end product of the conservation and management of heritage material.

By nature, conservation forms a significant part of the processing described above to which heritage objects are submitted. It is also a first-hand experience of the material remains of the past and forms a significant part of their history. Despite this, it remains a mostly introverted professional discipline, and its potential has not been fully explored. Conservation includes close observation of archaeological finds, historical objects, artefacts and buildings. Also, conservators have the 'privilege' of touching and intervening in the physical condition of the objects, assessing and at times even adding value. In contrast, the public is usually strictly forbidden from having any physical contact with heritage material on display. Information is communicated by the sense of sight, and arguably the concept of interaction in museums is principally designed to capture the interest of children, often leaving out adult audiences to engage with heritage solely by looking at objects through glass cases and with the help of explanatory texts and audio guides.

Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights clearly states that everyone has the right 'to freely participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefit' (United Nations 1948). This idea was taken further in the Faro Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (Council of Europe 2005), where encouraging participation and putting people and human values at the centre of cultural heritage policy and practice was set as an objective. However, whether heritage is, in fact, accessible to everyone is still debatable, as also is whether current policies in the sector indeed encourage the desired engagement and involvement. Concerning conservation, it may be argued that heritage audiences are extensively unaware of the treatments and interventions applied to heritage material before it finds its place in a museum showcase or on a site in the case of larger structures. As a result, people's understanding can be misled or dependent only on the interpretation of 'experts'. It is suggested that conservation does indeed play a significant role in how an object of heritage is perceived by the public as it can directly affect its physical condition and appearance. Enabling

people to recognise specialists' interventions and encouraging them to consider issues of conservation philosophy, as well as practice, could open a new path to more meaningful and in-depth involvement with heritage material. Finally, it could be said that empowering people to become involved in heritage conservation could turn into an avenue of multiple possibilities for promoting informal learning as well as inclusion in the heritage context.

In her more recent paper *'Culture and Anarchy': Considering Conservation*, Brooks identified three different hindering tensions which conservators currently face. The first is the significant difference between current developments in conservation and engagement by recognising the need to enable appropriate access to artefacts against the perceptions and experiences of people such as volunteers who feel that conservators and museums alienate them from the objects by depriving them of close and personal encounters with them (2013, 2). The second tension has to do with the perception of conservation within institutions, according to which it is 'an expensive technical nuisance and obstruction rather than a process for enabling preservation and the making of meaning'. The third is 'the lack of shared knowledge, understanding and communication between colleagues in the same profession with differing but complementary areas of expertise' (2013, 3).

Looking at the bigger picture within the current climate of general uncertainty about the future of public cultural services, the value of the heritage sector and the arts and humanities as a whole is being questioned (Nussbaum 2011). Specifically for conservation, the closure of educational programmes and institutions across the UK signifies an urgent need for reprioritization and adaptation to new circumstances. Like a living organism threatened by changing environmental conditions, conservation is evolving in order to thrive in a different cultural climate. These desirable or strategic adaptations may include the development of more outgoing and inclusive approaches such as embedding the element of public engagement into professional practice, working towards managing the field's public image effectively, or encouraging involvement and participation. Such efforts could raise the public profile of the professional discipline by increasing awareness and appreciation of the work of the conservator. Perhaps most importantly, however, publicly promoting and advocating conservation's social value rather than its technical aspects and developments could bring about significant changes in conservation ethics and practice.

Impressions and ideas about archaeological and historical objects, and consequently perhaps also history itself, continue to be largely influenced by conservation's end products, and a large part of the public is unfamiliar with the preventive measures and conservation interventions which for a long time have remained 'behind the scenes' activities. Conservators may not only need to come up with ways to enthuse people and foster public interest in conservation but, perhaps most importantly, we need to embrace this as an integral part of our role. Among scholars and heritage professionals there may be little need to advocate the social benefit that heritage conservation generates. In today's democratic system, however, it should arguably be what the majority of

people value as significant that should inform decisions, for instance concerning the legislation on the safeguarding of heritage, the selection of what conservation projects will or will not be funded, or the curriculum of conservators' training and education. On that basis, it could be argued that fostering a public which is well informed about heritage conservation could be seen as a form of citizen empowerment, and the opposite could be considered as a kind of patronization, or in Arnstein's terms as non-participation or tokenism (1969) (this is discussed more fully in Section 2.2).

Conservation presents numerous possibilities regarding providing new perspectives on 'rediscovering' heritage material to the public. Nowadays, an increasing number of institutions demonstrate reasonable efforts to become more inviting and inclusive, adopting strategies for attracting a wider and more diverse audience. However, the focus of such attempts is usually the creation of context-based learning environments, which may not directly relate to the objects on display. On the other hand, in the case of object-centred approaches, concepts are solely conveyed through a combination of text and visual encounter with the authentic artefacts, either from a 'safe' distance or behind a showcase. Thus, it is particularly challenging for both of these approaches to truly allow visitors to comprehend and connect with heritage material while simultaneously providing an experience of 'authenticity'. Public engagement with conservation might offer further possibilities towards this aim.

1.4 Significance and Parameters of the Study

At the beginning of any piece of research, it is essential to identify the reasons that make it worthwhile as well as the parameters within which it is conducted. The following section states the significance of this study and outlines its limitations.

The present study is an investigation of the interaction of heritage audiences with conservation practice. The primary purpose is to explore the ways in which conservation interacts on various levels with museum visitors through the examination of a number of different contexts in which public engagement with conservation takes place. On a first level, the review of these case studies is significant because its findings can inform future engagement projects. More specifically, the value of the results lies in exploring the nature of participants' engagement with conservation as it occurs in each particular context. This, on the one hand, generates detailed feedback, providing opportunities for the improvement of these current and studied cases, but most importantly provides a record of what has already been done regarding communicating conservation work to the general public and what the results of these efforts have been. Also, the paucity of relevant existing studies on the impact of such events is another reason why this study is so important. Finally, the study is set out to cover selected cases from the relatively limited number of existing examples. The limited number of case studies makes the research all the more pertinent.

Regarding limitations, perhaps the most determining one is the challenge of acquiring consent from museums and heritage institutions which have been considered suitable to be investigated for this study. It appears that a very likely reason for any reservations on their part is hesitation because of the risk to the safety of the objects or a cautious self-protecting attitude against criticism of the dominant practice. Another inhibiting factor is, of course, the fact that to study public engagement in conservation, there need to be a number of ongoing examples as this research project simultaneously requires both the presence of and communicative effort from conservators together with the presence and participation of members of the public. During the implementation of this research project, it became apparent that these contexts are have been surprisingly rare, which is both a challenge but at the same time also an even greater indication that the need for public engagement is more and more prominent in the conservation field.

1.5 Thesis Structure

The present chapter sets out the scope of the study. It describes the circumstances that led to its initial conception, along with the background and motivation. It defines the research aims and objectives, states the problem and the significance of the study, and outlines the structure of the thesis, providing orientation through a brief overview of the content of each chapter.

The second chapter concerns the establishing of the intellectual framework of the study. First, it introduces the main conceptual lines that form the theoretical foundations of the research project and defines the central concepts and terms used throughout. Second, it includes a synopsis of the historical evolution of conservation theory and practice, summarising the developments that have led the field to its contemporary state. It provides an overview of the more recent ethical debates as well as the ongoing challenges. This is followed by a critical overview of past and current attempts by conservators to engage heritage audiences, and in some cases also the general public, by communicating their work and its social value in a number of different modes the issue of decision-making in the conservation of cultural heritage material is discussed along with the broader issue of heritage democratisation in relation to public engagement with heritage conservation.

The research methodology is presented in the third chapter. First, it outlines the research design and sets out the research questions. The rationale of the methodological approach is discussed along with a description of the general context of the study, explaining the parameters that led to the implementation of the specific methods. Second, data collection methods are considered, including details about the sample and the process of developing the appropriate data collection instruments (see Instruments in Appendix I). Lessons learnt from a pilot study are presented, including an introduction to its scope and limitations, a summary of the results (see also the pilot study analysis in Appendix II), and the specific revisions subsequently made to the data collection instruments. This is followed by a description of the four main case studies followed by the profile

of the research participants, introducing the specifics in each approach to engaging and identifying the main elements that synthesise each researched context. A description of the different methods employed for gathering and analysing the data from the case studies, as well as the limitations and inhibiting factors of the selected methods, is presented. Considerations around the ethical aspects of the research are outlined (see Appendix III). Finally, the methodological limitations of the research project are discussed.

Each of Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7 is dedicated to the presentation, and discussion of the research findings examined in four distinct thematic categories. The findings are based on the integrated analyses of the data sourced from the four principal case studies:

- an adult learning event at the Yorkshire Museum called *Conservation Workshop: Pieces Of The Past;*
- a temporary exhibition at the British Museum entitled *Conservation in Focus*;
- interpretation of conservation projects at Knole House, National Trust; and
- a permanent exhibition at the Ashmolean Museum entitled *Conservation Galleries*.

Chapter 4 assesses the impact of the four events on visitors' views. It includes findings on the ways visitors experienced these events, followed by the measurement of change in two distinct strands of views. The first strand concerns views on the condition and presentation of museum exhibits and the second concerns views on heritage conservation practice.

Chapter 5 is concerned with participants' connection with conservation, its perceived importance, and their views on good practice. It examines these three elements separately and then moves on to present cross-cutting analyses between them. Chapter 6 is an account of participants' views on authenticity, originality and integrity as these emerged spontaneously from their responses to the visitor surveys conducted in the four engagement events studied. Finally, Chapter 7 is concerned with the subject of access and presents an analysis of participants' views on decision-making and participation in relation to conservation practice.

Chapter 8 brings together all the findings of the analyses presented in the previous chapters, summarising their conclusions and discussing them on a broader level. This is followed by an evaluation of the research by returning to the aims and objectives presented in Chapter 1 and reflecting on how these were tackled, considering the implications of the findings for the future and putting forward recommendations for designing engagement events based on the lessons learned throughout the process. Finally, possibilities for further research on the subject are identified, followed by an account of the overall conclusions based on a final overarching summary and evaluation of the research study.

Chapter 2. Intellectual Framework

This chapter provides the intellectual framework for this research. It defines the context and focus of the study and the basic terminology used throughout. It presents an outline of the historical evolution of conservation policy and practice to provide a background for better understanding of what has given rise to issues discussed in the chapters to follow. It considers contemporary conservation principles and codes of ethics that heritage professionals currently adopt and apply on heritage assets, mainly within the British and European context, as well as the main challenges they are faced with, and places those within the ongoing debate over the last two decades around the social value of culture. Some representative examples of past and current attempts to engage people with conservation are reviewed, providing a general overview of this professional and academic field. The chapter continues by discussing the prevalent attitudes towards conservation, as well as the role of heritage experts, concerning how various trends in policy and international approaches are feeding into current practices. Finally, it examines public engagement in conservation within the broader framework of the heritage democratisation process.

2.1 Introduction

Substantial progress has been made over the past decades in the domains of public and community archaeology (see for instance Chirikure & Pwiti 2008, Kuper 2003, Damm 2005, Marshall 2002, McManamon 1994; 2000, Pwiti 1996, Smith & Waterton 2009, Tully 2007, Waterton & Watson 2010, Watkins 2000), as well as public consultation and participation in area conservation and town planning (see for example Aas et al. 2005, Cohen 1999, Department for Culture, Media and Sport 2001, English Heritage 2000, Hampton 2005, Hodges & Watson 2000, Strange and Whitney 2003, Townshend & Pendlebury 1999). There has also been a plethora of publications on the relationship between people (often referred to as the public, audiences, visitors, non-experts, communities, or the society) and the museum (see Crooke 2007, Hooper-Greenhill 1994a, Macdonald 2003, Merriman 1991, Smith 2014, to name only a few), providing a useful platform for looking specifically at the relatively unexplored relationship between museum conservation and people. While during the recent years, there have been some serious efforts to communicate museum conservation (for instance through HLF funded projects and other examples detailed in Section 2.5) as well as some pioneering case studies of community consultation and participation in conservation decision-making (see Sully 2007, Sully, Raymond & Hoete 2014, Wharton 2008; 2011), it is argued that the field of museum conservation has not managed to keep up with these developments, in terms of engagement with and involvement of people in its current policy and practice, as conservation as a profession often remains 'remarkably invisible' (Brooks 2013, 3). This becomes evident through the profound lack of research publications on the subject, as well as the absence of dedicated sections in standard conservation textbooks. A representative example of this

is the recently published *Conservation of Cultural Heritage: Key Principles and Approaches* (Szczepanowska 2013). While this publication touches upon issues like culturally dependent approaches to conservation, it is limited to references to intangible heritage and indigenous communities, without any mention of the subject of public engagement or people's involvement in contemporary practices.

The significance of incorporating communication into the role of the conservator has been discussed for over a decade now, and there has been some attempt to open conservation out to the public. However, even though most conservators seem to be recognising the need for better communicating their work and there is increasing advocacy towards public engagement and participation (Jones 2002, 20), it seems that taking this beyond endorsement is still not the mainstream practice. As will be shown from reviewing current examples later in this chapter, in most cases the focus is the dissemination of information by conservators towards the general public, rather than people's active involvement. These observed tensions between dissemination vs. active participation, and the 'public' vs. the 'experts' (for instance Schofield 2014) have been widely discussed and debated in the domain of cultural heritage management, and in the wider sphere of the humanities and social sciences, especially in post-colonial environments (see Smith 2004; 2006, Waterton 2005, Nicholas & Hollowell 2007, to name only a few). However, the existing literature directly relevant to heritage conservation practice is somewhat limited and focuses mainly on the built environment (see for example Lu 2009), while there is little previous research on assessing the impact and outcomes of engagement projects specifically in the field of museum conservation.

The aim of this research is to explore heritage audiences' views on conservation and describe the effects of some of the current communication attempts by conservators and heritage institutions on their notions regarding the conservation process. The study seeks to explain the dynamics of the changing relations between heritage audiences and practitioners, as these evolve in the museum environment. However, before considering the interaction between the two parties, it is important that the language used is made explicit as to what it is intended to signify. Key concepts and the meaning of terms that are considered central to this study are discussed in the following Section 2.2.

2.2 Key Concepts and Meanings

This section provides an explanation of the key concepts used throughout the study. It was decided to incorporate selected term definitions into the intellectual framework chapter because these are considered to be fundamental to the understanding of the intellectual context of this research.

Throughout human history, material cultural objects, 'things', have been kept and cared for, by individuals, families and communities. These things vary from personal everyday items to art objects and monuments. They can be natural or artificial. They can be of personal or collective

significance and in the form of a single movable item or entire collections, archives, structures, buildings and landscapes. Naturally, the origins of conservation practice are rooted in the propensity of humans to selectively retain what they care about. Moreover, what is maintained is not restricted to the material dimension, but can also be of impalpable nature, what is often referred to as intangible or living heritage, defined in the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage as the 'practices, representations, expressions, as well as the knowledge and skills' (UNESCO 2003). Manifestations of intangible cultural heritage may include oral traditions and expressions, language, performing arts, social practices, rituals and festive events, knowledge and practices or craftsmanship. It has also been argued that all heritage is, in fact, intangible, as heritage can only be understood as such through values attributed to it (Smith 2009, 6). Although it is clear that intangible heritage informs material cultural expressions within its given environment and that all human-made things have intangible aspects, this study has a focus on the material aspects of cultural remains. While acknowledging that conservation of the physical aspects ought to respect its cultural and social attributes, this research concentrates on the cultural material that humans tend to maintain and that may eventually become the object of conservation, specifically within the context of museum institutions. Museums are defined as buildings in which objects of historical, scientific, artistic, or cultural interest are stored and exhibited (Oxford English Dictionary 2014). In this study, the term museum includes historic properties housing collections of objects and furniture.

Both conservation practice itself, as well as the language used to describe all actions and concepts involved in it, vary greatly between cultures around the world and often even within them. In an attempt to eliminate confusion over terminology in the European context and reach an agreement on the use of conservation vocabulary, the European Committee for Standardization has produced a document defining the key terms commonly used in the field of what it refers to as 'conservation of cultural property' intending to replace conflicting national standards. According to this Standard, the term object refers to a single manifestation of tangible immovable and movable cultural heritage and may include artefacts, sites, buildings, etc. The word value is used to signify one aspect of importance that individuals or a society assign(s) to an object. The types of value may include artistic, symbolic, historical, social, economic, scientific, technological and so on, while all assigned values are subject to change according to circumstance (see Avrami 2009; Avrami et al. 2000; De la Torre 2002). Moreover the word significance refers to a combination of all the values assigned to an object, while the term context is used to describe the past, present and future circumstances affecting significance, in which an object is created, built, used, worshipped, found, excavated, kept, displayed, and so on (CEN 2012). These terms are used with these particular meanings throughout this study.

The concept of heritage as it is currently perceived, has been developed in nineteenth century Europe (Smith 2006, 17). It emerged within the context of modernity and contemporary with the

early development of modern conservation (Walsh 1992, 70). Since then, the definition of heritage has continually been 'under construction', accordingly adjusted to the values of its time and social context. According to current notions, the worth of heritage is placed beyond its capacity to provide an insight into the past, but lies in its present and potential impact: 'heritage is not simply about the past; it is vitally about the present and future' (Council of Europe 2009: 8). Nevertheless, no matter how specific or broad experts' descriptions are, what people value is often different from official definitions and can vary from 'the outstanding and the iconic to everyday items and places' (Schofield 2010). As Smith argues, age, scale, monumentality and aesthetics are not qualities that constitute a site, building, place or artefact to be regarded as heritage. In an attempt to emphasise the problematic views of what is commonly perceived as heritage, she claims that 'there is no such thing as heritage', but there is a self-referential 'Authorized Heritage Discourse' (AHD) dependent on experts' claims and constructions of national identity and class. She antithetically defines heritage as a 'cultural practice involved in the construction and regulation of a range of values and understandings' (2006, 11) and as a 'social and cultural process that mediates a sense of cultural, social and political change' (2006, 84). Waterton has shown how these problematic views around heritage underlie public policy and contribute to processes of marginalisation (2010). As Lowenthal had pointed out, unlike history that is for everyone, heritage is an exclusive rather than an inclusive notion. It supplies a perspective of viewing the past as an unshared possession, by providing status and a shared purpose to an elite through altering history, passing down 'myths of origin and continuance' (1998, 128). Museums as institutions presenting heritage to the 'public' have been widely discussed, among others, also in terms of their role as potential zones of 'contact' (see for example Clifford 1997), negotiating and shaping identities (Macdonald 2003), constructing varied meanings (Falk 2004), and reinforcing pre-existing views and values (Smith 2014).

By implication, defining the aim of heritage conservation seems to be an even more perplexing and precarious task. It has been said for example that, as the word conservation might suggest, its role has fundamentally been to preserve the things that conservatives thought of as 'traditional' and representative of a national identity (Walsh 1992, 70). Notions related to defining conservation together with conservators' perceived role have undergone major revisions during the past two decades, and are still developing. Previous definitions, as 'conservation is the technology of preservation' (Ward 1986 in Caple 2000, 32) are currently considered too narrow. According to Feilden, conservation implied keeping in safety or preserving the existing state of a heritage resource from destruction or change, i.e., the action taken to prevent decay and to prolong life (1982: 3). In 1994, in the Nara Document on Authenticity, conservation was defined as: 'all efforts designed to understand cultural heritage, know its history and meaning, ensure its material safeguard and, as required, its presentation, restoration and enhancement' (Larson 1995, xxv). In 2000 according to the Canadian Association for Conservation of Cultural Property, the word conservation referred to 'all actions aimed at the safeguarding of cultural property for the future' (CAC 2000,13). Similar definitions have also been adopted by other major heritage organisations,

often placing emphasis on the responsibility towards future generations. More recent definitions also include references to the present, such as the one provided by the European Committee for Standardization, according to which the word conservation refers to 'all the measures and actions aimed at safeguarding cultural heritage while respecting its significance, including its accessibility to present and future generations'. Also, conservation, as it is defined here, includes preventive conservation, remedial conservation and restoration, based on documentary and material evidence (ICOM-CC 2008; CEN 2012). In the UK, English Heritage (now Historic England)'s *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance* document has more recently defined conservation as 'the process of managing change to a significant place in its setting in ways that will best sustain its heritage values, while recognising opportunities to reveal or reinforce those values for present and future generations' (English Heritage 2008, 71). Moreover, in the National Planning Policy Framework, conservation is defined as 'the process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and where appropriate enhances its significance' (Department for Communities and Local Government 2012, 51). Hence, conservation is about actively sustaining the intangible as much as the tangible attributes of material culture. According to the strategic plan set out by the UK's Institute for Conservation, conservation is 'not only essential to the continued survival of this heritage but directly helps to unlock its stories, reveal hidden meanings and encourage participation and emotional interaction. It is fundamental to defining cultural heritage for people and is crucial in interpreting and caring for the material world' (ICON 2012, 2).

The preservation of historic objects and the historic environment is currently known as conservation, but there are several other expressions commonly (and often mistakenly) used to describe this complex activity. According to a broad definition, conservation refers to all the measures taken in order to preserve original material and in some cases also to maintain later additions or alterations that can be considered historically, socially or scientifically significant (Oddy 1994, 3). The term restoration, which is one the most frequently misused terms as a synonym for conservation, concerns the process of returning an object or structure to its presumed original appearance or function (Oddy 1994, 4). The term preventive or defensive conservation is frequently employed and is increasingly being used both in the fields of historic objects and buildings conservation (Stubbs 2009, 125). According to one of the definitions given by the IIC-CG Code of Ethics, the term refers to 'all actions taken to retard deterioration and prevent damage to cultural property through the provision of optimal conditions of storage, use and handling' (IIC-GC & CAPC 1989). Remedial conservation, as opposed to preventive conservation, which primarily regards the control of environmental factors in museums, refers to actions involving direct interaction between the conservator and the conservation objects. It has been suggested that the term conservation is used to refer only to conservation in the broad sense, while restoration is used to refer to conservation in the narrow sense (Munoz-Vinas 2005, 15). The terms preservation, conservation and restoration, are in broad sense equivalent in some cultures, signifying the 'modern way of maintaining living contact with cultural works of the past' (Philippot 1996, 268).

Nevertheless, in the restricted academic context and the professional domain, the distinction between the terms conservation, restoration and other central concepts such as reconstruction, as well as the practical implementation of ethical principles are considered fundamental as they form the basis of conservation practice (see for example Bold 2013).

Based on the above recent definitions, part of the conservator's role, before making any decisions regarding the object of conservation, is to assess its values and significance. According to Caple, it is crucial through conservation investigation 'to uncover why the preserved object is important, what is important about it and how it can be preserved. Thus although preservation may be the core of what conservators do, it does not define it fully' (2000, 32). An item becomes the object of conservation not only because of its aesthetic, monetary or other expert-attributed values but primarily because it is meaningful to the society that has accredited it as such. Therefore, people's informed participation in discussions around conservation matters is not merely something that would help raise the public profile of the profession, but in fact an intrinsic part of the conservators' professional responsibility to assess social value.

It has been suggested that instead of the word conservators, the phrase conservation professionals is often used to include conservation scientists, conservation administrators, and others who may not be performing conservation treatments of cultural material but have peripheral roles in the broader field (Clavir 2002, 3). In addition, even though classical theories view conservation as a 'truth enforcement operation' (Munoz- Vinaz 2003) and consequentially conservators have been controversially defined as the 'professionals involved in the process of preservation, investigation and revelation' of the objects' 'truth', there are several other experts who facilitate in various ways the process of conservation (Caple 2000, 33). Even so, it is still arguable whether specialization and interdisciplinarity are adequate conditions to achieve the aim of conservation as set forth by the UKIC which is to reveal the true nature or integrity of an object (1983), since truth as a concept has always been extremely problematic to determine, while integrity is a highly contested term also. Their use and meaning in relation to conservation are discussed in Chapter 6.

According to the New Oxford English Dictionary, an expert is 'a person who has a comprehensive and authoritative knowledge of or skill in a particular area' (2010), in this case in the field of cultural heritage. The term 'heritage expert' is commonly used to indicate specialised professionals, such as archaeologists, architects, historians, planners, conservators, landscape architects, environmental managers, engineers and so on. It usually refers to individuals who are formally trained and experienced in a particular field related to heritage, while it can also refer to international organisations as well as to local or central government authorities.

The word public is a much more challenging one to define. In discussions about engagement and outreach, the term usually refers to those outside the heritage professional domain, the 'non-

experts', thus characterising the public as those members of the society who do not possess the knowledge that 'experts' a priori do. This description, however, establishes a rather simplistic dual perspective of those who possess the knowledge and the rest who need to be educated by them.

So far in the discussion, the term public has been defined in contradistinction to the term experts, using the lack or possession of specialised knowledge as the primary reference point. This definition of experts, however, seems rather problematic, as the contemporary perception of cultural heritage does not only include museum objects, monuments and historic sites but is broadening up to include more aspects of what people value. In the cultural value debate concerning policies and guidelines, however, the term public is usually used to refer to the various stakeholders, meaning the parties who have a special, but topical, interest. It becomes apparent that there is no such thing as a single public, nor can the public be identified in particular groups.

Furthermore, the term community has been used and considered in a many different ways in museum and heritage studies. The notion of community groups has been employed to discuss the involvement of perceived as distinct ethnic and cultural groups in the formation of museum collections, but also to examine the development of an awareness of common responses to heritage exhibitions (Crooke 2007, 7). In her exploration of the dynamics of the relationship between communities and museums, Crooke has suggested that the notion of the community may be used as a means of symbolising group identity, as part of public policy, and as a form of social action (2007, 4). It is understood nevertheless, that at least for this study, this seemingly more narrow term of a community group can only describe an inhomogeneous group of individuals, with numerous different demands and various views, which can rarely be voiced in agreement. The notion of community can be constructed for example by location and experience and yet comprise different sets of values and interests.

Finally, it should be made clear regarding both language and meaning, what is denoted by the phrase public engagement, a term more and more frequently encountered within a variety of sectors like academia and several professional contexts. Public engagement practice is, at least in the UK, a growing trend in many sectors, including those of heritage, science, education, and research. According to the definition given by the UK's National Coordinating Center for Public Engagement, the term public engagement refers to 'the myriad of ways in which the activity and benefits of higher education and research can be shared with the public. It is by definition a two-way process, involving interaction and listening, with the goal of generating mutual benefit' (2013).

Other types of engagement - for instance 'civic' or 'community' engagement - are part of the same family. What they all have in common is an aspiration to connect the work of universities and research institutes with society. This definition may also apply to heritage organisations and institutions like museums that inherently involve various forms of communication with their visitors

and also see themselves, and are considered by many, as facilitators of informal learning (see for example Hooper-Greenhill 1991, 1994b, 2007a, and Kelly 2007). Also, museums have also been specifically discussed regarding their potential as platforms for the development of community engagement (see for example Crooke 2006) and for the promotion of sociocultural diversity (Sandell 2003; 2007).

Besides the benefits of knowledge dissemination or facilitation, the promotion of social and cultural inclusiveness, and the enablement of participation that have been discussed in relation to heritage and museums, the main argument for public engagement is often linked to economic sustainability for threatened domains as the humanities and social sciences research, in a climate of growing uncertainty and budget cuts. However, perhaps the most fundamental argument for the importance and relevance of public engagement in the archaeological discipline (and consequentially in conservation) is epistemological and central to the rationale of interdisciplinary practice itself (Wylie 2012).

It has been attempted to define some key concepts in this domain to provide a more accurate and useful framework for research. In the article *A Typology of Public Engagement Mechanisms*, it is suggested, for instance, that the disparate area of public participation has been rephrased as public engagement, and three distinct activities are identified within this domain: public communication, public consultation, and public participation. They also suggest that public engagement, in its different forms, is enacted through a variety of poorly defined structured mechanisms, with a hindering effect on research and practice (Rowe & Frewer 2005, 84).

Public engagement could be viewed as an essential step towards public participation. However, what constitutes genuine participation and empowerment and under what conditions these can be achieved is a complex issue. The complexity is illustrated, for example, in some critical approaches to recent participation practice included in *Participation – The new Tyranny* (edited by Cooke and Kothari 2001). In this publication, it is proposed, among others, that by being uncritically seen as a 'good thing', participation becomes 'an act of faith' (Cleaver 2001, 36) thus losing its potential for empowerment. Furthermore, the issue of diffusing responsibility through participation is discussed both from a social psychology viewpoint (Cooke 2001) and from the perspective of Anthropology to Development, suggesting that through participation the risk for the consequences of a project is transferred from the practitioners to the 'beneficiaries' (Henkel & Stirrat 2001).

Much earlier, in the framework of social reforms debate in the 70s, a typology of eight levels of participation has been discussed by Arnstein in her paper A Ladder of Citizen Participation (1969). Her work is still relevant to the current discussion about public engagement as it provides a critical perspective on what constitutes genuine participation by highlighting the differences between 'citizen power', 'tokenism', and 'nonparticipation' as can be seen below.
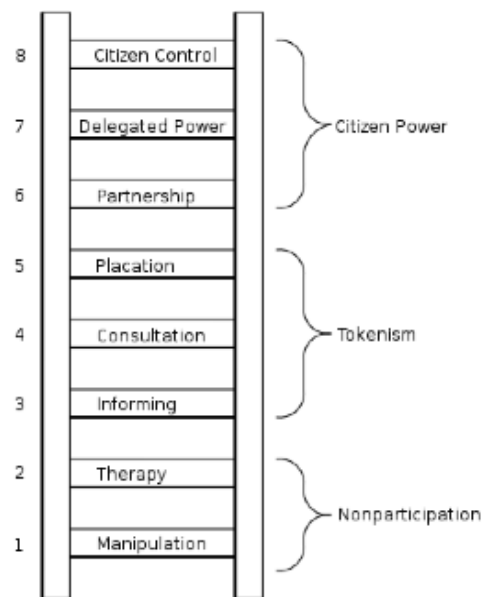
Figure 1 Eight rungs on the ladder of citizen participation (Arnstein1969, 217)

In Arnstein's analysis, citizen participation is viewed as a categorical term for citizen power, in the sense that only through genuine participation are citizens enabled to become deliberately included in determining how information is disseminated, goals and policies are set and so on, and thus share in the benefits of a prosperous society (1969, 216).

Specifically in relation to conservation, it has been argued that during the 1970s, along with the beginnings of a focus on 'community' in the field and the emergence of public engagement with heritage and archaeology (Smith & Waterton 2009, 25), a naturalized conservation ethic emanated in consequence of the notions about heritage that were shaped at this time. This conservation ethic is considered by Smith and Waterton to be 'technocratic and top-down, designed to deal primarily with a nationally-based understanding of heritage and the past' and drawing 'explicitly on the rights of future generations as a commonsense principle' (2009, 27). Again, the strain between 'experts' and the 'public' (or in Arnstein's terms the 'powerholders' and the 'have-nots') is observed within this notion that through the possession of knowledge and authority a skilled elite is fulfilling society's obligation towards future generations.

2.3 A Synopsis of Conservation's Historical Evolution

Conservation is an inherently human activity that almost all people undertake for material objects or constructions that they value highly (Caple 2000, 32). The care of cultural heritage has a long history within traditions of fixing and mending objects and in individual restorations of artworks (Pye 2001). The actions of mending, reusing, and repairing broken, damaged, or worn out objects appear to be contemporary with the creation of the first physical artefacts and the beginning of material culture (Clavir 2002, 4). Repair dates back to when *Homo sapiens* learned how to make

useful things out of the natural materials in their environment, and it primarily refers to the mending of utilitarian objects. However, in the case of non-utilitarian objects such as decorative items, the mending process has come to be referred to as 'restoration'. Furthermore, changes in fashion, taste or politics are also reasons why objects may have undergone alterations in the past (Oddy 1992, 8). Archaeological finds indicate that human efforts extend back over several millennia, in attempts to preserve, repair and restore various objects or even modify them, either to prolong their usability or alter their appearance for other reasons. Artefacts bearing indications of such processes in antiquity are held by or exhibited in several institutions. Some of the earliest ceramic repairs, for example, date back to 6500 years ago and can be seen at the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford and the National Archaeological Museum in Athens. Other examples are for instance, the repaired Bronze Age Dowris bucket in the British Museum, the six times re-gilded bronze head of Minerva in the Roman Baths Museum, Bath (Oddy 1992, 8), several Sicilian bronze statues restored in the sixth century BC, and a Greek figurine of a bird that was broken and restored during the eighth century BC tale (Lechtman & Steinberg 1970, 15) to name only a few.

The concept of cultural heritage has come to be understood as a much broader one than that of cultural property, and in contemporary usage includes tangible and intangible culture as well as natural heritage (see for example Smith & Akagawa 2008, and UNESCO 2011). Furthermore, the subdivision of cultural property (i.e. tangible evidence of cultures such as antiquities, fine arts, buildings, and monuments) into movable and immovable objects has been debated over several decades (for example see discussion in Jokilehto 2015). A distinction in approaches to conservation for different forms of cultural heritage is now accepted as being dependent both on material form and cultural context. Arguably philosophical approaches and significant historical developments in conservation theory and practice, whether for movable or immovable cultural heritage, have significantly influenced one another, for instance Brandi's Theory of Restoration (1963) influence on the Venice Charter (ICOMOS 1964) – developed in the context of fine art restoration and conservation but then more widely interpreted in the Charter (Jokilehto 1998).

Moreover, the distinction between museum objects and buildings is not always clear cut or immutable but contingent on circumstances. For example, the Caryatids of the Erechtheum temple built on the Acropolis of Athens c. 421 – 406 BC were initially created as pillars to support the entablature of the building (and thus were immovable architectural elements) but were later detached from the building itself and further separated to form parts of two different museum collections (the British Museum and the Acropolis Museum) as movable free-standing sculptures (see discussion in Koutromanou 2011).

Similar is the widely debated case of the Parthenon sculptures, which have also been redefined due to historical events, shifting from architectural elements to museum objects. There are numerous other examples internationally that show that the distinction between object and building can often be a challenging one to make. Also, revolutionary ideas introduced by thinkers and practitioners in architectural conservation as well as theoretical concepts such as that of authenticity are, arguably,

inherently transferable to advances of thinking in conservation of the movable cultural property. Thus, while this study focuses on objects and museum conservation, it is important to also refer to prevailing principles in the wider field of heritage conservation.

Historically, three distinct approaches have been identified: a) the traditional approach to conservation treatments, the 'romantic restoration' formed during the Italian Renaissance and further developed in the nineteenth century (e.g. Schinkel, Scott, Mérimée, Viollet-le-Duc), b) the 'conservation movement' advocating material authenticity and documentary value (e.g. Ruskin and Morris), and finally c) the modern conservation theories based on critical evaluation of aesthetic, evidential, historical, social and use values of cultural heritage (e.g. Riegl and Brandi) (Jokilehto 1986). Since the 19th century, different ideas and philosophical approaches emerging through often radical political and social changes, as well as challenges like globalisation continue to transform the meaning of heritage and conservation thinking (see Glendinning 2013), principles and practice (see Emerick 2014).

The earliest written evidence for the conservation of antiquities comes from Pliny the Elder in the first century AD, although the actual techniques used are not known. The foundations for modern conservation were established during the Renaissance and the following centuries with the rise of antiquarianism (Sease 1996, 157). The formation of private art and antiquities collections for study purposes during the Renaissance and Baroque ages as well as the establishment of the first public antiquities collections following the Renaissance in Europe resulted in high demand for the 'restoration' of antiquities and artworks (Jokilehto 1999, 22). Restoration developed rapidly, dictated by the taste and aesthetics of the time. Cellini gives the first written account of the methods and thoughts of one of these Renaissance restorers. Subsequent excavations at sites like Pompeii and Herculaneum led to the need for techniques to preserve, rather than restore, the material unearthed (Sease 1996, 157). This was essentially the starting point of the development of the conservation profession in the 15th century. However, at these early times, restoration work was often undertaken either by restorers-artists such as Donatello commissioned by the Medici family to restore antique fragments in Florence, Lorenzetto commissioned by Cardinal Andrea Della Valle in Rome and several others (Jokilehto 1986, 35) or craftsmen who were very secretive about the methods that they used and the findings they discovered during the process. Craftsmen made similar objects themselves and developed their own materials and techniques aiming to disguise the fact that the objects they 'renovated' had ever been in need of treatment, while artists treated the objects as material for their own work. The attitude adopted at the time by sculptors toward crumbling work has been described as that of a 'conqueror', reflecting the ethos of that society (Marijnissen 1996, 278). Parts of statues were freely used for new creations, for example rebuilding artworks and artefacts based on aesthetics of the times was common practice, as was the addition or removal of parts, painting over and so on (Oddy 1992, 9). This type of restoration was part of a sculptor's regular activity and could even be used as a test to prove the skill of artists (Jokilehto 1999,

23). Essentially, the dominant conception of conservation at that time concerned major interventions, such as completing fragmented artworks aiming to renew and 'beautify' and constitute them more pleasing by rebuilding all missing parts or repainting.

During the eighteenth century, conservation was still in the hands of restorers-artists. As a result, the treatment was often as aggressive as the pathology itself. In addition to the natural decay that time brings, there was also destruction due to restoration interventions. Rather than theoretical or logical, interventions were more empirical and were far from the modern scientific approach to conservation. Furthermore, based on what is considered good practice today, an additional problem was the great secrecy regarding the materials and techniques used, which mainly occurred due to the competition between professional groups (Oddy 1992, 9). At the time, the dominant idea concerning the practice of conservation was that a piece of art could easily be improved and renewed with some aesthetic intervention. However, it was then that the idea that interventions should be recorded if not obvious on the object was developed. Cavaceppi, one of the most prominent restorers of sculpture in Rome, believed that the restorer ought to respect the original intention of the artist and have knowledge of art history and mythology by consulting experts in these fields, but when unsure display the statue without completing it. He also suggested that new parts used in restorations should be made from the same material as the original sculpture (Jokilehto 1986, 89). These beliefs are very close to the contemporary principles regarding restoration interventions. The origins of conservation are associated with those of the modern historical consciousness of the Enlightenment, which matured towards the end of that century (Philippot 1996, 268).

At the end of the eighteenth and in the early nineteenth century, scientists became increasingly interested in problems concerning archaeological materials. The contributions of these scientists along with the field techniques developed by nineteenth- and twentieth-century archaeologists, such as Schliemann, Petrie and Carter, coalesced to form the discipline of modern archaeological conservation (Sease 1996, 157). Conservation's scope and the importance placed on it have been significantly broadened during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries when the fields of art and science came closer to one another. The scientific awakening of the nineteenth century was the starting point for the development of conservation of material culture, but it was not until the twentieth century that scientific conservation was developed and considerably advanced in the form that it exists today (Plenderleith 1998, 129). Michael Faraday began carrying out analytical and deterioration research for the National Gallery in London, studying the methods of cleaning paintings that demonstrated the damaging effect on works of art. Soon after, in the 1870s Louis Pasteur carried out analytical studies of paint while, in 1921, a scientific department was established at the British Museum (Stoner 2005, 41). The nineteenth century was also the time when the earliest legislation and policies to preserve and record heritage material were inaugurated in Europe. The fact that such statutes were put in place reflected and was the result of a consensus of

informed opinion, which had never existed before (Hunter 1981, 25). The basis of modern archaeological conservation was formed by Friedrich Rathgen, also named as the father of this field as he was intimately involved in the development and application of chemical and physical methods for the conservation of antiquities as early as 1888 as the first Director of the Chemical Laboratory of the Royal Museums of Berlin (Gilberg 1987). Rathgen was a pioneer in attempting to codify the methods used to treat antiquities in his laboratory in Berlin's State Museum and published the results in his manual entitled *The Preservation of Antiquities* in 1898, translated into English in 1905 (Plenderleith 1998, 129).

John Ruskin was one of the most formative of influences on conservation theorists. In his work, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (originally published in1849) and *The Stones of Venice* (originally published in1851), he expressed his strong appreciation for the virtues and values of ancient buildings. He supported his appreciation for the past so passionately that it was also accompanied by a certain disregard for the present. He believed that nothing present should disturb the original remnants from the past, especially if these remnants were Gothic buildings. For Ruskin, among these disturbing agents were the people trying to rebuild damaged buildings (Muñoz-Viñas 2005, 3). Ruskin argued for the material truth of historic architecture and conceived the authentic monument and memorial of the past as the nation's heritage (Jokilehto 1986, 305). He suggested that to learn anything from the past and have any pleasure in being remembered in the future; we need memory and something to which to attach our memories (Jokilehto 1986, 310). Ruskin associated the notion of authenticity or 'truth' with the material, which he considered of greater moral importance than form. Thus, he felt that any intervention to the fabric of monuments, except basic repair, as immoral. This stance engendered a new ethical interpretation of history and heritage, linking past generations with the future, based on the notion that people in the present have a custodial responsibility and no right to intervene to monuments, as these belong partly to those who made them and partly to the future generations of mankind (Glendinning 2013, 121).

A significant contribution to conservation ethics and theoretical foundations was that of William Morris. According to his views, the authentic structure and appearance of any object should not be changed or altered in any way. Influenced by the writings of John Ruskin (Miele 2005, 34), the Society for the Protection of Ancient Building (SPAB), was founded in 1877 by Morris and Phillip Webb in reaction to the Gothic Revival and the destructive 'restoration' of medieval buildings that was prevalent in architectural practice in Victorian times (Miele 2005, 58). The Manifesto was issued the same year recommending protection rather than restoration, as well as resisting tampering with the fabric or ornament, and formed the basis of the Society's philosophical foundations (see overview in Miele 2005).

Another major theorist of conservation was the French architect Viollet-le-Duc. His notion of *Restauration* was summarised in *Dictionnaire raisonné de l'architecture française du XIe au XVIe siècle* (1967).

He believed that it was not only legitimate but also an objective to restore a damaged building in accordance with its 'true nature' by filling-in-the-blanks, aiming to a reach a 'pristine' state even if that might have never existed in the past (Muñoz-Viñas 2005, 4). His ideas were in direct opposition to the ideas of Ruskin and Morris mentioned earlier. Viollet-le-Duc did not speak of conserving the original material but spoke about 'restorations', and his intention was that the new work should respect the original forms, where building elements were to be renewed (Jokilehto 1999, 281).

Returning to museum conservation, critical progress was made after 1890, by the work conducted by Georg Rosenberg in Denmark on environmental control, and in particular on the conservation of organic materials and metal (Berducou 1996, 257). In the field of archives and paper conservation, there was a conference as early as 1898, and there are various examples of collaborative committees composed of scientists and scholars in this area at the turn of the century (Caldararo 1987).

Another influential figure in conservation thinking for material culture in Europe was art historian Alois Riegl. He was appointed to develop a policy for the Austrian government, to guide state practice in the treatment of ancient monuments. He authored *The Modern Cult Of Monuments: Its Essence And Its Development* in 1903, an essay originally published in German, where he proposed a number of values to be taken into account for the conservation of monuments. With the term 'monument' he referred to any object, ranging from a structure to a paper sheet (1996, 70), to which 'modern subjects' ascribe individual values, such as artistic and historical. He also introduced the term 'deliberate monuments', which refers to objects created with the intention of commemorating important events or deeds (Riegl 1996, 69). Furthermore, he pointed out that certain preferences and overall attitudes towards conservation are shaped depending on the values that each society holds and attributes to certain objects (Riegl 1996, 78). Riegl's prescient contribution to conservation thinking in Europe is particularly relevant to the background of this study in supporting one of its central arguments: that conservation of material culture is socially and culturally dependent, underlining the importance of looking into the public engagement process.

Objects and museum conservation as a professional field developed in the 20th century out of art and archaeology restoration, but unlike restoration, conservation was 'based on the scientific and technical analysis of deterioration with a view to stabilising cultural property' (Clavir 2002, xxi). The development of archaeological conservation as a specialised discipline separate from archaeology did not occur simultaneously worldwide. In Britain, these developments took place much earlier than in the United States for example, due to British archaeology's keen interest in method and techniques and the creative input of certain archaeologists, conservation chemists, and conservators during the late 1800s through the mid-20th century (Johnson 1993, 253). In 1922, the British Museum Research Laboratory was set up, aiming to tackle the rapid deterioration of

artefacts during their storage in subway stations during World War I, using the work of Rathgen on the development and application of chemical and physical methods for archaeological conservation (Gilberg 1987) as the basis for the original research (Oddy in Johnson 1993, 256). At the beginning of the 20th century in London, chemists were sought by archaeologists to study and combat the causes of deterioration in objects excavated in Egypt. The first general works on the conservation of antiquities were published before World War II and London's Institute of Archaeology introduced education in conservation, intended initially for archaeology students, and later for future specialists in archaeological conservation (Berducou 1996, 257).

Science came to dominate the methodology of the treatment of objects, leading up to a significant shift from restoration towards scientific conservation in the 1930s, which came to represent a pivotal era (Clavir 1998, 3). In 1927, the chemist R .J. Gettens was invited to join the staff of the Fogg Museum, Harvard University, to be joined, in 1928, by G. L. Stout. In 1931 a research laboratory was officially incorporated as a department of the British Museum. In 1932, a technical journal of conservation studies entitled *Technical Studies in the Field of the Fine Arts* was founded by the Fogg Museum (Clavir 1998, 3). Scientists in Europe had already been working individually towards tackling deterioration of collections (Caldararo 1987), but it was not until 1930 that the first international symposium on works of art organised by the International Museums Office of the League of Nations took place in Rome, where scientific preventive conservation, particularly environmental control, were discussed. This conference is reported to have convinced the participants of the utility of laboratory research as an auxiliary to studies in the history of art and museology. During this period science become internationally acknowledged as a preferred methodology for solving problems in the preservation of historic cultural materials (Clavir 1998, 3).

The conservation of cities during the interwar era in Europe gave rise to new philosophical issues and brought about significant developments in conservation theory. Both, the Athens Conference (1931) on the restoration of historic buildings, organised by the International Museums Office, and the Athens Charter, drafted by Le Corbusier at the fourth Assembly of the International Congresses on Modern Architecture (1933) published in 1941, introduced the concept of international heritage (ICOMOS 2015). The Athens Charter put great emphasis on the importance of urban planning and the spiritual, cultural and economic value of architectural heritage in specific, and had a significant impact on conservation thought by incorporating the notion of respect for historical evidence and the development of architectural monuments (Jokilehto 1999).

Art historian, Cesare Brandi, was appointed as the first director of the Central Institute for Restoration in Rome in 1938, where he became aware of some of the issues conservators are faced with (Vinas 2005, 6). During these years he developed his theories on conservation and restoration, later published in his *Theory of Restoration* (1963), a theoretical essay in which he suggested a set of principles for the restoration of the aesthetical integrity of works of art (Brandi 1996, 231).

The rapid growth of conservation professional organisations, publications, journals, newsletters, both, internationally and locally, has spearheaded the development of the conservation profession, both practically and theoretically. An important role in this development played the International Council of Museums (ICOM), created in 1946, as a non-governmental organisation (NGO) maintaining formal relations with UNESCO and having a consultative status with the United Nations' Economic and Social Council. In 1947, UNESCO was founded and had promoted successive conventions and other instruments for the conservation of the cultural heritage. In 1949 the magazine *Museum* was first published. The first International Conservation Organisations developed in Britain during that period as well.

Conservation was formally recognised as a profession in 1950, when the International Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (IIC) was founded in the UK as a 'permanent organization to co-ordinate and improve the knowledge, methods, and working standards needed to protect and preserve precious materials of all kinds' (IIC 2011). It is claimed that the earliest usage of the term 'conservation' in the English language (in relation to movable material culture) was from the IIC at the beginning of the 50s (Hodges 1987). Soon after, the first scientific magazine for *Conservation Studies in Conservation* is published in 1952. A few years later, Plenderleith, previously Keeper of the Research Laboratory at the British Museum, wrote one of the most comprehensive books about conservation of museum objects entitled *The Conservation of Antiquities and Works of Art: Treatment, Repair, and Restoration*, first published in 1956, which was a pivotal contribution to the establishment of conservation as field of scientific research both in the UK and internationally. In 1956, the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (later ICCROM) was established in Rome and Plenderleith was appointed its first director (ICCROM 2016).

2.4 Contemporary Principles, Ethics and Debates

The ethics and values of professional conservation developed out of the tradition of restoration as western society's conceptual environment changed. Conservation developed into a distinct field through the evolution of a pre-existing area of practice during the 1930s, a period of conceptual change when the scientific model was increasingly acknowledged. These changes in societal values led conservators to hold their present ethical principles, values and beliefs. Two fundamental ideas in conservation that emerged during this time are the belief in preserving the integrity of the object and the belief that the best way to do this is through the application of science (Clavir 1998, 6).

Since the 1950's, conservation evolved from being 'a simple craft into an integrated part of archaeology' (Cronyn 1990, 8). Nowadays, it is regarded as a science-based profession, requiring special skills and a high level of expertise. It requires not only a good level of manual dexterity but also an understanding of the processes and preoccupations of modern history, art and archaeology,

in-depth knowledge of material science and early technology, combined with an aesthetic sense. The traditional description of the role of the conservator involved the examination, conservation, and preservation of cultural heritage to keep that object in as close to its original condition as possible for as long as possible (Walston 1978). However, today this definition has widened and would be described as that of managing change. At present, when we speak about conservation, we refer to all the actions taken to prolong the life and meaning of an object. Within this objective in mind, conservation also includes ethical considerations together with managing physical change. Finally, the conservator's work forms an integral part of museum practice. It enables objects to go on display and preserves cultural heritage material for future generations. Thus objects' presentation is a crucial responsibility of the conservators so that their meaning is made comprehensible and communicated to audiences without distortion.

There are several common concepts and principles that apply to different specialised fields of contemporary conservation such as documentation, reversibility, and minimal intervention. For example, recent approaches suggest that any intervention in a historic object or building should take into account the principle of reversibility. The endeavour should be that no conservation work is undertaken which precludes the possibility of a return to the original state. However, in many cases, the principle of reversibility is impossible to apply and the concept itself, as well as its use, are contentious. One of the earliest demands for high standards of reversibility was put forward by picture restorers, in Berlin in 1840s, who requested that the treatment, when reversed, should not affect subsequent treatments (Mure 1853 in Horie 2010). According to Oddy & Carroll (1999), several generations of conservators have been taught that reversibility is the core tenet of any treatment, but the truth of this statement depends on the meaning and context of the word reversible. Hence, for instance, the use of an entirely soluble resin, such as cellulose nitrate, as a consolidant does not mean that the treatment is reversible as the process of removing the resin with a solvent may cause damage to a fragile object. Also, most conservation theorists have advocated that conservation and even more restoration interventions should not go beyond a particular point and conjecture should, by all means, be avoided. The need to manifest these notions gave birth to another highly debatable principle, that of minimal intervention, which has been the subject of debate since the early days of the development of conservation ethics (Muñoz-Viñas 2009, 47). Ruskin, for example, believed that all restoration work is unacceptable as it compromises the authenticity of the original fabric, while according to Viollet-le-Duc it was the original intention of the architect that should necessarily be restored (Muñoz-Viñas 2009, 48). Later theorists, such as Brandi in his *Theory of Restoration* (1963) attempted to balance between the two opposite positions, by supporting the idea of careful, evidence-based restoration.

In archaeological conservation (see for example Berducou 1996, Cronyn 1990, and Sease 1996), the principle is that 'restoration should not alter materials, or conceal the effects of use, discard and burial' (Pye 2009, 134). To the extent that this is possible, any additions and reconstructed elements are formed to be easily removable and are coloured, based on the general tone of the original

material, rather than trying to match it precisely. This follows the general principle that viewers should be able to clearly distinguish the original fabric from the restoration (Pye 2009, 134). Similarly, the current ethical and practical issues in built heritage conservation can be summarized in: comprehensive analysis of the place, minimum intervention in the historic fabric, use of reversible and compatible materials and methods, precise and systematic documentation of all work stages, respect for contributions from all periods, maintenance of authenticity and adopting a holistic approach to the historic context. Nevertheless, these principles are often culturally dependent and case specific, and may often become the subject of debate among conservators and other conservation and heritage professionals.

To ensure good practice, there has been a significant amount of effort to establish some common foundation principles. However, it has become apparent from past unsuccessful attempts to enforce these, that charters and standards should be approached as general guidelines towards defining an appropriate response to particular conservation issues and not as instant and all-inclusive prescriptions (Feilden 1982). Thus, collaboration and interdisciplinarity have become widely accepted notions underlying current practice, as it is understood that the way to achieve the satisfactory and sustainable results in conservation work is through constructive debate and collaboration among professionals and stakeholders.

Going beyond the establishment and negotiation of principles and the development of professional ethics, today's conservation is faced with new challenges that stem from the debate around the public value of heritage and its relationship with conservation, as well as heritage funding cuts and policies adopted in the light of the recent economic decline. Apart from the challenges of shaping the conservation profession and developing accreditation procedures, one of the major issues concerning conservators at the beginning of the twenty-first century remains the need to work more closely with the 'public' (Pye 2001, 56). This issue brought about the challenge of finding the balance between access now and care for the future, and examining more carefully how they relate to damage and social benefit. Often in the form of handling sessions, there have been a number of attempts to facilitate physical encounters with cultural heritage material. One of the most prominent efforts to explore the nature of damage in relation to the social benefit that physical access may bring concerned a research cluster set up by the University College of London in 2009, which involved three workshops, a blog, and a conference. According to their findings, the tension between conservation practice and physical access forms an interesting paradox referred to as conservation's 'Catch-22':

> Access to heritage objects brings social benefit
> Greater access brings greater social benefit
> Greater access brings greater damage
> Greater damage brings reduced social benefit

The above antinomy suggests that enabling increased physical access to heritage objects results in the misuse of precious and irreplaceable resources, unless the social benefit that is gained exceeds the social benefit that is lost. Therefore, to achieve a positive outcome regarding the social benefit, the focus needs to be on either minimising damage or maximising social benefit. According to Jones, the primary concern in museums in 2002 and perhaps also at the time of writing this thesis, relates to the issues of access, learning and social inclusion. This matter she suggests is mainly led by the Government Department for Culture, Media & Sport. The access aspect of the care/access scales tends to be the focus point, while conservation is perceived to belong on the care side and thus in opposition to access (Jones 2002). It becomes quite clear that conservation is currently faced with the challenge of balancing between seemingly contradictory expectations. What is in fact expected of conservation, is managing loss and gain of social benefit brought by physical accessibility. However, to manage the outcome of the assumed conflict between access and damage for it to resolve in benefit, one should first examine the nature of these two conflicting sides – damage and social benefit - and also consider whether they are in fact contradicting or not.

In 2003, a conference called *Valuing Culture* was organised by Demos (Holden 2006, 12). In this event, a debate was initiated concerning the degree to which cultural organisations should be required to use instrumental arguments to justify their public funding (Holden 2006, 12). A pamphlet published in 2004 by Demos, states the need for developing a language 'capable of reflecting, recognising and capturing the full range of values expressed through culture' in a precise and efficient way that will help construct the basis for wider public support for funding towards culture (Holden 2004, 9). Moreover, the term public value is defined there as the value added by the government and the public sector or in other words to 'the difference between what citizens give up and what they receive from public bodies' (Holden 2004, 42). In the same year, 2004, the UK's Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport produced an essay entitled *Government and the Value of Culture* expressing her concern that the intrinsic value of culture is not adequately recognised within and beyond the government (Jowell 2004). There she also attempted to challenge the cultural value assessment criteria and general government policies related to the evaluation and funding of cultural activity. There she points out that 'value judgments, when fine judgments are required, are certainly to some degree subjective, […] but cannot always be justified on subjective grounds' (Jowell 2004, 5). Furthermore, public engagement with culture can help alleviate what Jowell calls 'the poverty of aspiration' (2004, 3). Culture and heritage are difficult concepts to pin down, in part due to the complex institutional relationships and conceptual diversity associated with them. 'Philosophically, the overarching term 'heritage' is a problem and indeed it is a not a word that Ministers like to utter' (Hewison & Holden 2004, 9). Nevertheless, Jowell also suggests that culture (or heritage) can play a significant role in the definition and preservation of the cultural identity of individuals, communities, and of the (British) nation. Culture she says 'defines who we are, it defines us as a nation. And only culture can do this' (Jowell 2004, 17).

Moreover, it has been pointed out that measuring instrumental value can be very challenging. As Holden observed, methods of impact and outcome assessment are increasingly being questioned while there is increased difficulty within the cultural sector, where the effect of much of what is done is not easily 'measurable'. If the methodologies are inadequate, the results flowing from them are bound to be unconvincing' (Holden 2004, 17). The discontent caused by this is obvious in a speech by the Minister for the Arts, Estelle Morris, in 2003: 'I know that Arts and culture make a contribution to health, to education, to crime reduction, to strong communities, to the nation's well-being, but I don't know how to evaluate it or describe it. We have to find a language and a way of describing its worth. It's the only way we'll secure the greater support we need' (Estelle Morris in Holden 2004, 17).

International Council of Museums – Committee for Conservation (ICOM-CC) has created a Task Force on Public Engagement in Conservation, and in 2006 their first newsletter was published. In 2008, Demos published another influential pamphlet entitled *It's a material world: caring for the public realm*, in which it is argued that there is a need for integrating the public directly into efforts of conserving material culture. The argumentation expressed there demonstrates the view that 'society can benefit from conservation as a paradigm as well as a profession' while conservators 'provide a paradigm not just for fixing things when they are broken, but for a wider social ethos of care', according to which actions and responsibilities are shared by individuals and collectively (Jones & Holden 2008, 16). As pointed out later, the pamphlet was written in the context of the threatened closure and cutbacks of several conservation courses, due to lack of policy support and because conservation 'didn't fit into the economy of higher education at that time' (Cocks & Jones 2010, 5).

It is not novel to point out that conservators need to be able to communicate well about their profession if they are to secure resources and achieve their objectives of stable, accessible collections. The importance of good communication among professionals but most importantly with the public has been acknowledged in several publications and initiatives. The Head of Conservation and Collection Care of the Historic Royal Palaces, while referring to the development of their first visitors communication scheme, mentions that the conservators' role has broadened, and it is believed that 'those who did the work would be the most knowledgeable and enthusiastic in explaining it to the public' (Frame 2008, 574). As part of the reorganisation of the Conservation and Collection Care of the Historic Royal Palaces up to 10 percent of every conservator's time has been allocated to communicating conservation, while previously as she says, communicating conservation work was a low priority and mainly focused on raising the profile of conservation within Historic Royal Palaces (HRP) itself. Communication, she mentions has strengthened the conservator's traditional role (Frame 2008, 575). Conservation has come to be about much more than treating the objects and controlling the climate. As Jones had put it, conservators need to 'develop professional and political skills, not for their own aggrandisement, but in order to do their jobs properly' (Jones 2002, 20).

Furthermore, it has been argued that conservation can be seen as social practice. Often contradictory values are attached to the cultural material by archaeologists and conservators on the one hand and by social groups or individuals on the other (Pye 2009, 135). An indicative example is the remains of human bodies, which may bear emotional value and spiritual meaning, but at the same time contain valuable information that can be conveyed only if they undergo scientific analysis (Pye 2001, 171). Nevertheless, even though there has been discussion and advocacy about the importance of the general public being concerned with heritage and its conservation, there has not been much talk about the urgency of conservators reaching out to the public. In addition to that, it may still be the case that some conservators have not been entirely convinced that it is worth communicating their work or that they have anything interesting to present to people outside their discipline (Jones 2002). Clavir also reports that although in several heritage contexts, visitor experience, partnerships and telling people's stories are considered central, conservators seem 'ill-prepared if not irritable when asked to embrace new skills and devote time to working in the world outside of collections' (CAC 2010, 4). As Schadla Hall had put it '…there is a failure on the part of conservators to make their profession sexy enough!' (Schadla Hall in Jones 2002). A very different view was expressed a year later, according to which conservation professionals have become 'increasingly cognizant of the importance of engaging with the public' (Brooks 2011, 333). In either case, what people understand and think about heritage conservation is crucial to its future and especially in the current uncertain times, while conservation centres and courses close down, there is an eminent need to rethink conservation's professional priorities.

It has often been suggested that it is people's appreciation that determines which objects or structures will ultimately be considered as heritage -therefore worthy of being kept and cared for, and that the act of conservation itself is a physical expression of socially determined value. Article 12 of the recent Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society that took place in Faro, Portugal, puts a clear emphasis on everyone's right to 'participate in the process of identification, study, interpretation, protection, conservation and presentation of the cultural heritage, as well as on 'public reflection and debate on the opportunities and challenges which the cultural heritage represents' (Council of Europe 2005). Furthermore, in the same year as the Faro Convention, during their fourteenth meeting, ICOM-CC also acknowledged the 'need to involve the public more in the conservation profession' (2005, 1). Between 2002 and 2008 (when it was disbanded), ICOM-CC established a Task Force on Public Engagement seeking to stimulate the public interest in conservation. It is also worth mentioning at this point that similar concerns have also been broadly expressed at much earlier times. For instance, in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, it is stated that 'knowledge and use of heritage form part of the citizen's right to participate in cultural life' (1948).

Concerning the public image, it can be said that the people may often view conservation as a highly specialised or even elitist profession. In reality, however, for things to be curated and conserved, it is

necessary for people to attribute significance and value to them. Conservation is in fact, as Jones & Holden advocate, 'rooted in social action, and refers to the management of change in objects that have fluctuating value in the society in which they exist. It is in conservation's favour that it is not objective' (2008, 27). Constain argues that 'the viability of a profession (or an enterprise) is dependent on society perceiving value in the services that they provide' (CAC 2010, 6). Also, as Brooks points out referring to ethical codes of the conservation profession, 'whether guiding direct intervention with an artefact or a modification of its environment, the ethics underlying conservation approaches are, of course, culturally determined' (2011, 332). Conservation interventions 'can change objects in their material form, in their institutional role and in the meanings attributed to them' (Eastop 2011, 426). Furthermore, it has also been argued that conservation is itself a later addition to the objects and thus the act of conservation can be viewed as a historical phase in itself (Peters 2002, 64). As Lowenthal put it, 'every act of recognition alters survivals from the past' (1985, 263). The very act of recognition and appreciation of an object that entails placing it into the museum not only has an impact on its physical condition but also on the way it is perceived. Appreciated heritage objects are not only conserved in order to achieve the prolongation of their 'life' or their function but also restored for example in order to become more comprehensible or more aesthetically pleasing to their viewers.

Eastop has demonstrated through a number of case studies that all conservation interventions are a form of enacted ethics. She first argues that ethics acts as a justification for practice and sustains or reinforces some practices as ethical. This results in limiting conservators in set ideological positions. Her second position is that ethics in conservation is seen as morally neutral while in practice they are highly socially and cultural dependent (2011, 427). Another perspective is that of the biographical approach, concerned with the creation of meaning through social interactions involving people and objects, focusing on the ways human and object histories inform each other (Gosden & Marshall 1999, 169). Other authors have also discussed this approach to material culture (for example Green 2008; Hamilakis 1999; Hoskins 1998; Meskell 2004; Tringham 1995). The initial conception of the idea of a biography of objects goes back to cultural anthropologist Kopytoff and the paper *The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process* in the pioneering volume *The Social Life of Things* (Appadurai 1986), where it was proposed that the examination of an object's biography reveals the socioeconomic mechanisms which result in a thing being considered as a commodity or not, in circumstances of varied economic and social values (Kopytoff 1986, 64). According to this approach, when an object forms part of a collection, a new stage in its biography begins. This change occurs because of the object's previous connections with people and events. It has also been argued that objects are collected (in the sense of becoming part of an entity such as a museum collection), with the ambition of being kept long term or even 'for eternity'. As such, when an object becomes part of a collection a terminal phase in its biography is established, attempting to give it a longer lasting life and significance (Macdonald 2011, 82). Thus, conservation, seen as the means of prolonging an object's 'life' and significance is arguably a central element in this process.

The combination of these debates reflects the magnitude of the challenge that cultural heritage conservation is currently facing, which arguably consists of two broad, interrelated components. The first is the discovery of avenues for developing meaningful communication and collaboration both with people and with policy makers, and the second is the efficient management of the impact of the realisation of the discipline's new widened scope on the professional practice of conservation.

2.5 Public Engagement in Cultural Heritage Conservation

Since the 19th century and continuing through to the present day, increasing ideological, social and technological developments have been impacting on all aspects of heritage. In recent years, there has been a growing public interest in the domains of art, history, anthropology and archaeology, and thus also in conservation issues, sparked by the rapid advancement of the media in combination with increasing government pressures to constitute cultural activities accessible and attractive to new audiences (Pye & Sully 2007, 21).

Conservation – 'the preservation of material cultural heritage and the interlinked intangible heritage' (Brooks 2011, 332) - has been considered, at least in the UK, as an integral part of the contemporary archaeological process (Johnson 1993, 249). The bond between the professional fields of conservation and archaeology can be traced back to the initial stages of their development as scientific domains. It was recognised at an early point that what today is referred to as conservation, is crucial when dealing with non-renewable resources such as archaeological finds and in movable historical items and structures in general. In the early 20th century, Flinders Petrie wrote in his *Methods and Aims in Archaeology*, in his chapter 'Preservation of objects' that: 'The preservation of the objects that are found is a necessary duty of the finder. To disclose things only to destroy them, when a more skilful or patient worker might have added them to the world's treasures is a hideous fault. And the excavator must be ready for all emergencies, for all classes of objects in all stages of decay, and deal with each without delays' (Petrie 1904, 85).

Today, however, conservation and archaeology have come to be perceived as two separate professional domains. And while there is a sustained effort to engage people's interest in archaeology and cultural heritage in general, there has been a much more limited effort to engage people with cultural heritage conservation. As discussed in further detail in the previous section, a possible cause for this different outlook in the conservation discipline is, according to Clavir, the fact that conservation's natural focus has been on the physical, material aspect of heritage, while 'a focus on people and serving society has remained rather a more distanced, idealized objective' (CAC 2010, 4).

It is apparent that public outreach has not always been an objective for conservators. In fact, it is probably still debatable whether it is currently accepted as one. As Podany suggested,

conservators as professionals and as a community have been 'inherently inward-looking, focused on the immediate challenges presented by the response of materials to time, the elements and to use' (CAC 2010, 3). As has been explained earlier, conservation being a relatively young domain has been devoted to a striving for recognition and establishment as a distinct science-based profession, and perhaps still continues to do so. It has been proposed that conservation is performed in a context of 'relatively low esteem' because conservators still strain to 'convey their professionalism and protect their exclusive knowledge at the expense of being interesting and at the risk of being sidelined' (Schadla-Hall in Jones 2002). Thus, it could be said that the progress of conservators reaching out to wider audiences as well as other heritage professionals are being hindered by the field's struggle for self-definition.

Nevertheless, during the past two decades, there has been some serious endeavour from conservators in several heritage institutions and organisations to take action towards the direction of opening up their work to the public. In fact, engagement of the public with conservation can be both deliberate or serendipitous and can vary from exhibitions and demonstrations of conservation work to films and novels, pivotal examples of which are reviewed in this section. While there have been considerable efforts from museums to involve visitors in the interpretation of heritage assets undergoing conservation treatments (see for example Vasamuseet 2016a and 2016b), there have been significantly less aiming to introduce them to the intellectual framework underpinning conservation practice. Moreover, while attention has been given to the process of involving the public in experiencing conservation practice, seemingly rather positively evaluated, there is a lack of research aiming to assess the outcomes and impact of these projects. For example, Corbell mentions that 'every special exhibit on conservation has great success with the public'. She also claims that the public is 'always amazed' when presented with before-and-after treatment shots or offered a chance to witness conservators at work (CAC 2010, 5). What is not made clear, however, is if and how these reactions of the public were captured and measured. Moreover, it has also been suggested that members of the public who 'receive this communication, represent an enormous group of preservers of, and carers for objects' and that 'they can do infinitely more good for more objects than any single conservators would achieve' (Caple 2000, 196). Similarly, in this and other more major claims, examples of which also concern some of the engagement projects identified below, there is very limited or no evidence at all based on an assessment of the effects of these encounters to support their validity.

So, although over the last two decades, while conservation content is increasingly being included in museum outreach projects, the subject of outreach remains under-represented in the conservation literature and discussions among conservators around this subject are limited (Williams 2013, ix). There is, however, a small number of studies that have attempted to examine the values and opinions of heritage audiences more systematically. One such example is a preliminary study conducted with visitors of Danish churches on issues concerning the restoration of wall painting

(retouching, reconstruction and over-painting), which showed that the majority of the sample valued visual qualities and narrative over historical value (Brajer 2008). These findings were considered in relation to current professional practices, highlighting the lack of previous research in the area as well as the need to establish sustainable communication between conservators and audience, ensuring that both sides have their views considered when challenging dilemmas arise (Brajer 2008, 37). The scarcity of such research on the subject demonstrates that although in the recent years there has been a trend of conservation becoming the subject of engagement events, there is a prominent lack of sources concerning the evaluation of their impact on people's views.

To provide a case-specific background to what has already taken place concerning public engagement in the field of conservation, a number of past and ongoing projects has been identified and reviewed below. These examples cover public engagement work carried out in leading heritage institutions in the UK, but also include some international examples, as well as different types of interaction to communicate conservation.

There is a broad spectrum of modes in which engagement with conservation may occur that extends beyond initiatives by museums and heritage organisations. Such examples may include television programmes such as *Timewatch*, *Meet the Ancestors* and *Restoration*, magazines relating to antique collection or family histories, and membership of organisations such as the National Trust, involvement in re-enactment societies, metal detectorist clubs, and volunteering in conservation projects (Pye & Sully 2007, 21). The serendipitous impact of these engagement models cannot be overlooked and is arguably considerably impactful on the shaping of public attitudes towards conservation.

In respect of the more deliberate efforts in the heritage sector, the imminent (at the time) shift towards making conservation work accessible to the UK museum audiences, was reflected in a *Museums Journal* article by Carol Davis entitled *A public display of conservation: the work of the conservators is being brought into the open* in June 2000, where it was reported that while engagement with conservation once seemed an 'unlikely trend', there was increasing public curiosity about the work carried out behind closed doors in museums and galleries (Davis 2000, 23).

One of the earliest reported attempts of introducing conservation to the general public took place at Winterthur estate in Delaware between the years 1980-1983. This initially began in 1980 in the form of tours confined to special groups and members, followed by meetings of organisations like the Early American Industries Association at the museum, and conservation tours became part of the programme. A year later the director was convinced by conservator Joyce Hill Stoner to include tours of the conservation labs given by conservators as part of an annual Country Fair. The response of the public was described as overwhelming: 'Long lines extended out the entrance of the research building as the general public got their first introduction to a previously hidden world.

Conservation students ushered them through the halls as they moved through labs staffed by conservators who made presentations and answered questions. The public loved it' (Price and Stoehr 2013, 9). These events ended in 1993 along with the Country Fairs because conservation did not qualify as the main attraction and so was not included in regular public programming. A decade later initiatives to communicate conservation to the public at Winterthur were introduced anew, including public lectures, tours, workshops, community outreach, public programmes for children and adults, and publications about conservation targeting visitors including a website and a blog. It is claimed that these efforts 'have yielded impressive results in generating visitor satisfaction, positive publicity and donor interest' (Price and Stoehr 2013, 8).

One of the earliest examples of museum exhibitions about conservation work and principles was set up in 1993 by the J. Paul Getty Museum and was entitled *Preserving the Past*. This was seen by the organisers as 'an opportunity to inform the public', while the main aim was 'to increase public awareness of the important functions of conservation' (Podany & Lansing Maish 1993, 101). An informal visitor survey included a sample of 125 visitors, 38 interviews and a log book in which visitor reactions to the exhibition were noted. It was reported that most of the visitors interviewed were able to discuss accurately conservation principles that the exhibition highlighted, while all expressed the desire to see more exhibits like that one on all facets of the conservation field. It was thought that overall, *Preserving the Past* encouraged much discussion, provided a great deal of information, and heightened awareness of the conservation field for a vast and varied audience. 'We hope that many of the estimated 12,000 visitors, including school children, will approach their future visits to our museum and other museums with a new and enlightened outlook. Such exhibitions provide the public with a window through which they can view the complexity of the field, the decisions that must be weighed, and the development of solutions for the complicated problems that await us. We found that with careful and thoughtful planning, an exhibition that open to view the world of conservation can, in fact, be made simple and understandable to a general audience' (Podany & Lansing Maish 1993, 108).

Another early and arguably one of the most interesting approaches to presenting the role of conservation to the UK public has been the exhibition 'Stop the Rot' organised by conservators Simon Cane and Mary Brooks in 1993, who in this case acted as curators. The exhibition took place at the York Castle Museum and ran for a year. It was considered as a great success among visitors and won the first International Institute for Conservation Keck Award in 1994 for making conservation work accessible and meaningful to the world outside the profession (The International Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works 2015). It was visited by more than half a million people and was also used as a training resource by conservators, museum professionals and teachers. Visitors had a chance to find out about the damaging effects of pollution, humidity, insect pests and human interference. They could also take away a leaflet explaining why things deteriorate, what can be done about it, and offering pointers to the correct care and handling of a whole variety

of objects (Brooks & Cane 1994). The exhibition 'Stop the Rot' can be seen as an original approach to presenting the role and significance of conservation to the public since the focus moved away from showing the benefits of conservation on museum objects and was instead placed on demonstrating the dramatic results of its absence.

In 1996, Liverpool's National Conservation Centre, run by National Museums Liverpool, was opened as a place for museum conservators to carry out treatments in public view. It was the first permanent UK exhibition on conservation with a clear focus on public engagement, an idea that evolved out of concern for the care of the diverse collections of the Liverpool Museums (Watts et al. 2013, 16). Among others, it initially included a permanent exhibition, entitled *Caught in time* and from 2006 a permanent display, called *Reveal: the hidden stories of objects* and received a number of awards including the International Institute of Conservation's Keck Award, and European Museum of the year in 1998. In 2010 it was decided that it should close its doors to visiting members of the public due to a 15% cut to its budget. As a result, public-facing functions were ceased, retaining only the permanent display with the intention of moving it to Liverpool's World Museum (Noakes 2010). Behind-the-scenes conservation work continued 'without being affected by the closure of the visitor part of the building' because, as it was mentioned, that occupied only 10% of the building's total space (BBC News online, 2010). This statement suggests interestingly that for the decision-makers the objectives of conservation were revolving around a purely technical perspective for the care of museum collections, leaving any social and public engagement aspects of the Centre's function as a low priority and of marginal importance. At present, some smaller scale public engagement efforts continue at Liverpool through the *Conservation In View* programme and Opinion Service, through which members of the public can seek advice from conservators on object care, handling and storage. Visitors can also interact with conservators in the framework of site visits and studio tours during open days, while conservators also give lectures and demonstrations at public events such as science festivals, conferences and activity sessions (National Museums Liverpool 2016). Finally, a video introducing the work of conservators, entitled *Conservation at Work* and made when the Conservation Centre first opened in 1996, is available on the museum's website (National Museums Liverpool 2016).

In 1996, conservator Glenn Wharton undertook a pioneering project that involved community participation in conservation decision-making. The project concerned the conservation of the King Kamehameha sculpture in Hawaii and the involvement of the local population in the process. This case study was an example of implementing a participatory model in conservation, resulting in a negotiated conservation treatment, combined with new ethnographic understandings about how the sculpture would fit into local history and contemporary life (Wharton 2008, 160). It was concluded that, in similar projects, conservators should adopt a facilitating role, rather than impose professional conventions (Wharton 2008, 171). A detailed account of the challenges and lessons was published in a volume entitled *The Painted King: Art, Activism, and Authenticity in Hawaii* (Wharton 2011).

There is a number of arguably less innovative examples than Wharton's project in Hawaii, but perhaps more typical of the UK initiatives of the late 1990s, as this approach grows in popularity among larger conservation / museum organisations. Such an example is the Textile Conservation Centre originally set up by the University of Southampton in 1998, and relocated to a purpose-designed building on the Winchester campus where it held regular open days (Davis 2000, 24). The TCC was closed in 2009 and succeeded by the Centre for Textile Conservation at the University of Glasgow in 2010. Public engagement remained an element of the Centre through open days, tours for special interest groups, two exhibitions, a website, as well as articles and TV features about the research undertaken (The Textile Conservation Centre Foundation 2015).

Another example of this period is that of the Wiltshire County Council Conservation Service which won the Award for Conservation for its work on the South Cadbury Shield in 1999. The project involved extensive outreach work including open days and lectures (Davis 2000, 24). Conservation staff played a crucial role in managing the collaborations and organising events to publicise the conservation of the shield, while it was reported that the profile of the Conservation Service was increased dramatically as a result of this project (Neal 2000, 7).

In the same year, a special commendation was awarded to the Museum of London Conservation Department and the Museum of London Specialist Services for the work carried out on a Roman stone sarcophagus containing an intact lead coffin found at Spitalfields in London. It was excavated and conserved in the Museum galleries over two weeks in full view of the public and media (Barham 2000, 7), attracting huge public interest (Davis 2000, 24). Conservation was a central theme of the displays, lectures, information on the Museum's website and booklet, and the media coverage. A team of conservators coordinated the process and the approach was characterised as 'unusual and exciting' (Barham 2000, 7). 1999 was the first year that organisations like The Council for Museums, Archives and Libraries; English Heritage; Public Record Office; the British Library; and the Pilgrim Trust, collaborated, aiming to focus public attention on the importance of conservation and the skills and expertise of conservation professionals in the UK and Ireland (Pullman 2000, 6), reflecting the impact of funding bodies such as the HLF starting to require public access and engagement (also see discussion in 8.1).

In 2004, a web resource designed to enable access to the collections of the Fitzwilliam Museum without requiring visitors' physical presence in the galleries, called *PHAROS*, was launched for the first time with support from the Heritage Lottery Fund and is still accessible today. *PHAROS* website provides a guide to the objects and artwork based on themes or time and is available on terminals in the museum as well as on the internet (Lewis 2005, 2). Pharos, among others, contains an interactive multimedia element using images, animations, text and video, called *Conserving Art*. This highlights museum conservation and restoration procedures, currently including the restoration of three Chinese vases broken in 2006, and the conservation of the Macclesfield Psalter.

Conserving Art is one of the few cases that do not just refer to an ongoing conservation project as is often done on museum websites. It is a rather straightforward and entertaining way of intriguing website visitors to explore some aspects of conservation. However, it could be argued that by attempting to present the fun side of conservation by either omitting, or over-simplifying, or over-dramatizing several aspects of it, there is a risk of creating misconceptions about what the role of the conservator actually involves and distort perceptions of significant stages of the process, as the investigation and deliberation that is prior to interventions.

In the Victoria and Albert Museum, the second edition of its Ethics Checklist for conservation professionals, developed in 2004 and still current, states that the conservator-restorer has a 'significant and distinctive role in interpreting the past' and an obligation to 'promote access by consulting and involving communities, users and supporters' (Victoria & Albert Museum Conservation Department Ethics Checklist 2004). Following those principles, online demonstrations of conservators' work are available, together with detailed description and justification of interventions, including information on the museum's past and present conservation projects and advice on how members of the public can look after various materials.

A year later, in contrast with the V&A's online initiative, a more personal, direct experience was introduced at the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge. An informal gallery programme called *Meet the Antiquities* including a series of supervised 'physical encounters' with artefacts began to run in 2005. These sessions were carried out in the galleries of the museum's Department of Antiquities by curators, conservators and volunteers, and each of them lasted overall 2.5 hours, while visitors were free to decide how much time they would like to dedicate there. The curators and conservators chose material that they were working on at the time and communicated interesting aspects of their work to their sessions' audience. Allowing visitors to access work behind the scenes of the museum created, according to the facilitators, a sense of discovery. This was considered by the museum as an element of added benefit for the overall visitor's experience (Dawson & Strudwick 2009, 1). Furthermore, according to the organisers, the aim of the scheme was to explore with visitors the original function and cultural context of the artefacts, the techniques involved in their making and aspects of their later history. In order to assess people's reaction to the scheme, a short visitor survey was carried out to find out if visitors would be disappointed by not having the opportunity of physical contact with the objects involved and whether or not touching would have any impact on their rating of the activity as a whole (Dawson & Strudwick 2009, 3). The survey showed that visitors responded positively to the chance of looking closely at artefacts and having one-to-one discussions with the museum's 'experts'. Moreover, the results also highlighted the fact that people's appreciation was not diminished by the lack of direct physical contact (Dawson & Strudwick 2009, 4). Regarding revealing the conservation process to the visitors, it could be said that this study demonstrates that meaning can also be derived from close examination of individual objects and discussion with conservators, without necessarily enabling direct physical access.

During the same year, another visitor communication programme was introduced by the Historic Royal Palaces (Frame 2008, 574) under the title: *Ask the Conservators.* This small pop-up travelling exhibition, is used at all five of the HRP sites giving visitors a chance to see up close some of the conservation work that typically occurs behind the scenes and to discuss it with conservation professionals. As the title may imply, visitors are probed to ask questions to the conservators around the palaces wearing *Ask the Conservators* badges regarding their work. Also, the scheme includes demonstrations in which conservators perform specialist conservation treatments as well as brief talks about their projects at certain times of the day. According to the Head of Conservation and Collection Care of the HRP 'communicating conservation has become a structured part of every conservator's job […] and skills have been built up for this work' (Frame 2008, 574). Until then, conservation carried out in the palaces' public areas had been thought of as 'operationally intrusive and detracting from the quality of the visitor experience' and therefore it was preferred for it to remain away from the public eye. As a result, the level of visitors' appreciation of conservation work remained very limited (Frame 2008, 575).

Returning to the Fitzwilliam's developing programme for visitor engagement, a three-month exhibition called *Mission Impossible? Ethics and choices in conservation* was put up in 2006, exploring conservation using examples of fine art, antiquities and applied arts from across the museum's extensive and diverse collections. This exhibition also touch upon issues that conservators and curators have to deal with when making decisions about the most appropriate treatment for the objects while enabling visitors' access. The widely known case of three broken Chinese porcelain vases and their restoration also featured in this exhibition, while one of the vases went on display as soon as its conservation was complete. As in the description of the exhibition available online, visitors had a chance to observe the impact of deterioration agents, the damaging effects of light, changes in relative humidity, unsuitable storage, previous inappropriate treatments and the damage inflicted by pests and insects as well as human activities. They were also encouraged to observe damage occurring to working models that they were probed to touch (Icon 2006). It is unclear if and how the impact of this exhibition on visitors has been assessed.

Moving to the US, the Smithsonian American Art Museum's Lunder Conservation Center, opened in 2006 in Washington DC. It was the first art conservation facility that allowed its visitors to view conservation work on a permanent basis and also received the Keck Award (Baptiste & Bentley 2008 online). It includes five conservation labs that are visible through floor-to-ceiling glass walls and treat paintings, prints, drawings, photographs, sculptures, folk art objects, decorative arts and frames. The LCC website describes the centre as a destination for learning about conservation science and techniques. Characteristically, it is mentioned that through special displays visitors can 'learn about the importance of conservation' and 'are shown how to take an active role in caring for public art and monuments, as well as how to care for personal treasures at home' (2013).

Returning to the UK a year later, the Centre for Conservation at the British Library in London was opened in 2007 in a purpose-built building comprising studios for the conservation of books and the preservation of sound archives. Public engagement with conservation has been a fundamental element since the early stages of the Centre's design (Shenton 2008, 130). There is a permanent, free exhibition on conservation and decision-making called *Conservation Uncovered* situated at the entrance to the centre, monthly behind-the-scenes tours of the conservation studios (currently at a price), as well as occasional demonstrations, workshops and talks (British Library 2016). There was an early evaluation of public engagement with the Centre in April 2008, which showed that the tours had been relatively highly rated by the visitors, for example 60% rated the content as excellent and 76% stated that they enjoyed the tour very much. That early analysis had also shown that the majority of visitors had been white, older, females. Feedback from the conservators' perspective, showed a mixed picture, ranging from feelings of being interrupted too much to great pride and enhanced presentation skills (Shenton 2008, 134). At an early stage, conservators had also expressed their concerns about the security of the collections as well as about a feeling of being in a zoo (Shenton 2008, 134).

A similar exhibition was set up two years later, in 2008, in the Ashmolean Museum. This exhibition, placed in a section of the museum's galleries, is still open to the museum's visitors (as of March 2015) and has a permanent character. The *Conservation Galleries* comprise one of the first exhibitions permanently dedicated to conservation and accessing it is free of charge. The themes of the exhibition focus on conservation's historical and current practice and employ several interactive elements. However, it is not available online as many of the Ashmolean's other exhibition galleries. According to the museum's Deputy Head of Conservation, careful thought has been put into the *Conservation Galleries* and their approach. Moreover, the galleries are part of how the department integrates its public engagement from school programmes to open door lab tours, the University of the Third Age (U3A) lectures, and fundraising events (Bone 2012). 'During their development, the galleries were a considerable way through when the Demos publication *It's a Material World* came out. That gave us a good boost as we were working right along the same lines' (Bone 2012).

In 2008, the British Museum also organised a free exhibition called *Conservation in Focus*, which, by contrast with the Ashmolean, lasted for a little more that a month and was the first exhibition solely devoted to the Conservation and Scientific Research Department's activities. Before this, the work of the Department was presented to the public through hosting events like the annual Science Day, public lectures, and on a few text panels in exhibitions and galleries (Drago 2011). The display consisted of a team of conservators working on four categories of objects: stone, organic materials, metals and ceramics, and was combined with a series of related thematic events. The public was 'allowed' to engage with them directly and also had access to supplementary material such as already conserved objects, conservation tools and material samples and digital screens telling the stories of conservation projects. Parallel to the event, visitors could also attend talks between

conservators and curators on the themes of Greek and Roman Sculpture, Medieval tiles and Iron-Age cauldrons. Overall, the display showcased conservation work as what the organisers refer to as the 'often hidden side of Museum work' providing an opportunity for the public to engage in discussing with conservators, ask questions and watch conservation procedures in action.

Moving to Sweden, a different example of conservation in public view was launched one year later, in 2009, by the Vasa Museum in Stockholm. Similarly to the British Museum's *Conservation in Focus*, the exhibition *Preserve Vasa* involved conservators working in public view within the museum's exhibition space, but this time the object of conservation is a 17th century warship ship named Vasa. Vasa sank in 1628 and since its salvage in 1961 the ship's timber has been slowly decomposing due to various factors. It is situated in the central hall of the museum surrounded by various exhibits related to its historical context. A movie theatre shows a film on the recovery and conservation efforts, while a large section of the museum is dedicated to detailing the initial raising and the perils the ship faces, in part due to it being on display. The exhibition presents to the visitors the various stages and conservation treatments the ship has been undergoing as well as the measures to preserve it for the future. The story of the ship in the museum is described as an 'ongoing high-tech fight against natural forces' since capsizing in 1628 (Vasamuseet 2016b). The past and current research and conservation projects are presented in chronological order through a timeline that has no end and fades out of the exhibition space, constituting a visual representation of the ship's unknown future. An online version of the research and conservation timeline is available through the museum's website and in the form of a blog (Vasamuseet 2016a). Conservators, archaeologists and researchers here often work in public view and explain to visitors the dilemma between preserving this irreplaceable heritage for longer by preventing access and continuing the exhibition of the ship by running the risk of triggering additional deterioration mechanisms. American archaeologist, Heffter, who took part in a project aiming to create an accurate representation of the ship, and monitor physical change over time, mentions that explaining their work 'excited the tourists, since they cannot board the ship, while many of them asked if there was a special ticket they could buy to board'. His sense was that there were great interest and awe among visitors, about on-going work, which was enhanced by the restricted accessibility to working areas. Regarding his evaluation of the ship's condition, he mentioned that 'the ship seems more akin to an old man monitored by many specialists rather than the hulking beast it appears to be'. He mentions there was great difficulty in conveying to people how, what seems to be such a massive, sturdy ship, is in fact very fragile and requires constant monitoring and conservation to continue existing as it currently is. This project foregrounds an interesting perception that the majority of the public seemed to think of museums as containers of 'static' objects, and that is one of the reasons why the museum's efforts focus so much on the dynamic role of conservation (Heffter 2011).

Another example of conservation in public view in the museum environment took place in Greece, in 2010. The Acropolis Museum and the Institute of Electronic Structure and Lasers of the

Foundation for Research and Technology-Hellas jointly carried out a conservation project, also awarded with the 2012 Keck Award for its contribution 'towards the promotion of public understanding and appreciation of the accomplishments of the conservation profession' (The International Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works 2015). The award related to their approach to providing visitors with the opportunity to observe the conservation work carried out on the Caryatids (Pouli 2012). This involved the laser cleaning of the statues, conducted in a laboratory platform installed on the balcony dedicated to the five Korai in the museum's exhibition space. The platform 'embraced' and isolated one sculpture at a time, and was being moved to different heights, so that the conservators could obtain optimum access along the surface. Visitors followed the work carried out behind the protective curtains via a camera connected to a monitor outside the laboratory platform. When conservators were not working, a recording of this process was displayed on the monitor. A recorded video was also made available online (The Acropolis Museum 2012). It was shown that this event has highly engaging and surprisingly popular among the general public and has also achieved multiple learning outcomes for the people who visited it (Koutromanou 2011). These findings must be considered along with the fact that the new Acropolis Museum was opened in 2009, amid a long-running political debate for the repatriation of the Parthenon Marbles (including the sixth Caryatid) from the British Museum, in which conservation featured as a central issue. Hence, there is an interesting political dimension to this public interaction with the conservation process.

A very different form of introducing conservation to the general public was the publication of a conservation book of general appeal entitled *Conservation: MFA Highlights,* by the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, in 2010. As mentioned by the author, the aim of this volume is to increase visitors' awareness of conservation's pivotal role in the public's experience of museum objects on display and to deal with the absence of a comprehensive and accessible publication that explains this science to the layperson (Newman 2010).

Back to the UK, an important large-scale project called *York Minster Revealed*, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), was launched in 2011, to conserve and restore the cathedral's East Front and Great East Window, develop new visitor attractions, and expand training in traditional craft skills (York Minster 2016a). The conservation and restoration of the Great East Window required the collaboration of York Glaziers Trust and York Minster's Stoneyard. During the project, visitors were able to see the stonemasons and carvers at work in the Masons Lodge (York Minster 2016b), and also had the opportunity to see stained glass conservation in action and interact with conservators through small groups tours of the Bedern Glaziers Studio (The York Glaziers Trust 2016). During the tours, stained glass conservators worked in turn behind a transparent wall and treatments are also shown to the visitors on a large screen. According to the tour guide and confirmed from observation work undertaken in 2011, visitors would often pose questions to the conservators and demonstrate interest and appreciation for the conservators'

detailed work. In an informal discussion, referring to the York citizens' day, the volunteer tour guide mentioned that there are usually long queues of people who specifically wanted to learn more about conservation of York Minster's glass window. It was also mentioned that a lot of visitors are relating to their life experiences from years dating back to their childhood. For example, many visitors were interested in glass working techniques, recalling that as students they used to take lamp making classes which helped them to understand and relate their previous experiences with the on-going treatments on display (Koutromanou 2011).

High profile archaeological discoveries can be an opportunity for highlighting the 'unseen' conservation process that follows on from the moment of discovery as powerfully illustrated by the example of the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery monthly fundraising tours, introduced in 2013, during which visitors had the opportunity to see the Staffordshire Hoard in the gallery and the ongoing conservation work on Hoard objects in the Conservation Studio. The studio tours involved demonstrations of the conservation of the Staffordshire Hoard and interaction with the conservators who presented recent findings and research and offer visitors a chance to view the objects under microscopes (Staffordshire Hoard 2013). In 2014, a new gallery exploring the Staffordshire Hoard, principally funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, opened. The gallery also includes exhibits dedicated to conservation techniques, microscopes and other tools used in conservation (Staffordshire Hoard 2014), while there is also an active conservation and research blog where conservators, conservation scientists and volunteers post regular updates on their projects (Staffordshire Hoard 2016).

In 2013, a 21-day paid programme called *Open Palace* was developed by the Historic Royal Palaces in collaboration with the Bath Preservation Trust and the Stowe House Preservation Trust, with the support of the Institute of Education and the University of Leicester Country House Study Centre. It mainly targets international heritage students and emergent professionals. It offers hands-on experience of working with and learning from professionals who care for a number of palaces and stately homes in England. The programme promises to enrich participants' careers by giving them 'a new perspective on heritage specialisms and how they are actually practiced on site' and by allowing them to 'engage directly with heritage alongside experts in their field and build their own knowledge and skills from direct experience' (Open Palace Programme, 2013). The programme is an example of engagement with conservation practice, not of the general public *per se* but of aspiring heritage professionals. Going beyond communicating conservation work to heritage audiences, this programme essentially commits to demystify conservation *modi operandi* for those who hope to become the future expert professionals, at a price.

In 2013, the Royal British Columbia Museum, Canada featured the public conservation project The Chinese Freemason's Lantern, which received the 2014 IIC Keck Award. A modified conservation laboratory was constructed, surrounded by text and graphic panels that described and

illustrated the process. During a period of seven months, a crew comprised of conservators, interns, and volunteers carried out conservation treatments and materials analyses. Also, an animated representation of the lantern provided an interpretation of the object in a state of complete restoration. It was reported that visitors asked probing questions and were overall enthusiastic about the work of conservators, while they also provided information and anecdotes relating to the object. Surveys completed during the project were considered as very positive and encouraging for similar future initiatives (The International Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works 2015).

Observational Case Study

This case study is different from the above as it concerns an early pilot study for this research, placed here as the concluding example. It concerns small-scale observational work conducted by the author in 2013, in the framework of a conservation project at Trinity Church in Ossett. This is included here as it helped illuminate a number of issues around intellectual access to conservation-related information, but at the same time it also revealed aspects of professional attitudes towards public engagement as well as a strand of visitors' views towards conservations in this specific context.

The church is a Grade II* listed building, which also functions as a community space for local people and families with children. Data collection involved field notes, correspondence with the local Heritage Officer, and discussion with the two conservators and thirteen of the visitors. The conservation of significant heritage features was one of the main aims of the HLF funded Heritage Education Project at the Church (Bradley 2013). Consultation with the local community was not attempted, but local people were invited to watch some of the conservation treatments on the Last Supper sculpture and ask the conservators about their work. The conservation open days were advertised by posters and announced in the local newspapers.

In the duration of the two open days, several people entered the building, but very few approached the conservators, either due to lack of interest or due to an effort not to be intrusive or disturb their work. When people approached them, the conservators attempted to initiate discussion by explaining the technical details of their equipment and the methods that they use, and occasionally urged people to interact with them by asking: 'When you look at it, do you focus on the cracks?' and 'What do you think about us using steam cleaning?'. Some people seemingly found those questions hard to answer and perhaps slightly alienating. While the conservators invited people to view their work in a friendly and approachable manner, most would soon withdraw and disengage, particularly when technical language was used.

The conservators mentioned that they also tweet and share updates on their work from their personal social media accounts, but that only their colleagues and friends have access to their updates. Some typical tweets include 'We don't know how to remove this paint (guild-looking), do

you have any suggestions?' or 'Laser cleaning would have been great but maybe too expensive and sensitive for that sort of project, what's your opinion?'. Their motivation for doing this was not to communicate with the general public, but rather to discuss technical issues with other conservators and conservation students.

The conservators felt that most people underappreciated their work and the required level of skill. They mentioned that people had frequently made comments like: 'Do you get paid to do this?' or 'You must have a lot of patience', while on one occasion they had also been asked if they were doing this work as part of their community service. They also believed that often people have the false impression that conservation work does not require any particular expertise. Conservators concluded: 'It's a good thing to let people know what we are doing, but it shouldn't seem too romantic or too easy, people shouldn't get the idea that anybody can have a go at this'. Drawing from previous work experiences, conservators also added that private clients or dealers often ask them to make things 'pretty' and damage 'invisible'. 'This is what most people like; they want to see things undamaged'.

Based on their experience of the Trinity Church conservation project, the conservators felt that most local residents looked down on their work. Indicatively, a visitor commented that 'when this was built people wanted to impress God and other people. We don't really need all that stuff anymore'. On one occasion, people appeared to be openly unsympathetic to the project as they felt there were more urgent matters to tackle in their community than heritage conservation. They expressed feelings of opposition through making remarks like: 'It makes you think, why are they spending on this when people outside are starving?'. The conservators mentioned that it was usually senior citizens and children who were the most curious or interested to find out about ongoing treatments. Indeed, this was the profile of most visitors who interacted positively with the conservators. A typical example was an evidently interested senior couple. They approached the conservators and asked several questions about them and their work. They later mentioned that they were living locally and were very familiar with the church building as they worship there. They said that they do not visit Trinity Church for the heritage, but to use it as a place for worship, and that this was their primary motivation for coming to see the conservation work.

The above overview of engagement initiatives demonstrates how engagement practice has developed over the last two decades, mainly in the UK, the US and Europe. Funding bodies, like the HLF, have begun including people's engagement as a requirement for supporting conservation work. At the same time, communicating conservation and involving people is increasingly gaining ground in high profile projects, museums and conservation organizations, as well as small-scale conservation projects, based on different objectives and with various outcomes. To outline the diverse attempts to engage people with conservation, a typology of events is developed below.

Typology of Engagement Events

Ten broad categories have been identified, based on their general approach to engagement. Defining these groups is intended to facilitate the systematisation of the study of the most usual ways that non-expert audiences or members of the public may encounter conservation. For the majority of existing initiatives, a combination of two or more forms of outreach is often employed. Nevertheless, for this study, it is useful to identify similarities and differences between the most common types of people's acquaintance with conservation, to enable a more rigorous and systematic analysis. While this is not intended as an exhaustive list, standard formats for public engagement projects have been classified into the following categories:

Observation: Conservation projects that offer the opportunity to observe conservation work in action, without that being planned as a demonstration event specifically, and without necessarily involving interaction with conservators at work or information about the process. That may occur for example when architectural elements or sculptures are being conserved in situ in public spaces, historic buildings, or in the museum context.

Web technologies: Websites, social media, blogging platforms, and forums, commonly used to present the progress of conservation projects to diverse online audiences. These can vary widely regarding their degree of involving people.

Commercial printed material: Posters, booklets, flyers, postcards, non-specialist books introducing conservation to interested lay audiences.

Audiovisual material: Information panels, photographs, videos of conservators in action, digital animation of objects in different states (e.g. restored), radio, film, television programmes.

Information dissemination sessions: Public lectures, conferences, festivals, and seminar sessions introducing conservation work, usually through ongoing projects.

Exhibitions: Any exhibition that refers directly or indirectly to conservation work, including exhibitions of conservation techniques, materials, processes, conserved objects, and conservation ethics.

Demonstrations: All types of demonstration of conservation work including live-conservation work in public view, conservation studios open or visible to visitors, and live video links of conservators in action.

Interaction: Invited interaction between members of the public and professional conservators, usually in the form of a question and answer element. Interaction can also occur with the use of interactive, usually audio, visual and tactile, exhibits.

Inclusive activities: Engaging members of the public in the context of planned activities such as conservation studio tours, open days, object handling sessions, and conservation workshops.

Participation: This involves members of the public being actively involved in conservation work and conservation decision-making, in the framework of educational programmes for aspiring heritage professionals, volunteering and community consultation.

In this research, four different approaches to engagement are evaluated. The events selected differ in terms of their approach, scope and format, as well as their intended outcomes. While all events sought to communicate conservation to non-expert audiences, there is insufficient data to infer the exact intentions of the engagement designers in each case. Based on the available data, the events examined here either fall into one of the above categories or are a combination of two or more different modes of engagement, serving to demonstrate their impact on visitors' views.

The possibility of the existence and application of other forms of intentional or unintentional interactions of people with the field of conservation are challenging to categorise, but should not, of course, be overlooked as they play a critical role in shaping the field's public image. Such ways of engagement can be identified in the literature, drama, film productions, radio and television broadcasts, social media and so on, which may be drawing inspiration from conservation work or tackling issues that conservators often come across. An example of that kind is the novel *Flanders Panel* (Pérez-Reverte 1990) describing a painting conservation project and the discoveries that the conservator makes during the investigative process. An example from the film industry that may not directly refer to heritage conservation in the museum context, but touches upon central conservation issues as well as the object relation theory, is the broadly popular film *Toy Story 2* produced by Pixar (*Toy Story 2* 1999). Moreover, the subject of conservation often attracts great publicity when heritage assets are threatened or damaged by war, looting, or natural disasters, but also when interventions are not particularly successful, such as in the recent example of the somewhat unskillful restoration attempt of the Ecce Homo fresco in Spain that became an Internet sensation during the summer of 2012.

To summarise the findings presented in this chapter so far, efforts of engaging with audiences have been relatively sporadic and the focus of conservation until recently has been placed on the physical aspects of heritage material and the technical sides of its care. However, it has been pointed out that it has become evident that 'little familiarity with the subject is needed to realise that conservation is not a neutral process' (Peters 2002, 64). The same is observed also by Pye, who

explains that the actions of conservators will shape the significance of objects and may change the substance of the objects themselves (2006, 239). Also, it could be argued that conservation's own existence is often justified through its relationship with the public and the responsibility towards future generations. Therefore, ignoring and excluding social groups and individuals is a potential risk for undermining conservation's relevance to society. Interestingly, it has been pointed out that 'the shift towards engagement has developed most substantially in countries where conservators are grappling with the complex physical heritage of colonialism' (Brooks 2011, 334). It also has been argued that museum practices are historically grounded and represent values that are not necessarily held by the originators of the objects, focusing on principles and methods in conservation work based on First Nations people's perspectives on preservation (Clavir 2002). The above concerns have also been reflected upon in the Burra Charter, according to which, 'the traces of additions, alterations and earlier treatments to the fabric of a place are evidence of its history and uses which may be part of its significance' (Australia ICOMOS 2013, 3).

When conservation professionals themselves reach out to the public using advocacy, and without depending on the media that in some cases may alter 'conservation stories', they can have control over the delivery of more precise and truthful information regarding their work (Caple 2000, 196). Finally, as Muñoz Viñas has suggested referring to the responsibility of conservation professionals towards future generations 'it will be the experts who will likely have to speak for these yet-to-be users. This great important responsibility is one of the reasons why conservation is such an interesting and attractive activity – an activity deserving social recognition' (2005, 196). To conclude, it has become apparent that even though still developing, there is already significant effort towards meeting the responsibilities of conservators towards society. What is lacking hitherto, however, is the assessment of their impact on the public understanding of conservation and people's attitude towards the field. Clearly, more detailed and systematic studies are needed to evaluate the outcomes of present and future endeavours of that nature.

2.6 Decision-making in Conservation: Democratising Heritage

Traditionally, experts have been making decisions about conservation of material culture. However, contemporary thinking positions people to engage with their heritage, not as passive receivers, but to actively take part in the process of value assessment, interpretation and decision-making. 'A heritage that is disjoined from ongoing life has limited value' (Council of Europe 2009, 8). The need for dialogue between heritage management and various societal groups is now 'widely recognised' (Burstrom 2010). This concept of power-shift from experts' authority to approaches with distinctive public focus, is, without a doubt, a challenge for the established authorities and a difficult task for those who will undertake it. The role of experts is questioned as the role of communities is increasingly acknowledged and recognised as greatly significant in heritage methodologies.

Within this framework of change in heritage philosophy, arises the issue of redefining the role of conservators along with other specialised professionals. Conservators may not only need to come up with ways to enthuse people and foster their interest in conservation, but also accept this as an integral part of their work. It may be the case that among scholars and heritage professionals there is little need to advocate the social benefit that heritage conservation generates. However, in contemporary democratic societies, it is usually what the majority of people regard as significant that is taken into account by policy makers to legislate on the safeguarding of heritage or funding conservation work and education. To put it simply, 'it is only when people care about things that they get conserved' (Jones & Holden 2008, 15). Also, in the current climate of uncertainty and recession, the value of cultural heritage and its preservation is being re-examined. More specifically, the closure of educational programs and institutions, and even museums themselves signifies a call for reprioritization and adaptation to the new challenges. One of these difficulties is to engage and involve the general public in the decision-making process.

It has been understood by conservators that 'objects are not static'. The material, meaning and significance shift depending both on the environmental conditions as well as the social context of objects. Conservators 'also recognise that conservation practice itself, far from being 'neutral', contributes to the unfolding life of an object by instigating material change, or by giving preference to a particular meaning' (Pye 2009, 136). Conservators' notions of what constitutes an object's significance have been broadened, and it is explicitly acknowledged that objects embody numerous and diverse values and that conservation decisions are subjective (Jones 2002, 2). As Brooks argues, 'conservation will flourish best when conservation practice itself is understood by the public and policymakers alike as not just a means of 'fixing things', vital though that is but as a means of creating cultural meaning' (2011, 332).

'Public questioning of conservation practice indicates a suspicion of experts who, until recently, have been seen as exclusive' (Pye 2009, 136). As Jones mentioned, there is very limited research into what members of the public actually want from conservators, while more could be discovered on what they like (or don't!), how conservators' decisions affect them and how they can contribute to the process. According to her opinion, in the case, the public does not want what conservators are offering them 'we cannot simply set out to change their minds but should re-examine what we do'. Conservators, she observes, feel compelled to proselytise and justify conservation and convert others to their cause, while the focus should be more on demonstrating what conservation adds to the understanding and enjoyment of objects (Jones 2002).

The ideas around significance-based conservation in the *Australia ICOMOS Burra Charter* (2013), have led to the incorporation of the process of significance assessment into UK heritage policy, philosophy, and practice during the 1990's and early 2000's (Clark 2004, 65). The Burra Charter (evolved out of the Venice Charter) introduced the concept of 'place' instead of 'monument and

site' and the attention was focused on the intangible aspects of cultural significance (Australia ICOMOS 1999). Moreover, the Burra Charter underlined 'the associations and meanings that places have for people, and the need to involve people in the decision-making process' (Jokilehto 1999). This shift towards values-based management provided a framework that allowed community views to influence the way heritage is managed and ultimately introduced a new way of thinking about cultural heritage (Clark 2004, 66). Another document contributing to the direction of democratising heritage is the European Landscape Convention (ELC) - also known as the Florence Convention. The ELC defines the term landscape as 'an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors' (Article 1) and is recognised as 'an important part of the quality of life for people everywhere: in urban areas and in the countryside, in degraded areas as well as in areas of high quality, in areas recognised as being of outstanding beauty as well as everyday areas' (Council of Europe 2000). In addition, according to the more recent Faro Convention (Council of Europe 2005) everyone 'has the right to benefit from the cultural heritage, contribute towards its enrichment' (Article 4) and 'participate in the process of identification, study, interpretation, protection, conservation and presentation' (Article 12) 'The Convention does not grant these rights of course; they already existed before experts gave a name to them, just as heritage existed before experts defined it' (Council of Europe 2009, 31).

Places and objects are appreciated differently from groups or individuals. Everything can be heritage and hence everyone can have expertise on something significant and valuable. Therefore, the traditional definition of heritage experts seems to be rather insufficient. A significant issue arises at this point. Does the right 'to benefit, contribute and participate' together with the broad definition of cultural heritage lead to the paradox that everyone is a heritage expert? What is then the distinction between an expert and a community member, or any individual who is a conveyor of a certain culture as we all are? Should there be such a distinction? Naturally, those communities who live, create and sometimes are themselves living cultural heritage (like for example in the case of Japan's National Living Treasures) have first-hand knowledge, based on life-long experience and are indeed experts in their own culture. Moreover, even though it is evident for earlier periods that the only experts are the professionals, in cases of researching the contemporary past 'we are all 'experts' and we all have a claim' (Harrison & Schofield 2010, 288 and Schofield 2014).

However, there are major differences between the local experts and the professional ones. The concept of 'hot interpretation' was introduced to the heritage field to advocate that visiting heritage is an emotional experience and not simply a cognitive one (Uzzell 1989). It is proposed that 'hot interpretation' accepts that people are 'subject to a full repertoire of emotional responses', and the reason that heritage evokes strong emotional responses is that 'it not only relates to our past but it is an important part of our present and future' (Uzzell & Ballantyne 2008, 503). Within heritage, the concept has an affective dimension through which heritage material is given meaning and greater significance. Furthermore, hot interpretation in heritage may also serve in developing communities

when employed politically, as a means of control (Uzzell & Ballantyne 2008, 510). The local expert's autocentric approach is described by Porteous (as cited in Schofield - lecture notes 2010) as 'hot' in comparison with the 'cool' allocentric approach of the professional heritage expert. The local's sense of heritage is physical, more primitive, 'actual', and close range. On the other hand, the professional's sense is based on intellect, is more sophisticated and detached, distanced and easier to recall and communicate.

The inclusion of everyone in cultural heritage policy is generally acknowledged as a progressive and democratic idea (see for example Nara Document on Authenticity, Burra Charter, Florence Convention, Faro Convention, Florence Declaration). However, on a theoretical level, this notion was conceived in the intellectual minds of professional heritage experts. What is more, these experts are often the only ones capable of communicating their knowledge and ideas efficiently, and so ultimately it is their voice that is heard and has the greatest impact on future developments in heritage policy and practice. It is professional heritage experts who have in the present climate concluded that it is time to give a voice to communities, not people themselves. The fact that professional experts determine the rights of individuals on heritage, clearly demonstrates that policies change only when there is the professional will or need to do so. Therefore, the professionals still are in actual fact the only heritage experts. And thus, their role is being re-defined in relation to people because they have decided so themselves. In light of the progress made in heritage policy, the role of experts is bound to change. In the Faro Convention, for instance, heritage experts have recognised 'the need to put people and human values at the centre of an enlarged and cross-disciplinary concept of cultural heritage' and are convinced 'to involve everyone in society in the ongoing process of defining and managing cultural heritage' (Council of Europe 2005). The Faro Convention might not yet be in force, but its influence is currently shaping contemporary heritage practices. Moreover, building on the ideas that emerged from Nara (1994) which assigned responsibility for cultural heritage to communities that generated or cared for it, the more recent Florence Declaration on Heritage and Landscape as Human Values discussed among others, the theme of community-driven conservation and local empowerment (ICOMOS 2014).

The traditional role of heritage experts used to be that of the authority whose decision-making, skills and knowledge were indisputable. The new emerging role that experts appear to adopt is perhaps closer to that of a heritage consultant, working with communities and interest groups rather than deciding for them. Professionals are not only expected to have expertise in their scholarly field, but should also be able to communicate with people who are not professionals and involve them in heritage management. Most importantly and above all, they will have to embrace the fact that their relationship with people and their cooperation is one of equals.

Nevertheless, there are some significant differences between communities and experts that cannot be over-looked. One major difference between the professional experts and the local experts is that

professionals have knowledge of a working methodology. This difference, combined with the fact that most members of communities cannot always express their ideas as efficiently as trained professionals, automatically sets their roles apart. The role of the professional is to give voice to the people by understanding, recording, expressing and delivering a study on the values of people to a wider audience. Heritage should not be the 'playground' of experts but be available, accessible, open and free to everyone. It is a human right as mentioned in Article 27, of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that everyone can 'freely participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits' (1948).

During the past two decades, peoples' interest in conservation of natural and cultural heritage resources has been increasing (Poddany & Lashing Maish 1993, 108). 'Communication with the public has become as important as communicating with fellow specialists. So although conservators have been accustomed to using formal scientific reporting and specialist terminology, we are now beginning to use everyday language to 'tell the story' of a conservation project' (Pye 2009, 136). Nevertheless, the question remains as to why is it important for people to know about and engage with heritage conservation. To answer that question, one should first look into what it is that constitutes heritage and the impact of conservation on it.

The reasons why humans tend not to part with certain objects and dispose of others are not always clear. Each individual, as well as each social context, is underlain by different practical and emotional needs, social and moral values and aesthetics. Anthropology, philosophy and psychoanalysis have all been concerned with exploring the various uses of objects; their attributed values and the nature of various connections humans develop with them. Conservation can be seen as the most sophisticated expression of the human disposition to preserve and care for valued possessions. Function, aesthetic value, necessity and pleasure are commonly recognised as qualities for which certain objects are valued. However, as Turkle points out in her book on evocative objects, 'objects bring together thought and feeling' and therefore can also be regarded as tools of provoking the thought by assisting intellectual practice or even as emotional companions in daily life (2007, 9). An additional reason why things are being valued for and therefore retained is their capacity as indicators of human development and progress through time. This perspective is essentially represented within the disciplines of modern archaeology and history (Walsh 1992, 15).

Furthermore, it has been suggested that 'preservation usually occurs in order to show others (or remind ourselves) of the importance we attach to the object and to show them what it means to us' (Caple 2000, 32). From the perspective of other disciplines like psychology, there also seems to be considerable consideration over the attribution of various values to material things as well as collecting, maintaining and possessing them - see for example Winnicott on transitional objects (1971). The value attributed to material possessions can extend far beyond their functional properties (Levy 1959). Possessions with such properties become an extension of the self (Belk 1988;

1991). It has also been suggested that material possessions may be used as symbolic manifestations of self-identities (Richins 1994). As a result of these extended uses of material possessions, it has been argued that their loss is a threat to self-identity (Ferraro et al. 2011, 169). The loss of special possessions is also thought to elicits strong negative reactions because these items are identity markers, and the loss of an identity marker is a symbolic form of death of self (Burris and Rempel 2004). Arguably, the intense feeling of grief and loss that can be experienced by individuals forced to part with their valued possessions, may also be experienced collectively and on a different level within a cultural entity when faced with the loss of assets collectively valued by its members. Also, similarly to the range of levels of attachment observed with individual possessions, there can be varying levels of attachment with collective possessions across different cultural entities.

Maintaining the physical condition of objects is equally important to the notion of their possession, since feelings of loss can occur from either removing these items from their cultural/social context, but also due to natural decay, or other forms of damage, dealt with by conservators. Heritage conservation is a crucial process that determines the physical condition, meaning and presentation of museum exhibits but usually takes place away from public view. Physical and intellectual access to heritage and engagement with its care and conservation can be seen as an aspect of heritage democratisation. The reason being, only through this kind of involvement would individuals and groups become informed and therefore enabled to actively take part in the decision-making process.

It is assumed that experts aim to ensure that heritage assets are safely passed on to future generations. Knowledge of particular methodologies and the power to influence policy makers is accumulated in their hands. Barriers of all kinds, such as cultural, geographical, economic or educational, are continually being raised between them and communities, and other interest groups and individuals. Nonetheless, it is not self-evident that the management best represents the public interest by adopting the public's opinion. Professional experts have 'a particular responsibility to stand up for other values than those that are spontaneously embraced by the public' (Burstom 2010). Returning to the discussion on the role of those who possess the expertise and to put it very simply, knowledge is power. Therefore, the role of heritage experts should include giving people the opportunity, but most importantly the ability, to express independent views and shape current policies and practice. Material remains of the past are so highly valued because they tell the story of peoples. It is true that many times, the public lacks knowledge and understanding of various aspects of cultural heritage. If people are empowered and encouraged to honour their rights on heritage assets, they should also become aware of the great responsibilities involved. Ultimately, the role of experts is to bring people closer to material culture and help raise awareness around the rights, obligations and responsibilities entailed in decision-making.

Chapter 3. Methodology

This chapter discusses the background to the methodology with reference to the literature in the field of museum visitor studies, states the research aims, objectives and questions, and outlines the methods employed for data collection and analyses. Also, it discusses fieldwork organization, planning and instrument devising (such as design, question formulation, and content) (see Appendix I), research ethics (see Appendix III), the results of the pilot study (see Appendix II), and how these helped test, rethink, and refine certain aspects of this work. Finally, it includes information about sampling and research instrument administration, as well as a close description of each event and the profile of the corresponding groups of respondents.

3.1 Introduction

The need for museums to play a more prominent role in the public sphere is being increasingly recognised among museum professionals and academic researchers, as previously discussed in Chapter 2. Indicatively, it has been argued that part of museums' duty involves empowering and supporting people's engagement with civil society (Black 2010, 144). Matters like learning, politics, and objects are considered as central to their role, as museums are 'invested with public ambitions and hopes' (Macdonald 2002, 258). Fostering 'relationships of partnership' and 'equal dialogue' between museum professionals and audiences is now seen as a way to inspire collective responsibility through the promotion of consultation, collaboration and democratic decision-making (Kelly and Fitzgerald 2011, 86). These ideas are currently reshaping museum practices and consequently also the research methodologies employed to study museum visitors' experiences and their effect on them.

During the past three decades, the call for and subsequent discussion around the democratisation of public institutions have resulted in placing the issue of access to the centre of museum policy, leading to initiatives ranging from visible storage to the emergence of digital access to collections and museum activities, including conservation. This has also brought about changes in professional attitudes as the public right to access now becoming embedded in museum ethics (Black 2012, 162). Museums are shifting their focus from the collections to the visitors, moving from the 'connoisseurship approach' (in which displays are determined by developed expertise) to a 'forensic' one (in which displays have to be based on evidence of what visitors are likely to want) (Macdonald 2002, 247). It has been suggested that the 'turn to the visitor' is one of the greatest contemporary challenges for museums, requiring considerable changes in professional practices. Instead of being thought of as the 'undifferentiated mass public', visitors are now being accepted as 'active interpreters' and 'performers of meaning-making' (Hooper-Greenhill 2011, 362). Although

continuous restructuring may have become a feature of public organisations like museums, it is considered unlikely that this trend of prioritising the visitor is reversible (Macdonald 2002, 249).

Following these developments, the scientific focus of conservation has also been redirected towards a more inclusive social approach (Pye 2009). The inclusion of activities that provide opportunities for visitors to handle and discuss objects has become a primary need for museums (Black 2012, 154), and thus conservation naturally plays a vital role in negotiating issues around the different forms and degrees of access (as discussed in Section 2.4). Engagement initiatives can vary in format and degree of involvement of people in conservation projects (see examples and classification of common formats in Section 2.5). As a result of this move from material preservation toward the values that people have for their cultural heritage, it has been argued that a new framework is needed to help conservators to engage people in heritage decision-making (Sully 2013).

It has been proposed that democratising the museum is about helping its users develop a better understanding of what museums are for and what they do. In this framework, opening up conservation work and opportunities to 'meet the expert', online provision through blogs, and social media, have provided access to 'behind the scenes' and have gradually become a feature of many other institutions in the UK (see for example Lithgow et al. 2008). These 'conversations' have been described as 'vital to transforming museum visitors into users', promoting a deep understanding of museums' role in society, and helping 'engender loyalty and enthusiastic support' (Black 2012, 164). Besides, it has been shown that through their enhanced encounters with objects and increased access to information, museum visitors are encouraged to reflect on themselves and their culture in ways that promote new connections and meaning-making (Kelly 2007, 287).

However, even though there has been plenty of support for social inclusion as well as worthwhile efforts in this direction, it remains the case that a consideration of interaction with people rarely factors into conservation practice and academic research. Conservation research studies still focus, for the most part, on the physical and chemical properties of materials, control over the environment of heritage objects and structures, or the development of techniques and management strategies of heritage assets. At the same time, conservation education does not always adequately equip practitioners with the relevant skill set and experience to help them communicate effectively with people outside their professional domain. Thus, one of the primary motivations for undertaking this study was the apparent lack of the human social element in conservation research studies and the limitations of this approach in professional practice.

For me, the endeavour of conducting this research study required coming to terms with the qualitative aspects of a research design that would be appropriate for this particular project. While understanding the necessity and relevance of qualitative methods (see Barbour 2008; Bauer & Gaskell 2000; Booth et al. 2003; Marshall & Rossman 2011; Mason 2002; Silverman 2001; 2010;

Weiss 1994), this has been one of the greatest challenges I was presented with as a research student, since my background as a conservator so far had led me to use primarily quantitative research methods and consequently to adopt a positivistic epistemological approach. As a result, deciding on and applying qualitative methods has not been a seamless undertaking but underwent numerous revisions and adjustments throughout the process. Indeed, while having developed a theoretical framework advocating the relevance of researching people's views in conservation practice, my views on how knowledge is acquired caused me to remain conflicted about the use of qualitative methods throughout the data review and analysis process. At the same time, however, exploring the unfamiliar helped challenge my way of thinking and broaden my perceptions of truth and objectivity. The progress and significant events of the study are outlined in the table below, and it is relevant because it also demonstrates the difficulty in identifying appropriate case studies. As a result, the data collection and analysis continued over 21 months. The advantage of such an extensive period was that the theoretical and methodological aspects of the study developed along with the processing of the incoming data sets, which allowed time for thorough comprehension of the material and critical evaluation of the methods used for its analysis. In addition, my experience in the development of this study accords with the qualitative research description mentioned in the research methodology literature, suggesting that this type of study often begins from broad research problems, and more descriptive and theoretical ideas develop through the collection and analysis of data, and also that such research is at the same time 'progressively focused' so as to check the ideas generated (Cooper et al. 2012, 6).

Year	Month	Event
2011	Oct - Dec	Literature review
2012	Jan – Apr	Development of scope and research questions
	Mar – Aug	Observation and participation in conservation demonstrations
	Sept	Development of research instruments
	Oct – Nov	Pilot study
	Dec	Data collection (surveys and interviews with museum visitors)
2013	Jan – Apr	Conservation workshop sessions and further data collection
	May – July	Identification of additional case studies and further data collection
	July – Dec	Development of coding schemes for data analysis
2014	Jan – Sept	Further data collection and analysis
	Oct – Dec	Overall review of findings, revisions, and conclusions
2015	Jan – Feb	Discussion and overall conclusions
2016	Jan – Oct	Revisions following the examiners' guidance

Table 1 Timeline for the research study showing progress and dates of key events

As set out in section 1.2, the primary aim of the study is to inform future efforts of public engagement with conservation by investigating how museum visitors perceive conservation as a professional activity and exploring how engagement work can impact on their views. Specifically, it aims to provide insights into how people engage, or not, with the conservation process and ethics in different events in the museum context. This goal is achieved by identifying patterns and trends emerging from visitors' responses. Also, conservators' views are analysed and wherever possible their intentions for devising engagement events are compared with the reactions of the visitors.

The importance of this work lies in its contribution to a better understanding of how the public image and notions of the work of the conservator can be shaped through such events, by considering issues around communication, transparency, decision-making and participation. The study also discusses matters related to impact assessment and evaluation of engagement projects.

It is mentioned in the literature that evaluation of museum events is one of the earliest forms of visitor research (Hooper-Greenhill 2011, 365), initially focusing on tracking the spatial movement and behaviour of people in the exhibition space. Concepts that emerged from these methods, such as 'attracting power' and 'holding power', were used in the UK during the 1980s and 90s (see Bicknell & Farmelo 1993). In the US, the evaluation of exhibitions and educational programmes was supported by a sense of accountability and the need to assess outputs for funders and sponsors, focusing on visitor attainment based on educational objectives using pre- and post-testing and visitor tracking (Hooper-Greenhill 2011, 366).

Over the past two decades, there has been a significant impetus towards the systematic collection of information about museum audiences, which has generated discussion and debate around the employment of appropriate methodologies and methods. During this period, 'museum visitor studies' emerged as a field of study (Macdonald 2005, 120). It was also proposed that visitor comments should become a much more relevant element in exhibitions as they were thought of 'as part of the museum's conversation with its visitors' and 'integral' to evaluation. As visitor research developed, learning from each new exhibition and applying the lesson to the next one was considered the priority (Black 2005, 284).

Nonetheless, approximately a decade ago, it was argued that only a very small number of organisations in the cultural sector had developed systematic strategies for carrying out visitor studies and evaluation work. It was also pointed out that evaluation of new developments and their impact was either 'not undertaken at all' or 'was limited to the personal feelings and impressions of the staff involved and to anecdotal evidence' (Economou 2004, 31). Research into the quality if the visitor's direct engagement with collections was reported to be still 'in its infancy' (Black 2005, 283).

During the past decade, evaluation studies have emerged rapidly in the UK, in large part due to government pressures on museums to demonstrate their impact and the value of investing funding in museums. As a result, museums either carried out their own evaluations and impact studies or commissioned freelance staff to evaluate their projects. However, many of these emerging studies have been accused of being of little use due to reasons such as methodological inadequacy, non-rigorous analysis, failure to describe research methods, and claims that could not be supported by evidence. The absence of sound research has also reported having a hindering effect on the understanding of the potential of museums and the success or failure of museum policy (Hooper-Greenhill 2007a, 64).

Concerning methodological decisions and terminology, evaluation in museums usually concerns the investigation and analysis before, during and after the exhibition process, and thus often refers to exploratory work, such as mapping general attitudes to exhibition themes. It has been discussed that the concept of evaluation is often confused with the concept of research, as both processes use the same methodologies: questionnaires, interviews, focus groups and observations (Hooper-Greenhill 1994a, 69). Although evaluation and research do not differ regarding methods and subject matter, it has been proposed that the way to distinguish between them is possible on the basis of their intent. Evaluation is a 'process of self-analysis and review - an activity central to quality performance by professionals'. Thus, evaluation aims to source information for specific action in the short term. Research, on the other hand, is driven by the desire for new knowledge and developing conceptual frameworks, without necessarily providing immediately useful findings (Munley 1986, 3).

Due to influential publications on the educational aspect of museums, such as *Learning in the Museums* (Hein 2002), museums have set out to provide constructivist learning experiences and develop sustained and more meaningful connections with their audiences (Kelly & Fitzgerald 2011, 77). However, the shift towards consultation in an equal two-way relationship between museums and their audiences still presents challenges (Kelly & Fitzgerald 2011, 87). It is self-evident that for a non-expert visitor to be in a position to understand a conservation approach and form an informed opinion on how it should or should not be carried out, acquisition of relevant knowledge is necessary. By contrast, the adoption of positive attitudes towards the field of conservation as a whole or in any particular case study may depend on various other factors that do not necessarily involve specialised knowledge. Moreover, people's attitudes might be of greater importance than awareness and comprehension because, as it has been pointed out, 'attitudes are enduring, but knowledge has an ephemeral quality' (Osborne et al. 2003, 1078). Therefore, the methodology employed in this study distinguishes between visitors' views on conservation and the formation of attitudes towards it and investigates possible links between the two.

The study's overall logic is to move from the examination of specific engagement efforts to broader conclusions about public engagement. Specifically, the study seeks to explain how visitors interact with aspects of conservation in each museum context considered. The reasons for carrying out this research and the significance of attempting to understand the dynamics between conservation and the society have been previously developed (see Chapter 2). To briefly summarise, it is argued that meaningful engagement of people with conservation thinking and practice is dependent on the public being both interested and informed. This has been recently recognised as the 'challenge of the next decennia' for conservation (Grijzenhout as cited in Brooks 2011, 334). Most importantly, though, conservation, like 'heritage' (Smith 2006), can be regarded as a social process (Pye 2009). Thus, the way it is carried out, as well as the act of conserving itself, reflect, and to some degree are determined by, the values and aspirations of the social context within which it takes place.

3.2 Research Questions

To begin with, in this study what is referred to as the public, people, heritage audience or museum visitors does not necessarily denote a homogeneous entity. In each one of the case studies considered, there is a different variety of groups and individuals who become the receivers of an engagement attempt. Also, emotional or intellectual connections developed either with the object of conservation or with the process itself, may be dependent on various factors that can affect the outcomes of the engagement process.

The following research questions are formulated based on the idea that notions of, views on, and attitudes towards conservation do not depend entirely on the quality or form of the engagement approach implemented in each case. For example, the composition of the audience regarding their level of interest in conservation and also factors such as locality, age, gender, education, and professional proximity to conservation are also considered. The process of engagement with conservation, or indeed the lack of it, is examined with these in mind in each case study.

Having completed the initial stage of establishing a baseline by identifying the participants' profile concerning demographic data and the sample's connection with conservation, the focus moves to determining the approach to the visitor engagement process within each of the museum environments studied. This refers both to a detailed description of the environment itself, as well as the way it is experienced and understood by its audience. Thus, the first research question must be:

How does the process of engaging heritage audiences occur in each context studied?

More specifically, the process here refers to: firstly, the messages that each engagement event intends to communicate to their specific heritage audience as well as the means employed to do that in each case, and secondly, the ways that these events are received regarding the visitor experience. Thus, the first research question above concerns the identification of different communication approaches taken in each case study, as well as the investigation of the mechanics involved in the process of engagement between conservators/curators and visitors.

The views expressed in the context of the visitor survey within the environment of each engagement event are also investigated, regarding how the subject of conservation is perceived by their heritage audience. It should be noted that it was decided to adopt for this study the term 'view' to describe the discrete strands of visitors' opinions in relation to certain aspects of cultural heritage conservation, rather than the term 'attitude' which is used to refer to the overall picture gained from the combination of singular views. This critical distinction is discussed in further detail in section 4.1. Therefore, the second research question is:

What are the audience's views on the conservation process in response to each engagement event and its environment?

The second research question above regards the investigation of museum visitors' views as expressed in response to each event through the visitor survey. At this final stage, a number of different strands of views and connotations concerning conservation are identified, as the combination of these views forms the basis of the prevailing attitudes of heritage audiences towards cultural heritage conservation. The findings of the analyses presented in the following chapters provide the evidence needed to answer these two principal questions.

3.3 Methodological Approach

Engagement of museum visitors has been defined as the ways 'to gain their attention, to hold it, and to encourage reflection' (Black 2005, 271). Research on museum visitors has rapidly grown during the recent years with different methodologies being applied to explore how visitors understand and respond to museum exhibitions and events (see Hooper-Greenhill 2006). Arguably, while the museum has various aspects and multiple functions, the focus of the vast majority of visitor research studies has been on its educational role - what visitors learn from an exhibition or other events. It has been shown for instance that museums are ideal locations for free-choice learning (what people choose to do in their own learning time) (Falk & Dierking 2002). It has been argued that visitors typically arrive at the museum with pre-existing expectations of what they will see and do. These expectations may be informed by direct experience of previous visits, the media, or websites but the predominant source of information for museum visitors is word-of-mouth (Falk & Dierking 2013, 97). Nonetheless, it has also been well established that museum visitors consider learning as their primary reason for going to museums (see Falk 1998; Falk et al.; 1998; Kelly 2001). There has also been extensive investigation on how visitor's learning identities (how visitors view themselves as learners) impact on their learning experiences at a museum (see Kelly 2007), while more recent studies have also explored how visitors' sense of identity can shape the visitor experience (see for example Bickford 2010; Falk 2006; 2009; 2011; 2013, McCray 2010).

Locality is another important aspect of how people perceive heritage and heritage related issues like conservation. According to Smith, a heritage place may not only represent or stand in for a sense of identity and belonging, but it may also 'structure an individual's response and the experiences an individual may have at that place, while also framing and defining the social meaning these encounters engender' (2006, 77). The extensive literature on place attachment approach covers its application in a variety of disciplinary fields such as psychology, architecture, and sociology, to name only a few. For instance, when looking, into the issue of participation in local life and decision-making (Patterson & Williams 2005, Cheng et al. 2003, Kruger & Jakes 2003), or when attempting to determine the reasons why people visit a certain place (Hwang et al. 2005, Stedman 2006, and Walker & Ryan 2008), the sense of place or place identity is often a key concept.

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Furthermore, it has also been suggested that the complex relationships that people develop with particular places are formed alongside their human identity (Manzo 2003, Eisenhauer et al. 2000, Kruger & Shannon 2000, Butz & Eyles 1997).

It has also been proposed that the visitor survey has, in some ways, become part of the visiting experience, having a function somewhat similar to that of a visitor book (which has also been used as a research source in some cases) (see Macdonald 2005). The use of mixed methods has been suggested as the most efficient way to source evidence for museum-based learning and capture outcomes and impact of museum events on visitors. Surveys (questionnaires distributed immediately following a museum visit) have been employed to provide statistical data about views, while qualitative data sourced through interviews, focus groups, and case studies have been used to provide deeper insights (Hooper-Greenhill 2007a, 84). Regarding research ethics, it should be noted that most audience research methods like the ones mentioned above, involve the researched being aware that they are being studied, and indeed some argue that any other form of research (e.g. observation) is unethical (Macdonald 2005, 120).

Another research field that has been closely associated with research on museum visitors is that of media and communications, as it has been argued that understanding how visitors' choices of leisure activities are influenced is vital for museum outreach efforts (see for example Hood 1993, 20). Looking at an overview of developments that shaped the field of audience research during the past century, it was argued that communications research (how people receive and act on communications and what messages would cause them to change their attitudes and behaviour), and in particular studies on diffusion and personal influence (which recognises the importance of the 'word of mouth' communication), has benefited museums (Hood 1993, 19). However, these developments have received criticism for being preoccupied with 'effects' and brought about a new recognition of the 'active audience', challenging the established top-down approach of experts transmitting information to the public (see Falk and Dierking 2000; Macdonald 2002; Hooper-Greenhill 2006; Macdonald 2005).

As discussed above, it has often been the case that museum visitor research studies perceived the behaviour and attitudes of visitors or viewers as something to be influenced by intelligently targeted messages (e.g. communications and media studies), or put primary emphasis on cognition - on 'what visitors have learned' and whether they have received (or not) the intended 'messages', a task on which they are evaluated for their performance, and the effectiveness of museum communication is judged accordingly (Macdonald 2005, 120). However, these approaches characterise visitors as relatively 'passive' as they are based on the 'transmission model' described above. In response to this criticism, a new wave of visitor research has emerged which is based on the premise of 'active' audiences which in turn has also been criticised for regarding anything that audiences do as 'active' and accepting these as expressions of 'agency' or 'resistance'. It has been

argued that visitor research should focus on revealing how activities are conceptualised and performed by those involved, instead of considering 'activity' or 'choice-making' as democratic and empowering a priori (Macdonald 2002, 219). It is stated that the proposed 'active audience' model aims to 'access visitors' own active meaning-making, and the assumptions, motives, emotions and experiences that this may involve'. Regarding the methods employed to achieve this, and because this perspective attempts to overcome the prior assumptions or expectations of the researchers, more open-ended methods are necessary (as opposed to the closed-question surveys that are typically used to assess effects). Nonetheless, the selection of appropriate methods that are in alignment with this model and at the same time go beyond researchers' prior assumptions or expectation is highly complex and has generated considerable debate and methodological innovation (Macdonald 2005, 120).

While measuring, counting, and mapping formed the basis of the vast majority of museum visitor studies, they do not provide an understanding of the value of the visitor experience (Hooper-Greenhill 2011, 371). In the research methodology literature, it is very often the case that research designs are criticised either for failing to employ rigorous scientific methods or for being too detached from the real world. Moreover, boundaries between qualitative and quantitative research are often questioned (see for example Cooper et al. 2012). It is widely recognised that all research necessarily involves both 'inductive' and 'deductive' modes of inference and that any difference between quantitative and qualitative approaches in this respect is a matter of degree (Cooper et al. 2012, 6). This study attempts to balance between the two by employing a variety of methods, collecting both qualitative and quantitative data and approaching the subject from various angles.

In this study, it was decided to use a mixed methods approach for data collection and analysis. Quantitative data is presented through descriptive tables, charts and cross-tables created using SPSS and Excel, while Dedoose is used for coding the qualitative data. Qualitative data is analysed according to the Grounded Theory (GT) approach which is an inductive approach focusing on generating or 'discovering' theoretical ideas and explanations from the data, rather than specifying them beforehand. This methodological approach has its origins in the field of sociology, and it was initially created with the aim of developing explanatory theories of social processes studied in the environments in which they take place (Glaser & Strauss 1967; Strauss 1987; Glaser 1992; Strauss and Corbin 1997; Charmaz 2003). Two other qualitative approaches that were considered for this study are the Discourse Analysis approach (Wooffitt 2005), and the Phenomenological approach (Charmaz & McMullen 2011), but it was decided that GT would be the most suitable one for the scope of this study among the three. More specifically, the GT methodological approach is selected because of its close relevance to the nature of the central research questions. These have a focus on studying the experience and understanding of visitors who are being exposed to information about conservation under different conditions, where the process of engagement takes place. GT is also considered as the most appropriate approach to researching public engagement with cultural

heritage conservation because there has been limited, previous directly relevant research and therefore it was not possible to formulate any hypotheses before collecting and reviewing the data.

The museum visitor experience is influenced by three particular aspects of the personal context of the visitor: a) prior experience, b) interest, and c) knowledge (Falk & Dierking 2013, 84). Interest, in particular, is thought to be the factor that will ultimately determine whether or not someone will decide to engage in the activity of museum-going (Falk & Dierking 2013, 91). As mentioned earlier, it was decided that the case-study approach would be the most appropriate for this research adapting to the given circumstances. In the framework of this study, four different contexts are surveyed, within which public engagement with heritage conservation is attempted. The experimental variables in this research are therefore the different contexts where these attempts occur.

It has been proposed that the evaluation of exhibitions usually falls into one of the following categories: front-end analysis, formative evaluation, or summative evaluation. The first takes place during the pre-planning and planning stages to identify potential problems before the exhibition goes into production. The second occurs during the implementation of plans to provide directional guidance while work is in progress. The third one takes place after an exhibition has been opened to the public with the purpose of establishing how successful an exhibition has been rather than to see how it could be improved (Bull 1999, 295). The methodological approach in this study falls into the final category.

The people who take part in the survey are considered as a controlled variable. The research instruments can also be considered as a controlled variable, meaning that the set of questions posed to the participants in each case are based on the same themes in order to result in generating as much as possible comparable data. It was considered whether data should be gathered using the same instruments and methods in all case studies for this study. This would ensure that the scientific method is appropriately employed and the project would benefit in terms of precision and data comparability. However, this approach would significantly limit the flexibility of adapting the questions to each separate case, and thus the survey design might run the risk of being too detached from or even completely irrelevant to each separate case study. To overcome the dilemma between instrument standardisation and relevance to each context, the instrument and methods used are adapted to the nature of each form of engagement in each different environment. At the same time, the questions and the data generated correspond in a broader sense, to constitute the data comparable. This research design, therefore, involves the comparison of data in the form of broad thematic categories that emerge from the analysis generated from each case study (see Yin 2009).

Although during recent years there is great advocacy for embedding public engagement in museum conservation practice (as discussed earlier in section 3.1) as well as efforts in this direction (see

examples in section 2.5), audiences still rarely have a chance to actually witness conservation treatments and be introduced to the issues and challenges that conservators deal with. Because of the relative scarcity of available applied engagement work, the identification of appropriate and ongoing case studies was a challenging phase in this research. A pragmatic approach was adopted to balance the theoretical outlook of this research with the current actuality in museum and heritage institutions on a realistic basis. Nevertheless, the case studies chosen effectively illustrate multiple aspects of the subject through different applied forms of outreach. In order to cope with the lack of available ongoing cases within the time constraints of producing a thesis, some of the missing context (i.e. an engagement event in the form of a workshop) was created and studied. In this case, the event was designed using tools such as interactive discussion, which was shown to be a particularly effective way to engage museum audiences in the context of educational programmes (Kelly and Fitzgerald 2011, 86).

3.4 Sample

This research essentially aims to investigate the process of communicating conservation to heritage audiences in different settings. That being so, museum visitors are the primary source of data. No specific individuals or groups are targeted using criteria such as gender, the level of education, professional occupation, ethnicity, or cultural background. It is intended to draw as diverse a sample of museum visitors as possible, within the specific limitations of each museum context, its location, its usual audiences, etc.

As expected, the majority of participants are adults from all age groups (and wherever possible children were also welcome to provide their input, given of course that they had ensured the informed consent of their parents or guardians). The only parameters for sampling are a) the participants' natural presence in each museum context studied, b) their informed consent and c) their ability to understand the questions and respond to them in a coherent manner (for example children of very young age are not included). Wherever possible it was attempted to use as a secondary source of data the conservators and conservation professionals involved as creators of an exhibition or demonstrators in the events studied.

Finally, based on the Grounded Theory approach, analytic work happens alongside data collection (Glaser & Strauss 1967). Hence, in terms of selecting the case studies in which the visitors were recruited to participate in the study, the initial intention was to apply the process of theoretical sampling, which refers to the parallel data collection and analyses, and then based on the findings, decide anew which cases to survey next in order to develop a theory as it emerges. However, occasions of attempting to engage heritage audiences with conservation were extremely limited within the given constraints of the study and as a result theoretical sampling was practically impossible.

3.5 Instrument Devising

The primary research instrument for data collection is a questionnaire used with minor adaptations for each case. Data is also gathered by semi-structured one-to-one interviews with visitors following a similar scheme of questions with the questionnaires. Additionally, while this is not the main focus of the study, it is attempted to capture also the views of the conservation professionals involved in the engagement events, wherever possible. The instruments (questionnaire and interview scheme) used for data collection can be found in Appendix I.

An essential requirement of a research project is to create suitable research instruments for data collection. Bearing their significance in mind, the set of questions used has been peer reviewed, piloted and revised regarding content, wording, and organisation. Questions had to be both comprehensible and answerable by the participants. For example, it could be said that most members of the public are unfamiliar with conservation issues. Hence, it would not be sensible to ask someone not acquainted with conservation a relatively complex question, without providing them with some pointer or menu of suggestions as to what conservation might involve. For that reason, participants were presented at an early stage with a question with an intended contextual effect, asking what they consider as good practice in heritage conservation and with a list of options (though not an exhaustive one) that would help them have a clearer image of what conservation may involve. This approach was intended to better 'equip' them to answer the following questions that required that minimum background information, without being directly instructed or biased towards any particular conservation approach.

Before conducting the pilot study, the instruments were checked and commented on by the academic supervisor and members of the Thesis Advisory Panel, as well as conservation professionals some of which have had the experience of sharing conservation matters with museum visitors. Discussions were held concerning the content and phrasing of the questions, the cross-correlation between instruments, opening questions, the level of difficulty, clarity, thought-provoking features, similarities/differences of the questions, practical features such as time management, and available space for answers. It was decided that the instruments used for the data collection should match the context but also correlate in a broader sense. Moreover, the instruments should be aiming to measure notions and views rather than sound knowledge of conservation. Finally, a determining factor for instrument design was my participation in conservation engagement events. This provided a first-hand experience of being in the position of delivering the engagement, which also allowed for closer observation of the process as a whole.

3.6 Pilot Study

The pilot study was conducted on an example of visitor engagement through demonstration, a type of engagement that is often employed in museums and other heritage contexts. This approach to engagement is also used in many National Trust historic properties as a way to engage visitors with conservation. Specifically, the programme implemented by the National Trust is called *Conservation In Action*. It involves allowing visitors, during opening times and on certain days, to view practical conservation work that regularly takes place during the periods when properties are closed for visiting.

The pilot study concerned one of these historic properties called Treasurer's House, housing a collection of historic furniture and objects. The survey was conducted on four different occasions during the autumn of 2012. These involved the treatment (preventive cleaning) of the oak chairs in the Great Hall, the bed cover in Princess Victoria's Bedroom, the horsehair fabric chairs in the Dining Room, and the glass chandelier in Princess Victoria's Bedroom. Data included responses from visitors via questionnaire, an interview with one of the conservation cleaners employed by the National Trust to carry out conservation work and demonstrations, and some observations notes made during my participation in these demonstrations. While the data collected at this formative stage is not directly relevant to the study, yet the experience of taking part in the demonstrations together with the process of data collection and keeping observational notes, have all informed the validations and amendments to the methodological approach in a number of ways, which are described in detail in the present section.

To gain a better understanding of the dynamics of visitor engagement in that particular context, it was thought in the early stages of the research that volunteering to assist with the conservation work and the demonstrations would offer useful insights for the purposes of this study. This experience had a significant impact on the development of the study on three different levels.

Firstly, the researcher's active involvement generated useful field notes reflecting on each day's exposure to the demands of the dual role of simultaneously carrying out conservation work, while explaining processes and their purpose to visitors and receiving their questions. Furthermore, in this context, there was the additional challenge of recruiting visitors to participate in the survey for the pilot study and whenever possible transfer observations and notes on dialogues with visitors to paper.

Secondly, testing the survey instruments resulted in multiple revisions and improvements and helped further refine the data collection methods as well as fine-tune the focus of the research. Data gathered comprised of 33 responses via questionnaires by visitors who had seen the conservation processes on the day of their visit and an interview with one of the conservation cleaners who had

been carrying them out. As previously mentioned, observation notes were taken, concerning the way visitors interacted with the demonstrators and the subjects that were brought up. In the early stage data analysis that followed, the relevance in reporting the pilot study findings is mainly for the way in which it allowed the nuance and development of the survey instruments, the methods for data analysis, and the mode for presenting the findings. Finally, the actual findings were not thought to be particularly useful regarding the discussion. However, they provided an initial basis for identifying some of the themes that also emerge in the main case studies data.

Thirdly, valuable lessons were learned from talking over and negotiating the research objectives and methods with the National Trust staff. These discussions were extremely useful in beginning to comprehend some of the established attitudes among heritage professionals and the existing tension, fear, and nuisance around evaluation and impact assessment, even in organisations with a notable history of advocating and promoting the public value and benefit of heritage like the National Trust. Wherever appropriate in the framework of this study, the views of curators and engagement managers in the case studies have been incorporated and discussed along with the findings on visitors' views. Although this is not the primary focus of the study, the experience of explaining and negotiating the methods as well as the aims of the study provided some interesting insights into professional attitudes on which it may be worth conducting further research in the future.

The pilot study is deliberately not focused on a discussion of findings but rather serves as an account of the revisions made to the methods for data collection and analysis, and the presentation of findings from the primary case studies. Specifically, it includes findings on audience profile, visitor experience, importance and good practice, perception changes, and decision-making and public participation (see detailed analyses in Appendix II).

The pilot study played an important part in identifying unexpected aspects of the study, particularly of the data collection and analysis phases (Appendix II). It led to the revision of the data collection process as well as the re-evaluation of the aim of the study. In addition, my own first experience of taking part in the transmitting end of the engagement process, in combination with interviewing the conservation professional whose role involves conservation demonstrations to visitors on a regular basis, helped me gain a hands-on experience and valuable insights into the mechanism of visitor engagement. Most importantly, the pilot study has also helped inform the methodological approach taken in the principal case studies below, as it was at this stage that it was decided to employ Grounded Theory for collecting and analysing the data.

3.7 Principal Case Studies

This section provides a close analysis of each of the main case studies in order to make it possible to examine the reactions of visitors on the basis of what they were offered. The subsections below provide the basis for the thematic analyses of visitors' views in the following chapters. The case studies are presented in ascending order of sample size. Each of the following subsections provides: A) a detailed analysis of each principal case study and the research methods used, B) the perspectives of the conservators involved in designing/delivering the engagement event and C) the demographic profile of the visitors who participated in the study.

3.7.1. Conservation Workshop, Yorkshire Museum

This initial case study was a two 2-hour conservation workshop sessions for two different groups of 10-12 visitors at the Yorkshire Museum, planned and run by the researcher. Participants were offered the opportunity to get involved in simple hands-on conservation treatments and to consider conservation's principles as well as some of the many challenges that conservation practitioners are faced with.

Figure 2 Advertisement in Adult Learning Events Programme

Participation of all group members was encouraged with probing questions and demonstrations for the hands-on activities. The equipment used for the demonstrations and the activities comprised basic tools that participants could safely handle under supervision and guidance. The materials were also friendly to the non-expert user in terms of their chemical composition as well as their workability. The session plan can be seen below.

Introductions & Welcome	10.30-10.40am
Objects examination and preservation state evaluation	10.40-10.50am
Discussion on historical background, previous treatments and storage conditions	10.50-11.00am
Thoughts on potential approaches – Define purpose of interventions (encourage debate)	11.00-11.10am
Conservation principles, intervention examples and dilemmas (Power-point presentation and short discussion)	11.10-11.20am
Break – Refreshments & thoughts on conservation approaches	11.20-11.30am
Group brainstorming on appropriate conservation interventions (flipchart)	11.30-11.40am
Conservation treatments	11.40-12.10pm
Conclusions	12.10-12.20pm
Feedback & Invitation to participate in survey and interview	12.20-12.30pm

- Discussion
- Hands-on activity
- Introduction & Break time
- Questionnaire distribution

In consultation with the museum's archaeologists and curators, it was decided to use the following objects (as described by the museum staff) for the workshop activities and to initiate discussion about conservation among participants.

- **OBJECT 1.** 1948.551.44 – Viking Axehead (Iron conserved with thick glue). Anglo-Scandinavian 866AD – 1066 AD (Viking). Iron bearded axehead. Tear-drop shape socket, with a straight-edged top, slightly curved cutting edge and curved lower edge.

- **OBJECT 2.** 1948.54.3 – Latch lifter (Iron, lightly cleaned – no preservative). Medieval 1066 – 1540. Probable latch lifter; thick square section shaft with a T-shaped, winged head.

- **OBJECT 3.** 1977.7.8874 - Coppergate animal bone (Hand clean of exterior only, number written on). No details found.

- **OBJECT 4.** 1954.7 - Samian bowl (Reconstructed with plaster to original shape then painted). A popular, mass-produced ceramic ware from Roman times. Made in Gaul in France. Sold as mementos outside stadiums, games, amphitheatres. Samian drinking cup with a stamp in the centre. Dragendorff 27 form. Reconstructed with plaster to original shape and painted. The trend now is to make an obvious distinction between the original and reconstructed pieces.

- **OBJECT 5.** H2108 - Samian cup with barbotine decoration (Reconstructed July 2012 with HMG Paraloid B72). Roman. Late Italian Samian ware cup; reconstructed from four modern breaks. Complete with exception of moulding above one handle. Pedestal base, moulded barbotine decoration and thin red slip (degrading)

- **OBJECT 6.** H195 - Samian bowl (Reconstructed as 1954.7, but the plaster has shrunk and no longer fits cleanly onto the original). Roman. Small Samian ware cup or bowl with relief pattern of stylised leaves around the rim. Dragendorff 35 form. In two pieces.
- **OBJECT 7.** 2002.457.268 [Woodhall Excavation] - Leather Shoe. Medieval 1066 – 1540. A complete leather shoe. Not a material that often survives the decomposition process. The conditions have to be just right with the correct balance of water, oxygen, and temperature.
- **OBJECT 8.** 2002.457 [Woodhall Excavation] - Wine bottle. No details found.
- **OBJECT 9.** h122 - Trumpet Brooch (Copper alloy preserved in antiquity). Roman (incomplete, pin missing). Acanthus waisted type' trumpet brooch. With an open, coil-mounted spring. Catchplate is complete, pin missing. Slight sloping on foot suggests that the brooch was cast upside-down.

The workshops sessions were designed in the framework of this research study, to create a specific, planned event within which it would be possible to study the ways that people can engage with the conservation process. The workshop sessions aimed to engage museum visitors with the conservation process through hands-on activities, discussion, and participation. The sessions were addressed to individuals with different cognitive skills, experience, and background, including welcoming visually impaired people. For that reason, it was intended for the practical activities to remain as simple and straightforward as possible, while at the same time presenting the participants with the opportunity to not only consider, but to also make use of conservation's fundamental principles by facing some of the challenges and dilemmas that a professional conservator often comes across when working with museum objects.

To examine the intervention's short-term impact and record the workshop's relative success/failure against its objectives, the groups were invited to participate in a survey requiring their thoughts on their experience after the completion of each of the sessions. The data collection instrument used can be found in Appendix I. To assess the long-term impact of this event, one-to-one semi-structured interviews were carried out after 9 – 12 months using the same questions asked in the survey instrument.

This case study presents some constraints in its development and evaluation. Namely, the workshop leader and the person assessing its outcomes were the same. The stages of conceiving the idea of designing this event, planning and delivering the sessions, distributing the questionnaire, and interviewing the participants, were all carried out by the researcher. While it was intended to eliminate any such effect, this fact may have introduced some skewing of the data, particularly due to the unavoidable social interaction with participants in the framework of running a session and asking them to discuss and evaluate their experience. This interaction could have potentially predisposed them to provide what they perceived as more gratifying responses.

Considering the extent to which data can be used to draw conclusions about impact, the second limiting factor was the sample. The workshop had to be a planned event, advertised through the Yorkshire museum's website and their partners, as well as the York Museums Trust's *Adult Learning Events Programme.* While admission was free and it was clearly stated that no previous knowledge or experience was needed, the fact that participants had to book a place to attend and were not casual museum visitors adds another layer of possible positive disposition towards conservation. Also, concerning the interviews, those participants who accepted to return and discuss their experience and its long-term effects possibly had an active predilection for the subject matter.

It is therefore decided to examine the results of this case study on the basis of the themes that emerged from the data and with less emphasis on the degree of success of this particular way of engagement and the measure of its impact. Concerning categorising this type of outreach, this case study could be more accurately described as a workshop run by a conservator conducting research on its impact. These factors should be taken into account when considering the representativeness of this case study and the capacity for generalising these research findings.

The following pie chart shows the responses of participants to the open question 'Where are you from'. Based on their answer to this question, the sample was then divided into two groups: Local (from York) and UK (from other places in the United Kingdom). It should be noted that this question was intended to measure how the participants thought regarding their own understanding of locality and sense belonging to a particular place, which they were asked to self-assess. National/ethnic backgrounds do not fully correspond to these responses.
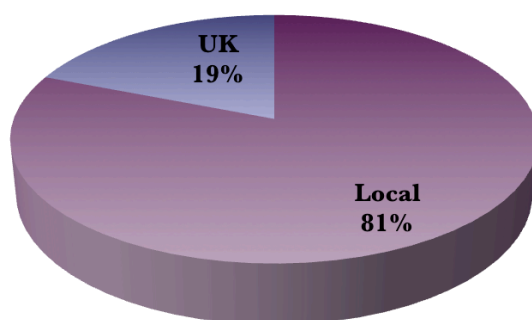
Figure 3 Participants' sense of locality

From a total of 21 participants in both sessions, the majority (81%) said they *were from* York or *near York.* The rest (19%) considered themselves local to other places in the UK. Based on the responses to this question assessing their personal sense of locality, there was no international participant.

Regarding gender, the sample presented a significant imbalance. The vast majority was female (90%) while the male population was only (10%), as can be seen in the chart below.
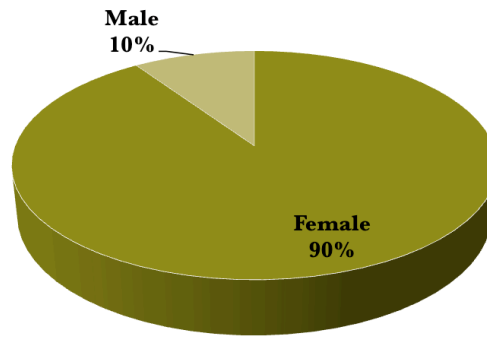
Figure 4 Participants' gender

Participants were asked to select their age group by ticking the appropriate box. Due to advertising the workshop as an adult learning event, all participants were adults. More specifically, the age group between 51 and 64 years old was the largest (43%) and the second biggest group was between 26 and 35 years old (24%). The age groups breakdown is detailed in the chart below.
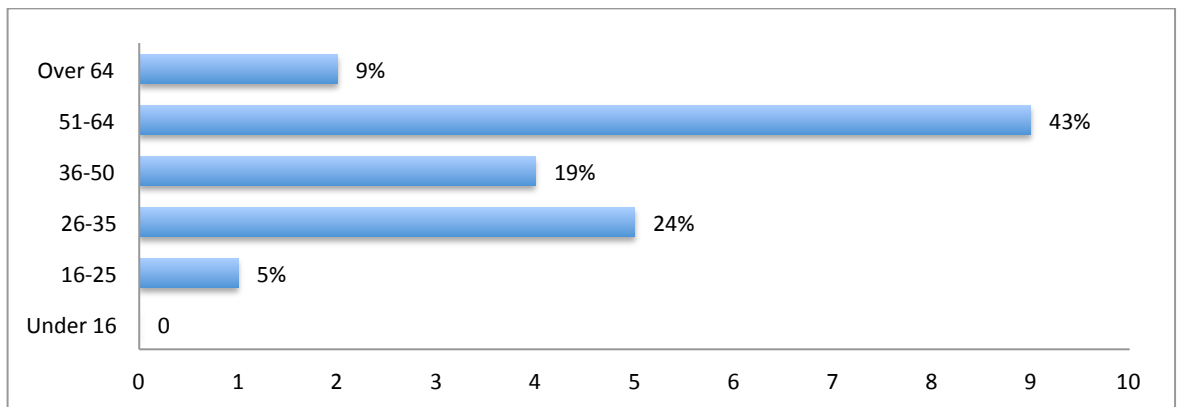
Figure 5 Participants' age

According to the Taking Part Adult and Child Report, in 2011/12, 63.3% of adults in England engaged with the arts three or more times, compared with 78.2% of adults who engaged at least once. The museums and galleries sector had the second highest percentage of adults who both visited in person and engaged digitally (12.0%) (DCMS 2012, 5). In comparison, a slightly lower (and steady since 2008) percentage of children and 11-15-year-olds had visited a museum in the last 12 months (60.9%) (DCMS 2012, 11). This data provides a measure of comparison between the age groups of museum visitors nationally, with the participants' profile regarding age in this study, which mainly focuses on the adult population due to methodological reasons.

The chart below shows a summary of participants' responses to the open question '*what is your current occupation*'. The answers were then divided into two groups: the first includes participants whose current occupation was related to conservation, while the second those whose occupation was not. This question was asked to determine participants' connection with conservation.
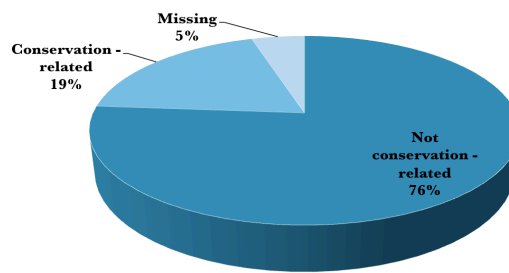
Figure 6 Participants' occupation in relation to conservation

As previously explained in the pilot study, the distinction between the two groups was based on the researcher's judgment of each response, verified by the response of participants to the closed question *'how interested are you in heritage conservation'* where they also had the option of indicating whether they had a professional interest in the conservation.

To determine their level of education, participants were asked to answer the open question *'What is the highest level of education you have completed so far'*. Responses were then placed into five categories: primary, secondary, tertiary, postgraduate (master's and doctorate).
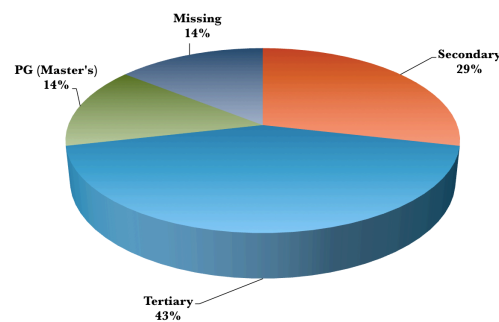
Figure 7 Participants' level of education

As can be seen in the chart above, the majority of participants have a relatively high level of formal education tertiary level (43%) and postgraduate level (14%). No significant dissimilarities were recorded or observed in the way individuals with different levels of education responded to the workshop content and activities.

Finally, regarding disability, no participant stated that they had any disability, except one person who was visually impaired.

3.7.2. *Conservation in Focus* **Exhibition, British Museum**

Conservation in Focus was an event in the British Museum, held in Room 3 (an experimental space for the museum's events, where display, design, and content ideas are explored). It took place for six weeks, from 11 September until 28 October 2008. The exhibition space was modified to provide a live conservation studio where visitors could engage with conservators as they treated objects from the collection, showcasing conservation as an often unseen aspect of the museum's work.

Conservators from three different conservation disciplines worked in three 'solid' blocks of time of two weeks, staffed by conservators from three sections:

- Stone conservators treated classical sculpture
- Organic artefact conservators treated a Pacific barkcloth
- Ceramics and metals conservators worked on medieval tiles and Iron Age cauldrons.

Throughout the period of the exhibition, each team of conservators was based in the room, offering visitors the opportunity to meet them as they worked and demonstrated the procedures, the techniques and the tools they were using. The conservators could also discuss with the public the decision-making processes and techniques they used. During each fortnight, a gallery talk was arranged and advertised through the museum channels, pairing conservators with a curator or scientist from the museum aiming to illustrate the collaborative nature of the conservators' work. Before this event, the Conservation and Scientific Research Department presented their work to the public through types of events like the annual Science Day, public lectures, and though some text panels in exhibitions and galleries. *Conservation in Focus* was the first exhibition that was devoted solely to CSR activities (Drago 2011, 28). An evaluation report entitled *I feel included* (2008) was produced for the British Museum by the research consultancy Morris Hargreaves McIntyre.

Figure 8 Conservators in the live studio discussing the conservation of Polynesian barkcloth with visitors (Drago, 2011, p. 32, fig. 3).

Figure 9 Conservators in the live studio treating classical sculpture with related information on the partition screen. (Drago, 2011, p. 32, fig. 4).

The following schematic diagram shows the layout of the exhibition. It is mentioned that the primary focus was the left-hand wall, where three conservators were seated behind a Perspex partition working on individual objects. At the front of the screen were images, text, and a small box containing some of the tools used by the conservators. Some of the images and text panels were removable so conservators could hold them up to help illustrate a point. At the back of the exhibition was a display case featuring static restored objects, which were periodically changed. The work that had been carried out was explained on interpretation panels. The right-hand wall featured quotes from conservators explaining their work and a series of video screens with changing displays of other conservation work (Morris Hargreaves McIntyre 2008, 7).
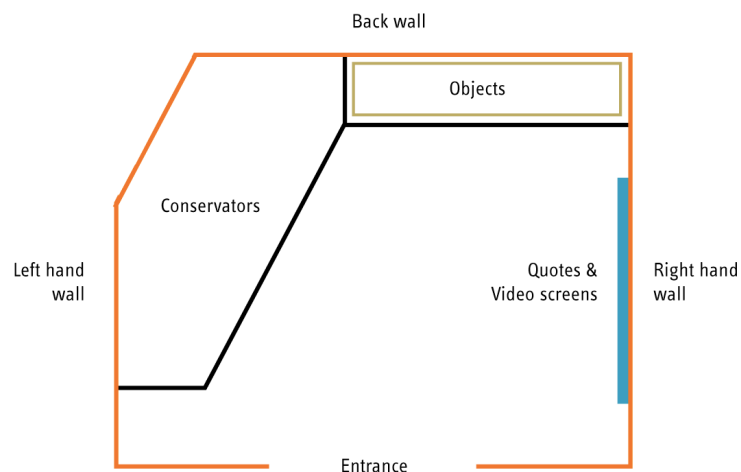
Figure 10 Schematic diagram of *Conservation in focus* (Morris Hargreaves McIntyre, 2008, p.7)

Regarding the research methodology employed, this case study was in many ways divergent from the other three. The main deviation it presents is that there was no control (of the researcher) over the data collection process. However, the engagement approach adopted included an element of 'conservation performance', which was considered valuable to include in the project. This particular case study comprises secondary qualitative analyses of the data available from the short interviews (vox pops) conducted with visitors at the time.

The primary research took place at the British Museum over five shifts between 22 September - 23 October 2008, covering weekdays and weekends. The element of that research project most relevant to the present study is called *Anatomy of a 3-minute visit* and concerns brief usually one-to-one interviews with visitors, although in some cases interviews were carried out with small groups of 2-3 people. In the MHMI report, it is mentioned that the number of interviews is 60. In fact, the actual data consists of 53 interviews in total, but in the appendix of this report, some interviews have been included more than once.

According to the methodology described in the report, the researcher approached visitors who had completed their visit in the room and asked them to talk them through their visit, explaining their thought process behind their decisions and describing feelings at each element of the display. Visitors were also asked about their reactions to the opportunity to interact with the conservators and the subsequent outcomes that have been provoked. Data generated from these interviews (full text included in the report's appendix) presents visitors' thoughts on what they experienced in the exhibition, mostly through talking with conservators or listening to conversations conservators had with other visitors, answering questions and explaining their work. The main interview questions that were asked by MHMI researchers are identified below:

1. What was it that attracted you into the room?
2. What did you look at once you were in the room?
3. How did you decide which bits to look at?
4. What attracted you to that bit in particular?
5. Talk me through. What did you speak with the conservator(s) about?
6. Why do you think the British Museum has put on this exhibition?
7. What do you think the key messages are?
8. What did you like best about this exhibition?
9. Has this exhibition changed how you feel about the museum, its collections or its staff?

The interviews were conducted by a number of different people. As a result, there were differences in the way they approached and communicated with visitors, as well as in the information that was being gathered. For example, some interviewers recorded the gender of the interviewee, or on one occasion their age, but others did not. Another issue with the methods employed was some leading questions and exhortations by interviewers in several instances. Example of such expressions are: 'So you think it has probably given you sort of a deeper insight into the museum as a whole rather than just the collections' or 'Was the lady quite helpful then and give a lot of useful information', 'Do you think this exhibition gives something particularly different to the other sort of exhibitions,

though, with it being sort of behind the scenes and do you think it helps you to learn more about the museum in general rather than just the specifics'.

An additional useful aspect of this research is the evaluation of engagement (comparing visitors who watched conservators working with those who spoke to them), as well as what conservators reported they were frequently asked. A number of common themes emerge from the conversations between the interviewer and the interviewee that appears to be useful in terms of describing attitudes towards conservation and evaluating the impact of this particular engagement approach on visitors' understanding of conservation.

To analyse the data in this case study, it was initially attempted to apply thematic coding of the conversations, using the codes that emerged from the analysis of the main case study (see section 3.7.4 below) to code data from the secondary ones. Thus the application of Grounded Theory would be limited to the central case study, which would be used as the reference point regarding coding. That was attempted to keep the same focus and allow for comparisons between all case studies that would enable drawing meaningful conclusions. However, this approach did not result in the desired outcomes. Through the process of applying the same codes on different data, it became apparent that important aspects of that body of data that did not 'fit in' had to be ignored since all the information had to fall under the predetermined themes and be compared and contrasted only with the corresponding data from other case studies. Following this analysis method specifically for the *Conservation in Focus* exhibition would mean that a large part of data available will not be considered as relevant and therefore omitted, as for example the section referring to visitors tracking, aiming to identify patterns of visitor behaviour in the exhibition. Thus, it became evident that Grounded Theory should be applied separately in each case study.

The aims of this event, as well as some of the challenges faced by conservators involved, were identified through the published paper *'I feel included': the Conservation in Focus exhibition at the British Museum* (Drago 2011) authored by Amy Drago, conservator at the British Museum, and through the MHMI report, to which enquiries for this research study were directed.

Specifically, regarding the intention of the people involved in the design and delivery of the event, it was mentioned that this exhibition aimed to: 'bring the museum's conservation activities more obviously into the public domain', 'showcase conservators and demonstrate their expertise', ' explore ways of communicating the practice of conservation', 'determine the potential of having conservation stories in the BM's permanent galleries', and finally 'build and expand the audience for Room 3 displays' (Drago 2011, 28). It is also stated in the MHMI report that the event offered visitors the chance to interact with the museum's conservators 'in order to gain a better understanding of their role, and also the role of conservation within the whole museum' (2008, 6).

To achieve that, the following key messages were developed in consultation with conservators:

1. Conservators reveal information about objects
2. Conservators ensure the preservation of cultural heritage for the future
3. Conservators collaborate with many colleagues across various disciplines
4. Conservators enable access to, and a better understanding of, objects.

These messages were used as points of reference during the development of the project when making decisions about text, images and objects. Success in communicating these messages was one of the criteria used to evaluate the effectiveness of the exhibition (Drago 2011, 29).

Regarding the research methodology adopted by MHMI to evaluate the event, it was stated that the research aim was 'to test how successfully visitors engaged with the conservators and the objects in the room, and find out the resulting outcomes'. To 'test the success of the exhibition' it was considered appropriate to evaluate the delivery mechanisms and the key messages that it was hoped visitors would take away with them (2008, 6).

Conservators involved in this engagement event were concerned about how they would communicate the complexity of their practice in brief conversations with visitors and with a limited number of examples.

> *The work carried out in the live studio was limited largely to basic cleaning techniques, as more complex conservation work may have put the object and the health and safety of the visitors at risk. This approach could have been counterproductive, giving visitors an impression that conservators' work is typically quite straightforward (Drago 2011, 34).*

Other reported difficulties for the conservators involved in designing the event had to do with logistics. Specifically, it was considered particularly challenging to use the exhibition space of Room 3 to design an event where conservators could easily interact with visitors, mainly because of its poor acoustics and the inherent noise and increased security risk due to its proximity to museum's main entrance. Conservators were concerned about the safety of the objects but also about environmental control in the exhibition space.

> *The room has inadequate environmental control because its environment is significantly influenced by external weather conditions. Sensitive objects are usually not exhibited on open display in this gallery; instead, they are usually displayed in conditioned cases. The room has windows; however, for most exhibitions, the light is blocked out by blackout blinds and artificial lighting is set at the beginning of each exhibition (Drago 2011, 29).*

Through a close examination of the transcripts in the MHMI report appendix, it was possible to infer that most participants were adults, with the exception of a 9-year old visitor who was interviewed. Some information on the interviewees' gender and age group have also been sourced through further examination of the transcripts, but it was not possible to extract information to describe the sample on the basis of locality or level of education.

Regarding gender, the sample presented a relative balance between male (47%) and female (39%) visitors, with a slightly larger male population, as can be seen in the chart below. In 3% of the interviews the gender has not been recorded, while 11% of the interviews have been conducted with groups of two or three people together (male, female or mixed gender).
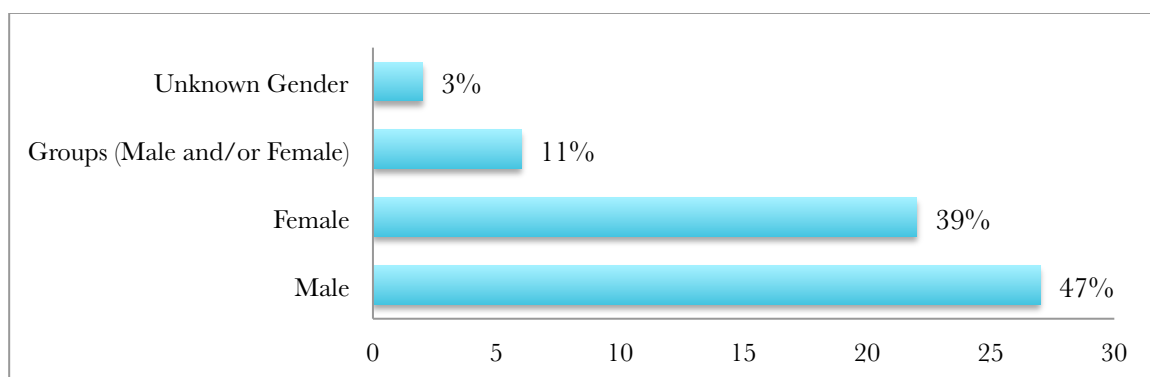
Figure 11 Participants' gender

In the MHMI report, three types (pen portraits) of visitors are identified. These are 1) the serial Room 3 visitors, 2) visitors with a personal connection and 3) incidental visitors. Serial Room 3 visitors regularly and purposefully visit this room to see the new exhibitions. Visitors with a personal connection are people who went to the Museum for another reason and entered Room 3 because they had an interest in the subject. Finally, incidental visitors are individuals who have been incidentally attracted to the museum or that particular exhibition because of its proximity to the main entrance and Great Court and its, often, intriguing décor. While there is no quantitative information about these descriptions, it is stated that compared to previous research in Room 3 (where temporary exhibitions take place), the *Conservation in Focus* exhibition attracted a higher proportion of visitors with a professional or academic interest in conservation or archaeology. Unfortunately, these potentially interesting findings could not be analysed further without available data from the study.

3.7.3. Conservation at Knole House, National Trust

This case study concerns the attempts to engage visitors with aspects of two conservation projects that were accessible to visitors in the historical collection of Knole, an English country house owned by the National Trust situated in Sevenoaks, West Kent. A visitor survey was carried out between 17 – 21 March 2014. During the period the survey was conducted, there were a number of interpretation boards throughout the house, informing visitors about the conservation projects in progress, via text, images, and videos of conservators at work. The most prominent of these was the conservation of the King James II's bed, in the Venetian Ambassador's Room.

Figure 12 James II Bed in the Venetian Ambassadors Bedroom at Knole (prior to dismantling) (The National Trust, 2012a)

The bed had been in a very fragile condition for several years, due to early conservation work carried out in the 1960s and due to exposure to various agents of deterioration. In 2006, the bed was dismantled, and since then visitors have viewed it in a deconstructed state.

Figure 13 The Venetian Ambassadors Bedroom at Knole during the period of the survey

Figure 14 Tactile exhibits explaining the deterioration of velvet and tapestry at the Venetian Ambassadors Bedroom, during the period of the survey

The second point where conservation work was explained to the visitors was the Reynold's Room, where a replica carpet was installed. According to conservators' and house stewards' verbal accounts, the installation of the eyemat reproduction aimed to prevent physical stress caused by people walking in the room and to control humidity levels in the space. This solution was chosen as a means of increasing access by allowing visitors to get closer to the Reynolds portraits without compromising the physical integrity of the original carpet.

Figure 15 The eyemat carpet reproduction in Reynolds Room (The National Trust, 2012b)

According to a Knole conservator, visitor engagement with conservation is in accordance with the National Trust's core values. In addition to the interpretation of ongoing projects, the conservation team at Knole already has an ambitious plan to develop the public aspect of their work further.

> *Whenever the team does any conservation in action when the house is open people are always fascinated by the work that we do. And I think in the Trust we have a huge amount of experience and expertise in conservation in historic houses. So we really want to share this knowledge more with our visitors. The plan is to build a conservation studio here on site. We know that we've got a huge amount of conservation work we need to do the collection, but we also want to make that part of the visitor experience. So the studio will be open to the visitors. Visitors will be able to come in and watch the conservators or talk to the conservators and hopefully get involved (National Trust, 2013).*

Knole presented an opportunity to look into visitors' perceptions in a much less accessible museum environment, in comparison with the other case studies. More specifically, access was limited in a number of different ways, physically, financially (due to admission charges), and perhaps also culturally. For example, only the great hall and the bottom of the stairs were accessible to wheelchair users, while there was no description of the ongoing conservation project in Braille or audio. These hindering factors possibly resulted in the exclusion of some people such as disabled visitors from finding out about conservation work and therefore from taking part in this survey.

In this case study specifically, and due to the limitations outlined above together with the audience profile presented in detail in the following section, it can be said that the data sourced from this case study is limited to certain categories of visitors. Any generalisations therefore only relate to these particular categories. Data in this case study was collected by questionnaire only, as interviews were thought by the managing staff to be potentially disruptive for visitors who would be asked to take part in a different survey carried out by the National Trust during the same period. An additional limitation was the lack of suitable indoors space where interviews could be conducted, as the café was undergoing refurbishment and the low temperatures and lack of seating in the house discouraged visitors from agreeing to be interviewed. Consequently, no interviews were conducted and data was gathered via questionnaire and observation notes from short conversations held with visitors, conservators, and room stewards.

The following chart shows the responses of visitors to the open question '*Where are you from'.* Based on their answer to this question, participants were then divided into three groups: local (Kent), UK (other than Kent), and international visitors.
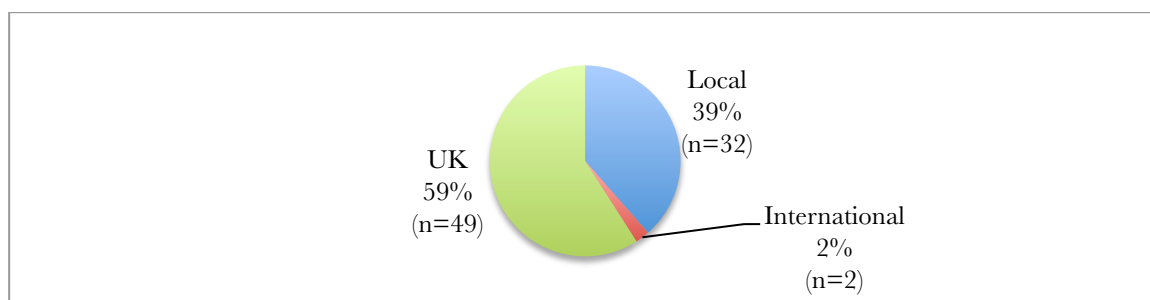
Figure 16 Participants' sense of locality

From a total of 83 participants in the survey, the vast majority of visitors (92%) considered themselves local to places in the UK. More specifically, 39% considered themselves local to Kent and 59% said they *were from* other locations in the UK. The percentage of international visitors (2%) considering themselves to *be from* several different places in the world was extremely small.

Regarding, the sample presented a good balance between male (46%) and female (48%) visitors, with a slightly larger female population, as can be seen in the chart below.

Figure 17 Participants' gender

Participants were asked to select their age group by ticking the appropriate box. The majority of participants were adults over 51 years old (73%). More specifically, the age group between over 64 years old was the largest (38%) and the second largest group was between 51 and 64 years old (35%). The age groups breakdown can be seen in detail in the chart below.
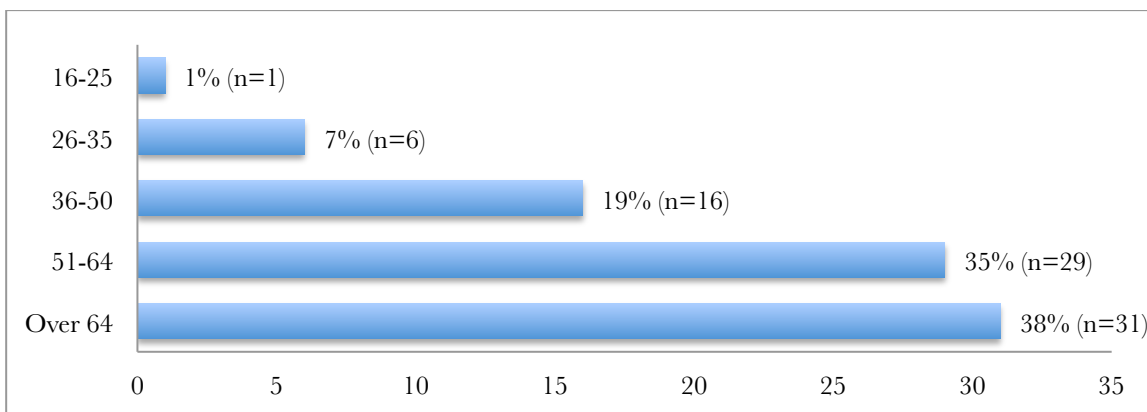
Figure 18 Participants' age

The results show the responses of visitors to the open question '*What is your current occupation'*. Based on their answer to this question, participants were then divided into two groups: Those whose current occupation was related specifically to conservation and those whose occupation was not. This question was asked to help determine the respondents' level of familiarity with the conservation issues presented at Knole.
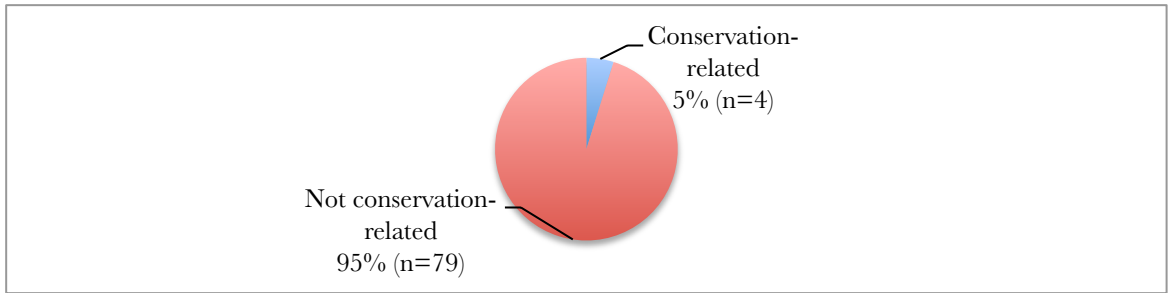
Figure 19 Participants' occupation in relation to conservation

As can be seen above, the vast majority (95%) of visitors' occupation was not related to conservation, while only a small percentage (5%) were professionally involved in heritage conservation and/or stated they had a professional interest in it.

The distinction between the two groups was based on the researcher's judgment of each response, verified by the response of each participant to the closed question 'how interested are you in heritage conservation' where they had the option of indicating whether they had a professional interest in the subject. For example, if someone responded that their occupation is associated with archaeology, art history, science, fine art or craftsmanship, etc. but did not indicate that they had an interest or professional interest in conservation they were moved to the not conservation-related occupation category. Similarly, visitors who responded they were retired but did not state their previous occupation or visitors who did not respond to the question about their occupation were placed into a category based on their response to the question assessing their interest in the subject.

To determine their level of education, participants were asked to respond to the closed question *'What is the highest level of education you have completed so far'*. Responses were placed into five categories: primary, secondary, tertiary, master's degree, and doctoral degree.
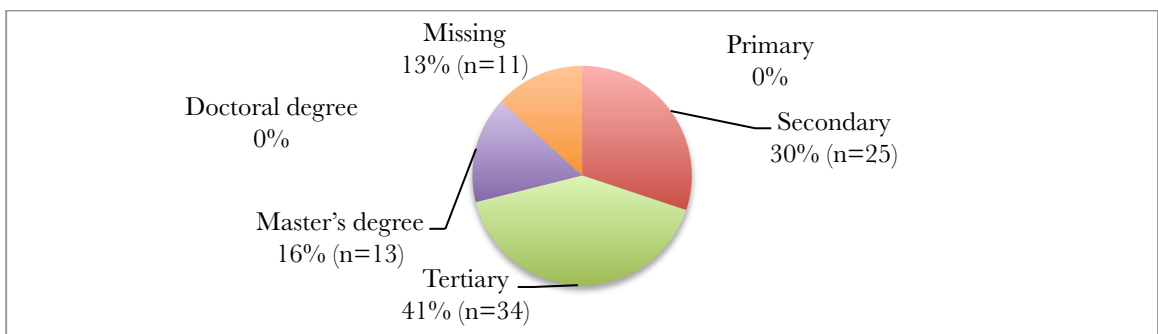
Figure 20 Participants' level of education

The above chart shows that the majority of participants were educated at least to tertiary (57%) level while a few were educated to master's level (16%). A significant percentage of the respondents stated they were educated to secondary level (30%). Preliminary analysis on formal education has indicated that there are some differences between the five groups, regarding the way participants

engaged or not with conservation issues in the exhibition, but this particular aspect was not investigated further in this study.

Participants were asked to indicate whether they had any disability. This question aimed to determine whether disabled participants would face any difficulties regarding accessing the exhibition. It should be noted that the showrooms were in fact not wheelchair accessible and there was no provision for visitors with other types of physical or mental impairment for the conservation-related exhibits.
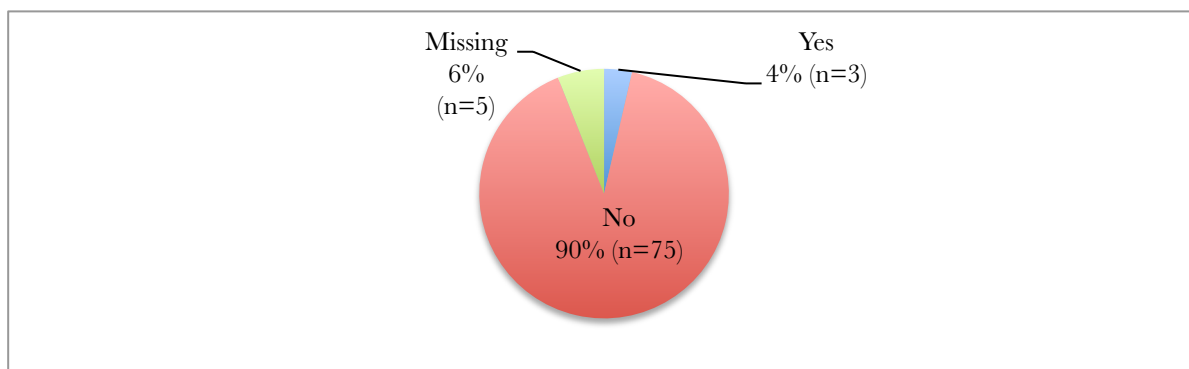
Figure 21 Participants with disabilities

Unsurprisingly, only a small number of participants indicated that they had some disability, while the vast majority stated they had none.

3.7.4. *Conservation Galleries*, Ashmolean Museum

This case study is the most substantial and fully developed case study of the four. It involved a survey and interviews with visitors carried out in the *Conservation Galleries* of the Ashmolean Museum. Data for this analysis is sourced from 167 completed questionnaires and eight interviews with visitors. Furthermore, the intentions and the reasoning behind the exhibition were discussed with the conservators/curators involved in its conception and design. To collect data that corresponds to the main research questions, the instrument used for this survey and the plan used to interview visitors included questions that were based on the themes below (see Appendix I).

The Ashmolean Museum's *Conservation Galleries* are currently the only example of a permanent exhibition on conservation in a major museum of art and archaeology in the UK. The exhibition illustrates the history of conservation through objects from the museum's collections, repair, reuse and recycling in antiquity, philosophical dilemmas in conservation practice, the nature of decay and other aspects of the conservation process.

Figure 22 The *Conservation Galleries* at the Ashmolean Museum

According to the Ashmolean Museum's Keck Award nomination report on the *Conservation Galleries*, past conservation events and temporary exhibitions were popular but never had the permanent and integrated platform the subject deserved (Ashmolean Museum 2010). This changed with a recent major development. The *Conservation Galleries* and new studios have been part of the museum since November 2009, when the museum opened after being rebuilt.

The two galleries: *Conserving the Past* and *Restoring the Past*, are located on the lower ground floor, opposite the education centre in the atrium. The exhibits include text several panels and objects under themes/titles such as: 'Decay', 'Investigation', 'Fakes and Forgeries', 'The work of the conservator today', 'Changing display of current projects', 'Why ethics matter', 'Enhancing the past', 'The eastern approach', 'Ancient repair, reuse, restoration', and 'Birth of modern conservation'. Interactive exhibits such as 'Exploring with light', the 'Touchometer', the 'Conservation Lab' and 'Match the pictures' were included for the exhibition to appeal to a range of different learning styles.

Figure 23 This Greek bowl was made and mended over 6500 years ago and is exhibited as an example of some of the earliest ceramic repairs, made by drilling holes in the fragments then lacing them together with leather or string.
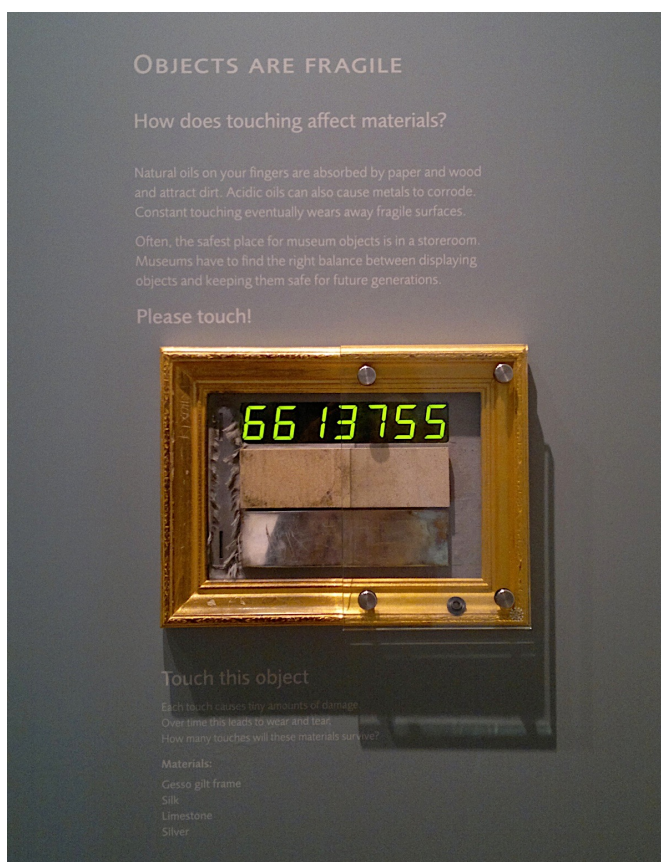
Figure 24 This is an interactive exhibit called the *'Touchometer'*, showing how touch can affect materials such as gesso gilt frame, silk, limestone, and silver.

Figure 25 This jar from Syria is exhibited as an example of a poor restoration intervention that was carried out in 1970's.

According to the conservators involved in the initial conception and design of the *Conservation Galleries* exhibition, public engagement is an important aspect of the Conservation Department's work. The *Conservation Galleries* have been developed through the experience of delivering various other events that aimed to engage students, the general public and benefactors.

> *We put a lot of thought into the Conservation Galleries and their approach and the galleries are just part of how the department stitches together its public engagement from schools programmes to open door lab tours, U3A lectures, fundraising events and so on. We developed the galleries and were a considerable way through when the Demos publication 'It's a Material World' came out and that gave us a good boost as we were working right along the same lines.*

Deputy Head of Conservation (Bone 2012)

The publication *It's a material world: Caring for the public realm* (Jones & Holden 2008) by the UK-based think-tank Demos, vigorously championed the aim of a pioneering model for conservators engaging with the public, and it also provided inspiration for the present study. Since these ideas were initially applied in practice to form the *Conservation Galleries* display, there had been no attempt to assess its effect on visitors' way of thinking about conservation.

> *There has been a lot of thought about whether there was a need to revise any aspects of the displays, as they have been up for 3 years. However, there had been no previous attempt to measure the impact of the visitors experience or understanding of conservation through the exhibition, as the Conservation Galleries were not part of a visitor survey carried out after the reopening.*

Head of Conservation (Norman 2013).

There was only some general feedback via emails and individual comments or reviews rather than a proper survey.

Deputy Head of Conservation (Bone 2012)

Below is an example of the type of feedback previously gathered about the effectiveness and impact of the exhibition, an anonymous quote from the AIC Objects Specialty Group Discussion website (AIC 2013).

I don't work at the Ashmolean Museum so I'm not sure if I should be the one to submit a wiki entry on their ongoing conservation exhibit but I wanted to give a shout out about it. In two galleries they take the museum goer through the history and practices of conservation at this great museum serving up the central dilemma of accessibility versus preservation, and then plunging into delicious details like Agatha Christie's cleaning of the Nimrud ivories for her archaeologist/husband and how the son of the Ashmolean's founding restorer/conservator moved here to Boston to found the research lab at the Museum of Fine Arts (Bill Young Sr. and Bill Young Jr.). Not the least interesting detail is that the senior Young signed his work 'NEOS'. I still wonder why- did he think of his work as connected somehow to a continuous tradition going back to the ancient Greeks? Don't know if the attached image will distribute through the list but the visual hook for the two-gallery exhibit is their version of the "Touch this object" display. This one has a 'live' contact activated counter showing how the accumulation of 6,680,917 touches (and counting) by museum goers like me have altered samples of silk, limestone, and silver in a gilt frame - a great symbol for our central dilemma.

Anonymous comment (AIC 2013)

Reviews in this form can be very descriptive, personal and in many senses insightful mainly due to their spontaneity and lack of bias created by a researcher. However, this kind of feedback was not collected in a structured way, with a particular set of questions in mind and does not provide easily comparable data. Thus, it is not particularly useful either in terms of improving the exhibition accordingly, or in terms of systematically monitoring the visitor's experience and perceptions of conservation. To address the research questions posed in this study and to also generate more accurate feedback on how the galleries could be improved, research here was based on a structured visitor survey. The survey and interviews were carried out between 15 – 21 December 2012, from 10.00am to 5.30pm, except Monday when the museum was closed. Questionnaire forms were given to the visitors entering the *Conservation Galleries* who were asked to complete and return them in their own time, once they had seen the exhibition. Interviews were conducted with visitors willing to participate on the day of their visit. The outcome includes 167 completed questionnaires and eight interviews.

Several participants mentioned that the survey itself made them pay more attention to the exhibition and spend significantly more time there than they would usually spend in an exhibition space. It should also be acknowledged that the timing of the survey (just before Christmas holidays) may not correspond to the regular function of the museum, regarding visitor numbers as well as demographics. Nevertheless, the sample was satisfactorily diverse concerning ethnicity, locality, age and level of education.

The following chart shows the responses of visitors to the open question '*Where are you from*'. Based on their answer to this question, participants were then divided into three groups: local, UK, and international visitors.
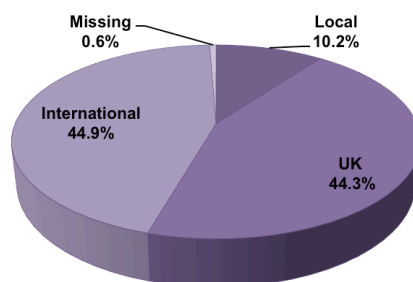
Figure 26 Participants' sense of locality

From a total of 167 participants in the survey, the majority (54.8%) considered themselves local to places in the UK. More specifically, 10.2% considered themselves local to Oxford, and 44.3% said they *were from* other locations in the UK. The percentage of international visitors (44.9%) considering themselves to *be from* several different places in the world was also significant.

Regarding gender, the sample presented a good balance between male (47.9%) and female (50.3%) visitors, with a slightly larger female population, as can be seen in the chart below.
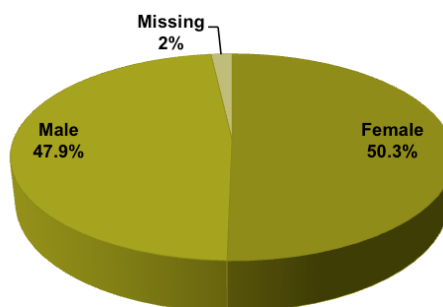
Figure 27 Participants' gender

According to the Taking Part 2011/12 Adult and Child Report, engagement with museums and galleries is associated with greater levels of happiness amongst females. The analysis of happiness scores found female museum and gallery goers to be significantly happier than males, for reasons that remain unexplored (Department for Culture, Media and Sport 2012, 29). The findings of the Taking Part survey were used as a possible direction for examining differences in gender in this study. A preliminary data analysis on gender has not identified any significant differences between male and female participants in the way they engaged with conservation issues in the exhibition. Gender differences among visitors regarding the process of engagement with conservation need to be further investigated.

Participants were asked to select their age group by ticking the appropriate box. The majority of participants were young adults. More specifically, the age group between 16 and 25 years old was

the largest (37.7%) and the second biggest group was between 26 and 35 years old (18.6%). The age groups breakdown can be seen in detail in the chart below.
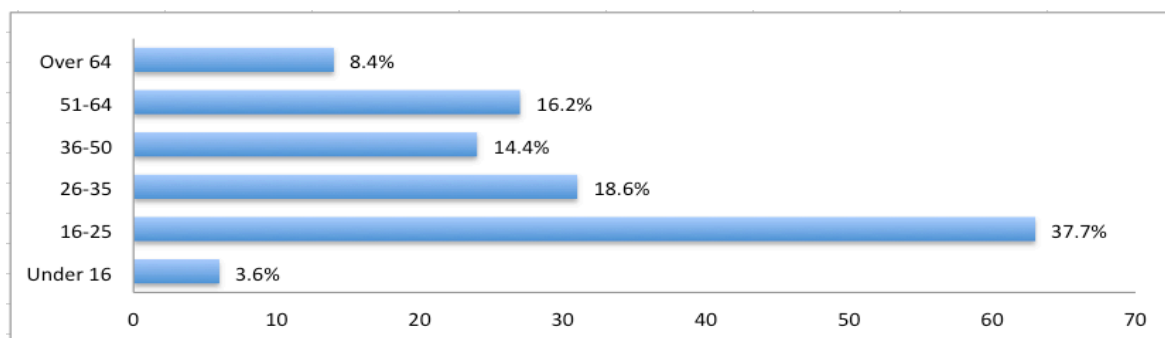
Figure 28 Participants' age

It should be noted that this survey was primarily addressed to adults. The questions and format of the instrument were not designed for children but were in general terms simple and straightforward, which made it possible for some children to participate with the consent and assistance of their escorts. The low number of participants under 16 years old should not be interpreted as indicative of the typical numbers of visitors falling into this age group.

The results show the responses of visitors to the open question '*What is your current occupation'*. Based on their answer to this question, participants were then d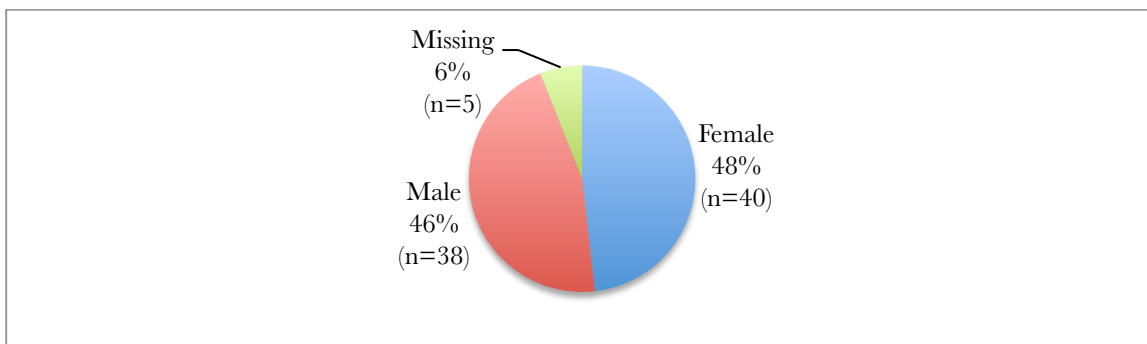ivided into two groups: Those whose current occupation was related specifically to conservation and those whose occupation was not. This question was asked to help determine the respondents' level of familiarity with the themes presented in the *Conservation Galleries*.
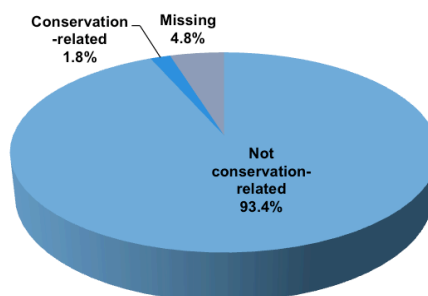
Figure 29 Participants' occupation in relation to conservation

As can be seen above, the majority (93.4%) of participants said their occupation was not related to conservation when the survey was carried out, while only a small percentage (1.8%) were professionally involved in heritage conservation.

The distinction between the two groups was based on the researcher's judgment of each response, verified by the response of each participant to the closed question 'how interested are you in heritage conservation' (as described earlier).

To determine their level of education, participants were asked to answer the open question *'What is the highest level of education you have completed so far'*. Responses were then placed into five categories: primary, secondary, tertiary, postgraduate (master's and (doctorate).
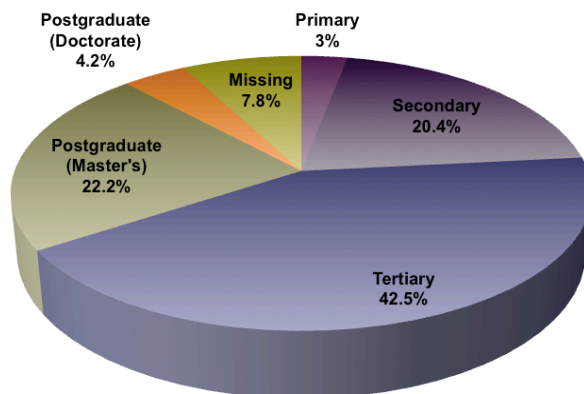
Figure 30 Participants' level of education

Similarly to the previous case studies, the majority of participants have a very high level of formal education. Preliminary analysis on formal education has shown that there are some differences between the five groups, in terms of the way participants engaged or not with conservation issues in the exhibition. For example, participants with higher levels of education (postgraduate level) overall tended to provide more extensive qualitative responses and expressed their views more assertively and often more critically.

Participants were asked to indicate whether they had any disability by ticking the appropriate box. This question was asked to determine whether disabled participants would be faced with any difficulties in terms of accessing the exhibition.

Figure 31 Participants with disabilities

Only a small number of participants (5.4%) indicated that they had some kind of disability, however, and based on the preliminary analysis there was no significant impact on their responses.

3.8 Data Collection

It has been extensively argued in the methodology literature that rich and varied data collection is the key point of a well-founded research (Oppenheim 1992). Thus, a mixed-method approach was implemented in this study to facilitate the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data from a number of different sources, using a combination of techniques, sourced mainly by the use of questionnaires and secondly by interviews and observation.

The main data collection method adopted is the case study approach: the survey of four different contexts in which public engagement with conservation occurs. These contexts are selected to reflect a variety of modes in which members of the heritage audience may encounter and interact with conservation (see section 2.5). In each case, the sample was invited to take part in a museum visitor survey and in addition, further data was gathered by observation. At a second stage, semi-structured one-to-one interviews were also carried out selectively when participants in the survey appeared prepared to discuss their experience of engaging (or not) with conservation. For the interviews to provide an insight into the interviewees' interior experiences, perceptions and interpretations of what they perceived and also how certain input affected their thoughts and emotions (Weiss 1994, 1), participants were approached in a friendly and informal manner. This helped to make the recruited participants feel as comfortable as possible during the interview process and encourage more genuine responses.

It has been suggested that qualitative methods compared to quantitative methods sacrifice uniformity of questioning to achieve fuller development of information. In addition, the sample in this kind of study is usually much smaller than in quantitative research and relies more on interpretation, summary and integration than on counting and correlating, while the finding are supported by quotations and case descriptions (Weiss 1994, 3). Thus, a fixed-question-open-response plan was adopted for the interviews, providing a desirable compromise between the advantages and disadvantages of qualitative and quantitative research. However, in order to extract richer data there was a certain degree of flexibility and the interview plan was used as an initiation for discussion, covering a number of pre-decided themes, rather than a rigid procedure.

It was planned that data would be collected using each of the instruments and techniques earlier described, with the physical presence of the researcher and the sample in each case study. However each case study had different challenges and that was not always achievable. Specifically, regarding the pilot study, the challenge was that the researcher was simultaneously demonstrating conservation processes as part of the *Conservation in Action days* and collecting data from the visitors, resulting in a significantly limited response rate. In the case of *Conservation Galleries* at the Ashmolean Museum, two volunteers contributed on two days out of the five that the survey was carried out for a few hours each. Even though that proved very useful during the museum's very busy hours or

while the researcher was carrying out interviews, it actually had an overall limiting effect in terms of response rate, probably due to hesitation or participants' reluctance to engage with someone other than the researcher, while participating in their project. In the case of the *Conservation Workshop*, a number of participants accepted to take part in the survey using the research instrument but also provided spontaneous verbal feedback, rather than focusing only on the questionnaire that was given to them at the end of the session. This was due to the fact that a level of intimacy had been developed during the workshop and discussion had been encouraged throughout. This was very positive as they provided additional data but also problematic because data was provided verbally and not in a systematic way, meaning they were not fully corresponding to specific questions. Recording these discussions was also not possible due to their spontaneous nature but notes were taken immediately after their completion. In the case of *Conservation in Focus* at the British Museum the data was not collected for the purposes of this study in mind. Primary data collection was also not possible due to the fact that the exhibition took place in 2008, before the beginning of this research. Finally, at the Knole House survey it was not possible to conduct interviews with visitors because of the management staff's concerns that visitors might feel over-surveyed and also because of the fact that there was no appropriate place to conduct them (the café was closed during that period), thus the main method for data collection had to be the questionnaire.

Case study	Questionnaires (N)	Interviews (N)
ASHMOLEAN MUSEUM	167	8
YORKSHIRE MUSEUM	21	2
BRITISH MUSEUM	0	53
KNOLE HOUSE	83	0
Total sample:	**271**	**63**

Table 2 Methods of data collection

Case study	Quantitative data	Qualitative data
ASHMOLEAN MUSEUM	Yes	Yes
YORKSHIRE MUSEUM	Yes	Yes
BRITISH MUSEUM	No	Yes
KNOLE HOUSE	Yes	Yes

Table 3 Types of available data

3.9 Data Analysis

In this study, which involves the collection and analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data, the qualitative input is examined according to a Grounded Theory approach (Strauss & Corbin 1990, 1994). Quantitative information is organised into tables, charts and cross-tables to facilitate a

more systematic interpretation of qualitative data. Some data sets are also tested for correlations using Pearson's correlation test (see Field 2009).

The method used for analysing qualitative data is open coding, progressing from descriptive to more abstract and analytic coding (see Silverman 2001). This method places the responses of survey and interview participants in categories that will enable linking them to and answering the main research questions initially set forth. Themes and subthemes are not predetermined but emerge from the data and help categorise it. Following the first stage of coding, data is further divided into sub-codes, identified as different dimensions of the same category/main code. While ideally, Grounded Theory research is begun from a blank page, inevitably it draws on a number of preconceived general ideas and arguable hypotheses, which are gradually replaced by new themes that emerge through the data during the process of its collection and analysis.

The selection of quotations and the identification of their appropriate use in the text was a particularly challenging stage in the study. Excerpts were selected with caution in order to find a balance between identifying responses that could be considered as more insightful or illustrated a particular point very effectively, and those that were more representative. It was decided, wherever appropriate, to use the most insightful and eloquent responses together with any balancing counter arguments. With regard to the most representative quotes, it was decided to indicate the relative proportion of similar responses rather than to provide a long string of quotations (Weiss 1994, 191).

Data is coded using the *Dedoose* software. This tool was selected for its specific features that enable coding, for its user-friendliness, as well as its other features that allow visualising qualitative in combination with quantitative information, facilitating the identification of patterns or trends within the data and ultimately producing more meaningful results. In a few instances during coding, participants' natural language was used for coding and presenting data categories to represent their own ways of understanding and interpreting the process. These are referred to as *in vivo* codes.

After the initial stage of coding the data with a sufficiently refined set of codes emerging from the data, the second stage of analysis involves comparing heritage audiences in different environments/case studies. It is suggested that this should be the stage where theoretical ideas should come in to compare and contrast with the findings. However, there has been a lot of debate in the methodology literature around which stage of the analysis, if at all, ideas deriving from the literature should come in. It has been argued that a researcher using the Grounded Theory approach should be free of any preconceptions throughout the process of both the data collection and analysis work (Charmaz 2003). On the other hand, it has been argued that this is not entirely possible and that theoretical ideas can come up at a certain stage of the analysis (Strauss & Corbin 1994). Concerning the analytical practice in this study, being aware of the above critique of the Grounded Theory approach helped minimise the effect of theoretical ideas on the coding process.

3.10 Research Ethics

This research project was designed and conducted in compliance with the Arts and Humanities Ethics Committee (AHEC) guidelines on Consent and Data Protection, and has received ethical approval by the Committee Consents, archiving and retention procedures, and related ethical matters are all detailed in Appendix III.

3.11 Limitations

As in most studies, the methodology decided for carrying out this research project presented some inherent limitations. Because the case study approach was selected, the sample could not be randomised in the sense that the people who visit each museum context are not necessarily representative of the entire population. Therefore the results cannot be generalised beyond those who belong to what is referred to as the 'museum audience' for each one of the case studies.

Another limitation concerned the lack of control over the sample and, with the exception of the conservation workshop, over the context and the overall conditions in which the data collection took place. In all cases, due to the fact that the main intention of the audience was not to participate in this research project but to enjoy their visit to the museums, there was no control over the time they dedicated in each context, or on their focus.

Moreover, even though a pre and post intervention could have provided very useful data regarding assessing the impact of each case on their responses, that was not possible due to the same reason. This also had an impact on the size of the sample, particularly for example in the case of the conservation workshop, since the limit set by the Yorkshire Museum was specified in two 2-hour sessions, with maximum 12 participants in each one.

To conclude, this project is, fundamentally, an investigation of people's perspectives on heritage conservation. The methodological approach and rigour of this study, together with its wider aims, seek to make an original contribution to public engagement in conservation practice in the museum context. As discussed above (see sections 2.1 and 2.5), limited research has been conducted in the field, and this study explores the potential of applying social science methodologies to analyse people's encounters with the domain of conservation. My own understanding of what is involved in conservation practice and my initial ideas on how it is perceived have been questioned and altered as a result of carrying out this research study. It is hoped that the reader will be as challenged by the findings as the writer has been.

Chapter 4. Impact on Participants' Views

As discussed in the methodology section, this study relies on a mixed-methods research design to investigate museum visitors' views and experiences of conservation as shaped through engagement attempts. Given that there is limited previous research on public perceptions of conservation, this study aims to add new knowledge to the concept of conservation specifically from the point of view of museum visitors. This chapter examines changes occurring on participants' way of thinking as a result of their experience of four engagement events.

4.1 Introduction

Concerning the terminology employed in this study, it is essential to clarify the distinction made between the terms 'view' and 'attitude'. It was decided to adopt the term 'view' rather than 'attitude' to describe the discrete strands of visitors' opinions about certain aspects of conservation. The term 'attitude' is used to describe the overall picture gained from the combination of these strands, as manifested by the views expressed.

In the literature, attitudes are described as comprising responses in a number of individual constructs, and such 'constructs' would be comparable to the strands identified in the study. For example, attitude is described as 'a state of readiness or predisposition to respond in a certain manner when confronted with certain stimuli'. It is also proposed that 'attitudes are reinforced by beliefs (the cognitive component), often attract strong feelings (the emotional component) which may lead to particular behavioural intents (the action-tendency component)' (Oppenheim 1992, 175). This definition indicates that information on attitude needs to draw on three components: 1) the cognitive (what you know), 2) the affective (how you feel about what you know) and 3) the 'action-tendency' (what you are likely to do as a result of what you know and how you feel) (Bennett et al. 2001, 836). The term 'views' on the other hand is used throughout the analyses to refer to individual opinions specific to a singular aspect of conservation as these were expressed in each different case study. For example, knowledge of the history of a particular object that is part of a museum collection draws on the cognitive component. When a participant refers to this object in analogy with a wild animal in the zoo, their expression arguably draws on the affective component. An attitude is the combination of both these components that leads for example to participants attaching great importance to cultural heritage conservation or developing a great interest in it.

In this research study, change in views is assessed by the use of two self-evaluating sets of questions consisting of two parts each. The first part is a closed-ended question measuring a) whether, according to the respondent, any change has in fact occurred, and b) how confident the respondent is of the occurrence of that change. The second part is an open-ended question, aiming to define

the type of change that occurred (e.g. increase in the perceived value of conservation) or the reason why no change at all occurred (e.g. drawing the distinction between persistent pre-existing views and the low impact of an event). The two sets of questions can be seen below.

Question A

Did *x event* make you think differently about the condition in which exhibits are presented?
□ No, not at all   □ Maybe a little   □ Yes, definitely

Why? ....

Question B

Did *x event* make you think differently about heritage conservation?
□ No, not at all   □ Maybe a little   □ Yes, definitely

Why? ....

The above questions were used in three engagement events: the *Conservation Galleries* at the Ashmolean Museum, the workshop at the Yorkshire Museum, and the interpretation of conservation work at Knole House. Through these, the impact of these events is measured using post-visit self-evaluation in situ, and on the day of the experience, with the exception of the interviews conducted with the conservation workshop participants at a later stage. This was due to the fact that it was not possible in terms of timing and facilities made available by the museum to interview participants on the same day the event took place.

For the data from the British Museum *Conservation in Focus* exhibition, a different approach was adopted due to the fact that there was no control over the data collection process. Evidence of change in visitors' views here was drawn from the qualitative data available from the research conducted by the independent research consultancy. In order to address the problem of dissimilar data, it was initially thought that converting interviews from the British Museum exhibition into a comparable data set could be a solution. To do that, it was attempted to classify interviews initially into two broad categories based on: 1) evidence of change and 2) evidence of non-change identified in the participants' views, and then the ones that presented evidence of change into two further categories based on the two themes: a) condition in which exhibits are presented and b) heritage conservation. The degree of confidence of each respondent of those who demonstrated the occurrence of some change was determined by the context of each full interview record, placing them accordingly in the categories of *'Maybe a little'* or *'Yes, definitely'*. Finally, qualitative justification of this classification was extracted from the full record of each interview in the form of quotations.

Nonetheless, this approach proved inadequate as an effective approach to handling this particular data set due to the fact that this study is already subject to multiple layers of interpretation, and thus subjectivity. The spectrum of interpretation ranges from the way questions have been phrased, addressed, and understood by visitors to the process of interview transcription, and of course the thematic analysis as a process itself. In order to avoid additional skewing of the data, it was

decided that quantitative data should be sourced from questionnaires only where questions were presented in tick-box form and visitors had complete control over their response. Meanwhile, qualitative data is sourced from both questionnaires in the form of written responses and from interviews in the form of verbal, more spontaneous replies. As a consequence, the value of the discussion of the impact of the British Museum case study is extremely limited.

In the following two sections, both types of data are brought together and findings are discussed conjointly across all case studies. Deviations emerging in particular case studies are highlighted and discussed in comparison with the overall findings, and wherever appropriate compared and contrasted with each other.

4.2 Visitor Experience

The visitor experience is an important factor in the public engagement process, which is often also a measure of success of heritage institutions. It is mentioned for example that 'one measure of excellence in museums and libraries is in the degree of their engagement with people, which is critically dependent on the quality of the experiences they offer and the depth and authenticity of those experiences' (Arts Council 2011, 11). Thus, measuring the experience of visitors in the events examined is the main focus of the analysis below.

Conservation Galleries, Ashmolean Museum

Participants were asked to evaluate their overall experience visiting the *Conservation Galleries*, by selecting up to six suggested qualitative responses by ticking the appropriate box. Participants could select more than one option. The table below shows how many times each option was selected.
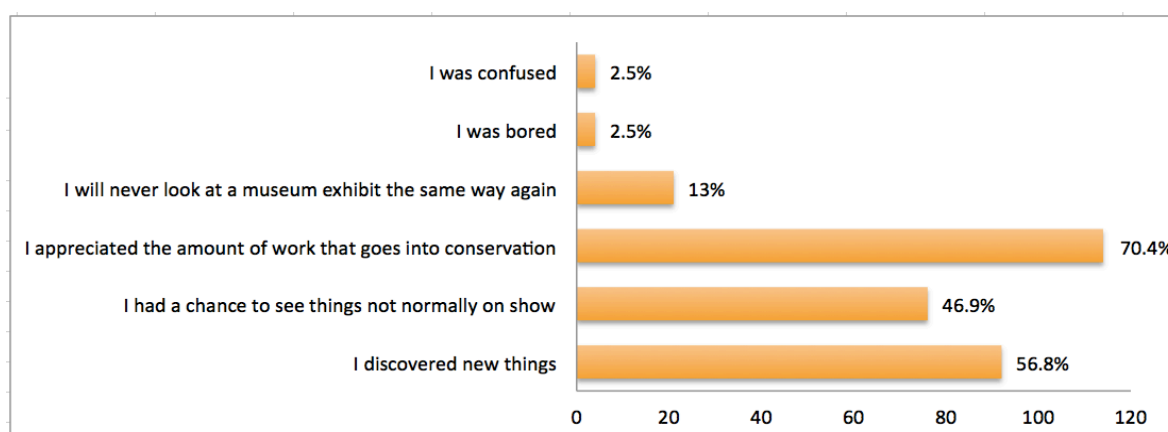
Figure 32 Participants' overall experience

Overall, the reactions of visitors to the *Conservation Galleries* could be characterized as very positive. More specifically, participants indicated that they 'appreciated the amount of work that goes into conservation' (70.4%), that they 'discovered new things' (56.8%), and that they 'had a chance to

see things not normally on show' (46.9%). Also, a significant amount of participants suggested that their perception of museum exhibits has been changed due to their visit of the *Conservation Galleries*, by selecting the option 'I will never look at a museum exhibit the same way again' (13%). Furthermore, a small number of participants indicated that they were 'bored' (2.5%) and 'confused' (2.5%) by what they came across in the exhibition.

Participants were also given the opportunity to express their overall thoughts on the exhibition in a qualitative way and to make suggestions for improving it. It became apparent that visitors were not accustomed to exhibitions on conservation, making their visit more exciting and informative due to the fact that it is unusual and the subject relatively unexplored. Some indicative responses can be seen below.

I haven't seen this sort of exhibition before.

(Male, 16-25, International visitor)

It's an excellent gallery and I've never seen a gallery devoted to conservation before. Fascinating.

(Female, 36-50, UK visitor)

There were clear indications that visitors would have liked to find out more about conservation. There were many suggestions for expanding the exhibition, highlighting debate and controversy, including conservation demonstrations, and integrating conservation exhibits into the rest of the museum.

More please - demonstrations?

(Female, Over 64, UK visitor)

I would have liked to see more of the conservation processes.

(Male, 26-35, International visitor)

Extend the exhibition a little would be helpful to get to learn other aspects of conservation.

(Male, 26-35, International visitor)

There could be more content and more hands-on.

(Female, 26-35, UK visitor)

Participants were asked to indicate the exhibit(s) in the *Conservation Galleries* that they enjoyed most. There was a list of exhibits that they could select by ticking the relevant box. The participant could select more than one option and also indicate whether they preferred another exhibit that was not included in the list. The frequency table below shows how many times each one of the exhibits has been selected by participants.
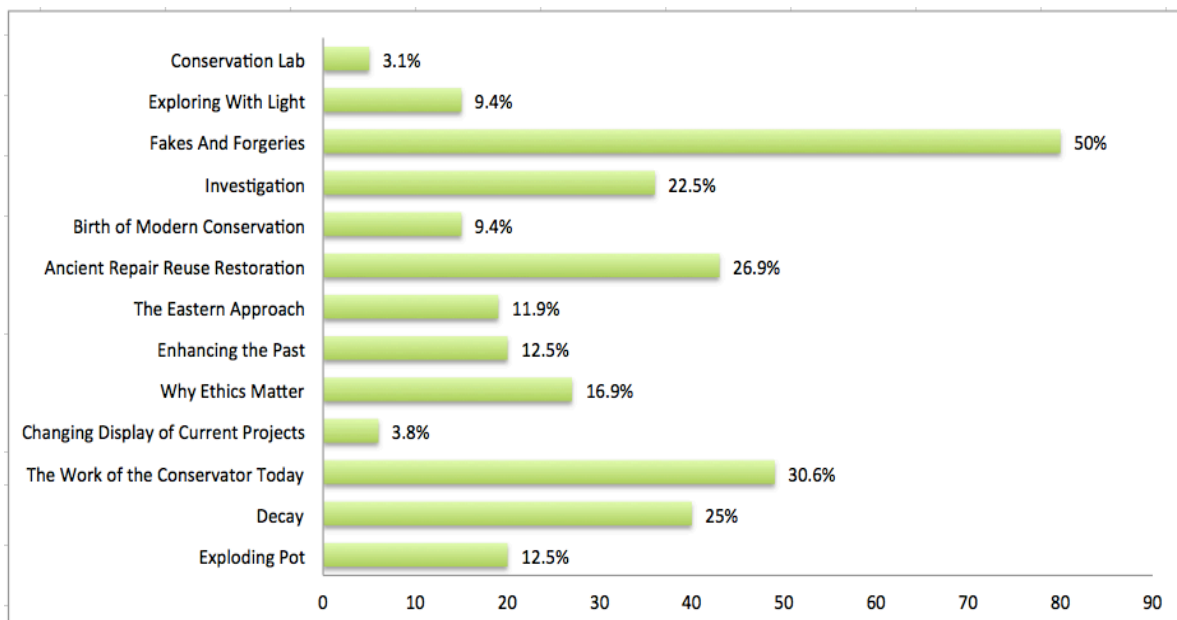
Figure 33 Most enjoyed parts of the exhibition

As can be seen here, the most enjoyed section of the *Conservation Galleries* was 'Fakes and Forgeries' (50%). 'The Work of the Conservator Today' (30.6%), 'Ancient Repair Reuse Restoration' (26.9%), and 'Decay' (25%) were also particularly enjoyed. The second part of this question required participants to explain why they have enjoyed the particular exhibits they selected by answering the open-ended question: *'What did you like about them in particular'.* Below are some of the aspects of the exhibition that visitors said they enjoyed most.

A sense of discovery and intrigue is evident among most visitors. They think of the *Conservation Galleries* as an opportunity to look 'behind the scenes' of the museum, to find out how artefacts are treated before they find their place in the museum, to learn about the stories behind the objects and the challenges conservators are faced with. Conservation remains an unknown and mysterious domain for most of them and as a result the exhibition is seen as an unusual and rare experience offering them a sense of privilege. It could be said that the audience's lack of familiarity with the subject plays a major role in the success of the *Conservation Galleries* in terms of visitor enjoyment.

> *They provided a window into the lesser-known world of conservation - the story behind the exhibits.*
> *(Male, 16-25, UK visitor)*

> *I liked how the exhibits make the conservation process and the issues that go along with it less mysterious to the public and more tangible.*
> *(Female, 16-25, International visitor)*

> *Learning about behind the scenes. It makes you think. Fantastic!*
> *(Female, 16-25, UK visitor)*

> *I also enjoyed the x-ray thing today, you know with the child, and the backlit paper. I've seen it before... it made me smile that that things can be hidden either intentionally like the example of forgery, or that you can suddenly discover something new about something beautiful. So there is a beautiful old picture or painting and then suddenly something new is revealed about it. And that's a reason to smile I think. Like a hidden treasure, you know. Finding a treasure... yeah! If you were the first person to look at it and you would have been looking at that painting for, I don't know how long, and then suddenly you*

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put ultraviolet or x-ray, you would probably be running out of the conservation lab to call everyone "Oh look what I found"! It's exciting I mean.

<div align="right">*(Female, 36-50, UK visitor)*</div>

This element of curiosity has also been identified and discussed in the paper *Conservation Curiosity: An Irreversible Trend* (Price and Stoehr 2013). The authors argue that people visit their heritage institutions 'because they are curious' and that the public interest in conservation stemming from the sense of curiosity conservation inspires in them is increasing and irreversible. They also demonstrate through examples of engagement practice that 'conservation can be a wonderful resource in building knowledge and enthusiasm for a collection' (Price and Stoehr 2013, 14).

While most visitors enjoyed discovering concealed aspects of museum work, there were also a significant number of visitors who developed an appreciation for the conservation work as well as for the evolution of the conservator's role.

It really made me think how much work goes into conservation for placing an artefact in a museum.

<div align="right">*(Female, 36-50, UK visitor)*</div>

They give a small insight into the extreme efforts conservators make.

<div align="right">*(Male, 26-35, Local visitor)*</div>

Made me think how painstaking the work of a conservator is.

<div align="right">*(Male, Over 64, UK visitor)*</div>

It [conservation] is an expensive and extensive undertaking.

<div align="right">*(Female, 16-25, International visitor)*</div>

[I enjoyed learning] how the role of the conservator has changed over recent years.

<div align="right">*(Male, 51-64, Local visitor)*</div>

Many visitors left the exhibition thinking that museum conservation is not a simple and straightforward process. They understood the complexity of the decision-making and of the techniques used and also enjoyed the challenge of debate and controversy over different approaches and conservation ethics.

It illustrated the debates of what to conserve and how to conserve correctly.

<div align="right">*(Male, 16-25, UK visitor)*</div>

[I enjoyed] seeing so many ways of restoring and conserving. Very thought provoking.

<div align="right">*(Female, over 64, UK visitor)*</div>

I enjoyed questions of ethics and debates over adding to objects.

<div align="right">*(Male, 26-35, International visitor)*</div>

The eastern approach was an interesting and different perspective.

<div align="right">*(Male, 16-25, UK visitor)*</div>

No simple answers.

<div align="right">*(Male, 51-64, UK visitor)*</div>

I hadn't realised quite how much there is to consider when looking after old objects.

<div align="right">*(Female, 26-35, Local visitor)*</div>

> *I need to come back it is fascinating! I like the challenge to received values.*
>
> *(Female, Over 64, UK visitor)*

Many visitors were excited to learn about techniques that conservators use to confirm 'authenticity' by identifying fakes and forgeries by looking at examples of such objects. There are various hypotheses one could make about the reasons why that subject appears to be so appealing, perhaps related with how the subject is portrayed in fiction or the fact that it is often considered to be beyond the boundaries of law.

> *I liked learning about a conservators work when deciding whether or not a particular object was a fake or a forgery, especially the idea of patterns being an indication of objects authenticity.*
>
> *(Male, 26-35, UK visitor)*

> *I had not considered that forgery would be common.*
>
> *(Male, 36-50, UK visitor)*

> *It shows how easily objects can be forged and how difficult it can be to identify them.*
>
> *(Male, 26-35, Local visitor)*

A number of visitors were impressed by the effort and skill involved to recreate objects as well as the science behind identifying 'originality' and 'authenticity' (also see Watts et al. 2008).

> *The idea of faking a particularly famous object is so clever and takes a huge amount of time and dedication.*
>
> *(Female, Under 16, International visitor)*

> *It made me think about the depth of knowledge you have to have in order to produce a convincing forgery!*
>
> *(Female, 26-35, Local visitor)*

> *Ingenious methods of reproduction.*
>
> *(Male, 16-25, International visitor)*

Some visitors on the other hand were surprised by the choice of skilled people to invest energy and time not in order to create something 'new' but to imitate something old, 'from long ago'. The creation of something new here is considered to be more worthwhile than the recreation of something from the past.

> *I think it is interesting that people went through so much trouble to recreate (fake) something from long ago instead of making something new.*
>
> *(Male, 16-25, international visitor)*

According to a very different approach, the ability to distinguish an *original* from a *fake* was associated with identifying the superiority of some objects over others. In this case, value is placed only on the original object. The original is considered to be of higher 'quality', regardless of its age, the materials used, the actual level of skill involved to create it etc. Furthermore, some visitors also felt that this exhibit had taught them something about how to 'recognise quality' themselves.

> *They teach you how to recognise quality.*
>
> *(Male, 26-35, International visitor)*

Because, art you know is expensive on auction. So you know there is a kind of way, a new way of making forgeries to make huge money. So it's really important for professionals to tell people how to know the difference. But not guess. You should judge based on some scientific investigation or some other reliable sources.

(Male, 51-64, International visitor)

A smaller number of visitors particularly enjoyed finding out about the scientific and technological aspects of conservation.

I enjoy the scientific and forensic part of conservation.

(Male, 16-25, International visitor)

I love how modern scientific techniques can be used to detect forgeries (when it's hard to tell by sight alone).

(Female, 36-50, International visitor)

[I enjoyed finding out] how the technologies can reveal the story behind the objects.

(Male, 16-25, International visitor)

[I enjoyed that] there was some information on the science behind decay and identifying forgeries.

(Male, 36-50, Local visitor)

I think I hadn't quite appreciated the level of detail that people sometimes have to go to and the contributions of technology over time, like the ability to x-ray things and make determinations about when something was perhaps made, how it has changed. I really liked the exhibits where you could put your hand over the light and see that maybe there has been a repair or something.

(Female, 36-50, International visitor)

Several visitors said that they enjoyed the way the exhibition was set out and especially the interactive exhibits. Information was presented in a clear and engaging way, which encouraged further exploration of the subject. Arguably, the sophisticated museological approach applied in the galleries was an important element that contributed to the visitor engagement with the actual content.

Very interesting. Beautifully laid out, made you want to read and learn more.

(Female, 16-25, UK visitor)

Fascinating and very well explained and illustrated.

(Female, 36-50, UK visitor)

Made it interesting, which meant you learnt more. It was easy to look at.

(Female, 16-25, UK visitor)

Clear and concise yet precise explanations.

(Female, 26-35, UK visitor)

Visitors came up with several suggestions and ideas for improvement. The most indicative ones include the display of conservation of contemporary materials and objects, the introduction of conservation information along the exhibits throughout the museum and the use of new media.

Have 'modern' objects and show ways to preserve them – digital items, sounds, images etc.

(Male, 36-50, International visitor)

The new media could be used, for instance the video. That would be easier for people to know the whole process. But if it's only a picture, that's only one episode of the whole work. So if you have a big screen to show how one particular piece is restored, that would be very educating.

(Male, 51-64, International visitor)

Perhaps implementing a "conservation" piece into other exhibits so the general population can further appreciate all that goes into the process.
(Female, 16-25, International visitor)

Furthermore, according to a few comments the exhibits used as examples to introduce the subject of conservation were not particularly engaging. They suggested that the galleries would have been more interesting for them if more impressive objects or references to popular items were used to capture their attention.

This exhibition seemed to focus on some items from the museum. But if you use other items, you know, to show the public how dangerous the situation is... like for Mona Lisa for example. So if you have a picture of that to see how damaged this world famous painting is, then people will realise it's really important to protect and restore these precious items.
(Male, 51-64, International visitor)

I guess only a small number of people would be interested. Because the general audiences they need to see the major things... They won't pay a lot of attention to conservation, because that is something very professional, very technical in the museum.
(Male, 26-35, International visitor)

There were also a number of people who thought that watching conservators at work would be far more engaging than a static exhibition. Some suggestions included having conservators working behind a glass or in another area in the museum where they could be easily observed. They were also a few references to the lab tours at the conservation laboratories of the museum, which are available only for a limited number of people.

I went to the conservation area upstairs and that... that was very alive and very exciting to see all those desks full of stuff you know... And to me that's much more alive and exciting than what is presented down in the galleries. It doesn't draw me in as much, but the thing about having the desk and the people and "Oh, oh look!" I don't know, it was much more exciting. You people working rather than just the result behind the glass and I don't know practically... It's probably not practically possible to take lots of people up there but that was... that really... I loved that.
(Female, 36-50, UK visitor)

Finally, an interesting suggestion was that of including examples of badly conserved or restored objects. Viewing disastrous results of the absence of care, according some visitors, would demonstrate the importance of resources spent for conservation purposes.

I think the exhibition is done very well because of the examples and before and after pictures and things like that... especially where you can see with different lights, that was really good. Maybe some more examples of things being badly restored and why it's so important to be careful, now that would be very interesting. Bad conservation I think... lots of things like the Victorian archaeologists who had a horrible tendency to clean everything. Like an example of that would be really really interesting. If someone had a tiny bit of knowledge you know they wouldn't do that... which shows the importance of conservation being regulated and you know time and money being spent on that.

(Female, 16-25, UK visitor)

A significant number of visitors thought that the exhibition helped them learn about something that they were not particularly familiar with, or in some cases even completely ignored. This response suggests once more that conservation remains an unexplored domain for most people. Arguably, although attempts of reaching out and communicating conservation to non-experts are becoming more and more frequent, the vast majority of heritage audiences are still ignorant of it to a large extent.

> *I didn't know much about it before, so I hadn't really thought of it.*
>
> *(Male, 16-25, UK visitor)*

> *[I enjoyed] finding out more about how much it takes to conserve artefacts.*
>
> *(Female, 16-25, International visitor)*

> *I liked the process of learning about a piece's history and about the way object/items are subjected to decay and the issues of conservation.*
>
> *(Female, Over 64, International visitor)*

> *I didn't realise quite how much went on, even in earliest times.*
>
> *(Female, 36-50, UK visitor)*

> *I didn't realise before how much research and investigation goes into an object and how everyday environments negatively alter objects.*
>
> *(Female, 51-64, UK visitor)*

Moreover, learning about conservation through this exhibition encouraged positive attitudes towards conservation, an indication that this form of communication in the museum context also has this potential.

> *I did not know of the many methods used and how useful they are. We should try to conserve more.*
>
> *(Female, Over 64, UK visitor)*

> *I had never thought much about it before but I will from now on.*
>
> *(Female, 16-25, UK visitor)*

> *Because I didn't know much about it and it is something important for conserving our wonderful past.*
>
> *(Female, 16-25, International visitor)*

> *I liked learning about something I didn't know much about and hopefully learn more about it from now on and pass that on to someone else.*
>
> *(Female, 16-25, UK visitor)*

> *It [the exhibition] made me think about the effort that is needed in maintaining the quality of the museum exhibits.*
>
> *(Male, 16-25, UK visitor)*

Although the exhibition inspired positive attitudes and interest, many responses revealed views that demonstrated a prominent lack of general knowledge on conservation treatments and their purpose. While defining the scope of conservation and determining its purposes has been for decades a subject of constant discussion even among heritage 'experts', there is an evident lack of awareness among visitors. It is not being suggested that this is due to misleading information provided by the

galleries but is possibly associated with the general lack of familiarity or the existence of ambiguous notions around the subject.

I just assumed that they would always do that sort of things in the art galleries. […] I suppose conservation in the art galleries… they would automatically do it, wouldn't they? Automatically look after a picture? Take the lacquer off?

(Female, Over 64, UK visitor)

[Conservation is very important because] there would be no museums maybe!

(Female, 26-35, UK visitor)

[Conservation is important] because it's necessary.

(Female, 26-35, International visitor)

When you have a new technique you say " God! I must try out this, I should try out my new technique on this thing!"

(Female, 36-50, UK visitor)

[…] But this preservation, what conservation does is to describe some items really really ancient which is much more demanding and more difficult.

(Male, 51-64, International visitor)

[…] So when our civilization is wiped out and the next animal comes they'll be looking for fossils and they won't find any because they all will be in some museum safe somewhere, underneath ruble... I mean when you look back to a fossil record and you go back millions of years if these creatures will be here in a million years time they won't be able to look back at the record because it's all been dug up by us. So that's quite... that bothers me! That question about conservation bothers me. The idea that all of the layers have been left for us to dig up...

(Male, 36-50, UK visitor)

Conservation Workshop, Yorkshire Museum

Participants were invited to evaluate their overall experience visiting the conservation workshop, by selecting up to six suggested qualitative responses by ticking the appropriate box. Participants could select more than one option. The table below shows how many times each option was selected.
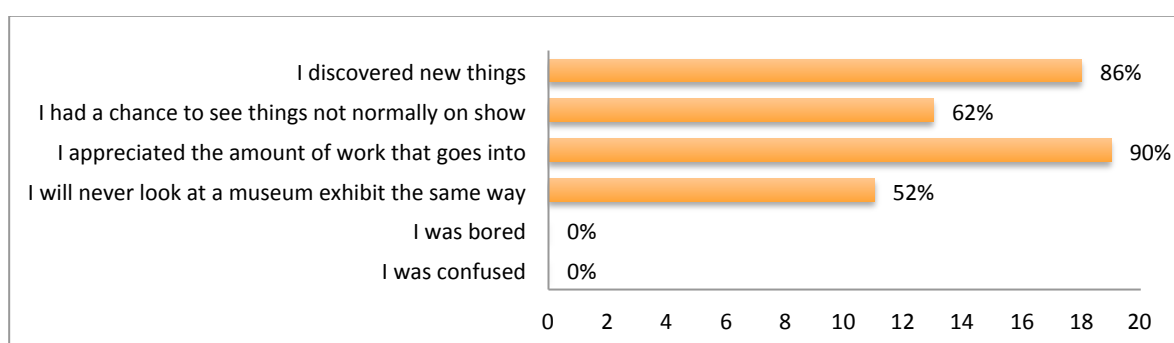
Figure 34 Participants' overall experience

Based on the responses above, it could be inferred that the workshop was very positively received. More specifically, participants indicated that the workshop made them 'appreciate the amount of work that goes into conservation' (90%), that they 'discovered new things' (86%), and that they 'had a chance to see things not normally on show' (62%). Also, more than half of the participants suggested that their perception of museum exhibits has been changed due to their participation in

the workshop, by selecting the option 'I will never look at a museum exhibit the same way again'. Finally, no one indicated that they were 'bored' or 'confused'.

Participants were also invited to share their overall thoughts on the workshop in a qualitative way and for suggestions on how it could have been improved. Participants stated that they overall enjoyed the experience, while some thought that time and information on the artefacts were inadequate and that sessions were not held frequently to get more people involved.

I thoroughly enjoyed the experience.

(Female, Over 64, Local visitor, Questionnaire 5)

It should have been longer.

(Female, 35-50, Local visitor, Questionnaire 20)

Hold more workshops and get more people involved.

(Female, 51-64, Local visitor, Questionnaire 7)

More please.

(Female, Over 64, Local visitor, Questionnaire 13)

I would have liked to know more about how old some things were and what their function was.

(Female, 51-64, Local visitor, Questionnaire 17)

Conservation Work at Knole, National Trust

Visitors were asked to evaluate their overall experience of the conservation exhibits at Knole House, by selecting up to six suggested qualitative responses by ticking the appropriate box. They could select more than one option. The table below shows how many times each option was selected.
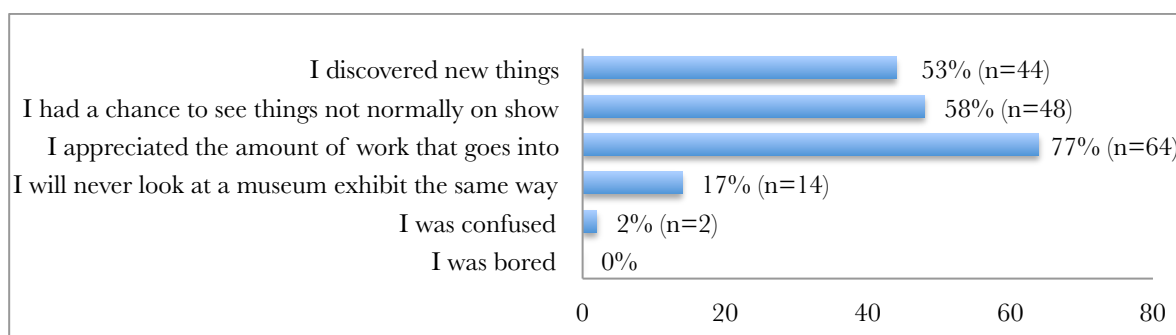
Figure 35 Participants' overall experience

Overall, visitors' reaction to could be characterized as very positive. More specifically, respondents indicated that they 'appreciated the amount of work that goes into conservation' (77%), that they 'had a chance to see things not normally on show' (58%), and that they 'discovered new things' (53%). Also, a significant amount of participants suggested that their perception of museum exhibits has been changed, by selecting the option 'I will never look at a museum exhibit the same way again' (17%). A very low percentage indicated that they were 'confused' (2%) by what they came across in the exhibition and no one indicated that they felt 'bored'.

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Visitors were also given the opportunity to express their overall thoughts on the conservation exhibits in a qualitative way and to make suggestions for improving it. Some indicative responses can be seen below.

> *[I most enjoyed finding out about the conservation of James II state bed because it] shows the dangers of using wrong materials.*
>
> *(Male, Over 64, UK visitor, Questionnaire 23)*

> *[I most enjoyed finding out about conservation of wall hangings because] you can see what lies under the tapestries, i.e. plain wood, plumbing that isn't usually visible.*
>
> *(Male, 51-64, UK visitor, Questionnaire 61)*

Conservation in Focus Exhibition, British Museum

According to the Morris Hargreaves McIntyre report, the British Museum outlined the following three key messages for visitors to take away from the exhibition.

> **Message 1:** *Through their specialised skills and knowledge, conservators reveal information about objects and ensure the preservation of cultural heritage for the future.*
>
> **Message 2:** *Conservators don't work in isolation. They collaborate and make decisions with many people across various disciplines.*
>
> **Message 3:** *The work of conservators enables the public to access museum objects and understand them better.*

The researchers attempted to examine the success of conveying these messages to the visitors by looking for evidence through the interviews. According to their findings, the first message was very effectively communicated. From their analysis it is shown that the workshop area of the exhibition, where conservators were working and demonstrating their work to visitors, was the most effective element of the exhibition. It is described as 'an overwhelming success' in terms of attraction, visitor engagement and subsequent outcomes. This evaluation, however, relied heavily upon the interpretation of the interaction between the conservators and the visitors. The message that conservators don't work in isolation was not evaluated as successfully communicated, due to the fact that visitors were more attracted by the live interpretation than the static objects, which were intended to provide the relevant information leading to that key message. Finally, visitors were shown to develop the notion that conservators enable the public to access museum objects and understand them better. However, this was mainly achieved through discussion with conservators rather than through viewing the static objects in the rest of the exhibition space.

It could be said that the co-existence of static elements intended to convey certain learning outcomes with conservation demonstrations, may be somewhat problematic. It is apparent that visitors of the *Conservation in Focus* display were far more intrigued by watching conservators at work than they were by any other exhibit presented in the same space. As a result, an uneven, antagonistic relationship between the different elements of the exhibition is formed.

Similarly to the findings from the *Conservation Galleries* case study, it became apparent also in this exhibition that most visitors were not very familiar with the subject of heritage conservation. As a result their visit was perceived as exciting, informative and was characterized by several participants as an educational experience and a privilege.

> *You should keep it [the exhibition] going. Because it's wonderful, it's educational, and when you look at a piece of sculpture just on its own you don't necessarily get the richness of you know somebody working on it, and it's a privilege to be able to interrupt somebody working.*
>
> *(Male, Interview 14)*

Evidence suggests that conservation was perceived, through this exhibition, as a very exciting display theme and was greatly popular among several visitors.

> *It makes you want to tell people about it. Say 'Oh you must go to the British Museum. They've got this wonderful conservation area'.*
>
> *(Group, Interview 39)*

> *I love conservation.*
>
> *(Female, Interview 51)*

> *[The exhibition made me feel] an immense amount of pleasure. I'm delighted with my day here.*
> *(Male, Interview 45)*

Again like in the *Conservation Galleries*, the sense of discovery and intrigue was evident among most visitors who saw this as a rare opportunity to peek 'behind the scenes' of the museum and to explore its 'hidden' aspects. As mentioned in the Morris Hargreaves McIntyre report, visitors were extremely interested in the work of the conservators, to the level of fascination at times.

> *The conservation and what's going on. It's absolutely fascinating. I've always been very interested. I suppose I've never really had the opportunity to watch the experts in action. Fascinating.*
> *(Male, Interview 45)*

Unlike the perceptions recorded in the *Conservation Galleries,* where the message received was that decisions in conservation can be highly complex and that treating museum artefacts is not a straightforward procedure, it could be said that one of the outcomes of this exhibition was the creation of a more idealized and perhaps even glamourized image of conservation. The excitement generated by the 'performance' in this case seems to be much more prevalent when contrasted with the visitors' more intellectual engagement with concepts, complexities and debates conveyed in the *Conservation Galleries*.

> *The best? Them! Watching the man at work on that sculpture.*
>
> *(Female, Interview 35)*

> *I liked the people working there. It's a good opportunity for us to see people working in restoration. […] We are not allowed to see this kind of work, never ever, so it's great. It's like seeing a Doctor during surgery!*
>
> *(Female, Interview 50)*

> *What I like best is seeing is being in the proximity with these people doing their work. That is sometimes things you see in the movies.*
> *(Male, Interview 38)*

I liked being here, because everything's so up close. It's not like you're watching chefs in a distant kitchen in some restaurant. It's...they're very up close. There's just that small little thing of glass between you and them, they're able to reach over, and hand you examples of things, which I thought was good. […] The idea of being to interact with an expert is for me hugely alluring.

(Male, Interview 40)

The fact that visitors witnessed conservation processes taking place in front of their eyes was so compelling for many of them, mainly due to the element of proximity and physical access to the objects undergoing treatment. Conservators, in some instances, also enabled people to handle objects and conservation materials themselves, which was as expected enjoyable for most visitors.

It looked interesting. More interesting than the ordinary exhibits, to see people actually touching the objects and stuff, and see people actually work on them directly. I'm not sure really [why I enjoyed that]. It's just something you don't see very often.

(Male, Interview 20)

I just had a bit of a talk by one of the organics conservators, and she let us have a sort of feel of the example of the bark cloth, which is great, because you can't normally touch it, so...

(Group, Interview 22)

I think I was attracted by the action.

(Male, Interview 36)

Interestingly, it was reported that the exhibition was considered too general and perhaps superficial, unless visitors engaged in discussion with the conservators themselves. For visitors who did not interact with conservators, the event was possibly limited to the sight of people working on objects.

The Conservation in Focus was a bit general. I could have done with more information on all of them. I found a lot of them skims, it's almost too abstract. There was really [missing text] until he explained it to me exactly what I was seeing.

(Male, Interview 43)

I'll be honest with you, I basically sort of skim read most of it, because it's very basic. The kind of stuff that I sort of read in the summary of a book really. There's nothing too in-depth […].

(Male, Interview 23)

It is however very difficult to draw a general conclusion about the outcomes of the exhibition as the precise topics discussed, and the level of involvement and depth varied enormously and was almost entirely dependent on each inquiring visitor and each conservator.

Mostly it was about this exhibit, mostly I was asking them questions about what they were doing, what the materials were made of, what did they have to do before they were doing what they're doing now. In other words, was there a phase, what they had to do. […] She's filling the stuff in with putty. I asked her what it was made of. I said would this have been cleaned, before you follow to fill in the cracks, and she said normally yes, but in this case, this hasn't been cleaned yet, because they want to I guess show the filling in. That's the sort of thing that's not self-evident, and I'm not suggesting it could be. There'd be a book you'd have to read to have that explained to you, and it probably changes as the people on shift, and the samples change, but it was a little tricky as to what was actually going on. I actually talked to them a lot about their professional tracks, their career tracks actually, because I was very curious to know how they got into such a specialised field.

(Male, Interview 40)

4.3 Changes in Views on the Condition and Presentation of Museum Exhibits

To begin with, in order to capture the bigger picture of how the events have impacted on this strand of visitors' views, an analysis of quantitative data initially based on the addition of frequencies was carried out as shown below. These results concern data from all case studies with the exception of the British Museum case due to the lack of quantitative data available.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	**Yes, definitely**	127	46.9	**47.6**	47.6
	Maybe a little	104	38.4	**38.9**	86.5
	No, not at all	36	13.3	**13.5**	100.0
	Total	267	98.6	100.0	
Missing	System	4	1.4		
	Total	271	100.0		

Table 4 Change in views on the condition in which museum exhibits are presented, across three case studies (the BM was not included due to lack of quantitative data)

However, due to the fact that the sample size varies considerably between case studies, the combination of data based on combining frequencies as shown in the table above was not regarded as the most accurate way to demonstrate of the overall findings. Therefore, it was decided to examine findings using the average valid percent method, as shown below. Where averages are referred in this section of the case study analysis, this is the table on which it is based.

	Valid Percent Ashmolean Museum	Valid Percent Yorkshire Museum	Valid Percent Knole House	Valid Percent British Museum	Average Valid Percent
Yes, definitely	41.7	66.7	54.2	-	**54.2**
Maybe a little	44.8	33.3	28.9	-	**35.7**
No, not at all	13.5	0.0	16.9	-	**10.1**
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	-	100.0

Table 5 Change in views on the condition in which museum exhibits are presented, across all case studies, based on average valid percent

According to this analysis, the vast majority (89.9%) agreed that the visiting experience has to some extent shaped their views, while most visitors (54.2%) were very confident that their views have indeed been changed. It is evident that overall, the events examined in this study have had a significant impact on the views of visitors regarding their way of thinking about the condition of museum objects and collections and about the way these are presented. A detailed analysis of the views expressed in each event is presented in the following sections.

Conservation Galleries, **Ashmolean Museum**

In the *Conservation Galleries*, the vast majority (86.5%) of participants replied that there was change in their way of thinking. While many of them (41.7%) said that the exhibition definitely made them think differently about the condition of museum exhibits, most of the respondents (44.8%) were not entirely confident this change was significant, and the rest (13.5%) of them stated that the exhibition had no impact at all on their way of thinking on the condition in which museum exhibits are presented.

		Frequency	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
Valid	**Yes, definitely**	68	40.7	**41.7**	41.7
	Maybe a little	73	43.7	**44.8**	86.5
	No, not at all	22	13.2	**13.5**	100.0
	Total	163	97.6	100.0	
Missing	System	4	2.4		
	Total	167	100.0		

Table 6 Change in views on the condition in which museum exhibits are presented

Comparing this data with the overall findings (on average, 89.9% agreed that the exhibition has to some extent shaped their views, while 54.2% were very confident that their views have been changed), it can be concluded that while the exhibition has had some impact on visitors' views, it was overall below the average (as calculated and explained on page 4). The comparatively modest impact could be explained by the fact that this was a static exhibition with no elements of interaction with conservators, or hands-on activities and limited interactive exhibits and therefore required more time and effort on the visitors' part to engage with its intended messages. The impact can be still considered as significant, nontheless, as it has been established that according to visitors' self asessment, change has occurred and indeed to a large extent (86.5%).

Although this provides a general framework on how effective this event was in terms of shaping this strand of visitors' views, it is impossible to determine the various aspects of change that were brought about through a quantitative analysis only. Thus, in order to capture the multiple dimensions of impact, visitors' qualitative accounts also needed to be explored.

To begin with, one of the most striking changes that visitors repeatedly reported had to do with the realisation that objects are not necessarily found in the condition they are presented to them, but may have been treated, and sometimes to the extent of restoration. It was also understood that treatment of heritage material is a complicated process that does not happen 'automatically' when an object is acquired by a museum and that preservation state is not a static condition and cannot be taken for granted.

> We think of the objects we see in museums as simply 'being there'. But now I realise the time, expertise and patience needed to get them to their present state. It makes me think what design that artefacts are presented in.
>
> *(Female, Under 16, International visitor)*

Many reported that the exhibition made them more conscious of the fact that historical artefacts are a non-renewable resource and also that objects are not secured forever by simply being part of a collection.

> *Looking after these things is important because history won't repeat. We've got to look after the things; it's the only history we will get.*
>
> <div align="right">(Female, Under 16, Local visitor)</div>
>
> *We cannot rebuild artefacts. They must be preserved.*
>
> <div align="right">(Male, 16-25, International visitor)</div>
>
> *If we don't conserve items, they will be destroyed.*
>
> <div align="right">(Female, Over 64, International visitor)</div>

It was frequently mentioned that finding out about conservation was not only revealing but also a cause of surprise due to the fact that they had very limited or no information at all about the process prior to their visit.

> *I didn't know at all about the subject. I had never questioned as to if artefacts had been restored.*
>
> <div align="right">(Female, 16-25, UK visitor)</div>

In addition, it has also been mentioned that this realisation was accompanied by feelings of deception related with the unknown stages of treatment that objects may have undergone.

> *I think I realised there is more smoke and mirrors than I had realised before... I haven't thought about it too much but I suppose all the objects are treated in some way before I see them. It doesn't make me feel great...*
>
> <div align="right">(Male, 36-50, UK visitor)</div>

Several visitors also said the exhibition made them more aware of the inevitability of decay of materials and their eventual loss. This idea is very close to one of the definitions of conservation discussed in the theoretical framework, according to which conservation is understood as the management of change rather than an attempt to preserve certain states.

> *[…] And you know, art works are not neutral items which will never change. So even in a very careful way... protected and restored... still it will change over time.*
>
> <div align="right">(Male, 51-64, International visitor)</div>
>
> *We are not having these things forever so the better we take care of it the longer we will have it. I've never thought of it that way.*
>
> <div align="right">(Female, Under 16, Local visitor)</div>

Finding out about conservation and becoming aware of the fact that objects may be treated before they go on display made many visitors consider whether they need to pay more attention, examine more carefully what they are looking at, or be sceptical regarding their understanding and interpretations of artefacts in their present condition.

> *Made me think more about what I was seeing and the possible decision processes that were behind the particular appearance and presentation of a given object.*
>
> <div align="right">(Female, 16-25, Local visitor)</div>
>
> *Not always shows what you think.*
>
> <div align="right">(Male, 51-64, UK visitor)</div>

Some visitors also thought that objects are presented to them in an inappropriate way because the interpretation provided does not include information about conservation interventions and previous states of preservation.

> *It made me wonder whether all the information with an exhibit is correct.*
>
> > *(Female, 51-64, UK visitor)*
>
> *Because they are displayed inappropriately.*
>
> > *(Female, 36-50, Local visitor)*
>
> *Made me think about the "validity" of artefacts in view.*
>
> > *(Female, 16-25, International visitor)*

Some reported reflections on the effect of the exhibition on visitors' way of thinking are indicative of a potential change not simply in visitors' views on the subject in question, but also in their attitude (i.e. the 'state of readiness or predisposition' (Oppenheim 1992, 175) composed by strands of views, as previously defined in Section 4.1) towards the experience of museum visiting in general.

> *Will take me more time to think about what happened to objects before they were put on display.*
>
> > *(Female, 26-35, Local visitor)*
>
> *I may look upon objects in the future with a sceptical eye.*
>
> > *(Male, 26-35, International visitor)*
>
> *I will pause for thought more often.*
>
> > *(Female, 26-35, Local visitor)*

Another idea that may be indicative of attitudinal change is that there may be more to an object's physical state, or its history, than what is observable at first sight. It may be said that when visitors become exposed to the idea of potential interventions they are likely to look for signs of them on museum objects and try to find out if and how an object has been treated.

> *Because you can sometimes notice what has been restored.*
>
> > *(Female, 16-25, UK visitor)*
>
> *It [the exhibition] challenges what is observable to what it was historically.*
>
> > *(Male, 26-35, UK visitor)*

Conservation Workshop, Yorkshire Museum

The conservation workshop was a significantly divergent event in terms of the quantitatively measured impact on participants' views on the condition in which museum exhibits are presented, as becomes evident from the quantitative analysis below. This event presented significantly different results from the other events examined. As can be seen below, all participants agreed that there has been change in their way of thinking (100%).

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	**Yes, definitely**	14	66.7	**66.7**	66.7
	Maybe a little	7	33.3	**33.3**	100.0
	No, not at all	0	0.0	**0.0**	100.0
	Total	21	100.0	100.0	
Missing	System	0	0.0		
	Total	21	100.0		

Table 7 Change in views on the condition in which museum exhibits are presented

The majority of participants (66.7%) were confident that their participation experience has had an impact on their views, while the rest (33.3%) said that the workshop may have shifted their way of thinking. No one indicated that the workshop had no impact on their views. By comparing these findings with the corresponding average data (54.2% were very confident that their views have been changed and 35.7% indicated that the events may have impacted on their views), it can be concluded that this workshop was overall the event with the most notable measured impact (100%) on this strand of views.

This extreme result (100% of participants agreeing that there has been change) could be explained by some of the issues discussed in the limitations section, like the double self-selection in the sample, as well as participants' social interaction with me, in the concurrent roles of the workshop leader and the researcher. Nevertheless, as previously discussed, the meaning of this striking consensus in the quantitative findings cannot be more fully interpreted without analysis of participants qualitative justifications presented below.

To start with, similarly to the the *Conservation Galleries* display, the theme of suspicion towards interventions emerges from the realisation that objects may have been treated before they find their place in the museum's showcases.

> *When I am next at a museum, I will consider how the exhibits are presented and whether I agree with what they have done. Before I wouldn't consider this at all.*
> *(Female, 26-35, Local visitor, Questionnaire 2)*

The workshop deliberately did not introduce any particular principles concerning what constitutes good practice in conservation as explained in detail in Chapter 5. This was decided to inspire debate and encourage argument among participants by introducing them to different historical and current trends in relation to conservation principles and ethics. Through their experience and the conclusions drawn from group discussion, most participants came to an agreement that often there are no simple solutions in conservation, as there are no black-and-white certainties in approaching the construct of heritage. The realisation that conservation plays an important role in interpreting and even shaping heritage along with the meanings and values attached to it has resulted in some degree of scepticism and the development of a more critical outlook.

> *I will think more about how it's done – whether I think it has been done as I think it should have been.*
> *(Female, 51-64, Local visitor, Questionnaire 18)*

As a result of the appreciation of the controversy between existing conservation theories, visitors developed an appreciation for preventive conservation approaches. Aspects of environmental control, as well as museological issues like labelling and interpretation, emerged through group discussion as an alternative to remedial conservation.

> *[The workshop made me think about] lighting, storage, presentation etc.*
> *(Female, 51-64, Local visitor, Questionnaire 7)*

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Finally, some participants brought up the issue of values connected to physical integrity. For them, the workshop experience has caused them to consider their views around the notion of perfection and physical integrity, which are not necessarily seen as values in themselves anymore. This is arguably a change of attitude rather than of a singular strand of views. For this visitor, meaning can instead be found in the appreciation of the different states of preservation, which is now understood as an integral part of an objects' history, or indeed an objects' biography, which is an idea discussed in the theoretical framework.

> *Do museum objects need to be exhibited whole or in perfect? I used to think so but perhaps its broken condition tells us more about its history.*
>
> *(Female, 16-25, UK visitor, Questionnaire 19)*

Visitors' perceptions of integrity will be further discussed in Chapter 6, along with notions around authenticity and originality.

Conservation Work at Knole, National Trust

The conservation engagement events at Knole House differed from the other case studies in the sense that they were primarily focused on providing visitors with an insight into different ongoing conservation projects in the collection, rather than introducing conservation as an exhibition subject in itself. The impact of this approach on visitors' views of the condition in which museum exhibits are presented is shown below.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	**Yes, definitely**	45	54.2	**54.2**	54.2
	Maybe a little	24	28.9	**28.9**	83.1
	No, not at all	14	16.9	**16.9**	100.0
	Total	83	100.0	100.0	
Missing	System	0	0.0		
	Total	83	100.0		

Table 8 Change in views on the condition in which museum exhibits are presented

The majority of participants (83.1%) replied that there was some change in their way of thinking. More than half (54.2%) were confident that the exhibition made them think differently about the condition of museum exhibits, and some (28.9%) indicated there may have been an impact on their views. Fewer (16.9%) said that the exhibition had no impact on their way of thinking on the subject in question. By comparing these findings with the corresponding average data (54.2% were confident that their views have changed and 35.7% indicated that the events may have impacted on their views), it can be concluded that the measured impact of the engagement events at Knole House was substantial but slightly below average as calculated in page 4. The qualitative responses below demonstrate the kind of changes that occurred in visitors' views on the subject.

The most prominent outcome recorded was, once again, the feeling of appreciation for the information provided, and the privilege of being given access to the 'behind the scenes' processes.

Conservation work is perceived as a painstaking and time-consuming undertaking that aims to ensure the protection of the collection. For most visitors, finding out more about it is seen as a way of understanding the conserved exhibits and their condition better.

Helps understand the problems and appreciate the time scale and end product.
(Male, Over 64, UK visitor, Questionnaire 19)

Furthermore, it was also discerned that objects in the collection are subject to decay due to environmental conditions, which conservators try to keep under control. It was understood that certain aspects of the presentation of the collection, such as limited lighting and low temperature in the house, are connected to preventive conservation efforts.

It made me understand how the environment alters the condition of objects.
(Male, Over 64, UK visitor, Questionnaire 16)

Finally, it was proposed that the presentation of exhibits should include information about conservation. This aspect was seen as part of present-day good practice.

Exhibits should now be shown with conservation considered. I think most modern exhibits actually do this.
(Male, Over 64, UK visitor, Questionnaire 59)

Visitors' views on good practice, including the aspect of informing visitors about conservation processes will be further discussed in Chapter 6.

Conservation in Focus Exhibition, British Museum

As mentioned in the overall description of the case studies, according to the Morris Hargreaves McIntyre report, the British Museum outlined three key messages for visitors to take away from the exhibition. The exhibition was then evaluated according to how effectively these messages were communicated. In these messages it is mentioned, among others, that: 'conservators reveal information about objects' (message 1) and that 'the work of conservators enables the public to access museum objects and understand them better' (message 3). The report concludes that both had been successfully conveyed.

As previously mentioned (see Section 3.7.2) sourcing evidence of change on views in terms of the condition and presentation of museum exhibits is challenging in this case study. Although there was no control over the methods used, there is adequate qualitative data to suggest that the exhibition has had an impact on some visitors' views.

You come into museums and look at things. You know they've been restored but you don't actually know what effort's gone into restoring it so I think it's good to make people aware how hard people work behind the scenes.
(Female, Interview 27)

However, it is not possible to quantify this type of response or to determine the degree of these changes without the risk of skewing the results.

4.4 Changes in Views on Heritage Conservation Practice

As explained in Section 4.1, in order to capture the bigger picture of how the events have impacted on this strand of visitors' views, an analysis of quantitative data initially based on the addition of frequencies was carried and is presented below. Here too, the results concern data from all case studies with the exception of the British Museum case study.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	**Yes, definitely**	98	36.2	**37.3**	37.3
	Maybe a little	121	44.6	**46.0**	83.3
	No, not at all	44	16.2	**16.7**	100.0
	Total	263	97.0	100.0	
Missing	System	8	3.00		
	Total	271	100.0		

Table 9 Change in views on heritage conservation, across three case studies (the BM was not included due to lack of quantitative data)

As in the previous section, it was decided to examine findings using the average valid percept method, as shown below, in order to capture the overall picture, regardless of the proportion of the sample size in each case study. Where averages are referred in this section of the case study analysis, this is the table on which it is based.

	Valid Percent Ashmolean Museum	Valid Percent Yorkshire Museum	Valid Percent Knole House	Valid Percent British Museum	Average Valid Percent
Yes, definitely	29.5	66.7	45.6	-	**47.3**
Maybe a little	56.4	14.3	32.9	-	**34.5**
No, not at all	14.1	19.0	21.5	-	**18.2**
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	-	100.0

Table 10 Change in views on conservation, across all case studies, based on average valid percent

The results of the valid percent-based analysis above are slightly divergent from the frequency-based analysis. While it is still the case that the majority of respondents (81.8%) indicated that change occurred, on average almost half of the respondents were confident that there was an impact on their views regarding heritage conservation (47.3%), while several were not very confident about this change (34.5%), and some said there was no change at all (18.2%).

Conservation Galleries, **Ashmolean Museum**

As shown below, the majority of participants (85.9%) replied that there was some change in their way of thinking about conservation, although most respondents (56.4%) did not think that this was a major change, and only some (29.5%) were certain the exhibition impacted on their views. Fewer respondents (14.1%) said that the exhibition had no impact at all.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	**Yes, definitely**	48	28.7	**29.5**	29.5
	Maybe a little	92	55.1	**56.4**	85.9
	No, not at all	23	13.8	**14.1**	100.0
	Total	163	97.6	100.0	
Missing	System	4	2.4		
	Total	167	100.0		

Table 11 Change in views on conservation

Compared with the average results (81.8% indicated that change occurred, most of which (47.3%) were confident that there was an impact on their views regarding heritage conservation, while fewer (34.5%) were not particularly confident about this change) it can be said that the exhibition has had a greater overall impact on this strand of views that the average, but the changes that occurred were more subtly experienced by the visitors.

To identify which particular changes occurred in their views about conservation, visitors' qualitative accounts have been analysed. According to this analysis, a significant proportion of responses were focused on the learning aspect of the exhibition (being presented with more information about museum conservation – a subject they previously knew very little about).

Until visiting the galleries, I wasn't aware of the particular skills and thinking required in order to preserve particular objects from the past.
(Male, 26-35, UK visitor)
I didn't know much about it before, so I hadn't really thought of it.
(Male, 16-25, UK visitor)
I didn't not know how much could be done with conservation.
(Male, 51-64, UK visitor)
I wasn't aware how much work was involved.
(Male, 16-25, International visitor)
It introduced new thoughts. I don't know if it changed my mind but it added something today.
(Female, 36-50, UK visitor)

Secondly, many responses were concentrated on the visitors' increased appreciation for the work of a conservator and its importance as a result of visiting the galleries.

I could understand how conservationists work. Some things must take a lot of time.
(Female, Over 64, UK visitor)
Because [before my visit] I didn't appreciate the work done.
(Female, 51-64, UK visitor)
I learned more about the decisions museum conservators face, which are slightly different than those faced by conservators in my field (archaeology). I also appreciated to a new extent the creativity behind finding new solutions to displaying and conserving objects while taking into consideration the history of particular objects over time.
(Female, 16-25, Local visitor)
[The galleries made me think] it is very important to conserve the evidence of previous cultures, civilization etc.
(Male, Over 64, UK visitor)
I hadn't thought about how important the right conservations are for preserving objects.
(Female, 26-35, Local visitor)

Finally, some respondents' discernment was widened as the exhibition revealed varied aspects of the objects and multiple dimensions to their history.

It is very interesting seeing what is revealed about objects using conservation techniques.

(Female, 51-64, UK visitor)

The story behind objects is just as important as the object itself.

(Female, 26-35, UK visitor)

I also enjoyed the x-ray thing today, you know with the child, and the backlit paper. I've seen it before... it made me smile that that things can be hidden either intentionally like the example of forgery, or that you can suddenly discover something new about something beautiful. So there is a beautiful old picture or painting and then suddenly something new is revealed about it. And that's a reason to smile I think. Like a hidden treasure, you know. Finding a treasure... yeah! If you were the first person to look at it and you would have been looking at that painting for, I don't know how long, and then suddenly you put ultraviolet or x-ray, you would probably be running out of the conservation lab to call everyone "Oh look what I found"! It's exciting I mean.

(Female, 36-50, UK visitor)

Those who indicated that there was no impact on the way they thought about conservation, mostly did so because they thought they already knew about conservation, or already appreciated it and understood its importance.

I don't think so, no. Because I already knew it was a very complex process, really scientific. So I don't think that it changed my views. It informed me better about how it works and the technicalities of it. It's really informative, really impressive.

(Female, 16-25, UK visitor)

I already understand the ageing affects that displaying objects can cause.

(Female, 36-50, UK visitor)

Already aware of dilemmas.

(Male, 36-50, UK visitor)

That's probably for other people, because I realise how important the conservation could be... So not really something new for my mind.

(Male, 51-64, International visitor)

Conservation Workshop, Yorkshire Museum

As is shown below, the majority of participants (66.7%) replied that there definitely was change in their way of thinking about conservation, while some said that there may have been some change (14.3%). Finally, some respondents (19.0%) said that the exhibition had no impact on their way of thinking about conservation.

		Frequency	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
Valid	**Yes, definitely**	14	66.7	**66.7**	66.7
	Maybe a little	3	14.3	**14.3**	81.0
	No, not at all	4	19.0	**19.0**	100.0
	Total	21	100.0	100.0	
Missing	System	0	0		
	Total	21	100.0		

Table 12 Change in views on conservation

The qualitative justifications for these responses contribute significantly to the interpretation of this data. A typical reason of a negative response is shown below.

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[The workshop did not made me think differently at all] because I already believe that heritage conservation is extremely important.

(Female, 51-64, Local visitor, Questionnaire 18)

Based on the participants self-assessment, the types of changes that occurred to those who responded positevly can be seen below.

[The workshop] threw up lots of questions and concerns and made us aware of solutions or possible ways to look at museum exhibits.

(Female, 51-64, Local visitor, Questionnaire 7)

I learnt a lot more about the questions and dilemmas involved and it made me think about whether access or preservation is more important.

(Female, 16-25, UK visitor, Questionnaire 19)

I feel more involved.

(Female, 51-64, Local visitor, Questionnaire 17)

Conservation Work at Knole, National Trust

As is shown below, the majority of participants (78.5%) replied that there was change in their way of thinking about conservation, while many (45.6%) thought that there definitely was a change. Finally, several respondents (32.9%) said that the exhibition had no impact on their way of thinking about conservation.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	**Yes, definitely**	36	43.4	**45.6**	45.6
	Maybe a little	26	31.3	**32.9**	78.5
	No, not at all	17	20.5	**21.5**	100.0
	Total	79	100.0	100.0	
Missing	System	4	4.8		
	Total	83	100.0		

Table 13 Change in views on the condition in which museum exhibits are presented

To identify which changes occurred in visitors way of thinking about conservation, participants were asked to explain their response in a qualitative way.

It is so easy to take things at face value and not think about how it is kept in such good condition. It is easy to take such things for granted.

(Female, Over 64, UK visitor, Questionnaire 70)

The vast majority of negative responses to this question can be interpreted through the visitors pre-existing notions that conservation is of great importance and/or of interest to many of them, as can be seen in the typical examples below.

I have always felt this work is important. It was interesting to see how much time (and money) needs to be spent on this work.

(Female, Over 64, UK visitor, Questionnaire 53)

[Finding out about conservation work did not make me think differently at all about heritage conservation because] I was already interested.

(Male, Over 64, UK visitor, Questionnaire 59)

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***Conservation in Focus* Exhibition, British Museum**

As mentioned in the overall description of the case studies, according to the Morris Hargreaves McIntyre report, the British Museum outlined three key messages for visitors to take away from the exhibition. Through these messages, an emphasis was given to the 'specialised skills and knowledge' conservators have, and to their duty to 'ensure the preservation of cultural heritage for the future'. These points reveal the intention of the curators to communicate the idea that conservation requires extensive training and specialisation, and thus it should not be seen as an empirical craft anymore. Instead, it should be considered as a science-based calling with a mission for the future of heritage.

The report suggests that there is evidence of change in visitors' views on what conservation involves. More specifically, it is suggested that 'visitors were unaware of the painstaking work that was involved with conservation, and as a result felt differently about the conservators themselves, and the amount of skill they had to do this as a job' (24, 2010). From the analysis carried out for the purposes of this study, there is indeed adequate evidence to support the claim that appreciation for the conservators' work is a major theme that clearly emerges through the interviews (see thematic analysis) and that was a realisation that for some people occurred in the exhibition.

> *Oh my god. It's a lot of work on the other side of the museum.*
>
> *(Female, Interview 50)*

However, due to the fact that there was no attempt to assess change or respondents' views prior to the exhibition, there is not enough evidence to support the claim that that was the case for more than just a few, since there is no possible way to determine how many visitors were not aware before their visit but became aware because of this experience.

Furthermore, it was also intended to communicate that conservation is a collaborative and interdisciplinary profession: 'conservators don't work in isolation' (Message 2). The report suggests that this particular idea was not successfully communicated to the visitors, because no visitor spontaneously mentioned the collaborative nature of conservation. It could be said that the phrasing of this message reveals that the curators assumed that the notion that conservators work in isolation is the dominant perception among the public, and this exhibition intended to change this particular view. It could be said that perhaps the main reason that this message was not successfully communicated was that there had been no research to establish what the dominant views on this aspect of conservation are. It is, therefore, impossible to attempt to cause change without first defining what it is that needs to change, or even whether that notion exists, and if so, to what extent.

4.5 Conclusion

The analyses in the present chapter suggest that the four engagement events have had an impact on visitors' views on several different levels. Participants expressed a broad range of changes in their views regarding conservation as a process and the way this affects their understanding of museum objects. Significantly more agreed that the events studied have played a role in shifting their way of thinking. Smith has argued that museum visiting is not only a learning experience for visitors, but it may be understood as 'a cultural performance in which people either consciously or unconsciously seek to have their views, sense of self and social or cultural belonging reinforced' (2014, 1). Participants in this study expressed positive attitudes towards the attempts of the museums to educate them about conservation issues and were overall very appreciative of the opportunity to find out more about an aspect of the museum that they, in their own words, previously ignored or had very little access to both physically and intellectually.

Also, participants showed signs of developing a critical understanding of the role of conservation in shaping the form and meaning of heritage objects while mostly expressing negative views towards restoration and more positive towards preventive conservation. These views and attitudes on what constitutes good practice in conservation will be explored in further detail in Chapter 5.

The findings of these analyses highlight the need for conservators and curators to consider visitors' views about many aspects of cultural heritage conservation both as a social process and as a professional practice if we are to devise effective strategies for communicating and negotiating its purposes together with the society. As Lowenthal argues, 'history explores and explains pasts grown even more opaque over time; heritage clarifies pasts so as to infuse them with present purposes' (1985, xi). Conservation is thus another tool to shape values and notions already embedded in heritage as Lowenthal defines it. Finally, as Swarbrooke observes, 'the reality of a product or experience is probably less important than the consumer's perception of it' (1996, A69).

Chapter 5. Perceptions of Importance and Good Practice

In her analysis of what she calls the 'authorized heritage discourse' (AHD) (see Section 2.2), Smith argues that through the dominant language used by 'heritage experts' such as practitioners, academics, policy makers, etc., it is attempted to construct heritage as something that is engaged with passively and consumed uncritically by heritage audiences (Smith 2006, 31). With regard to the exploration of the spectrum of audiences' engagement with, or alienation from, heritage through the four events, the analysis below focuses on two elements that concern: a) participants' perceptions of the importance of heritage conservation and b) the activities which, according to their views, constitute good practice in heritage conservation. These two distinct elements are examined also in relation to a third factor which concerns participants' connection with conservation (in the sense of their level of interest in heritage conservation as the subject of a museum exhibition or activity, and also their potential professional involvement in the field), and are finally tested for potential correlations.

5.1 Introduction

This chapter will firstly present the overall findings on perceptions of importance and good practice across all case studies. Secondly, it will provide a comparison of each event with the overall findings, and between events (wherever relevant). Thirdly, it will examine possible correlations between the three elements across all events, and in each event separately or in comparison to the rest (wherever relevant). The first three thematic sections initially present the overall findings. This is followed by the detailed exploration of the findings in each event separately, discussed in comparison with the overall picture. The fourth section explores the connections between the three elements through a cross-cutting analysis between the sets of quantitative data. More specifically there are three relationships between the variables examined that the cross-cutting analysis allows us to look at:

- Participants' connection to heritage conservation (i.e. their level of interest or their professional involvement in conservation) in relation to its perceived importance. As these two elements (connection and importance) have been measured also as quantifiable variables in this study, Pearson's correlation test is applied to demonstrate the correlation between them.
- The relationship between certain views around good practice with participants' connection to conservation.
- The relationship between views on good practice with perceptions of conservation's importance.

An identified correlation and qualitative patterns indicating possibilities of causal relationships are discussed in relation to their implications for the nature of engagement. In terms of interpretation, this analysis raises the complex issue of the relationship between cause and effect between participants' interest in conservation and its perceived importance.

5.2 Participants' Connection with Conservation

The level of participants' interest or their professional involvement in heritage was measured in order to establish their familiarity (or lack of it) with conservation issues, determining for example whether people who participated in the study can be considered as members of the 'heritage audience' or as 'heritage experts'. Participants were asked to indicate their connection with conservation by responding to the closed question *'How interested are you in heritage conservation'*.

On average, more than half of the total number of participants (51.8%) across all three case studies with the exception of the British Museum (where only qualitative data was available) were 'very interested' in conservation, while a significant percentage (37.9%) 'would be more interested if they knew more about conservation'. A small percentage (7.9%) had a professional or academic interest, while only a few (2.4%) were 'not interested at all' in the subject. As previously explained, due to the fact that the sample size varies considerably between case studies, it was decided to use the average valid percent method for the analysis (see Appendix IV). So, where averages are referred in the case study analyses, this is the section on which it is based. These findings are shown in further detail in Appendix IV. The figure below shows participants' connection with conservation as it was measured across case studies and on average.
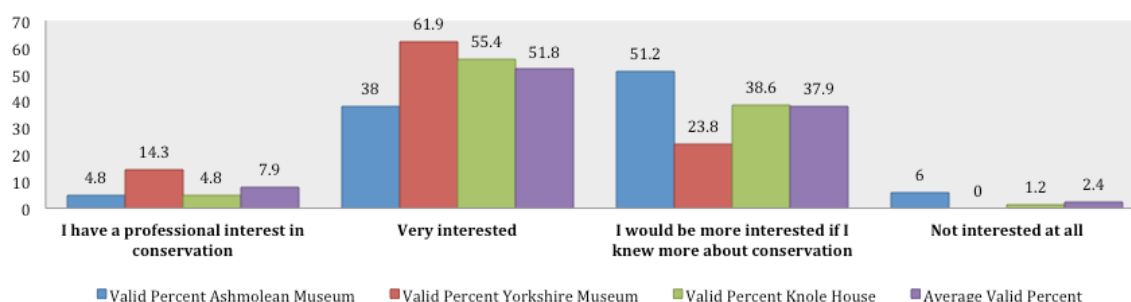
Figure 36 Participants' connection with conservation (plot 1)

It is shown that the sample used in this study is mainly comprised of people who could be considered as members of the 'heritage audience', as the vast majority of them are not involved in conservation related professions but either already have a great interest in the subject or would like to discover more about it.

> *I think it's very important for people to understand their history because it helps us understand our present and it's really interesting… I am starting to get very enthusiastic about it you know. I enjoy learning about it. The more stuff there is out there to learn from, the more you can learn.*

> *(Female, 26-35, UK visitor, Yorkshire Museum, Interview 2)*

Only a very small minority is indifferent to the subject, while there are also a few who identified themselves as professionally interested in conservation, ranging from conservation/heritage students to professionals, including an artist involved in conservation and material design.

Looking at the three case studies separately, we can observe some differences in the composition of the sample in terms of their connection with conservation, especially between the percentage of participants who are 'very interested' and the percentage of those who 'would be more interested if they knew more about conservation'.
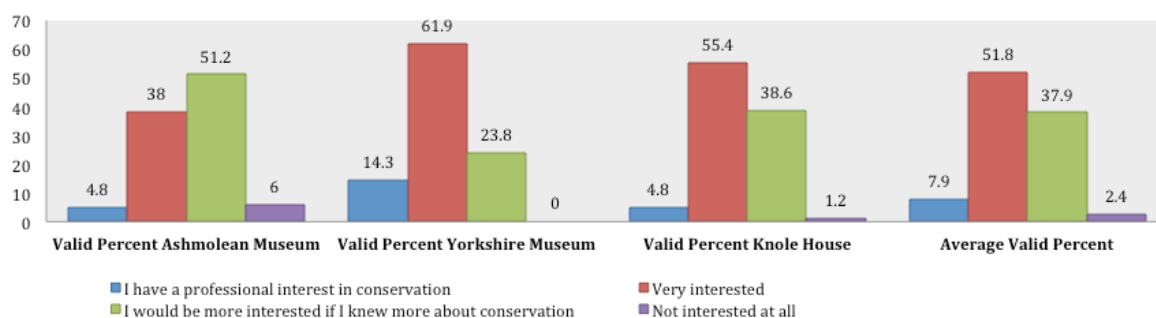
Figure 37 Participants' connection with conservation (plot 2)

In the conservation workshop at the Yorkshire Museum, the majority of participants (61.9%) were 'very interested' in conservation while a significant percentage (23.8%) suggested that they 'would be more interested if they knew more about conservation'. A smaller percentage (14.3%) said that they had a professional or academic interest in conservation. No one (0%) indicated that they were 'not interested at all'. The high level of interest that was recorded could be related to the fact that the sample was self-selected and that this type of adult-learning events attract a particular category of interested individuals and not casual museum visitors (see further discussion in Section 3.7)

In the British Museum case study, data on visitors' connection with conservation from the *Conservation in Focus* exhibition is missing (see Section 3.8 for further details on data collection limitations).

At Knole, the majority of participants (55.4%) were 'very interested' in conservation, while a significant percentage (38.6%) indicated that they 'would be more interested if they knew more about conservation'. Further more, a few (4.8%) had a professional or academic interest in conservation and very few (1.2%) stated that they were 'not interested at all'.

Finally, in the *Conservation Galleries* of the Ashmolean Museum, the majority of participants (51.2%) 'would be more interested if they knew more about conservation', while a significant percentage (38%) indicated that they were 'very interested' in conservation. Further more, a few respondents (6.0%) said that they were 'not interested at all' in the subject and fewer (4.8%) had a professional or academic interest in conservation. These findings demonstrate the relevance of public engagement with conservation to the heritage visitor experience. While very few participants are professionally or academically involved in conservation, there is a widespread interest in and demand for more and better conservation-related information among participants.

5.3 Perceived Importance

Having identified the majority of people comprising the sample of the study as members of the 'heritage audience' the analysis here focuses on their views about conservation in terms of its importance captured both quantitatively (with the exception of the British Museum) and qualitatively. To begin with, participants were asked to indicate how important they considered conservation, by responding to the closed question 'How important do you consider heritage conservation' on a Likert scale from 'Not important at all' to 'Very important'.

On average, the majority of participants (60.9%) considers conservation to be 'very important', while a significant percent (32.9%) consider it 'important'. A few (5.6%) think that it is quite important and very few (0.6%) think it is 'not very important'. No one (0%) regards conservation as 'not important at all'. As previously, due to the considerable variation of the sample size between case studies, it was decided to use the average valid percent method (see Appendix IV). Where averages are referred in the case study analysis, this is the section on which it is based. Findings are shown in further detail in Appendix IV.

The figure below shows the findings on participants' perceptions of the importance of conservation as this was measured across the three case studies and on average.
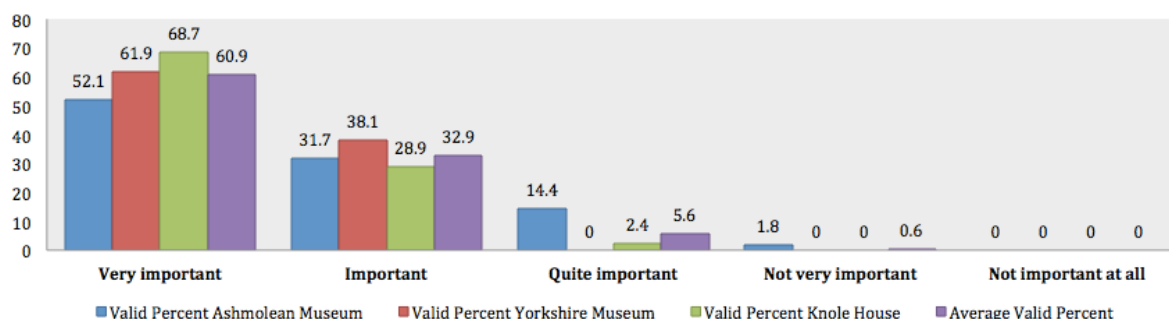
Figure 38 Perceived importance of conservation (plot 1)

Overall, this analysis shows that the vast majority of participants attach great importance to conservation. It is also surprising that among a total sample of 271 people who responded to this question via questionnaire, surveyed in three different contexts, no one considered conservation to be completely unimportant to them. These findings clearly suggest that cultural heritage conservation is held in very high esteem among museum visitors.

A more detailed examination of the specific findings in each context surveyed follows below, aiming to highlight any possible differences or similar emerging patterns.

Looking at the comparison between case studies, as can be more easily observed in this figure, the pattern of perceived importance is very similar across all three events with some minor differences.
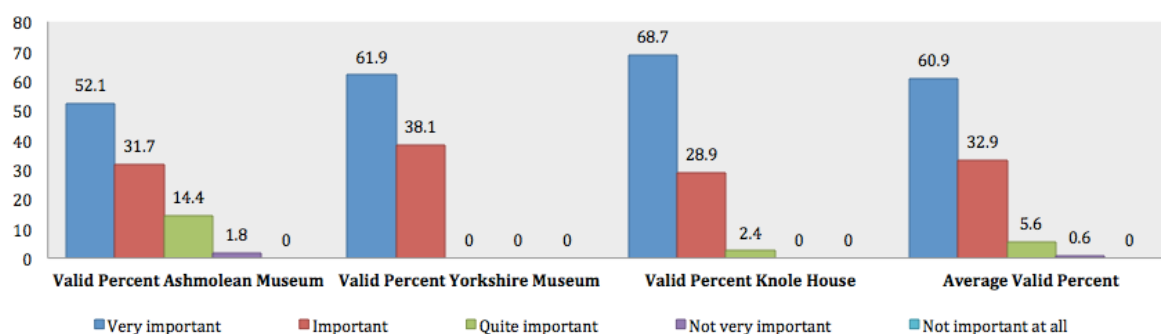
Figure 39 Perceived importance of conservation (plot 2)

The majority of participants in the workshop at the Yorkshire Museum consider conservation 'very important' (61.9%), while all the rest (38.1%) consider it 'important'. Thus, in this event conservation is very highly esteemed by all participants (100%). This is a critical difference between this and the other two case studies and it should be underlined that these particular findings are not the most representative of the museum visitors' population. It is suggested that they rather reflect the profile of a fraction of the population who would be attracted to conservation-related events and is keen to participate in hands-on activities (also see participants' profile in Section 3.7).

In the *Conservation in Focus* exhibition at the British Museum, quantitative data on participants' perceptions of conservation's importance is missing (see Section 3.8 for data collection limitations).

Participants at Knole House case study were asked to indicate how important they considered conservation, by responding to the rephrased closed question 'Thinking about heritage conservation, does it matter?' on Likert scale with the same options. The majority (68.7%) thinks conservation is 'very important', while a large number of visitors (28.9%) consider it 'important'. Again here, it shown that conservation is very highly esteemed by the vast majority (97.6%), while very few (2.4%) consider it 'quite important'. No one (0%) considers conservation 'not very important' or 'not at all important'.

Finally, at the Ashmolean Museum, the majority of participants (52.1%) think of conservation as 'very important', while a significant percentage (31.7%) considers it 'important'. In this event too, the vast majority of visitors (83.8%) attaches great importance to conservation, while an additional (14.4%) thinks of it is 'quite important'. Only a very small number (1.8%) thought that it is 'not very important' and no one (0%) thought conservation is 'not at all important'.

The reasoning behind this evidently considerable attachment of importance to conservation overall observed among participants in the study is further explored in the qualitative analysis to follow.

The second part of the question on conservation's importance, required participants to elaborate on their tick-box style responses on the scale of the first part of the question, explaining why they are of the opinion that conservation is (or isn't) important. As was shown in the quantitative analysis above, the vast majority (93.8%) across all three case studies suggested that conservation is either *'important'* or *'very important'* for them. The qualitative analysis here focuses on the reasons why most participants esteem conservation so highly.

To begin with in the *Conservation Workshop* at the Yorkshire Museum case study, participants' referred to the conservation importance for the benefit of future generations.

> *I believe it is important to conserve objects for future generations so that people can continue to enjoy, learn from and engage with the past.*
> *(Female, 16-25, UK visitor, Yorkshire Museum, Questionnaire 19)*

> *Preserving can tell us about our ancestors, social and historical context of events that affect us now. And doing so can bring the past to life for future generations.*
> *(Female, 26-35, Local visitor, Yorkshire Museum, Questionnaire 8)*

In relation to the theme of the future, another participant also referred to the utility of conservation in helping people understanding a commonly shared past. Understanding *'our past'* is understood as the way forward to the construction of a common shared future.

> *To understand our past helps to shape our future.*
> *(Female, 51-64, Local visitor, Yorkshire Museum, Questionnaire 9)*

This idea of a shared past is also found in the conservation literature. Philippot for example, suggests that although the scientific approach to the past, since the end of eighteenth century, has often been linked with nationalistic revivals, it has recently surpassed national borders, fostering the notion that products of all cultures are part of one cultural patrimony of mankind (1996, 269). Smith however observes that the AHD employed by 'heritage experts' often focuses on 'aesthetically pleasing material objects, sites, places and/or landscapes that current generations *'must'* care for, protect and revere so that they may be passed to nebulous future generations for their *'education'*, and to forge a sense of common identity based on the past' (2006, 29). This notion presents itself here in relation to the question of conservation's importance. For the participant below, conservation is important because *'our own'* history is what makes *'us'* different from others, constructing a distinct identity.

> *I think it is important to have a sense of our own history.*
> *(Female, 51-64, Local visitor, Yorkshire Museum, Questionnaire 17)*

According to another view, the sense of identity is constructed through identifying with contemporary times rather than with distinct national histories or cultures. People today are contrasted with people in the past. So, conservation is seen as important here because it enables *'us'* the people living in the present to learn about *'them'* who lived differently in past.

To learn how people do different things at different times.
(Female, 36-50, Local visitor, Yorkshire Museum, Questionnaire 15)

Conservation's importance is also realised through the fear of loss and change. Heritage conservation is seen as a way of resistance to the threatening effects of modern developments.

In the 20th century much of York was neglected, destroyed in the name of progress.
(Female, 51-64, Local visitor, Yorkshire Museum, Questionnaire 4)

Finally, conservation is important because the material remains of the past provide a sense of self and a reference point for how far *'we'*, again as a common entity, have progressed.

If we wipe away everything because it has decayed or isn't contemporary, then we are taking away part of ourselves. We cannot see our progression of knowledge.
(Female, 51-64, UK visitor, Yorkshire Museum, Questionnaire 21)

In the *Conservation in Focus* exhibition at the British Museum many similar themes were recorded, such as the notion of the common universal history shared by humankind, as well as the fear of loss of the information contained within heritage objects, expressed in the two quotes below.

[They put on this exhibition] I suppose to keep everybody aware of what it takes to conserve our history, well the world's history.
(Male, British Museum, Interview 24)

Because it [conservation] is necessary. Otherwise we'll lose so many articles and that information would be lost.
(Female, British Museum, Interview 29)

It is worth mentioning however that unlike the other case studies, the *Conservation in Focus* exhibition was the only event among the four, where visitors had the opportunity to observe conservators at work. This element arguably had a distinct impact on the course of the participants' thoughts.

Just sort of seeing the history being preserved really. For the fact I suppose if you weren't doing all this work, eventually it would disappear!
(Female, British Museum, Interview 31)

[They put on this exhibition] to make people aware that they've got to preserve things basically. Treat them properly otherwise we'll lose all our history.
(Male, British Museum, Interview 30)

Through the interviews, it also evident that the exhibition invoked in many participants, feelings of appreciation with respect to the conservation profession. This appreciation is expressed in relation to a number of different aspects of conservation such as the highly specialized training conservators receive, but also for their knowledge, skills, hard work and patience required to treat objects.

This is kind of like painstaking work, so it's refreshing to see people still putting in as much effort and work into preserving artefacts and preserving history of what we have been through.
(Male, British Museum, Interview 34)

What I like best is seeing is being in the proximity with these people doing their work. That is sometime things you see in the movies, or that we only see the final when they've been through the actual, and the way these people are fully trained in a special kind of work and they can figure out how it was

because of their talent of re-doing it, and their knowledge of the art, and the pieces that they've found, and it's interesting for me to see that how it's finishes the work that they're doing.

(Male, British Museum, Interview 38)

I actually talked to them a lot about their professional tracks, their career tracks actually, because I was very curious to know how they got into such a specialised field.

(Male, British Museum, Interview 40)

I think they want to show off how they work. They want to say, 'We have the collection here but in the back they are working for us'. […] Oh my god. It's a lot of work on the other side of the museum.

(Female, Interview 50)

Moreover, the nature of this event seems to have attracted a number of visitors arguably not only because of its unusual theme but also because it provided a unique opportunity to engage with actors in conservation.

[…] I like anything to do with conservation.

(Female, British Museum, Interview 25)

Well from what we've just seen here, I think its fascinating.

(Male, British Museum, Interview 39)

Firstly, this is an indication that conservation is gradually becoming a popular attraction in the form it was exhibited in the British Museum case. Moreover, this suggests that conservation performance as a form of public engagement is potentially particularly attractive as it provides visitors with an opportunity to interact with the individuals who are doing the work, and through this offering them a sense of personal interaction with the conservation process.

I love conservation, I like to see how [they] go about doing their work. […] Pretty cool stuff. I'm very excited about the kind of work that's going on here.

(Male, British Museum, Interview 34)

[What I liked about this exhibition is] that there are people here doing something

(Male, British Museum, Interview 37)

Most visitors responded very positively to the messages conveyed through the event and expressed respect and high esteem for the efforts of the museum to inform its audience about its less prominent activities such as conservation work and their significance.

[They put on this exhibition] I suppose to keep everybody aware of what it takes to conserve our history, well the world's history.

(Male, British Museum, Interview 24)

[They put on this exhibition] surely to add interest, to add the real touch. For people passing through. There are a lot of locked rooms all over the various levels in the building, and you just wonder what's going on behind there. I think this kind of shows some of it maybe. I think it's important to know that these things aren't just sitting in the back gathering dust. That the museum is interested in putting them back into a display status if you like.

(Male, British Museum, Interview 36)

Meanwhile there was also a smaller, but still worthy of mention, number of responses that demonstrated suspicion and scepticism around this image of conservation and the role of the British

Museum in promoting it as well as the motivations behind the choice of objects for this exhibition. Some interesting indicative quotes can be seen below.

> *[They put this on] to complete the picture that's trying to be painted about what conservation is.*
> *(Female, British Museum, Interview 46)*

> *[They put this on] because I suspect...I can think of about half an hours worth of answer to that! 1) Is to advertise what they do to the public and where their money goes. 2) Is because of course the British Museum in its treatment of whatever we're calling those bits of Greek stone on the other side of the museum has been relatively controversial. I guess it also probably serves as good publicity, and makes the conservation department feel like its efforts are being appreciated which is an important thing.*
> *(Male, Interview 33)*

> *[They put this on] to inform what goes on behind the scenes? Justify their existence? […].*
> *(Male, British Museum, Interview 32)*

Finally, based on some responses, this exhibition elicited appreciation translated into donations for the museum or it accounted for financial investment into conservation.

> *Well I suppose just so you know what's going on, and I also thought well it make you more inclined to perhaps put some money in because you think 'Oh well that's what the money's being used for'.*
> *(Female, British Museum, Interview 15)*

> *Because we need to know that these things aren't dug up the ground in the way, the way, the format in which they appear and also we probably need to know why they need the money to keep going.*
> *(Female, British Museum, Interview 9)*

At Knole House case study, some common themes emerged such as the usefulness of conservation in informing the construction of a positive future through knowing one's history.

> *[Conservation is very important because] knowledge of our history is vital to our future, and to preserve skill now almost lost.*
> *(Male, 51-64, UK visitor, Knole House, Questionnaire 20)*

Several participants' responses were imbued with a sense of nostalgia. For example, this particular one above includes a reference to the preservation of skill that used to exist in the past but is scarce in the present.

Finally, a participant who indicated his professional interest in conservation, stating in particular his current occupation as a town planner, referred to conservation as a means of understanding 'place'.

> *It helps understand 'place' better.*
> *(Male, 26-35, UK visitor, Knole House, Questionnaire 54)*

This particular quote highlights the difference of the case study of Knole House situated in the historic house context from the other museum contexts surveyed in this study.

In the Conservation Galleries case study within the Ashmolean Museum context, a very large number of participants believed that the importance of conservation lies in its educational value, referring again to both the present generation and the future ones.

I just think that knowledge for that sort of thing should be available for everybody, it should be there so that is the people pick up on it, they see how it's done, I think that all the exhibits you have, how they depict the things... well it opened my eyes to a lot of things so in my opinion it should open the people's eyes, so should be for schools, schools should see what you do. I think it should be part of the education really.

(Female, Over 64, Ashmolean Museum, UK visitor)

Conservation is very important as it is about preserving the history and cultures, about educating people in the future.

(Female, 36-50, Ashmolean Museum, UK visitor)

Conservation is seen here, again, as a means of understanding the past and the objects that have been 'passed on to us' from 'our' ancestors. It may help 'teach' the present generation about the past, helping 'us' understand the origins of tradition and contemporary life.

[Conservation is important] because it teaches us about the past.

(Male, 36-50, Ashmolean Museum, UK visitor)

[Conservation is quite important] to enable us to understand history and cultures.

(Male, Over 64, Ashmolean Museum, UK visitor)

[Conservation is very important because] it's important to learn from our past and understand our contemporary traditions and their roots.

(Female, 16-25, Ashmolean Museum, UK visitor)

[Conservation is quite important because] it gives us a more accurate idea of things in the past, which is useful to know about.

(Male, 16-25, Ashmolean Museum, UK visitor)

Conservation is also considered important in the learning process itself because it enables the use of 'original' objects from the past, which is seen here as a more effective teaching method.

[Conservation is very important]. I am an art historian major, and believe in teaching with original objects (much more effective than pictures).

(Female, 36-50, Ashmolean Museum, International visitor)

A large number of participants suggested that conservation is important for the future. For them, the present generation is seen as having a duty to deliver 'knowledge', 'wisdom', 'history' and the 'lessons from the past' to future generations and conservation is viewed as the way to do that.

[Conservation is important because] it gives possibility for objects to last longer and to show also to the next generations how the world worked before.

(Ashmolean Museum, International visitor)

[Conservation is quite important because] it's important to know our heritage. We could be wiser thanks to it.

(Female, 16-25, Ashmolean Museum, International visitor)

[Conservation is important] to conserve the knowledge for next generations.

(Male, 26-35, Ashmolean Museum, UK visitor)

[Conservation is important] for descendants history.

(Male, 16-25, Ashmolean Museum, International visitor)

Some participants thought of conservation as important because it provides a sense of continuity and therefore meaning to human life, by connecting the past, the present and the future, through material remains that contain proof of our existence and the existence of those before us. Memory and nostalgia are again dynamic elements of several responses.

[Conservation is very important because] it will help our kids and grandkids learn more about the past and that they will be able to see the things we do from historic times.
(Female, 16-25, Ashmolean Museum, International visitor)

[Conservation is very important] because it is not good to live in a world where we have no idea what our pasts were like.
(Female, Under 16, Ashmolean Museum, International visitor)

[Conservation is very important because] things change.
(Male, 26-35, Ashmolean Museum, International visitor)

[Conservation is very important because] we need to know where we came from, and keep a sense of perspective. Old artefacts represent values of craftsmanship, beauty and patience that are rare nowadays.
(Female, 36-50, Ashmolean Museum, International visitor)

[Conservation is very important] because it's important for people to be able to look back on and remember the past.
(Female, 16-25, Ashmolean Museum, UK visitor)

[Conservation is important because] then you get to see the old stuff!!
(Male, Under 16, UK visitor)

I think children should be shown as much as possible of old things. They are shown technology now… and it has its place, but I think there are other ways of doing things.
(Female, Over 64, Ashmolean Museum, UK visitor)

Finally, unlike the other case studies, in this event there was a small number of participants who did not think conservation is of much importance because it has a scope limited to the past, as opposed to dealing with issues of the present or the future.

[Conservation is not very important because it is] all in the past.

(Male, 26-35, Ashmolean Museum, UK visitor)

5.4 Views on Good Practice

Having explored the multiplicity of reasoning behind the attachment of importance to conservation, the analysis here focuses on the exploration of views on good practice in heritage conservation. Participants were asked to answer the closed question: 'In your view what does good practice in conservation involve'. The response included multiple possible tick-box style choices and the option of suggesting additional alternative actions (see data collection instruments in Appendix I). It was possible to select more than one choice and therefore the percentages do not add up to 100%. This question also had an intended contextualizing effect by providing participants with some initiatory information on what actions conservation could involve or may have involved historically. The figure below shows participants' views on good practice on average based on a total sample of

N=271 visitors who responded to this via questionnaire in the three case studies where it was possible to collect this type of data, with the exception of the British Museum.

In your view what does good practice in conservation involve?

Category	Percent
Involving the public	34.1%
Restoring an object to its original appearance	33.4%
Informing the public	60.3%
Assessing an object's values	48.4%
Taking preventive measures for future	80.8%
Stabilising the present condition	75.1%
Adding new elements in order to improve the	9.2%
Cleaning	41.7%
Recording the present condition	68.4%

Figure 40 Views on good practice (average valid percent calculated using valid percent per case study)

Overall findings on views on good practice across the three case studies show that stabilisation (75.1%), prevention (80.8%), recording the present condition (68.4%), and informing the public (60.3%), are considered to be good practice by the majority of respondents. Several consider good practice involves assessing an object's values (48.4%), cleaning (41.7%) and restoring an object to its original appearance (33.4%), but only a low percentage (9.2%) of respondents believe that it involves the addition of new elements in order to improve an object. Perhaps the most surprising finding of this analysis is the fact that while a significantly high percentage (60.3%) of participants consider 'informing the public' as good practice in conservation, at the same time only a comparatively low percentage (34.1%) thinks the same about 'involving the public', while in several cases there is an overlap between the two groups.

In order to explore these recorded trends shown above, further analysis of participants' valuable insights in relation to what activities they believe conservation practice should involve was carried out based on references sourced from all case studies. The quantitative analysis for each case study can be seen in further detail in Appendix IV.

In the case study of conservation workshop at the Yorkshire Museum, the vast majority of participants thought that good practice in conservation involves stabilisation of the condition of an object (90.5%), prevention measures (90.5%), recording of the present condition (90.5%) and value assessment (85.7%). Only a very low percentage of respondents believe that good practice involves restoration (9.5%), and the addition of new elements in order to improve an object (9.5%). These findings demonstrate that participants surveyed in this event expressed a clear inclination towards

preventive conservation, rather than restoration or any form of alteration of what is perceived as 'the original state' (a notion which is discussed in detail in Chapter 6).

Even though participants as a group had strong opinions on conservation practice, only just over half of them (52.4%) believed that it is good practice to 'involve the public' in conservation. However, it should also be noted that this percentage is much higher than the average measured across all case studies. This participant for example spontaneously suggests at the end of the survey instrument the involvement of more people in conservation through additional organized events.

> *Hold more workshops and get more people involved.*
> *(Female, 51-64, Local visitor, Yorkshire Museum, Questionnaire 7)*

Finally, a slightly higher but very close to the average percentage suggested that it is good practice to 'inform the public' about conservation (57.1%). It could be argued that participants felt that events that aim to inform rather that involve people in conservation may still instill feelings of inclusion. Also in the British Museum event, that did not involve the element of active involvement in conservation work, the feeling of inclusion was identified as a major theme. So much so that it was used as the title of the evaluation report by the independent consultancy company: *'I feel included' – An evaluation of Conservation in focus in Room 3 at the British Museum* (Morris Hargreaves McIntyre 2008).

Moreover, here too, there were spontaneous urges for further events on the subject.

> *- Thank you. Please try and keep these things going. […] Yes this type of thing is excellent.*
> *(Male, British Museum, Interview 14)*

> *- I think it's a cool thing to learn about how they restore objects are displayed in the museum.*
> *- So it's cool to learn about how they display in the museum?*
> *- Yeah because it's a really important part of the museum industry, and what's going on behind you know.*
> *(Female, British Museum, Interview 17)*

There were however some differences observed between this event and the others explored in this study. Despite what the other case studies show through the quantitative analysis about favouring preventative conservation, there seems to be a good indication that several participants at the British Museum event thought restoration is a desirable aim for conservation.

> *I like the idea that they are restoring all things.*
> *(Female, British Museum, Interview 50)*

> *Well we talked to the people restoring the sculptures, very interesting. They were explaining what they were doing. They were removing the older repairs which were causing problems, and replacing it with new materials, which is much better, and cleaning to make it look better, so it was fascinating.*
> *(Male and female, British Museum, Interview 39)*

In this event, it appears that participants also focused on the removal of previous conservation interventions and their replacement with new. This seems to have given rise to a sense of superiority of contemporary practices in comparison to older interventions.

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- So it's the conservation part that interested you?
- A bit, and because I've just been to the Hadrian exhibition and there were statues that have been falsely put together, with the head, and so on, it's the wrong head!
What kind of?
- He was standing there, I asked what she was doing.
- The information that she was talking about?
- Yeah, because I've never talked to anybody like that...like this it wouldn't have occurred to me that they'd been put together although obviously when you say it then you know that of course the Victorians did all sorts of stuff. It's interesting yes, I think it's one of the most interesting parts of the visit really.

(Female, British Museum, Interview 15)

[I learned] that they often have problems with old restorations. That they used material that they think it's not a good idea anymore.
(Female, British Museum, Interview 19)

He showed us which materials they were filling the holes with, which was fascinating, compared with the old ways of fixing things together, which was with pegs or metal. So it was a lot better way of doing it.
(Male and female, British Museum, Interview 39)

Well I was interested to see the head that had been sort of half cleaned, and sort of Victorian restorations being undone, and x-rays and so forth.
(Male, British Museum, Interview 37)

Through enquiry, some participants were also introduced to the principle of reversibility, which appears to have been both comprehended and accepted as part of good practice.

- Did you ask him any questions at all?
- Yeah. We asked what he was doing with that sculpture.
- Did you learn anything from what he told you? What did you find out?
- I found that he was removing old plaster from the 18th Century and replacing it will new like silica, I don't know what it's called, but it will be easy to remove in the future.

(Female, British Museum, Interview 17)

Moreover, another element of good practice that emerged in this event was the cooperation between heritage institutions and organizations.

[I learnt] […] that you cooperate a lot with other foundations and museum which I thought was good.
(Female, British Museum, Interview 19)

Some participants in the British Museum event mentioned that informing the public is an important aspect of good practice.

I think it's very important because it's going to give people a good idea about how much work goes into preserving artefacts of various periods and it's not just you know the end product that you see out there. It's all this hard work that goes into preserving and maintaining it, so it's very important.

(Male, British Museum, Interview 28)

I've just noticed it. I hadn't seen it before. I just came in to see the marbles, and the other room, so it's very good. Very interesting to see conservation being done. To be able to ask people about their work. Gives you an appreciation of how important it is when you see a delicate piece of material like that, to conserve it.
(Male, British Museum, Interview 28)

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The quote below is a particularly interesting one as this person expresses his conviction that more people '*should*' be interested in finding out about conservation.

> - *And why do you think the British Museum has put on this exhibition?*
> - *That's a good question but its well worth doing. I'm not sure how many people are interested in the idea of how things are preserved but they should be.*
> *(Male, British Museum, Interview 44)*

At Knole, the most popular views on good practice were prevention (81.9%), and stabilisation (62.7%). The option 'informing the public' was selected by more than half of the participants (61.4%), and there were also some spontaneous suggestions for expanding the scope of such events and providing visitors with information about ongoing conservation projects in a more systematic way.

> *The more can be shown to the general public the better. To show exactly how much work goes into such projects helps people to appreciate it.*
> *(Female, Over 64, UK visitor, Knole House, Questionnaire 70)*

> *Have a 'conservation/what work is in progress' leaflet explaining all the work going on in one place.*
> *(Male, 51-64, UK visitor, Knole House, Questionnaire 61)*

However, again in this case study *'involving the public'* was a much less popular view (21.7%), which is in this particular case was also a much lower percentage than the recorded average. This was perhaps the case due to the fact that at Knole visitors were informed about conservation projects mainly through text panels, without any possibility for interaction with conservators, which may have had an impact on their thoughts in relation to the feasibility of their possible involvement.

In the *Conservation Galleries* exhibition at the Ashmolean Museum, the most popular views were again stabilisation (71.9%) and prevention (70.1%). Recording the present condition (62.9%), and 'informing the public' (62.3%) were selected by the majority. Only a low percentage (3.6%) compared to the average selected the addition of new elements. Again here, an inclination towards preventive conservation rather than restoration or any form of alteration is observed.

> *[…] If you restore to the original then you might damage it or years down the road what you did may not be right.*
> *(Female, 36-50, International visitor, Ashmolean Museum)*

> *Replicas/computer models are better than cleaning/restoring.*
> *(Male, 51-64, Local visitor, Ashmolean Museum)*

> *I think you should try... you have to evaluate what the status of the object is to begin with and maybe you do something to preserve it instead of restore it.*
> *(Female, 36-50, International visitor, Ashmolean Museum)*

> *I don't think we should try to restore the original appearance of the object. I think that is too invasive.*
> *(Female, 16-25, UK visitor, Ashmolean Museum)*

> *I think it is [good practice] if you are keeping it as it is, you are conserving what is left from what you've got rather than trying to make it look good, if you know what I mean.*
> *(Female, Over 64, UK visitor, Ashmolean Museum)*

Again here, there is a noticeable contradiction emerging from the quantitative analysis. The majority (62.7%) considers 'informing the public' as good practice in conservation, while a comparatively low percentage (28.3%) thinks the same about 'involving the public'.

> *I think people should be told how much any particular object has been changed. I'd really like to see how it was but I also want to see how it could be. Not only the actual real state of the object now but also how it was then. I want to see both! Because they are both really interesting.*
>
> *(Male, 36-50, UK visitor, Ashmolean Museum)*

> *I like knowing what has been conserved or restored because... because then I can understand and maybe appreciate the effort that somebody has gone through to present this to me and the rest of the world and also just a reminder that you know things do need to be taken care of. But I do like the idea of seeing what has been done or being told that you know this piece was like this and then we made this change or... because then you can... I don't know... I think you can appreciate it more.*
>
> *(Female, 36-50, International visitor, Ashmolean Museum)*

As was previously observed, conservation is considered important also by people with limited or no interest in it. That provides a possible explanation as to why the majority would prefer to be informed but not involved, a theme repeatedly manifesting itself across all four case studies.

> *I don't know if it would be wise to involve people in the decision making because if you haven't studied it you might... I think you need to be more informed to make these decisions. So I think conservators have an obligation to inform the public of any alterations if any, have been made, so when they look at an object in museum and there has been some restoration then I think people should be told so they are aware of how objects deteriorate and how those involved have been conserving them.*
>
> *(Female, 16-25, UK visitor, Ashmolean Museum)*

In the literature, it has been observed that museum visitors' passive engagement with heritage in the museum exhibition context is a phenomenon that extends beyond the museum's 'glass cases' and can also be found in the ways heritage sites and places are approached (Merriman 1991). Surprisingly, through this analysis it is observed that most participants would rather be *educated* by the 'experts' about conservation. Arguably, they would prefer to assume the roles of passive receivers and learners within the museum context, rather than be given the choice of becoming actively involved in complex conservation decisions, as participation may perhaps be seen as incorporating the burden of responsibility. This is further discussed in Chapter 7.

> *I mean I wouldn't like to have to make those decisions, because it's... it's tough!*
>
> *(Female, 36-50, UK visitor, Ashmolean Museum)*

5.5 Cross-cutting Analysis

In this section, the connections between the three strands of views are explored by a cross-cutting analysis between sets of data. More specifically, it is explored how participants' connection to heritage conservation (i.e. their level of interest in it or their professional involvement) correlates with perceptions of importance, how certain views around good practice relate to participants' connection to conservation, and finally how views on good practice relate to perceptions around conservation's importance. Cross-examination of quantitative data is presented in its entirety in Appendix IV. For each cross-theme there is a corresponding table containing combined data

from all case studies (in the form of frequencies). For each case study there is a separate table containing data from that case study only. Data in each table is shown in the form of two charts (two different plots). Finally, a correlation test was applied to the two sets of ordinal data sourced from the three events combined, as well as separately in the case studies of Knole and the Ashmolean as the sample of Yorkshire Museum case study was considered too small for this type of test, and it was not possible to gather this data from the British Museum.

To begin with, the relationship between the level of participants' connection with conservation and the level of conservation's perceived importance was examined based on the combined frequencies (N=271) from all events except the British Museum. This analysis can be seen in the table below and in further detail in Appendix IV.

	Very important	Important	Quite important	Not very important	Not important at all	Total N
I have a professional interest in conservation	14	1	0	0	0	15
Very interested	90	27	5	0	0	122
I would be more interested if I knew more about conservation	48	51	21	2	0	122
Not interested at all	4	6	0	1	0	11
Missing	1	-	-	-	-	1
Total N	157	85	26	3	0	271

Table 14 The relationship between connection with conservation and perceived importance

Firstly, it is observed that all participants who have a professional interest in conservation consider it 'important' or 'very important'. In addition, the vast majority of participants who consider conservation 'very important' also find it very interesting. The majority of participants who consider conservation moderately important 'would be more interested in it if they knew more about it'. Also, many participants who consider conservation as 'not very important' are also not interested in it at all, while most of those who consider conservation 'not very important' stated that they 'would be more interested in it if they knew more about it'. Finally, participants who are 'Not interested at all' in conservation do not consider it completely unimportant.

To further examine the relationship between participants' connection with conservation and perceived importance of conservation, these two sets of data were tested using the SPSS Statistics software to apply Pearson's correlation test in order to identify this possible correlation. This analysis is detailed in Appendix IV.

		Level of perceived importance of conservation
Level of interest in conservation (participants' connection with conservation)	Pearson Correlation	.381**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	272

Table 15 Pearson's correlation test based on the combined data from all three case studies (N=272)

As can be seen in the table above, the Pearson's correlation test applied to the combined data from all three case studies (N=272) has shown that, as was reasonably expected, there is a statistically significant positive correlation (Field 2009, 193) between participants' connection with conservation and the level of conservation's perceived importance, $r = .38$ (p<0.01). In addition, statistically significant correlations between these sets of data were also found in both Knole and the Ashmolean Museum examined separately.

However, the identification of this unsurprising correlation cannot answer the far more complex question of causality. Do close connections with/interest in conservation cause people to consider it more important? Or does the notion of importance cause the interest? Or does a third factor cause both simultaneously?

Some of the reasons why heritage conservation may appeal to museum visitors have already been identified in Chapter 4. In Section 5.3 in this chapter the reasoning behind the importance visitors attach to conservation has also been explored. Testing the connections between the themes that emerged through the qualitative analysis and the levels of interest in conservation, as well as perceptions of its importance, could be the subject of further research addressing the problem of cause and effect.

The relation between participants' views on good practice and their connection with/level of interest in conservation was also examined. This analysis can be seen in the table below and in Appendix IV.

	I have a professional interest in conservation	Very interested	I would be more interested if I knew more about conservation	Not interested at all	Missing	Total N
Recording the present condition	9	81	69	8	-	167
Cleaning	7	59	45	4	-	114
Adding new elements in order to improve the object	0	12	8	0	-	20
Stabilizing the present condition	15	82	87	7	-	191
Taking preventive measures for future preservation	15	98	83	8	-	204
Assessing an object's values	10	46	41	4	-	101
Informing the public	12	79	71	5	-	167
Restoring an object to its original appearance	3	54	43	4	-	104
Involving the public	3	38	33	2	-	76
Total N	15*	122*	122*	11*	1	271*

Table 16 Views on good practice and level of interest in conservation

Not surprisingly, all conservation professionals thought that stabilising the present condition and taking preventive measures for future preservation are good practice, while these two options were also selected by the majority of those who 'would be more interested in conservation if they knew more about it'.

It is also observed that the addition of new elements was a choice avoided by all conservation professionals, but also by participants who are 'not interested at all' in conservation. Similarly, the option of restoring an object to its original appearance was least selected by the same two groups. Interestingly, these two options were selected mostly by participants who were 'very interested' in conservation. This could be an indication that dramatic interventions such as restoration may be particularly attractive for museum visitors in terms of sparking their interest in the subject of conservation.

The majority of participants who are 'not interested at all' in conservation selected the options of recording and stabilizing the present condition, and taking preventive measures for future preservation. So perhaps this suggests that preventive conservation as the subject of an exhibition or an event is disengaging for museum visitors.

Finally, 'informing the public' was selected by most participants with a professional interest in conservation, most of those who are 'very interested', and by most of those 'who would be more interested in conservation if they knew more about it'. It was not preferred by most of those who are 'not interested at all'. 'Involving the public' was not selected by the majority of any group, and was mostly selected by participants who are 'very interested' but by a surprisingly small proportion of conservation professionals. This is perhaps an indication that the dominant attitude among both the professionals and the museum visitors is to inform the public but not to involve them.

The relation between participants' views on good practice and the degree of importance they attach to heritage conservation was also examined. This analysis can be seen in the table below and is also detailed in Appendix IV.

	Very important	Important	Quite important	Not very important	Not important at all	Total N
Recording the present condition	103	47	16	1	0	167
Cleaning	69	34	10	1	0	114
Adding new elements in order to improve the object	11	6	3	0	0	20
Stabilizing the present condition	115	57	17	2	0	191
Taking preventive measures for future preservation	125	61	17	1	0	204
Assessing an object's values	61	31	7	2	0	101
Informing the public	101	51	14	1	0	167
Restoring an object to its original appearance	61	35	7	1	0	104
Involving the public	46	24	5	1	0	76
Total N	157*	85*	26*	3*	0*	271*

Table 17 Views on good practice and perceived importance

The patterns emerging in this analysis have very small differences, and there is no particular divergence worthy of note emerging from this analysis. It is observed however, that the addition of new elements has been chosen slightly less by respondents who perceive conservation as very important and not at all by those who do not consider it very important. Also, the option of assessing an object's values and the option of involving the public were slightly more popular among visitors who did not consider conservation to be very important.

Thus it is suggested that there is no obvious connection between visitors' views on good practice and their perceptions around the importance of conservation, perhaps with the exception of the addition of new elements, which was the least popular option and thus the results may have been affected by the small frequency.

5.6 Conclusions

The analyses in the present chapter suggest that there is considerable interest about heritage conservation among museum visitors, based on the fact the majority of participants stated that they either are already very interested in the subject of conservation or that they would like to discover more about it. Moreover, the vast majority of participants in the study were not involved in conservation related professions, and thus it could safely be said that these findings primarily concern people who could indeed be considered as members of the 'heritage audience'.

Findings also suggest that cultural heritage conservation is held in very high esteem among most museum visitors for numerous reasons. In summary, the main reasons stated by participants include the following themes: the responsibility towards future generations as well as the duty towards ancestors for the maintenance of the continuity between past, present and future that provides meaning to human life; the forging of ideals of unity and solidarity based on common past shared by the human kind; the construction and reinforcement of national identities as well as a sense of self; the definition of our contemporary culture as well as the ability to evaluate contemporary achievements in contrast with the past; resistance to the destructive effects brought about in the name of progress; fear of loss and change; feelings of nostalgia; keeping a record of history; and finally, preservation of skills and promotion of values like patience and hard work recognised almost as inherent virtues of conservators. It has been suggested that conservation is about 'refreshing and renewing culture and heritage in ways that reflect and contribute to society's values, thereby making a statement about value to others, and a statement about the present to the future' (Jones and Holden 2008, 27). It is shown here that this statement corresponds to great extent to the rationale behind the importance attached to conservation by museum visitors.

The analysis of views on good practice suggests that museum visitors incline towards a preventive approach to conservation rather than restoration. Moreover, they appear to favour the idea of

professionals informing the *'public'*. The act of informing the *'public'* about conservation was also thought to be important because of reasons including: education and raising awareness; transparency; inclusion; and finally, financial sustainability of profession, while this particular aspect was also approached with some scepticism. Surprisingly, while *'informing the public'* appears to be the prevalent view and considered important, the same is not true for *'involving the public'* in conservation work. According to some individual insights, this is perhaps due to the fact that participation is often felt more as a burden of responsibility rather than as an entitlement.

Finally, cross cutting analyses suggest that: there is a positive correlation $r = .38$ (p<0.01) between visitors' connection with conservation and the level of conservation's perceived importance. Dramatic interventions such as restoration spark interest in conservation while preventive conservation could be a disengaging theme for engagement events, it appears. The dominant attitude of *'informing the public'* but not *'involving'* it is evident both among professionals and visitors; and no apparent connection was observed between views on good practice and perceptions around the importance of conservation.

Chapter 6. Views on Authenticity, Originality, and Integrity

This chapter concerns the thematic analysis of participants' views on authenticity, originality, and integrity in relation to conservation, as expressed in response to the engagement events included in this study. Discussion of the meaning and use of these concepts from the perspective of heritage professionals has already been introduced in the theoretical framework chapter. The focus here is specifically placed on the perspective of the museum visitors. It was deliberately decided not to use any of these terms in the data collection instruments in order to avoid leading participants to think towards this particular direction. Thus, unlike findings presented in previous chapters, the present analysis is based on spontaneous references in relation to the three concepts that emerged from participants' responses to the open-ended questions.

6.1 Introduction

The problem of determining the meaning of the concepts of authenticity, originality and integrity is extremely complex and has been extensively discussed and debated by conservation philosophers, practitioners and scholars, both recently as well as historically (see for example Brandi 1963, Holtorf & Schadla-Hall 1999, ICOMOS 1964; 1994; 2004, 2014, Jokilehto 1999; 2006; 2008, Jones 1992, Larsen & Marstein 1994, Larsen 1995, Lowenthal 1998; 1999; 2008, McIntosh & Prentice 1999, Munoz Vinas 2005, Phillips 1997, Pye 2006, Ruskin 1899, Viollet-le-Duc 1875, to name only a few). Visitors' views on the concepts of authenticity, integrity and originality are examined together here as they all encompass meanings that often overlap. Although the definitions of these terms still present a challenge, these concepts play a central role in heritage conservation policy and practice. It has been argued that notions of authenticity are formed on the basis of the relationships between objects and people (and places) and are employed by people 'as a means of negotiating their place in a world characterized by displacement and fragmentation' (Jones 2010). Through this analysis it is intended to explain the relationships between visitors and heritage objects in particular, by looking at the ways in which perceptions of authenticity, originality, and integrity are experienced, communicated, and ultimately negotiated through a discussion about conservation.

Respondents' views and references to the concepts of authenticity, originality, and integrity are discussed thematically on a case study basis. It should be noted that in this chapter, it was intentionally decided to select the most insightful quotes over the most representative ones. This is done in order to illustrate the evident diversity of views and connotations expressed in relation to the meaning of these complex and fluid concepts. Without avoiding sporadically emerging patterns where these are significant, the primary intention in this chapter is to present a miscellany of different perspectives and highlight the fact that, unlike the largest part of findings presented in this study, participants' references to these concepts are more often idiosyncratic than typical.

6.2 Authenticity

To begin with, although authenticity is such a challenging concept for heritage professionals to pin down, by participants it is regarded an essential quality for objects on display. According to the individual quoted below, authenticity plays such a pivotal role in the way heritage material is experienced by audiences that it forms a fundamental impetus for museum visiting.

> *[I most enjoyed Fakes and Forgeries] because, art you know is expensive on auction. So you know there is a kind of way, a new way of making forgeries to make huge money. So it's really important for professionals to tell people how to know the difference. But not guess. You should judge based on some scientific investigation or some other reliable sources. So that's a whole war, you know, it's a war in the future, but also in the past. It's a big difference, if it is the authentic one or not. It's really important for the public because the reason for people to go to museums is to view authentic artefacts, not fakes.*
> *(Male, 51-64, International visitor, Interview 6, Ashmolean Museum)*

In conservation literature, it has been discerned that any object is authentic in its own right as long as it physically exists (Munoz Vinas 2005). However, the meaning of authenticity is for this person in direct contrast to the concepts of fakery and forgery. An authentic object is understood by him as that which is not a fake. The word fake here has the meaning of forgery, and the way this is phrased directly suggests that forgery involves an element of criminal activity, deception and fraud. The problem of authenticity, specifically in connection with the concept of genuineness, has been discussed by Jones in the paper *Why Fakes Matter: Essays on Problems of Authenticity,* where it is argued that forgeries that are recognised as such, are authentic in themselves as forgeries (1992). Interestingly, the issue of authenticity is also connected here with the perception of the museum as the keeper of objects that possess the quality of authenticity. For this participant, museums should only display objects that are *authentic*. This linkage between authenticity and the museum is particularly interesting as it draws on the idea museums are reliable establishments, which guarantee this quality and inspire the necessary trust in people, underpinning the reason for visiting. The museum professionals, in this case the conservators who curated the exhibition, are seen as the 'experts' and deemed to be responsible for educating people about forgery and authenticity with scientific reliability. Thus, arguably there is an expectation among some museum visitors about conservators assuming the role of the educator on the authenticity of objects. This is a potentially problematic message to communicate within the framework of public engagement projects, since authenticity remains a greatly complex and debatable concept among conservators ourselves.

Besides the authenticity of objects, participants also touched upon the concept of the authenticity of experience linking it with the different states of objects. For this participant for instance, the state of an object is a matter of choice that rests with the professionals and depends upon the 'attitude' of the museum both towards the objects and towards the experience they provide to visitors.

> *It depends on the museum's attitude. Some try to show the objects as found, some try to give an experience.*
> *(Male, 51-64, UK visitor, Questionnaire 14, Yorkshire Museum)*

Museums in this case differ on the basis of two seemingly contrasting 'attitudes': those that in their collections display objects in the 'as found' state and those that offer their audience with 'an experience' which implies a different state. The distinction here seems to be between the educational role of the museum (in which case the ideal is the 'as found' state), and the educational or recreational aspect of visiting, in which case the state of the object should enable a pleasurable or a learning experience.

According to a different, greatly insightful, view, the experience of seeing objects in the museum is understood as a compromise between access to authenticity and physical damage. This is an idea discussed also by conservators but in relation to social benefit, which resulted in the articulation of the paradox known as Conservation's Catch 22 (*see* 2.4). Through a particularly interesting analogy between the cultural and the natural environment, these are both seen as non-renewable resources. The museum is comparable to a zoo, while heritage objects in their own cultural surroundings are compared to wild animals in their natural habitat. Through this analogy, access to authentic objects and authentic experiences is imbued again with a sense of privilege that comes with the cost of damage and the risk of total loss and perhaps the image of captivity is also implied for museum objects removed from their cultural environment in order to be more easily accessible.

> *[…] When people get on a plane for no reason and, you know, 'I've got to go on my holiday, I've got to see all these things, and I've got to go see the wildlife of this country' the world becomes a playground! And 'Oh I've got to go see the penguins, there are the penguins hop hop hop'. But if you just hang back a little bit there is a whole row of tourists... So it's not particularly good for the environment and conservation of the environment with these masses and masses of tourists to go and see these rare things. So there is quite a fine balance. But then there is a bit... you know without wildlife there is never going to be a zoo! So you do go and see it at the zoo when you can't see a dodo, except a stuffed one, you know?*
>
> *(Female, 36-50, UK visitor, Interview, Ashmolean Museum)*

While access is almost demanded, decontextualising heritage objects by placing them in a museum environment, is perceived here as having the effect of undermining both their originality: 'a stuffed dodo', but also their authenticity in the sense of the sensory experience in order to make them as widely accessible as possible. Thus, the consequences of increasing accessibility may not only concern physical damage, but may also affect the notion of authenticity and the sense of privilege that appear to underlie the action of museum visiting.

6.3 Originality

The meaning of originality is often encompassed in the use of the term authenticity, and so the exploration of visitors' perceptions of originality comes as a natural continuation. As in the previous discussion about authenticity, again here, there is a reference to the notion of objects' varied states. According to the most representative (most frequently expressed) view, 'original' refers to the object in the condition when it is first made, in an intact or new state, before being damaged, altered, and before the mechanisms of decay manifest their effects.

> *It depends I guess... for Leonardo's Madonna of Rocks it's probably very important to see the original texture of the oil painting while for so many years there has been so much dirt, layers and layers... but if you take away not element* [sic] *by Leonardo himself... some later addition and when you take off this kind of layer, you will see the original.*
> (Male, 51-64, International visitor, Interview, Ashmolean Museum)

Conservation is perceived as the process of treatments aiming to reveal the 'original state', while restoration is seen by some as an acceptable way to achieve this.

> *[Conservation is important because] we can see how the objects shown were originally.*
> (Male, 16-25, International visitor, Questionnaire, Ashmolean Museum)

> *- And you said you were interested in conservation?*
> *- Well yes I think so. I'm a good believer in having things restored rather than leaving them in the state that they were found. I think there are so many beautiful things around that have been damaged and defaced, and to be able to see them as they originally were is fabulous.*
> (Male, Interview 12, British Museum)

The second participant clearly states that he is an advocate of restoration which is understood here as a synonym of conservation. He identifies two different states in which the objects can exist. The first is the state in which objects are 'found', and the second is the state they were 'originally'. The first is the state of damage and defacement, while the second state (the original), in contrast with the first, is free of damage and accentuates the quality of beauty. The motif of nostalgia emerges through several responses throughout the study and presents itself here once again in this judgement of aesthetics. Drawing on the notion of the ideal past, the imagined damage-free original state is linked to the idea of beauty. According to this participant, this notion of originality is contained in the desired state that conservation should aim to restore.

The purpose of conservation is approached by another participant quoted below from a slightly different angle. She considers conservation to be the preferable solution to renewal.

> *Amazing what can be done. Far better to conserve rather than renew.*
> (Female, Over 64, UK visitor, Questionnaire 70, Knole House)

For her, the maintenance and care of a damaged object is far more acceptable than its replacement with a new one or any attempt for its return to a more desirable previous state. Restoration of the 'original state' of 'beauty' is not necessarily seen here as an objective.

Once again the theme of contrast between the two states, the 'as found' and the 'original', emerges. This time however, unlike the participant at the British Museum exhibition, this person chooses to adopt an anti-restoration approach to conservation as a result of the workshop. She suggests that the preferred state in which an object should be exhibited in museums and passed on to future generations in order to be appreciated is the 'as found' state and not necessarily the 'original' one.

> *It is important to conserve our heritage as we find it so that future generations can appreciate it. [...][The workshop made me think] it's not necessary to exhibit something how it was originally but to show it as it was found.*
> (Female, 36-50, Local visitor, Questionnaire 20, Yorkshire Museum)

It this event, participants looked at and discussed about objects that had previously undergone restoration as well as some older controversial treatments. This is a particularly interesting example as it shows that the way conservation is communicated in different events, as well as the choice of objects used to convey certain meanings and messages, can, in effect, determine the visitors' views or change already existing ones, without that necessarily being an implicit aim or intended outcome. The workshop had the effect of making this participant think and reevaluate the desired state of objects. Prior to the event she thought that the ideal state was perhaps that of completeness, free of signs of damage or decay, which she considered 'original'. After the event, she thought that the responsibility of the conservator is to deliver the object in the state it 'was found' which in this particular case is possibly used to refer to the phase of an archaeological excavation, as the material that participants focused more on in this event was untreated archaeological ceramic fragments and stone.

Interestingly, according to another participant, the process of removing the soil from the surface of an excavation find is the way to reveal its 'original' state.

> *[The part I most enjoyed was] cleaning the objects. Seeing how they looked without the dirt and getting an idea of how they would have looked originally.*
> *(Female, 25-35, Local visitor, Questionnaire 6, Yorkshire Museum)*

For her, the 'original' state is understood as the state prior the object's entombment, which can be slowly revealed through investigative cleaning.

In the Knole case study in particular, references in relation to the concepts of authenticity, originality and integrity were relatively rare. The participant below, comments on her first impressions of the condition in which the objects of the collection of the historic house are presented.

> *One's first reaction might be to query why things are not in better condition, until [you] realise that the fabrics are being preserved because [they are] original.*
> *(Female, 51-64, UK visitor, Questionnaire 76, Knole House)*

Signs of damage and decay on the textiles of the furniture initially created a negative impression for her until the moment she realised these were 'original' and that this was the reason for not renewing or fully restoring them. Damage and decay in this case indicated the objects' originality. As described in further detail in section 3.7, one of the main conservation exhibits in the property was a restored tester bed. As a response to this exhibit, the participant quoted below expresses the opinion that restoration of integrity to a past 'historical' state is the ideal approach.

> *I now believe that it is historical integrity that is most important, rather than showing a piece in an 'original' form, which would mean little or nothing if any original materials or colours remained.*
> *(Female, 36-50, Local visitor, Questionnaire 83, Knole House)*

Restoration of physical integrity is seen as a means of making an object meaningful by making its

'original' characteristics more obvious or better understood by the viewer, rather than exhibiting it in the 'original state' of damage.

Moving beyond damage and decay, an emerging theme discussed in relation to the concept of originality is that of copies. For this participant, copies are perceived in direct contrast with original objects: *'the real thing'*. She comments in a particularly expressive way on the value of original objects being that they provide unique and powerful sensory experiences that cannot be achieved through any copy. By looking at the original object she can imagine the movement of a painter's hand *'look at those brush strokes'* and by analogy refers to this experience as listening to live music.

> *Because there is something about them... I think the old... old paintings of the saints, that gold... the gold on those paintings… that you just have to take a step back and… Every time, every time I see one of those beautiful, beautiful, gold... that would not be the same from a copy. […] It's lovely to see the original things. It's very very beautiful... If you know it's the real thing versus a copy, it's nothing like… it's just a different experience. That was made, I don't know, a thousand years ago, that was made two thousand years ago, that was made three hundred years ago, and look at that thing! You know? Look at those brush… those brush strokes! It's a level of sublimity, it's like listening to live music instead of a recording... you can't explain it! You can't... It's like the hair on the back of your head will stand up when you see real brush strokes. And if you just see the print it's not... It's a physical experience which you know don't get when looking at... it's not the same.*
> *(Female, 36-50, UK visitor, Interview, Ashmolean Museum)*

The notion of original experience that is implied here is linked to the encounter of the visitor with the object. At this point, a cross over between notions of authenticity and originality is indicated. The sensation invoked by original objects is described to be unparalleled, while a copy (lacking authenticity) is thought to be devoid of this trait, lacking the sensory qualities of the original. Thus, it could be said that authenticity here is perceived as the capacity of an original object for appealing directly to the viewer's senses: *'it's like listening to live music instead of a recording'* providing an unequalled *'live'* experience of beauty, art, and the past. However, given that the museum may be seen as a reliable provider of authenticity, it is unclear whether these sensory experiences are more strongly related to the actual physicality of the objects or to the idea of authenticity attested by the museum context. Many participants assent that knowing that they are standing in front of an original and authentic object and not a copy is extremely important to them. Thus, the perception of 'the real thing' rather than the object itself appears to be fundamental to the way objects are experienced in the museum context, and perhaps this particular notion could be dependent upon the credibility that the museum as an institution inspires to its visitors.

Another view expressed in relation to the experience of the visitor's encounter with an object was that seeing the 'original' in the museum provides the viewer with a sense of privilege.

> *[…] When you see an original object you feel very privileged and that sense of privilege you don't get when something is mass produced, I don't know, or online... So there is a sense of privilege when you see an original artefact and that's fantastic. I think if you are seeing digital models... The level of technology might not be there yet but I don't think I wouldn't mind if I could see as much when I want to zoom in, zoom out, spin it round, change the lighting, I don't think to be honest, I would be able to tell the difference. Well I wouldn't get that sense of privilege but at least I would see what it looked like*

and I can do the learning part even if I can't do that, you know, that really visceral sense of "Wow"! I might not get that so much but still to see something that old, even a copy, is a fantastic feeling.
(Male, 36-50, UK visitor, Interview, Ashmolean Museum)

According to this participant, value is attached to the originality of an object, which in this case is not directly contrasted with the concept of fakery, as authenticity previously was, but is instead in disparity with mass-production and digital modelling. Here, originality is linked to the idea of uniqueness or rarity, which mass-produced objects lack, and it is also connected to the physical presence of the object as opposed to its virtual copies. The sense of privilege reported seems to derive from the idea that the singularity of a museum object means that access to it is limited for many other people, constituting its viewing as an exclusive experience to a particular audience. Thus, it is shown here that notions of rarity and limited access situate the visitor in an advantageous position, enhancing their contentment during their encounter with 'original' museum objects. At the same time however, virtual copies are seen as an acceptable solution in order to increase accessibility and minimize damage of particularly sensitive objects.

I think it's nice to see the original objects. I very much prefer that, but sometimes we can't and it'd be really nice to see three-dimensional scans of the objects and one of the problems is that museums are so cagey about the... they say "these are our things" and they don't put them on the internet for example, to share, and I find that so annoying. Even if they say, here pay five pounds to visit our museum for the day, you know they might do that, great, but you know, all their stuff is held there...
(Male, 36-50, UK visitor, Interview, Ashmolean Museum)

Specifically in relation to conservation interventions, some participants consider original the state of an object before restoration and in some cases also before conservation. According to these views, when an object is restored/conserved it is not *in* its 'original' state, or in the extreme perhaps it *isn't* an original object anymore.

Restored items should be shown in original condition (before restoration) to enable comparisons to be made.
(Male, Over 64, UK visitor, Questionnaire, Ashmolean Museum)

The theme of suspicion and fear of deception emerges again associated here with any form of intervention to the object's 'original state' or 'original condition' and perhaps enhanced by the realisation that museums do not usually provide information about treatments or alterations.

[This exhibition made me think differently] because you are not seeing the original piece.
(Male, Under 16, UK visitor, Questionnaire, Ashmolean Museum)

I wonder if I'm seeing the original or an altered state. Especially the paintings.
(Male, 26-35, International visitor, Questionnaire, Ashmolean Museum)

The gallery showed how one can assume an item is in original condition unless made very aware.
(Female, 51-64, UK visitor, Questionnaire, Ashmolean Museum)

A particularly interesting and imaginative proposal for tackling this issue of suspicion among visitors and enable them to feel more confident about the originality of objects after the realisation

that they have been potentially altered by conservation interventions, came from a participant according to whom originality can be demonstrated on a scale.

> *You know like when you go to the super market and it says "cheese strength 1,2,3,4,5". It says, this is an original object, this is pretty much how it's been found, with the dust straight on, which would get a 5 and for each object we can choose... you know if there was an easy way of saying, you know, "This a museum has nearly all restored stuff, but this museum has only original stuff". People can actually vote by going more to the museum they prefer... then I think you would see... then you would get some feedback.*
>
> *(Male, 36-50, UK visitor, Interview, Ashmolean Museum)*

On this proposed scale, conservation is seen as the grey area between complete restoration and doing absolutely nothing. A scale system of exhibiting objects is considered by him as an empowering tool for visitors' views on conservation approaches to be heard and taken into account. Along the same line of thought, an additional distinctive suggestion coming from a different participant goes a step further in the sense that it extends beyond interventions such as restoration to also include preventive conservation.

> *It's best to leave things (the original) alone (but maybe make a copy) and exposed to the consequences of time.*
>
> *(Male, 51-64, UK visitor, Questionnaire, Ashmolean Museum)*

According to this distinct view, in order to maintain its 'originality', an object should not be protected at all against the effect of time. Visitors should be made aware of that by viewing the object exposed to decay as any attempt to slow this process down and prevent damage is seen as a compromise to the object's originality. What is more, copies here are approached as a useful means of demonstrating an object's 'original state' (the state prior to decay as was understood by other participants) by comparison to its naturally altering states that result from the passage of time.

The great difficulty in defining the concepts of originality and authenticity is mentioned by some participants. It is realised that ethics is an important part of the work of conservators and that different philosophical approaches to conservation practice generate highly complex conundrums.

> *Because of ethical issues, different approaches, and varied definition of 'original'. All very interesting and new to me.*
>
> *(Male, 26-35, International visitor, Questionnaire, Ashmolean Museum)*

> *The conservator's dilemma goes to the heart of the problem at the heart of archaeology – whether to keep something as it is or as it's assumed original.*
>
> *(Male, 36-50, International visitor, Questionnaire, Ashmolean Museum)*

6.4 Integrity

As was shown in the previous discussions on the concepts of authenticity and originality, integrity was also contemplated through considering an object's different 'states' or 'versions'.

> *- Do you think it is useful to have the cauldron particularly for example, the completed version, is it*

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helpful to have that there as a comparison?
- Yes. I think it is essential otherwise most people wouldn't be able to identify what that lump of stone and earth there is. It is much easier to see what it is.

<div align="right">

(Interview 10, British Museum)

</div>

For this participant, restoration of the physical integrity of a fragmented object by completing the missing parts is essential in order to make it identifiable for audiences. The state of completeness is suggested here as the preferable one for educational purposes, but for the participant below restoration is mentioned as more of an aesthetic preference expressed with an underlying sense of nostalgia and idealization of a previous condition.

I would love to see the textiles on the bed restored to their former glory. […]

<div align="right">

(Female, Over 64, UK visitor, Questionnaire 69, Knole House)

</div>

Really it was just sort admiring what he was doing, and I don't know about encouraging him exactly, but you know saying that I thought it was a marvelous thing to do, not to just leave things in piles of old rubble. Things like the sphinx, that's had its face taken off and the Parthenon that's falling to bits. I was shocked when I went to Athens and saw that. There's all this stuff lying around like a load of old rubbish, and my feeling is it should be restored.

<div align="right">

(Male, Interview 12, British Museum)

</div>

However, many participants are either intentionally or unintentionally vague about their disposition on what constitutes the ideal state of an object.

[Conservation is important] to pass on objects to future generations in the best state possible.

<div align="right">

(Female, 51-64, Local visitor, Questionnaire 7, Yorkshire Museum)

</div>

In this case for instance, although the participant has just attended a two-hour workshop and either actively took part or at least was present in groups discussions of other participants on this subject, she chooses to not define what the 'best state possible' of an object actually is. It is nevertheless stated that conservation's importance lies in its role to ensure that an object is handed over to future generations in that undefined ideal state, perhaps also implying that the responsibility to determine the most suitable course of action lies with the professionals.

Another theme emerging in relation to integrity interestingly involved feelings of surprise and perhaps also a sense of discomfort. This participant for example appears to not simply accept or be aware of the fact that in the museum she will see incomplete or damaged objects but to actually expect that this is what she will encounter. As a result, the restoration of physical integrity, or the restoration of colour in paintings, may invoke reactions of shock.

We went to another gallery and we saw all the heads had noses. I am not used to seeing noses on sculpture... you know.

<div align="right">

(Female, 36-50, UK visitor, Questionnaire, Ashmolean Museum)

</div>

While for some participants like the one quoted above, the expectation when visiting museums is to encounter fragmentary objects, for a few others, prior to their visit, the lack of physical integrity in the sense of completeness was seen as a deficiency. The Conservation Galleries exhibition in this

case was experienced as a revelation to them as it clarified the reasons why objects in 'imperfect' states can be part of museum collections on display.

> *Now I understand why broken objects are on display.*
> *(Male, 51-64, Local visitor, Questionnaire, Ashmolean Museum)*

Some respondents agreed that restoring the physical integrity can in certain cases enhance the aesthetic value of an object and also amplify its use as a means of learning.

> *The Japanese... just as a shield that was hanging up there on the wall and it had been, you know, restored... I would have been like well that's a nice shield... to see the level of detail that was in it and just the beauty of the art work that went into something that someone used to protect themselves in the battle... it sort of tells more of a story to be able to see the whole thing, as opposed to just seeing part of what was left.*
> *(Female, 36-50, International visitor, Interview, Ashmolean Museum)*

Restoration of integrity is thought in this case to help the viewer not only understand and appreciate an object in all its detail, but also to acknowledge the skills employed to construct it, its intended use, and ultimately its history. In addition, the utility of objects exhibited in museums is also identified in their ability to trigger visitors' imagination. This participant for instance considers the evocative capacity of 'as found' objects an important part of the experience museums provide.

> *Many museums display objects as found. I think it is important that the visitor is able to imagine the condition and usage of the original find.*
> *(Male, Over 64, UK visitor, Questionnaire, Ashmolean Museum)*

Finally, it is again observed that conservation work often involves difficult choices and results in disputable solutions in connection with an object's physical integrity and in relation to the concepts of originality and authenticity.

> *I mean do you restore it? You don't restore it? How far do you go? Do you put the head back on? Do you try and put it back together? Or... It's always a moral... a moral dilemma.*
> *(Female, 36-50, UK visitor, Questionnaire, Ashmolean Museum)*

> *There are a lot of different viewpoints in the exhibit itself you know... should something be restored to it's original? If you restore to the original then you might damage it or years down the road what you did may not be right.*
> *(Female, 36-50, International visitor, Questionnaire, Ashmolean Museum)*

6.5 Conclusion

During the past fifty years, the concept of authenticity has been the subject of extensive discussions in the academic field of heritage conservation. Although these debates have in many ways broadened our spectrum of interpretations of it, authenticity remains, however, a particularly hard concept to define. In the Venice Charter (ICOMOS 1964) authenticity was still perceived rather simplistically solely in association with the material dimension of heritage. Since then our perception has expanded to include additional concepts and factors that could relate to it. The Nara Document on Authenticity (1994) recognised that the notion of authenticity is culturally

dependent and should be understood primarily in association with values rather than with the original physical fabric. Thus, since authenticity is rooted in values and as such it is subject to variation and interpretation, it is a relative concept and cannot be regarded as an absolute (Bold & Pickard 2013, 113).

This analysis has demonstrated the relativity of the concept of authenticity through the plurality of views captured over its meaning concerning the idea of originality and also touching upon the educational and aesthetic value of physical integrity as well as the implications of restoration. While participants often use authenticity and originality as separate concepts, in several cases the terms are used interchangeably as synonyms or suggest links between them. The analysis focused on the various uses and perceptions of the terms separately although it is emphasised that there are several overlapping areas, making the complexity of defining these concepts all the more evident.

Firstly, it was shown that notions around the concepts of authenticity, originality, integrity, play a significant role in the experience of the museum visitor and possibly underlie the motivations of people for museum visiting. In addition, by researching case studies like the Ashmolean Museum and the British Museum that host collections from various cultures and civilizations and at the same time also attract many international visitors from around the globe, but also museum contexts that attract many local visitors like Knole House and the Yorkshire Museum, provided diverse insights into visitors' views as these were expressed in each if these contexts. It is becoming clear that among museum visitors, the dominant views on conservation treatments and preferences for more dramatic interventions such as morphological restoration are related to transitory taste and are arguably dependent on cultural differences as well as what people are accustomed to encounter when viewing heritage objects in the museum environment. It was also shown that the 'public' does successfully deliberate and debate complex conservation issues as the emerging dilemmas are very close to the historical and contemporary conundrums held among heritage 'experts'. The analysis demonstrated that there are various acceptable limits for conservation interventions among participants. While many of the views captured are not necessarily based on particular lines of rational argument or specific philosophical approaches to conservation, it was also shown that theoretical debates about the conservation principles and ethics that have been taking place for centuries among 'heritage experts' are clearly of interest to, and indeed part of the experience of, museum visitors in the present day.

Chapter 7. Access, Decision-making and Participation

A paradox that emerged from the analysis of participants' views on what constitutes good practice in the conservation of material culture (see Chapter 5) was that the majority would rather be informed about conservation, rather than be involved in it and consequently be placed in a position to deliberate on and to participate in the decision-making entailed. The present chapter explores this observed notion further. The following analysis focuses on the ways in which visitors approach and negotiate access and participation in the engagement events investigated, based on qualitative and quantitative findings concerning their views on the decision-making process involved in conservation. In particular, the themes of access and participation are discussed through participants' most indicative references in relation to these topics.

7.1 Introduction

In the cultural heritage realm, the term 'access' can have different meanings to different groups and individuals. The term may refer to intellectual access, physical access − use (e.g. studying and sampling), the ability to pursue scientifically 'knowing' and 'understanding', or to engage with an object's aesthetics, emotional, religious or spiritual access. For some people, access may also be related to identity or 'rights', or even prestige, influence, and power. The meaning of access is complex, relational and often context-dependent, and museum conservation decision-making often involves working with this set of variables (Peters & Romanek 2008, 2). Concerning this study, some of the meanings attached to the term from the perspective of scholars and conservation practitioners have also been discussed in the theoretical framework (also see a useful account in Thomassen-Kraus 2013). One of the most central interpretations to the discussion in this chapter is found in the Faro Convention, in which access is linked to democratic participation. Article 12 in particular, states that everyone should be encouraged to participate in: 'The process of identification, study, interpretation, protection, conservation and presentation of the cultural heritage' and 'public reflection and debate on the opportunities and challenges which the cultural heritage represents' (Council of Europe 2005).

Access understood as participation in decision-making, has been extensively discussed particularly in relation to communities (see for example Crooke 2007; Smith & Waterton 2009; Waterton & Watson 2010; Waterton & Watson 2011; Watson 2013; Schofield 2014). A number of critical perspectives on issues around participation, though not directly linked to conservation practice, have been included in *Participation: The New Tyranny* (Cooke & Kothari 2001), while it has also been argued, from a conservation theory perspective, that 'people's right to impose their views is proportional to their involvement' (Muñoz Viñas 2005, 161).

Concerning museum conservation specifically, access has also been examined in relation to its social benefit resulting in Conservation's 'Catch 22' (University College of London: Institute of Archaeology 2010) as discussed in Section 2.4. Also, the contribution of cultural heritage to well-being has been already researched (see for example the HLF Strategy & Business Development Department research review by Maeer & Killick 2013), as has the potential of objects themselves (see Chatterjee 2008; Chatterjee & Noble 2009; Chatterjee et al. 2009; and Ander et al. 2011). Physical access to heritage material, in particular, has also been explored in *The power of touch* (Pye 2008), and, during the same year, access became the subject of the *IIC Conservation and Access London Congress* (2008), who had also previously highlighted that 'access is, in fact, what conservation is all about. It is not about total protection but about making objects usable (Pye 2001, 158).

7.2 Access from the Perspective of Visitors

As in conservation literature, multiple understandings of, and views on, the concept of access also exist among museum visitors. This study investigates the different ways in which participants experience and consider access through their own accounts as these were captured in the context of the four events examined. The following discussion is based on a qualitative analysis of their spontaneous (i.e. not in response to a question on the specific theme) references in relation to this.

The conservation workshop at the Yorkshire Museum included the element of supervised physical access to some archaeological objects (ceramic and stone). The suggestion for an assessment of the benefits and risks to allow greater access to objects (Ashley-Smith 1999) was considered and implemented when planning the activities included in the session (see Section 3.7.1 for further details). The initial response to enabling participants to physically access objects prompted expressions of entertainment and pleasure. The activity that involved physical access was by some participants referred to as the most enjoyable part of the session.

> *[The part I enjoyed most was] touching the objects.*
>
> *(Female, 51-64, Local visitor, Yorkshire Museum, Questionnaire 1)*

The second emerging theme was the issue of intellectual access through physical access to the objects. The information obtained, in this case, concerned methods used by conservators to reveal more details about an object's state of preservation (e.g. stereoscope examination, investigative cleaning) that was later followed by group discussion around possible treatments and consideration of practical and ethical dilemmas (e.g. storage, exhibition, conservation, restoration). This participant for example clearly suggests that hands-on actions are his way of active learning.

> *[The part I enjoyed most was] handling "hands-on". I always find it easier to absorb information if I am actually doing it as well as just discussing how to do something.*
>
> *(Male, 51-64, UK visitor, Yorkshire Museum, Questionnaire 14)*

The idea that some people possess bodily-kinesthetic intelligence allowing them to function more efficiently through physical activities was initially developed and discussed by the developmental psychologist, Howard Gardner, in his theory of multiple intelligences (1983). This model of eight, and later nine, types of behaviour (intelligence) has been a subject of extensive discussion and debate in several domains including both formal education and informal learning (e.g. in the museum environment) where there have been widespread efforts to apply it in the teaching/learning process (Gardner 2005; 2008). While the effectiveness of the hands-on experience for learning in museums has been widely discussed and broadly accepted (see for example Caulton 1998), it is not however considered adequate for aiming at deep learning and scientific understanding (see for example Gregory 1989).

Nonetheless, public engagement may not always and necessarily be about deep learning, but perhaps about introducing people to something that was previously unfamiliar to them or difficult to reach. For this participant, for instance, both the physical contact with the objects and the opportunity to find out about conservation work were positioned in the sphere of inaccessible.

> *I enjoyed how you explained things to us. And I enjoyed touching all the old objects. I had never had the opportunity to do so. […] It's not only about touching… I liked learning how you work with them and that was the most interesting. Not only the touching.*
> *(Female, 51-64, Local visitor (international background), Yorkshire Museum, Interview 1)*

For most participants, the element of physical access was an enjoyable activity or a way to learn about or engage with the objects and conservation. For one person who was visually impaired, however, this was perhaps the only way to access the content of this event. Even though it was not possible to capture her experience in her words, another participant who worked with her in this activity suggested that this was not simply an inclusive activity and a pleasant experience, but that her tactile skills contributed significantly to the successful completion of this practical task.

> *It [touching] was good because it gave us great pleasure to… like for another woman who was there and who was blind. She was totally blind and she managed by working with her hands and by touching to put together that vase which was very difficult for us, but she managed. So it gave her great pleasure. And we were pleased to see her.*
> *(Female, 51-64, Local visitor (international background), Yorkshire Museum, Interview 1)*

In the conservation literature, the importance of touch has been explored and conservators have been challenged to welcome it as a means of access to the objects (Pye 2008, 162), arguing that it is possible to overcome conservation's 'Catch-22' by finding the balance between the risk of damage and the social benefits access can generate (see Section 2.4). Reflecting on the experience of planning and facilitating the conservation workshop, encourage touch through the incorporation of this activity in the session plan was proven to be crucial for the participants' equal chances for learning and engagement with conservation which was the principal aim of the event.

Facilitating access may have an additional effect on some visitors' experience, allowing them to develop very personal connections not only with the objects in their material dimension but also

with their stories and the people who used them. Below is a participant's personal account of her experience of examining and handling objects in the conservation workshop and then reflecting on how the experience of connecting with the material remains of the past differs from learning history through means that do not focus on objects. Moreover, this account shows that physical access to objects presents an enormously powerful channel for some people to feel connected with the past on a very personal and emotional level rather than intellectually.

> *Through objects it's much more tangible, you know. If you look at all those TV programmes… it's all very removed. There is kind of like a barrier or… you know. It's very hard to kind of perceive… Whilst if you are actually looking at an object you can imagine someone holding it or using it… you connect with it. While if you get a chance to hold it or use it then you feel even more connected to the past. If you are holding something that was used in the trenches during the 1st World War, then that hundred-year time gap is a lot less. You are much more involved and it's… I think you get a different perspective. You get a much more immediate perspective of the people who actually lived through that, rather than, you know, the historians' remote removed bigger overview. And I think sometimes the little details and the peoples' stories actually get lost in a way in history texts and generic history books. Because, you know 'this is what happened'… Yeah, but this was happening to _somebody_… There was _somebody_ who held this, who had to use it, who had a life, and family, and friends and [inaudible] and their impact on society may well be small or big but you don't get to get a sense of that necessarily from a book or a TV programme or a radio programme. But I think it's much more visceral and much more immediate when you are actually holding or looking at an object that, you know, you can connect with it.*
>
> *(Female, 26-35, UK visitor, Yorkshire Museum, Interview 2)*

Objects are often approached by archaeologists, conservators, and other heritage professionals, as repositories of information that can help us understand the past. Indeed, numerous investigation methods are being developed and scrupulously refined, while a large part of the literature is dedicated to the study of objects that aims to generate reliable information about the past, like for instance Caple's guide to different investigation methods entitled *Objects: Reluctant witnesses to the past* (2006). This scientific approach is to a large extent represented by museums that provide their audiences with opportunities to engage with the past by appealing to their intellect rather than their sentiment. For this participant, however, objects are not perceived only as sources of information, but also experienced as tangible links with people. It is shown that physical encounters with objects may take very personal dimensions, experienced almost as encounters with individuals who owned or used them in the past. This dual effect of objects (emotional and intellectual) is also present throughout a collection of autobiographical essays called *Evocative Objects: Things we think with* (Turkle 2007) where people from various disciplines ranging from artists to scientists consider objects either as a means of connecting emotional worlds or as provocations to thought.

As previously explained, in the *Conservation in Focus* exhibition at the British Museum there was no quantitative data available. Therefore the analysis below concerns purely qualitative data that consists of respondents' references relevant to the theme of access, decision-making and participation. In many respects, the responses in the *Conservation in Focus* case differ from the other case studies mainly due to the data collection instruments and methods employed, but also due to the particular nature of the event itself. Overall, the responses here were more focused on the

specific objects and techniques rather than on issues relating to conservation ethics.

Many participants suggested that the exhibition's main aim was to inform them about something new and unfamiliar such as conservation treatments.

> *Because it's something which is unfamiliar, because I liked...I was interested in the last statement I think on the text which is that the indigo production is now no longer remembered where it was made, so there's something quite mysterious about it in that respect. Parts of the tradition are comparatively recent tradition, which has already been lost.*
>
> *(Male, British Museum, Interview 33)*

> *Yeah I wouldn't have know how you'd...I didn't really know bark cloth existed, but I wouldn't have known how you go about cleaning it or anything, or what you do to repair the holes or anything like that so yeah.*
>
> *(Male, British Museum, Interview 31)*

> *Well [they put up this exhibition] to show people what they're doing behind the scenes I think, and you know maybe teach people something.*
>
> *(Female, British Museum, Interview 27)*

> *[They put up this exhibition] to inform us a bit more.*
>
> *(Female, British Museum, Interview 48)*

There were differences regarding the perception of the visiting experience depending on the different levels of familiarity with the subject and the course of the discussion held with conservators.

> *There's nothing really to add to that kind of thing. The whole experience is nice to actually see a lot of the stuff that's...a lot of the stuff in person, the kind of things that you would read about, to actually see them, see the scale and so on. But beyond that it's an academic study, it's just a process, it's not like I walked into here, and had a sudden revelation!*
>
> *(Male, British Museum, Interview 23)*

> *- So you think it has probably given you sort of a deeper insight into the museum as a whole rather than just the collections?*
> *- No no no I wouldn't go that far because like I said it was very much centred on the specifics of this particular analysis that is all.*
>
> *(Male, British Museum, Interview 2)*

> *Well its simple isn't it? It's simple for you to understand. There's a crack, there's a break. This is how we fix it.*
>
> *(Male, British Museum, Interview 13)*

> *She told me that when the first female sculptures were done in Greek times that there was shock, and it was like new art you know. I didn't know that. They'd got used to it by the first Century AD.*
>
> *(Male, British Museum, Interview 14)*

Physical access was again here perceived as an exciting element of the event by many of the participants.

> *I just had a bit of a talk by one of the organics conservators, and she let us have a sort of feel of the example of the bark cloth, which is great, because you can't normally touch it, so...*
>
> *(Female, British Museum, Interview 22)*

> *I like hands on exhibits, and I was curious what they were doing here.*
>
> *(Male, British Museum, Interview 34)*

Intellectual access was also greatly appreciated by several participants who viewed conservation as a specialists' field.

> -Well I think people visiting the exhibition they're, there are normal people coming to see the various different rooms, but I think people who are perhaps more interested in specialist things would probably come in
> -Come into this room?
> - I think the people who would probably involve themselves in conservation, or they were interested in that particular subject would go in. I don't think people who would come in on tourism would...
> -Would enter this room? Because of the size of the room or...?
> - No I don't think it's a tourist room. I think it's a specialised thing really, for people who would be more conscious of this sort of thing, wouldn't you? I don't think people come, the coach parties.
>
> <div align="right">(Male, British Museum, Interview 39)</div>

In the Knole House case study, similar themes were identified. In the quote shown below, it was mentioned that the conservation process becomes increasingly interesting for people when they find out more about it.

> The more you learn, the more interesting it is.
>
> <div align="right">(Female, 51-64, UK visitor, Knole House, Questionnaire 37)</div>

The above quotation is a particularly interesting expression as it perhaps hints towards the problem of attributing causality between the concurrently measured interest and perceived importance of conservation discussed in Chapter 5 (see Section 5.5 in particular).

Moreover, as suggestions and ideas for improving the event, the following were proposed by participants (spontaneously on this particular theme) in relation to access.

> For Knole to have its own conservation centre on site allowing access for visitors to observe the work as it is being done.
>
> <div align="right">(Female, 36-50, UK visitor, Knole House, Questionnaire 83)</div>

> The more can be shown to the general public the better. To show exactly how much work goes into such projects helps people to appreciate it.
>
> <div align="right">(Female, Over 64, UK visitor, Knole House, Questionnaire 70)</div>

> Have a conservation/what work is in progress leaflet explaining all the work going on in one place.
>
> <div align="right">(Female, 51-64, UK visitor, Knole House, Questionnaire 61)</div>

In the *Conservation Galleries* at the Ashmolean Museum, based on some responses, it is evident that it was not clear what the current principles in the conservation field are, how interventions are decided, and by whom.

> So is it up to a conservationist now to say "Oh we have to put the white back in!" Is that a good thing to do? It's a question! I don't know!
>
> <div align="right">(Female, 36-50, Ashmolean Museum, UK visitor)</div>

> Is there not some sort of board or institution that does this? So people have to ask permission to do these things like restoring objects?
>
> <div align="right">(Female, 16-25, Ashmolean Museum, UK visitor)</div>
> My question to you then... how do they decide? How far do you go?
>
> <div align="right">(Female, 36-50, Ashmolean Museum, Local visitor)</div>

A significant number of respondents expressed discontent with the lack of adequate information on conservation in museums. Before their visit to the galleries, several people felt they viewed objects in museum displays without being in a position to understand and evaluate what they were shown.

> *It is hard to tell when an exhibition presents original pieces.*
> *(Male, 26-35, Ashmolean Museum, International visitor)*

> *You know because when you look at that little sculpture, you know it's a nice little sculpture but then you see you know how precisely someone repaired the hand, repaired the arm. Because I couldn't tell!*
> *(Female, 36-50, Ashmolean Museum, International visitor)*

> *[…] I haven't thought about it too much but I suppose all the objects are treated in some way before I see them. It doesn't make me feel great...*
> *(Male, 36-50, Ashmolean Museum, UK visitor)*

> *[The galleries made me think that] what we can see has been limited and we often even don't have any idea about it.*
> *(Female, 16-25, Ashmolean Museum, International visitor)*

Some respondents believe that members of the public (non-experts) are not in a position to take part in decision-making because they are either not well informed, not in a position to make sound judgments, or do not have an appropriate level of education.

> *No, I don't think so. Because the general audience... they are not well informed, you know, about history. Or they are not well educated. But if the decision was made by art historians, conservators and the managing people that would be ideal.*
> *(Male, 51-64, Ashmolean Museum, International visitor)*

There were also several respondents who agreed with the above but also believed that it is the duty of conservators to be transparent with people about their work.

> *I don't know if it would be wise to involve people in the decision making because if you haven't studied it you might... I think you need to be more informed to make these decisions. So I think conservators have an obligation to inform the public of any alterations, if any, have been made so when they look at an object in museum and there has been some restoration then I think people should be told so they are aware of how objects deteriorate and how those involved have been conserving them.*
> *(Female, 16-25, Ashmolean Museum, UK visitor)*

Furthermore, a view shared by many respondents is that everyone should have the right to decide regarding the conservation of material culture because the perceive heritage assets as the common property of all humankind. At the same time, however, the majority appears hesitant when facing the prospect of practical implementations of this notion.

> *I think it goes back to who owns the object. I mean we own the object, you know, the planet owns the object somehow, or us as the species own the object. It's a human object. We own it. So all should have some say on how it's looked after. So in theory everyone should have a say. That's my philosophical position. How you do that in practice is much harder... Because most people just don't have the capability to make good judgments...*
> *(Male, 36-50, Ashmolean Museum, Local visitor)*

> *I mean I wouldn't like to have to make those decisions, because it's... it's tough!*
> *(Female, 36-50, Ashmolean Museum, UK visitor)*

Some also suggested that it should be the conservators' responsibility to provide enough background for the public to have a say and make informed decisions.

> *I think the professionals know best what can be done or how things might turn out. But I also think the public should have some say... but because we don't know, we don't understand, we don't know what we are seeing... that's why I'm saying if there was some way of knowing on every article how much of it had been restored, we'd have some feeling of when it should be done and when it shouldn't be done... something like that, you know, to at least have some input.*
>
> *(Male, 36-50, Ashmolean Museum, UK visitor)*

It was also proposed that highlighting and explaining conservation to visitors should become part of the museum's role, while arguably the *Conservation Galleries* played an important role in the formation of this view.

> *It [conservation] is not usually brought to the fore - that is, I am aware that it happens but it isn't a primary consideration when I look at exhibits. It should be highlighted more!*
>
> *(Female, 26-35, Ashmolean Museum, UK visitor)*

> *It [the exhibition] made me realise this topic needs more attention in museums.*
>
> *(Female, 36-50, Ashmolean Museum, International visitor)*

> *I think visitors can't decide at the moment because they are not given enough information. So we don't know what has been fixed... I don't know! I go around the museum and I see all this nice stuff and I don't know what has been fixed and what hasn't been fixed. […] I don't think there is anyway for me as the public to actually know. I don't know what procedures... I've no idea!*
>
> *(Male, 36-50, Ashmolean Museum, UK visitor)*

7.3 Views on Decision-making and Participation

One of the divergent points in the usual analogy of heritage conservation with medical practice is that, unlike in medicine, conservation takes into account both the tangible and the intangible significance of the object under treatment and also incorporates information from consultation with interest groups in order to reach a conservation decision (Pye 2001, 25). However, as discussed in the intellectual framework, defining what the interest groups are, which individuals they comprise, and even more finding productive avenues for their involvement in the decision-making process may often present a significant challenge.

In this study, participants in the surveys undertaken in three out of four case studies were asked to state *their* views on who, in their opinion, should be able to participate in decision-making regarding heritage conservation, by responding to a closed question including the options: conservation professionals, local people, central authorities (government), local authorities, visitors, volunteers. They were able to select more than one option and could also specify any additional stakeholder/decision maker they might consider as an appropriate answer.
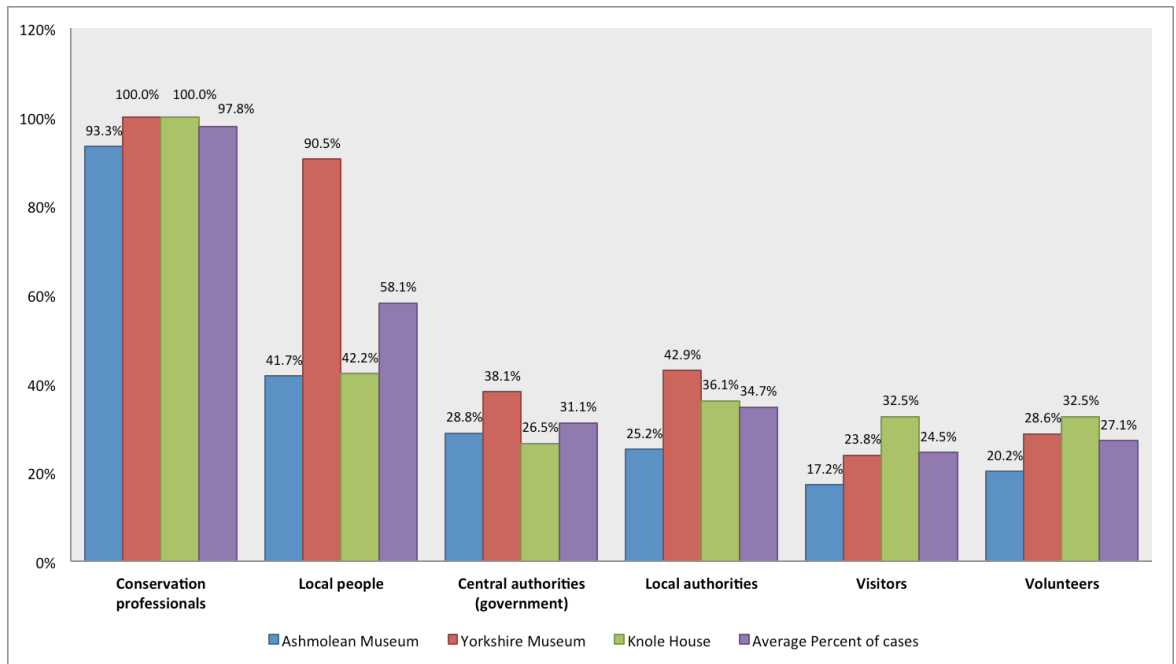
Figure 41 Visitors' views on who should take part in decision-making regarding conservation (average valid percent calculated based on valid percent per case study)

On average, with the exception of the British Museum for which only qualitative data was available, the overwhelming majority of participants (97.8%) responded that conservation professionals should be taking part in the decision-making, while more than half (58.1%) of the respondents also believed that local people should be able to have their say in the process. The options of local authorities (34.7%) and the government (31.1%) were not particularly popular among respondents. Thus, on average, according to the respondents' opinion, the primary decision-makers should be conservation professionals, and secondarily local people should be involved directly and not through representation.

What is surprising with these findings, however, is that the option of visitors as participants in decision-making (which was the group that all respondents belonged to while the survey was carried out) was selected only by a relatively low percentage (24.5%). This option was, in fact, the least selected one among all available options. Surprisingly small was also the proportion of people who chose the option according to which volunteers should also take part in decision-making (27.1%).

As stated above, these findings represent respondents' views on average. A case study specific quantitative analysis in combination with qualitative data was carried out to identify any context-dependent differences and similarities that will enable a more meaningful interpretation of the results and to gain a better overall understanding of these findings. The quantitative analysis is detailed in Appendix V. The following is a discussion based mainly on the qualitative analysis.

Conservation Workshop, Yorkshire Museum

In the conservation workshop at the case study, all respondents agreed that conservation professionals should be in a position to make such decisions (100%). Moreover, the vast majority

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of respondents also indicated that local people should also be involved (90.5%). The government (38.1%) and the local authorities (42.9%) were considered to be suitable participants in the decision-making by several respondents. The lowest percentages corresponded to the participation of volunteers (28.6%) and visitors (23.8%).

Compared to the average, the percentage of the conservation professionals' option was a marginal 2.2% higher in this case. The most striking deviation was the percentage of the local people option that in this case was higher than the average by a significant 32.4%. The local authorities option was also higher by 8.2%. This deviation could perhaps be attributed to the local character of the Yorkshire Museum audience and the fact that it probably attracts more local participants to events like the workshop (in comparison to the visitors in the other case studies). The government option was also higher in this case by 7%. Finally, the percentage of visitors was slightly lower than the average by 0.7% and the percentage of volunteers slightly higher by 1.5%.

There appears to be a degree of inconsistency in this data in comparison to the responses participants gave regarding what constitutes good practice in conservation, where more than half indicated that the 'public' should be *involved* in conservation but only 23.8% said that visitors should be involved in the decision-making. Moreover, the respondents' own participation in the workshop in combination with their expressed preferences for holding more extensive and more frequent events of this type to get more people involved, is an additional contradiction. This contradiction can perhaps be explained through this particular response during an interview.

> *I think it would get people more interested if they could participate in conservation. Part of me… you know. Part of people are clever… but part of people are not clever. They they… I don't know. You get a group of people together and then they suddenly stop being able to think properly. So yes I think experts definitely need overall control, but the ability of people to be involved I think… You know, because conservation seems very remote, it's not something people even think about. You know, they just see objects in a museum and they don't know… […] the whole concept of conservation is very alien you know, if people don't know anything about it at all. So I think getting people involved is better if people could be involved in actually helping conserve items, to help clean them if necessary that would be great. But I think there does need to be someone with an expert eye to overlook them and make sure they are not doing anything wrong, but also to make sure that objects aren't overlooked, that stuff that people get really excited about to get conserved, but stuff that people don't [get excited about], get conserved as well.*
> *(Female, 26-35, UK visitor, Yorkshire Museum, Interview 2)*

Participation is seen here as a way of inspiring the interest of people in conservation, which is positively evaluated as an approach. However, the respondent here makes two important points. The first point is that 'people' (non-experts), are not always able or informed well enough about conservation and thus not in a position to participate actively in the conservation process or the decisions. The second point made here concerns the hierarchy in the decision-making process. According to this view, experts should have the leading role and manage both what gets conserved and also how. Looking at the rungs on Arnstein's ladder of citizen participation (1969, 217) (see Chapter 2), the approach suggested here can be characterised as tokenism or even non-participation. It is surprising that this approach is proposed by a non-expert, or in Arnstein's

terminology a 'have-not', as one would expect that this group of people would be keen to take a more dynamic stance on claiming their stake, and is probably also adopted by many other respondents as the contradictory quantitative data suggests.

Conservation in Focus exhibition, British Museum

Several respondents perceived their visit as an educational experience, an opportunity for informal learning.

> *Because it's wonderful, it's educational, and when you look at a piece of sculpture just on it's on [sic] you don't necessarily get the richness of you know somebody working on it, and it's a privilege to be able to interrupt somebody working.*
>
> *(Male, British Museum, Interview 14)*

> *I think [they put up this exhibition] to give people a better understanding of actually what goes on in the museum and it is not just about displaying the objects it's about sort of keeping them for us now and generations to come really, and learning and research.*
>
> *(Unknown gender, British Museum, Interview 1)*

> *- And what do you think you get out of visiting this room?*
> *- Just learning more. Just for my own interest, learning.*
>
> *(Female, British Museum, Interview 29)*

However, the exhibition mainly focused on demonstrating techniques and objects, without discussing principles, practical or ethical dilemmas that conservators face. Consequently, participants did not refer to issues around the complexity of decision-making, arguably because the nature of the event did not encourage thinking critically about conservation issues. The above is a key finding for museum professionals, as it demonstrates that the rationale behind planning an exhibition or other type of event including the element of participative engagement can make a significant difference in terms of the impact or the affective process for the participants.

> *- Well just how they were conserving it basically? We didn't realise all they were using was a dry sponge. We thought they'd have to use some sort of cleaning material but they don't at all do they?*
> *- Did you ask any of the staff questions, or did you talk to any of the staff?*
> *- Yeah we asked the young lady there how they were cleaning it and what they used, and that's how we found out, they just use a dry sponge that's all.*
>
> *(Male, British Museum, Interview 24)*

> *- What have you personally learnt from an exhibition like this then? Anything in particular, has it taught you something new?*
> *- No I would like to know quite how they use lasers, I can't imagine how lasers can help in anything, I thought lasers were destructive, so there must be something useful that I don't know.*
>
> *(Male, British Museum, Interview 7)*

> *I now know more that that's what they do with restoration in terms of anything that has been repaired, and the old adhesive going a horrible colour, and how they remove it and they fill it in with a new one but obviously as she said you can still remove it quite easily as well.*
>
> *(Male, British Museum, Interview 11)*
> *- And what do you think you'll take of being in his room today? What do you think you'll take out of being in here?*
> *- That's a good question. Information to store away for another day. You never know.*
> *Something that you can use in the future basically?*
> *- Yes. Yes that's right. Knowledge isn't something you get for a reason. You never know what you need it for. Serendipity!*
>
> *(Male, British Museum, Interview 32)* 168

It is highlighted in the report (and its title: *I feel included*) that the exhibition invoked the sense of inclusiveness. However even though it enabled interaction with the conservators at work, there was no actual possibility of participation in decision-making or consideration of this prospect.

> *- I think it is trying to add a personal connection to some of the pieces in the museum and give people a deeper understanding of what it takes to conserve and stuff, what it means historically.*
> *- Do you think it gives you, changes the way you feel about the museum as a whole and about the exhibits and also about the staff that work here, does it give you a whole new perception on that would you say?*
> *- Oh yes I think it is great, I like all the, I think it is definitely, gives you a better understanding, personal connection, I think it is well worth it to have this kind of stuff.*
> <div align="right">(Male, British Museum, Interview 53)</div>

> *- And why do you think the British Museum has put on this exhibition?*
> *- To explain how it's being done.*
> <div align="right">(Female, British Museum, Interview 51)</div>

Moreover, it is evident throughout participants' expressions that there was almost complete lack of debate and critique it this event.

> *And why do you think the museum puts on this exhibition on do you think?*
> *M: Because lots of people are asking how the reconstruction of the pieces was made.*
> <div align="right">(Male, British Museum, Interview 38)</div>

> *Well when I went there, what attracted me immediately was the photographs, and it just showed you cracks, it showed you different faults, and immediately I just thought well that's what they're doing, they're fixing the cracks and the faults. I just was looking, I saw the lot on the last statue. The lady there, she's got white whatever it is, she's filling up the cracks, I thought that's interesting to see that. And the man was explaining the history of it. He said it was from the First Century and something like that, so that was interesting.*
> <div align="right">(Male, British Museum, Interview 13)</div>

It appears that visitors to this exhibition tended to assume the role of passive viewers of a performance, almost like in museum theatre. In the literature, museum theatre has been discussed as a form of communication with visitors through drama, exploring its capacity for making museum subjects engaging, as well as for its educational value (see for example Hughes 1998).

> *I like it. I liked being here, because everything's so up close. It's not like you're watching chefs in a distant kitchen in some restaurant. It's...they're very up close. There's just that small little thing of glass between you and them, they're able to reach over, and hand you examples of things, which I thought was good.*
> <div align="right">(Male, British Museum, Interview 40)</div>

> *I was just standing there, and he was talking to somebody else. Then I asked him a question and we just chatted about what he's doing and so on. It was very interesting.*
> <div align="right">(Male, British Museum, Interview 12)</div>

> *- And what information did you learn?*
> *- Not much really. It's interesting just to see anyway.*
> *- And what did you find interesting? Just seeing how they worked?*
> *- The whole thing really. Just seeing how they worked, seeing the tools they were using, watching what they were doing really.*
> <div align="right">(Male, British Museum, Interview 20)</div>

Not really. It was just really looking at the screens and just reading the bit beside just showing you what they were doing. Not a lot of detail to tell you how they were doing it. It just shows you describes what's going on.

<div align="right">(Male, British Museum, Interview 30)</div>

Through the analysis it is shown that several participants thought of themselves as ignorant and needing to be informed or educated by the professional experts (in this case the conservators), while some others mentioned that they hesitated to approach or talk to the conservators at work fearing that they might cause disruption.

- Do you think the conservators (I have been struggling to say that word all day) do you think they were good in the sense of sort of bringing information across in a level or in a way that people are able to understand them, was it easily accessible I suppose is what I am asking?
- I think so yes. Yes I think so, we heard one of them talking to a gentleman who admitted that he knew nothing, and he spent a long time talking to one of them and asking questions and she was explaining things and he seemed to really appreciate that and get an awful lot from it.

<div align="right">(Female, British Museum, Interview 10)</div>

- And what did you think about the information that you got in the room?
- I thought it was just brilliant. Well at my level, yes I think I understood
- And why do you think the British Museum has put on this exhibition?
- Well to help ignoramuses like me understand!

<div align="right">(Female, British Museum, Interview 41)</div>

- Did you talk to any of the guys over there or...?
- I felt I could've approached them if I'd like to. I had no need to
- Can I ask why? Why didn't you need to talk to them?
- Simply if I had approached any of them it would have been inane questions I'm sure. I'm not qualified to ask them the right stuff, and they probably get a bellyful of it from tourists in lighter terms of what they're doing. I think you probably need to be a little more qualified to ask them about these big structures that they're doing. For myself I would ask them questions like 'Will that light cement turn grey eventually?'

<div align="right">(Male, British Museum, Interview 36)</div>

- And were they working when you went over to them?
- Yes. I felt badly about interrupting them!

<div align="right">(Male, Interview 44)</div>

The primacy of AHD (Smith 2006) is once again present in these expressions. There is an evident tendency coming from the side of the visitors to privilege the expert view over their own, showing that the professional discourse is the dominant one. The conservators, in this case, are seen as the experts who possess the necessary knowledge. Their specialised knowledge warrants them authority over the cultural heritage material that they care for, while the role of the museum visitor is understood and fully accepted as that of the learner.

Conservation at Knole House, National Trust

In the Knole House case study, all respondents (100%) agreed that conservation professionals should participate in the process of decision-making. Moreover, a significant number of respondents indicated that local people (42.2%) and local authorities (36.1%) should also be involved, while a smaller percentage indicated that visitors (32.5%) and volunteers (32.5%) should

be able to take part in this process. Finally, fewer respondents thought that the government should be involved (26.5%). Other suggestions by individual respondents also included: 'the owner/Family', 'the National Trust/English Heritage etc.', and 'people interested to conserve and have funds outside UK'.

Compared to the average, the percentage of the conservation professionals' option was 2.2% higher also in this case study. The percentage of the local people option was significantly lower by 15.9% but that of the local authorities option was slightly higher by 1.4%. The percentage of the government option was lower than average by 4.6%. Finally, the percentage of the participants' option was higher by 8% and that of volunteers was also higher by 5.4%.

Conservation Galleries, Ashmolean Museum

In the *Conservation Galleries* case study, the vast majority of respondents (93.3%) agree that conservation professionals should participate in the process of decision-making and a significant number of respondents (41.7%) indicated that local people should also be involved. Compared to the average, the percentage of the conservation professionals option was lower in this case study by 4.5%, and that of the local people option was also lower by 16.4%. The options of local authorities (25.2%) and the government (28.8%) were relatively unpopular. Compared to the average, the percentage of the local authorities option is lower in this case study by 9.5% and that of the government option by 2.3%. While on average the local authorities option was more popular than the government option, in this case the percentage of the government option is slightly higher than that of the local authorities option. Only a low percentage (17.2%) responded that visitors should be able to take part in this process, while the percentage of respondents who selected the option of volunteers was also characteristically low (20.2%). Compared to the average, the percentage of the visitors option is lower by 7.3% and lower than that of the volunteers option by 6.9%.

To summarize, in the *Conservation Galleries* case study respondents believe that the main decision makers should be conservation professionals, while both local people and the local authorities are significantly less likely than on average to be considered as suitable participators in the process. This deviation could perhaps be attributed to the international character of the Ashmolean Museum (in comparison to the other case studies) both in terms of the collections it houses and its visitors. Therefore, one could conclude that local people and local authorities are perhaps not seen by most respondents as stakeholders in the heritage material housed in the museum. What is more interesting perhaps is how high the percentage of local people is compared to other groups such as visitors and volunteers. The fact that it was not thought that visitors group should have a stake is surprising firstly because the respondents were visitors themselves. Furthermore, a significant percentage (44.9%) of the respondents did not define themselves as being from the United Kingdom but from other places in the world, while only a small percentage (10.2%) considered themselves to be local to Oxford. Secondly, by definition visitors as a group consists of people who

spend time, effort and some of them also money, in order to learn about and enjoy the museum's collections, and so undoubtedly they have an interest in them. Similarly, volunteers too are individuals who consciously choose to spend time and effort to undergo training and provide unpaid services to the museum. Therefore, regardless of their motivations for doing so, it is striking that most respondents did not consider that these groups have a role in in the decision-making process.

To further explore visitors' views on the theme of access and the underpinning issues, a qualitative analysis based on respondents' responses was carried out and the findings are discussed below.

To start with, one of the main messages that many respondents received from the *Conservation Galleries* exhibition was that judgments concerning the selection of appropriate conservation solutions can be subjective.

> *I consider heritage conservation as more subjective, and objects as potentially vulnerable to mistreatment.*
> *(Female, 26-35, Ashmolean Museum, UK visitor)*

> *It made me think that conservators have to consider whether to restore or leave alone.*
> *(Male, 36-50, Ashmolean Museum, Local visitor)*

Knowledge of the original object justifies participation of local people in decision-making.

> *Local people [should participate in decision-making regarding heritage conservation] only if they have knowledge of the original artefacts.*
> *(Female, 16-25, Ashmolean Museum, UK visitor)*

However, as the quantitative findings also show, it is thought that the main responsibility should rest with the professionals.

> *They have no choice. They are the professionals. Things have deteriorated so much that something needs to be done. We have to entrust all these items to their care.*
> *(Male, 51-64, Ashmolean Museum, UK visitor)*

> *You know, you have to... if your job is to preserve things then you should do it. What percentage of any civilization would be lost because it is seen to be too trivial or in such abundance that no one has to care about it, is another matter.*
> *(Male, 51-64, Ashmolean Museum, UK visitor)*

According to some, the question should not be whether the non-expert views should be considered, but rather how to appoint suitable professionals. According to them, aside from specialized knowledge and skills, the qualifications of a conservator should also comprise a mindset according to which they will decide and act based on professional pride and guardianship of the object.

> *I think there has to be a certain amount of love... Because, you know, you could conserve to attract visitors. That could be your reasoning. I think professional pride should be your yardstick. Because you know there could be all kinds of yardsticks... there could be 'this is how we've always done things' yardstick.*
> *(Female, 36-50, Ashmolean Museum, Local visitor)*

> *I think about mistakes that could be made. I mean I noticed in the exhibition this is how was preserved in the past and it damaged the item. So if you have that knowledge, if you have that historical*

knowledge of how much damage can be done and some sort of feeling as you know, where the line is. And I think a good professional, a professional with some sort of... one would assume that all professionals in conservation would encompass... would have the good of the object at heart. I don't know! Maybe all professionals have their demons, I don't know!

(Female, 36-50, Ashmolean Museum, UK visitor)

Many visitors had the opinion that conservation issues should be dealt with by highly specialized experts only, or by a group of specialists in the museum.

Sometimes you need to find the right person, not get anyone available at the museum. Particularly for some major art works you need to have experts.

(Male, 51-64, Ashmolean Museum, International visitor)

People who are well read. People who have studied it. So I suppose people who run museums but not just one person. I think everybody who is in charge of these important decisions in large museums should have that responsibility.

(Female, 16-25, Ashmolean Museum, UK visitor)

According to another suggestion, academics should also have a say on conservation matters.

I think that academics [should participate in the decision-making].

(Male, 16-25, Ashmolean Museum, Local visitor)

Politicians are also seen as playing a role in the way objects are managed (also see Bennett 1995). Most people are sceptical about their part in making decisions while some believe that politicians may decide only after consulting with conservators.

Well the conservator should make the decision but sometimes political people, politicians decide. For example Mona Lisa in the 60s, it had been sent to America and Japan for an exhibition because the ministry of culture said that, but the conservator in the Louvre said many times that it's not good... So yeah I think politics many times have an important effect on conservation. But to my mind the conservation of items is the most important thing and it should be the most important thing to know if it should be shown or not.

(Male, 26-35, Ashmolean Museum, International visitor)

Being local is not seen by some respondents as an adequate reason to have one's opinion taken into consideration. A special interest or knowledge of an object is seen as the factor that should determine whether a view should be taken into consideration.

I think local people always have an interest in how well... other people in their city or their country. So probably... yeah... somebody local or somebody you know maybe not local but who is in a place for a specific reason, maybe has a particular interest in that piece, like a student. You know, someone who is interested beyond just living there, then yeah.

(Female, 36-50, Ashmolean Museum, International visitor)

Interestingly, touching upon the subject of public image of conservation outside the context of the galleries, stories like the famously unsuccessful restoration of the *Ecce Homo* fresco in a 16th-century church in Spain was also brought up in several conversations with visitors. The dominant view was that amateur conservator should not be allowed to intervene and some even proposed that 'wrong' interventions should be penalized and considered a minor crime.

There was this lady in Spain I think... the potato Jesus head... that one. There was a woman who was restoring this really famous, really important, really old fresco of... it was an image of Jesus and she did it really badly and it now looks like a potato head. Like a child had painted over it, it's terrible! It's really sad but quite funny at the same time but now she is trying to charge money to the church for people viewing it... you know... coming to see her work... but it's very scary. I think that there should be some sort of regulation about that. Maybe to become some sort of a small crime for someone who cannot paint to take a paintbrush to an old masterpiece, or something like that.

(Female, 16-25, Ashmolean Museum, UK visitor)

A number of respondents agreed that the public's views should be heard and taken into consideration by the professionals who would come up with the final solution.

Well I think the public's opinion should be heard... I think the public should have a say but I think the ultimate decision should rest with the professionals.

(Female, 16-25, Ashmolean Museum, UK visitor)

Along the same lines, it was also suggested that the final decision should be taken by a professional who has is enthusiastic about, or has a highly developed ability to contemplate diverse views of various stakeholders before taking action.

I guess, it should be a person who has enough knowledge of, you know, the museum... museum workers… or someone who would be very keen on observing opinions of other people, not an amateur... Sometimes the amateur doing that could be a disaster. So ideally, in my point of view, it should be you know a shared decision, not a decision made by one side, because that would be more secure, more reliable.

(Male, 51-64, Ashmolean Museum, International visitor)

7.4 Conclusion

The analysis in the present chapter suggests that there are multiple understandings and experiences of access among visitors of engagement events. Physical access to heritage material, in particular, was received as a greatly enjoyable element of the events that facilitated it. Moreover, it was thought to have an educational value and to be a factor for fostering equality in terms of disability. Intellectual access to different aspects of heritage conservation was also considered enjoyable. Perhaps even more interestingly it was also mentioned that increased intellectual access to conservation sparks greater interest in it. Moreover, intellectual access was also linked to issues of transparency and was thought to be the responsibility of the conservators and the museum to facilitate it among visitors. It was also shown that both physical and intellectual access to heritage objects function as a basis for constructing powerful personal connections with the objects and their history.

It has been proposed that heritage conservation decisions (in this case as regards historic buildings), such as reconstruction, are 'political rather than scientific' (Bold & Packard 2013, 117). Thus, they involve inherent risks such as subjectivity and partiality, or may even be utility-oriented in their implementation in terms of taking into account particular interest groups while downplaying the interests of others, or serving particular political schemes (see for example issues covered in Dwyer's *Understanding social citizenship: Themes and perspectives for policy and practice* (2003). Moreover, it has also been suggested again concerning the built environment that psychological factors such as the notion of ontological security are equally important in conservation practice to political and aesthetic issues (Grenville 2007).

Arguably, similar issues also apply to movable heritage material such as objects in museum collections and even also for intangible heritage assets, raising issues of the same nature as the historical built environment, in relation to participation (see Cooke & Kothari 2001, Hickey & Mohan 2004), power, and authority in relation to knowledge (Foucault in Gordon 1980) as these are enacted through conservation engagement events taking place in the museum context.

The analysis also shows that the rationale behind the design of engagement events as well as the nature of participative engagement in them make a significant difference to the impact or affective process for their audiences. Moreover, the AHD (Smith 2006) is present throughout participants' responses concerning conservation. Clichés (platitudes) such as *'the past is important'* or *'for future generations'* and so on, are present as expressions throughout the discourse adopted by (or developed with) heritage audiences as much as in the language and thinking employed by heritage 'experts', museums, and other heritage organisations. The received orthodoxies about transmission to the future and the value of the past appear to be unchallenged or at least comfortably accepted. These findings raise the question of whether this is the affect of the dominant discourse or a more deeply held human response to time depth and the relation of past and future, which could be the subject of further exploration in future research.

Chapter 8. Conclusion

This final chapter brings together a closing discussion of the important findings of this study in order to address the research aims and objectives (see section 1.3) and answer the research questions (see section 3.2). Lessons are also drawn from the methodological approach followed as well as from the experience of designing and reviewing engagement events. Finally, in combination with what has been discussed in the intellectual framework, this chapter closes with an evaluation of the study's contribution to the literature and draws overall conclusions on the subject.

8.1 Summary of Findings and Discussion

This study has evaluated recent research and practice into the fields of conservation and museum visitor studies, it has developed a framework for assessing different modes of public engagement with conservation in the museum context, and has evaluated four contrasting engagement events on the basis of their effect on museum visitors' views concerning conservation. It has also developed a typology of engagement events (see Section 2.5) and a set of recommendations in the form of guidelines to support conservators and other heritage professionals in planning, implementing and evaluating events that aim to engage audiences with conservation (see Section 8.3).

The events that were investigated in this study were selected to explore different types of interaction between audiences and conservation. The main findings are based on mixed-methods analyses, using a total sample of 271 questionnaire responses and 63 interviews with museum visitors (see Section 3.8). Based on their format, engagement projects have been classified into categories of activity characterized by different modes of engagement without excluding the existence of additional types. The events evaluated either fall into one of these categories or are a combination of them. The case studies serve to demonstrate the impact of different types of public engagement work on museum visitors' views, as well as the way these views contribute to shaping prevalent attitudes towards conservation among heritage audiences. The sequence of this discussion follows the structure of the analyses. It commences by presenting the findings about the impact of the four events on participants' views, followed by the findings on their level of interest in conservation in relation to their perceptions of conservation's importance, and their views on good practice. This leads on to further analysis of views expressed in relation to the concepts of authenticity, originality, and integrity. The discussions of these three themes are followed by the presentation of the findings generated from analysis on the subject of access, decision-making, and participation. In addition, wherever appropriate in the framework of the study, the views of conservators, curators and engagement managers have also been incorporated and discussed. While this is not the main focus of the study, some interesting insights into professional attitudes are also revealed.

Impact on Participants' Views

In Chapter 4, the impact of the communication approaches taken in each engagement event was investigated using both qualitative and quantitative methods. The quantitative analysis of the three case studies (excluding *Conservation in Focus* at the British Museum due to lack of quantitative data), based on self-assessed changes, showed that the events have had a significant overall impact on the respondents' way of thinking More specifically, the impact measured concerned two distinct strands of views regarding: a) the condition in which museum exhibits are presented, and b) heritage conservation practice more broadly. These were intentionally broadly phrased questions (see instruments in Appendix I) in order to allow participants to express their thoughts on different issues as they experienced or considered them in the events, such as conservation and museum ethics, access, notions around authenticity, originality, and integrity, informal education, participation and so on. The analyses demonstrated that the four engagement events had an impact on the visitors' views on several different levels.

More specifically, the quantitative analysis across all case studies showed that the vast majority of respondents (89.9%) agreed that the events had impacted on their views on the condition in which museum exhibits are presented, and more than half (54.2%) were very confident about this change. The vast majority of respondents (81.8%) also agreed that the events had impacted on their views on heritage conservation, and nearly half were very confident (47.3%) about this change. Overall, the events' greatest impact measured was on the way visitors perceive the condition in which museum exhibits are presented to them, but the impact on their way of thinking about conservation itself was also considerable.

Participants reported a wide range of changes in their views regarding conservation as a process and the way this affects their understanding of museum objects. Most agreed that the events have played a role in shifting their way of thinking. Among the three case studies, the most impactful event on visitors' views on the condition in which museum exhibits are presented was the conservation workshop at the Yorkshire Museum, followed by the *Conservation Galleries* exhibition at the Ashmolean Museum, and finally Conservation at Knole House, National Trust. The most impactful event on visitors' views on heritage conservation was the *Conservation Galleries* exhibition, followed by the conservation workshop, and finally by Conservation at Knole House. Some respondents reported that the reason for indicating no perceived change was that they already considered conservation important. This is particularly relevant to the Conservation workshop as the sample was self-selected, which meant that respondents already had some interest in the subject. These findings suggest that small group workshop is the most impactful format for engaging people who already have some interest in conservation, while the thematic exhibition is the most impactful format for larger numbers of museum visitors who do not necessarily have any prior interest. A useful area for further research would be to investigate more fully the effects of participation in these two event types by measuring their impact on alternative strands of views.

Participants expressed generally positive attitudes towards the attempts of the museums to educate them about conservation issues and were generally very appreciative of the opportunity to find out more about an aspect of the museum that they, in their own words, previously ignored or had very little access to both physically and intellectually. The qualitative analysis indicates that overall heritage conservation remains a largely unfamiliar and unexplored domain to many. Simultaneously however, the subject of heritage conservation intrigues and excites visitors not professionally involved in it, appealing to their curiosity and imagination, perhaps due to the fact that it is still perceived, and often also branded, as a 'behind the scenes' activity, involving investigative methods to reveal 'hidden secrets' of the past. Also, participants generally showed signs of developing a critical understanding of the role of conservation in shaping the form and meaning of heritage objects while mostly expressing negative views towards restoration and more positive towards preventive conservation. It was shown that all four events significantly impacted on raising respondents' levels of esteem for the work of conservators and recognition of its importance. In several cases, the realisation that museum objects are treated by conservators gave rise to some controversial feelings that simultaneously involved appreciation and suspicion, to the level of distrust at times, with regard to conservation and museum ethics.

> *I think I realised there is more smoke and mirrors than I had realised before... I haven't thought about it too much but I suppose all the objects are treated in some way before I see them. It doesn't make me feel great...*
>
> *(Male, 36-50, UK visitor, Ashmolean Museum)*

Respondents reported that this increased awareness had impacted on their experience of visiting museums in general, by adding another layer of meaning to the objects to be viewed in the future, as respondents would from then on examine exhibits for signs of treatment such as repair or restoration.

> *When I am next at a museum, I will consider how the exhibits are presented and whether I agree with what they have done. Before I wouldn't consider this at all.*
> *(Female, 26-35, Local visitor, Yorkshire Museum, Questionnaire 2)*

This critical stance and significant change of perspective manifested themselves most prominently among respondents at the *Conservation Galleries*, and less at the conservation workshop and the British Museum. They were rarely present in the data from Knole House. It is suggested that these particular findings provide important insights into what public engagement with conservation is about and may form the basis for further exploration of what it may mean both for the 'general public' and for those professionally involved in it. As visitors get more accustomed to the 'behind the scenes' hype, conservation work may become more visible but at the same time also more exposed. Visitors will learn to look for signs of treatment or even environmental control, and begin to question what they see by critically approaching ethics and practice in conservation and museology. A useful analogy to explore the consequences of this in the heritage context would be to consider the developments in the food industry during the recent years. Just as people now expect

to understand more about the way food is produced and processed in manufacture for consumption, public engagement with conservation may signify a more critical climate of cultural consumption, such as for example in the comment suggesting that museums should adopt a scale system to inform visitors about the degree of intervention.

Level of Interest in Conservation, Perceived Importance and Views on Good Practice

Chapter 5 examined participants' level of interest in conservation, their perceptions of conservation's importance, and their views on what actions may constitute good practice. It was shown that the vast majority of participants in the study were not involved in conservation-related professions, and thus all findings concern members of the 'heritage audience'. Among this particular group of people, the analyses suggest that there is considerable interest in heritage conservation and a positive disposition to find out more about it through engagement events, based on the fact the majority of participants in the study stated that they either are already very interested in the subject of conservation or that they would like to discover more about it. More specifically, across the three case studies on average, more than half of the respondents (51.8%) indicated that they were 'very interested' in conservation, while a significant percentage (37.9%) indicated that they 'would be more interested if they knew more about conservation'.

Findings also suggest that as a professional practice, heritage conservation is held in very high esteem among most museum visitors. Specifically, on average, the majority (60.9%) considered conservation 'very important', and an additional large percentage thinks it is 'important' (32.9%). In addition, the analysis of the values in Chapter 5 allows us to understand better the significances for museum audiences that are encompassed in the notion of 'importance'. Based on the participants' accounts, the reasons for this considerable attachment of importance to conservation encompass a rich and diverse range of factors. One of the most prominent reasons relates to the sense of responsibility towards future generations, as well as the sense of duty towards ancestors, for a sense of continuity between past, present and future that provides meaning to contemporary life. These ideas are considered to form the basis for forging the ideals of unity and solidarity based on a common past shared by humankind. Another important factor that emerged from participants' qualitative accounts relates to the construction and reinforcement of national or cultural identities as well as a sense of self. For many respondents, conservation is important because it gives them perspective to define our contemporary culture as well as the ability to evaluate contemporary achievements in contrast with those of the past. Conservation is also seen as a way to resist the destructive effects in the name of progress and helps tackle the fear of loss and change which often tied together with feelings of nostalgia, a need to keep a record of history, the desire to preserve traditional skills, and to promote values such as patience and hard work which are recognised almost as inherent virtues of conservators. This represents a complex area of the research findings as the data collection instrument was not designed specifically to investigate visitors' values in that sense, but nonetheless, the analysis shows that this aspect would repay more detailed investigation.

The analysis of views on good practice suggests that visitors incline towards a preventive approach to conservation as opposed to more interventive actions that interfere with the preservation state of an object. More specifically, across the three case studies it was shown that the majority considers the following as good practice: taking preventive measures for future preservation (80.8%), stabilising the present condition (75.1%), recording the present condition (68.4%).

Additionally, findings again suggest that restoration is currently not a particularly well-received approach among museum visitors. There is a sense expressed that good practice also involves assessing an object's values (48.4%), cleaning (41.7%), and restoring an object to its original appearance (33.4%), but few (9.2%) respondents believe that it involves the addition of new elements in order to improve an object.

Museum visitors appear to favour the idea of professionals 'informing the public' (60.3%). It is viewed as important for reasons of education and raising awareness; transparency; inclusion; and finally, financial sustainability of the profession (even though this particular aspect was also approached with scepticism). Surprisingly, while 'informing the public' appears to be preferred and considered important by participants, this is not the case for 'involving the public' in conservation work and decision-making. This particularly interesting finding is further discussed below.

This sense of hesitation for the public to be more actively involved rather than simply informed is perhaps unexpected in the context of the rapid recent growth in opportunities for participation in heritage conservation through volunteering. In the most recent Taking Part 2015/16 statistical release, it is indicated that volunteering is a steadily growing form of public involvement, presenting a strong potential for engagement with the heritage sector. Specifically, almost a quarter of adults reported that they had taken part in voluntary activities in the last 12 months, a similar proportion to 2005/06 and 2014/15 findings, while the proportion of adults who volunteered in DCMS sectors has increased from 7.0 percent in 2005/06 to 7.9 percent in 2015/16 (DCMS 2016). In terms of public involvement in conservation, there are numerous examples of schemes that provide opportunities for outreach, learning, and volunteering. Two representative examples are the conservation work at Tyntesfield house and estate in North Somerset, and the conservation of the Great East Window at York Minster, both supported by the HLF. Supporting and encouraging volunteering activity is embedded in HLF Policy Directions (2014) and the number of volunteering opportunities is a measure of performance for supported projects (see HLF 2002, 38). Moreover, in *HLF Evaluation: Good practice guidance* volunteered time is outlined as an outcome in relation to which projects will be evaluated (HLF 2012, 4) and the number of volunteers involved in a project is set as one of the fundamental starting points for the post-completion project evaluation (HLF 2012, 6). In the *HLF Volunteering: good-practice guidance*, volunteering is described as a 'vibrant expression of active citizenship' and 'a powerful force for social change' (HLF 2013, 4). The impact of this HLF policy has been an increasing and diverse range of opportunities for public participation in heritage

projects. Thus, it surprising that the respondents in this study overall expressed reluctance towards participation and indicated their preference towards a more passive role – that of being *informed* by the 'experts'. A possible explanation may be that participation in decision-making is felt more as a responsibility of the experts and less as a right of the non-experts (see related discussion in section 2.2). This possibility is indeed an interesting area that may warrant further interdisciplinary research.

Through the cross-examination of the elements examined in this chapter one statistically significant correlation was identified between respondents' level of interest in conservation and its perceived importance. Based on the combined data from all three case studies, the Pearson's correlation test showed that there is a statistically significant positive correlation between respondents' level of interest in conservation and the level of its perceived importance, r =.38 (p<0.01). This is a useful confirmation of what one might anticipate that if people are interested in something then they will think it is also important. This finding clearly demonstrates the significance of public engagement with conservation as the way to move from awareness about the work of conservators towards genuine appreciation and valuing of the conservation profession. The correlation was also found to be statistically significant in both the Ashmolean Museum and the Knole case studies when these were individually examined but was not tested for the Yorkshire Museum event due to the small size of the sample. Moreover, the cross-cutting analysis also suggests that dramatic interventions such as restoration spark interest in conservation while preventive conservation could be a disengaging theme for engagement events.

A significantly high percentage (60.3%) considers 'informing the public' as good practice in conservation. Simultaneously, however, a comparatively low percentage (34.1%) thinks the same about 'involving the public'. It is encouraging to find that the majority of museum visitors want to be informed by professionals about conservation. The qualitative analysis showed that in fact many consider it part of a conservator's role to do so. At the same time, however, approximately three out of four respondents would prefer not to be involved in the process. This suggests a preference of museum visitors for a top-down approach to public engagement with conservation, where the experts have the responsibility of making their work transparent and accessible but not necessarily inclusive or participatory. Moreover, the cross-cutting analysis shows that the prevalent attitude of 'informing the public' but not 'involving' it is dominant both among professionals and visitors; and no apparent connection was observed between views on good practice and perceptions around the importance of conservation.

These findings provide an indicative record of the current views of museum visitors on what conservation activities should involve and could potentially be used as a starting point for designing specifically targeted engagement events and measuring their impact. Conservation practitioners and organisations could usefully employ these findings to inform their work and to establish more

effective communication with museum visitors. A set of guidelines for designing engagement events is also devised as a practical contribution to the sector (see Section 8.3).

Finally, variations among the case studies were not considered significant enough to draw conclusions on the differences between the events in terms of their impact on the level of visitors' interest in conservation, its perceived importance, and visitors' perceptions of good practice. In the case of the Yorkshire Museum case study there were some observable differences but due to the small sample size, it was decided that there is not adequate evidence to draw a conclusion from a comparative examination.

Views on Authenticity, Originality and Integrity

Chapter 6 discusses participants' views on the concepts of authenticity, originality, and integrity. In this analysis, the relativity of the concept of authenticity was demonstrated through the plurality of views captured over its meaning in relation to the concept of originality and also touching upon the educational and aesthetic value of physical integrity as well as the implications of restoration. While participants often use authenticity and originality as separate concepts, in several cases the terms are used interchangeably as synonyms or suggest links between them. The analysis focused on the various uses and perceptions of the terms separately although it is emphasised that there are several overlapping areas, making the complexity of defining these concepts as used by participants all the more evident.

The qualitative analysis revealed that notions around these concepts play a significant role in the experience of the museum visitor. It was also shown that there are various acceptable limits for interventions that are not necessarily based on particular lines of argument or a specific philosophical approach to conservation. Notions around the concepts of authenticity, originality, integrity possibly also underlie the motivations of people for museum visiting. The findings also suggest that views on conservation treatments and preferences for more dramatic interventions, such as restoration, depend both on cultural differences and on what people are accustomed to encounter when viewing heritage objects in the museum environment. This becomes all the more evident when considering that visitors' views analysed in this study were captured in contexts with an international outlook, such as the Ashmolean Museum and the British Museum that host collections from various cultures and civilizations and attract visitors from around the globe, but also in museum contexts that attract more local visitors like Knole and the Yorkshire Museum.

It was also shown that museum audiences do deliberate and debate complex conservation issues: the dilemmas they reflect on are very close to the historical and contemporary debates held among heritage 'experts'. As described above, the analysis demonstrated that visitors' notions in relation to conservation treatments differ according to their cultural background and previous experiences of viewing cultural heritage material. However, theoretical debates about the principles and ethics of

conservation and restoration that have been taking place for centuries among 'heritage experts' can readily be traced in participants' responses. For example, concerns are expressed around the notions of authenticity and originality, the nature and purpose of interventions to the fabric, debates around restoration and conservation, access and damage, and so on. Clearly, what has been considered as a specialists' domain, is not only understood and accessed intellectually by heritage audiences but can also be interesting and engaging for them and consequently potentially transforming for conservation theory and practice.

Access, Decision-making, and Participation

Chapter 7 discussed the issues of access, decision-making and participation. The analysis suggested that there are multiple understandings and experiences of access among visitors of engagement events. It was striking how clearly physical access to heritage material is highlighted by participants as the most enjoyable aspect of their experience. Moreover, it was thought to have an educational value and to be a factor for fostering equality in terms of disability. Intellectual access to different aspects of heritage conservation was also considered enjoyable. Perhaps even more interestingly, but not surprisingly, it was also mentioned that increased intellectual access to conservation sparks greater interest in it. Moreover, intellectual access was also linked to issues of transparency and it was thought to be the responsibility of the conservators and the museum to facilitate it among visitors. As significant finding was that both physical and intellectual access to heritage objects function as a basis for constructing powerful personal connections with the objects and their history. Finally, it was shown that the rationale behind the design of engagement events, as well as the nature of participative engagement in them, make a significant difference to the impact or affective process for their audiences.

Insights into Professional Attitudes

Finally, while this study was focused on museum visitors, it also reveals an important insight into aspects of professional views and attitudes towards public engagement. From the examination of the views of conservators involved in designing or delivering engagement events, a number of different perspectives were offered, ranging from openly critical to highly enthusiastic. For some, public engagement is a vital part of their professional role while others consider communicating as an obstruction or interruption in performing their main role.

The cross-cutting analysis showed that 'informing the public' but not 'involving' them is not only a dominant attitude among heritage 'audiences', but also among those participants who identified themselves as heritage 'experts'. In addition, a form of AHD (Smith 2006) was traced throughout participants' responses in relation to conservation across all themes. Clichéd expressions such as 'the past is important' or 'for future generations' and so on, appear throughout the discourse adopted by (or developed with) 'audiences' as much as in the language and thinking employed by professionals, museums, and other heritage organisations. This might suggest that a tokenistic

approach to public participation in cultural heritage conservation, or at least an uncritical approach to understanding the complexity of motivations for participation, underlie some public engagement work, or may be cultivated and reinforced through it.

8.2 Research Evaluation and Implications for the Future

The first aim of this research study was to develop an appropriate research methodology to evaluate the impact of engagement projects designed to introduce conservation practice and ethics to 'non-specialist' heritage audiences in the museum environment. Researching public engagement was particularly challenging methodologically, mainly because the impact an experience has on a person's views and attitudes is very difficult to assess through a single research study. For that reason, it was decided to employ a mixed-method approach in the development of research design, in order to capture and investigate as many aspects as possible in as a systematic way as possible, by combining both quantitative and qualitative methods for data collection and analyses. Generally speaking, this approach was found to be a valuable one and successful for the aims of this study: it allowed for a certain degree of flexibility in approaching each event and at the same it generated multiple findings that highlight a plurality of themes in relation to this broad field while usefully identifying areas that need further and more specifically focused investigation.

The second strategic aim of this research study was to generate useful findings for the field of cultural heritage conservation, by contributing to the establishment of a platform for meaningful, equal dialogue between conservators, heritage professionals, and the general public. It is thought that the findings of this investigation on museum visitors' views on conservation, as expressed by participants in these events, can inform similar future engagement projects. Most importantly, however, the findings of this study establish some new premises, as the basis for further discussion on ways in which increased awareness of conservation work among 'heritage audiences' will affect the conservation discipline, and in considering effective plans of action for managing the consequences of these coming developments.

Due to practical constraints most visitor research, including the case studies of the present study, necessarily attempt to assess impact during or just after a museum experience. However, variables such as time and space in which the research is conducted to a large extent determine the 'picture' that is captured by a research study and its outcomes. Specifically for visitor research, it has been argued that 'museum experiences require time to be accommodated and integrated into the fabric of visitors' lives' (Falk, Dierking & Adams 2011, 330). Visitor experience or participation in other forms of public engagement events cannot be fully understood as confined simply to the time when these experiences have just occurred, as their full impact (e.g. in terms of learning, views, attitudes, well-being) may develop over time, growing in significance in retrospect as they interact with other life experiences. Reflecting on this realisation, this research study might possibly have generated

more meaningful findings if it had been feasible to conduct a longitudinal study on the effects of these events on people's views. Such as approach might usefully inform future research in this field.

8.3 Suggestions and Recommendations for Future Practice

Based on the findings of this study and the experience of investigating and reviewing museum visitors' views on conservation, it is possible to propose recommendations for future practice in this field. The following guidelines have been produced in consultation with conservation practitioners and have been fined-tuned through an additional consulting process with conservators who are involved in, or have experience of, public engagement work in the museum environment. More specifically, a set of guidelines was initially drafted mainly based on the research findings on museum visitors' views on conservation, which was gradually informed and nuanced by discussions and correspondence with conservators. These proposals were then tested and refined by further input from conservators, in the form of feedback specific to the content of the recommendations (see Appendix VI). Their focus is on the development of a framework for creating engagement projects that will facilitate effective communication between conservators and heritage audiences, through enhancing the impact on people's way of thinking about conservation.
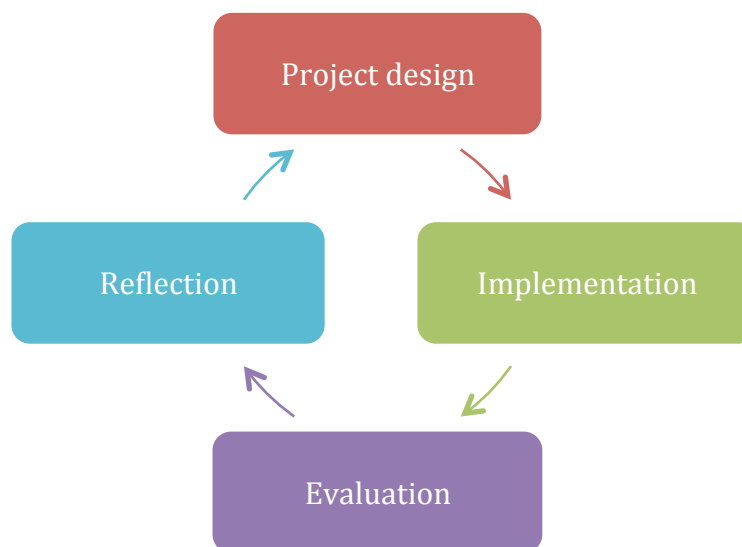
Figure 42 Schematic diagram of the stages of a public engagement project

While these recommendations are primarily intended as a practical contribution to the field of museum conservation, it is also hoped that they will stimulate an overarching discussion also among conservators who specialise in other areas, as well as critical reflection on current practices, ultimately inferring proposals for a comprehensive, methodical line of action in the sector.

A) PROJECT PLANNING

A.1. Set aims

Setting specific targets is essential for any project to be focussed and impactful. Having well thought out and clearly expressed goals is also necessary to evaluate projects in a meaningful way, against their initial intentions. This initial stage involves determining what the project aspires to achieve, regardless of its approach and character. If a project, for instance, has an educational focus, then specific intended learning outcomes should be set out. Similarly, if a project aims to achieve different goals such as increasing public interest, fostering awareness, attracting donations, encouraging participation or volunteering and so on, this should be made clear from the initial conception. Keeping within the scope of the primary objectives is essential for the duration of the project. Some examples of possible intended outcomes of projects are:

• Disseminating conservation research findings to the broadest possible audience

• Providing conservators with the opportunity to showcase their current work

• Raising the profile of the profession

• Educating audiences about the conservation process

• Inviting specific communities or the general visitor to participate in dialogue on conservation-related decisions

While maintaining a clear focus on intended outcomes throughout a project is essential, it is also advisable to have a degree of flexibility to adapt to unexpected situations and expand or alter one's goals if necessary.

A.2. Plan resources and operational factors

Setting objectives it an important part of planning and should be determined by taking into consideration some practical issues. Firstly, available resources should be identified. These may include identifying people with the right knowledge and skills, securing project funding, or deciding for alternative methods for recouping cost such as admission charge. As in any project, the budget should be carefully managed and a time frame should be set in place for liaising with museums, galleries or heritage organisations, in particular for arranging loans of specific objects, as this process may take up a lengthy period. An important consideration, particular to public engagement with conservation, is the assessment of the skills and training needs of staff. Even highly skilled and experienced conservators with substantial knowledge in their field may require specialised training to be able to communicate their expertise confidently, efficiently, and in an engaging manner to non-expert audiences.

Collaboration and co-production between conservators, educators and other members of staff is imperative (also see A.6.). Conservators should take part in every step of the project planning, and get actively involved in decisions regarding the accuracy of information, the safety of objects, and the requirements of their evolving public-facing role. While some conservators may feel very

positive about being involved in public engagement initiatives and derive a sense of professional pride from presenting their work to the public, many others appear reluctant to participate in certain types of public engagement projects, particularly when it involves them treating fragile objects in public view, as this may obstruct their work and have an adverse impact on their performance. Demonstration can also significantly increase the time of treatment.

Moreover, conservators may express concern and discomfort about working in public view laboratories or being video recorded. For instance, it has been mentioned that this may cause them to feel like 'being in a zoo' (see Shenton 2008, 134), while others may be disinclined to reveal their methods and techniques. Such concerns should be carefully considered when setting out objectives. It may be constructive to hold regular update meetings throughout the course of the project to check on progress and address any issues that may arise.

A.3. Know your audience

There are two primary considerations when it comes to making an engagement project relevant to people and impactful on their views: a) identifying the characteristics of the groups who are more likely to be the receivers or participants, and b) deciding to which particular group or groups of people it will be addressed. The content has to correspond to the group of individuals you intend to engage with, regarding language, format, breadth and depth of information, the level of interaction and potential participation (also see AIK Wiki 2014, Bickford 2010, Brooks 2011, Dawson & Jenson 2011, Falk 2011, Falk & Dierking 2000, Hooper-Greenhill 1994a; 2011, Kelly & Fitzgerald 2011, Macdonald 2005, and McCray 2010).

The first step is to identify the profile and origin of visitors or users of the environment within which the project will be actualised. Establishing information on factors such as age, level of interest in the subject area, the degree of professional involvement in heritage conservation, the level of education, cultural background, disability, and social group, is a vital step for maximising the impact of the engagement process.

Museums and heritage organisations undertake visitor / audience surveys for a number of different purposes and may be able to provide this kind of data on their visitors, sourced from previous internal or external surveys. Relevant demographic information can also be obtained from other sources such as the Office for National Statistics (ONS) or the Department for Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS). Methods for primary data collection are proposed in the HLF guidelines for evaluation, which provides a useful model. There is extensive literature on research methodology, data collection methods, and methods for data analyses that may be profitably utilised for visitor research. In addition to the literature on museum visitor studies proposed earlier in this section, there is also substantial useful guidance on research methodology more broadly (see for example Oppenheim 1992, Robson 1993, Silverman 2001; 2010, and Weiss 1994). Nonetheless, considering

working with a qualified professional consultant in market research to explore this aspect could also prove beneficial.

The second step is to determine the intended audience regarding its size, level of experience and general profile. This critical point relates to the scale of impact, as people will have different predispositions towards conservation, depending on factors such previous experience of conservation, the level of interest in cultural heritage conservation, and potential professional involvement. For example, groups that have less or no previous experience of engaging with conservation will be more likely to demonstrate a greater shift in their views post-engagement.

Museum visitors who participated in this study overall had a high level of education. Most participants grasped complex issues about cultural heritage conservation and engaged in debates on philosophical dilemmas that conservators often have to contemplate. However, there are also groups of visitors who do not have the same level of previous knowledge or interest and may, as a result, require a different approach regarding language and content. Specifically, this study has highlighted that some visitors may be unfamiliar with the state of preservation and level of physical integrity of objects prior to treatment or with previous restoration work many objects have undergone. Also, many visitors may not be aware of the nature of the conservation process, the level of skill, patience and concentration that is required. This study has shown, as one would expect, that the impact of engagement work is much higher on people who are less familiar with the conservation process, and thus, arguably, more valuable to them.

These elements should be carefully considered when deciding on the most appropriate format of engagement and, even more so, when determining the content and the way it is presented. To communicate with broader and more diverse audiences, the approaches to engagement should be tailored to meet the needs of the people they are trying to reach, but at the same time, there should be a degree of flexibility to be able to adjust to the needs of more than one group.

A.4. Risk assessment and management

A proactive approach to managing potential risks involved in public engagement projects is necessary. Risk assessment reports should be produced when projects involve risks either for people or objects. Such risks may be involved when, for an engagement project, objects from collections are being handled by non-experts, when conservation treatments are carried out in public view, during conservation studio tours and conservation site visits. It is important to consider potential risks for the visitors (e.g. dust, mould, solvents), as well as to ensure the protection of objects (e.g. from physical damage or theft) and the security of materials. It may be advisable to provide personal protective equipment or decide to carry out treatments that involve high risk either during closed hours or away from public view and provide alternative means of access to this work e.g. through a screen that you can open and close to see or via video recording. It is also essential to

have an emergency protocol and training for all staff and to make sure that visitors not only are but also feel safe. Non-expert audiences may perceive certain treatments or materials as hazardous without that being necessarily the case. For example, the smell of relatively safe solvents could still cause people concern.

Consultation with conservators is necessary to minimise potential risk for people and objects, and to make sure the quality and standards of their work are not negatively affected. Conservators may have some reservations about public engagement work due to the risk involved, not only about the objects but also concerning the impact on their ability to concentrate and perform delicate conservation work in public view. It is advisable to establish the level of interaction from the outset; if a complex conservation treatment is a priority, then the interaction aspect must be limited to set times or a third party should control the communication.

In addition to engaging visitors, conservation projects can also help to raise the profile of conservation in an organisation internally. To promote a professional public image, other members of the organisation such as Front of House Visitor Services staff should be made aware of the project and be in position to answer basic visitor questions or incorporate conservation into a tour. It may be beneficial to also involve them in planning (e.g. they could provide useful information on what visitors ask questions about).

A.5. Ethical considerations

The public engagement process naturally involves human beings. Balancing between causing interest, excitement, and provocation can be a great challenge for public engagement projects. This brings about the need for considering ethical issues, particularly if a project aims to target or involve vulnerable groups such as children or people with mental or physical disabilities.

There are also some sensitive topics concerning the content of public engagement projects with conservation that may need to be considered from an ethical perspective. Fascinating subjects may at the same time cause considerable controversy, giving rise to particular dilemmas when it comes to content. Some of the most engaging themes for museum visitors referred to illegal activities such as forgery and vandalism of works of art. People can be excited by content that is a sensitive matter to others. A representative example that has already caused a lot of debate in museums is when projects involve or refer to human remains (see Brooks & Rumsey 2006; 2007). For this kind of content, there are certain codes of practice to give professionals practical guidance on legislation such as the Human Tissue Act (2004) and DCMS guidance on the treatment of human remains. Nonetheless, even when legislation is followed, there is often a fine line between fascinating people and alienating or offending them, by crossing socially or culturally accepted boundaries. Some issues to consider before any engagement endeavour could be finding a balance between sensitivity and subjectivity, depending on the environment the project is placed in. What is comfortable and

what is awkward in that context? What would cause people discomfort and what would capture their imagination?

Furthermore, identifying and openly discussing ethical boundaries as part of an engagement project can not only raise awareness of the ethical codes conservators operate under but may also become a highly captivating and impactful element of a project.

A.6. Collaboration

Engagement projects can significantly benefit from effective collaboration between conservators, educators and curators (also see A.2.). Moreover, public engagement is a concept used and applied widely across many other disciplines beyond conservation, such as pure science and health, but also to academic fields like social archaeology, social geography and anthropology. There is clearly potential for cross-disciplinary work utilising the findings and insights gained in other sectors, to inform professional practice and to foster interdisciplinary research collaborations between heritage conservation and disciplines such as education, sociology, psychology as well as communications and marketing. Moreover, this is a fruitful field for further enquiry by collaboration with professionals in other areas, such as environmental conservation, chemistry, physics, and material science, which could foster public interest and awareness for all these domains and potentially be of significant educational value to non-expert audiences.

B) EXECUTION

B.1. Consider the degree of people's involvement

Before the implementation of the project, the overall approach towards the level of people's participation in the engagement process needs to be decided. The stance of the project organiser on the expert – non-expert spectrum should be clearly set out as this is necessary to determine the preferred way of communication between the two groups, as well as the roles of those involved. This decision should be made based on the combination of elements of project planning outlined above, namely audience's profile, curatorial aims and objectives, risk assessment reports, ethical considerations, and collaboration. Some questions that should be addressed at this stage are: Is the project positioned as educational, fun, participatory, or inclusive? Do the aims involve encouraging consultation and public participation in conservation decision-making or is a top-down approach the preferred mode?

B.2. Determine the engagement format

The form of engagement needs to be determined by carefully considering the aims along with the overall direction and character of the project. Different formats, or a combination of them, can be more useful for achieving certain objectives than for others. Typical engagement formats have been classified into the following categories:

- **Observation:** Conservation projects that offer the opportunity to observe conservation work, without that being planned as a demonstration event specifically, and without necessarily involving interaction with conservators or information about the process. That may occur for example when architectural elements or sculptures are being conserved in situ in public spaces, historic buildings, or in the museum context. If managed, these occasions may, incidentally, present excellent opportunities for public engagement with conservation.

- **Web technologies:** Websites, social media, blogging platforms, and forums are commonly used to introduce the progress of conservation projects to diverse online audiences. These can vary widely concerning their degree of involving people. In this approach, it is useful to consider how to take advantage of a project or an object's necessary maintenance/conservation work to showcase care of collection and highlight conservation in the best possible way.

- **Commercial printed material:** Posters, booklets, flyers, postcards, non-specialist books (e.g. coffee table books) introducing conservation to interested lay audiences.

- **Audiovisual material:** Information panels, photographs, videos of conservators in action, digital animation of objects in different states (e.g. restored), radio, film, television programmes.

- **Information dissemination sessions:** Public lectures, conferences, festivals, and seminar sessions introducing conservation work, usually through ongoing projects.

- **Exhibitions:** Any exhibition that refers directly or indirectly to conservation work, including presentations of conservation techniques, materials, tools, processes, conserved objects, and conservation ethics.

- **Demonstrations:** All types of deliberate demonstration of conservation work including live conservation work in public view, conservation studios open or visible to visitors, and live video links of conservators in action.

- **Interaction:** Invited interaction between members of the public and professional conservators, usually in the form of a question and answer element. This approach can be tiring for the conservators, so it is essential to include adequate staffing and plan for breaks, relief cover, etc. Interaction can also occur with the use of interactive exhibits, usually audio, visual and tactile.

- **Inclusive activities:** Engaging members of the public in the context of planned activities such as conservation studio tours, open days, object handling sessions, and conservation workshops.

- **Participation:** This involves members of the public being actively involved in conservation work and conservation decision-making, in the framework of educational programmes for aspiring heritage professionals, volunteering and community consultation.

B.3. Content

Decisions regarding which aspects of conservation the content will include should be based on identifying the themes which best correspond to the curatorial and conservation objectives and the aim of the project. For example, if the intended purpose is to engage new audiences without any prior interest in heritage conservation, the themes should be focused accordingly, making use of research findings and reports on comparable past events. It may be useful to set out the key messages to better focus the content in alignment with the aims of the project. A clear message will enable better outcomes for the audiences. Themes like the discovery of unknown aspects of an objects' history, forgery, vandalism, false practice, and the threat of total loss, are accessible and highly engaging for lay audiences (see also A5.). Conservation principles and the complexity of ethical dilemmas such as the removal or preservation of previous unsuccessful treatment or restoration attempts are also shown to be appealing, particularly to habitual heritage audiences.

Elements that were identified in this research as highly impactful on museum visitors were interactive exhibits, hands-on activities, and the use of debate as a tool for sparking interest by generating discussion and facilitating informal learning. Underlying concern among conservators about some potentially impactful elements, such as audiences watching live conservation work and being able to interact with conservators while the work, may affect the quality of their professional performance and the quality of the visitor experience as a result. If it is thought that individual elements may have an adverse effect, either on conservators' ability to concentrate and perform or on the safety of the objects, this should be taken into account and put into perspective according to the overall aims through a balanced assessment of risk and gain.

B.4. Language

Language is a powerful tool for engaging people. It helps bring together in memory everything known about a concept and invoke further associations and knowledge. The use of appropriate language is central to constituting a project relevant to its audience and impactful on people's way of thinking.

The lack of a common language was sometimes shown to be an issue between conservators and museum visitors researched in this study. Also, it can be challenging for conservators to take complex ideas and terminology and relate them to a broad audience. To make a highly specialised domain like conservation more widely accessible, there needs to be an emphasis on using jargon-free language and simplifying certain aspects of the conservation process, such as scientific terms, both in writing and in the context of verbal communication.

Nonetheless, among professional conservators, terminological language is essential for referring to and distinguishing between particular technical applications and key concepts, such as conservation and restoration. The accurate use of these words is important because they signify different sets of

actions, but could also mark the differences between cultural and philosophical approaches to conservation work with significant implications for policy and practice. Appropriate choice of words and phrases should accurately represent the conservation process without causing any misconceptions among non-expert audiences. All staff involved should be briefed on how to accurately and consistently disseminate the intended message and refer to conservation work.

B.5. Presentation

When introducing conservation to non-specialist audiences, it is as important to depict the conservators, as it is to show the objects they are working on and the treatments they carry out. Paradoxically, conservators are rarely the focus of photographs, videos, or articles about their work and in some cases do not feature in them at all. Sidetracking the actors of conservation by focusing on objects and treatments not only discourages communication and hinders public engagement but also perpetuates the invisibility of the conservation profession as a 'behind the scenes' activity.

C) EVALUATION

Evaluation has gradually gained ground in museum practice over the past two decades and impact assessment is currently standard practice for institutions internationally and in the UK, see, for example, the accreditation scheme for museums and galleries in the United Kingdom (Arts Council England 2011). Evaluation includes two categories of activities. The first type is product-oriented activities which include assessment of the event by determining how well it has accomplished the goals set for it, and evaluation of the process in planning and executing it. The second category concerns management-oriented activities which include evaluation reports setting down the findings of the assessment activities and reports required by grant-giving agencies assessing the use and effectiveness of their funding (Dean 1994, 18). When it comes to engagement projects either in the museum context or elsewhere, it is vital that both quality and impact assessment are built-in elements from the very early stages of project planning. Both of these aspects are important for engagement work because they contribute to shaping views of the conservation process, as well as its perceived value for society, and ultimately shape attitudes towards the conservation profession. The following aspects are highlighted as significant factors:

• Evaluation of a project's degree of success or failure should be done by comparison of the outcome against its aims and objectives.
• Peer reviewing from conservation practitioners and scholars should be invited.
• Audience feedback should be collected using data collection instruments including questions addressing the project's intended outcomes while using language, which is both accurate and friendly to non-expert people.
• Ideally, the impact should be measured against known existing baselines, which are indicative of people's views and attitudes towards conservation before engagement. Alternatively, self-assessment methods can be used.

- Honest and critical reflection on the outcomes should be based on people's feedback in combination with peer reviewing. Reflection on the experience of planning and executing an engagement project should also include explaining any difficulties and issues that may have occurred during the process, and a summary of lessons and suggestions to pass on to organisers of future projects.
- Finally, it is important to ensure the transparency of the process and share gained knowledge and experience by making evaluation reports available to other practitioners and researchers.

D) Useful resources

There are many resources that can be used by practitioners as an initiating point for gaining insights and inspiration from other projects (see for example AIK Wiki 2014, Barham 2000, Brooks & Cane 1994, Brooks 2013, Drago 2011, Ganiaris & Lang 2013, The International Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works 2015).

8.4 Possibilities for Further Research

Possibilities for future research projects include:

- Researching the views of people outside the museum environment (but in a given cultural/ social context). Establishing a baseline of peoples' views on conservation in order to be able to compare them with the views of people who have experienced an engagement event would have significant utility for this research. This comparison would enable far more meaningful conclusions on impact assessment.
- Further researching the views of professionals and organisations involved in engaging visitors/the public with conservation, both in terms of their approach to engagement, and also in terms of their methodological approach to assessing the impact of this kind of events, in order to refine the proposed guidelines.
- The findings of this study are indicative of the differences between some formats of engagement projects, in terms of their impact on visitors' views. Nevertheless, further research is required on additional cases studies in order to arrive at overarching conclusions, which could be achieved, for instance, through a meta-analysis that would combine the findings of multiple studies.

8.5 Contribution to Literature and Overall Conclusions

Communicating conservation is important for two main reasons. The first reason has to do with the moral responsibilities of conservators as heritage custodians. People's right to participate in cultural life was stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations 1948) and taken

further in the Faro Convention (Council of Europe 2005), where encouraging participation and putting people and human values at the centre of cultural heritage policy and practice was set as an objective (see Council of Europe 2005). Conservators are entrusted with the 'management of change' (English Heritage 2008) on the material remains of the past that people attach value to. Thus, people are just as central to the conservation process as are objects. Consequently, there are numerous different views and perspectives about how objects should be managed and conservators are required to take these into account when negotiating solutions and justifying their decisions (see for instance Wharton 2008, Sully 2007, and Sully et al. 2014).

However, a purposeful and equal negotiation necessitates all parties to be adequately equipped to develop and put forward their own stance. Hence communicating conservation to non-experts is crucial both in terms of encouraging public interest in heritage assets and their management, but also in terms of enabling non-expert people to access information and specialised knowledge. Furthermore, conservation projects can extend their focus beyond simply informing people or consulting with interest groups, but also seek to encourage more active involvement and collaboration. For instance, a strategy for collaborative practice that has been proposed for facilitating effective community involvement in archaeology projects, comprises seven components: communication and collaboration, employment and training, public presentation, interviews and oral history, educational resources, a photographic and video archive, and community controlled merchandising (Moser et al. 2002, 229).

Communicating conservation is essential also for another reason that relates to the sustainability of the conservation profession. The value-based approach in cultural heritage management has gained ground during the past two decades, championing for the involvement of various interest groups and stakeholders and for the inclusion of their views in decision-making (Clark 2000; 2014). The discussion around global and local heritage is challenging conservation ethics and practice on a fundamental level, requiring emphasis on the social processes of conservation and the development of a revised new framework of professional principles (Avrami 2009). At the same time, there is increasing pressure on museums and other heritage organisations to demonstrate their contribution and relevance to society in order to justify receiving funding investments (see discussion in section 3.1). In this challenging climate, engaging with people by effectively communicating conservation work is arguably the only way to lay the foundations for a viable and sustainable future for the conservation profession. It has been argued that 'conservators have always worried about their status' (Ashley-Smith 2009, 19). However, while this assertion may be justifiable to some extent, the importance of communicating conservation and advocating its value extends far beyond a preoccupation with professional prestige or income. Promoting the public understanding of the conservation process and building support for it, is not a reaction to a crisis of confidence, but a critical and fundamental reorientation of our disciplinary practice.

The importance of communicating conservation and sharing the responsibility of decision-making between experts and non-expert interest groups is not only limited to conservation ethics or professional anxieties. Encouraging the involvement of people with different stakes and views on how conservation should be carried out can potentially reshape and enrich our understanding and experience of objects and their multiple meanings. The views of the people who participated in this study are important because they convey how certain issues that are central to conservation work are perceived beyond our specialised domain. This information is useful as it can help us discern whether certain approaches to conservation work are divergent or in alignment with non-expert views. This can either reaffirm the validity of particular approaches or broaden our understanding of alternative perspectives to our work that should be considered. For that reason, it is essential to obtain this insight through research instead of simply relying on anecdotal evidence. Finally, research findings can also help conservators further refine their communication methods and achieve their engagement-project objectives.

This research study contributes to the literature in current scholarship in two ways. Firstly, it has explored the mechanisms of public engagement with cultural heritage conservation in the context of museum events. It has resulted in the creation of a primary typology, providing a basis for its further development, and also for more closely focused research on the subject, for instance in the form of comparative studies between different types of engagement approaches. Secondly, this research study has described some of the dominant public attitudes towards heritage conservation and has identified views that compose and reinforce them.

Communicating conservation principles and practice is a two-way process and as such, it requires both sides to find a common language and a platform for exchanging views. Since conservation has, until the recent years, remained away from public view, it is fairly reasonable to expect that such a discussion would be initiated on the side of the conservators. 'Conservation cannot afford to model itself as a self-evident valuable activity that needs no justification. We need to demonstrate our role in preserving culturally significant artefacts and bringing the knowledge obtained through that process into the public domain' (Brooks 2013, 5).

In addition, it has been argued that public outreach activities are important not just as fundraising tools but also due to their 'potential to define why and how communities care for their heritage' and to 'create social capital' (Williams 2013, ix). However, while the initiative to disseminate information on what conservators do is arguably a necessary step towards creating an informed audience, this study has shown that current public engagement attempts do not always entail the element of public participation or inspire a desire for it among museum visitors, as many of the participants in this study demonstrated an interest in being informed rather than being actively involved.

It has been demonstrated that both conservation principles and practice are essential for the well-being of society (Brooks 2013). In this study, I have argued that this is, in fact, an interdependent relationship as the great value that is placed by society on cultural heritage material and its preservation is essentially central to conservation's objectives. Berducou points out that the most successful way to preserve objects is not to hide them away in order to preserve them but to make them more accessible so that people care about them (1999). In this sense, public engagement could be seen as a form of conservation itself. Thus, the more effective the communication is, the better for the ultimate objective of conservation.

It has been observed that during the past decade, conservators and heritage organisations have entered a process of reconsidering a number of fundamental assumptions, such as the meaning of objects and the reasons for their preservation. On that basis, it has been suggested that what Berducou proposed for the preservation of heritage objects may also apply to aspects of behind the scenes conservation work: 'that which is not seen is not valued' (Wadum 2003, 3).

At the same time, it has also been suggested that conservation of material culture is culturally and socially dependent (see for example Eastop 2006; 2011, Eastop & Brooks 2011, ICOMOS 1994; 2000; 2014, Pye 2009). While this may be the case on a broader level (e.g. different conservation policies and practice implemented across different nations based on notions of cultural coherence), people's views are rarely taken into consideration directly when decisions regarding conservation are made. Arguably, this is an issue of the authority of 'experts' over 'non-experts', but at the same time, it is also a question of responsibility and liability. While active involvement could be considered as a form of 'democratisation' of heritage practices such as conservation, participation could also be perceived as a challenge rather than as a right; a responsibility that non-experts might understandably be reluctant to embrace. The findings of this research study emphasise that fostering equity in the partnership between the expert and the non-expert is the way forward. The importance of ensuring that conservation is and remains relevant to the society extends beyond our professional domain. It ultimately about the values we choose to safeguard and promote as a civilisation. As an insightful visitor commented, conservation is an expression of culture in itself.

> *[Heritage conservation] is an important part of my idea of culture.*
>
> *(Male, 51- 64, Ashmolean Museum, UK visitor)*

Appendix I − Data Collection Instruments

Do you live in York or near York?

What do you know about the history of this property?

What does it mean to you?

How interested are you in heritage conservation?

☐ Not interested at all
☐ I would be more interested if I knew more about conservation
☐ Very interested
☐ I have a professional interest in conservation
☐ Other .... (please specify)

How important do you consider heritage conservation and why?

In your view, what does good practice in conservation involve?
(You can choose more than one answer)

☐ Recording the present condition
☐ Cleaning
☐ Adding new elements in order to improve the object
☐ Stabilizing the present condition
☐ Taking preventive measures for future preservation
☐ Restoring the object to its original appearance
☐ Assessing an object's values (historic, artistic etc.)
☐ Informing the public
☐ Involving the public
☐ Other .... (please specify)

Figure 43 First page of the questionnaire used for pilot study

In your view, who should participate in decision-making regarding heritage conservation?
(You can choose more than one answer)

☐ Conservation professionals
☐ Local people
☐ Visitors
☐ Volunteers
☐ Central authorities (government)
☐ Local authorities
☐ Other ……………………………………………………………………………………….. (please specify)

Please tell us what you think about 'Conservation in Action'.

Have you noticed any on-going conservation work before?   ☐Yes ☐No

Did you mind that there was conservation work going on during your visit?   ☐Yes ☐A bit ☐No

Did you like being able to talk with the conservators about their work?   ☐Yes   ☐A bit   ☐No

Would you like to find out more about conservation within the property?   ☐Yes   ☐Maybe   ☐No
Would you have liked the opportunity to take part in conservation work?   ☐Yes   ☐Maybe   ☐No

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Has this experience made you think differently about conservation work or exhibits in a historic property?

If so how?

Please tell us a bit more about yourself.

Are you male or female? ☐Male   ☐Female
How old are you?   ☐Under 16   ☐16-25   ☐26- 35   ☐36- 50   ☐51-64   ☐65+
What is your current occupation? ………………………….
What is the highest completed level of education you have achieved so far? ………………………….
What is your ethnicity? ………………………….
Do you consider yourself as having any disability?   ☐Yes   ☐No

If you would like to take part in an informal one-to-one interview to further discuss any of the above, please leave your contact information or use the following contact details to suggest a convenient time. Refreshments and cookies will be provided.

Name:
Email:
Telephone number:

Danai Koutromanou, PhD student in Conservation Studies, University of York
Email: dk603@york.ac.uk
Mobile telephone number: (+44) 07528149049

Thank you for your help!

Figure 44 Second page of the questionnaire used for pilot study

ASHMOLEAN
MUSEUM OF ART AND ARCHAEOLOGY UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

CONSERVATION GALLERIES
SHARE YOUR VIEWS

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this research on investigating various ways of engaging people in heritage conservation. Your answers will help improve communication between conservation professionals and the general public. All information you provide is confidential and will be used solely for the purposes of this study.

Where are you from?

Which exhibits in the GALLERIES did you enjoy most? (You may choose more than one answer.)

☐ Exploding Pot
☐ Decay
☐ Investigation
☐ Fakes and Forgeries
☐ The work of the conservator today
☐ Changing display of current projects

☐ Why ethics matter
☐ Enhancing the past
☐ The eastern approach
☐ Ancient repair, reuse, restoration
☐ Birth of modern conservation
☐ Other _____ (Please specify)

What did you like about them in particular?

Did the GALLERIES make you think about what you have at home that you would like to preserve?

How interested are you in heritage conservation?

☐ Not interested at all
☐ I would be more interested if I knew more about conservation
☐ Very interested
☐ I have a professional interest in conservation
☐ Other _____ (Please specify)

How important do you consider heritage conservation?

☐ Not at all   ☐ Not very important   ☐ Quite important   ☐ Important   ☐ Very important

Why?

In your view what does good practice in conservation involve? (You may choose more than one answer.)

☐ Recording the present condition
☐ Cleaning
☐ Adding new elements in order to improve the object
☐ Stabilizing the present condition
☐ Taking preventive measures for future preservation

☐ Restoring an object to its original appearance
☐ Assessing an object's values (historic, artistic etc.)
☐ Informing the public
☐ Involving the public
☐ Other _____ (Please specify)

Figure 45 First page of the questionnaire used for the Ashmolaen Museum case study

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Did the GALLERIES make you think differently about the condition in which museum exhibits are presented?

☐ No, not at all   ☐ Maybe a little   ☐ Yes, definitely

Why?

Who do you think should participate in decision-making regarding heritage conservation?
(You may choose more than one answer.)

☐ Conservation professionals   ☐ Central authorities (government)
☐ Local people   ☐ Local authorities
☐ Visitors   ☐ Other _____ (Please specify)
☐ Volunteers

Did the GALLERIES make you think differently about heritage conservation?

☐ No, not at all   ☐ Maybe a little   ☐ Yes, definitely

Why?

What are your overall thoughts on the GALLERIES? (You may choose more than one answer.)

☐ I discovered new things
☐ I was confused
☐ I had a chance to see things not normally on show
☐ I was bored
☐ I appreciated the amount of work that goes into conservation
☐ I will never look at a museum exhibit the same way again

Any other thoughts or suggestions?

Please tell us a bit more about yourself.

Are you male or female?   ☐Male ☐Female
How old are you?   ☐Under 16   ☐16-25   ☐26-35   ☐36-50   ☐51-64   ☐Over 64
What is your current occupation?
What is the highest completed level of education you have achieved so far?
What is your ethnicity?
Do you consider yourself as having a disability?   ☐Yes   ☐No

Thank you for your help

Danai Koutromanou, PhD student in Conservation Studies
Department of Archaeology, The University of York

Figure 46 Second page of the questionnaire used for the Ashmolaen Museum case study

Yorkshire Museum

CONSERVATION WORKSHOP
SHARE YOUR VIEWS

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this research on investigating various ways of engaging people in heritage conservation. Your answers will help improve communication between conservation professionals and the general public. All information you provide is confidential and will be used solely for the purposes of this study.

Where are you from?

Which part(s) of the CONSERVATION WORKSHOP did you enjoy most?

What did you like about them in particular?

Did the CONSERVATION WORKSHOP make you think about what you have at home that you would like to preserve?

How interested are you in heritage conservation?

☐ Not interested at all
☐ I would be more interested if I knew more about conservation
☐ Very interested
☐ I have a professional interest in conservation
☐ Other .... (Please specify)

How important do you consider heritage conservation?

☐ Not at all   ☐ Not very important   ☐ Quite important   ☐ Important   ☐ Very important

Why?

In your view what does good practice in conservation involve? (You may choose more than one answer.)

☐ Recording the present condition
☐ Cleaning
☐ Adding new elements in order to improve the object
☐ Stabilizing the present condition
☐ Taking preventive measures for future preservation

☐ Restoring an object to its original appearance
☐ Assessing an object's values (historic, artistic etc.)
☐ Informing the public
☐ Involving the public
☐ Other .... (Please specify)

Figure 47 First page of the questionnaire used for the Yorkshire Museum case study

Did the CONSERVATION WORKSHOP make you think differently about the condition in which museum exhibits are presented?

☐ No, not at all   ☐ Maybe a little   ☐ Yes, definitely

Why?

Who do you think should participate in decision-making regarding heritage conservation?
(You may choose more than one answer.)

☐ Conservation professionals   ☐ Central authorities (government)
☐ Local people   ☐ Local authorities
☐ Visitors   ☐ Other .... (Please specify)
☐ Volunteers

Did the CONSERVATION WORKSHOP make you think differently about heritage conservation?

☐ No, not at all   ☐ Maybe a little   ☐ Yes, definitely

Why?

What are your overall thoughts on the CONSERVATION WORKSHOP? (You may choose more than one answer.)

☐ I discovered new things
☐ I was confused
☐ I had a chance to see things not normally on show
☐ I was bored
☐ I appreciated the amount of work that goes into conservation
☐ I will never look at a museum exhibit the same way again

Any other thoughts or suggestions?

Please tell us a bit more about yourself.

Are you male or female?   ☐ Male ☐ Female
How old are you?   ☐ Under 16   ☐ 16-25   ☐ 26- 35   ☐ 36- 50   ☐ 51-64   ☐ Over 64
What is your current occupation?
What is the highest completed level of education you have achieved so far?
What is your ethnicity?
Do you consider yourself as having a disability?   ☐ Yes   ☐ No

Thank you for your help

Danai Koutromanou, PhD student in Conservation Studies
Department of Archaeology, The University of York

Figure 48 Second page of the questionnaire used for the Yorkshire Museum case study

CONSERVATION AT KNOLE
SHARE YOUR VIEWS

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this research study. Its aim is to assess the impact of attempts to engage people in heritage conservation. Your answers will help improve communication between conservation professionals and visitors. All information you provide is anonymous and will be used only for the purposes of this study.

Where are you from?

Which conservation project did you most enjoy finding out about? (you may choose more than one answer)

☐ The James II state bed ☐ The eyemat carpet reproduction in Reynolds Room
☐ Other... (please specify) ☐ None of them

Why?

Thinking about heritage conservation, does it matter?

☐ Not at all ☐ It is not very important ☐ It is quite important ☐ It is important ☐ It is very important

Why?

How interested are you in heritage conservation?

☐ Not interested at all
☐ I would be more interested if I knew more about conservation
☐ Very interested
☐ I have a professional interest in conservation
☐ Other .... (please specify)

In your view what does good practice in conservation involve? (you may choose more than one answer)

☐ Recording the present condition ☐ Restoring an object to its original appearance
☐ Cleaning ☐ Assessing an object's values (historic, artistic etc.)
☐ Adding new elements in order to improve the object ☐ Informing the public
☐ Stabilizing the present condition ☐ Involving the public
☐ Taking preventive measures for future preservation ☐ Other .... (please specify)

Figure 49 First page of the questionnaire used for the Knole case study

Did finding out about conservation work make you think differently about the condition in which exhibits are presented?

☐ No, not at all   ☐ Maybe a little   ☐ Yes, definitely

Why?

Who do you think should participate in decision-making regarding heritage conservation?
(you may choose more than one answer)

☐ Conservation professionals   ☐ Central authorities (government)
☐ Local people   ☐ Local authorities
☐ Visitors   ☐ Other .... (please specify)
☐ Volunteers

Did finding out about the ongoing work here make you think differently about heritage conservation?

☐ No, not at all   ☐ Maybe a little   ☐ Yes, definitely

Why?

What are your overall thoughts on the way conservation is presented to visitors at Knole?
(you may choose more than one answer)

☐ I discovered new things   ☐ I had a chance to see things not normally on show
☐ I was confused   ☐ I appreciated the amount of work that goes into conservation
☐ I was bored   ☐ I will never look at an exhibit the same way again

Do you have any other thoughts or ideas for improvement?

Please tell us a bit more about yourself
Are you male or female?   ☐Male ☐Female
How old are you?   ☐Under 16   ☐16-25   ☐26-35   ☐36-50   ☐51-64   ☐Over 64
What is your current occupation?
What is the highest level of education you have completed so far? ☐Primary ☐Secondary ☐Tertiary ☐Master's ☐Doctorate
What is your ethnicity?
Do you consider yourself as having a disability?   ☐Yes   ☐No

Thank you for your help
Danai Koutromanou, PhD student in Conservation Studies
Department of Archaeology, The University of York

Figure 50 Second page of the questionnaire used for the Knole case study

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE (Visitors)

Date: Gender:
                                             Age:
                                             Current occupation:
                                             Level of education:
                                             Ethnicity:
                                             Disability:

1. Where are you from and what brought you to the museum/historic house today?

2. Do you have any special interest or personal connection with any of the objects in the museum/historic house?

3. Which parts of the event/exhibition did you enjoy most?

    What did you like about it/them in particular?

4. Did the event/exhibition make you think about what you have at home that you would like to preserve?

5. How interested are you in conservation and what are your previous experiences of it?

6. How important do you consider heritage conservation, and why?

7. In your view, what does good practice in conservation involve, and why?

8. Did the event/exhibition make you think differently about the condition in which museum exhibits are presented to the visitors, and why?

9. Who do you think should participate in decision-making regarding conservation, and why?

10. Did your visit/experience today make you think differently about conservation, and why?

11. What are your overall thoughts on the event/exhibition? Do you have any ideas for improving this event/exhibition, or perhaps more generally the way conservation is presented to visitors?

Other comments:

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE (Conservation Professionals)

Date:

1. What does your role at the museum/historic property involve?

2. What motivated you to facilitate this event/set up this exhibition and what is the rationale behind them it?

3. What do you enjoy most about facilitating this event/setting up this exhibition and why?

4. What do you find most challenging in the process of engaging visitors with conservation work?

5. What are the aims of this event /exhibition and what do you hope to achieve?

6. What are some of the most usual questions/comments coming up when communicating conservation work to visitors?

7. In your opinion, how does this event /exhibition contribute to the visitors' experience?

8. Has there been any attempt to measure the impact of this event /exhibition on the visitor experience or their views?

9. In your opinion, does engaging visitors contribute to the field of conservation? If so, how?

10. Do you consider engaging with audiences as part of the conservator's role?

11. In your opinion should it be part of the conservation professional's role?

12. Which in your opinion will be the next great challenge(s) for conservation professionals?

13. Would you like to share any other experiences, comments or ideas?

Other comments:

Appendix II - Pilot Study

Pilot study findings and data collection instrument revisions

The pilot study is an important part of this study not because of the actual findings, but primarily because the process of collecting the data and analyzing allowed for better nuancing of the survey instruments and refinement of the methods employed.

Participants' profile

To begin with, the data collection instrument included a number of questions aiming to generate data on the participants' profile in terms of locality, gender, age, level of education and disability. This was decided in order for this data to be potentially utilized for more in-depth interpretation of the main body of data that is directly relevant to the aims of the study.

The first question assessing locality was the open-ended opening question initially phrased as '*Do you live in York or near York*'. From a total of 33 visitors on three different days, the majority (70%) said they *lived in* or *near York*. The rest (30%) were based in other places in the UK. Based on the participants' responses to this question, the sample was then divided by the researcher into two groups: Local (people living in York or near York) and UK (people living in other places in the United Kingdom). Responses to this particular question do not indicate national or ethnic backgrounds. It should also be noted that in the pilot study there were no international participants (in the sense of living permanently outside UK).

While this question served well as an opening question (and was also successfully used to initiate discussions with hesitant visitors during conservation demonstrations), the phrasing was thought to be problematic because it assessed locality only in terms of residing in the place or the nearby area where the historic house and collection were situated.

This question was later changed (for case studies that followed) to the open-ended question '*Where are you from*'. This was considered to be a more appropriate question because it could be used to measure how participants thought in terms of their own understanding of locality and sense belonging to a certain place, which they were asked to self-assess. Participants' own perception of their locality was thought to be much more relevant to this study, instead of the collection of data on where participants' were based at the time of their visit. The change in the choice of words for this question was mainly the result of critically approaching the meaning of locality, a concept that is often used obscurely to justify, among others, custody and ownership of cultural heritage.

Furthermore, to establish participants' possible connections to the historic property and its collection, two open-ended questions were introduced immediately after the opening question. The first was phrased as '*What do you know about the history of this property*' and the second as '*What does it*

mean to you'. A typical response from a UK (not living in York) participant to these questions can be seen below.

> *Nothing. I am a member of the National Trust and I see this as a good opportunity to take advantage of my membership.*
>
> *(Female, 51-64, UK visitor, Questionnaire 29)*

Responses from participants living in or near York were not significantly different. These questions were not considered particularly useful for answering the research questions, as they did not reveal any notable attachments to the house or the collection among participants, regardless of the proximity of their residence to the historic property. Thus, it was decided to eliminate them from the instruments used to research the main case studies.

The rest of the data used to outline participants' profiles was purely demographic and was collected by a set of closed-ended, tick-box style questions at the end of the questionnaire. It was stated again, specifically for this set of data, that it was at the participants' discretion to provide it or not.

In terms of gender, the sample presented some imbalance. The majority were female (58%), while the male population was only (36%). In terms of age, participants selected their age group by ticking the appropriate box. The age group between 16 and 25 years old was the largest (40%) and the second largest was the group of visitors over 65 years old (33%). A detailed breakdown of the age groups can be found in the age group chart (see Appendix II). There were no significantly different patterns emerging through the main body of data between genders or age groups. Also, the sample was not considered adequate to utilize these results for a crosscutting analysis but it was thought that these questions could be considered as potentially useful interpretative tools in case any significantly different patterns were identified in the principal case studies.

Participants were asked to provide information about their occupation by responding to the open question '*What is your current occupation'*. Based on the answers, the sample was then divided into two groups: the first group included those whose current occupation was related specifically to conservation, while the second one included those whose occupation was not conservation related. This question was asked to help determine the respondents' level of familiarity with conservation. The distinction between the two groups was based on the researcher's judgment of each response, verified by the response of each participant to the closed question '*How interested are you in heritage conservation'* where respondents had the option of indicating whether they had a professional interest in the subject. For example, if someone responded that their occupation was associated with archaeology, art history, science, fine art or craftsmanship etc. but did not indicate that they had a professional interest in conservation they were moved to the *not conservation-related* occupation category. In the pilot study, no respondent had an occupation related to conservation. Also, no participant stated that they had any professional interest in conservation.

Finally, in order to collect data on their level of education, participants were asked to answer the open question *'What is the highest level of education you have completed so far'*. Responses were then placed into five categories: primary, secondary, tertiary, postgraduate (Master's) and postgraduate (Doctorate). This was phrased as an open-ended question in order to make it easier for all participants to respond. The majority of participants had a relatively high level of formal education tertiary level (43%) and postgraduate (Master's) level (15%). No significant dissimilarities were recorded or observed in the way individuals with different levels of education engaged with the content of the event. Finally, no respondent stated that they had any type of disability. Similarly to the questions described above, these were considered as potentially useful questions, depending on the results of the main data analysis.

Visitor experience

In the pilot study, participants were asked to evaluate their overall experience of visiting the historic house on a *Conservation in Action* day by answering five tick-box questions (see findings also in the form of charts in Appendix II).

The first of this set of questions, phrased as '*Have you noticed any on-going conservation work before?*' aimed to assess participants' level of familiarity with conservation on display. It did not specifically measure this in relation to demonstrations in historic houses, but it was rather intended to determine the number of participants who had previous experience of witnessing on-going conservation work in any other context. The majority (67%) of respondents responded positively, while approximately one third (33%) responded that they had never noticed any on-going conservation work before.

The second question '*Did you mind that there was conservation work going on during your visit?*' was intended to assess whether there were any negative reactions (and to what extent) to the display of conservation work during opening times. To find out, for example, whether the display of conservation work was being perceived as something disruptive, distracting visitors from the main exhibition, or whether it caused any other form nuisance to visitors. The vast majority (91%) responded that they did not mind, but a small percentage (3%) responded that they minded a little bit, and a small percentage (6%) replied that they did, in fact, mind that there was conservation work going on during their visit.

The third question '*Did you like being able to talk with the conservators about their work?*' was intended to measure participants' views on the possibility of verbal communication with conservators, in terms of how positively or negatively they perceived the presence of conservation professionals working in the display rooms and the possibility of interaction with them. The majority (79%) responded that they liked being able to talk with the conservators about their work. A smaller percentage (12%) responded that they liked it a little bit, and a small percentage (9%) replied negatively.

The fourth question '*Would you like to find out more about conservation within the property?*' aimed to measure how positive or negative visitors' viewed the possibility of finding out more about conservation in that specific context. Many participants (46%) replied positively, slightly fewer (39%) were unsure, and a smaller percentage (15%) replied negatively.

Finally, the fifth question 'Would you have liked the opportunity to take part in conservation work?' was intended to measure participants' inclination to participate in conservation work. Many (40%) replied negatively, approximately one third (33%) were unsure, and slightly fewer (27%) replied that they would have liked that opportunity.

These early findings triggered some initial thoughts on visitors' perceptions specifically in the context of a historic property, in combination with demonstration as a form of engagement. For example, participants' responses to the elements of interaction and involvement were indicative, both of the inquisitiveness, but also the hesitation towards more active forms of participation. However, in relation to the methodology, two things became evident at this stage. Firstly, any attempt to interpret these findings would be incomplete and potentially inaccurate without further qualitative evidence. Visitors' views on conservation as an exhibit depend on a variety of complex interdependent factors, including the museum context itself, the strategy of engagement, the collection, the conservation processes on display, the visitors' familiarity with conservation, their motivation for visiting, their expectations of the visiting experience, and potentially several others. Secondly, the phrasing of these questions could be seen as leading. So, while this was a structured and straightforward way of measuring how negative/unsure/positive participants felt towards certain aspects of the event, it was not efficient in capturing other possible factors or providing evidence for interpreting these quantitative findings. In addition, phrasing created a risk for skewing the data. Thus, it was decided that in the instruments used for the case studies this set questions would be eliminated and replaced by a combination of less leading closed-ended questions with open-ended ones, as these would produce richer and more meaningful findings.

Importance and good practice

Participants were asked to indicate the level of their interest in the subject of conservation by responding to the closed question '*How interested are you in heritage conservation*'. Almost half of the respondents (46%) indicated that they were 'very interested' in conservation while a very high percentage (42%) suggested that they 'would be more interested if they knew more about conservation'. A small percentage (6%) of visitors said that they are 'slightly' or 'vaguely' interested. A small percentage (6%) of visitors had no interest at all, while no respondent had professional or academic interest in conservation.

Visitors were asked how important they considered conservation and why, by responding to an open question. Below are some typical responses.

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Very important as the history and assets we have are vast and should be kept for our children to enjoy.
(Female, 51-64, Local visitor, Questionnaire 5)

Vital. We need to understand our past history through artefacts.
(Female, 65+, Local visitor, Questionnaire 7)

I think preservation is important because it gives you an opportunity for an immersive experience which can give [illegible] o fan emotional picture of what life was and can be like for other people. Knowing where we and our lifestyles came from can be important for understanding why we are as we are.
(Male, 26-35, UK visitor, Questionnaire 9)

Yorkshire has rich heritage, would be a shame to lose it.
(Male, 16-25, Local visitor, Questionnaire 25)

This question was revised in the instruments used for the principal case studies and was changed into a closed-ended section aiming to measure the perceived importance of conservation on Likert scale, followed by an open-ended justification section.

Visitors were asked what in their opinion constitutes good practice in conservation, by answering a closed question including the responses seen in the chart below. They were able to select more than one option. This question also had an intended contextual effect by providing some information on what actions conservation involves or may have involved historically.

Taking preventive measures (73%), informing the public (73%), cleaning (70%), recording (67%) and stabilizing (64%) the present condition are considered to be good practice by the vast majority of respondents. It is interesting that more than half (55%) of the respondents consider restoration as good practice. Furthermore, involvement of the public was selected by a significant percentage (40%), while value assessment is thought to be good practice by a relatively small percentage of visitors (30%). Finally, only a very low percentage of respondents believe that good practice involves the addition of new elements in order to improve an object (1%).

Perception changes

Visitors were asked to self-assess any changes their experience of viewing conservation demonstrations has brought about in relation to the exhibits or the conservation process itself. This was done by using the open ended question '*Has this experience made you think differently about conservation work or exhibits in a historic property*', followed by a seconded open question '*If so, how*'. The responses were then placed in two categories including those who indicated that there was a change in their way of thinking and those who responded negatively. The majority of visitors (46%) replied that the demonstrations have not brought about any changes in their way of thinking and a small percentage (30%) responded positively to this question. Furthermore, a relatively significant percentage of participants did not respond to this question at all (24%).

The qualitative responses below illustrate the types of changes that occurred to visitors who

responded positively, based on their own assessment. The qualitative justifications for these responses contribute significantly to the clarification of this data.

> *Yes, the importance of it.*
>
> > *(Unknown, 65+, Local visitor, Questionnaire 14)*

> *Yes. Must not mess about.*
>
> > *(Male, 16-25, UK visitor, Questionnaire 18)*

> *Yes, if not done correctly a lot of damage could occur.*
>
> > *(Female, 65+, Local visitor, Questionnaire 7)*

A typical reason that helps interpret the negative responses is shown below.

> *Not really. It's important but I'm not particularly interested in it.*
>
> > *(Male, 16-25, Local visitor, Questionnaire 12)*

> *Not really. I like the way the National Trust does this.*
>
> > *(Female, 51-64, UK visitor, Questionnaire 29)*

Decision-making and public participation

Visitors were asked to select who they believed *'should participate in decision-making regarding heritage conservation'* by responding to a closed tick-box question. They were able to select more than one option, and they could also specify if there was any other additional option (stakeholder) that they considered a suitable answer.

The vast majority of respondents agreed that conservation professionals should be involved in such decisions (91%) and many also indicated that local people should also be involved (64%). Almost half of the responses were positive to the participation of volunteers (48%) and the local authorities (48%). The lowest percentages corresponded to the participation of visitors (27%) and the government (21%) in this process.

This was thought to be a useful question that would generate meaningful and comparable data that would help highlight the differences between visitors' views on the subject within different engagement environments.

Pilot study quantitative analyses
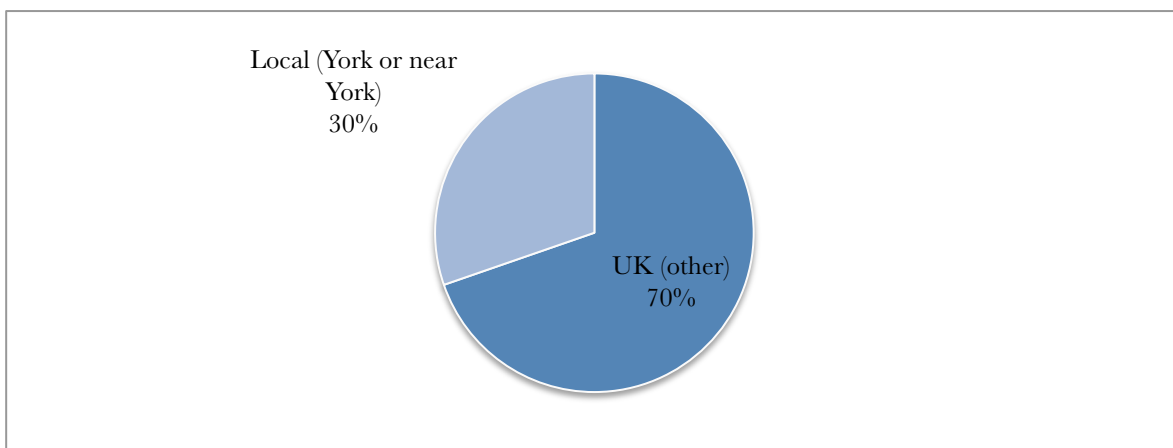
Figure 51 This chart shows the responses of participants to the opening open-ended question '*Do you live in York or near York*'. Based on their answer to this question, the sample was then divided into two groups: Local (people living in York or near York) and UK (people living in other places in the United Kingdom)
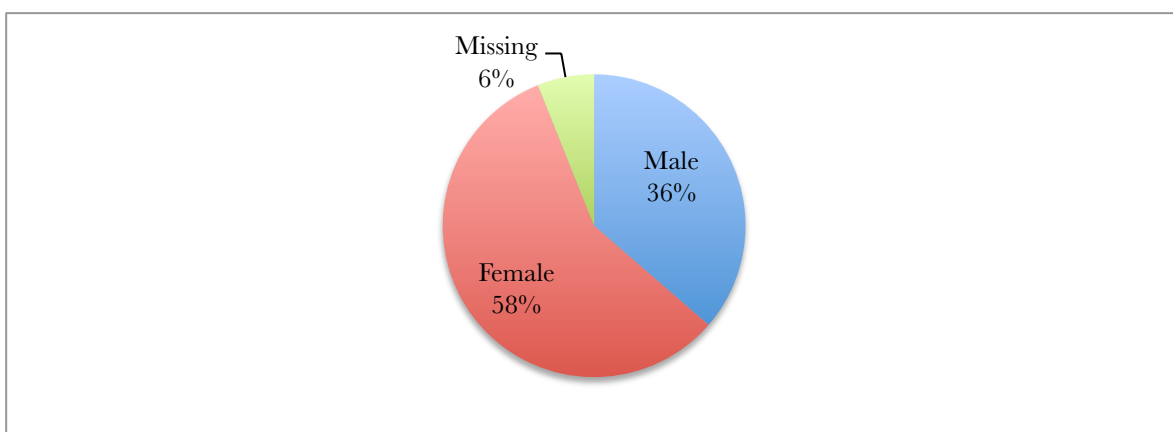
Figure 52 This chart shows the responses of participants to the closed-ended tick box style question 'What is your gender'
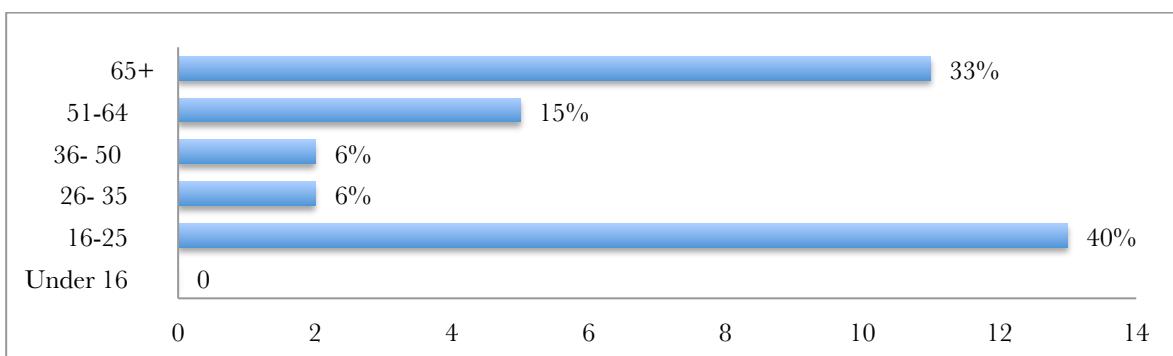
Figure 53 This chart shows the responses of participants to the closed-ended tick box style question 'What is your age'

Visitors were asked to provide information about their occupation by responding to the open question '*What is your current occupation*'. Based on the answers, the sample was then divided into two groups: the first group includes those whose current occupation was related specifically to conservation, while the second one those whose occupation was not. This question was asked to help determine the respondents' level of familiarity with conservation. The distinction between the

two groups was based on the researcher's judgment of each response, verified by the response of each participant to the closed question *'how interested are you in heritage conservation'* where respondents had the option of indicating whether they had a professional interest in the subject. For example, if someone responded that their occupation was associated with archaeology, art history, science, fine art or craftsmanship etc. but did not indicate that they had a professional interest in conservation they were moved to the *not conservation-related* occupation category. No visitor had an occupation that was related to conservation, while 4 responses did not include this information. Also, no visitor stated that they had a professional interest in conservation.
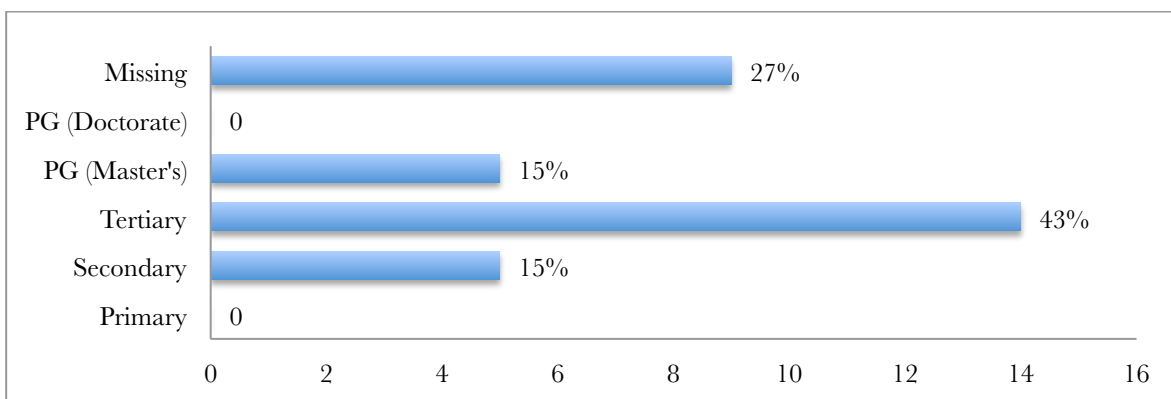
Figure 54 This chart shows the responses of participants to the opening open-ended question *'What is the highest level of education you have completed so far'*. Responses were then placed into five categories: primary, secondary, tertiary, postgraduate (Master's) and postgraduate (Doctorate)
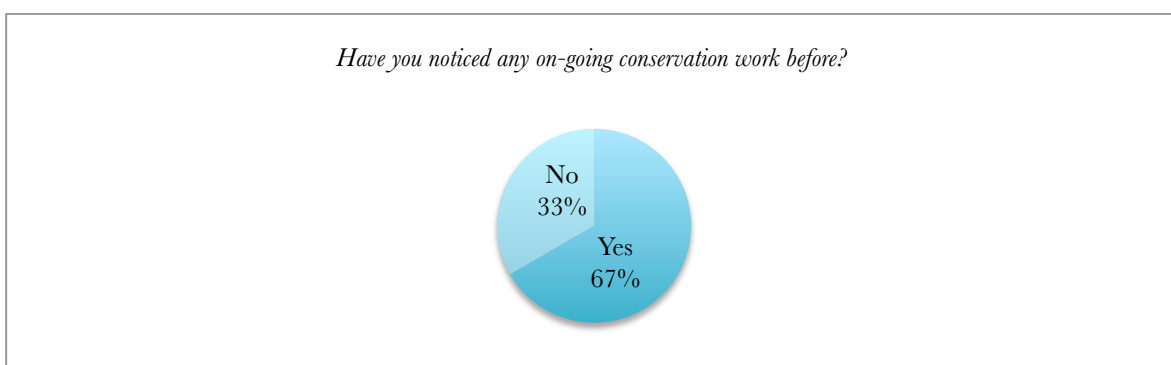
Figure 55 Visitors' previous experience of conservation events/displays. This tick-box question aimed to assess visitors' level of familiarity with conservation on view
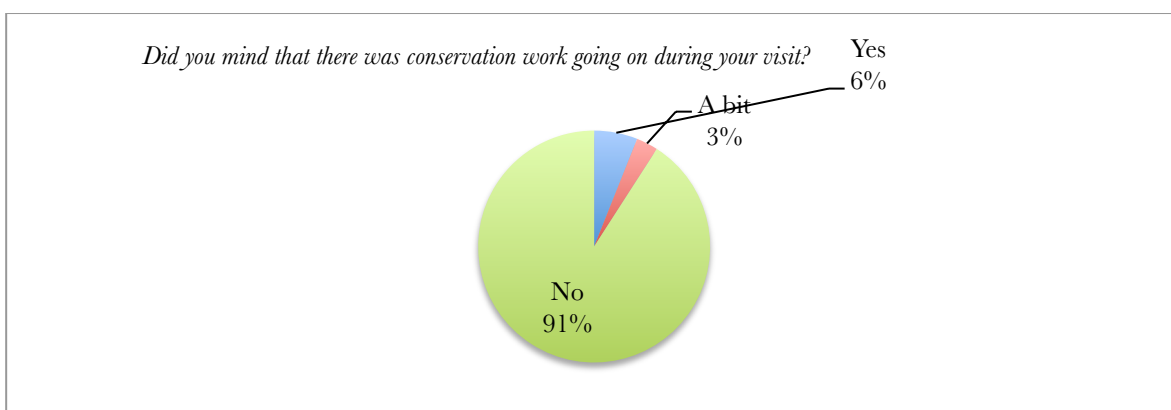
Figure 56 Visitors' views about on-going conservation work being disruptive. This question was intended to measure any nuisance caused to visitors by on-going conservation work in the historic property during opening times
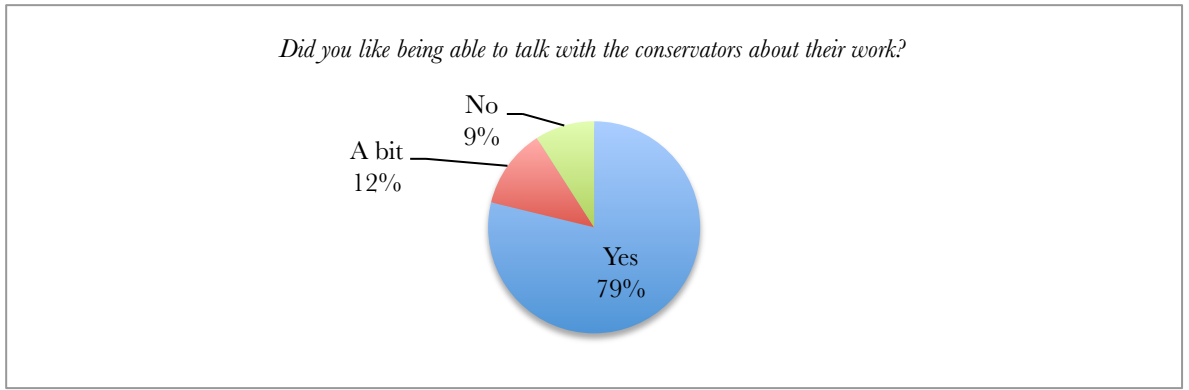
Figure 57 Visitors' views on verbal communication with conservators. This question was intended to measure how visitors perceived the presence of conservation professionals working in the display rooms and the possibility of interaction with them
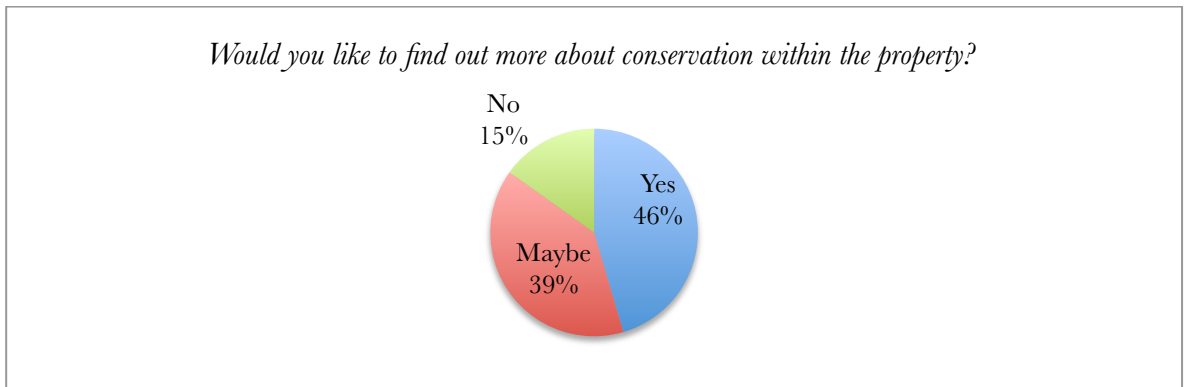
Figure 58 Visitors' views on the possibility of viewing further conservation-related displays. This question aimed to measure how the prospect of including more conservation focused elements would be received
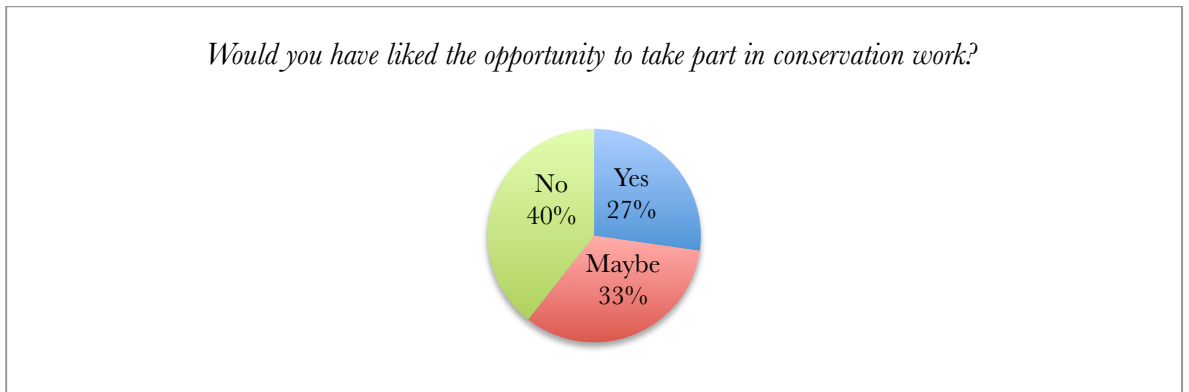
Figure 59 Visitors' inclination of participating in conservation work. This question was intended to measure the inclination of visitors to participate in conservation work
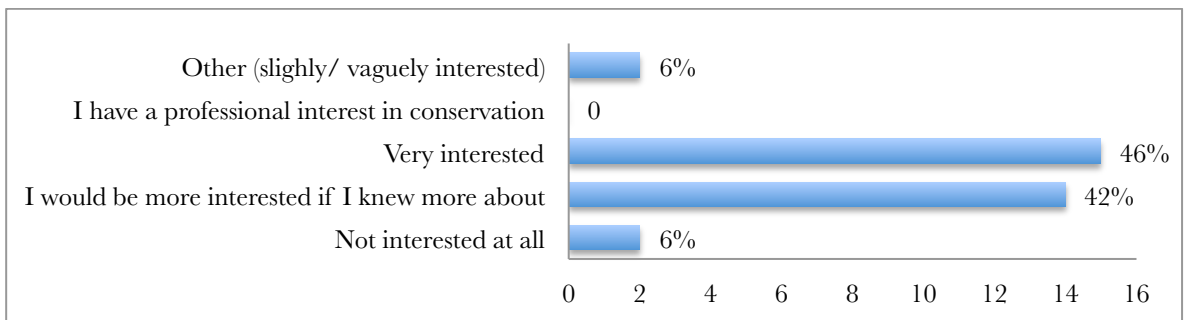
Figure 60 Visitors' connection to conservation. Participants were asked to indicate the level of their interest in the subject of conservation by responding to the closed question *'How interested are you in heritage conservation'*
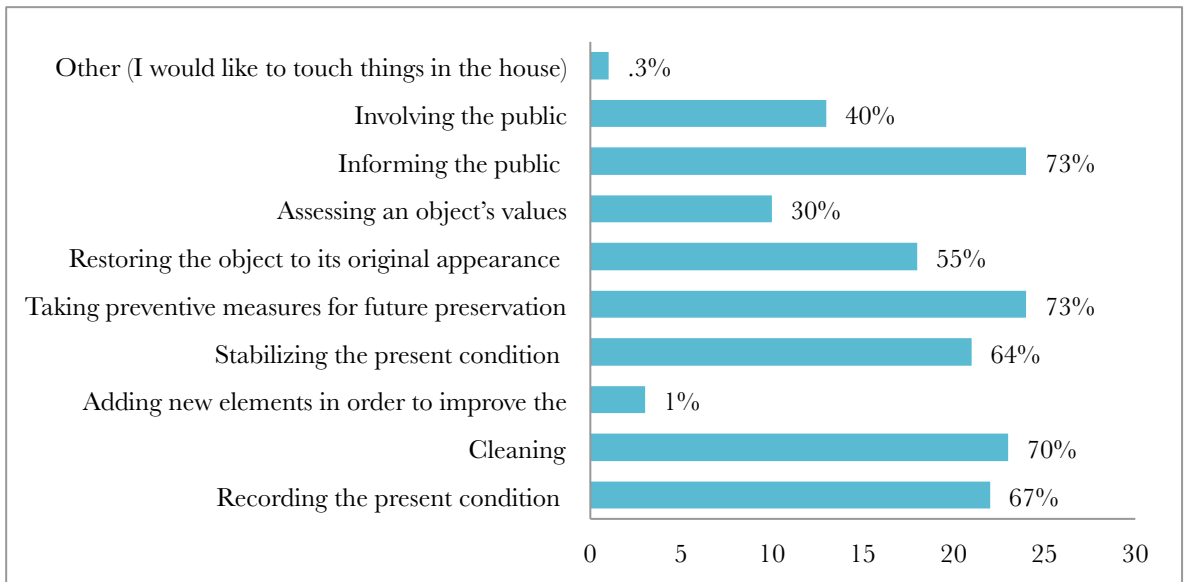
Figure 61 Views on good practice. Visitors were asked what in their opinion constitutes good practice in conservation, by answering a closed question including the responses seen in the chart below. They were able to select more than one option

Has this experience made you think differently about conservation work or exhibits in a historic property?

Missing 24%
Positive 30%
Negative 46%
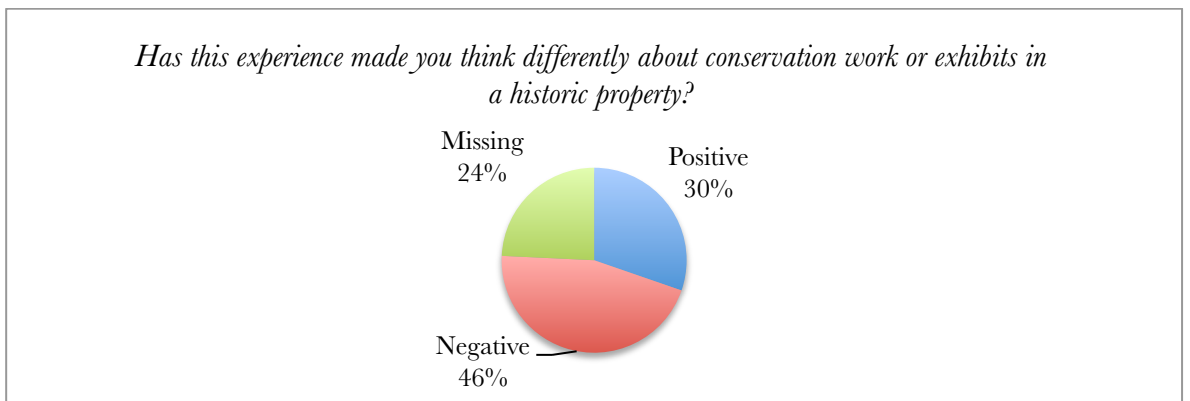
Figure 62 Impact on visitors' views. Visitors were asked to self-assess any changes their experience of viewing conservation demonstrations has brought about in relation to the exhibits or the conservation process itself. This was done by using the open ended question '*Has this experience made you think differently about conservation work or exhibits in a historic property*', followed by a seconded open question '*If so, how*'. The responses were then placed in two categories including those who indicated that there was a change in their way of thinking and those who responded negatively.
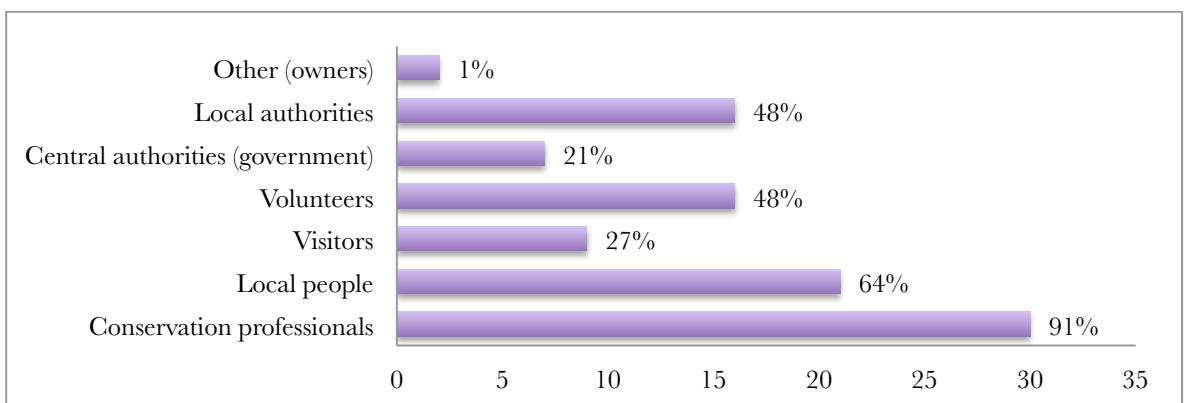
Figure 63 Visitors' views on who should take part in the decision-making regarding conservation. Visitors were asked to select who they believed '*should participate in decision-making regarding heritage conservation*' by responding to a closed tick-box question. They were able to select more than one option, and they could also specify if there was any other additional option (stakeholder) that they considered a suitable answer.

Appendix III – Application Submitted to the Arts and Humanities Ethics Committee

THE UNIVERSITY of York

Arts and Humanities Ethics Committee

Submission form

To be used for:

- Small scale evaluation & audit work

- Non-invasive research

- Not involving vulnerable groups e.g.

    o Children
    o Those with learning disabilities
    o People with mental impairment due to health or lifestyle
    o Those who are terminally ill
    o Recently bereaved
    o Those unable to consent to or understand the research
    o Where research concerns sensitive topics / illegal activities
    o Where deception is involved
    o Any research requiring a CRB check

- Following initial evaluation you may be required to submit a Full application to AHEC where ethical issues need more detailed consideration

- It is up to the researcher to determine which form to complete at the outset.

- NB If you are collecting data from NHS patients or staff, or Social Service users or staff, you will need to apply for approval through the Integrated Research Application System (IRAS) at https://www.myresearchproject.org.uk/Signin.aspx

    o If you are a staff member please fill in the IRAS form NOT this one and send your completed IRAS form to AHEC for health and social services research.

    o Student applications for approval through IRAS should normally be pre-reviewed by department ethics committees or AHEC.

Completed forms should be sent to the Chair of the AHEC as follows:

1. **one signed hard copy** (to Judith Buchanan, Director, Humanities Research Centre, Berrick Saul Building, University of York, YO10 5DD), and
2. **one electronic copy** (email to ahec-group@york.ac.uk).

Initial decisions will normally be made and communicated within two weeks of the Committee meeting. Details of committee meeting dates can be found on the AHEC web pages at: http://www.york.ac.uk/hrc/ahec

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SUBMISSION FORM LITE

1a. Please provide the following details about the principal investigator at York

Name of Applicant:	Danai Koutromanou
e-mail address:	dk603@york.ac.uk
Telephone:	07528149049
Staff/Student Status:	Research student
Dept/Centre or Unit:	Archaeology
Head of Department:	John Schofield
HoD e-mail address:	John.schofield@york.ac.uk
Head of Research: (if applicable)	
HoR e-mail address: (if applicable)	

2. If you are a student please provide the following supervisory details for your project:

1st Supervisor	Gill Chitty
email address:	gill.chitty@york.ac.uk

3. Please provide the following details about your project:

Title of Project:	Public engagement in heritage conservation
Date of Submission to AHEC:	07/08/2013
Project Start Date:	01/10/2011
Duration:	3 years
Funded Yes/No:	No

4. Summary of research proposal

Aims and objectives of the research
Please outline the questions or hypotheses that will be examined in the research.
The aim of this research is to investigate various forms of engaging audiences in heritage conservation practice and thinking. This will be examined within a number of different museum contexts by exploring non-experts' notions and attitudes towards heritage conservation.

Methods of data collection
Outline how the data will be collected from or about human subjects.
The methods used involve interview (audio-recorded) and questionnaires (hard copies completed by participants). Participation is optional and participants are informed that they can withdraw at any time or omit any questions they do not wish to answer.

Recruitment of participants
How many participants will take part in the research? How will they be identified and invited to take part in the study? How will informed consent be obtained?

The total number of participants is determined by the number of those willing to take part in the survey and the specific circumstances in each case. In terms of the size of sample groups, the likely range of numbers of participants is estimated between 50 and 200. The duration of the survey for each case study is maximum 6 days, during the museum's opening hours. Participants will be asked whether they would like to take part in the survey by completing a questionnaire or by taking part in an interview. They are informed a) about the research, anonymity etc. orally and in writing on the survey instrument and b) orally before they agree to take part in an interview (please see attached form with information for participants). The researcher's contact details are also available at the bottom of each questionnaire and are also available to the interview participants. The sample includes primarily adult museum visitors. In case of younger visitors who may wish to participate in the survey, they may do so with the consent of their parent or attendant. Finally, in case they are willing to offer their perspective on the subject, members of the Conservation Department are also interviewed.

Participant information sheets and consent forms

Please attach (1) the project information sheet to be given to all participants and (2) the informed consent form. **(n.b. failure to submit these documents may delay the approval process.)**

i. Please confirm you have included the project information sheet to be given to all participants with your submission to AHEC. If this has not been attached, please explain why this is the case.

Participants are asked for their consent orally. They are informed that their participation is optional, that they can choose not to respond to any questions if they do not wish to and can withdraw at any time. Their names and contact details are not required at any stage and therefore anonymity is ensured. It is also explained to them how data is handled and stored.

ii. Please confirm you have included all the relevant informed consent forms. If these have not been attached, please explain why this is the case.

Informed consent is received orally in order for visitors not to be discouraged to participate and to ensure a good response rate.

iii. Are the results to be given as feedback or disseminated to your participants (if yes please specify when, in what form, and by what means)

The relevant thesis chapters will be sent via email to the Conservation Dept. of the Ashmolean museum and Knole, but not to the visitors who participated.

Anonymity

In most instances the Committee expects that anonymity will be offered to research subjects. Please set out how you intend to ensure anonymity. If anonymity is not being offered please explain why this is the case.

Anonymity is offered to all participants. In the case of interviews and correspondence with conservation professionals, their work titles are used to refer to the information they provide. Their names are used only if they wish to.

Data collection

All personal and sensitive data must be collected and stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. Please set out all the types of data you will be collecting (e.g. interviews, questionnaires, recordings)

i. Please detail type(s) of data.

Transcribed interview recordings

Questionnaires

ii. Where is the data to be collected and where will it be stored electronically? Please describe what protection there will be in relation to electronic storage?

Data will be stored on Google drive and a backup copy will be stored on my personal computer.

iii. Where is the data to be stored in paper form? Please describe how this will be protected.

Tables including this data will be included in the thesis in the form of appendices.
iv. At what point are you proposing to destroy the data, in relation to the duration of this project? And how?
The data will be stored on my university account, which will be automatically deleted at the end of my enrolment. The questionnaires will be scanned and stored on Google drive and the paper copies will be shredded.
v. If you are sharing data with others outside your department, what steps are you taking to ensure that it is protected?
In the case of the Conservation Galleries, part of the data will be shared with the Ashmolean museum's Conservation Department and in the case of Knole, data will be shared with the National Trust. These institutions follow their own codes of ethics and agree not to share or publish any of this data without permission.
vi. If the data is to be exported outside the European Union, what steps are you taking to ensure that it is protected? (**Note: you must identify how you will comply with Data Protection Act 1998 requirements.**)
Data will not be exported outside the European Union.

Perceived risks or ethical problems
Please outline any anticipated risks or ethical problems that may adversely affect any of the participants, the researchers and or the university, and the steps that will be taken to address them. (**Note: all research involving human participants can have adverse effects.**)
i. Risks to participants (e.g. emotional distress, financial disclosure, physical harm, transfer of personal data, sensitive organisational information…)
The risk to participants is low. The focus of the study has to do with the visitor experience in the museum environment and the participants' understanding of heritage conservation. It is therefore highly unlikely that any emotional distress or harm of any kind can be caused as a result of the questions asked in this survey. Finally, it is optional for participants to also supply demographic information the form of tick box questions at the end of each questionnaire.
ii. Risks to researchers (e.g. personal safety, physical harm, emotional distress, risk of accusation of harm/impropriety, conflict of interest…)
None
iii. University/institutional risks (e.g. adverse publicity, financial loss, data protection…)
None
iv. Financial conflicts of interest (e.g. perceived or actual with respect to direct payments, research funding, indirect sponsorship, board or organisational memberships, past associations, future potential benefits, other…)
None
v. Please draw the committee's attention to any other specific ethical issues this study raises.
None

5. Ethics checklist

Please confirm that all of the steps indicated below have been taken, or will be taken, with regards to the above named project submitted for ethical approval. If there are any items that you cannot confirm, or are not relevant to your project, please use the space provided below to explain.

Please tick if true, otherwise leave blank:

✓ Informed consent will be sought from all research participants where appropriate
✓ All data will be treated anonymously and stored in a secure place
✓ All Relevant issues relating to Data Protection legislation have been considered (see http://www.york.ac.uk/recordsmanagement/dpa/) & the Data Protection office contacted (Dr Charles Fonge, Borthwick Institute, charles.fonge@york.ac.uk)

- ✓ All quotes and other material obtained from participants will be anonymised in all reports/publications arising from the study where appropriate
- ✓ All reasonable steps have been taken to minimise risk of physical/ psychological harm to project participants.
- ✓ All reasonable steps have been taken to minimise risk of physical/mental harm to researchers
- ✓ Participants have been made aware of and consent to all potential futures uses of the research and data
- ✓ With respect to indemnity Sue Final (University IP Manager, **Ext#** 4401 **email:** sue.final@york.ac.uk) has been made aware of the research
- ✓ There are no known conflicts of interest with respect to finance/funding
- ✓ The research is approved by the Head of Department, Unit, Centre or School

Please explain in the space below, why any of the above items have not yet been confirmed:

6. Other comments

Are there any issues that you wish to draw to the Committee's attention (it is your responsibility to draw any ethical issues to AHEC that may be of perceived or actual interest)?

7.   Submission Checklist for Applicants

Finally, please **sign** the form and ensure that **all of the indicated documents** below are sent both **electronically** to hrc-ethics@york.ac.uk, and in **hard copy** to the AHEC Chair, Judith Buchanan, Director, Humanities Research Centre, Berrick Saul Building, University of York, YO10 5DD.

þ AHEC Application form

þ Consent form for participants

þ Information Sheet for participants

þ AHEC Compliance form

8.   Signed undertaking

In submitting this application I hereby confirm that there are **no actual or perceived conflicts of interest** with respect to this application (and associated research) other than those already declared.

Furthermore, I hereby undertake to ensure that the above named research project will meet the commitments in the checklist above. In conducting the project, the research team will be guided by the Social Research Association's/AHRC's/ESRC's ethical guidelines for research.

Danai Koutromanou

(Signed Lead Researcher/Principal Investigator)

07 August 2013

(Signed Supervisor (where relevant))

28 August 2013

Arts and Humanities Ethics Committee

Compliance Declaration

This declaration must be returned, fully completed, along with each submission made to AHEC.

On completion, please return **two copies** of this form: one by email to ahec-group@york.ac.uk, and a second, hard-copy, **signed by the Applicant, the Applicant's Head of Department, and − if applicable − the Applicant's Supervisor**.

Those making a resubmission **must also complete section 6, on page 3.**

Return Address: Helen Jacobs, Humanities Research Centre, Berrick Saul Building, University of York YO10 5DD .

1.   The Applicant:

Name: Danai Koutromanou

Position: Research student in Conservation Studies

Department: Archaeology

Contact details: email address: dk603@york.ac.uk   Telephone number: 07528149049

2.   Supervisors:

Doctoral Supervisor: Gill Chitty

Head of Research:

Head of Department: John Schofield

3.   The Project:

Project Title: Public engagement in heritage conservation

How is the project funded?:   Self-funded

4.   Other Jurisdictions:

Please indicate whether your proposal has been considered by any other bodies:

☐ External Sponsor

☐ Another University of York Ethics Committee

☐ NHS Research Ethics Committee

5.   Declaration:

I confirm that I have read and understood:

þ   the AHEC guidelines on consent; and

þ   the AHEC information sheets for researchers working with human subjects; and

þ   University of York data protection guidelines.

These forms are available on the AHEC pages of the HRC website: www.york.ac.uk/hrc/ahec

Signature of applicant:

Danai Koutromanou

_____
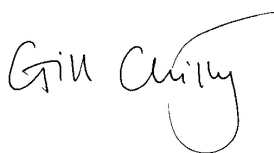
Date: 07/08/2013

I confirm that the applicant and myself have read and understood the AHEC guidelines on Consent and Data Protection)

Signature of Research Supervisor (if appropriate):

(Type name if submitting electronically)

28/08/2013

Signature of Head of Research Centre or Head of Department:

(Type name if submitting electronically)

_____

Date:

6. Additional Declaration for Resubmissions:

I have read and understood the AHEC response to the initial application, and consider that the attached response deals appropriately with its recommendations.

Signature of applicant:

_____

Date:

Please attach an additional sheet/file with a point-by-point response to the recommendations issued by AHEC.

I have read and understood the AHEC response to the initial application, and consider that the attached response deals appropriately with its recommendations.

Signature of Research Supervisor (if appropriate):

_____

Date:

I have read and understood the AHEC response to the initial application, and consider that the attached response deals appropriately with its recommendations.

Signature of Head of Research Centre or Head of Department:

_____

Date:

Consent form for participants

This form is used to ensure informed consent by anyone taking part in this study. All participants are asked to orally agree with the following, before completing the questionnaire/taking part in an interview.

	Yes	No
Have you understood all the information about this research project?		
Do you understand that the data you provide is anonymous?		
Do you understand how long your data will be stored for and how it will be used?		
Do you understand that you can withdraw at any time?		
Have you had the chance to ask any questions about this research?		
Do you agree to take part in an interview/complete a questionnaire?		
Do you agree to be recorded during the interview?		

Information for participants

About this research

My name is Danai Koutromanou and I am a research student in Conservation Studies at the University of York. I am looking at the subject of public engagement in heritage conservation and this is an optional interview/questionnaire that will help me with my project. I am carrying out this research to explore how museum visitors perceive conservation and I would like to find out what your thoughts are on this exhibition/demonstration/workshop/project. I would also like to ask your views on public participation and decision-making in conservation, and finally how your visit/experience has changed (if at all) the way you think about heritage objects and conservation in the museum environment.

What it involves

I would like to gather the views of visitors who have seen this exhibition/demonstration/project or participated in this workshop on conservation. This involves either the completion of a questionnaire or a one-to-one audio-recorded interview. Your responses will help improve this event/exhibition and the communication between conservation professionals and the general public.

About the data

Your responses are anonymous, you do not have to answer any questions if you do not wish to and you are free to withdraw at any time. The information you supply will be used only for the purposes of this research and may be shared as feedback for this exhibition with the relevant museum/organisation. The data you supply will be recorded and kept on Google drive until the end of my degree, and a copy will be stored on my personal computer.

Contact infromation

If you have any further questions on any of the above, please feel free to ask me or email me at:
Danai Koutromanou: dk603@york.ac.uk

Appendix IV – Data Analyses in Chapter 5

Participants' connection to conservation

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	I have a professional interest in conservation	15	5.5	5.5	5.5
	Very interested	122	45.0	45.2	50.7
	I would be more interested if I knew more about conservation	122	45.0	45.2	95.9
	Not interested at all	11	4.1	4.1	100.0
	Total	270	99.6	100.0	
Missing	System	1	0.4		
Total		271	100.0		

Table 18 Connection with conservation (valid percent calculated using combined frequencies)

	Valid Percent Ashmolean Museum	Valid Percent Yorkshire Museum	Valid Percent Knole House	Average Valid Percent	Cumulative Average Valid Percent
I have a professional interest in conservation	4.8	14.3	4.8	**7.9**	7.9
Very interested	38.0	61.9	55.4	**51.8**	59.7
I would be more interested if I knew more about conservation	51.2	23.8	38.6	**37.9**	97.6
Not interested at all	6.0	0.0	1.2	**2.4**	100.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	**100.0**	

Table 19 Connection with conservation (average valid percent calculated using combined valid percent per case study)
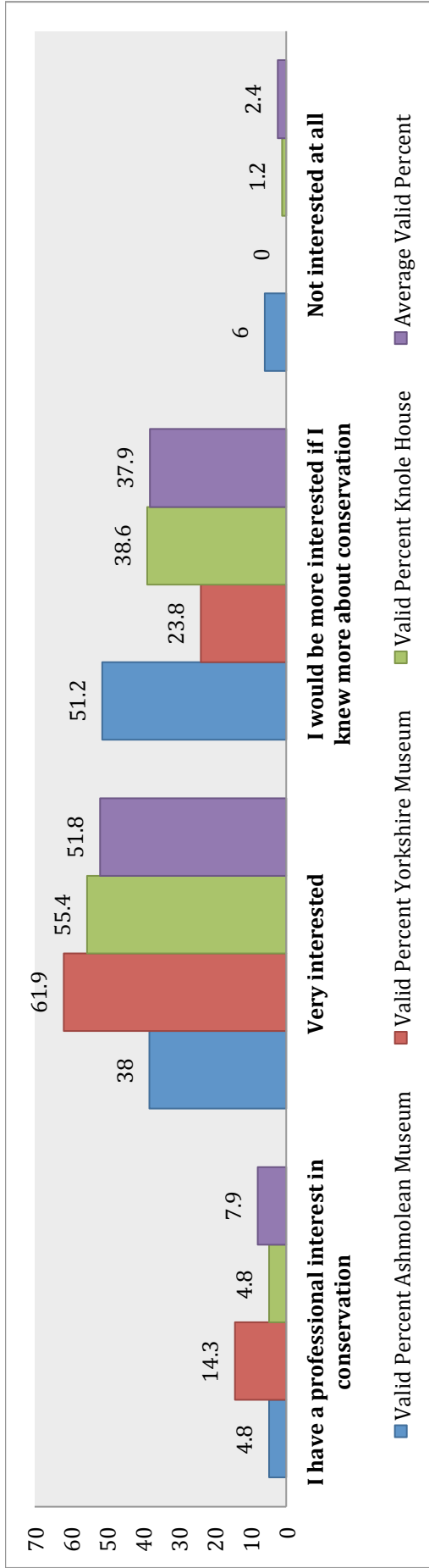
Figure 64 Connection with conservation (average valid percent calculated using combined valid percent per case study)

Figure 65 Connection with conservation (average valid percent calculated using combined valid percent per case study)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	I have a professional interest in conservation	8	4.8	**4.8**	4.8
	Very interested	63	37.7	**38.0**	42.8
	I would be more interested if I knew more about conservation	85	50.9	**51.2**	94.0
	Not interested at all	10	6.0	**6.0**	100.0
	Total	166	99.4	**100.0**	
Missing	System	1	0.6		
	Total	167	100.0		

Table 20 Connection with conservation (ASHMOLEAN MUSEUM)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	I have a professional interest in conservation	3	14.3	**14.3**	14.3
	Very interested	13	61.9	**61.9**	76.2
	I would be more interested if I knew more about conservation	5	23.8	**23.8**	100.0
	Not interested at all	0	0.0	**0**	100.0
	Total	21	100.0	**100.0**	100.0
Missing	System	0	0		
	Total	21	100.0		

Table 21 Connection with conservation (YORKSHIRE MUSEUM)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	I have a professional interest in conservation	4	4.8	**4.8**	4.8
	Very interested	46	55.4	**55.4**	60.2
	I would be more interested if I knew more about conservation	32	38.6	**38.6**	98.8
	Not interested at all	1	1.2	**1.2**	100.0
	Total	83	100.0	**100.0**	
Missing	System	0	0		
	Total	83	100.0		

Table 22 Connection with conservation (KNOLE HOUSE)

Perceived importance

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Very important	157	57.9	57.9	57.9
Important	85	31.4	31.4	89.3
Quite important	26	9.6	9.6	98.9
Not very important	3	1.1	1.1	100.0
Not important at all	0	0.0	0.0	100.0
Total	271	100.0	100.0	
Missing System	0	0.0		
Total	271	100.0		

Table 23 Perceived importance of conservation (valid percent calculated using combined frequencies)

	Valid Percent Ashmolean Museum	Valid Percent Yorkshire Museum	Valid Percent Knole House	Average Valid Percent
Very important	52.1	61.9	68.7	**60.9**
Important	31.7	38.1	28.9	**32.9**
Quite important	14.4	0.0	2.4	**5.6**
Not very important	1.8	0.0	0.0	**0.6**
Not important at all	0.0	0.0	0.0	**0.0**
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	**100.0**

Table 24 Perceived importance of conservation (average valid percent calculated using combined valid percent per case study)
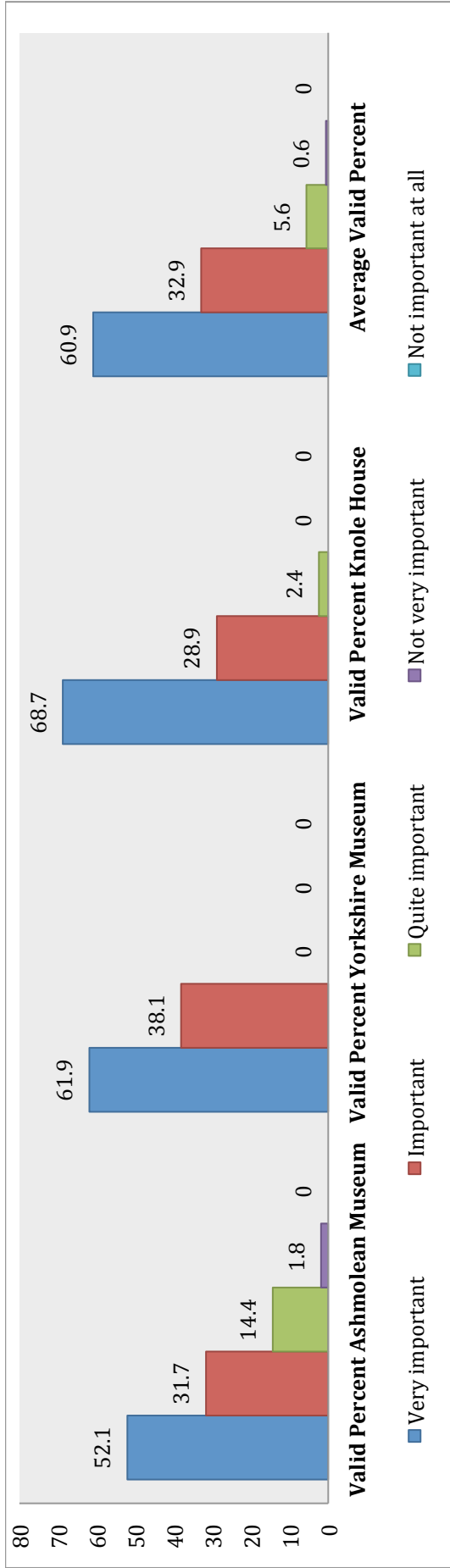
Figure 66 Perceived importance of conservation (average valid percent calculated using combined valid percent per case study)
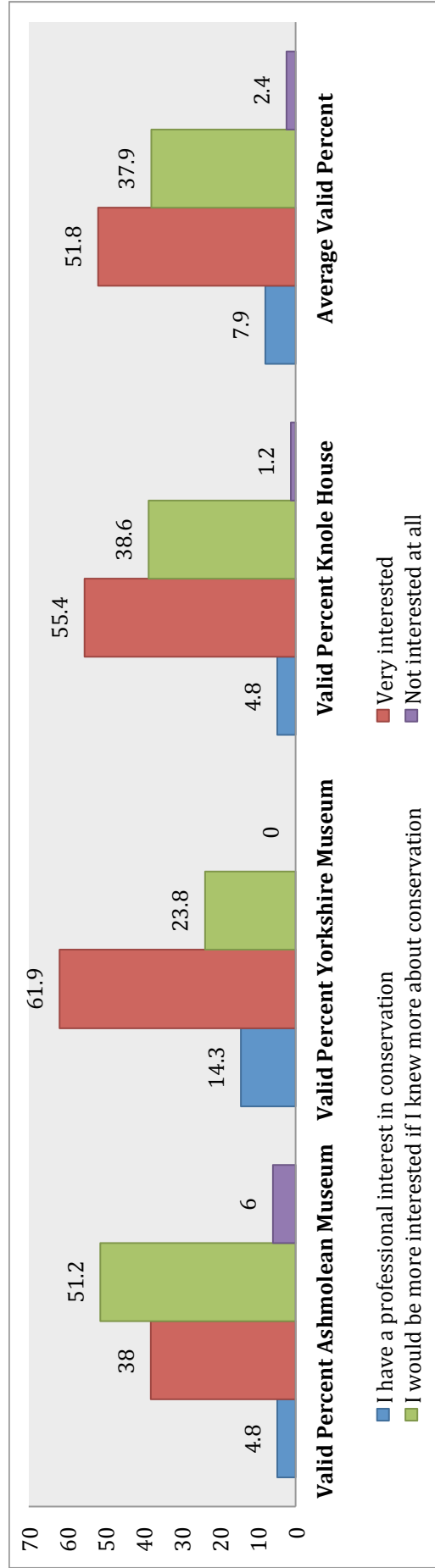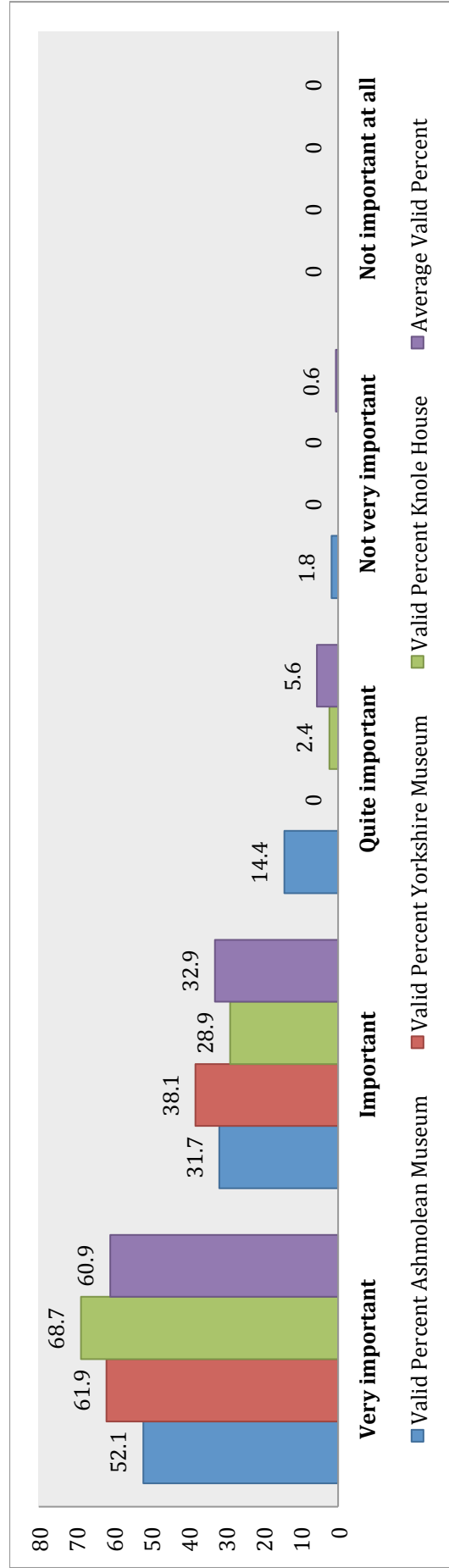

Figure 67 Perceived importance of conservation (average valid percent calculated using combined valid percent per case study)

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		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Very important	87	52.1	**52.1**	52.1
	Important	53	31.7	**31.7**	83.8
	Quite important	24	14.4	**14.4**	98.2
	Not very important	3	1.8	**1.8**	100.0
	Not important at all	0.0	0.0	**0.0**	100.0
	Total	167	100.0	**100.0**	
Missing	System	0	0.0		
	Total	167	100.0		

Table 25 Perceived importance of conservation (ASHMOLEAN MUSEUM)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Very important	13	61.9	**61.9**	61.9
	Important	8	38.1	**38.1**	100.0
	Quite important	0	0.0	**0.0**	
	Not very important	0	0.0	**0.0**	
	Not important at all	0	0.0	**0.0**	
	Total	21	100.0	**100.0**	
Missing	System	0	0.0		
	Total	21	100.0		

Table 26 Perceived importance of conservation (YORKSHIRE MUSEUM)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Very important	57	68.7	**68.7**	68.7
	Important	24	28.9	**28.9**	97.6
	Quite important	2	2.4	**2.4**	100.0
	Not very important	0	0.0	**0.0**	
	Not important at all	0	0.0	**0.0**	
	Total	83	100.0	**100.0**	
Missing	System	0	0.0		
	Total	83	100.0		

Table 27 Perceived importance of conservation (KNOLE HOUSE)

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Views on good practice

	Frequency Ashmolean Museum	Frequency Yorkshire Museum	Frequency Knole House	Frequency Total	Total Percent of cases
Recording the present condition	105	19	43	167	61.6%
Cleaning	67	8	39	114	42.1%
Adding new elements in order to improve the object	6	2	12	20	7.4%
Stabilising the present condition	120	19	52	191	70.5%
Taking preventive measures for future preservation	117	19	68	204	75.3%
Assessing an object's values	67	18	16	101	37.3%
Informing the public	104	12	51	167	61.6%
Restoring an object to its original appearance	53	2	49	104	38.4%
Involving the public	47	11	18	76	28.0%
Number of respondents*	167	21	83	271	

Table 28 Views on good practice (valid percent calculated using combined frequencies)

	Ashmolean Museum	Yorkshire Museum	Knole House	**Average Percent of cases**
Recording the present condition	62.9	90.5	51.8	**68.4**
Cleaning	40.1	38.1	47.0	**41.7**
Adding new elements in order to improve the object	3.6	9.5	14.5	**9.2**
Stabilising the present condition	71.9	90.5	62.7	**75.1**
Taking preventive measures for future preservation	70.1	90.5	81.9	**80.8**
Assessing an object's values	40.1	85.7	19.3	**48.4**
Informing the public	62.3	57.1	61.4	**60.3**
Restoring an object to its original appearance	31.7	9.5	59.0	**33.4**
Involving the public	28.1	52.4	21.7	**34.1**

Table 29 Views on good practice (average valid percent calculated using valid percent per case study)
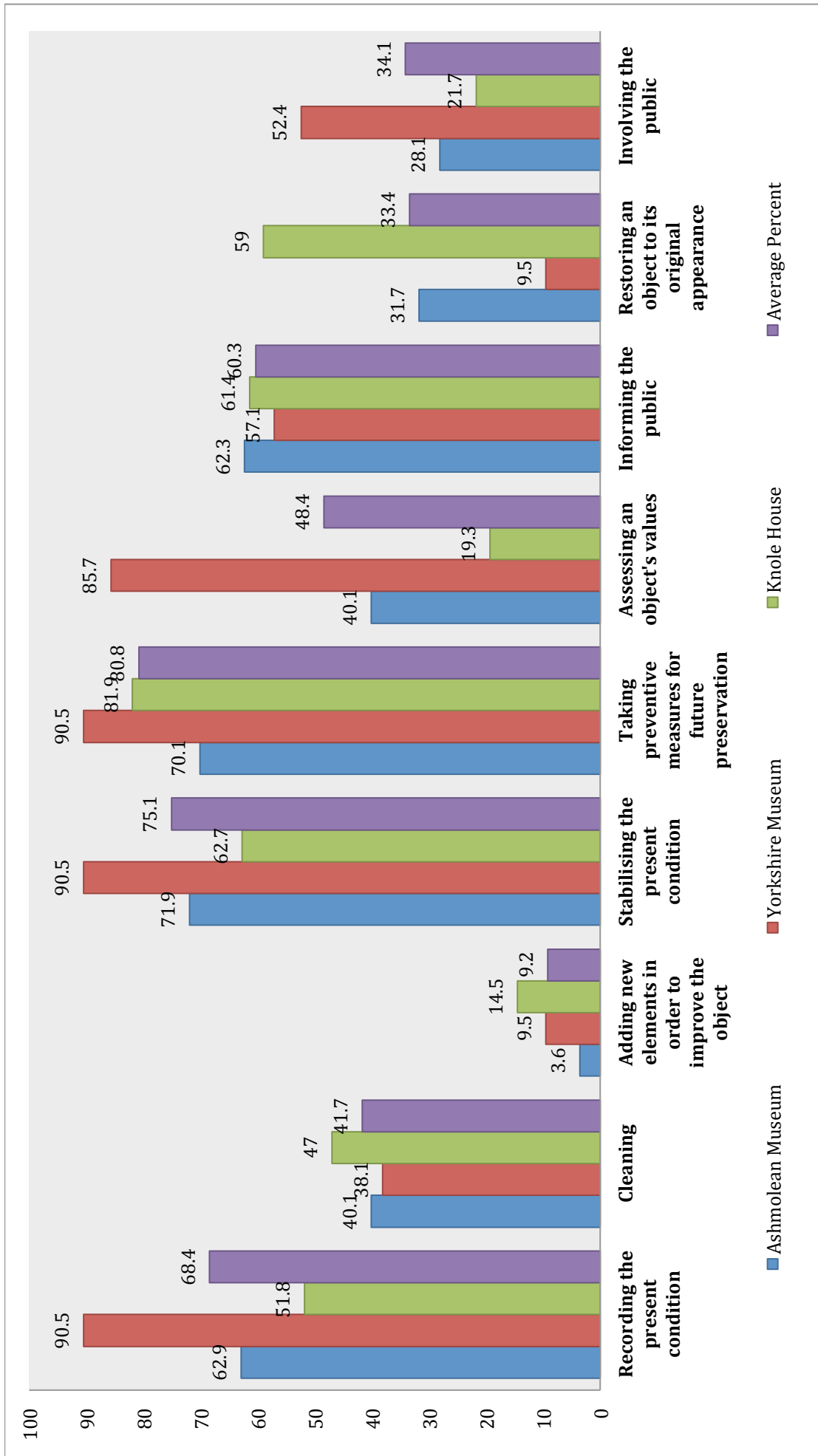
Figure 68 Views on good practice (average valid percent calculated using valid percent per case study)

233
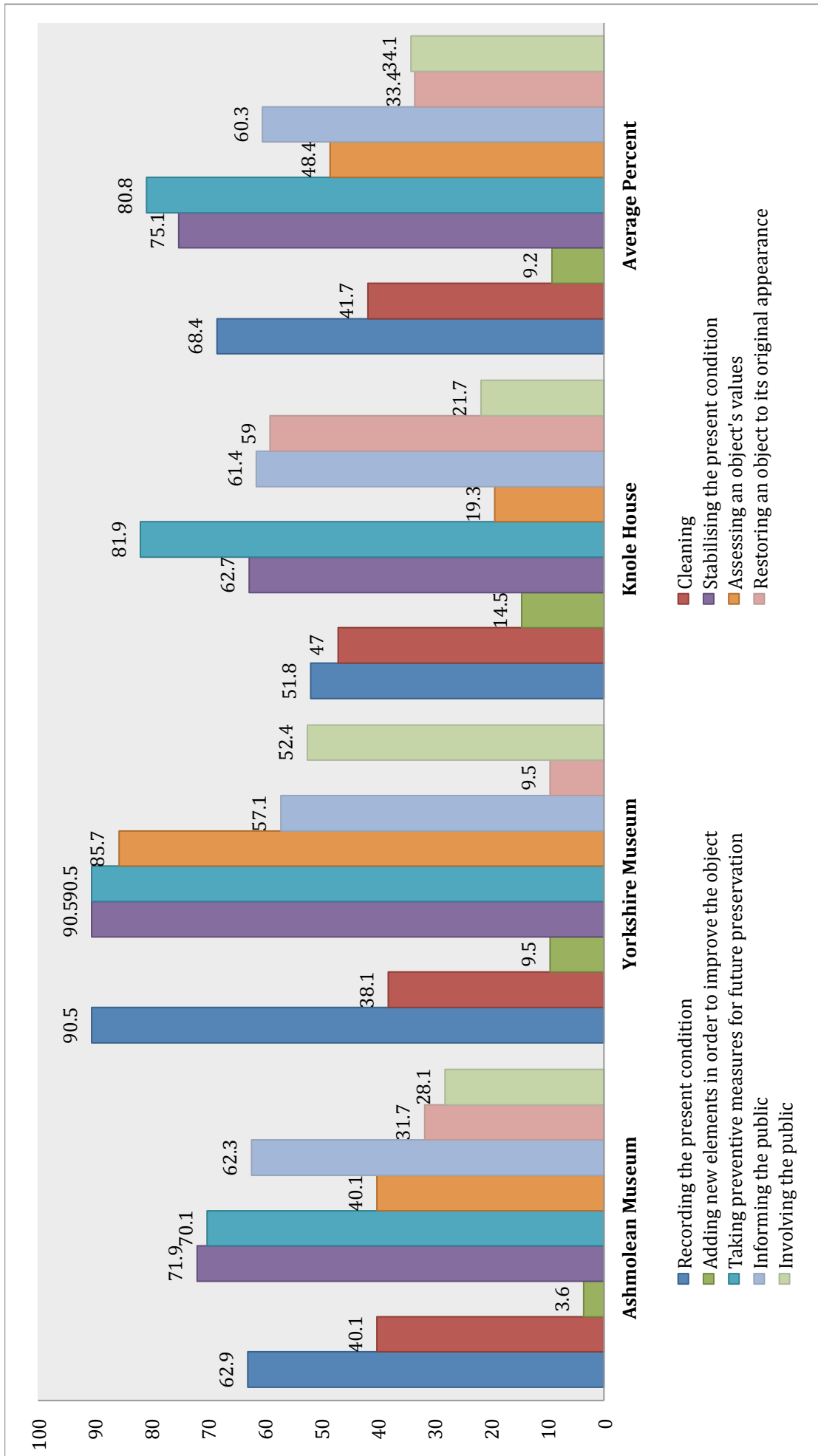
Figure 69 Views on good practice (average valid percent calculated using valid percent per case study)

Legend:
- Recording the present condition
- Adding new elements in order to improve the object
- Taking preventive measures for future preservation
- Informing the public
- Involving the public
- Cleaning
- Stabilising the present condition
- Assessing an object's values
- Restoring an object to its original appearance

Ashmolean Museum
- 62.9
- 40.1
- 3.6
- 71.9
- 70.1
- 40.1
- 62.3
- 31.7
- 28.1

Yorkshire Museum
- 90.5
- 38.1
- 9.5
- 90.5
- 90.5
- 85.7
- 57.1
- 9.5
- 52.4

Knole House
- 68.4
- 41.7
- 9.2
- 62.7
- 81.9
- 19.3
- 61.4
- 59
- 21.7

47
51.8
14.5

Average Percent
- 75.1
- 80.8
- 48.4
- 60.3
- 33.4
- 34.1

234

	Frequency	Percent of cases	Total percent of cases	Average percent of all cases
Recording the present condition	105	62.9	61.6%	68.4%
Cleaning	67	40.1	42.1%	41.7%
Adding new elements in order to improve the object	6	3.6	7.4%	9.2%
Stabilising the present condition	120	71.9	70.5%	75.1%
Taking preventive measures for future preservation	117	70.1	75.3%	80.8%
Assessing an object's values	67	40.1	37.3%	48.4%
Informing the public	104	62.3	61.6%	60.3%
Restoring an object to its original appearance	53	31.7	38.4%	33.4%
Involving the public	47	28.1	28.0%	34.1%

Table 30 Views on good practice (ASHMOLEAN MUSEUM)

	Frequency	Percent of cases	Total percent of cases	Average percent of all cases
Recording the present condition	19	90.5	61.6%	68.4%
Cleaning	8	38.1	42.1%	41.7%
Adding new elements in order to improve the object	2	9.5	7.4%	9.2%
Stabilising the present condition	19	90.5	70.5%	75.1%
Taking preventive measures for future preservation	19	90.5	75.3%	80.8%
Assessing an object's values	18	85.7	37.3%	48.4%
Informing the public	12	57.1	61.6%	60.3%
Restoring an object to its original appearance	2	9.5	38.4%	33.4%
Involving the public	11	52.4	28.0%	34.1%

Table 31 Views on good practice (YORKSHIRE MUSEUM)

	Frequency	Percent of cases	Total percent of cases	Average percent of all cases
Recording the present condition	43	51.8	61.6%	68.4%
Cleaning	39	47.0	42.1%	41.7%
Adding new elements in order to improve the object	12	14.5	7.4%	9.2%
Stabilising the present condition	52	62.7	70.5%	75.1%
Taking preventive measures for future preservation	68	81.9	75.3%	80.8%
Assessing an object's values	16	19.3	37.3%	48.4%
Informing the public	51	61.4	61.6%	60.3%
Restoring an object to its original appearance	49	59.0	38.4%	33.4%
Involving the public	18	21.7	28.0%	34.1%

Table 32 Views on good practice (KNOLE HOUSE)

Connection with conservation / Perceived importance

	Very important	Important	Quite important	Not very important	Not important at all	Total N
I have a professional interest in conservation	14	1	0	0	0	15
Very interested	90	27	5	0	0	122
I would be more interested if I knew more about conservation	48	51	21	2	0	122
Not interested at all	4	6	0	1	0	11
Missing	1	-	-	-	-	1
Total N	157	85	26	3	0	271

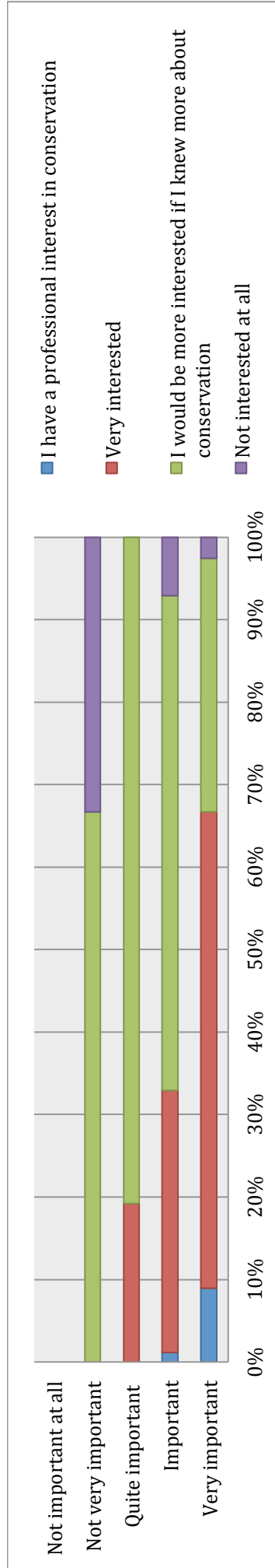**Table 33 Connection with conservation / Perceived importance (COMBINED DATA)**

Figure 70 Perceived importance / Connection with conservation (COMBINED DATA)
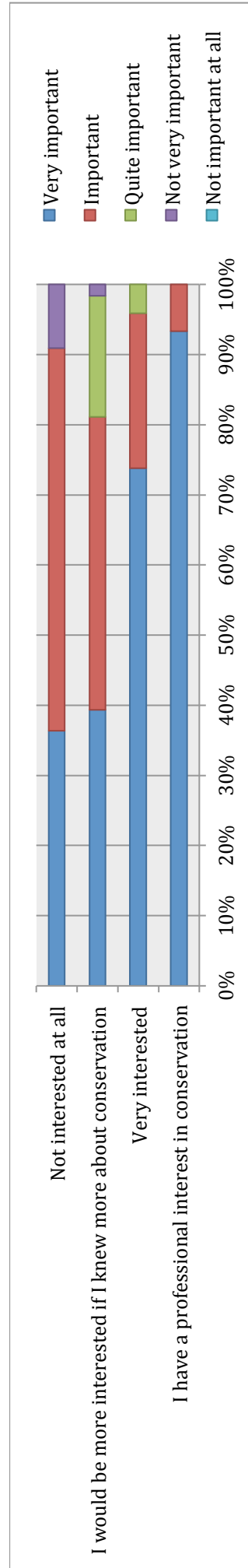

Figure 71 Connection with conservation / Perceived importance (COMBINED DATA)

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	Very important	Important	Quite important	Not very important	Not important at all	Total N
I have a professional interest in conservation	7	1	0	0	0	8
Very interested	41	17	5	0	0	63
I would be more interested if I knew more about conservation	34	30	19	2	0	85
Not interested at all	4	5	0	1	0	10
Missing	1	-	-	-	-	1
Total N	87	53	24	3	0	167

Table 34 Connection with conservation / Perceived importance (ASHMOLEAN MUSEUM)
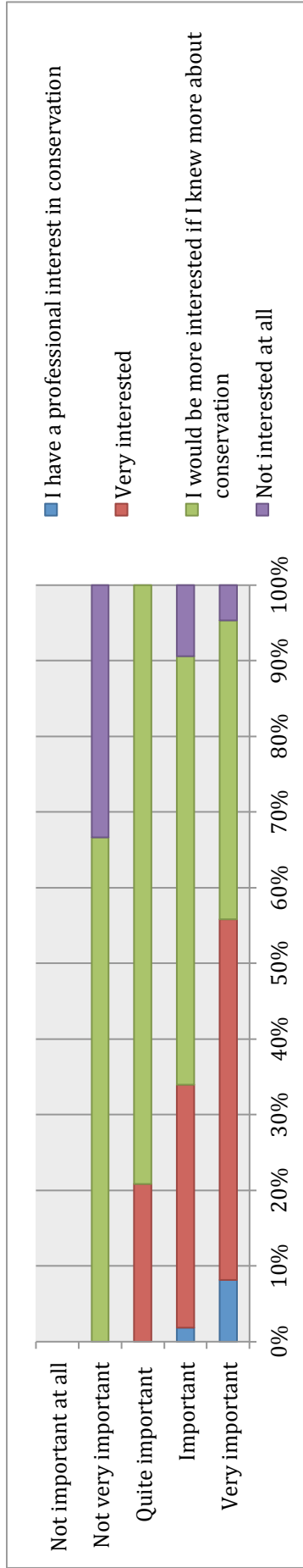

Figure 72 Perceived importance / Connection with conservation (ASHMOLEAN MUSEUM)

Figure 73 Connection with conservation / Perceived importance (ASHMOLEAN MUSEUM)

	Very important	Important	Quite important	Not very important	Not important at all	Total N
I have a professional interest in conservation	3	0	0	0	0	3
Very interested	8	5	0	0	0	13
I would be more interested if I knew more about conservation	2	3	0	0	0	5
Not interested at all	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total N	13	8	0	0	0	21

Table 35 Connection with conservation / Perceived importance (YORKSHIRE MUSEUM)

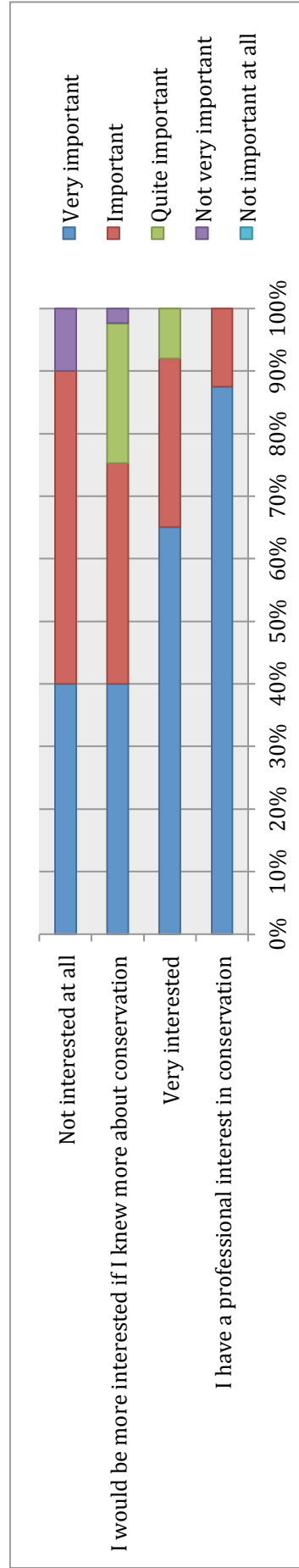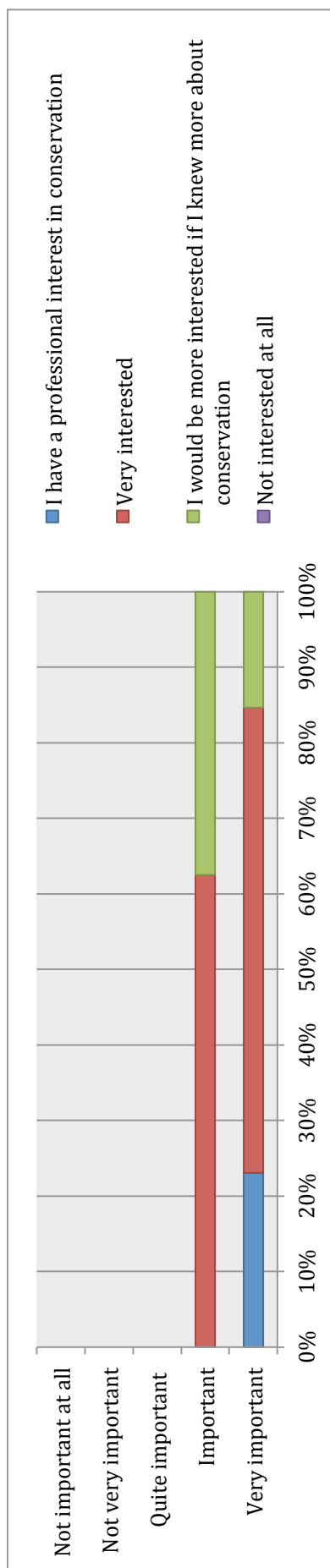**Figure 74 Perceived importance / Connection with conservation (YORKSHIRE MUSEUM)**

Figure 75 Connection with conservation / Perceived importance (YORKSHIRE MUSEUM)

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	Very important	Important	Quite important	Not very important	Not important at all	Total N
I have a professional interest in conservation	4	0	0	0	0	4
Very interested	41	5	0	0	0	46
I would be more interested if I knew more about conservation	12	18	2	0	0	32
Not interested at all	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total N	57	24	2	0	0	83

Table 36 Connection with conservation / Perceived importance (KNOLE HOUSE)

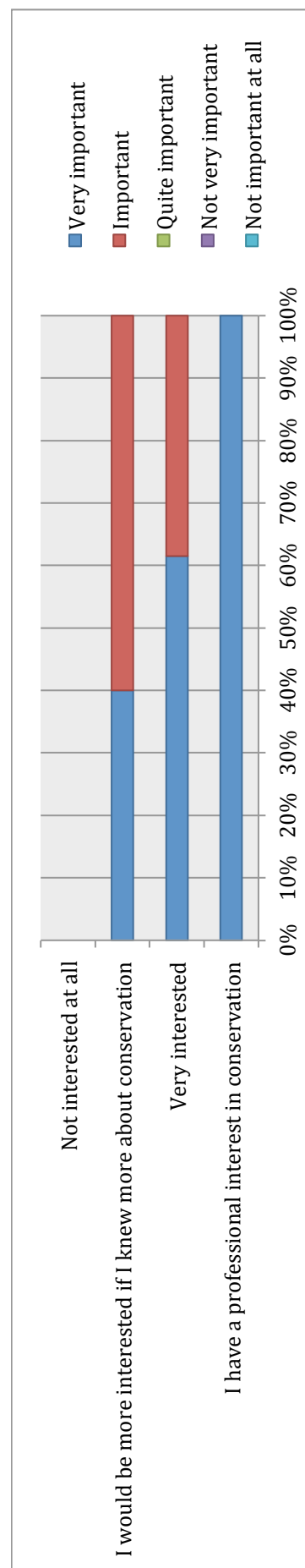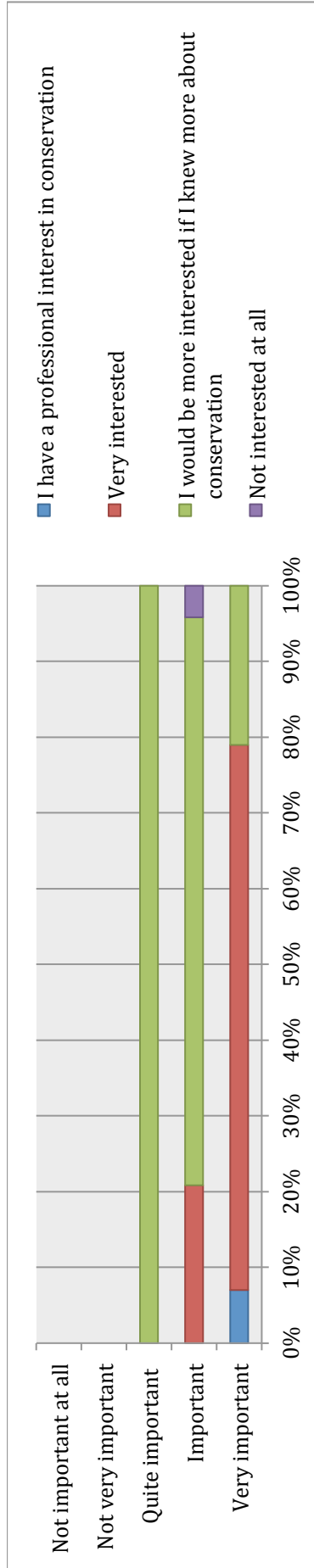**Figure 76 Perceived importance / Connection with conservation (KNOLE HOUSE)**

Figure 77 Connection with conservation / Perceived importance (KNOLE HOUSE)

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Views on good practice / Connection with conservation

	I have a professional interest in conservation	Very interested	I would be more interested if I knew more about conservation	Not interested at all	Missing	Total N
Recording the present condition	9	81	69	8	-	167
Cleaning	7	59	45	4	-	114
Adding new elements in order to improve the object	0	12	8	0	-	20
Stabilising the present condition	15	82	87	7	-	191
Taking preventive measures for future preservation	15	98	83	8	-	204
Assessing an object's values	10	46	41	4	-	101
Informing the public	12	79	71	5	-	167
Restoring an object to its original appearance	3	54	43	4	-	104
Involving the public	3	38	33	2	-	76
Total N	15*	122*	122*	11*	1	271*

Table 37 Views on good practice / Connection with conservation (COMBINED DATA)
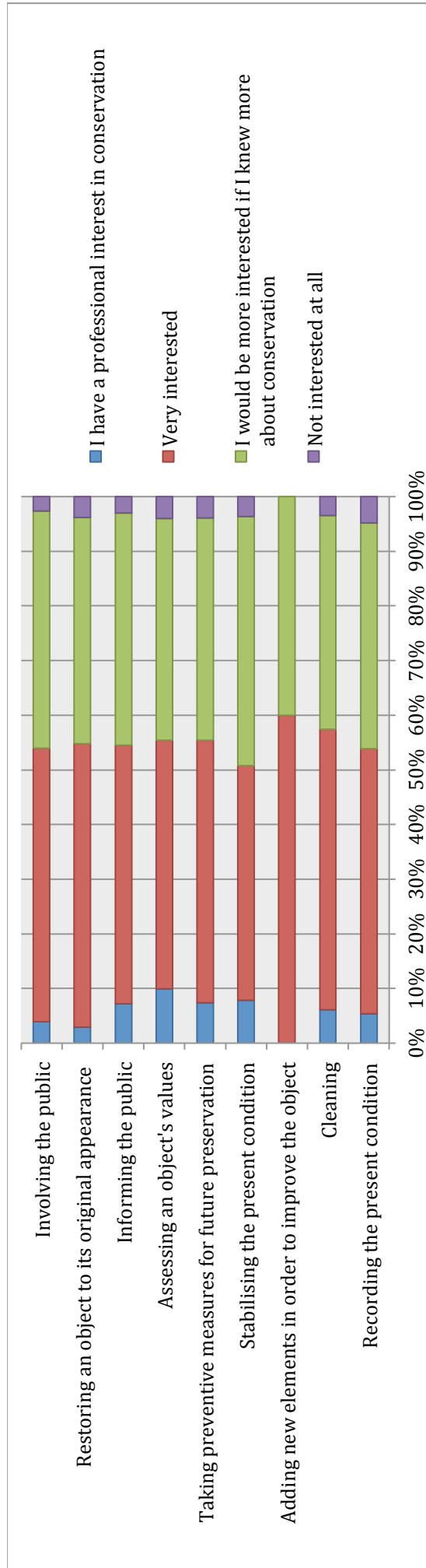
Figure 78 Views on good practice / Connection with conservation (COMBINED DATA)
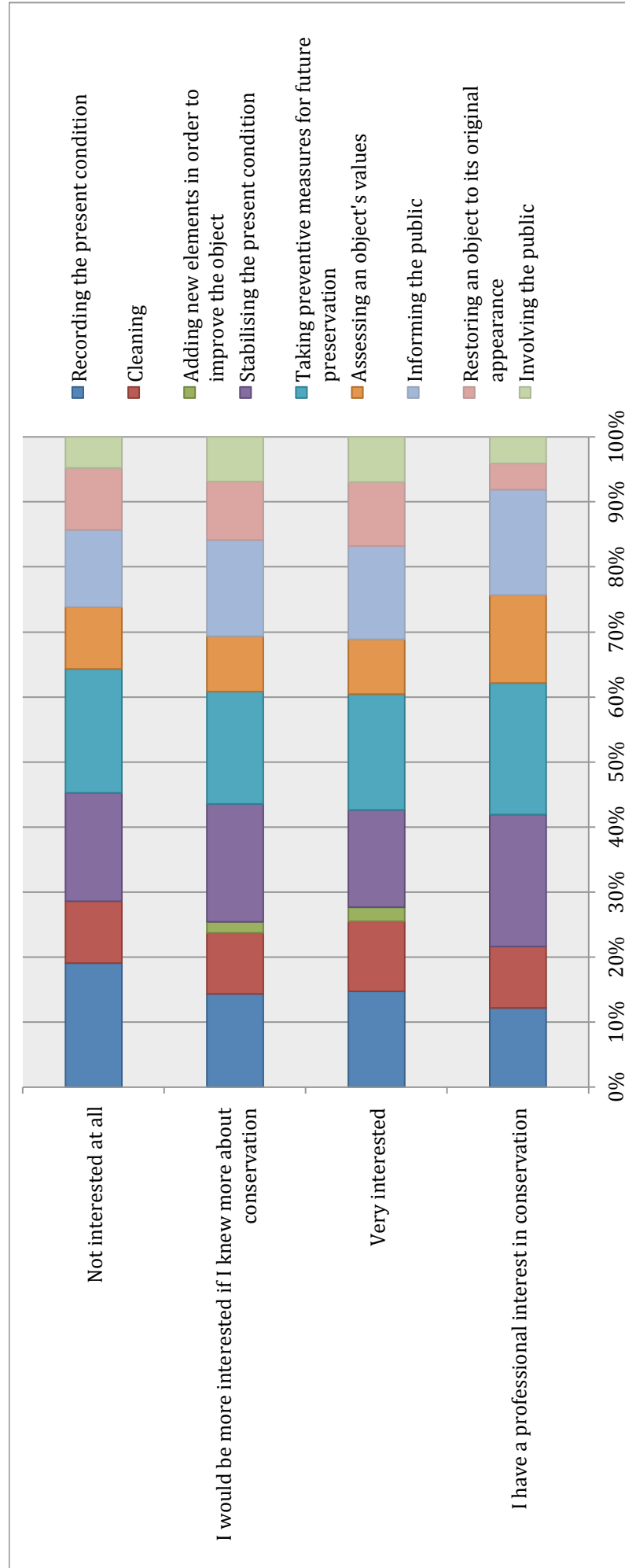
Figure 79 Connection with conservation / Views on good practice (COMBINED DATA)

Legend:
- Recording the present condition
- Cleaning
- Adding new elements in order to improve the object
- Stabilising the present condition
- Taking preventive measures for future preservation
- Assessing an object's values
- Informing the public
- Restoring an object to its original appearance
- Involving the public

Y-axis categories:
- Not interested at all
- I would be more interested if I knew more about conservation
- Very interested
- I have a professional interest in conservation

	I have a professional interest in conservation	Very interested	I would be more interested if I knew more about conservation	Not interested at all	Missing	Total N
Recording the present condition	5	44	48	8	-	105
Cleaning	5	28	31	3	-	67
Adding new elements in order to improve the object	0	2	4	0	-	6
Stabilising the present condition	8	46	60	6	-	120
Taking preventive measures for future preservation	8	45	57	7	-	117
Assessing an object's values	4	25	34	4	-	67
Informing the public	6	40	53	5	-	104
Restoring an object to its original appearance	2	19	28	4	-	53
Involving the public	1	21	23	2	-	47
Total N	8*	63*	85*	10*	1*	167*

Table 38 Views on good practice / Connection with conservation (ASHMOLEAN MUSEUM)

Legend:
- I have a professional interest in conservation
- Very interested
- I would be more interested if I knew more about conservation
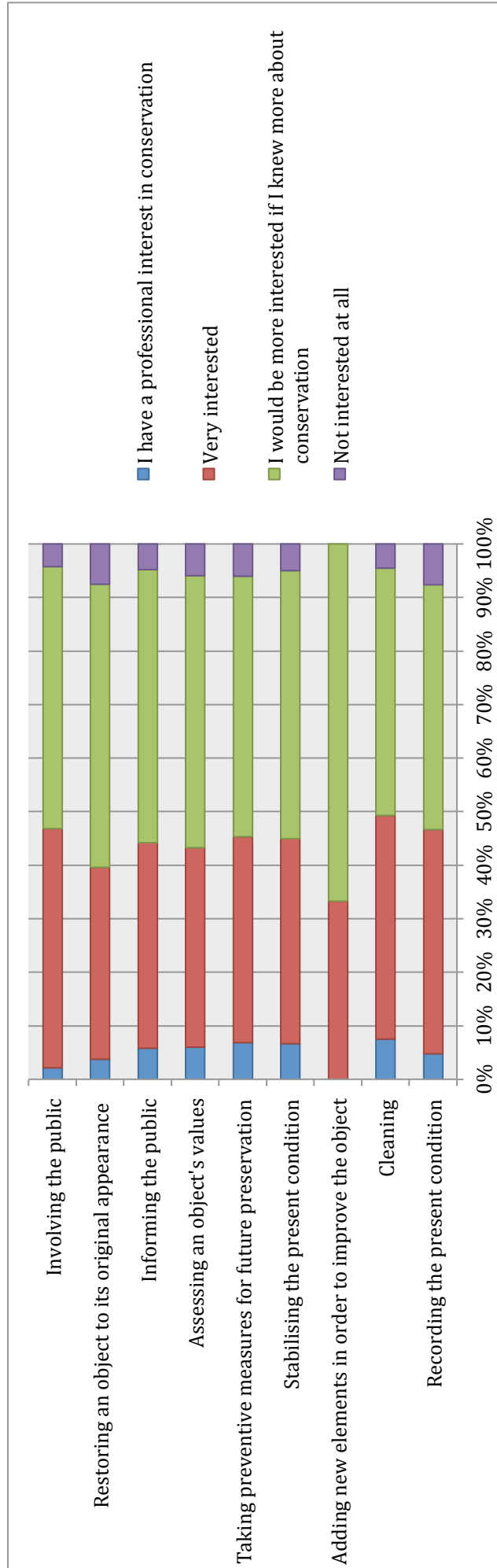- Not interested at all

Figure 80 Views on good practice / Connection with conservation (ASHMOLEAN MUSEUM)

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Figure 81 Connection with conservation / Views on good practice (ASHMOLEAN MUSEUM)

Legend:
- Recording the present condition
- Cleaning
- Adding new elements in order to improve the object
- Stabilising the present condition
- Taking preventive measures for future preservation
- Assessing an object's values
- Informing the public
- Restoring an object to its original appearance
- Involving the public

Categories:
- Not interested at all
- I would be more interested if I knew more about conservation
- Very interested
- I have a professional interest in conservation

	I have a professional interest in conservation	Very interested	I would be more interested if I knew more about conservation	Not interested at all	Total N
Recording the present condition	2	12	5	0	19
Cleaning	0	7	1	0	8
Adding new elements in order to improve the object	0	1	1	0	2
Stabilising the present condition	3	11	5	0	19
Taking preventive measures for future preservation	3	12	4	0	19
Assessing an object's values	3	12	3	0	18
Informing the public	3	7	2	0	12
Restoring an object to its original appearance	0	1	1	0	2
Involving the public	1	7	3	0	11
Total N	3*	13*	5*	0*	21*

Table 39 Views on good practice / Connection with conservation (YORKSHIRE MUSEUM)

Figure 82 Views on good practice / Connection with conservation (YORKSHIRE MUSEUM)
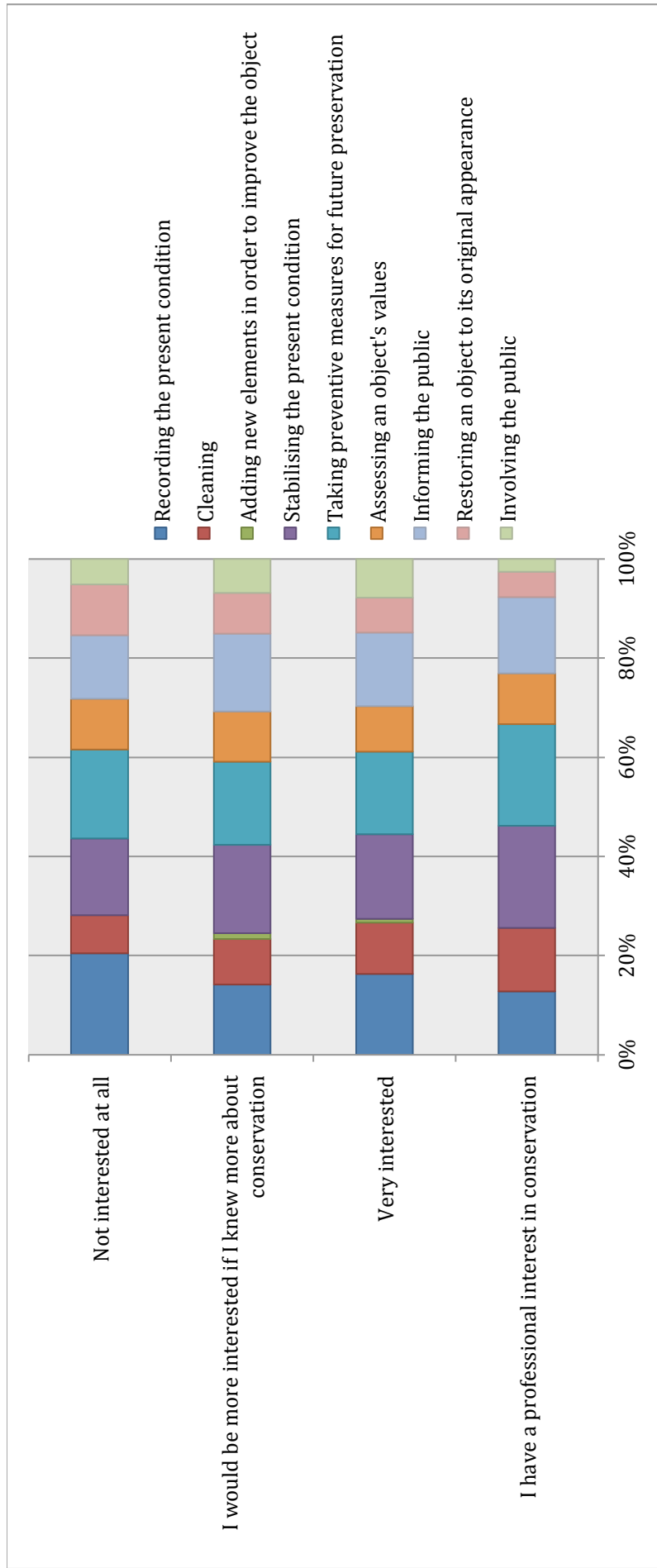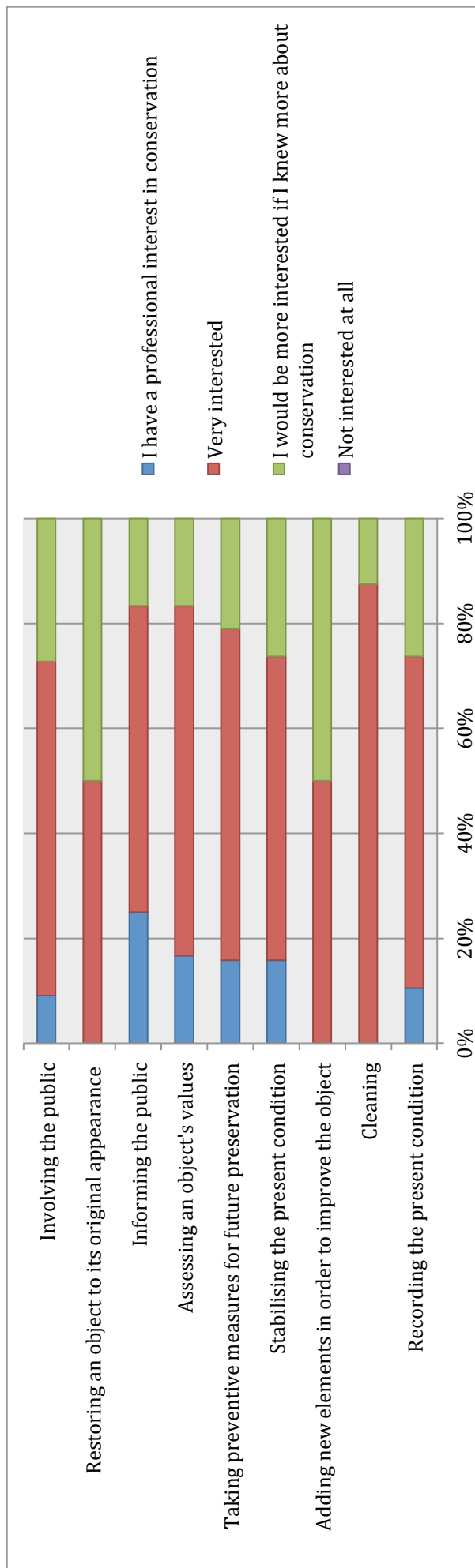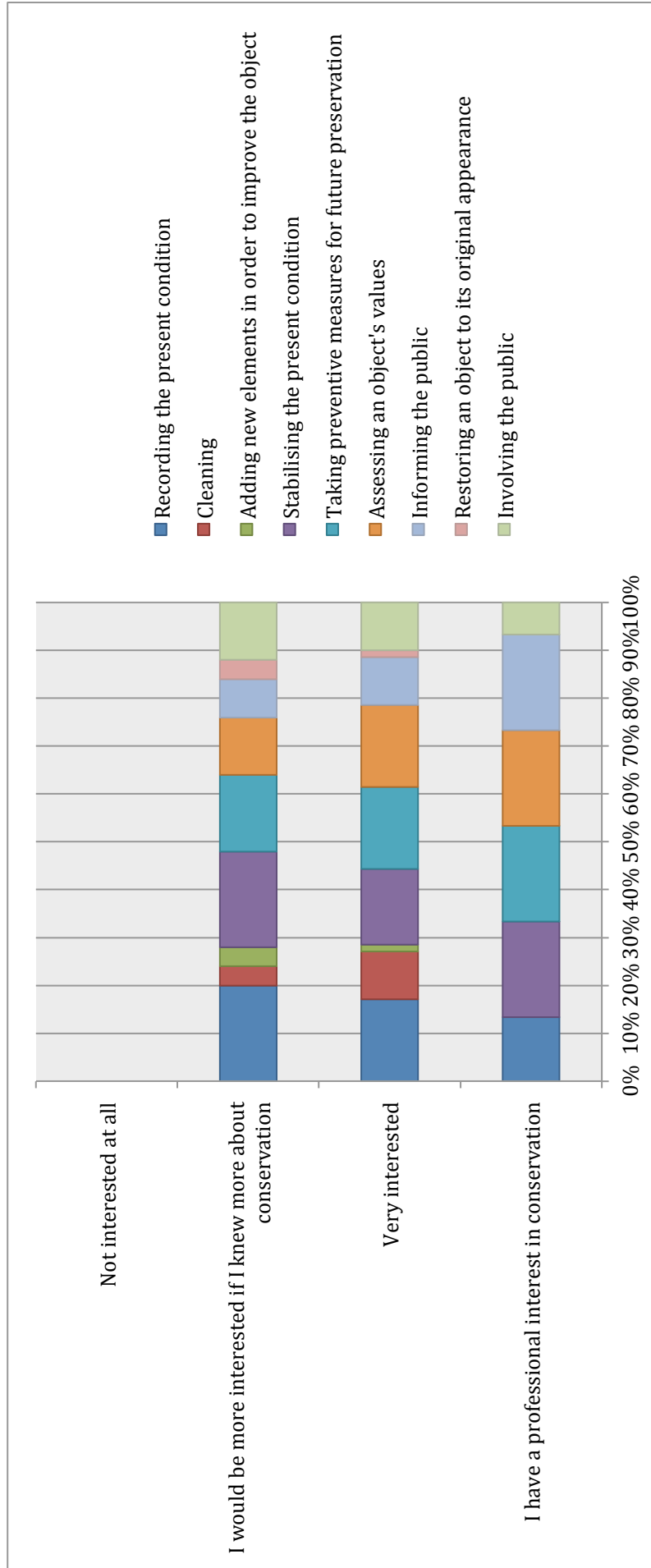
Figure 83 Connection with conservation / Views on good practice (YORKSHIRE MUSEUM)

Legend:
- Recording the present condition
- Cleaning
- Adding new elements in order to improve the object
- Stabilising the present condition
- Taking preventive measures for future preservation
- Assessing an object's values
- Informing the public
- Restoring an object to its original appearance
- Involving the public

Categories:
- Not interested at all
- I would be more interested if I knew more about conservation
- Very interested
- I have a professional interest in conservation

Axis: 0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

	I have a professional interest in conservation	Very interested	I would be more interested if I knew more about conservation	Not interested at all	Total N
Recording the present condition	2	25	16	0	43
Cleaning	2	24	13	1	39
Adding new elements in order to improve the object	0	9	3	0	12
Stabilising the present condition	4	25	22	1	52
Taking preventive measures for future preservation	4	41	22	1	68
Assessing an object's values	3	9	4	0	16
Informing the public	3	32	16	0	51
Restoring an object to its original appearance	1	34	14	0	49
Involving the public	1	10	7	0	18
Total N	4*	46*	32*	1*	83*

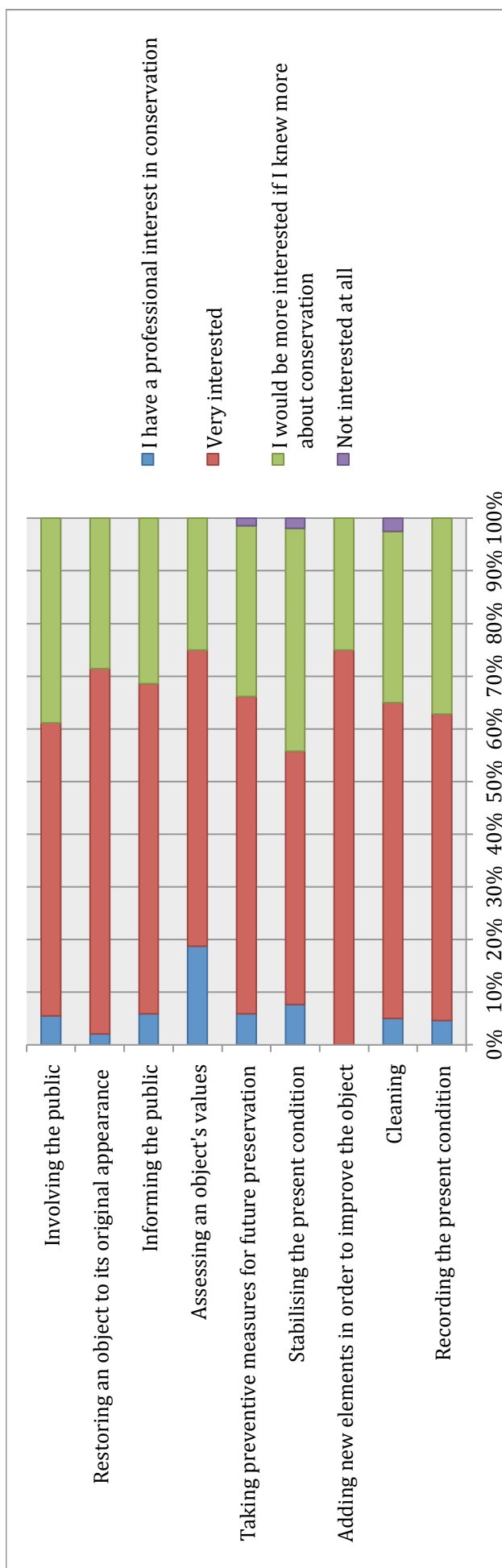**Table 40 Views on good practice / Connection with conservation (KNOLE HOUSE)**

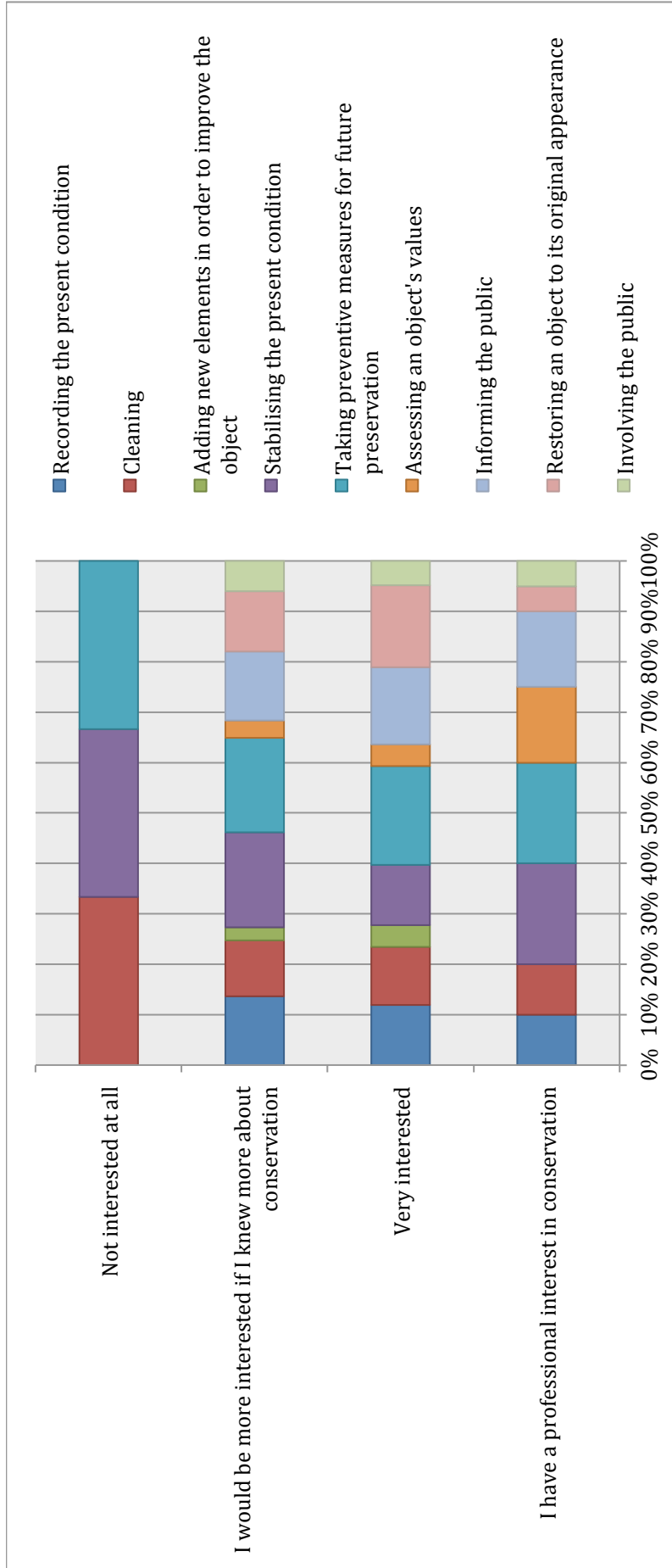**Figure 84 Views on good practice / Connection with conservation (KNOLE HOUSE)**

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Figure 85 Connection with conservation / Views on good practice (KNOLE HOUSE)

Views on good practice / Perceived importance

	Very important	Important	Quite important	Not very important	Not important at all	Total N
Recording the present condition	103	47	16	1	0	167
Cleaning	69	34	10	1	0	114
Adding new elements in order to improve the object	11	6	3	0	0	20
Stabilising the present condition	115	57	17	2	0	191
Taking preventive measures for future preservation	125	61	17	1	0	204
Assessing an object's values	61	31	7	2	0	101
Informing the public	101	51	14	1	0	167
Restoring an object to its original appearance	61	35	7	1	0	104
Involving the public	46	24	5	1	0	76
Total N	157*	85*	26*	3*	0*	271*

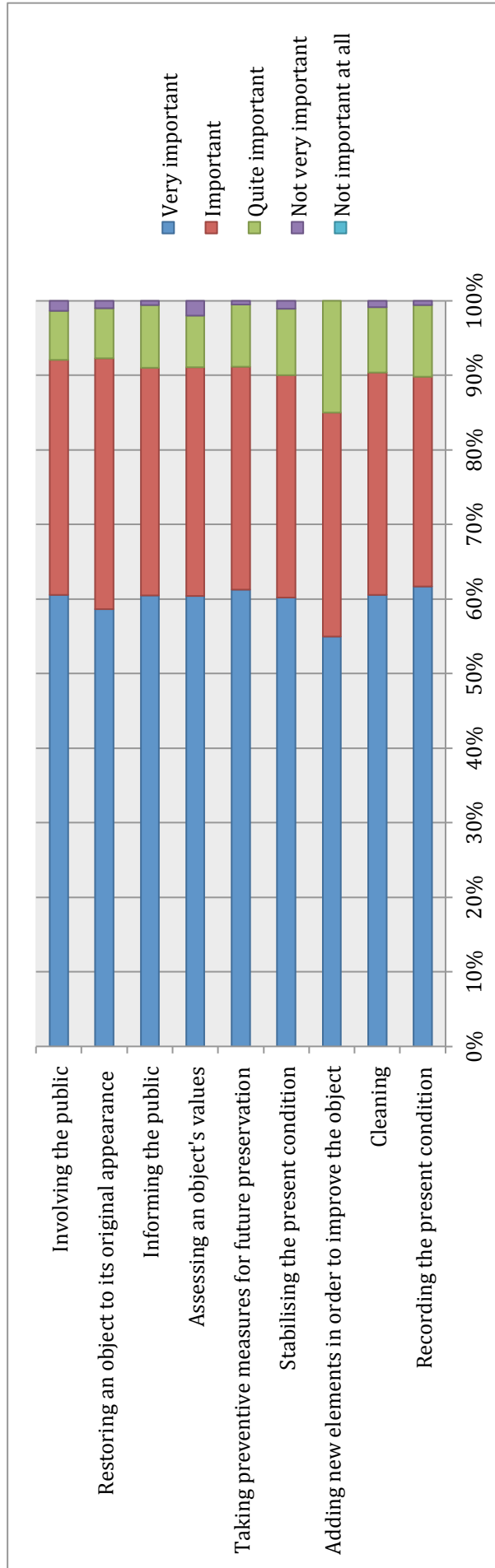**Table 41 Views on good practice / Perceived importance (COMBINED DATA)**

Figure 86 Views on good practice / Perceived importance (COMBINED DATA)
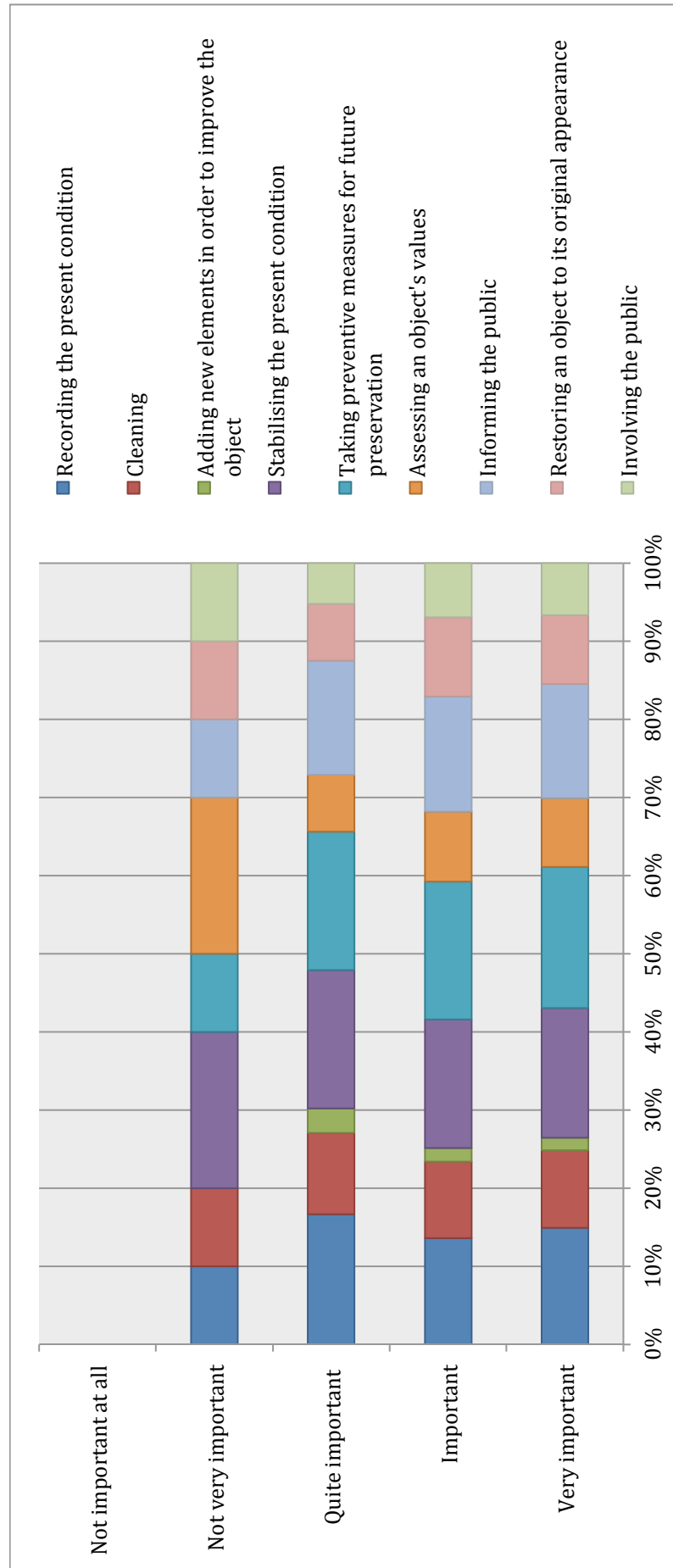
248

Figure 87 Perceived importance / Views on good practice (COMBINED DATA)

	Very important	Important	Quite important	Not very important	Not important at all	Total N
Recording the present condition	62	28	14	1	0	105
Cleaning	38	20	8	1	0	67
Adding new elements in order to improve the object	1	2	3	0	0	6
Stabilising the present condition	68	35	15	2	0	120
Taking preventive measures for future preservation	63	38	15	1	0	117
Assessing an object's values	35	23	7	2	0	67
Informing the public	57	33	13	1	0	104
Restoring an object to its original appearance	24	21	7	1	0	53
Involving the public	27	15	4	1	0	47
Total N	87*	53*	24*	3*	0*	167*

Table 42 Views on good practice / Perceived importance (ASHMOLEAN MUSEUM)
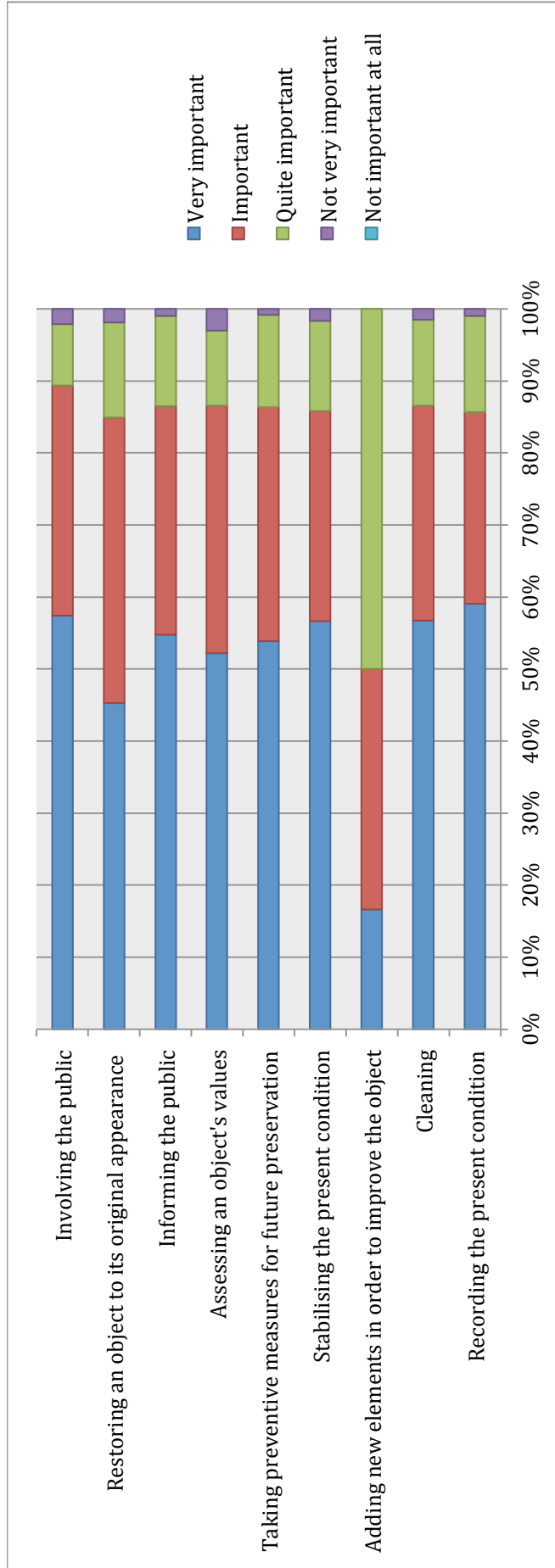

Figure 88 Views on good practice / Perceived importance (ASHMOLEAN MUSEUM)
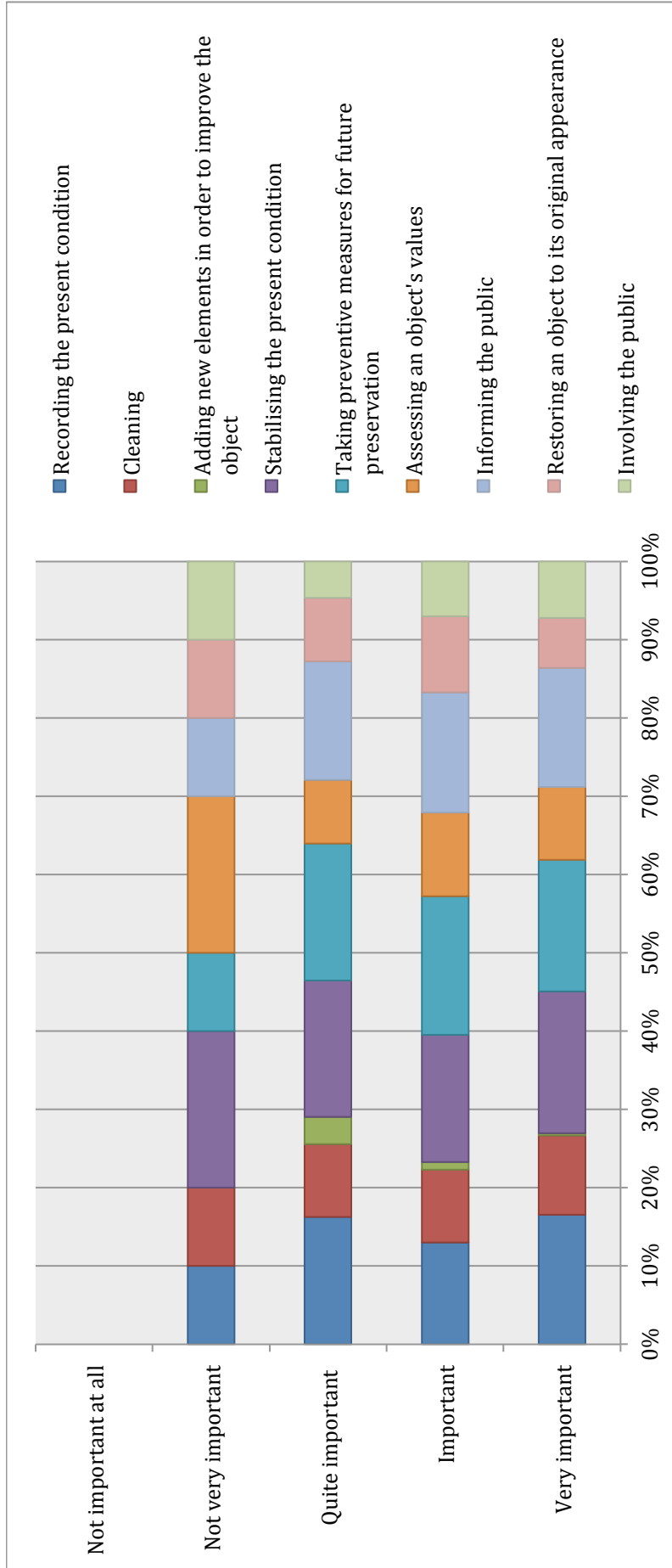
250

Figure 89 Perceived importance / Views on good practice (ASHMOLEAN MUSEUM)

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	Very important	Important	Quite important	Not very important	Not important at all	Total N
Recording the present condition	12	7	0	0	0	19
Cleaning	4	4	0	0	0	8
Adding new elements in order to improve the object	1	1	0	0	0	2
Stabilising the present condition	11	8	0	0	0	19
Taking preventive measures for future preservation	13	6	0	0	0	19
Assessing an object's values	11	7	0	0	0	18
Informing the public	8	4	0	0	0	12
Restoring an object to its original appearance	1	1	0	0	0	2
Involving the public	8	3	0	0	0	11
Total N	13*	8*	0	0	0	21*

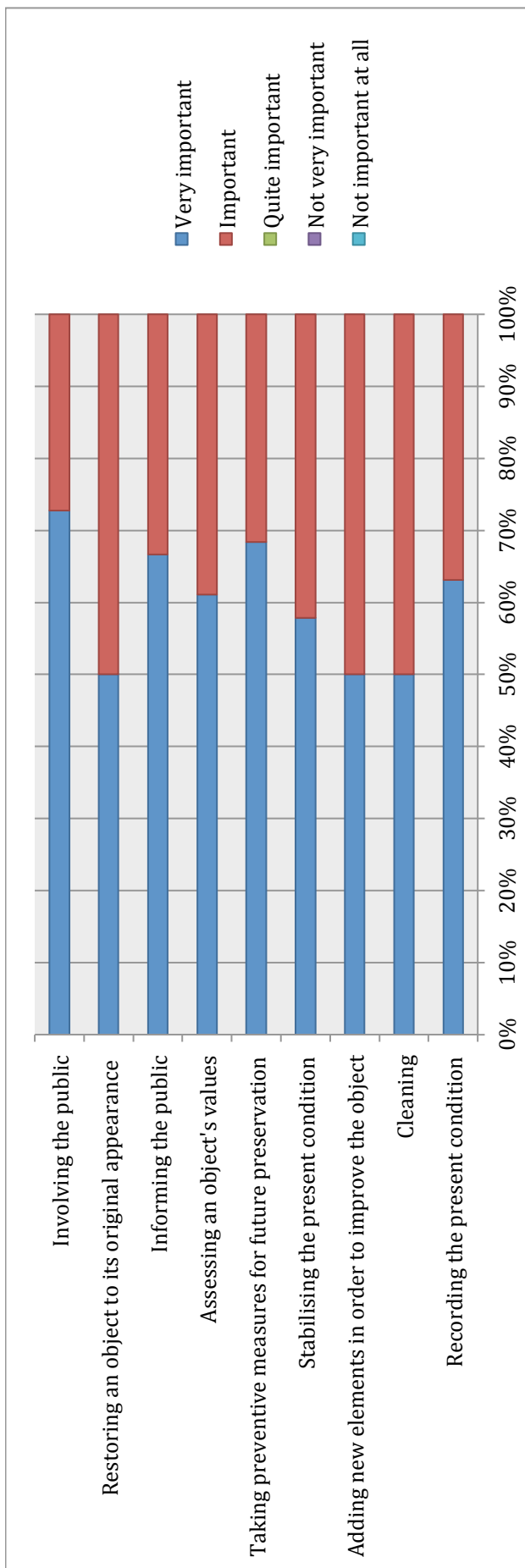**Table 43 Views on good practice / Perceived importance (YORKSHIRE MUSEUM)**

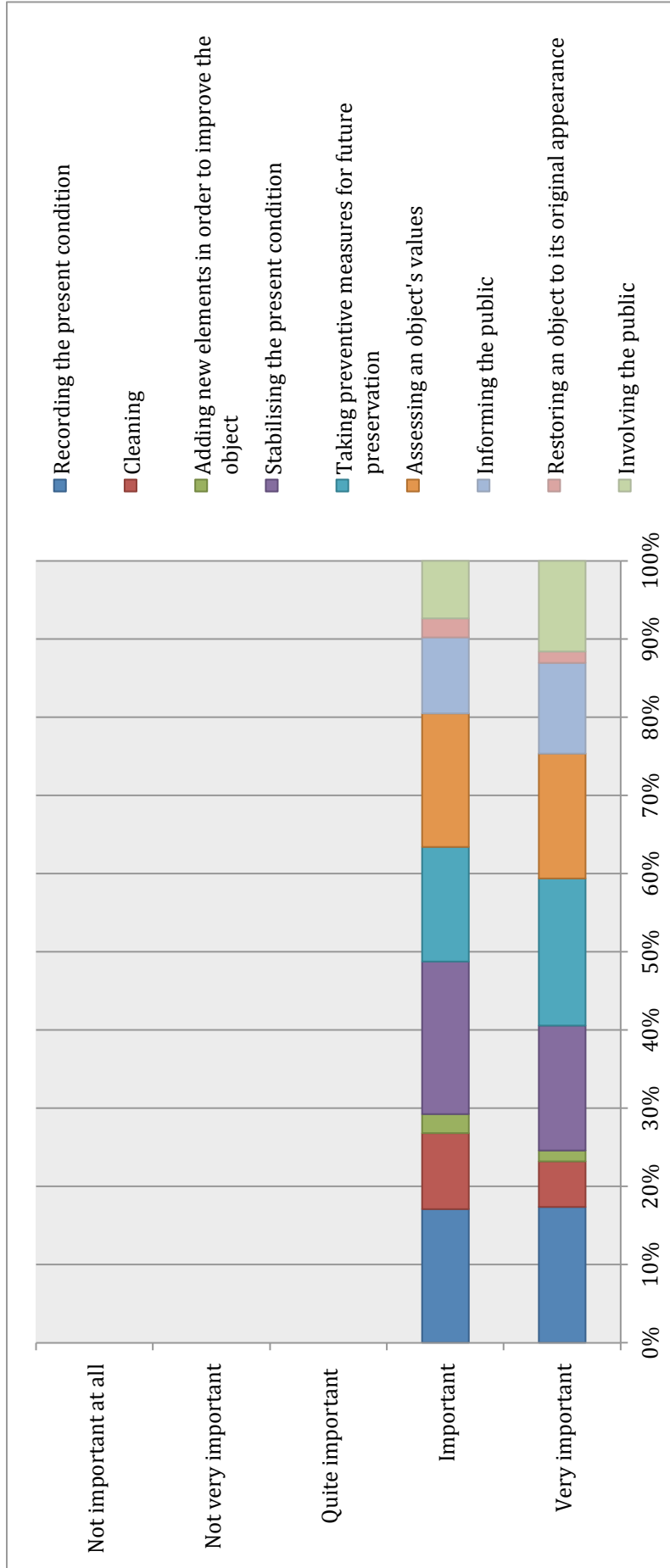**Figure 90 Views on good practice / Perceived importance (YORKSHIRE MUSEUM)**

Figure 91 Perceived importance / Views on good practice (YORKSHIRE MUSEUM)

	Very important	Important	Quite important	Not very important	Not important at all	Total N
Recording the present condition	29	12	2	0	0	43
Cleaning	27	10	2	0	0	39
Adding new elements in order to improve the object	9	3	0	0	0	12
Stabilising the present condition	36	14	2	0	0	52
Taking preventive measures for future preservation	49	17	2	0	0	68
Assessing an object's values	15	1	0	0	0	16
Informing the public	36	14	1	0	0	51
Restoring an object to its original appearance	36	13	0	0	0	49
Involving the public	11	6	1	0	0	18
Total N	57*	24*	2*	0	0	83*

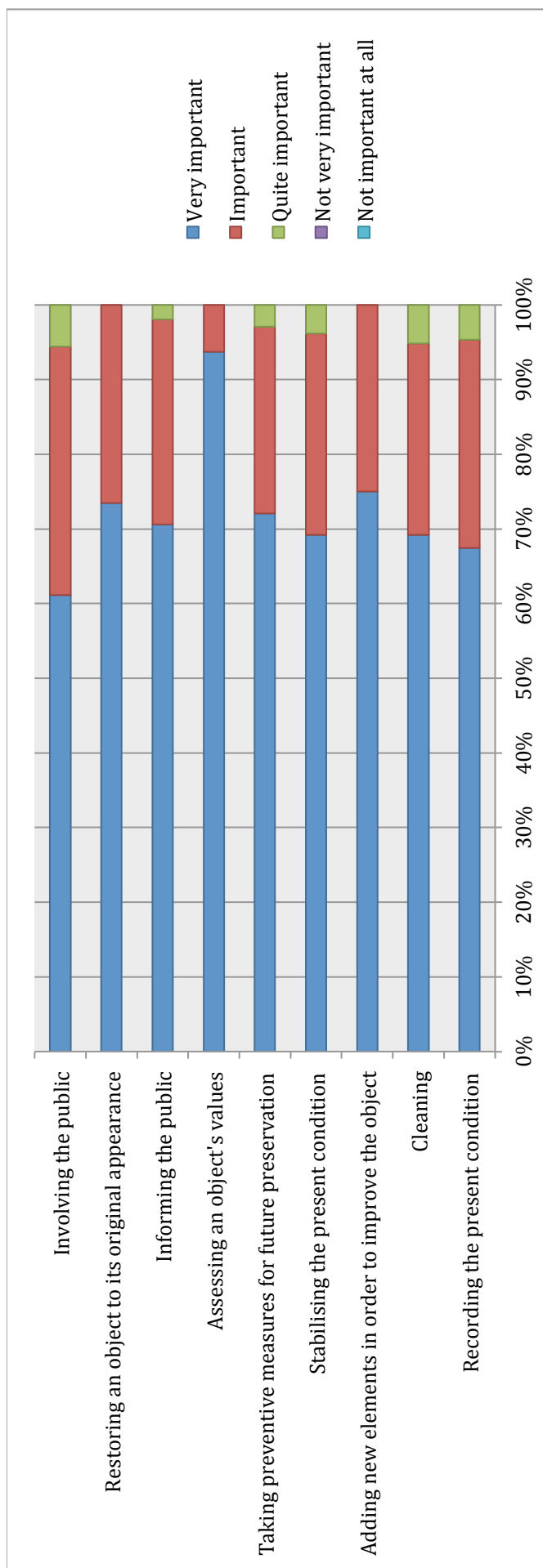**Table 44 Views on good practice / Perceived importance (KNOLE HOUSE)**

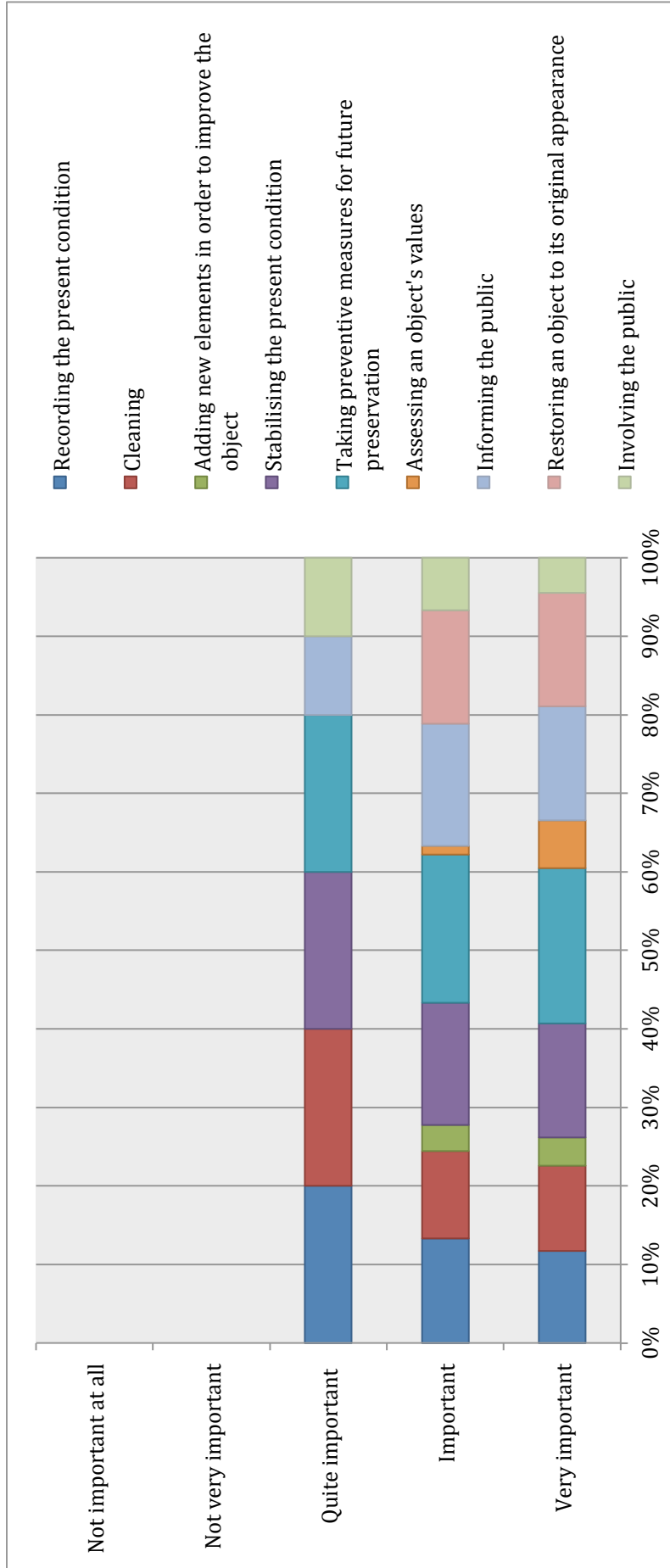**Figure 92 Views on good practice / Perceived importance (KNOLE HOUSE)**

Figure 93 Perceived importance / Views on good practice (KNOLE HOUSE)

Legend:
- Recording the present condition
- Cleaning
- Adding new elements in order to improve the object
- Stabilising the present condition
- Taking preventive measures for future preservation
- Assessing an object's values
- Informing the public
- Restoring an object to its original appearance
- Involving the public

Categories (vertical axis):
- Not important at all
- Not very important
- Quite important
- Important
- Very important

Pearson's correlation test showing the correlation between respondents' level of interest and perceived importance

		Perceived Importance
Level of Interest	Pearson Correlation	.381**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	272

Table 45 Based on the combined data from all three case studies (N=272), the Pearson's correlation test shows that there is a statistically significant positive correlation (Field 2009, 193) between respondents' level of interest in conservation and the level of its perceived importance, r =.38 (p<0.01).

		Perceived Importance
Level of Interest	Pearson Correlation	.324**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	167

Table 46 Based on the data from the Ashmolean Museum case study (N=167), the Pearson's correlation test shows that there is a statistically significant positive correlation (Field 2009, 193) between respondents' level of interest in conservation and the level of its perceived importance, r =.32 (p<0.01).

		Perceived Importance
Level of Interest	Pearson Correlation	.503**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	84

Table 47 Based on the data from the Knole case study (N=84), the Pearson's correlation test shows that there is a statistically significant positive correlation (Field 2009, 193) between respondents' level of interest in conservation and the level of its perceived importance, r =.50 (p<0.01).

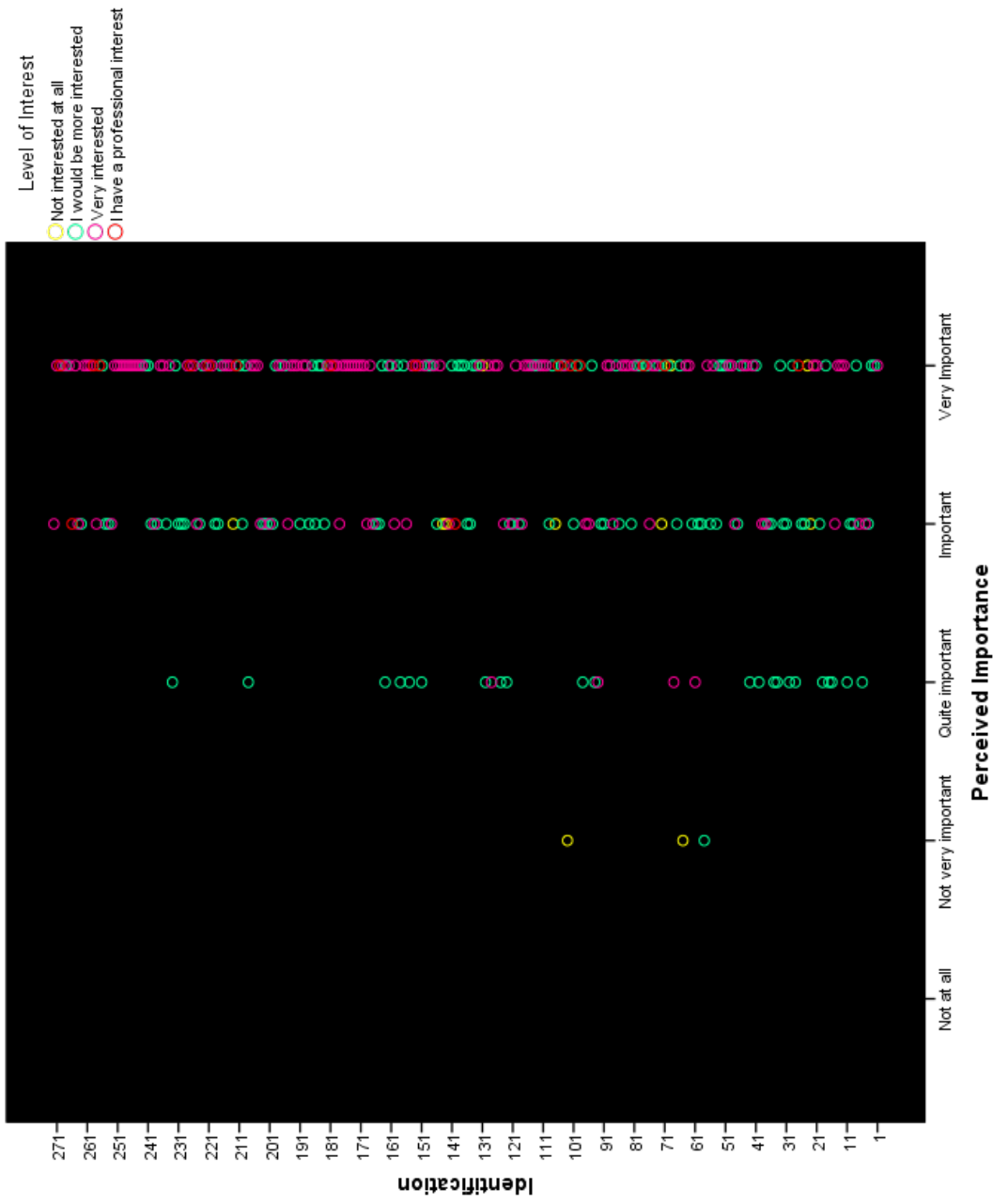For the Yorkshire Museum case study the sample (N=21) was considered too small to apply a correlation test.
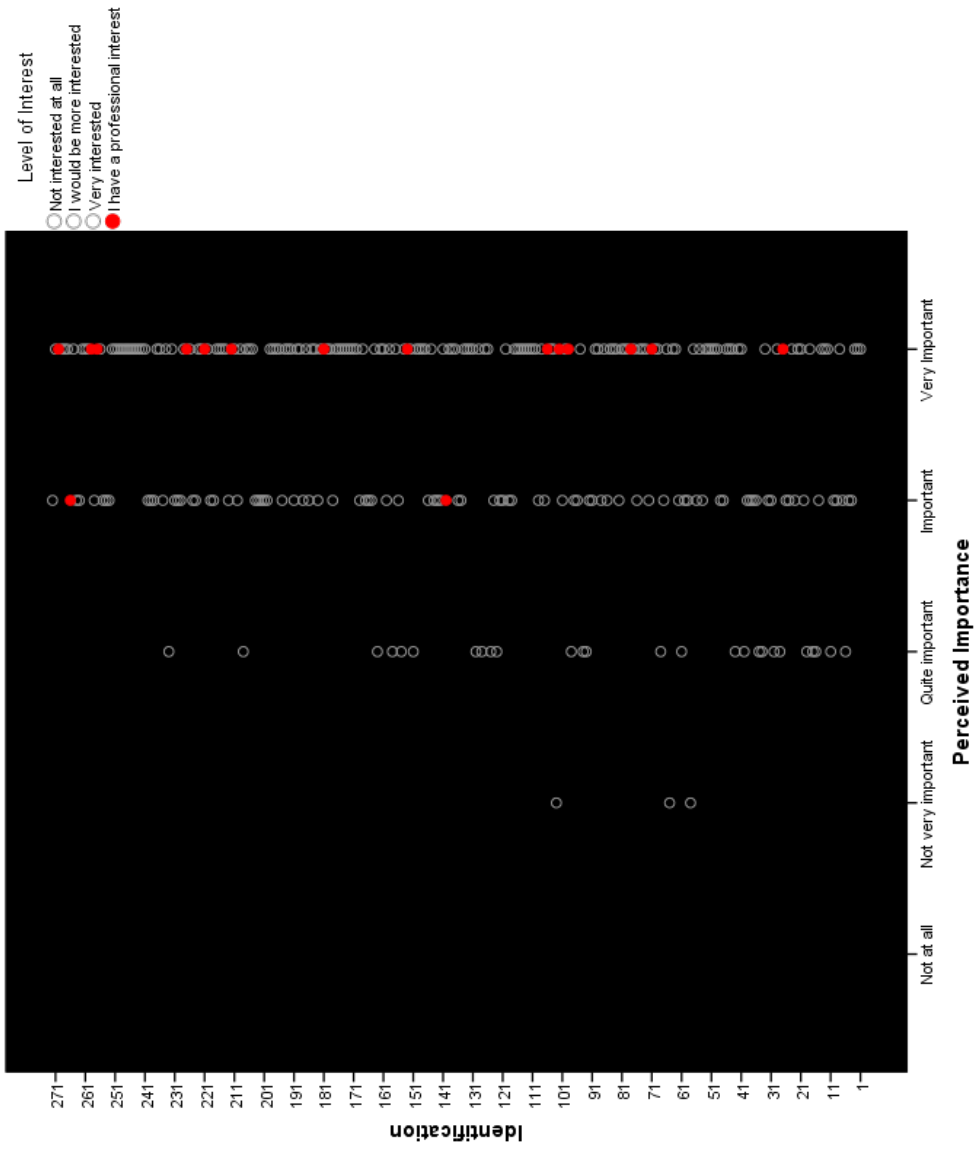
Figure 94 Pearson's correlation test
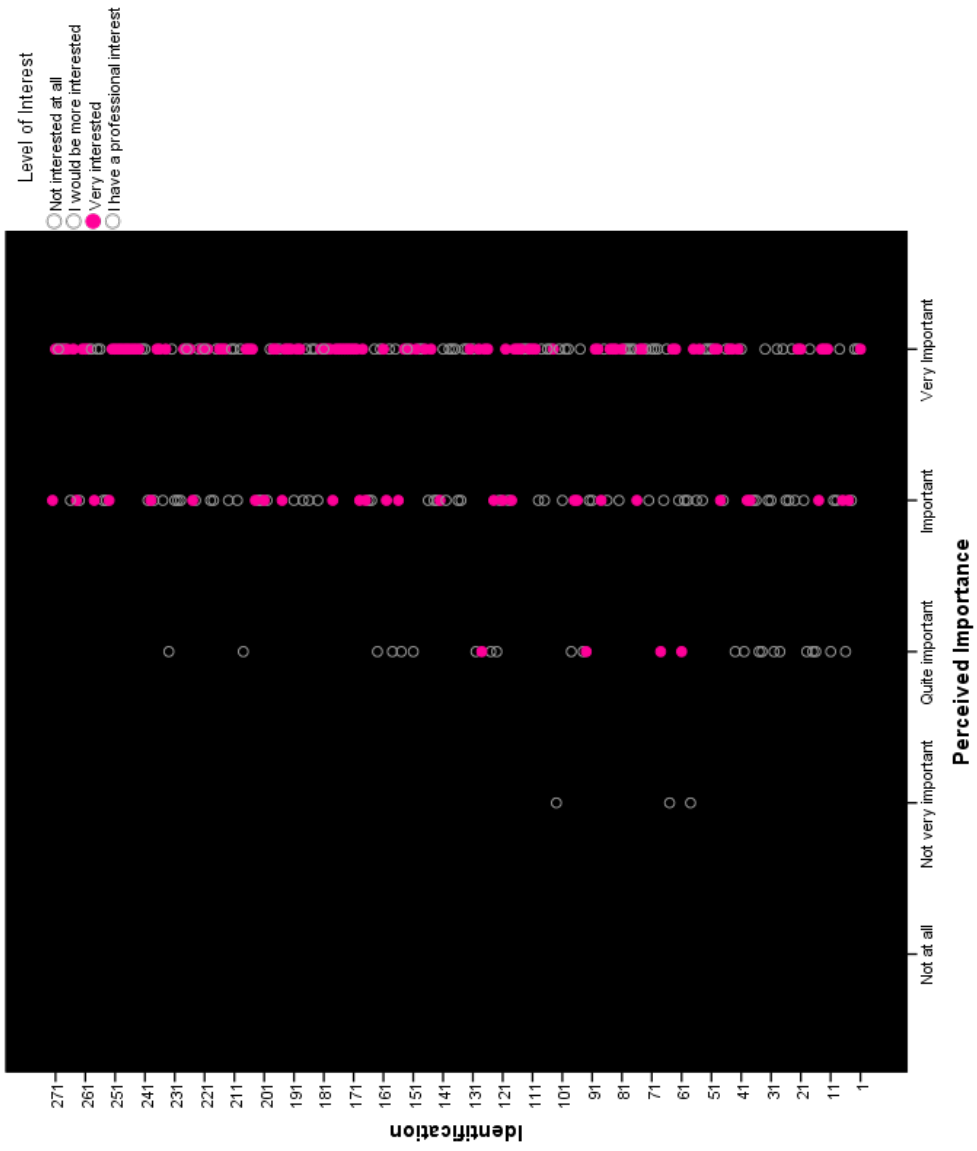
Figure 95 Pearson's correlation test
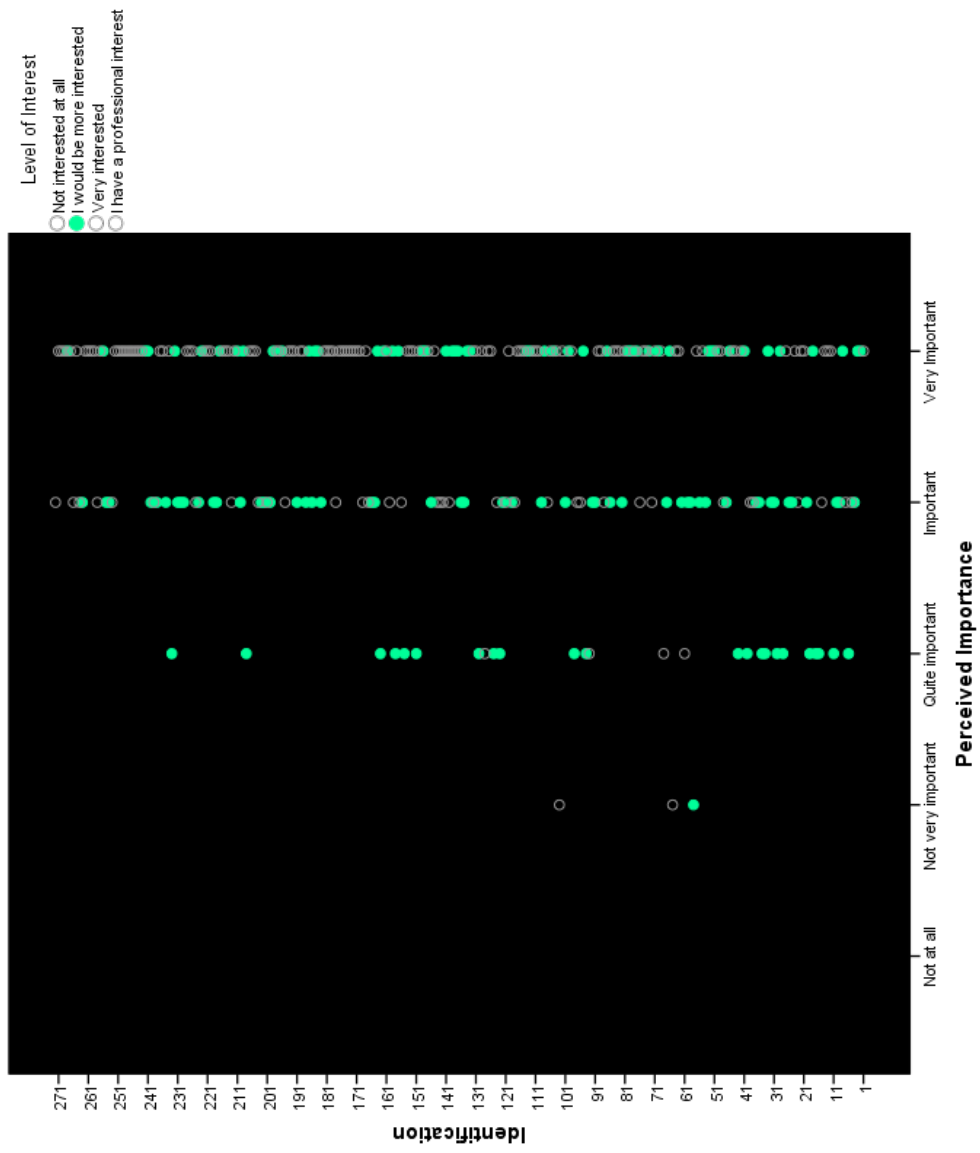
Figure 96 Pearson's correlation test

Figure 97 Pearson's correlation test

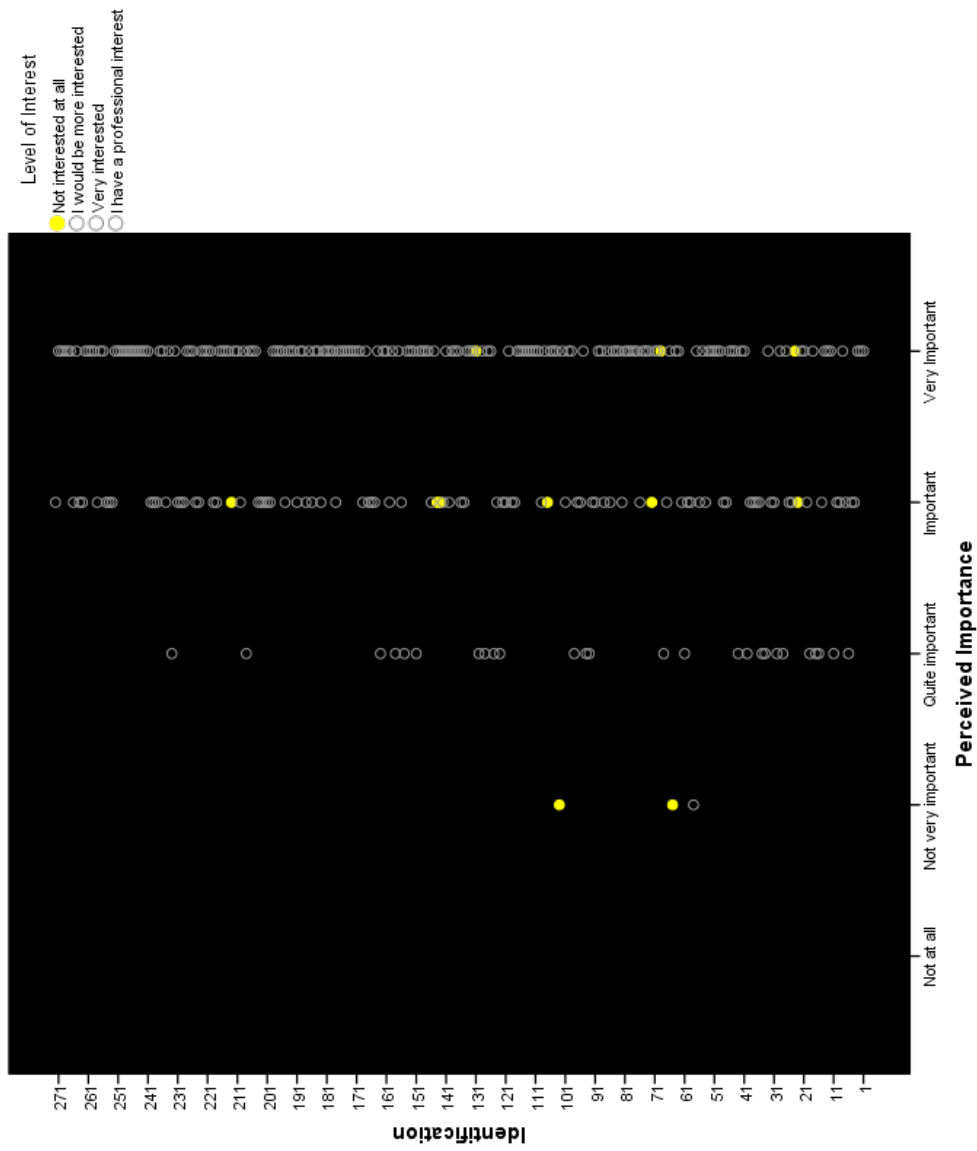**Figure 98 Pearson's correlation test**

Appendix V - Data Analyses in Chapter 7

	Ashmolean Museum	Yorkshire Museum	Knole House	Total N	Total Percent of cases
Conservation professionals	152	21	83	256	94.5%
Local people	68	19	35	122	45.0%
Central authorities (government)	47	8	22	77	28.4%
Local authorities	41	9	30	80	29.5%
Visitors	28	5	27	60	22.1%
Volunteers	33	6	27	66	24.4%
Number of respondents *	167	21	83	271	100%

Table 48 Visitors' views on who should take part in decision-making regarding conservation (valid percent calculated using combined frequencies)

*This refers to the number of visitors who answered the question

	Ashmolean Museum	Yorkshire Museum	Knole House	Average Percent of cases
Conservation professionals	93.3%	100.0%	100.0%	97.8%
Local people	41.7%	90.5%	42.2%	58.1%
Central authorities (government)	28.8%	38.1%	26.5%	31.1%
Local authorities	25.2%	42.9%	36.1%	34.7%
Visitors	17.2%	23.8%	32.5%	24.5%
Volunteers	20.2%	28.6%	32.5%	27.1%

Table 49 Visitors' views on who should take part in decision-making regarding conservation (average valid percent calculated using valid percent per case study)
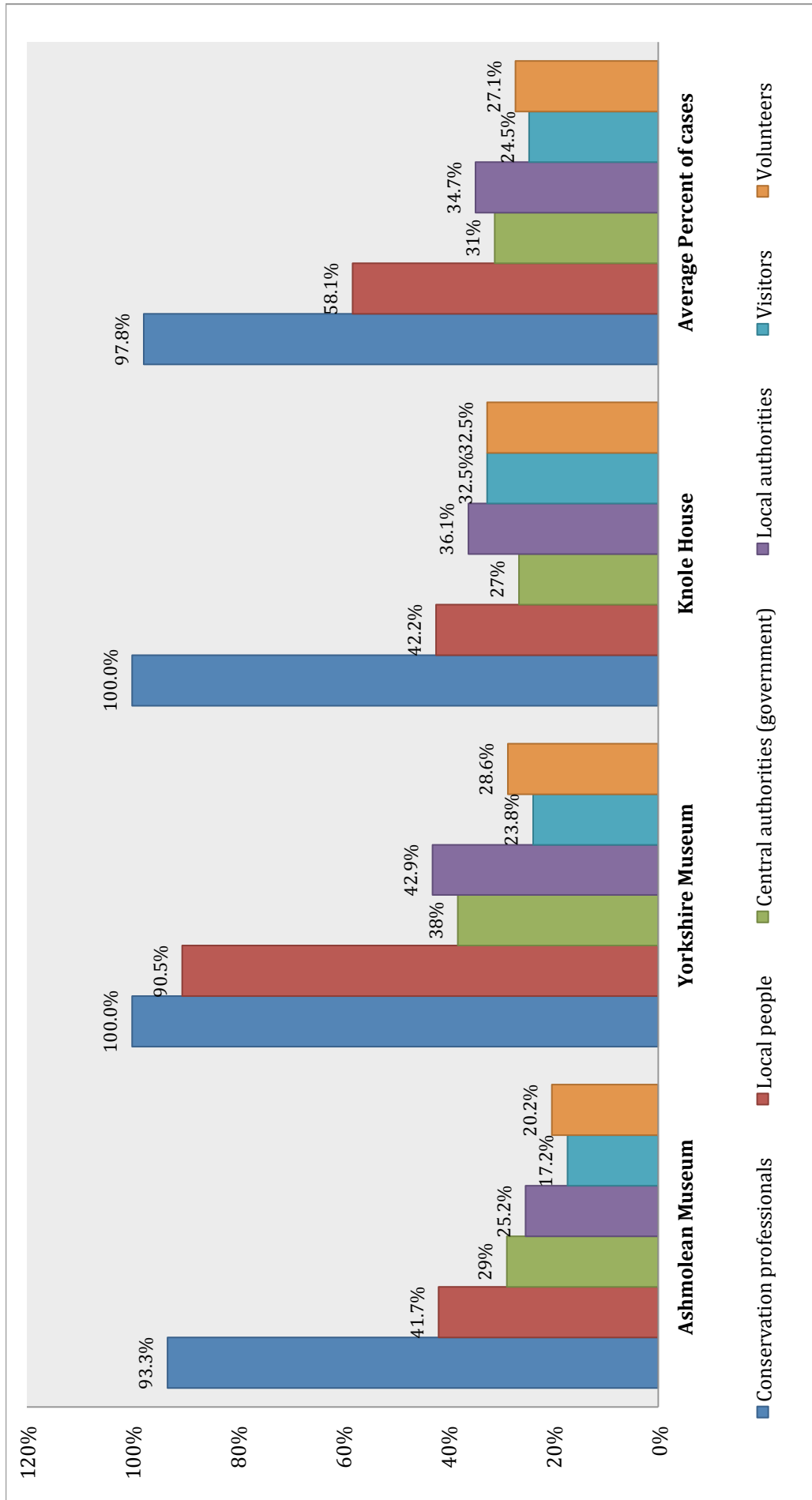
Figure 99 Visitors' views on who should take part in decision-making regarding conservation (average valid percent calculated using valid percent per case study)
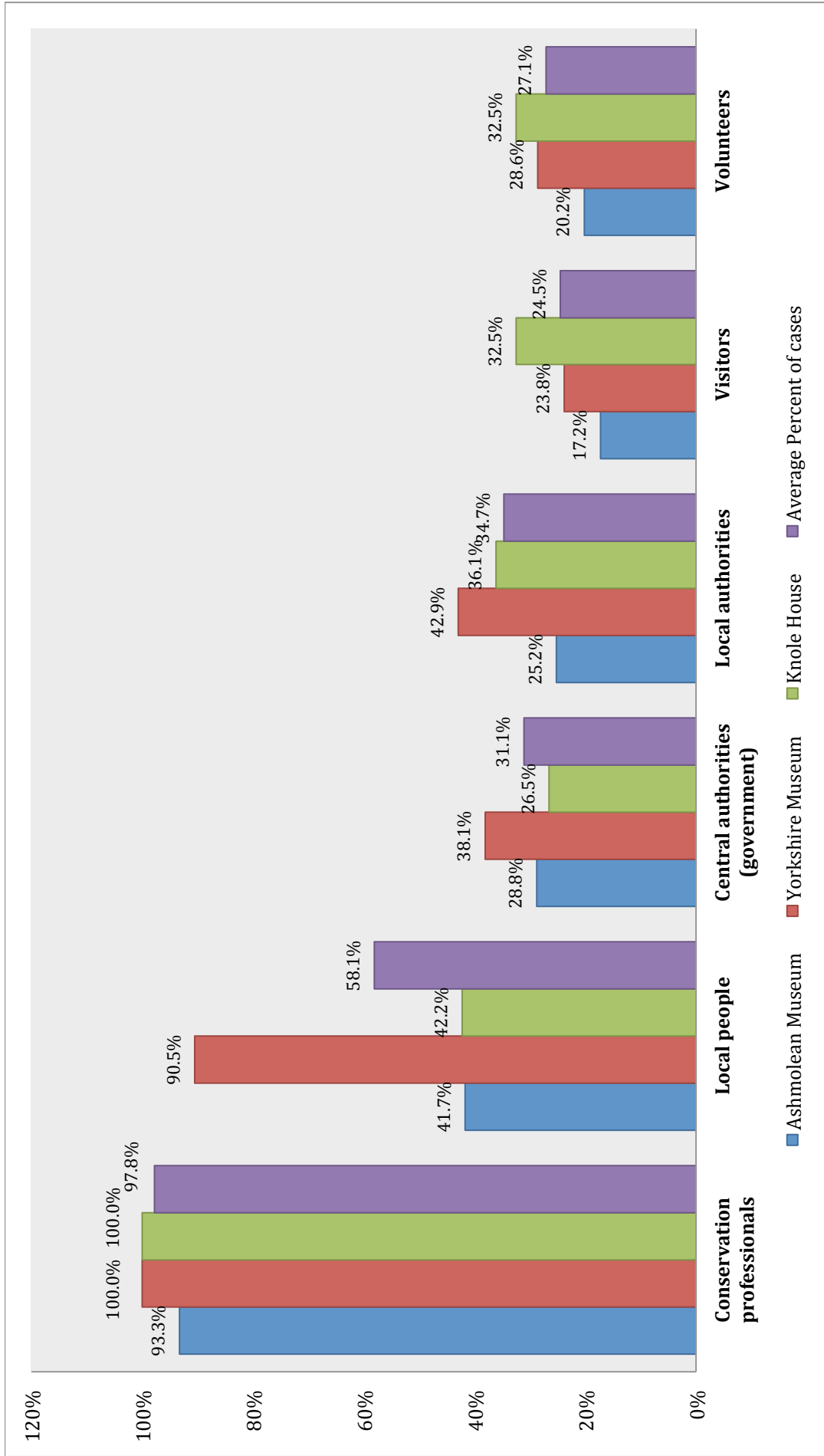
Figure 100 Visitors' views on who should take part in decision-making regarding conservation (average valid percent calculated using valid percent per case study)

Appendix VI – Conservators' Perspectives

This appendix includes indicative examples of data collected on conservator's views on public engagement and feedback received on the proposed guidelines, which was used for refining them for the version presented in Section 8.3.

To maintain confidentiality of information collected from research participants, this appendix has been redacted in the final version of the thesis (particularly views of conservators who provided more critical perspectives on the subject), as permission was not given to make these publicly available. This information was provided to the thesis examiners confidentially and solely for the purpose of authenticating the work undertaken.

Appendix VI has been redacted to maintain confidentiality of information collected from research participants.

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