**Bournemouth University**

**Interpret Wales Conference, Cardiff. 8-9th March 2016**

Enhancing the visitor experience by exploring their expectations: a case study from The Jurassic Coast, Dorset and East Devon World Heritage Site, UK.

This presentation is based upon a PhD study which explored the interests of visitors in wildlife generally and on a range of on-site interpretive experiences at two locations on the Jurassic Coast World Heritage site, in Dorset.  Specifically, the presentation will report on the preferences of visitors towards on-site interpretation as well as explaining what visitors felt makes for best practice, using the example of the guided walk experience.  In so doing, the presentation will summarise visitor preferences which could be used to support the successful enhancement of the visitor experience at designated natural areas and notably, natural World Heritage sites.

**Presentation**

**1.0    Background to the visitor survey**
600 visitor groups (1254 individuals) were interviewed between April and October at two locations along 'The Jurassic Coast' World Heritage site, Dorset.

The survey explored the visitors;
~ reasons for their visit and choice of on-site activities,
~ interest in and demand for on-site interpretive facilities.

The profile of the respondents was;
~ 45% local, 55% tourist, with 66.7% being repeat visitors,
~ 47.5% visiting with 'family and friends', 36.7% with their partner and
  14% were alone,
~ over 65 (25.0%), 56-65 (16.3%), 46-55 (20.7%), 36-45 (24.9%), 26-35 (9.0%)
  and only 3.9% (aged under 25)
~ 45.5% were in full-time employment and 23.5% retired,
~ 45.8% chose to stay for between 1-2hrs and 39.7% for 2-4hrs.

**2.0    Choice of on-site activities**
'**Local**':          casual walk (57.1%), wildlife (46.5%), views (26.7%), dogs (23.1%)
'**Tourist**':        casual walk (76.9%), views (51.2%), wildlife (20.4%), games (11.7%)
'**First-time**':    casual walk (86.0%), views (56.0%), games (14.5%), wildlife (12.0%)
'**Repeat**':        casual walk (43.0%), wildlife (42.8%), views (32.0%), long walk (26.3%)
'**Alone**':         casual walk (40.5%), wildlife (40.5%), dogs (36.9%), views (29.8%)
'**w. partner**':   casual walk (67.8%), wildlife (43.9%), views (35.0%), dogs (12.6%)
'**w. family**':    casual walk (75.1%), views (47.4%), wildlife (21.4%), games (12.9%)

**3.0    Interest in wildlife**
**Importance of wildlife as part of the visit:**
Repeat (96.7%), Tourists (95.7%)  -  Local (89.0%), First-time (84.0%)

'**Local**':          birds (78.3%), butterflies (69.2%), flowers (67.8%)
'**Tourist**':        birds (49.7%), marine (43.2%), flowers (35.5%)
'**First-time**':    birds (38.5%), marine (35.5%), geology (29.0%)
'**Repeat**':        birds (75.3%), butterflies (63.5%), flowers (63.0%)
'**Alone**':         birds (78.6%), butterflies (69.0%), flowers (69.0%)
'**w. partner**':   birds (72.6%), butterflies (63.2%), flowers (62.8%)
'**w. family**':    birds (51.2%), marine (45.9%), flowers (35.1%)

**4.0     Demand for and engagement with, on-site interpretation**
Demand for:
'**Local**':        rangers (74.7%), displays (71.8%), VC (63.7%), walks (12.8%)
'**Tourist**':      displays (71.8%), rangers (54.0%), VC (43.3%), walks (12.0%)
'**First-time**':   displays (49.5%), rangers (47.5%), VC (41.0%), walks (10.0%)
'**Repeat**':       rangers (71.5%), displays (69.3%), VC (61.0%), walks (13.5%)
'**Alone**':        rangers (71.4%), displays (70.2%), VC (63.1%), walks (13.1%)
'**w. partner**':   rangers (70.9%), displays (70.9%), VC (61.9%), walks (12.5%)
'**w. family**':    rangers (54.8%), displays (53.0%), VC (44.6%), walks (11.9%)

Engagement with:
'**Local**':        signs / panels (81.3%), guidebooks (7.3+79.1%), VC (26.3%)
'**Tourist**':      signs / panels (86.1%), guidebooks (39.8+19.6%), VC (50.0%)
'**First-time**':   signs / panels (88.5%), guidebooks (46.0+3.0%), VC (49.2%)
'**Repeat**':       signs / panels (81.5%), guidebooks (14.2+67.3%), VC (35.0%)
'**Alone**':        signs / panels (67.9%), guidebooks (0.04+82.1%), VC (13.7%)
'**w. partner**':   signs / panels (86.1%), guidebooks (20.2+53.4%), VC (42.6%)
'**w. family**':    signs / panels (86.3%), guidebooks (34.4+29.1%), VC (43.8%)

**5.0     Views on guided walks**

**5.1     Why undertake a guided walk?**
~ an enjoyable activity (79.1%)
~ to view wildlife (67.3%) – (1st for 43.6%)
~ to learn more about the site (64.5%)
~ I wanted to ask questions (20.9%)
~ someone else made the choice for me (11.8%)

**5.2     What length of walk would you prefer?**
~ up to 1 hr: first-time (64.2%) / w. family (55.6%)
~ up to 2 hrs: alone (60.3%) / local (53.2%)

**5.3     What are the problems you find with taking part?**
~ 'takes too long': first-time (36.8%) – local (24.6%)
~ 'too many people': tourist (34.3%) – local (25%)
~ 'too much knowledge assumed': first-time (15.3%) – local (7.6%)
~ 'attract experts': first-time (60.4%) – local (43.6%)

**5.4     Good practice in leading a guided walk**
5.4.1.  Promotion of the walk
~ agree a topic and theme
~ plan the route carefully
5.4.2   Welcome and introduction (start on time)
~ be visible, greet everyone (read your audience)
~ opening remarks - introduction + comments on the walk
~ move to the first stop (selected to accommodate latecomers)
5.4.3.  During the walk
~ lead from the front – 'teachable moments'
~ be a good host and involve everyone
~ answer Qs as you walk but don't let individuals monopolise you!
~ manage each stop
3.4.4   Closure
~ end on time; you can always leave them wanting more!
~ make any final announcements and close with a clear, strong conclusion

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