



University
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*'Choost an Owld Pile o' Ston'? The Value of
Archaeology to Caithness*

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Abstract

Caithness has a rich archaeological landscape, yet one, arguably which is underdeveloped. This may be to the county's detriment: as it looks to move beyond the closure of Dounreay, the county's main employer for over 60 years, Caithness will need to consider new avenues of growth. Whilst tourism and heritage tourism studies have been carried out in areas such as the Western Isles and Orkney, regions like Caithness, without 'local authority' status, and on the fringes of heritage tourism and (recent) archaeological research, have been somewhat neglected.

This study sought to better understand and illuminate the value of archaeology to Caithness, both economically and socially, through a mixture of qualitative and quantitative online surveys and interviews, as well as data collected from over 70 accommodation providers in the region.

According to those who participated in the survey, the historic environment - which incorporates sites and monuments, museums and events and activities - were found to play a significant part in promoting concepts of well-being within the local community, such as belonging, pride in place and community spirit. Furthermore, respondents highlighted Caithness' rich archaeological landscape of Caithness as one of the main reasons to visit the county, and to make return visits, emphasising the importance of Caithness' historic environment to the local economy.

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CHAPTER ONE

Caithness: Past, Present, Future

1.1: Introduction

Caithness is my home. It is where I was born and where I lived for twenty-five years, before moving to Glasgow, to study archaeology at the University of Glasgow. The region provided me with a safe upbringing, a good education, and many friendships, as well as several years of employment and opportunities. Caithness has been, and still is, an important part of who I am. Indeed, I owe much of my interest with the past to the rich archaeological and historic environment of the region. The Caithness landscape, disdainfully perceived as ‘dull’ by so many, obscures a wealth of archaeological treasures stretching back thousands of years. It is a place where, arguably, there has been a lack of archaeological investigation, or even exploitation. And yet this is an aspect of Caithness which I believe has the potential to mitigate existing and forthcoming issues for the region; with this borne in mind, a more rounded understanding of the value of archaeology – both economic and societal - to Caithness would be of real benefit to the county.



Fig. 1 – *Caithness, highlighted in red*

For present-day Caithness faces an uncertain future: questions are being asked of its sustainability, of the provision of services, of employment and opportunities. Caithness, as a rural area, already faces a number of challenges: a perceived disproportion in levels of government funding exacerbated by a lack of equity at a local authority level; poor provision of medical services; an ageing population, closure of banks and other facilities, issues of connectivity – both physical and digital – have been raised on a regular basis. Of all the challenges posed, however, the bleakest and potentially most devastating outcomes lie with the decommissioning of Dounreay Nuclear Power Station (*Fig. 2*). This dissertation, then, can be seen as a reaction to the closure of Dounreay and the expected downturn, and an attempt to reconcile the future of Caithness through better understanding and utilisation of the regions' archaeological landscape.

1.2: 'A Demographic Disaster': Post-Dounreay Caithness



Fig. 2 – *Dounreay Nuclear Power Station*

It would be prudent to understand the current economic situation in Caithness, however, and discuss how and why it finds itself in such a precarious position. It began with a flick of a switch, just over sixty years ago, when the region was transformed forever by the construction of Dounreay

Nuclear Power Station on the far northern coast of the county. Caithness, a hitherto quiet, 'remote' and unassuming corner of Scotland was suddenly thrust into the 21st century, as Dounreay's prototype reactor became an epicentre of the 'white heat of technology'. The introduction of Dounreay saw an immediate bucking of a falling population trend in the region (*see Fig. 3*), from 43,000 in 1861 to 23,000 in 1951 – yet by 1971 the population stood at over 29,000 (Cant, 1982, p.3). Thurso in particular experienced extraordinary growth, and the town saw its population rise from around 3,300 to 9,000 between 1954 and 1964 (Gunn & Croft, 2010, p.20). Dounreay employed as many as 3,000 workers (Energy Voice, 2017), but, generally, between the late 1950s to the mid-1990s, employed around 2,400 workers (Gunn & Croft, 2010, p.20). Over the same amount of time, the population of Caithness was no more than thirty thousand (*see Fig. 3*), meaning that Dounreay employed roughly 10% of not just the working population of Caithness, but the actual population of Caithness. This remains true today: the site remains the region's largest employer, accounting for one in 5 jobs in the region (NDA, 2009, p.4). The 'economic footprint' that Dounreay has left in Caithness is 'substantial', and has injected millions of pounds into the local economy: in 2007/08 it was estimated to be worth £80 million pounds (*Ibid.*, p.4), falling to £68 million in 2016 (HIE, 2016, p.6). Dounreay has, then, earned favourable remarks as 'central to the Caithness economy for the past 50 years' (Scotland's Census, 2011), but a more cynical outlook may be that it has engineered Caithness towards monoculturalism.

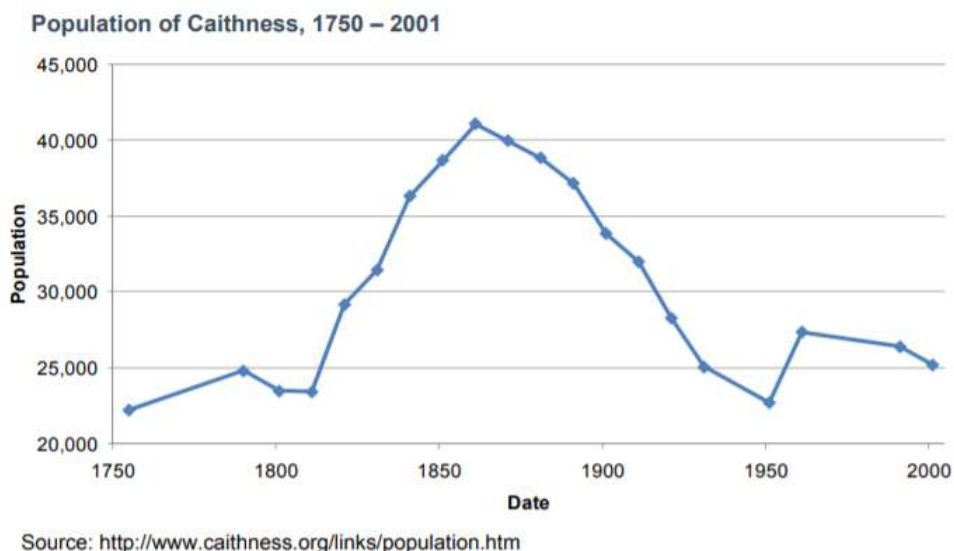


Fig 3. – Population trends of Caithness, showing the dramatic rise in the 1950s after the introduction of Caithness

In 1994, however, the reactor at Dounreay was taken offline, marking the end of nearly fifty years of nuclear power generation at the site. With the decommissioning of Dounreay, job losses and reductions have followed (Energy Voice, 2018), with occasional spates of layoffs (STV, 2017). The benefits offered by Dounreay's near-unique position as one of the first British nuclear power plants to be decommissioned do not seem to offer much comfort to the area: indeed, the longevity of such a task has been brought into question: an initial suggestion (Construction News, 2005) of 100 years of decommissioning was slashed by 60%, meaning that the site would be fully decommissioned by 2036. Of course, it should be noted that it seems this number seems to be open to some speculation, with later reports suggesting that Dounreay would be closed by 2022 (BBC News, 2012).

Regardless, any form of 'acceleration of the decommissioning programme' has 'implications for the Dounreay workforce' (UKAEA, 2005) and, given Caithness' disproportionate dependence on Dounreay as an employer, has led Highland Council to project a dramatic population decrease in Caithness of more than 20% (*see Fig. 4*) between 2016 and 2045, which roughly chimes with the Dounreay's expected decommissioning timescales. Such a sharp decline in population could spell devastation for Caithness: Jim Hunter (2019) regards this as a 'demographic disaster', whilst Akkerton and Skerrat note there to be several detrimental impacts with depopulation, including 'land abandonment, decreased employment, reduced service provision at a time of increasing demand, and increased social fragmentation as a result of higher levels of poverty and exclusion' (2017, pp.9-10). Compounding matters, Caithness is also noted for having an 'ageing population' (BBC News, 2012), though it should also be noted that young Caithnessians are reported to identify as 'Committed stayers' more than the rest of the Highland region (HIE, 2018, p.3). That seems to contrast, however, with the Scottish Government's findings that the working age population decreased by 8.1% between 2011 and 2018 (Scottish Government, 2020, p.8).

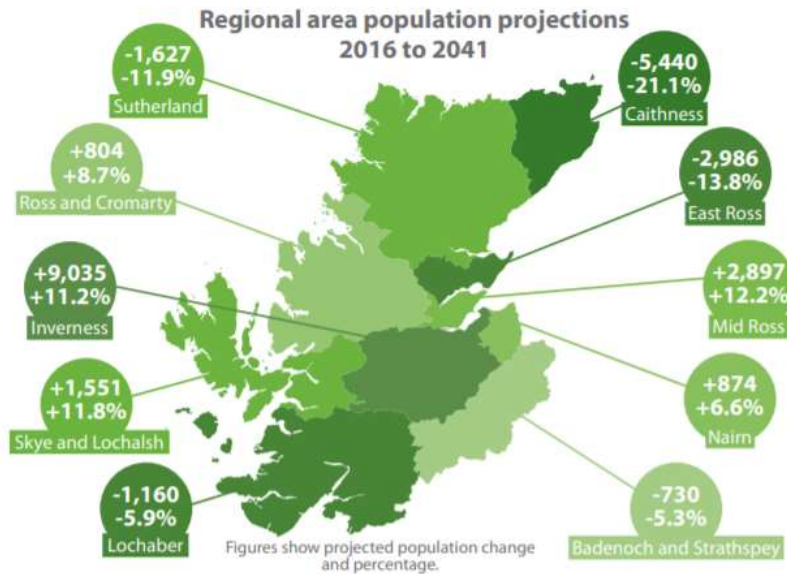


Fig. 4 – *Projections suggest a population decrease of 21.1% in Caithness, by some margin the biggest projected population deficit in the Highland region.*

Caithness, then, must now consider a ‘post-Dounreay’ future. There are several avenues earmarked for growth and development in the region, and certainly diversification in employment has become a ‘well-developed view’ (Highland Council, 2018, p.7; Reference & Eskogen, 2012, p.30). Tourism is one such sector which has been frequently cited as one of the key areas of development for Caithness: outcome 5.2 in making the Highland Region ‘A Welcoming Place’ was increasing Highland tourism, and investing in tourist infrastructure (The Highland Council, 2019, p.17), whilst the Adopted Caithness and Sutherland Local Area Development Plan (CaSPlan) makes numerous references to the importance of tourism to the region in relation to not only employment, but also connectivity and place-making (The Highland Council, 2018). The development of this sector has been identified as a ‘key priority’ arising from the decommissioning of Dounreay (Grangeston, 2012, p.36).

1.3: Research Questions

Within this context, my dissertation sought to answer the following questions:

- *What is the economic value of archaeology to Caithness?*
- *What is the social value of archaeology to Caithness?*

Both questions are set out and explained in more detail below.

1.3.1: The Economic Value of Archaeology to Caithness

This dissertation, then, shall investigate heritage tourism in Caithness, and try to better understand how the archaeology – a term which incorporates both archaeological sites and monuments in addition to historic buildings and landmarks – is perceived by both previous and prospective visitors to the region, as well as assessing the financial benefits of heritage tourism to Caithness. This is especially important given that almost little or no thought has been given to the touristic impact and potential of Caithness' archaeological landscape, and yet heritage tourism forms such an important part of other regions of Scotland (*see section 2.5*).

This study shall use a combination of data from local accommodation providers and surveys for both past and potential visitors to the region, which will be used to ascertain tourist spend in the region. Given the sparsity of Caithness-focused tourism research, the surveys will also provide an opportunity to draw further conclusions on heritage tourism in the region: they shall be used to understand how important archaeology and the historic environment is in tourists' considerations when visiting Caithness, and, additionally the surveys will also collect their overall views on the archaeological sites and historical monuments of Caithness – whether they were well maintained, if they had sufficient access or information, and so on. All of this will help to provide some indication as to the importance of the archaeological and historic landscape of Caithness, and what it contributes to the county, as well as providing some further discussion and recommendations as how this aspect of tourism in Caithness can best be utilised and exploited.

1.3.2: The Social Value of Archaeology to Caithness

Additionally, this dissertation will examine the 'social value' of archaeology to Caithness; that is to say, how it can serve to benefit the 'well-being' of the inhabitants of Caithness. The concept of 'well-being' incorporates a wide-ranging number of social ideas, which I have grouped into the below definitions:

- Social Connections, Community and Bringing People Together
- Belonging, Identity, Pride in Place
- Learning Skills, Education & Volunteering
- Fun Experiences, Happiness and Health

This study will examine each of these concepts in more detail and try to provide an explanation to what each one 'means'. This is not entirely straightforward, as they are subjective, and somewhat

open to interpretation. Following this, the dissertation will report on the results from the survey, which seeks to understand whether people living in Caithness or people from Caithness believe that the historic and archaeological environment (i.e. archaeological sites and monuments), museums and activities can play a role in improving or increasing the ideas listed above.

This part of the study will rely largely on survey responses from the general public, but given that the concepts listed above are somewhat ill-defined, this dissertation will also make use of open-ended interviews with selected candidates who have participated in archaeological events. It is hoped this will provide further insight and clarity to the question.

1.4: Impact of Covid-19 on my Research

Of course, 2020 was a turbulent year in terms of travel and tourism across the world, with thousands of businesses in the Highlands affected (Mackenzie, 2020). This was no different for businesses in Caithness, and, through discussions with them to understand visitor numbers, several would explain that business was non-existent for 2020. This meant that 2020 was, to the say the least, an irregular year for tourism, especially when the upwards trend in Scottish tourism is considered (*see 2.4*). Indeed, a glance at Visit Scotland's initial report for the first quarter 2020 reveals the effect Covid-19 had on the accommodation providers (*see Fig. 5 below*). With this in mind, accommodation statistics were taken from 2019 to gauge a 'normal' year of tourism, instead.

Accommodation Occupancy				
Hotel (Room)	49%	▼	-7.5	percentage points
Guest House/ B&B (Room)	19%	▼	-8	percentage points
Self-Catering (Unit)	23%	▼	-12	percentage points
Hostel (Bed)	31%	▼	-6	percentage points
Touring Caravan & Camping (Pitch)	12%	▼	-7	percentage points

Fig. 5 – The evident effects of Covid-19 on accommodation providers in Scotland

However, the Covid-19 pandemic did not affect my means of research a great deal; I was able to collate many responses through online surveys (*see 3.3.2 and 5.5.2 for more details on*

methodology), and, in any case, I would have carried out online surveys irrespective of lockdown measures.

Interviews were also secured online via Zoom, which enabled me to have conversational interviews with Caithnessians and people based in Caithness from my own home in Glasgow, saving time and travel. This again may have been something I would have utilised, given that recordings could be made and so quotes and data correctly attributed. Although I had also considered, prior to the Covid-10 pandemic, to carry out more interviews with tourists *at* archaeological and historic sites, as well as at archaeological excavations/events in Caithness, the bulk of the information would still have most likely come from online surveys.

1.5: Conclusions

In carrying out his study, it is hoped that the importance of archaeology and the historic environment to Caithness shall be outlined, in socio-economic sense. Given the lack of Caithness-specific tourism reports, this is an opportunity to begin to understand the impact of heritage tourism specifically to the region, rather than as part of the wider Highland Council region or North Coast 500 (NC500) route. The importance of tourism and heritage tourism in Caithness will likely becoming an increasingly important avenue of financial sustainability in the next twenty years, and so it would be wise to provide at least some basis for a wider conversation with both local, national and governmental bodies. Furthermore, this study offers 'Caithnessians' with a chance to discuss and relate their views to the historic environment, including historic sites and monuments, museums, and archaeology-themed events and activities. Indeed, it is vital that the inhabitants of the region are given equity in any further conversation surrounding the development and promotion of the archaeology of Caithness, and this study is at least an attempt to capture this narrative.

CHAPTER TWO

Holidays and History: A Discussion in Tourism and Heritage Tourism

In part due to the benefits offered by Dounreay, Caithness has become somewhat over-reliant on a single industry to provide for and support its inhabitants (NDA, 2009, p.4; NDA, Cavendish Dounreay Partnership, DRSL, 2018, p.10). This has arguably been to the detriment of other economic sectors and industries, including tourism, though this outlook may be changing.

This chapter shall, then, seek to address what tourism is, and why it is important, in examining levels of tourism - and in particular heritage tourism – in other areas Scotland. These figures will provide a useful comparison, as there are inherent difficulties in researching and assessing tourism in Caithness these issues are discussed in more detail in the following chapter. However, the potential future importance of tourism and heritage tourism to the sustainability and success of the county shall be discussed.

2.1: What is Tourism and Heritage Tourism?

'It touches every nation and community, either directly or indirectly, even where tourism does not exist, and influences decision making at even the highest national and supranational levels.'

(Timothy & Boyd, 2008, p.1)

It would be prudent to first clarify what is meant by the terms 'tourism', and 'heritage tourism'. For all the luxurious and leisurely connotations associated with tourism it is defined in somewhat brusque terms: whilst the Collins Dictionary labels it as merely 'the business activity connected with providing accommodation, services and entertainment for people who are visiting a place for pleasure', the Merriam-Webster dictionary describes it as follows: '1: the practice of traveling for recreation. 2: the guidance or management of tourists. 3a: the promotion or encouragement of touring. 3b: the accommodation of tourists.'

Tourism and heritage tourism are seemingly intertwined: 'Perhaps more than any other economic activity, tourism has an intricate interrelation with natural and cultural heritage' (Coccossis, 2009, p.47, cited in Burtenshaw, 2013, p.84). Yet Heritage tourism, is a 'problematic' term, at least according to Duncan Light. It means different things to people from different places: In the UK and

northern Europe, for instance, 'heritage tourism' largely relates to visiting historic buildings or site; in the Americas it can refer to natural landscapes, whilst in Australia and New Zealand it refers to cultural processes and traditions (2015, p.144). Paul Burtenshaw also notes that heritage tourism has also acquired further nomenclature such as 'cultural tourism', 'archaeotourism' and 'archaeological tourism' (2013, p.85), and so the definition is further muddled when the concept of what constitutes as 'heritage' is discussed: *for a more detailed discussion on what constitutes as 'archaeology' for the purposes of this essay, see section 4.1.*

Despite issues pertaining to definition, heritage tourism exists, and is in fact perhaps one of the oldest forms of tourism - both the Egyptians and Romans were known to have visited 'historic places of cultural importance' (Timothy & Boyd, 2008, pp.1- 2). Indeed, this would continue into the medieval era, and was a noted part of seventeenth century where 'young aristocrats' would partake in the 'Grand Tour' of southern Europe. Heritage tourism would steadily grow throughout the modern period, aided by the 'dramatic growth' in museums as well as a general interest in visiting historic places. Whilst once exclusively the reserve of the wealthy elite, tourism was 'steadily democratised' and would form part of the 'broader leisure explosion of the post-war decades' (Light, 2015, pp.145-146). Heritage tourism, today, and for the purposes of this dissertation, is perhaps best described by Timothy and Boyd as a form of travel which,

"entails visits to sites of historical importance, including built environments and urban areas, ancient monuments and dwellings, rural and agricultural landscapes, locations where historic events occurred and places where interesting and significant cultures stand out."

(2008, p.2)

2.2: Why is Tourism Important?

To further understand the importance of heritage tourism in Caithness, It would also be useful to outline the importance of tourism to at both world and local levels. Undoubtedly tourism provides a considerable economic boost: Tourism has been described by as United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) as a 'social and economic phenomenon' (2020a), an 'economic powerhouse' (Tourism for SDGs, 2020a).

Tourism is 'one of the world's largest industries' according to Paul Burtenshaw, with around 983 million tourist arrivals worldwide measured in 2011, making over US\$1 trillion in tourism receipts, amounting to 9% of the global economy (Burtenshaw, 2013, pp.82 – 83). By 2019, the UNWTO calculated that the number of tourist arrivals had risen to 1.5 billion (2020b), while the World Travel

and Tourism Council (WTTC) recorded that this had contributed US\$8.9 trillion towards to the world's GDP – or 10.3% of global GDP. Additionally, tourism accounted for:

- 330 million jobs, 1 in 10 jobs around the world
- US\$1.7 trillion visitor exports (6.8% of total exports, 28.3% of global services exports)
- US\$948 billion capital investment (4.3% of total investment)

(World Travel and Tourism Council, 2021)

Both the UNWTO and WTTC note in their reports that tourism continues to outpace the global economy, and in the case of the UNTWO had projected further increase in 2020 – although clearly that did not happen.

Tourism has also been listed as a means to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, as set out by the United Nations General Assembly, which comprise seventeen targets – ranging from tackling poverty to gender equality – which aim to 'eradicate poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity' (Tourism for SDGs, 2020b). Tourism features as a means to achieve these targets (*see Fig. 6 below*), and has been noted to have the 'potential to contribute, directly or indirectly to all of the goals' (Tourism for SDGs, 2020a), largely through economic contribution and the potential for employment.



Fig. 6 – United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals

2.3: The Role of Heritage Tourism

Heritage destinations form a significant part of tourism (Burtenshaw, 2013, p.82), whilst Duncan Light notes that heritage tourism is ‘a major economic activity in almost all countries of the world’ (2015, p.144). However, despite these assurances, Burtenshaw notes that it is difficult to assess heritage’s stake in the overall tourist trade. He notes that ‘Timothy and Boyd (2003) estimated that about 40% of international travel is motivated by heritage, and later Timothy suggests between 50% and 80% of travel involves a cultural element (Timothy 2011)’ (2013, p.86).

Heritage tourism, then, is likely a significant factor in holidaying and tourism, and so the economic impact cannot be ignored, despite difficulties in gauging it; this is perhaps easier to understand, however, at a more national level (*see section 2.5 below*). There are, however, additional benefits to heritage tourism: Burtenshaw notes that tourism revenues provide one of the chief justifications of preserving archaeological sites (2013, p.82). Burtenshaw also described as the primary way through which contemporary human society engages with and experiences the past (Harvey, 2001; Smith, 2006 as cited in *Ibid.*, p.144), and these opportunities help to provide visitors to historic spaces and places with a raft of social benefits (*see 4.4*).

2.4: Tourism in Scotland

The continuing success of the Scottish tourist industry is evident, and tourism in Scotland seems to have gone from strength to strength in recent years. The key figures from 2019, taken from VisitScotland’s ‘Key Insights’ report (2020a, pp. 3 – 5) are outlined below:

- 134 million day trips in/to Scotland
 - Day trip expenditure calculated at £5.8 billion
 - An increase of 6% on 2018
- 17.5 million overnight visitors
 - Overnight expenditure calculated at £5.9 billion
 - 14.1 million visitors from the UK, accounting for £3.3 billion in spend (57%)
 - 3.5 million visitors from overseas, accounting for £2.5 billion in spend (43%)

VisitScotland announced that 2019 was the ‘best year for overnight tourism’ in over a decade, and a ‘record-high’ in terms of international tourism expenditure. Notably 2019 saw a large rise in domestic tourism – Scottish residents travelling within the country - exceeding 2018 levels by a third, helping to make 2019 the ‘best year over the last decade in terms of visits and nights’ (2020, p.3).

Tourism has been identified as one six 'Growth' sectors by the Scottish government – 'sectors in which Scotland has been identified as having a distinct comparative advantage' (Tourism Leadership Group, 2018. p.14) and is regarded as 'an important part of the Scottish Economy', an area which makes 'a substantial contribution to Scotland's economic performance.' (*Ibid.*, 2018, p.28).

Indeed, tourism appears to be an important player in employment, with the Tourism Leadership Report also noting that almost one in twelve people in Scotland were employed within the tourist sector, at around 207,000 individuals in 2016 (*Ibid.*, p.28) with 14,145 'tourism enterprises' in operation in 2017 (*Ibid.*, 2018, p.14); by 2019, however, this had risen to 217,000 employees and 18,095 businesses (VisitScotland, 2020, p.9).

Ultimately, the contribution of tourism to the general Scottish economy cannot be understated. This is summarised in the Tourism Leadership Report (2018, p.29):

"...spending by tourists in Scotland generated around £11 billion of economic activity in the wider Scottish supply chain and contributed around £6 billion to Scottish GDP (in basic prices). This represents about 5 per cent of total Scottish GDP."

2.5: Heritage Tourism in Scotland

Heritage tourism has formed an integral part of tourism in Scotland, and interest in the archaeological and historical sites can be traced back a number of centuries, with places like Edinburgh Castle acting as tourist 'honey pots' (Anderson, 2017). This trend in heritage tourism does not appear to be slowing down, as the figures below shall indicate. with Historic Environment Scotland revealing that over 5 million people visited staffed sites in 2018, generating £620 million and helping to support 18,000 FTE jobs.

In 2015, tourist spend associated with heritage (i.e. not just Historic Environment Scotland) was calculated at £780 million, supporting 23,10 FTE jobs, whilst 'total heritage tourism value' was calculated at £1.35 billion (*see Fig. 7 below*). By 2016 this grew to £2.3 billion, supporting 55,4000 jobs (Historic Environment Scotland, 2016, p.4). By 2019, the overall 'historic environment' was worth £4.4 billion in (Historic Environment Scotland, 2019, p.8).

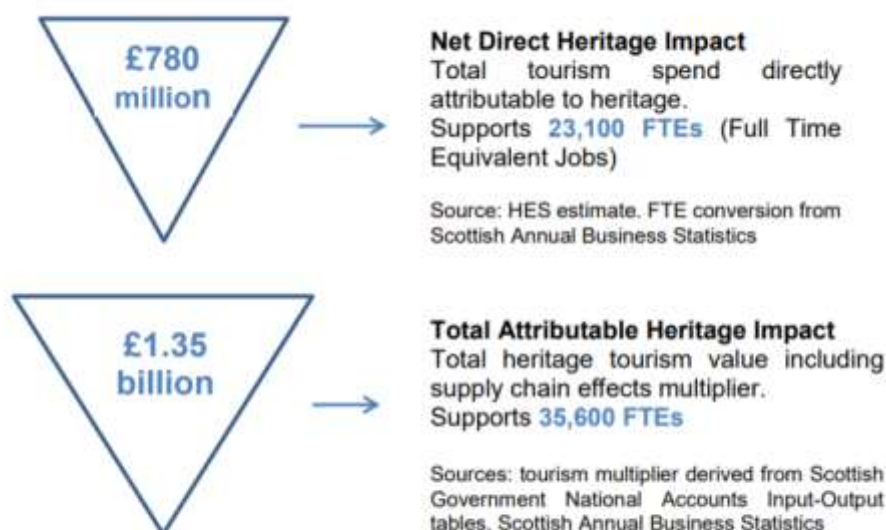


Fig. 7: *Historic Environment Scotland's calculations for the value of heritage tourism in Scotland in 2015*

Understanding tourism in Caithness is difficult, however (see 3.1), as it falls under the Highland region – a huge area which incorporates several other council areas such as Sutherland, Inverness and Skye, and so any form of understanding which can be garnered lacks in Caithness-specific detail. VisitScotland statistics for the Highlands region in 2019 (2020c) also lack the granular detail to understand the role heritage has to play in tourists' motivation in visiting the Highlands region.

Studies and surveys carried out in specific local council areas of Scotland are altogether more illuminating. Reports commissioned by VisitScotland in areas such as the Western Isles and Orkney have revealed the importance of heritage to the overall tourism trade, even to more rural areas, and to their wider economy. Given that these areas may also be considered 'rural' and are further away from tourism hot spots such as Edinburgh and Inverness, they provide a useful comparison to Caithness, and the importance of tourism to these regions is highlighted below.

- **Orkney Tourism Overview (2019 Figures)**

- In 2019, a total of 192,173 visits were made to the Orkney Isles; an increase from 174,273 in 2017
- Visitor spend was calculated at £67.1 million in 2019, up from £49.5 million

- Interestingly, the research conducted neglected to include cruise ship passengers, which brought in an additional 160,000 visitors to the region in 2019, and so the figure is likely higher.

(VisitScotland, 2020b)

- **Orkney Heritage Tourism Insights (2019 Figures)**

- According to the Orkney Island Council and VisitScotland Survey (2020), one third of visitors (31%) were attracted by archaeology and specific attractions, with 57% visiting because of the 'history and culture' (p.29).
- The main attractions - Ring of Brodgar, Skaill House/Skara Brae, St Magnus Cathedral and the Italian Chapel - are all related to historic environment, with most being 'archaeological' in nature, with the Ring of Brodgar and Skara Brae/Skaill House being the most popular visitor attractions for visitors from Scotland and overseas (p.67).
- A report carried out by EKOS Consultants for Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (*see below*) identified that archaeology in Orkney supported FTE 180 jobs (2017, p.9), and equated to being worth around £9,000,000 to the region.
- 67% of participants had visited an archaeological site (Orkney Islands and VisitScotland Survey, 2020, pp.69 – 69).
- 37% of visitors highlighted archaeology and history as the 'highlight' of their trip (*Ibid.*, p.91).

- **Western Isles Tourism Overview (2017 Figures)**

- According to the Comhairle nan Eilean Siar and VisitScotland survey there was nearly 219,000 visits (rather than visitors) to Western Isles (2017, p.117).
- Nearly £65 million was spent by visitors (*Ibid.*, p.117).

- **Western Isles Heritage Tourism Insight**

- The EKOS report studied the economic impact of archaeology (drawn from visitor survey data from 2012/13) suggests that archaeology contributes £4 million towards the economy of the Western Isles (2017, p.8).
- The same report suggests that archaeology supports the 80 FTE roles in the region.

- Interest in ‘archaeology’ and ‘history and culture’ accounts for nearly 40% of visitor motivations (Comhairle nan Eilean Siar and VisitScotland, 2017, p. 30).
- 27% of visitors visited archaeological sites (*Ibid.*, p.79).

2.6 The Potential of Heritage Tourism in Caithness

“The archaeology of Orkney is breathtaking and well worth many visits, but surely a few leaflets on Caithness’ prehistoric remains is not too much to ask for. Apparently it is.”

(Heald & Barber, 2016, p.9)

As should be evident, then, tourism and heritage tourism are important economic contributors to Scotland. The current tourism situation and potential of tourism in Caithness, then, is worth investigating. Despite this, it is matter muddled by legislative and governmental issues, which has impeded county-specific tourism research (see section 3.1). This is unfortunate, as Caithness is distinguished from the rest of the region geographically and geologically (*see Figs. 8 & 9*) and even culturally: Undiscovered Scotland describe it as an ‘island’ with a ‘character’ which is ‘distinct and unique to itself’ (2021), whilst Steven Timoney notes that the area ‘differs greatly from the stereotypical image of Highland Scotland’, and this distinction is expressed by locals of Caithness, too (2008, p.89).

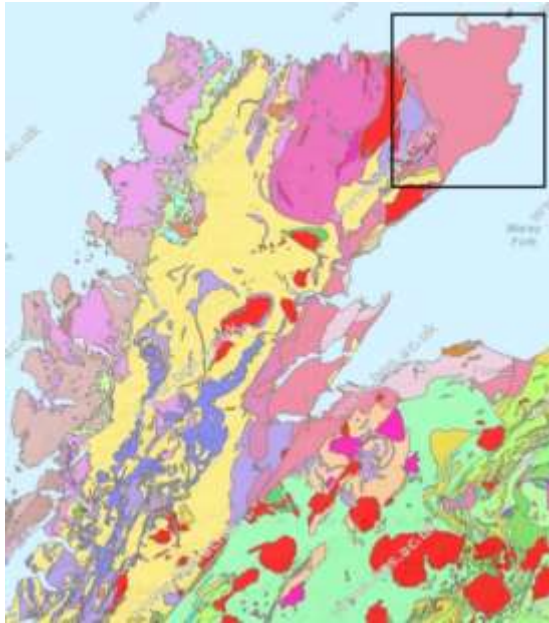


Fig. 8 – showing the underlying geology of Caithness, which Donald Omand notes ‘contrasts markedly’ with the rest much of the Highland region (Omand in Baldwin, 1982, p.7)



Fig. 9 – Caithness forms part of the renowned ‘Flow Country’, a vast area of blanket bogs and peatland. Up to 60% of Caithness is covered by peatland (Omand in Baldwin, 1982, p.11)



Fig. 10– *‘Adjectives such as featureless, flat and monotonous have been used to describe the Caithness landscape. Its monotony is debatele, its flatness non-existent, and it far from featureless!’*
(Omand, p.33, 1972)

Indeed, the heritage and archaeology of Caithness is a notable aspect of the region: archaeology is woven into the landscape of Caithness, and the county is strewn with remnants of the past - from enigmatic prehistoric brochs to remarkable clifftop castles (see Fig. 11). This has been noted by myriad writers, researchers, archaeologists and academics: Heald and Barber describe the region as:

“one of the richest landscapes of Europe... Caithness is dominated by landscapes rich in archaeological remains of all periods: chambered cairns, stone settings, brochs, Pictish settlements, wags, castles, harbours and post medieval settlements, amongst others.”

(2016, p.5)



Fig. 11 – Dunbeath Broch

A cursory glance at CANMORE further supports this notion and reveals the extent and volume of Caithness' archaeological and historical environment (see Figs. 12 & 13), and as noted by Andy Heald in 2011, there is one monument for every 7 inhabitants in Caithness (Heald, 2011, Slide 4). Timoney points out that the Yarrows landscape is 'arguably one of the richest prehistoric landscapes in

Scotland' (2008, p.58). Despite being subjected to a flurry of antiquarian interest in the 19th and early 20th centuries, Caithness's archaeology has been 'marginalised' and 'understudied' (*Ibid.*, slide 4) with the result that with the 'general public is unaware of the county's rich heritage, culture and landscape' (Gunn, in BBC News, 2015).

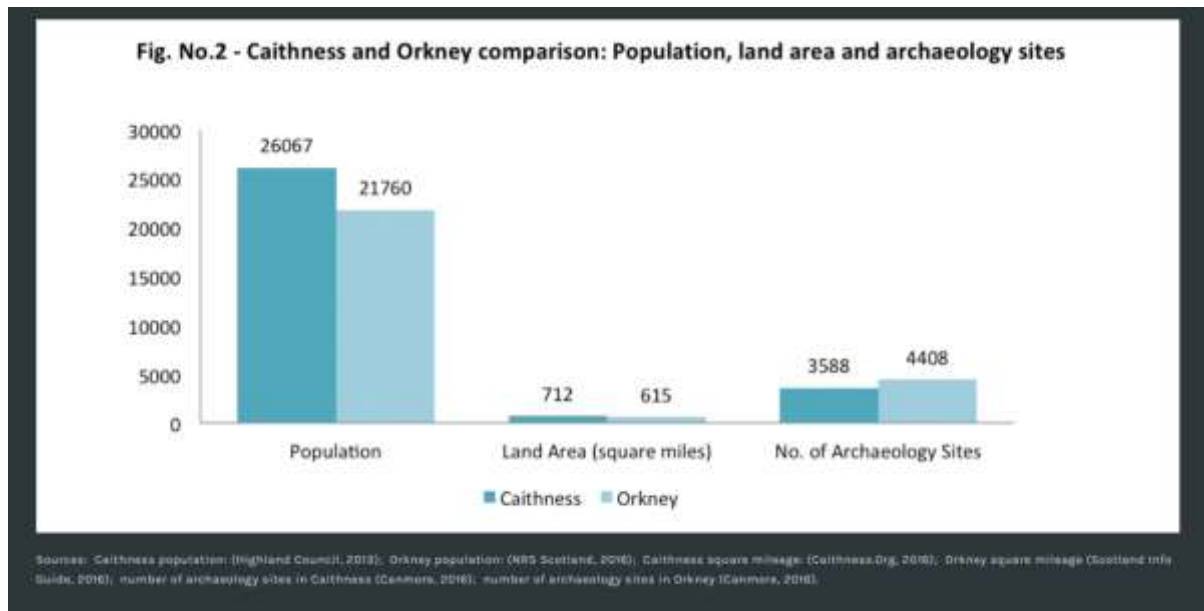
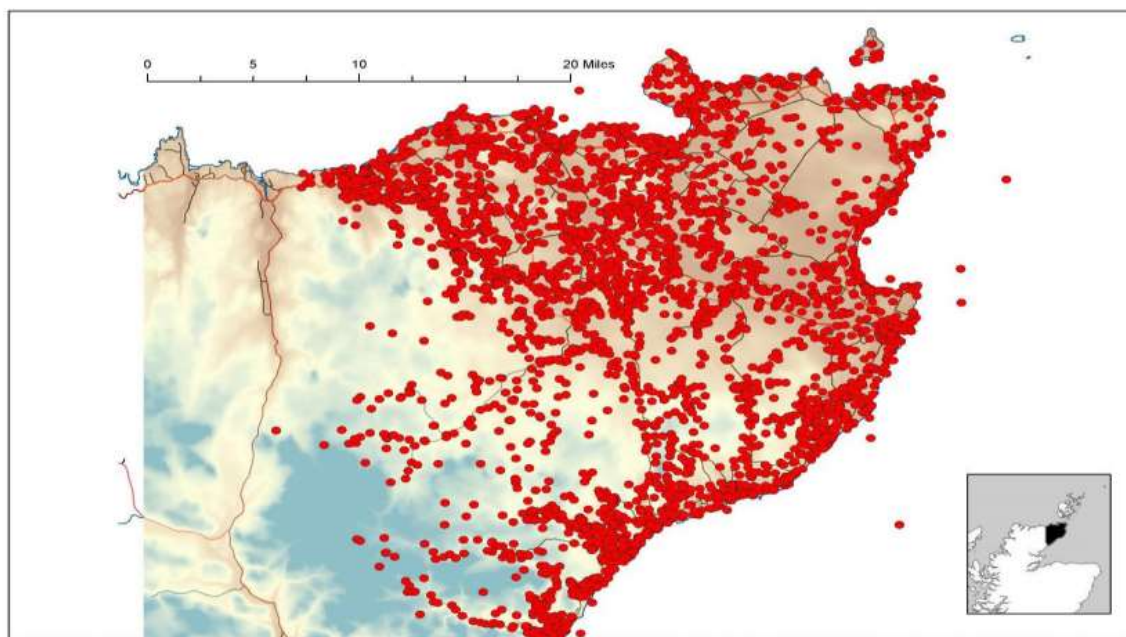


Fig. 12 – Information drawn from *Inspired by Caithness*' research



Map © Andy Heald

Fig. 13 – Map of Caithness showing the known archaeological sites (Andy Heald)

Highland Council recognise that importance of heritage and archaeology in the adopted Caithness and Sutherland Local Development Plan, which notes that ‘The historic environment already plays an important role within the tourism industry and the wider economy of Caithness and Sutherland’, and that the rich and the area’s ‘diverse heritage’ should be utilised for ‘economic and cultural benefits’ (Highland Council, 2018, p.56). Indeed, this focus on the heritage environment is outlined as one of the key outcomes in their setting out of a ‘vision and spatial strategy’ for Caithness and Sutherland:

“Safeguarding and promoting appreciation of valued historic environment assets, by taking account of key historic features in choosing sites to allocate for development and in setting developer requirements included in this Plan, and promoting tourism with a historic environment focus.”

(Ibid., p.5)

Caithness archaeology, and heritage tourism in Caithness, then, seems to be an under-utilised aspect of the economy, and yet this is at odds with its relevant importance and potential importance to the region. With all of this borne in mind, Caithness would certainly benefit from more in-depth examination of its archaeological environment, and its contribution to the wider economic landscape of the region. This study, then, will provide some initial understanding as to the implications of heritage tourism in the county.

CHAPTER THREE

The Economic Value of Archaeology to Caithness: Methodologies in Assessing and Researching Tourism and Heritage Tourism in Caithness

3.1: Assessing Tourism and Heritage Tourism in Caithness

‘a particular bête noire is the tendency for the tourism map of Scotland to be cut off at Inverness’
(Bowditch, The Times, 2016).

As stated in section 2.7 Caithness certainly has tremendous heritage tourism potential – yet arguably there has been little focus on the development of tourism in Caithness, given that the county has been able to depend on other means of employment and opportunity (see 1.2). This is recognised at a local level, and would chime with observations by archaeologist John Barber who, laying out his ambitious ‘River of Stone’ project, remarked that ‘the tourism infrastructure of Caithness is, in general, poorly developed and the county’s earning capacity from tourism is commensurately low’ (2006, p.5). This is something which seems to have trickled into the local public consciousness, with locals revealing to Steven Timoney that there is a general feeling of ignorance from national bodies such as VisitScotland or the Highland Council towards Caithness and the promotion of Caithness heritage, and that visitors, instead, travel onwards to Orkney for archaeology (2008, p.89), and is also reflected in my own research (see 6.11). That is not to say, however, that Caithness has entirely shirked tourism. Donald Omand noted that ‘Tourism as a Caithness industry is only in its infancy and presents a challenge to us all’ (1972, p.211), and so clearly, locals were at least considering how to promote Caithness to tourists nearly 50 years ago. Regardless, there are still challenges and issues facing Caithness’s plight to be recognised as a tourist destination.

Understanding levels of tourism and the economic impact of tourism in Caithness presents an initial difficulty: there is very little by way of previous research into the tourism sector of the region. Certainly, as has been remarked, ‘Caithness specific tourism reports and visitor statistics are very limited’ (Hoskins Architects, 2020, Appendix E, p.3). This may seem somewhat remarkable given that ‘Tourism is the biggest industry in the Highlands’, bringing in 6 million visitors and worth

approximately £1.2 billion pounds to the region, as well as supporting 20,000 jobs (Mackenzie, 2020). Understanding how Caithness benefits from this and what share of these figures relate to Caithness would, then, be a worthwhile endeavour.



Fig. 14 – Map showing the Highland Council region in 2019

The research situation is, however, somewhat obfuscated by Caithness’s lack of legal and political definition. Caithness is a historic county and lieutenancy, and a committee area for the council – but it is not a local government region, like Orkney and the Western Isles. And it is here wherein lies the problem: as John Thurso, chairman of Visit Scotland and a resident of Caithness, explains – ‘Often [VisitScotland] are funded by councils or regions to undertake work for them and of course there are usually council data sets which we can use’ (pers comm, 2020). Caithness, instead, is part of the wider Highland Council, and this means Caithness-specific tourism statistics are hard to come by, with the county relying instead on figures gleaned by VisitScotland from the entire Highland Council

region. This, it should be noted, is a vast area which stretches from Ardnamurchan Point to Dunnet Head, 25,656 km² in total. The latest VisitScotland reports (2020c), then, reflect the entire region, and so, whilst offering some sort of indication, do not offer reliable statistics for Caithness.

Furthermore, there is very little in the Visit Scotland Highland profile reports which allow for understanding motivations for visiting the region, and so is not terribly helpful in determining why tourists might visit Caithness.

Even more 'granular' studies are similarly lacking in detail: Caithness now also finds itself as a part of the 'North Coast 500', a 516-mile long 'touring route' which incorporates much of the Far North of Scotland (see Fig X). As part of their own research, North Coast 500 have suggested that the touring route has brought £22.89m in Gross Value Added (GVA) in 2018, helping to create around 179 FTE jobs in the North of Scotland (Moffat Centre for Travel and Tourism Business Development, 2019, p.2). Again, however, there is little by way of investigation into the direct contribution to Caithness, or to understand visitor numbers to Caithness. With the above borne in mind, understanding of heritage tourism in Caithness is not 'complex' as such, but is, rather, non-existent.



Fig. 15 – *The North Coast 500, which incorporates Caithness.*

3.2: Assessing Visitor Numbers – Methodology and Limitations

Integral to understanding tourism in Caithness is understanding the number of tourists to the region. However, investigating visitor numbers to the region is particularly difficult, as there is scant evidence for visitor numbers specifically to Caithness.

There is at least some data which can be used - as mentioned previously, the Highlands attracted 6 million visitors in 2019, and so presumably a portion of these visitors visited Caithness. The Moffat Centre's study into the North Coast 500 was at least able to reveal visitor numbers to the Castle of Mey and the Caithness Broch Centre: the former saw 28,961 visitors in 2018 giving at least some indication of visitor numbers to what is one of Caithness' most popular attractions (2019, p.16) It should be noted, however, that these were not broken into locals and tourists, so this it is tricky to delineate where these visitors came from; additionally, these numbers are variable – the Broch Centre only attractive 432 in 2018 (*Ibid.*, p.15). Personal communication with the chairman of the John O'Groats Development Trust has indicated that John O'Groats – long regarded as a one of the tourist 'hotspots' of the county, attracts something in the region of 250,000 visitors to the region (Andrew Mowat, pers comm, 2021).



Fig 16. – The famous John O'Groats Signpost

With such poor mechanisms in place for collating visitor numbers in Caithness, I decided to contact accommodation providers – including hotels, bed and breakfasts, campsites - in the region to help record levels of tourism. There are, however, some limitations in undertaking such work: it should first of all be noted that this is not an exhaustive list of accommodation providers, and some accommodation was missed out, or simply some providers were unable to provide any figures and so were not included: as noted by the Moffat Centre, several of these businesses were very small, ‘and are characterised by very limited record keeping’ (2019, p.6). Furthermore, most accommodation providers could only provide estimates of visitor numbers. Though this analysis may seem somewhat ‘rough’, it is not within the scope of this essay to collate an in-depth tourist count for the region, and nor would it be feasible to extract exact numbers in terms of length of stay. Regardless, after speaking to 73 accommodation providers in the region, including campsites, bed and breakfasts and hotels, a figure of 182,421 overnight visitors to Caithness in 2019 was calculated. This is a reasonable estimate, with the Western Isles EKOS consultation reporting 218,000 visitors to the Western Isles in 2016 (2017, p.10), and with 192,173 visitors in Orkney in 2019 (VisitScotland, 2020b).

In summary, the assessment of tourist numbers in Caithness was drawn from my own investigations into both ‘exact’ and ‘estimated’ overnight figures provided by hoteliers and accommodation providers. These figures were then used against the results of the tourist survey, which is described below.

3.3: Understanding the impact and contribution of Archaeology to Caithness: Research Question and Survey Methodology

3.3.1: Research Question

This survey sought to understand the how important ‘archaeology and history’ was as a motivational factor in visitor’s reasons in visiting the county: this would be coupled with data gathered from accommodation providers (*see above*) so that an understanding of the economic impact of heritage tourism could be understood. The question here, then, is ‘*What is the economic value of archaeology to Caithness?*’

3.3.2: Methodology

As noted by Steven Timony (2008, p.4), 'there is no 'single' way of doing research', and so, given the broad scope of this study, I opted for both quantitative and qualitative research, through the use of an online 'Google Form' survey. This survey was aimed at participants were based outwith Caithness but had visited or planned to visit, whilst those who lived in Caithness were given a separate survey to complete (*see section 5.5*).

A list of the same questions was used for each participant. The survey largely consisted of closed questions; this was chosen to simplify questions and refine the outcomes of the survey, enabling a statistical outcome. Questions ranged from how visitors accessed or were inspired to visit Caithness; their general impression of archaeological and historical sites (including access and presentation of sites); and whether Caithness promoted itself enough: these results could be statistically analysed through use of quantitative questions. However, as this study provided a real 'first' opportunity to understand tourism trends in Caithness, I endeavoured to garner as much qualitative detail about tourists' overall impression of Caithness its archaeological landscape as possible, and so I also sought comments on how they felt about particular sites, or if they could elaborate on their views of Caithness archaeology, in general.

An online survey was ideal given that it could be 'shared' quickly and easily, and so a larger set of participant data could be collected, whilst also complying with protocols over the current Covid-19 situation. The survey was shared from my own social media accounts on Facebook and Twitter; however, I also approached tourism bodies such as Venture North and North Coast 500 to share the survey, as this would help collect data from those who had visited the region. I also shared the survey into social media 'groups' aligned with travel to Scotland, such as 'NC500' and 'Scottish Travel Society' to help gain as many responses as possible.

The survey primarily asked what factors attracted visitors to the region (Questions 6. and 7). The style of answering this question, however, could have been framed slightly differently, and, as discussed in section 8.8.2, there are some difficulties in ascertaining an exact economic impact from this question.

3.3.3: Assessing Tourist Spend in Caithness

To ensure better understanding of tourist spend in Caithness, I incorporated aspects of both the EKOS report (2017) as well as VisitScotland reports to attempt to gauge spending levels by tourists in Caithness. I simplified this for survey respondents into three broad questions:

- *How much did you spend on food and drink during your visit to Caithness?*
- *How much did you spend on accommodation during your visit to Caithness?*
- *How much did you spend on activities (e.g. paying for boat trips, tours, activities, equipment hire etc) / souvenirs etc on your visit to Caithness?*

Respondents were given a set range of expenditure (0-50, 50 – 100, 100 – 300, 300 – 500, 500 – 1000 and 1000 +) to select for each question. I then calculated the average spend from each range by first taking mean number from the ranges given: for example, the mean for the £50 – £100 range is £75.

This number was then multiplied by the number of respondents who chose that particular range. This was calculated for each range, to give the total (mean) spend for each range of each question. The three totals (food and drink, accommodation, activities) were then added together, and divided by the number of respondents to give an average spend (*see section 7.6*). Again, this was something of a rough method to understand visitor spend in Caithness, and there were issues with this method (*see section 8.8.2*) realised only after the survey had been distributed. Regardless, it gives some inclination as to the spending habits of tourists to the region.

3.3.4 Assessing the value of Archaeology to Caithness

To understand the economic value of archaeology to Caithness, I decided to employ a blend of methods and calculations from VisitScotland's assessment of visitors to the Highlands (Highland Factsheet, 2019) and the Western Isles EKOS consultation (2017). To understand leisure vs. business visitors to the region, I first of all used VisitScotland's calculation of 73% leisure for domestic visitors (reflecting the large majority of Scotland and UK-based respondents who answered my survey).

I would then use the calculation employed by EKOS (2017, p.8). I would find 73% of the total number of overnight visitors provided to me by hotels and accommodation. That figure would then be multiplied by the average spend (see above). From that figure I would take a calculation using the percentage of people who were attracted to the region because of archaeology and history. I would

then find 25% from that figure, as suggested by EKOS, to find the economic value of archaeology to Caithness (*see 7.8 for these results*).

3.3.5 Ethics

To ensure that the survey complied with University of Glasgow Ethics and GDPR protocols, a participant statement was included at the beginning of this survey. Survey participants were anonymous and free from coercion.

In terms of speaking with accommodation providers, it should be not that ‘occupancy rates’ is highlighted by the Moffat Centre as ‘commercially valuable and sensitive’ (2019, p.6). With this in mind I have not included the total guest number figures for accommodation providers in the appendix and data will be deleted on the 6th April.

3.3.6: Coronavirus Considerations

I have opted to calculate overnight stays at accommodation providers in Caithness during 2019 season. This year was chosen to investigate as 2020 was undoubtedly an imbalanced year in terms of tourism, with the Highland region hit especially hard during the Covid-19 pandemic (HIE, 2020, p.15). Of course, some accommodation providers remained open, and, in discussion with them, noted that their numbers remained largely the same, commenting that merely there was a higher proportion of local or visitors from within Scotland. In any case, figures from 2020 were not yet ready for many accommodation providers, and so 2019 would present the best opportunity to understand tourist numbers in the region. On balance, however, 2020 would not provide a fair reflection of previous years, and so would provide an uneven comparison for the future of tourism in the region.

As noted previously, the Covid-19 pandemic has severely hampered tourism in the Highlands, and in doing so has damaged the Highland economy. VisitScotland, however, note that the results from the latest Orkney Islands Visitor Survey (*see Chapter 2: Section 2.5*) ‘will provide invaluable context by which to measure and shape tourism recovery’ (VisitScotland, 2020b). In a similar vein, I hope that this report can not only help provide a better understanding of heritage tourism in Caithness, but may even help towards the recovery process of the region.

CHAPTER FOUR

Archaeology and Social Value

In addition to having economic value, archaeology also has social value. In order to develop an understanding the social value of archaeology to Caithness, then, it would be useful to unpick the elements involved in this, as it contains concepts open to interpretation and meanings which are as wide-ranging as they are ephemeral. First, A discussion of what constitutes ‘archaeology’ in this study would be beneficial in understanding the scope of the research, followed by a discussion on what is meant by ‘social value’ or ‘social benefits’.

The term ‘archaeology’ will be discussed, first. This can be analysed through a number of ways: through more traditional means such as interaction with the physical archaeological environment - sites, the buildings, the archaeological landscape – but also through the participation in archaeological-themed events and activities, ranging from attending museum exhibits or talks, and the more ‘hands-on’ activities such as excavations or even outreach events. In developing an understanding of what ‘archaeology’ means, the question will be broadened to include other meanings and types of ‘the past’.

This will be followed by a discussion of ‘social value’ – or rather social ‘benefits’, ranging from pride-in-place, skill development, belonging and general happiness. These are encapsulated under the heading of ‘well-being’, a widely-used term and a concept which seems to be the *de rigueur* term to describe the social benefits of heritage, having been adopted and applied to this area of study by the likes of Alison Heritage, Liz Ellis and Laura Drysdale, as well as in research by Historic Environment Scotland, Historic England and The Heritage Alliance. It can be understood in terms of ‘individual’ well-being as well as ‘community’ or ‘societal’ well-being, though is a wide-ranging and somewhat tricky to define idea, as shall be discussed.

4.1: What is ‘Archaeology’?

It is, however, important to consider what counts towards ‘archaeology’, first of all. Archaeology is the artefactual, material and environmental evidence left behind by prehistoric and historic peoples, the study of which has been in practice, in some shape or fashion, for over three centuries; it can also be described as the process of uncovering such evidence. It satisfies scientific and academic curiosity, as well as fulfilling government infrastructure requirements, such as in development work.

It is the purpose of this essay, however, to explore the perhaps more less discernible results created by the act and presence of archaeology and the archaeological landscape. Here I shall investigate the effects of archaeology and will elaborate on the social, individual and communal benefits to the public.

Indeed, for this study, 'archaeology' could be expanded. Barbara Little suggests that 'public archaeology' could incorporate ideas of 'the past' and 'heritage', not just 'archaeology' (p.4, 2002). Indeed, English Heritage's understanding of 'inherited resources which people value for reasons beyond mere utility' (English Heritage, 2008, cited in Pennington *et al.*, 2019, p.6), and 'archaeology' could be applied to this statement, and so a 'broad brush' approach to understanding the public benefits of archaeology becomes apparent. Afterall, the themes of archaeology, heritage and the past are closely interwoven, and it would churlish to eschew historic buildings, outreach events or museums for purely 'archaeological' sites: The What Works Well-being study of Heritage study, for instance, considered a wide range of spaces and places, from conservation areas, to churches to community archaeological sites (*Ibid.*, p.2). There are further ways to define 'archaeology', still: Historic Environment Scotland's study into heritage and well-being – 'The Links between Scotland's Historic Environment and Well-being' (HES, 2020a, p.1) – refers to the 'historic environment' when considering its contributions towards well-being. This 'historic environment' is defined in Historic Environment Scotland's 'Our Place in Time' as 'the cultural heritage of places', which takes in both tangible – i.e. physical spaces and sites - and intangible – stories, traditions, customs (HES, 2014, p.2).

Additionally, the What Works Well-being study considered 'activities' as a means through which heritage and archaeology could be analysed through 'activities': such as 'handling of historical objects, heritage inspired arts and crafts, tours of collections or facilities' (Moratti, 2019, pp.13 – 14). Other reports, too, such as Historic England's 'Well-being and the Historic Environment' (2018) consider alternative means through which the public might engage with archaeology and heritage – as a 'process' through volunteering; as 'participation' through visiting sites – the 'largest area of research' in this topic; as a 'mechanism' by which groups are brought together through projects and events (Reilly, Nolan, Monckton, pp.1-2). Sian Jones (2017, p.26) criticises this aspect of study of well-being in heritage, arguing that in lieu of study into the act of volunteering or participation in activities associated with archaeology, there has been a 'long-standing pre-occupation with tangible heritage', certainly in European contexts.

With this in mind, I have broadened the scope of the dissertation, to include the above ideas: this study will not be restricted to just physical, archaeological remains, and nor will associated activities of archaeology be ignored. This essay will have a wider remit in exploring 'the past', and this will help to develop a more holistic view of the heritage and archaeology of Caithness. This 'broadening' will also ensure that data collection - in the context of Caithnessian interaction and engagement with the past - is not stymied, as a narrow view of what counts towards 'archaeology' would surely be detrimental to this study.

4.2: What is 'Social Value?' and 'Well-being'?

Social value is a difficult concept to 'pin down', and so it would be prudent to investigate and delineate what this comprises this concept, and what it means. Sian Jones has, for instance, identified several issues and dilemmas in the collection of social value through the historic environment, such as the 'dynamic nature of social values', but also that these social values are not always equal to historic value, especially when definitions are set by heritage professionals (2017, pp.25-26). Perhaps, instead, it is better to look at 'social value' through the lens of 'social benefits' which approximate to a sense of 'well-being'. Jones' assertions that 'concern with benefits tends to distract attention away from the social values' (p.24) seems somewhat semantical and potentially restrictive. Regardless, the idea of well-being, as shall be discussed, is a burgeoning area of study at governmental level (Historic Environment Scotland, 2020a), and this is also reflected in the recent growing number of heritage-based studies on the subject. To this end, the social benefits associated with the creation of well-being will be analysed in more detail, and so it would first be useful to gain an understanding of what well-being meant, given its place in the heritage spotlight.

Well-being is described in the Oxford English Dictionary as 'The state of being comfortable, healthy, or happy'; Historic England and the Heritage Alliance place 'well-being' in the context the World Health Organisation's description of 'health', as a 'state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity' (WHO, 1948). It is a somewhat fluid and flexible term, and no consensus has been reached with regards to its definition (Historic Environment Scotland, 2020a; Heritage *et al*, 2020). Indeed, a morass of meanings and values have been applied to the term: a cursory glance online reveals that there have been numerous approaches and efforts made studies to try to define the concept. This is further complicated, as Darvill *et al*. explain, by the fact that 'well-being' is in fact a 'multi-dimensional range of contexts including: mental well-being; physical well-being; social well-being; spiritual well-being; emotional well-being; economic well-being' (2019, p.4). On top of this, it is somewhat difficult to measure, as it

may be evaluated on an individual basis. Reilly *et al.* also note that well-being is 'valued in distinct ways', adding to the subjectivity and complexity of its study (2018, p.19).

4.3: Why is 'Well-being' Important?

There are clear socio-economic implications in improving the well-being of the populace: the mental health statistics make for 'grim reading'. One in six people in England suffer from a diagnosable mental health issue, and that one in three will be afflicted by a brain disorder such as depression and anxiety. The costs are not just emotional or social for individuals and family members; the cost of mental health support to the NHS in England equated to £34 billion pounds per year, and the cost to the economy was estimated to be something in the region of £105 billion pounds per year (Darvill *et al.*, pp. 1-2, 2019).

Unsurprisingly, well-being has an increasingly important consideration for both society and government, with 'Good health and well-being for all, at every stage of life' being set as Goal 3 of the UN's 2030 'Agenda for Sustainable Development', adopted by Member Nations in 2015. (The Heritage Alliance, 2020, p.7). The term 'well-being' can be found in 117 constitutions across the world as well as featuring in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Heritage, 2020), and countries across the world now look to incorporate 'well-being' into their own policy-making (The Heritage Alliance, 2019, p.7). This has seemingly stemmed, from a crucial study carried out in 2008-2009 known as the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress by Joseph Stiglitz, Amartya Sen and Jean-Paul Fitoussi (The Heritage Alliance, 2019, p.7; Dalziel 2020). Proponents of the inclusion of well-being into governmental policies include Iceland, which stressed the measurement of well-being ahead of GDP in December 2019 (BBC News Report) and New Zealand, which now has a well-being budget, and was, according to Professor Dalziel, the first country to 'incorporate well-being policy into core economic policy'. Dalziel, moreover, states that New Zealand is world-leading in their incorporation of cultural identity into their measuring of well-being, stating that 'cultural identity is essential to well-being' (2020).

Closer to home, In 2010, the then-Prime Minister David Cameron launched the 'National Well-being Programme', designed to measure not economic progress and standard of living, but how lives and the quality of life were improving (2013), followed by a study on 'What Matters to You' carried out by the Office for National Statistics in 2011. More recently this sentiment towards well-being has also been shared in Scotland, which, alongside Iceland, sought to measure well-being more highly against GDP. Scotland's First Minister Nicola Sturgeon recognises the power and importance of a

good level of well-being in a country, remarking at a 'TED Talk' that 'it is more important than ever that we ask and find the answers to those questions and promote a vision of society that has well-being, not just wealth, at its very heart' (2019), before being quoted as placing well-being as important as GDP in 2020 (BBC News, 2020a). Historic Environment Scotland (2020a) also observe that the Scottish Government's Purpose Statement, 'at the heart of the National Performance Framework (NPF)', aims 'to focus on creating a more successful country with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish through increased well-being, and sustainable and inclusive growth'.

4.4: How is Well-being measured?

How to best measure 'well-being', then? Again, difficulties lie ahead in attempting to do so. The changeable nature of social value and concepts associated with well-being make it somewhat problematic to understand: different types of 'well-being' exist: social well-being, community well-being and physical well-being are all considered by the 'What Works Well-being' study (2019). Well-being has also been studied on an individual or 'personal' basis by the Office for National Statistics (2019) – which in turns has been used to help understand 'well-being' at national level. Well-being is clearly layered, multi-faceted and subjective: there is no 'one-size-fits-all', according to The Heritage Alliance (2020), and this statement is echoed by Historic Environment Scotland who remark that 'there is not a single, comprehensive source for defining and capturing well-being in the sector' (2020a). Even then the evidence produced can be of 'mixed quality', reflecting the complexity of such studies (Moratti, 2019).

Well-being, then encapsulates a wide range of concepts, and is probably impossible to measure accurately: The Heritage Alliance suggest that that a bespoke approach is more worthwhile, and that 'organisations should explore the existing resources and guidance and consider what fits their project' (2020, p.76).

For the purposes of this essay, I have outlined how I will measure well-being terms of belonging; identity; bringing the community together; learning skills and increased understanding; health and an 'fun' or 'positivity' (*for more details on these concepts, see Chapter Five*).

4.5: So, Can Archaeology Promote Good Well-being?

Although the study of well-being and archaeology is a fairly new field of research (Lunt, 2019, xix) - though one which is burgeoning – and despite there being some unsurety on what well-being 'is', it is broadly agreed by those researching the sector that is that the places, spaces and activities

associated with the past have an undeniably positive effect on both individuals and whole communities. As stated by What Works Well-being:

‘We found that historic places and assets, and interventions associated with them, can have a wide range of beneficial impacts on the physical, mental and social well-being of individuals and communities’ – (2019)

This sentiment is echoed across other studies: Historic Environment Scotland states that the ‘historic environment has a contribution to make to individuals’, communities’ and society’s well-being’ (2020a, p1.), whilst The Heritage Alliance’s ‘Heritage, Health and Well-being A Heritage Alliance Report’ regards heritage as being ‘transformative’ and ‘integral role in the nation’s future well-being’ (2020, pp. 1 – 4).

There are a number of issues, however, in grappling with this ‘new’ field of study. As mentioned previously, information and statistics about heritage and are not always available at a local authority level (RSA, 2020, p.13) – such as Caithness – and so this provides a further challenge in collecting and disseminating the data: this is much true for understanding the relationship between well-being and heritage as it is in understanding the relationship between the economy and heritage. As discussed, there are also further difficulties lie in understanding, measuring and evaluating what well-being means and what it means to others. It is a multi-faceted term, and so it shall be broken into a number of concepts (*see Chapter 5*), through which the public will be surveyed. To increase the scope of the survey, the public will be provided with a number of different types of ‘heritage’ upon which they can remark – from visits to archaeological sites to outreach events; and will also be presented with a number of different types of ‘well-being’, ranging from general ‘happiness’ to themes of belonging, connectivity, pride and so on.

This study shall, then, look at the relationship between Caithness and the way it engages with the historic environment. First of all, there is material culture and buildings: as Barbara Little states, ‘nothing quite so compelling as personal experience of a place to begin to understand its significance’ (2002, p.14), whilst Liz Ellis also notes how ‘special’ people feel when interacting with a historic environment or historic objects (2020). Historic Environment Scotland’s study into well-being takes a fairly wide spectrum of engagement with physical spaces and places into account, ranging from ‘noticing’ the historic environment to visits to historical sites (2020b).



Fig. 17 – *Dancing at Avesbury, as part of the Human Henge project*

The second element involves study into participation in archaeological events, such as excavation. There are a number of benefits associated with outreach events, or archaeological processes. These are noted in the case studies carried out by the Heritage Alliance as having contributed towards education and skills, as well as improving both mental and physical health (2020). Geoffrey Scarre, also notes that excavation can provide communities with connections to their forbears and can bring the past to life (2014, p.120) whilst Tilley notes that excavation has opportunities in becoming more 'socially engaged' (1988, p.280). More recently, work carried out by Vanessa Heaslip and Timothy Darvill on the 'Human Henge' project has suggested that 'activity and exploration in the prehistoric landscape' can help add towards feelings of connectedness, challenging oneself, or even feeling special. Ultimately their research suggested that creative involvement in such a project created 'positive impact upon participants' mental health and well-being' (2018, p.33).

There is no doubt that heritage, archaeology and the past are an important part of society, and that these concepts can play a part in producing and promulgating well-being: the issue at stake, however, is whether this has been realised in an area like Caithness, which, arguably, has not yet fully realised the potential of its archaeology.

CHAPTER FIVE

Methodology and Frameworks on Understanding Social Value and Well-Being

With the previous chapter's observations borne in mind – explicitly section 4.4 - it would be prudent to break down and examine the social benefits of archaeology and the historic environment into a number of concepts associated with, or leading to, greater well-being. My own assessment will be based on three studies: the *What Works Wellbeing Scoping review: Historic places or Objects and Impact on Individual and Community Wellbeing* (Pennington et al., 2019); The Heritage Alliance's *Heritage, Health and Wellbeing: A Heritage Alliance Report* (2020), and *Historic Environment Scotland's KPI Survey – Wellbeing* (2020b).

The above studies refer to broadly similar benefits correlating to an improved sense of 'well-being', whether that be physically, mentally or even economically. Liz Ellis (2020), for instance, notes that The *What Works Wellbeing Scoping Review*, which provides a synthesis of over 3,500 reports on the subject of 'heritage' and well-being between 1990 and 2018, remarks on concepts which include 'belonging and local pride, social connections, self-confidence, empowerment, positive emotions and skills and learning', whilst the Heritage Alliance's *Heritage, Health and Wellbeing* report notes that the 'Heritage's offer is varied', with strong themes of 'connection, mindfulness, activity, learning, and contributing to the community', all of which correlate with five of the New Economics Foundation (NEF) 'wellbeing actions': 'connect; be active; take notice; keep learning; give' (2020, p.8).

Perhaps the most important study, and the one 'closest to home', is the *Historic Environment Scotland KPI Survey – Wellbeing* (Historic Environment Scotland 2020b). This research report by Historic Environment Scotland connects engagement with heritage to 'Established Benefits' such as fun, more physical activity, pride and confidence, social networking and skills and employability (Historic Environment Scotland, 2020a), and so similarly aligned with the previous studies. The work here will be utilised, and most importantly the questions employed here will help form the basis of my own survey material.

Within each of these studies, the below aspects of 'well-being' are discussed, and it would be prudent to discuss these in more detail, as they inform my own questions; understanding these outcomes is key to understanding the outcomes of the survey and interviews.

5.1 Social Connections, Community, Bringing People Together

Social connections, community, the 'bringing together' of people and feeling of 'belonging' are cited frequently in the study of well-being in archaeology, and indeed these are noted as being a particularly important part of 'well-being'. This has become an especially pertinent and poignant point considering the effects of Covid-19. As Alison Heritage remarks, 'We are social animals. We need each other. We are missing each other' (2020).

These terms essentially represent a sort of 'community cohesion' as Barbara Little suggests (2002, p. 3) and the provision of opportunities for individuals to connect with one another, to establish networks and friendships: heritage is described by Moratti (2019) as having an ability to provide 'Social connectivity'. In their understanding of well-being, The Heritage Alliance case studies frequently refer to the creation and sustenance of friendships, both 'new' and 'lifelong', all aided by heritage organisations and events.

Liz Ellis (2020), commenting on the 'What Works Wellbeing' study, notes that heritage groups can bring people together to explore different histories, that these are opportunities to at least begin to have conversations on the past. This is a point picked also picked up on by Barbara Little, who comments that 'Community leaders find that archaeology can build community links in the present as well as the past' (2002, p.16).

This dissertation, then, shall explore whether heritage or archaeology has had the effect of bringing communities together, and whether it assists in the 'bringing communities together' in the Caithness region.

5.2: Belonging, Identity, Pride in Place

Other concepts involved with well-being and heritage are somewhat more ephemeral and arguably more difficult to describe: 'belonging' and 'identity' are two such concepts, used to define who an individual is, and their place in society, both of which can lend towards a sense of 'pride in place'.

As opposed to bringing people together physically, 'Belonging' is a sense which helps to connect people both to a place and with a certain people. This is a 'significant and necessary' aspect of well-being which leads to an individual's development, distinguished by 'by the need to establish close and safe ties that generate a sense of security, care, and affection'. (Peter *et al.* 2015, p.95). This can be developed through interaction between global and 'local places' and 'individuals' experiences which can involve 'natural and social dimensions' (*Ibid.*, 2020, p.96).

Belonging is certainly an area which appear to be growing in importance, now appearing as a desired 'wellbeing outcome' from National Heritage Lottery Funding investment: 'Individuals will feel more connected to the people and/or the place where they live as a result of involvement in your project' (Ellis, 2020). Much like a social connectivity and community, this is an aspect of well-being which has been further highlighted by the presence of COVID-9 (Ellis, 2020). The Heritage Alliance also notes that heritage 'offers the intangible: a sense of rootedness (2020, p.4), whilst The What Works Wellbeing report suggests that can heighten a sense of belonging, also (2019). Essentially, as stated by Reilly *et al.*, 'Culture and heritage generally are understood as key methods of generating belonging' (2018, Executive Summary).

Identity on the other hand, plays a significant role in formulating this sense of belonging, allowing to provide a sense of self and sense of who 'we' are, and allowing an individual to understand. This can be understood as 'relational representation' and allows individuals to understand 'what [they] have in common, what [they] share with other people, and also what [they] have different, not from other individuals, but from other groups' (Pehrson, 2020). Heritage and archaeology can play a part in the formulation of this, with Barbara Little stating that 'Archaeology can empower local groups by supporting local identities and cultural heritage' (2002, pp.7-8), whilst the Royal Society of Arts note that 'Heritage is part of local and individual identity' (2020, p.7)

The Heritage Alliance also notes that heritage offers 'identity' (p.4, 2020), whilst it has also been observed by Reilly *et. al* that the notion of local identity being inherently linked to historic spaces is 'borne out of research'. This is evident in the 'A community right to beauty' report carried out by The Chartered Association of Building Engineers (CABE), which revealed local preference for older buildings, a choice made due to the 'perceived longevity of their presence as well as their grandeur, rather than style' (2018, in Monckton *et al.* 2018, p.23).

These ideas can help to support a sense of 'pride in place', or 'sense of place'. 'Pride' is perhaps an altogether more-readily defined concept, though there is a lack of detailed studies of 'pride in place', especially with regards to heritage. According to Chow *et al.* (2012, p.122), heritage can elicit a 'mild positive emotion of respect, an achievement-related affect and worth'. It also plays a part in bolstering a number of positive feelings, such 'awareness, appreciation, identity, understanding and tolerance of others but 'pride in place' is perhaps most noteworthy for being so closely tied to tourism: 'Tourists are interested in the culture of Oxford and this gives pride to the residents', (*Ibid.*, 2012, p.122). This sentiment is shored up by similar observations made by Barbara Little, (2002, p.7) who states that 'celebrations of local identity, on the other hand [are] often instigated by tourism

concerns'. Pride-in-place, therefore, is an important factor in improving both the well-being and economy of communities.

It is the purpose of this dissertation, then, to try and understand whether archaeology and the historic environment contributes to 'belonging' in Caithness and if it helps to provide an 'identity' which residents can share. Furthermore, the study will seek to understand if the historic environment can assist in creating a sense of 'pride-in-place'.

5.3: Learning Skills, Education & Volunteering

A much-vaunted well-being benefit of archaeology is that it provides an informal learning experience for participants, and the chance to develop new skills, as well as being a volunteering opportunity. Across all three reports, and dozens more, 'learning', 'skills', 'education' and 'volunteering' are mentioned several times and is seen as an important part of improving well-being. Indeed, it is important to acknowledge that 'Health and wellbeing are increasingly understood as tied up with, and not separate from, learning' ((Desmarais, S., Bedford, L. and Chatterjee, H.J, 2018, p.52).

Indeed, Historic Environment Scotland (2020b, p.22) single out learning about Scotland's history, culture and heritage as a 'key benefit' in their study into 'Benefits of engagement with historic sites and heritage places'. Likewise, 'Learning new skills' is highlighted by the NHS in their '5 steps to Mental Wellbeing', which correlates with the NEF's '5 Ways to Wellbeing' report, in which 'keep learning', as mentioned previously, is stated as one of the cornerstones of well-being (2020, p.8). As well as historic places and archaeological sites, museums can provide an excellent learning experience, and that they are 'are ideally placed to be key players in supporting health and wellbeing for individuals and communities' (Desmarais, S., Bedford, L. and Chatterjee, H.J, 2018, p.52).

Furthermore, museums can provide opportunities for 'creative learning', ascribed with promoting better wellbeing (Oliver-Harrison, 2019).

As well as museums, the process of learning can also be undertaken through participation in actual archaeological investigations, such as excavation, where 'active engagement in the process of archaeological discovery and learning that supports the growth of positive personal attributes' (Sayer, 2015, p.258). Of course, there is a wide range of skills associated with archaeology: excavation, recording, surveying, mapping, interpretation, measuring, public speaking, teamwork, interpretation, teamwork, marketing, writing, and so on. Volunteering in such skills, furthermore, can be hugely beneficial to an individual, as noted by the Heritage Alliance, who note that '30% of

volunteers soon found employment as a result of skills gained, which is itself a key determinant of wellbeing' in one such heritage case study (2020, p.10).

This study, then, will also seek to understand if new skills were accrued by those participating in archaeological events, as well as if participants felt that these opportunities were valuable educational experiences towards their own understanding of Caithness' past.

5.4: Fun Experiences, Happiness and Health

Perhaps a value which should not be overlooked is the general sense of satisfaction and positive emotions which can be obtained through engaging with the historic environment and participating in events and activities. Indeed, the above benefits - belonging, identity, connectedness - are arguably hazy and somewhat academic concepts, whilst 'feeling happy' or 'enjoying' visits to archaeological sites and/or taking part in archaeological activities is probably a more readily-identifiable value. Some survey respondents may not be able to identify or articulate why visiting a site is good for their well-being (and even the term well-being, as discussed, is slippery) and so happiness provides a good 'catch-all' expression to indicate enjoyment and pleasure.

Of course, a caveat should be applied here: measuring satisfaction and happiness is somewhat difficult, given that this varies from individual-to-individual. Indeed, the psychologist Ed Diener, notes 'happiness' as a 'subjective well-being' (2009, p.67). Certainly, though, interaction and visiting archaeological sites and landscapes can, essentially, make a person feel good, and provide an enjoyable past-time. Historic Environment Scotland, for instance, used this question in their own survey assessing the impact of the historic environment, noting that 78% of respondents, in general, 'felt happier' (2020b). This kind of study is particularly pertinent in the context of the Covid-19 outbreak, with Peter Ainsworth remarking that '*Joy, happiness and thoughtfulness have rarely been more needed than now*' (Heritage Alliance, 2020, p.1).

There is of course, an added well-being bonus attached with engaging with archaeological landscape and the historic environment: namely, physical health. This aspect goes hand-in-hand with mental health, though is often associated with 'natural' elements, as demonstrated by doctors in Shetland 'prescribing nature' (BBC News, 2018) who advise to 'Look for tracks and signs of animals', 'follow the course of a burn' or to 'Start bagging Shetland's 19 Marilyns' (NHS Shetland Nature Prescriptions Calendar, 2018, February). It should be pointed out, however, that the archaeological and historic environment also feature in this 'nature prescriptions calendar', with recommendations to 'Take the

coastal route to the Broch of Burraland' (April) or to 'Go and find a chambered cairn as near to the shortest day as possible' (December).



Fig. 18 – Example page from the NHS Shetland 'Nature Prescriptions Calendar' advising people to 'Go and find a chambered cairn as near to the shortest day as possible'

Additionally, participation in archaeological investigations – namely excavation - can have obvious health benefits. This aspect, however, seems to have garnered relatively little academic interest, and may be an interesting point of future research. Faye Sayer noted in her 2015 study 'Can digging make you happy?' that 'Involvement in physical activity, such as archaeological excavation, can result in participants feeling stronger and more active.' (p.256), and such effort is noted by fitness trainer and volunteer archaeologist Mike Nowak, who remarks that 'The work can be quite manual and challenging in terms of hiking, digging and screening' (Nowak), and provides evidence of via heart rate analysis.

It should be noted, however, that though there are obvious health benefits attached with rigorous archaeological work, Sayer (2015, p.258) argues that 'Involvement in archaeological excavation

projects cannot guarantee increased well-being or personal happiness' (2015, p.258). Nevertheless, it should be borne in mind, yet again, that there is an element of difficulty in analysing this given the various extenuating circumstances and subjective nature of measuring 'wellbeing'. What may be restricting, though, is the lack of involvement in any form of heritage event or activity: these opportunities are somewhat limited in Caithness, and the vast majority of the residents of Caithness are unlikely to have participated in any sort of archaeological opportunity, let alone have had the chance to excavate at an archaeological site.

Finally, this study will attempt to uncover whether archaeology is enjoyed and appreciated by local residents, and if they believe it is important towards the provision of 'happy' and 'healthy' experiences.

5.5: Research Question and Survey Methodology

5.5.1: Research Question

This survey sought to understand the how the local inhabitants felt and perceived the 'archaeology and history' of the region: from historic sites, to museums and heritage-based activities. The research question, essentially, is 'What is the social worth of archaeology to Caithness?'.

5.5.2: Survey Methodology

In order to help answer this, I again opted for mixed quantitative and qualitative research, through the use of an online 'Google Form' survey. This survey was aimed at participants with a 'connection' to Caithness, but primarily for those who lived or currently live in Caithness.

Again, an online survey was ideal given that it could be 'shared' quickly and easily, and so a larger set of participant data could be collected, whilst also complying with protocols over the current Covid-19 situation. The survey was shared from my own social media accounts on Facebook and Twitter, and into Caithness-centric Facebook 'groups' such as Thurso Heritage Society and Caithness Facebookers. I also shared this with friends and family via WhatsApp, and asked if they could share it with others.

A list of the same questions was used as opposed to conversational collection of data. The survey largely consisted of closed questions; this was chosen to simplify questions and refine the outcomes

of the survey. However, some questions were asked such as trying to ascertain ‘why’ or ‘how’ participants felt towards archaeology and heritage in general, as well as expressing their thoughts on Caithness archaeology.

The survey asked respondents if they believe there were any benefits from visiting local archaeological and historical sites and museums, as well as participating in heritage-themed events such as excavations. The questions related to the concepts outlined in sections 5.1 – 5.4 above, and were asked in a simple and straightforward manner.

Though assessments of how Caithnessians ‘view’ their heritage have been carried out previously, (*see Timoney 2008*), this was a much broader approach. Rather than just looking through the lens of a particular site, as was attempted by Timoney, I opted to discuss the ‘general’ view of archaeology and heritage in the region, based on participants’ previous interaction with ‘archaeology’.

5.5.3: Survey Ethics

To ensure that the survey complied with University of Glasgow Ethics and GDPR protocols, a participant statement was included at the beginning of this survey. Survey participants were anonymous and free from coercion.

5.5.4: Interview Methodology

It became apparent that participant interaction with archaeological events was strikingly low (*see section 6.7*). In order to help illuminate some of the thoughts, opinions and overall view of archaeological activities – in particular archaeological investigation such as excavation – I decided to carry out qualitative interviews with select participants whom I knew had taken part in archaeological excavations in the region.

I decided to speak to five people; one of whom was a long-term advocate of archaeology in Caithness and had participated in and organised several excavations, and four interviewees who had only taken part in a handful of events – two from another country, and two who have lived in Caithness most of their life. I hoped to gain further insight into why these excavations appealed to some more than others, or where improvements might be made in terms of promoting archaeological investigation in the county.

A list of the same ‘basic’ questions was used for each participant, but the interview was open to conversational questions, too: this would allow for participants to feel more relaxed, leading to

further or deeper insight into their thought and beliefs on archaeological activities. Questions were based on the above concepts, to understand if, for instance, they felt that the activities contributed to their sense of 'belonging' or if it increased 'pride in place'. Participants would then be asked to explain why or how they believed this to be the case. Interviewee participants were given pseudonyms so that they could not be recognised (Cai1 – Cai5), which allowed them to talk more candidly in the interview process.

5.5.5: Interview Ethics

To ensure that the survey complied with University of Glasgow Ethics and GDPR protocols, a participant statement was provided for each interview prior to each interview which was signed and sent to me. Recordings were kept of each interview to assist with the collation of data and to ensure quotes could be correctly attributed. These recordings will be deleted on the 6th April 2020.

CHAPTER SIX

The Social Value of Archaeology to Caithness: Results and Discussion

6.1: The Social Value of Archaeology

This section elaborates on the findings of the '*The Social Value of Archaeology to Caithness*' survey, and seeks to understand how those living in Caithness perceived and interacted with the archaeological and historic environment, and, furthermore and what benefits can be drawn from this. Essentially, the aim of this survey was to understand the social 'value' of archaeology to the region.

This section also includes excerpts of interviews with five Caithnessians, to help furnish the study with some additional local insight and to help convey the general 'feeling' towards heritage in the county.

6.2: Demographic information

The total number of survey respondents for this survey was 452. The survey attracted a good mix of age groups, though the 18-25 and 71+ categories were poorly represented (*see Fig. 19*). More than half of the participants were born in, and presently lived, in Caithness (*see Fig. 20*). One-third of survey respondents were from Thurso (*see Fig. 21*). This would reflect the fact that Thurso has the highest population in the region, but also reflects that Thurso bias in survey respondents (*see also section 8.1.1*)

1. Please state your age group

449 responses

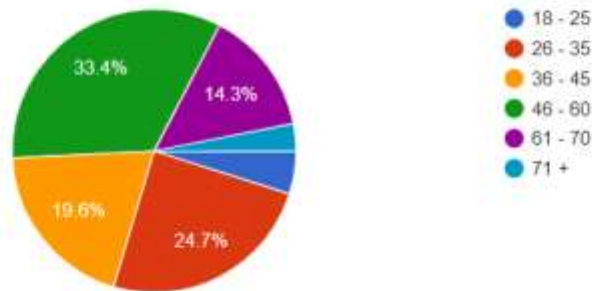


Fig. 19

2. Please indicate your connection to Caithness

451 responses

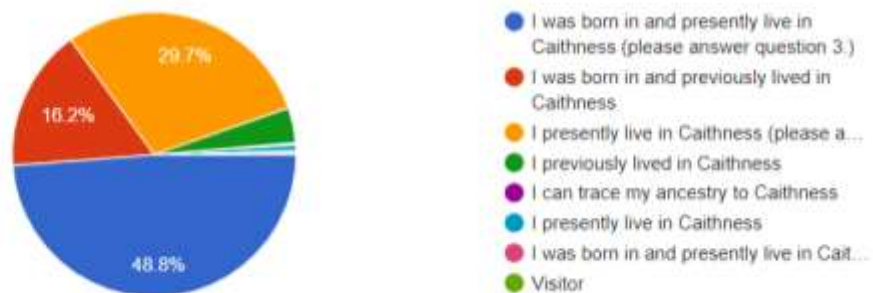


Fig. 20

3. If you presently live in Caithness, which community council do you belong to?

372 responses

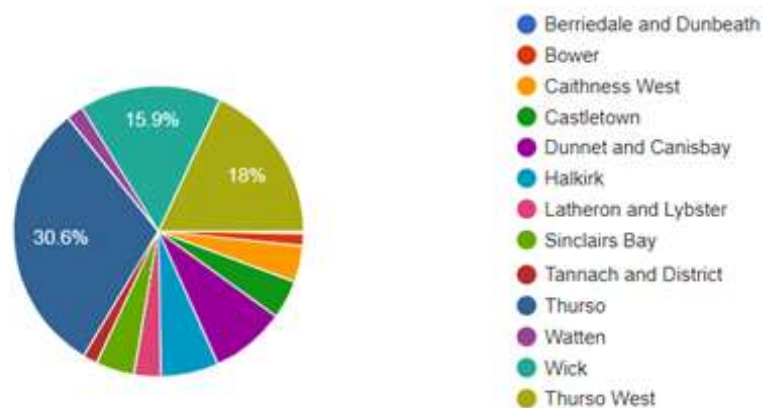


Fig. 21

As part of the 'Demographic Information' section, and to help frame who answered this questionnaire and their 'general' views on archaeology, the survey also asked respondents whether

they thought it important to be aware of and learn about the historic environment, and whether they visited archaeological sites outwith Caithness. The answer was an overwhelming 'yes' to both questions, at 98.7% and 97.1% respectively. This would indicate that most people answering the survey had an interest in history and archaeology regardless of their understanding of Caithness archaeology (see Figs. 4 & 5). It may be, however, that this steered some respondents to a 'yes' answer because they deemed it the 'right' thing to say, whether they believed it or not (see section 8.1.1).

4. Do you think it is important to be aware of, and learn about, archaeological sites and places of historic interest (not just in relation to Caithness)?

452 responses

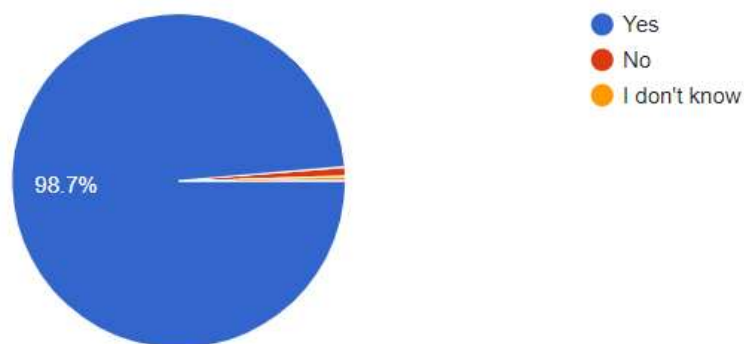


Fig. 22

5. When you go on holiday or visit a new place (not Caithness), do you visit sites of historic interest? i.e. castles, museums, archaeological sites, heritage centres, historic trails, famous birthplaces etc.

452 responses

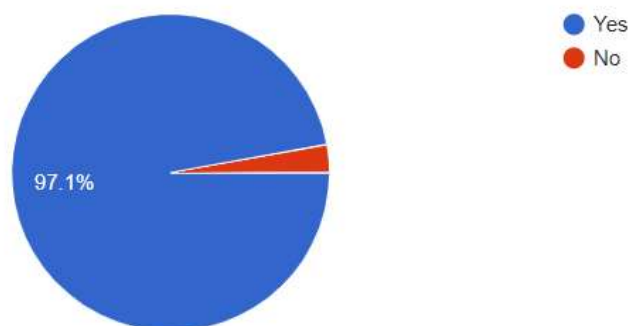


Fig. 23

6.3: Archaeological / Historical Sites in Caithness

This section sought to determine respondents' interaction with archaeological sites in the region.

- Again, almost all respondents (99.1%) were aware of archaeological sites in the region.

1. Are you aware of archaeological or historic sites (brochs, cairns, castles, etc.) in Caithness?

451 responses

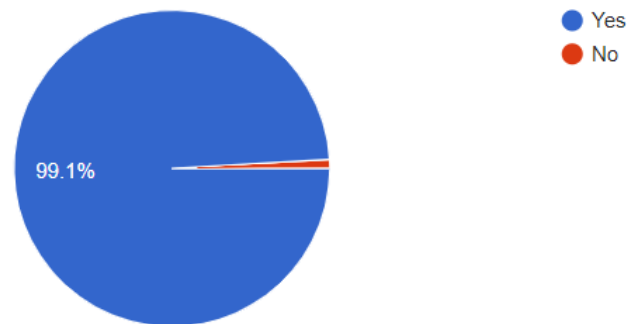


Fig. 24

- 97.1% explained they had visited an archaeological site in the county:

2. Have you visited any archaeological or historic sites in Caithness?

447 responses

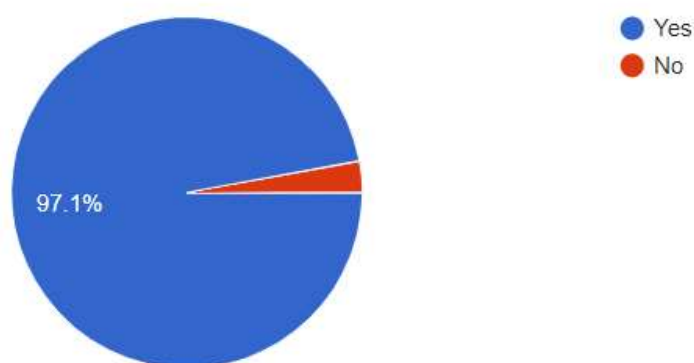


Fig. 25

- 408 (92%) respondents had visited Camster Cairns, making this the most 'popular' archaeological site in the county, followed by Whaligoe Steps (353), Thurso Castle (328), Old St. Peter's Kirk (315) and Sinclair Girnigoe Castle (299).

3. What archaeological / historical sites have you visited?

442 responses

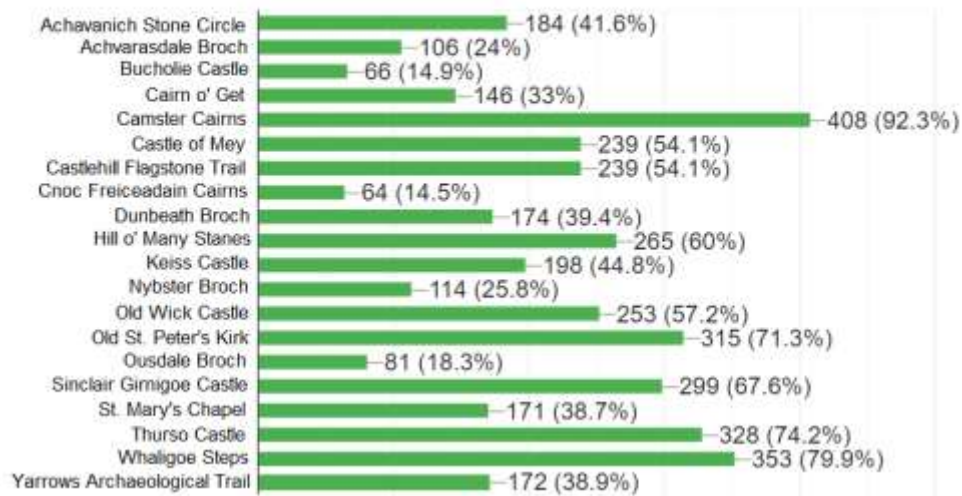


Fig. 26 – 11.12% visited 'other' sites, such as Dirlot Castle or Thing's Va Broch.

- The majority of respondents (94%) had heard of these sites through 'Local Knowledge / word of mouth' with 59.6% of survey participants explaining they had visited them because they live or lived near them; 20.3% had learned about them through social media, whilst another 20.3% had been taught about them in school.

4. How did you learn about these sites? You may choose more than one option.

448 responses

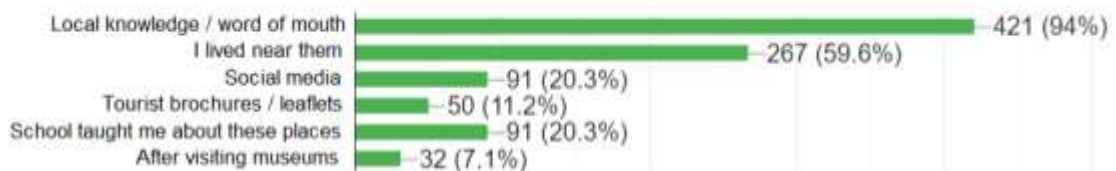


Fig. 27 – 9.52% chose 'other' options ranging from CANMORE, 'noticing signs' and 'Caithness Broch Project'

- Almost three quarters of respondents (70.1%) explained they visited such sites a few times a year, with 10.2% visiting once a month, and 11.3% visiting a few times per month (see Fig.28 below)

5. How often do you visit archaeological sites in Caithness?

442 responses

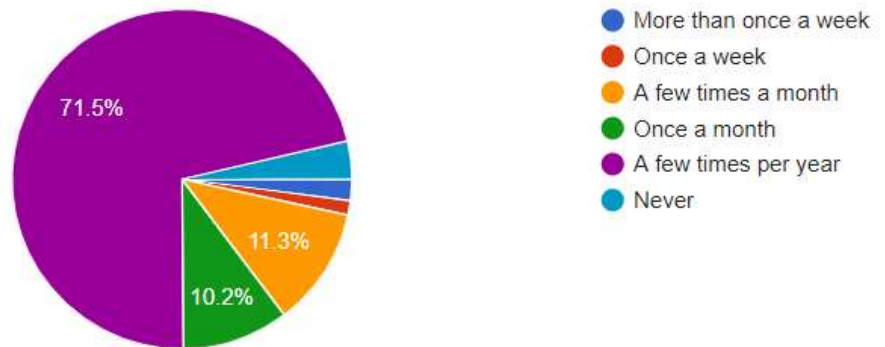


Fig. 28

6.4: Benefits of Visiting Archaeological and Historical Sites

The next few questions discussed the social benefits of visiting and interacting with the historical and archaeological sites.

- In terms of the 'rating' these visits, the feedback was general positive, with 89.2% rating the sites as 7 out of 10 or more.

6. Generally speaking, please mark your visits out of ten:

446 responses



Fig. 29

- Over three-quarters (83.3%) of participants believed that visiting archaeological and historical sites was good for well-being ; comments (*see Fig. 32*) ranged from these activities being part of getting exercise and ‘getting out and about’, the role visiting sites had in learning new things and education, and feeling ‘connection’ or ‘connected’ to the past and past societies.

7. Do you think visiting archaeological / historical sites are good for your well-being? i.e. - do these places make you happier or make you feel more positive?

450 responses

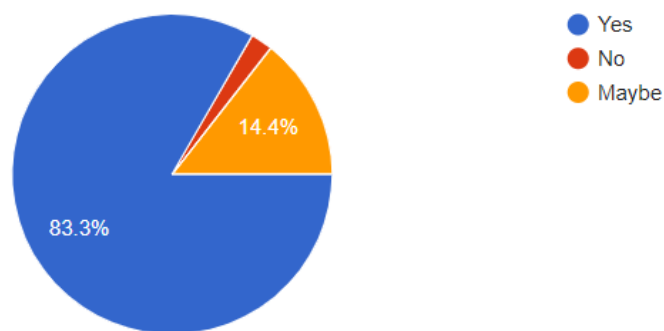


Fig. 30

Fig. 31 (overleaf) – Bucholie Castle

DEFINING
wellbeing from
visiting
archaeological
sites



“An imagining of older times, a link to the past, makes you think a bit”

“It's good to get out and about.”

***“Generally positive, as they are great to see, but often leave with mixed feelings as some are
unkempt and difficult to find or reach”***

*“Visiting archaeological or historic sites isn't just about the site it's self and the impression it leaves.
It's about the journey of getting there and the things experienced on the way. Getting out and
exploring places, especially lesser known places gives one a great sense of achievement along with
providing a sense of connection to the history of the area”*

“It's something primal, deep rooted to feel connected to the history and energy of a place”

“Seeing old sites makes me think about how I live now and all thinks they had to do to live”

“Just find them fascinating. Usually outdoors too so that often helps improve my mood”

*“I feel part of something bigger and more important. I am both significant and insignificant at the
same time. I am not the first or last to be where I am or feel what I do or worry about the things that
worry me. Death is also less of a concern!”*

I feel like I've learned something and got out in the fresh air.

*“It allows you to escape the mundane everyday life we live and retrace how things were and how folk
live. It gives you perspective. Makes you wonder if any of your distant relatives lived like that etc!”*

***“Most the sites sit in areas on natural beauty. The combination of the locations, being out in the
open and the educational purposes these serve, provide and excellent combination to have a
positive impact”***

*“You get a sense of the past and I find comfort in thinking about the people who once lived there. A
sense of home and belonging”*

Fig. 32



Fig. 33 – *Fresh air and exercise was noted as a benefit of visiting archaeological sites*

- The comments on exercise would be reflected in the next question, which asked if visiting historical sites was good for your health or made you feel healthier: 90% answered yes.

9. Does visiting historical sites make you feel healthier? i.e. is it good exercise / fresh air?

448 responses

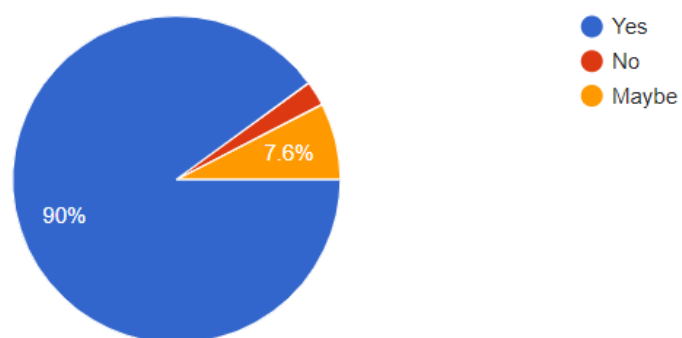


Fig. 34

- 66.3% of survey participants thought that the visits increased their appreciation and/or understanding of Caithness; 20.5% said it only improved their appreciation whilst 5.8% explained it only increased their understanding.

12. Did your visits increase your appreciation and/or understanding of Caithness?

448 responses

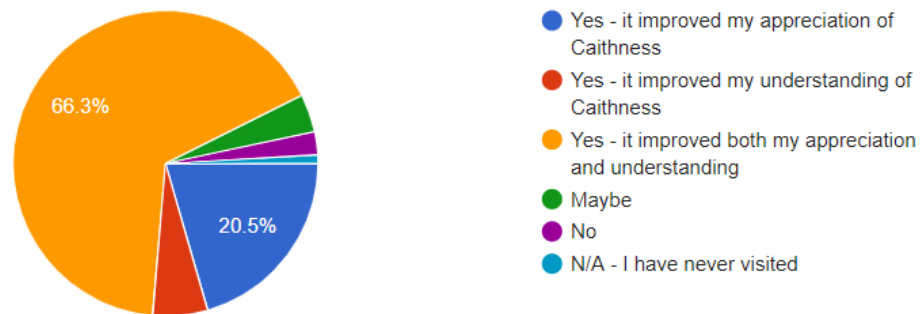


Fig. 35

- 69.5% of participants believed that the visits increased their sense of belonging to the area.

13. Did your visits increase your sense of belonging to the area? i.e. did you feel more connected to the place?

452 responses

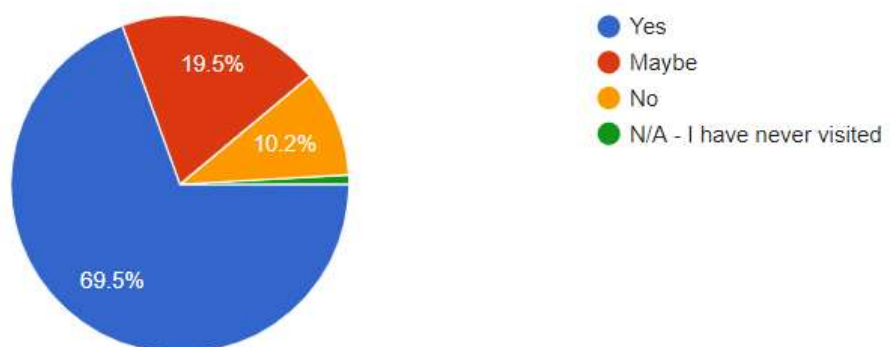


Fig. 36

- 81.8% of respondents felt prouder of Caithness or felt proud to be Caithnessian because of these sites.

14. Do these sites make you more proud of Caithness or more proud to be Caithnessian?

446 responses

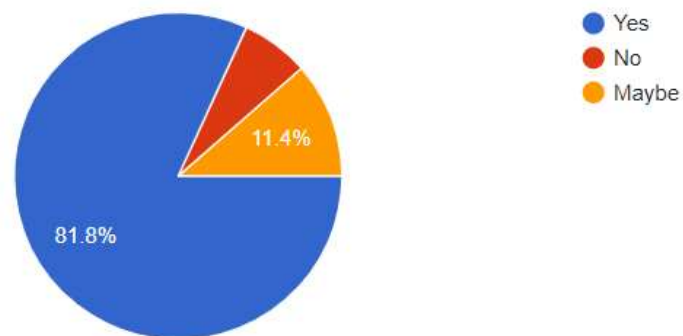


Fig. 37

- 66.7% believed that the archaeological sites of Caithness played an important role in their identity.

15. Do you think archaeological sites play an important role in your 'identity'? That is to say, who you are and where you are from?

448 responses

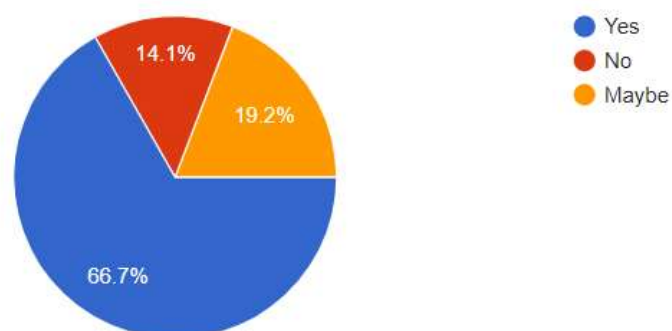


Fig. 38

- 83.7% of participants believed that these sites can play a role in bringing communities together

16. Do you think these sites can play a role in bringing local communities together?

447 responses

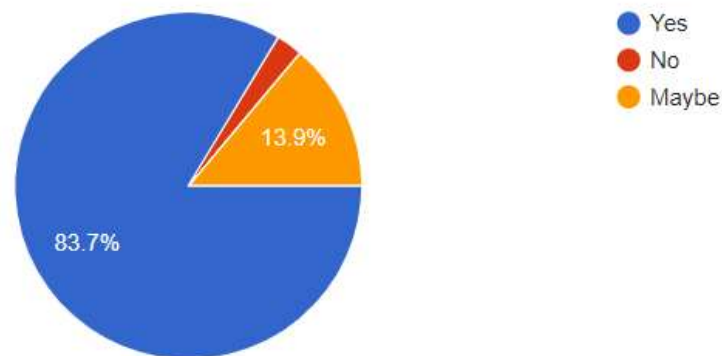


Fig. 39

Comments:

In remarking on their site visits, comment that were less positive focused on a lack of information available for and at these sites; that many of the sites had poor levels accessibility and were insufficiently signposted. Several remarked that Caithness could promote their archaeological sites better, and could use Orkney as the ‘model’ in terms of advertisement which ties in with earlier observations about Orcadian tourism as compared with Caithness tourism (*see sections 2.7 and 3.1*). Other comments noted that Caithness had a rich archaeology, with many “untapped gems”, and visits to the site – often located in “stunning” scenery – entailed a sense of adventure (*see Fig. 41*)

Fig. 40 (overleaf) – *Standing stone at Borgue, Caithness*

A tall, moss-covered standing stone stands prominently in a field of dry, brownish vegetation. The stone is covered in green moss and lichen, suggesting it is old. In the background, there are rolling hills and mountains under a cloudy sky. The overall scene is a typical Scottish landscape.

Caithness Heritage and Archaeology Site Visit Comments

"We need to do a better job of sign posting and arranged/guided visits"

"We should be copying the way Orkney does it"

"I thought I new all / most sites of interest in Caithness, being from Caithness... in fact I've gone my whole life unaware of most sites! Shocking!"

"Little things like better signate would be lovely to help aid understanding of what the site is what we're looking at."

"Sometimes I feel that there is not enough information given at the site so that it does just look like a pile of old stones. It is great where information is given it helps to visualise what life might have been like in the past. Sometimes it is frustrating to see folk (particularly tourists) who are disengaged and mistreat the site - clambering all over it, leaving their litter, etc."

"I would like to emphasise the strength of my 'yes' responses to the last four questions. These places, in my view, are of paramount importance to Caithness history and culture. These things need to be tended delicately. I don't think that anyone wants to see these places become commercialised, but I do think that there is a need for more obvious pride and maintenance to be taken in them. They need to be harnessed properly to help build and protect local culture and identity."

"None of the sites are marked effectively, there's no comparison between us and Orkney on how these sites are promoted"

"I feel these sites are key to the sustainability of Caithness in respect of our own history and tourism"

"I think archeology is part of what it means to be Caithnessian and what Caithness is historically, what makes it different but just a part. It is a unique landscape, ecology and natural heritage which the archeology sits in which creates Caithness and the cultural traditions of the more recent past which creates Caithnessians, for better and worse"

Fig. 41

6.5: Museums

The next section sought to gain an understanding of Caithness' historical and archaeological museums.

- 94.2% of participants had visited a museum in Caithness, with Caithness Horizons proving to be the most popular venue with 390 survey participants visiting. This was followed by Wick Heritage Museum with 274, Mary Ann's Cottage with 335, Laidhay Croft Museum with 226 and Castlehill Heritage Museum with 186.

1. Have you visited a museum in Caithness?

449 responses

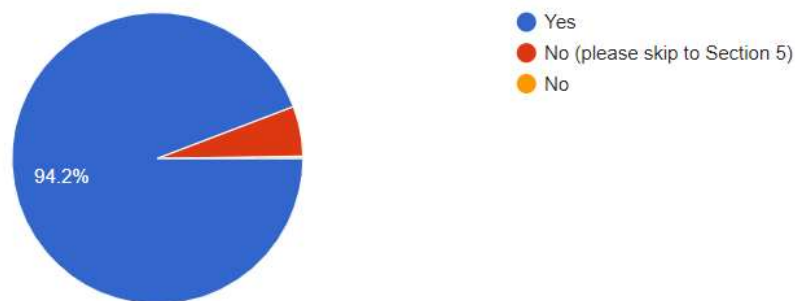


Fig. 42

2. Which of the following museums have you visited?

421 responses

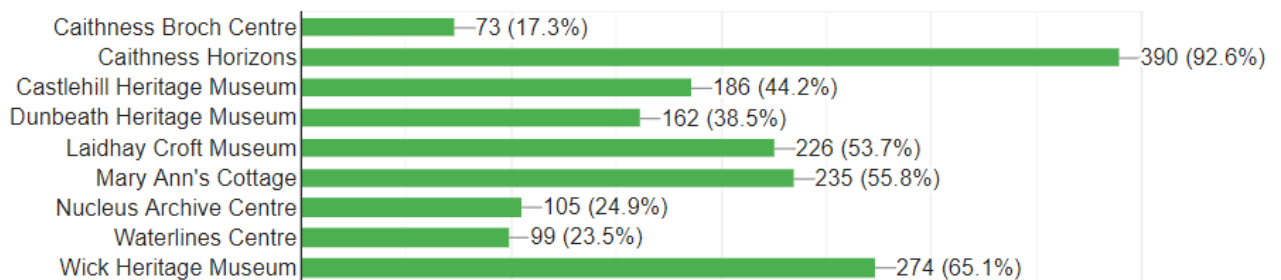


Fig. 43 - 0.28% selected other, not included here

- Again, like the archaeological and historical sites of Caithness, word of mouth and local knowledge (91%) was cited as the most common way of finding out about these places. 96.5 of respondents explained that they visited these websites only a few times per year (see Fig.44 & 45 below).

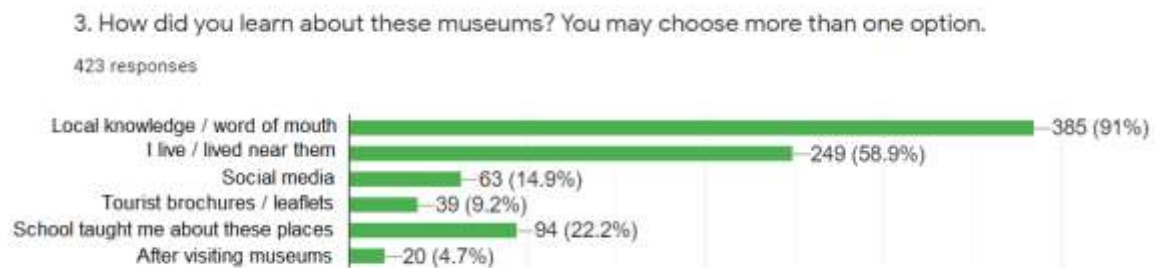


Fig. 44

4. If 'yes', please state how often you visit museums in Caithness

405 responses

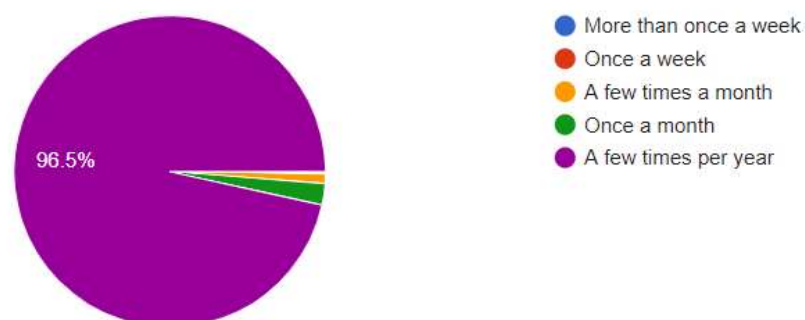


Fig. 45

6.6: Benefits of Visiting Museums

The next few questions discussed the social benefits of visiting and interacting with the museums of Caithness.

- The 'general' feedback for these museums was positive, almost mirroring the score provided by visiting archaeological sites, with 89.4% of respondents giving the museums a score of 7 or more out of ten.

5. Generally, how enjoyable were your visits?

427 responses

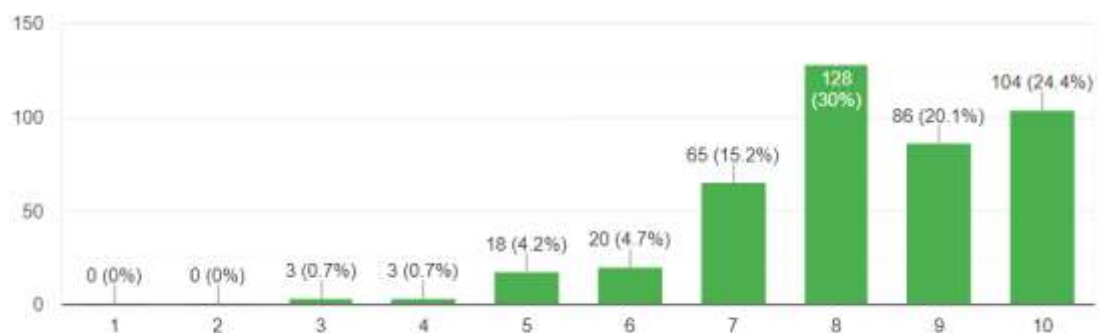


Fig. 46

- 68.2% of participants believed that visiting museums was good for well-being

8. Did your visit(s) increase your well-being? i.e. did these visits make you happier or more positive?

422 responses

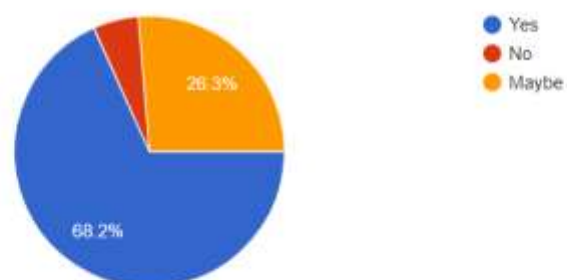


Fig. 47

- 66.1% of survey participants thought that the visits increased their appreciation and/or understanding of Caithness; 15.7% said it only improved their appreciation whilst 13.1% explained it only increased their understanding.

9. Did your visits to museums increase your appreciation and/or understanding of Caithness?

428 responses

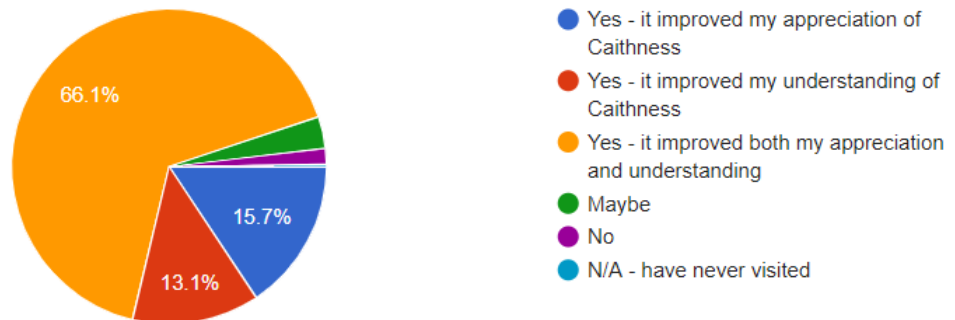


Fig. 48

- 67.8% of participants believed that the visits increased their sense of belonging to the area.

10. Did your visits to museums increase your sense of belonging to the area? i.e. did you feel more connected to the place?

426 responses

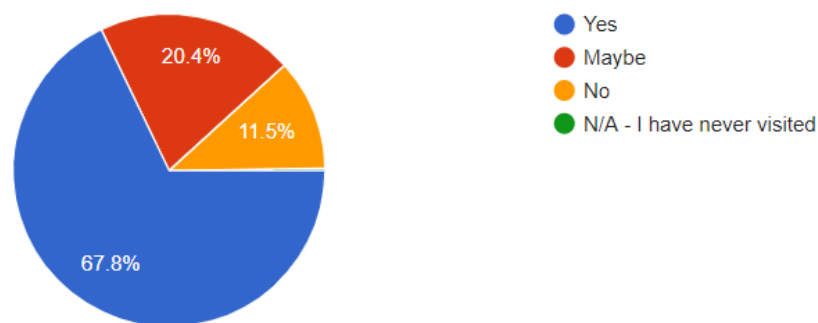


Fig. 49

- 72% of respondents felt prouder of Caithness or felt proud to be Caithnessian because of their visit to a museum.

11. Did you visits make you more proud of Caithness or to be Caithnessnian?

422 responses

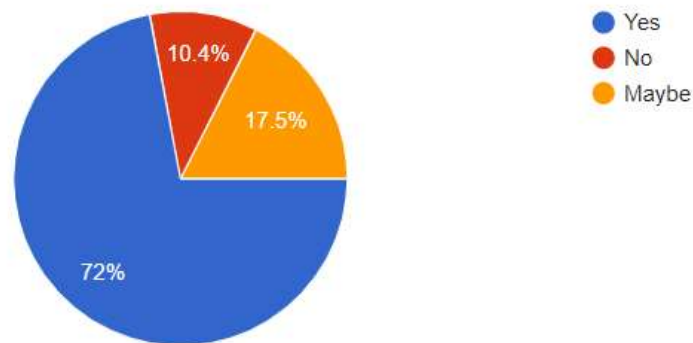


Fig. 50

- 61.1% of respondents felt that their visits to the museum increased their sense of identity

12. Did you visits increase your sense of 'identity'? i.e. who you are, and where you come from?

424 responses

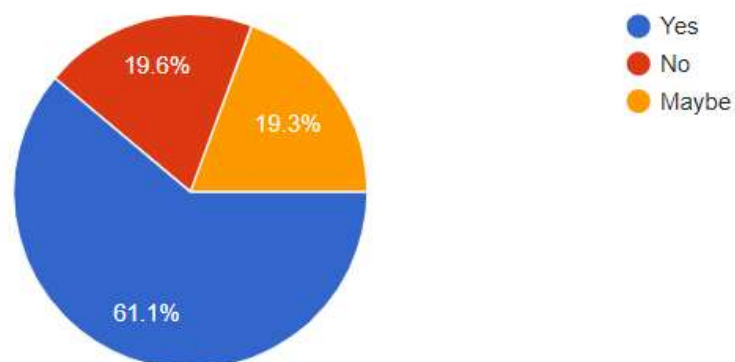


Fig. 51

- A large majority (83.8%) believed that museums could bring local communities together. The role of museums as a central focal point is perhaps reflected in the comments section, in which Caithness Horizon's closure was regretted by several respondents.

13. Do you think these sites can play a role in bringing local communities together?

420 responses

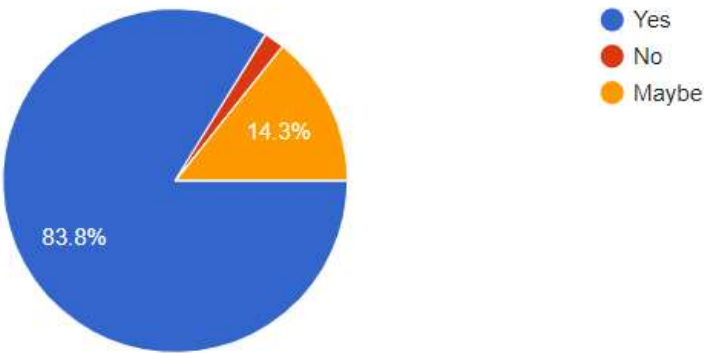


Fig. 52

General Comments:

Museums in Caithness were commended by participants (*see Fig. 54*), who noted that they were a ‘fantastic resource’, run by volunteers with a ‘wealth of knowledge’. Wick Heritage Museum and Castlehill Heritage Centre were singled out for praise, with the Caithness Horizons being noted as a ‘real loss’ to the local community – this sentiment would also be echoed by visitors to the county, also as seen in 7.5.

Fig. 53 (overleaf) - Caithness Horizons



Museum visit Comments

I'm full of admiration for those who look after our heritage.

There are a fine selection of local museums which help to make a portion of the rich history of Caithness available to the public.

Having local people with personal experiences and tales to tell ie Wick Heritage, enthusiastic older generation brings experience of herring fishing, etc alive to visitors. Knowledgeable enthusiastic locals sharing what life in their community was like.

Excellent resources eg Castlehill Heritage, as volunteer led they deserve more praise in keeping local history records.

I can't wait for Horizons to reopen - Thurso is very much missing that at the moment. The Wick heritage centre is an amazing resource and highly recommended

My grandchildren and I have really missed Caithness Horizons. Each time we visited we saw something different or at least in a different way. Paid for a yearly membership.

The standard of museums is very good and the work done by volunteers is immense

Real shame when Caithness Horizons shut, hopefully it will open again soon. Real loss to both locals and visitors. Worth the entrance fee when it was introduced.

Wealth of local knowledge and often run by well informed and enthusiastic volunteers

What appeared normal to me in Caithness horizons was totally fascinating to my kids - the glove box and robotic arm in Caithness Horizons. Working with radioactive materials was nothing special in the 1970s. But amazing to 21st century kids. And they thought The Simpsons was a cartoon. Little did they know how similar their parents' Caithness childhood was. I remember seeing Scarabrae for the first time with the same sense of awe!

Having local people with personal experiences and tales to tell ie Wick Heritage, enthusiastic older generation brings experience of herring fishing, etc alive to visitors. Knowledgeable enthusiastic locals sharing what life in their community was like.

The thing with museums is that they tend not to be for the locals. How often will a local visit, once during school and maybe with their kids on a rainy day? Museums are for visitors so are unlikely to bring the community together. That isn't what museums are for unless they diversify

Fig. 54

6.7: Archaeological / Historical Activities

This section dealt with social benefits of activities associated with archaeology. These events ranged from archaeological or historical talks, to participating in archaeological investigations such as excavation.

- Only 23.7 % of respondents had taken part in an archaeological activity in Caithness.

1. Have you participated in any archaeological excavations / activities or history-themed events in Caithness?

451 responses

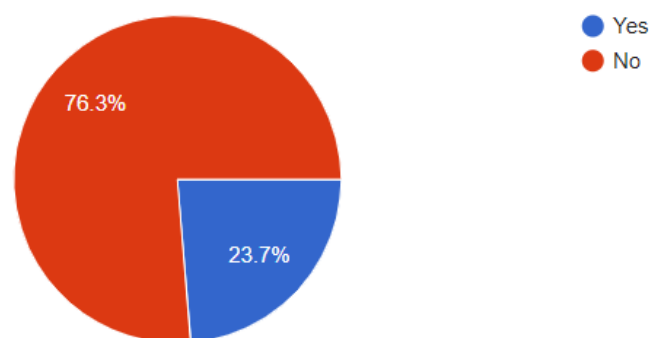


Fig. 55

6.8: Benefits of Archaeological / Historical Activities

The next sections look at the participants' responses to the social benefits of participating in archaeological and/or historical activities. Much of these results were skewed by a lack of respondent's participation in such events, with only 23.7% having participated in such events.

- 84.71% marked their archaeological activity as 7 out of ten or more in terms of enjoyability
(See **Fig. 56** below)

2. Generally, how enjoyable was your activity / activities

130 responses

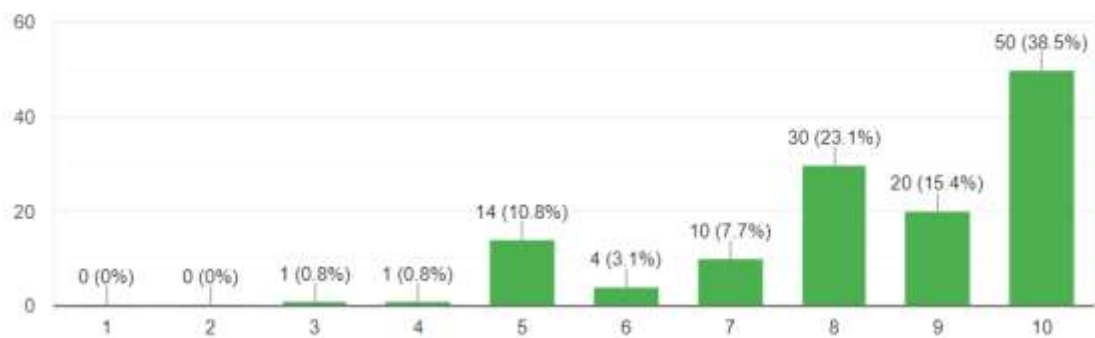


Fig. 56

- 67.9% of participants believed that taking part in archaeological and historical activities was good for well-being.

3. Did taking part in these events increase your well-being? i.e. did these visits make you happier?

140 responses

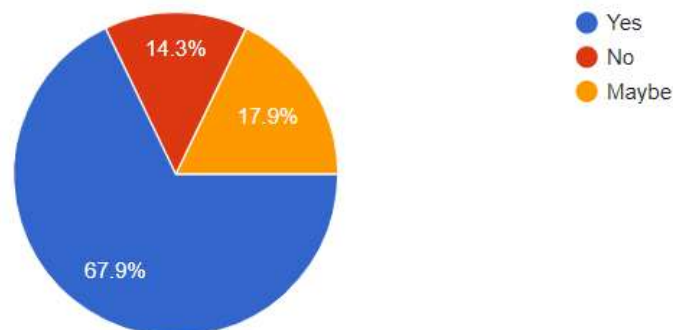


Fig. 57

- The question on whether it improved understanding and/or appreciation of Caithness elicited a more mixed response, as can be seen by Fig. 58. Of those who had taken part, however, 32.9%, believed it increased both their appreciation and understanding of Caithness, with 8.2% noting it increased only their appreciation, and 3% feeling that the events had increased their understanding (*see Fig. 59 below*)

4. Did these activities improve your understanding and/or appreciation of Caithness?

231 responses

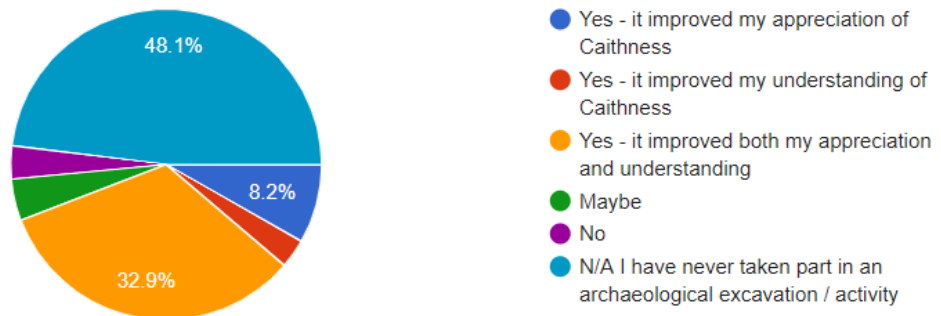


Fig. 58 – Showing mixed results

- 36.3% of participants believed that the activities equipped them with new skills.

5. Did these activities equip you with new skills or abilities? e.g. drawing archaeological plans, excavation.

135 responses

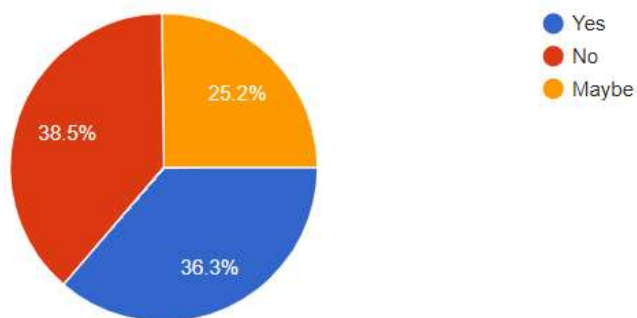


Fig. 59

- 33.5% of participants felt that the activities increased their sense of belonging to the area

6. Did these activities increase your sense of belonging to the area? i.e. did you feel more connected to the place?

230 responses

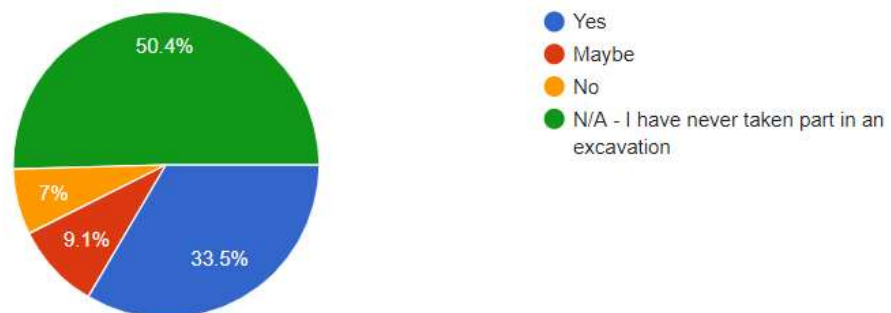


Fig. 60

- 63.4% felt that the activities made them prouder to be Caithnessian or of Caithness

7. Did you visits make you more proud of Caithness or to be Caithnessnian?

145 responses

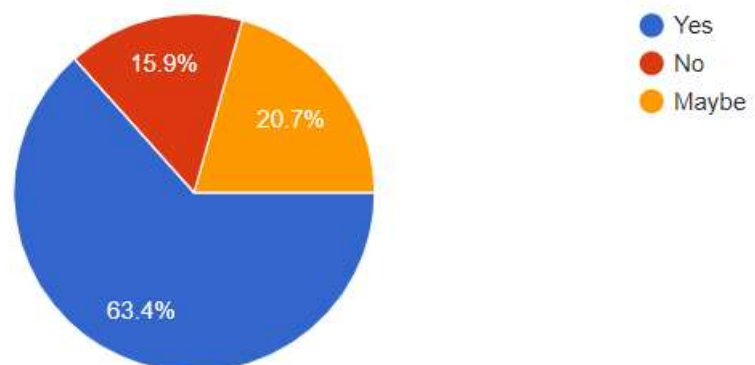


Fig. 61

- 55.4% thought that these activities played a role in their 'identity' (*see Fig. 62 below*)

8. Do you think these activities play a role in your 'identity'? That is to say, who you are and where you are from?

186 responses

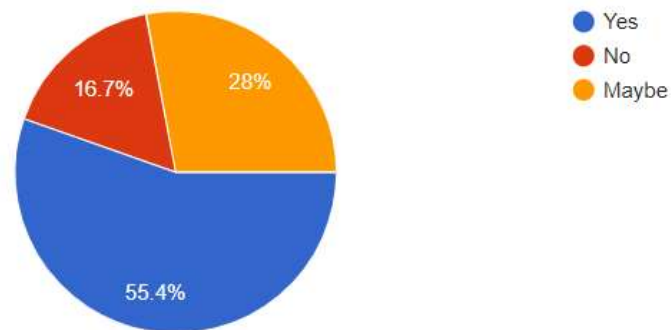


Fig. 62

- 86.2% of participants believed that these sites can play a role in bringing communities together (*see Fig. 63 below*).

9. Do you think these activities can play a role in bringing local communities together?

260 responses

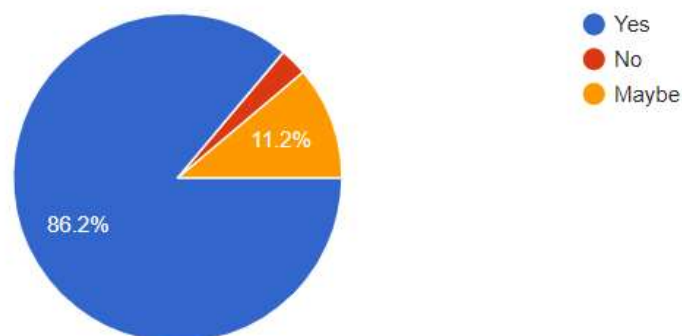


Fig. 63

6.9: Archaeological Activities Interviews

To help provide added local insight, five local inhabitants of Caithness were interviewed to ascertain their views on the archaeology of the region. Primarily this was used to furnish their experiences in archaeological activities, given the low participation rates, but they were also asked about general opinions of Caithness' archaeology, and whether it was promoted or developed enough, especially with regards to tourism. The interviews again suggested that the events were beneficial for a number of reasons, in particular ideas of community spirit, and also that Caithness was under-developed in terms of heritage tourism – though it should be noted that 'overtourism' was a concern from some of the interviewees.

Did you activity/activities increase your knowledge, understanding or appreciation of Caithness?

Cai5:

"Certainly, I think the hands-on stuff, it brings it to life, it's all very well reading about something in a book, but when you can actually get you know, some of the dirt under your fingernails and actually look at stuff that's been around for 2000 years, it's a little bit easier to appreciate it, I would say."

Cai4:

"It's maybe not so much limited to Caithness...it added to my knowledge more generally I'd say. And maybe it added to the depth of what I knew about the history of Caithness. I already appreciated Caithness before!"

Cai1:

"Seeing how things which looked pretty insignificant to me as a very untrained person, but actually someone could look at that...whereas I might just see some stones, they can say "no actually this looks like a wall or the foundations of something...they can sort of make sense of things and bring them to life in a way that I probably didn't appreciate at the time. You see little things that seem insignificant but actually you can piece them all together and it starts to tell a story"

Cai2:

"Absolutely. Because it takes you to a new area. For example, I had never been to the Yarrows area, I didn't know it existed and it was a real eye-opener to find that Caithness had a completely different landscape over that side compared to my home territory, which is the flat north coast. And here we had looking down on the sea, we had the loch, we had the hills behind, full of monuments and interesting places, and it was a complete eye-opener to me. And it was through archaeology that happened."

Did these events increase your sense of well-being, belonging, pride of place or identity and general well-being?

Cai1:

"It didn't give me any sense of belonging or connection to Caithness, probably 'cos I wasn't sure what we were doing"

Cai5

Yes, I mean, obviously, I'm not from the area, and I've moved in, and there is sort of a community aspect. But I think if you, you need to dig a bit deeper. And it's not necessarily just sort of the surface community that's here. Now, if you can understand what's going on before, then it helps you sort of see how it's arrived. And I think now, now that everything is, you know, just hop on a plane and you can get anywhere pretty much, but actually belonging to a place and putting down roots, it's quite important to know what's been there before.

Cai4:

"It was always part of my identity... always been interested in archaeology, but I guess it kind of added, the actively taking part bit, which before wasn't possible"

Cai2:

Well, I'll give you one example of an early occasion - my grandson is now 17. And when he was about 6 or 7, I took him to the broch at Thrumster, because they were excavating it, and it was open to the public to visit. And he and another small boy were given pales and so on, and they were given an area in which they could do little damage, while other people round about them were making the most astonishing discoveries, there they were, the two little boys with their trowels, feeling like they were part of this. And at the end of it, one turned to the other and said, "We're working here just like men!" And that has always stayed with me, because they felt completely involved in what was going on, they were given something within their abilities, physical, with the chance they might find something, and they did - I mean they found little things, and we made much of it and said 'Well that could be a....' - and it wasn't but it didn't matter - and that really promoted their feeling of self-worth, even in a small child!"

What about community spirit?

Cai3:

"In some of the stuff I've attended... You could see people coming together."

Cai1:

"Good for community spirit, good to meet both a mix of professionals and amateurs from other people in Caithness - I did enjoy it, I found it was interesting, it was a pretty nice day too!"

Cai5:

"Yeah, yeah, absolutely. And I think again, because certainly the events I've been to has allowed all people, not just students, or hardcore, you know, enthusiasts, it's open to the wider community. So you get, you know, sort of people wheeling in granny in the wheelchair and stuff to have a look at different things. And then you get the kids.... And not many families would think about, you know, getting some stones and chisels and having a go at home, whereas they actually can at these events, look at it and say, 'Well, yeah, actually, this is, this is how it's done!'"

Would you want to see more events and activities in the region? Are they good value for money?

Cai3:

Yes, they are good value for money. Anything that promotes a better sense of well-being, a better sense of social interactivity, not just talking and having a blether, but actually working together. I'm desperate to get to the dig in Swartigill – and that's because the whole sense of discovery is a shared concept, you've got your own personal 'what might I discover today', but it's the whole team thing, the whole discovery was a team effort" It's a big team effort, that's probably one of the things, it helps bring people together, it generates a sense of wellbeing, social integration, it's got lots of good things coming out of it. I'm quite proud of the area that I come from. And it's one of the under-noted thing in the council – the words culture, heritage, history, are virtually obliterated from the council's promotional literature, and it looks to the things like 'roads', 'lighting', all that kind of stuff, where it is a necessity for services to the people, and the investment in our history and our archaeology is well down the list, but if people could see the intangible benefits and recognised that, and got involved in it, they would soon realise there is much bigger benefits in return of investment. And it tends not to cost that much – it's not the big money hole that folk think it is, they just have this, 'Well what do you discover for the pound you're putting in there?'...well get involved and you'll soon find out!"

Cai4:

"I was quite happy with the number of events...there is lots of things happening in Caithness"

Cai2:

"I presumably think they are [good value for money] but then I'm biased. And It's perfectly right that where public money is used then it has to be of benefit, and it's not just throwing money at an idea that somebody's had, it has to be proved, and it has to be proved in advance before you get the funding, that it's going to be of benefit to the local community. So, it's the old chestnut isn't it? You have to have an amalgam of community plus the expertise which the community doesn't have. You have to have the experts and you have to have the backing of the community. It's their land afterall, it's their heritage. Would I like to see more? Yes, of course."

Is Caithness promoted or developed well enough in terms of heritage tourism?

Cai1:

"Some of these places are difficult to get to, and when you do get to them they're not necessarily particularly well maintained...the last time I went round the Yarrows trail, which I think encompasses about 5000 years of history, really good walking trail, you know brochs, and all these sort of things, but when I had to get there I had to walk through a field which was completely muddy and full of horse poo."

Cai3:

"And that's what Orkney does really really well, they work together, you know, between the whisky distilleries, the seafaring heritage, the Vikings, the Picts, they've got it all up there, but you know what I mean – they all work together, corporately. They knit everything together, you can go on a bus tour and travel right through the heritage in Orkney, from St. Magnus Cathedral to Skara Brae to the Italian Chapel, you get the lot. We don't have anything like that in Caithness. We just don't have the corporate connectivity of it all."

Cai5:

"There are so many amazing places. I mean, you've got Ousdale Broch, Achvarasdal [Broch]...you've just got like these amazing little gems of places, but they just are not set up for a busload of tourists turning up, and the problems that those busloads of tourists bring with them. And I don't think that's necessarily the tourists' fault. But it needs some oomph behind it to actually get everything else in place."

Cai4:

"One thing I don't know is if the museum in Thurso will re-open. It could definitely do with kind of more things like that museum, where you can take a lot of people...a few obvious stops for people...where a large number of people can come and it doesn't affect the site. I wouldn't want to see more people, say, for example the Yarrows Trail, you know it is quite nice that it is hidden, and that it is not visited much, and isn't completely trodden. My main point – not limited to archaeology – I would be a bit wary of having too many people everywhere, because it can't just take too much. Of course, we want people and there are tourists are respectful and everything and respect the environment any everything, but I wouldn't want to see large crowds"

6.10: Funding and Tourism

This section discusses the final questions of the survey, which looked at funding for archaeology in the region, as well as Caithnessians views on heritage tourism in the region.

- 92.2% of participants explained they would like to see more excavations and archaeological activities in the region.

10. Would you like to see more archaeological excavations / activities and history-themed events in Caithness?

358 responses

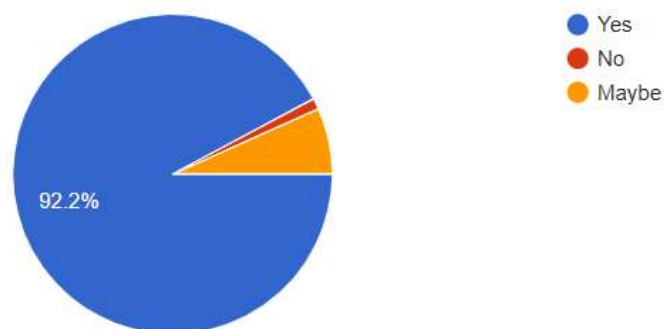


Fig. 64

- 93.7% stated that they would like to see more investment into the archaeological sites from wind farms. (see Fig. 65 below).

11. Would you like to see more financial investment into archaeological sites / facilities / activities in Caithness from local funding groups (e.g. wind farms)?

383 responses

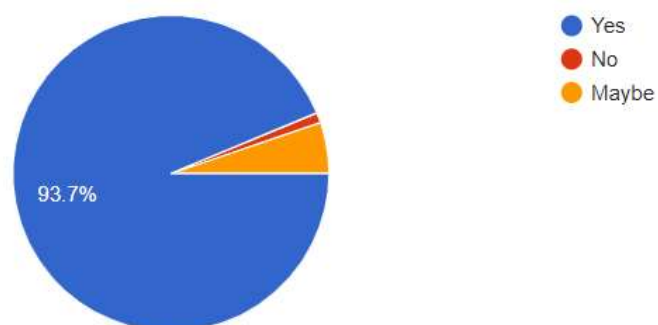


Fig. 65

- 95.3% said they would like to see more funding from national bodies such as Heritage Lottery Fund and Historic Environment Scotland.

12. Would you like to see more financial investment into archaeological sites / facilities / activities in Caithness from national funding bodies (e.g. Historic Environment Scotland, Heritage Lottery Fund)?

386 responses

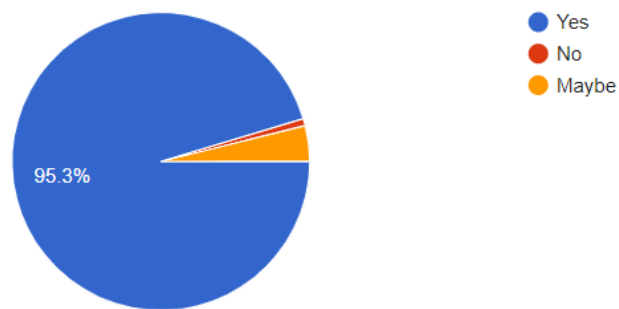


Fig. 66

6.11: Heritage Tourism

This section looked how respondents thought that those outwith the county viewed or perceived the region's archaeology, and whether heritage tourism played an important role in the economy of Caithness.

- 82.5% of respondents thought that the archaeological and historical sites of Caithness were not promoted enough (*see Fig. 67 below*)

1. Do you think the historical and archaeological sites of Caithness are promoted enough to tourists?

451 responses

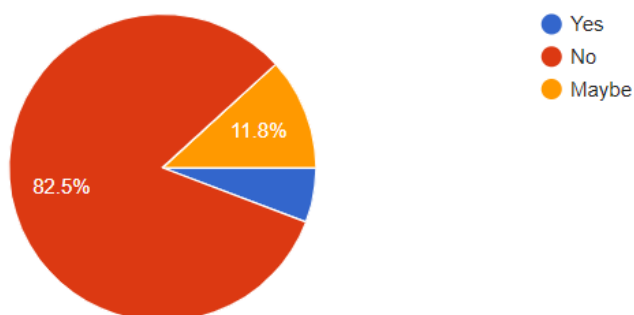


Fig. 67

- 59.7% thought that archaeology played an important part in the local economy and in the provision of jobs.
- Participants were asked to identify three reasons why tourists would visit Caithness (*see Fig. 68*). The top three reasons were:
 - As part of a trip to Orkney (87.2%)
 - As part of the NC500 (62.6%)
 - For the natural environment (49.8%)
- Only 9.1% believe that Heritage and Archaeology attracted visitors to the region.

3. What do you think are the main reasons why tourists visit Caithness? Please select THREE options.

452 responses



Fig. 68

Comments about Caithness' heritage tourism ranged in tone from concern to disparaging. Many sought to see an improvement in the way that these sites were presented and promoted. Several

comparisons were drawn to Orkney, which was seen to be “miles ahead” in terms of marketing (*See Fig. 70 below*).

Fig. 69 (overleaf) – *Welcome to Caithness!*

Caithness Heritage TOURISM COMMENTS



I don't think that we exploit the tourism opportunities that exist in Caithness in the same way that Orkney has. We have as much to offer in the way of archaeological importance but fail to exploit these opportunities through lack of funding to promote it.

Have not been back in Caithness for 5 years, but improved signage and awareness (maps, heritage trails/routes) for tourists plus facilities could see Caithness easily rival Orkney as a destination full of history. Nc500 footfall should be tapped into with perhaps some sites with voluntary payments (honesty box) or other scaled payments based on the level of attraction to assist with funding upkeep and management.

Sadly lacking to be honest. Much more could be done to provide activities for tourists

Not developed very well, Orkney much better at showing their projects off

Unlike Orkney to the north, caithness has never quite promoted the plethora of archaeological and historical sites to their potential, though there are some good groups currently trying to raise the profile of caithness archaeology.

Increased funding from windfarm developments, not just to benefit small groups close to the developments but for the entire county. Better publicity and a functioning museum/tourist info centre in Thurso.

There are a lot of sites in Caithness which receive very little attention. There could definitely be more done in simple ways like road signage and tourist information leaflets

It really needs to be improved. Caithness is essentially a pit stop in the way to Orkney.

I'm mixed about it while I like the idea of tourism I think the more people go to these places the more they are going to get ruined or damaged by over trampling, littering etc. but it is good for the economy

I think it could well become an integral part of a more managed approach to tourism, one that enables the heritage to remain unspoiled yet promotes that heritage to a wider, more understanding (of the issues involved in developing sustainable approaches) group of potential tourists. A balance is the ideal thing - we don't want an overwhelming influx of tourists that take away the joy of our wide-open spaces and heritage attractions

I think that it is vastly underdeveloped in comparison to what is in place in Orkney, Shetland, and other parts of Scotland. It could be so much bigger and important to the county if investment was made into access to the sites and provision of visitor centers and facilities to engage with tourists.

6.12: Discussion

It is clear to see that the physical archaeological and historic environment – that is to say, historic monuments and museums – are held in high esteem by the local community. Though perhaps not visited on a regular basis, Caithnessians and those based in Caithness recognize that it can play an important part in the development of a rounded well-being, and in particular understand the physical health benefits associated with accessing archaeological and historic sites.

Although respondents placed more emphasis on archaeological and historic sites over museums in terms of instilling belonging, identity, pride of place and understanding and appreciation of the county, museums were still acknowledged as being places which held an important role for bringing communities together.

There is, however, perhaps something of a disparity in the way in which Caithnessians interact with the process of archaeology, with only one-quarter of those who took part in the interview having attended an archaeological activity; regardless, those who did take part in the events viewed them as good for increasing a range of social benefits. This general interest – or even perhaps desire - is also reflected in the comments, which suggest that Caithness would benefit from further investment in the promotion, development and conservation archaeological sites, as well as the creation and organisation of further archaeological activities.

This need for investment perhaps correlates with the general perception in terms of heritage tourism: that Caithness has a rich archaeological landscape, yet one which is not utilized or exploited. It should be noted local funders are willing to fund heritage initiatives, but these are often fairly small-scale and are limited to two or three events a year; it may be that larger or more activities should be proposed by groups within the region, alongside more investment being granted by local funders. Regardless, respondents' appear to appreciate and enjoy the archaeology and heritage of the county, but believe it to be of little interest to tourists. Yet, as shall be discussed in the following chapter, heritage and archaeology seems to play a major role in attracting tourists to the county.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Economic Value of Archaeology to Caithness: Results and Discussion

7.1: The Economic Value of Archaeology

This section elaborates on the findings of the '*Heritage Tourism in Caithness*' survey, and seeks to better understand the motivations of those visiting or planning to visit Caithness, and how important a role the archaeology and history of the region was in their decision to visit the county.

It will also reveal what tourists thought such sites and monuments, and whether these were well-presented, accessible, and if enough information was provided at and for these sites. The results of this survey would be used in conjunction with findings from local accommodation providers to provide some understanding the economic 'value' of archaeology to the region.

7.2: Demographic information

This section sought to understand who the participants were and especially where they were from.

- The total number of survey respondents for this survey was 329. The survey attracted a good mix of age groups, though, much like the '*Social Value of Archaeology*' survey, the 18-25 and 71+ categories were poorly represented (*see Fig. 71*).

2. How old are you?

328 responses

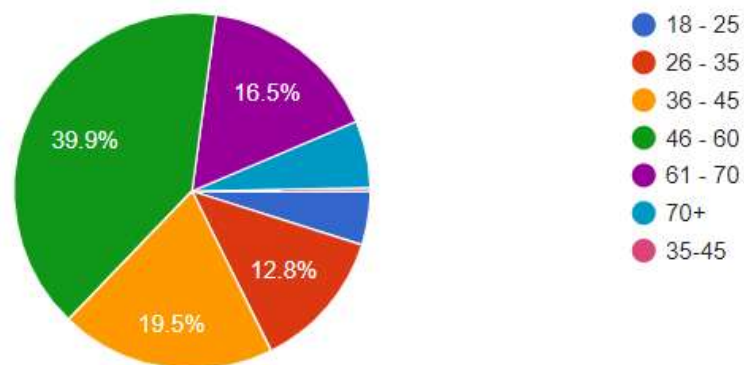


Fig. 71

- More than half of the participants (57.8%) were from Scotland (*see Fig. 72*), with nearly one-third of survey respondents were from the rest of the UK. The next biggest percentage was the United States of America (6.7%), with Europe (2.8%), Canada (2.4%), Australia (1.8%) and New Zealand (1.2%) making up the rest of the respondents' locations.

This spread roughly reflects domestic visitors to Scotland in 2019 (VisitScotland, 2020a, p.5) as well as international visitors (*Ibid.*, p.16). However, though the survey does not quite match VisitScotland's visitor research for the Highlands. Though the proportion of domestic tourists once again roughly fits, the VisitScotland factsheet suggests that there were more European tourists than North Americans (Visit Scotland, 2020c, p.3). This may have simply been because more North Americans saw the survey being shared on social media than Europeans, or perhaps a language barrier may have played a part. Regardless, understanding this aspect might be difficult, given that it was shared from multiple sources.

1. Where are you from?

327 responses

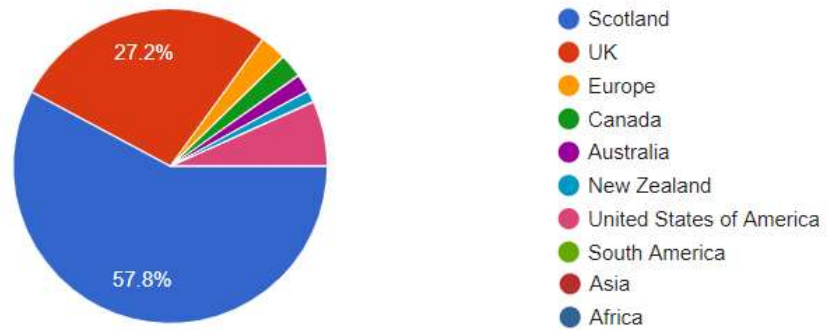


Fig. 72

- The majority of participants had visited Caithness previously. An error was made here but did not affect the overall results of the survey (see 8.1.2).

3. Have you visited Caithness before?

328 responses

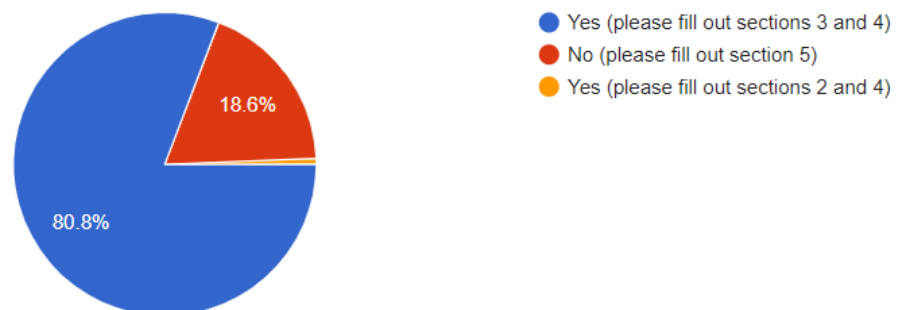


Fig. 73

7.3: Assessing Respondents' Visits to Caithness

Most participants were regular visits to Caithness, having made over thirty visits to the county, with a variety of previous visits making up the rest of the survey.

1. How many times have you visited Caithness?

268 responses

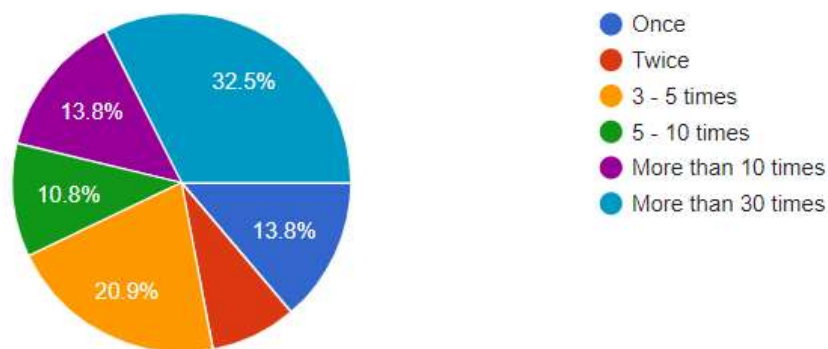


Fig. 74

- Most previous visits were day trippers or were just passing through, presumably as part of a visit to Orkney or as part of the North Coast 500 (see Fig. 78), though a considerable number of visitors were either overnights or spent 2-3 nights in Caithness. Respondents could choose more than one option to help understand what length of stay was more popular, if they had visited more than once (see

2. How long did you stay for? You may choose more than one option if you have visited several times.

268 responses

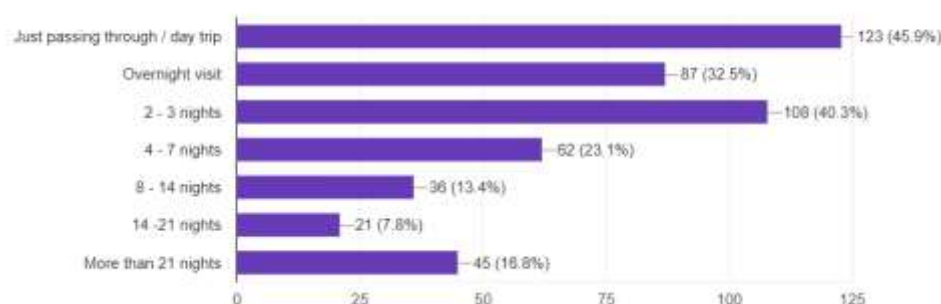


Fig. 75

- A high number of participants (145 in total) chose the 'Other' options (see 8.1.2 for clarification on this matter) their reason to visit – reasons included work, general exploration and genealogical research. Many of the respondents chose 'Visiting Friends and Family' as

the inspiration behind their visit to Caithness, with social media being the third most popular choice.

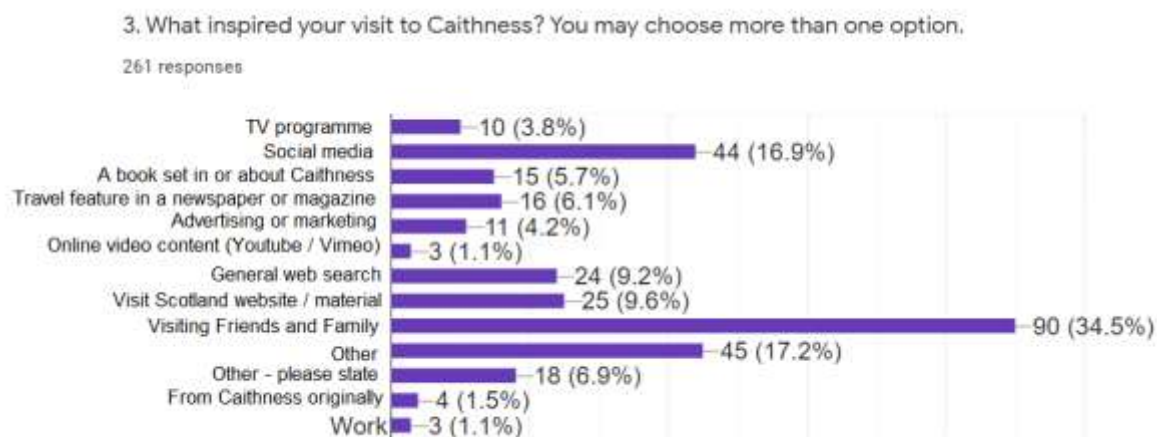


Fig. 76 – Please note that the 82 single ‘other’ (32.8%) reasons were also stated, not included here.

- Further clarification was sought on which social media pages influenced those who selected ‘Social Media’ to Question 3; Caithness Broch Project and North Coast 500 were particularly popular answers, though this may be attributed to these pages sharing the survey (see Fig. 77 below)

4. If you answered ‘Social media’ to the previous question, can you advise which accounts, if any, influenced your decision to visit Caithness? You may choose more than one option.

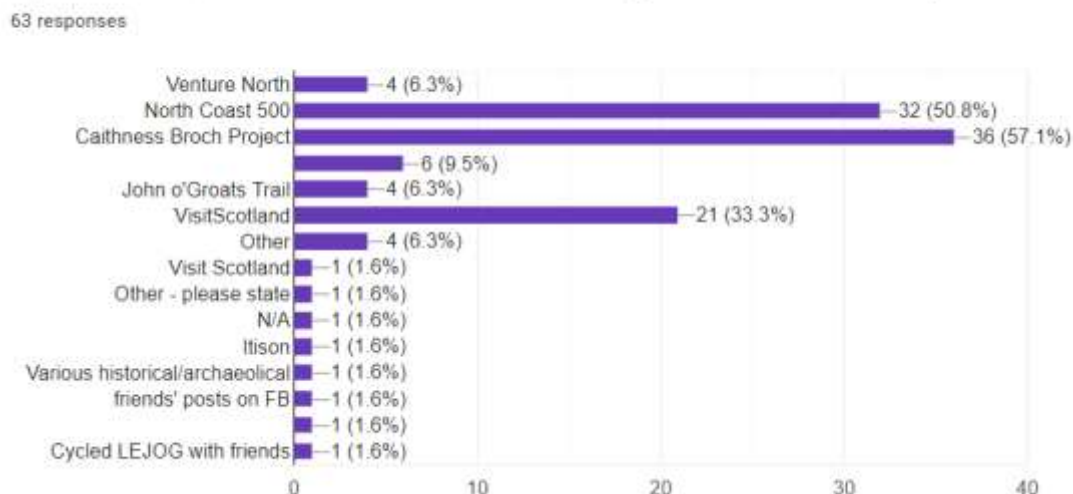


Fig. 77

- The circumstances of each visitor’s journey was also explored: the most popular options were visiting friends and family (37.5%) and holidaying specifically to Caithness (35.6%), followed by holidaying as part of a tour round the Highlands (30.3%) and as part of a trip to

Orkney (28.1%). This is perhaps surprising, given held beliefs in Caithness that most people visit Caithness on their way to Orkney.



Fig. 78 – Please note that the 50 single 'other' reasons (20%) were also selected, not included here.

- In order specific reasons for visiting Caithness, respondents were asked to name three reasons why they holidayed to the region. The 'natural environment' was the most popular answer (80.2%) closely followed by 'Historical and archaeological attractions' (73.3%). Although this was an important question to ask, and vital to our understanding of the economic contribution of Caithness, the method of answering should have been limited to one choice (see 8.1.2). Regardless, it is clear to see that history and heritage plays an important part in the motivations of tourists to the region.

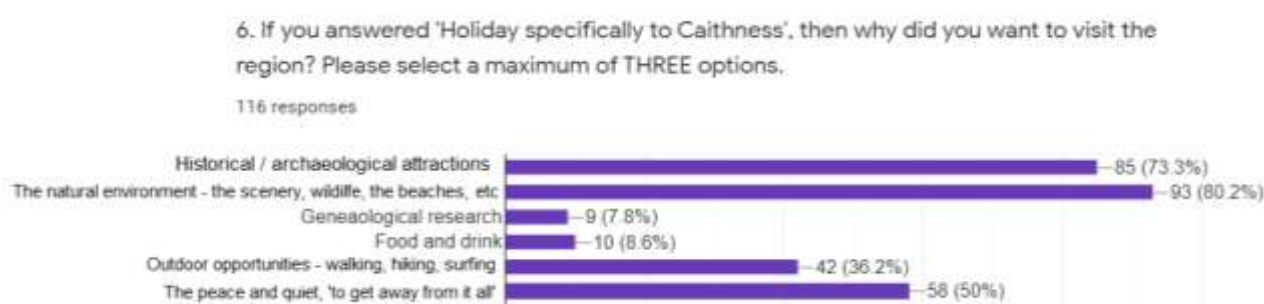


Fig. 79

- Only a very small percentage (0.7%) of those who had visited Caithness said they would not visit again.

8. If you have visited Caithness (for any reason), would you visit again?

267 responses

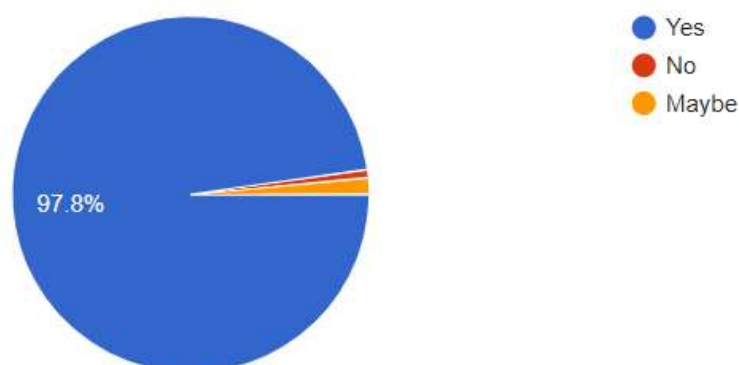


Fig. 80

- Q9 sought to understand reasons for revisits; whilst most visited the region for the nature and landscape (32.4%), most would revisit because of the history and archaeology (35.9%).

9. If you answered 'Yes' or 'Maybe', why would you visit again? Please select the most important reason for a return visit.

262 responses



Fig. 81 – Please note that 7.9% chose other reasons, not included here - *several respondents stated 'Friends' and 'Family' as reasons for returning making 7.9% of the total replies.*

- Q.11 reinforced the importance of archaeology and history as a reason to visit Caithness, with 67.4% giving this aspect 7 out of 10 or above as shaping their decision to visit the region.

11. Regardless of decision, how important was the archaeology / history of the region in shaping your decision to visit?

267 responses

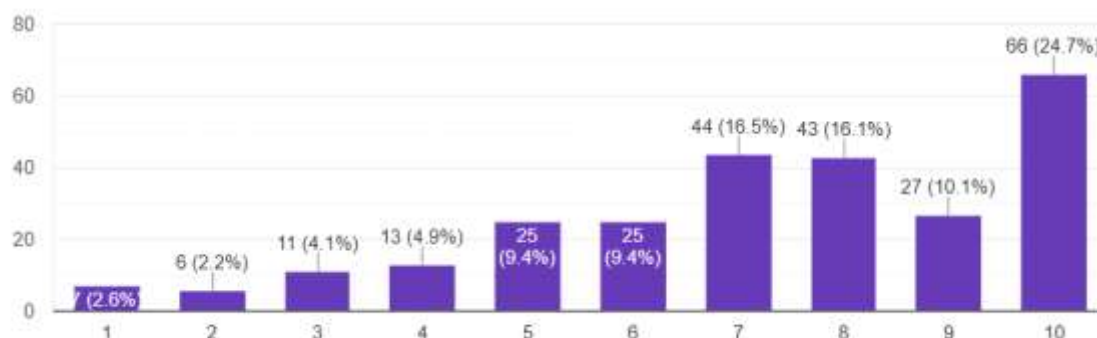


Fig. 82

- This is further supported by Q.12, in which 87.3% of respondents visited an archaeology or historical site when they were in Caithness.

12. Regardless of reason for visiting, did you visit any historical / archaeological sites when you were here?

267 responses

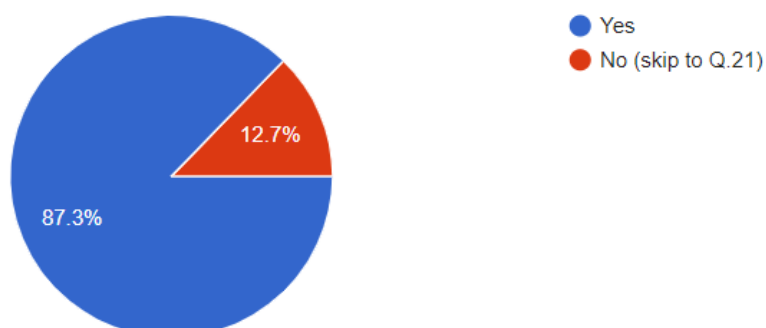


Fig. 83

- Q13 sought to understand which sites were most frequented by visitors. Much like the survey for inhabitants of Caithness, Camster Cairns and Whaligoe Steps, with Hill o' Many Stanes also proving to be popular.

13. If yes, what sites did you visit? You may choose more than one option.

233 responses

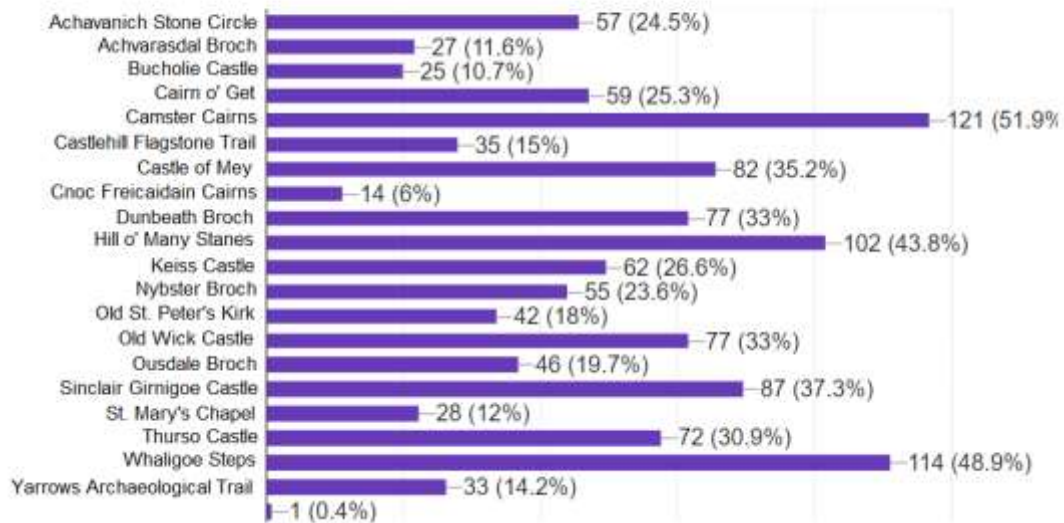


Fig. 84 – Please note that 14.8% chose a variety of 'other' sites, not included here

- People 'discovered' sites through a variety of means, mainly through Word of mouth (41.7%), 'by chance' (30.7%) and VisitScotland material (20.2%) and books about / set in Caithness (20.2%)

14. How did you find out about these sites?

228 responses



Fig. 85 – 23.2% stated 'other' reasons which ranged from 'Historic Scotland' to 'Ordnance Survey' and 'Friends'

7.4: Rating Site Visits

The following questions sought to understand visitors' general impressions of sites, including their thoughts on signage, information available, site preservation / presentation and access.

- Visitors seemed relatively satisfied with the level of signage and local information available to them, as outlined by Q.15, with 70.9% giving this aspect 7 out 10 or more.

15. How easy was it to find these sites (i.e. signage, local information)

229 responses

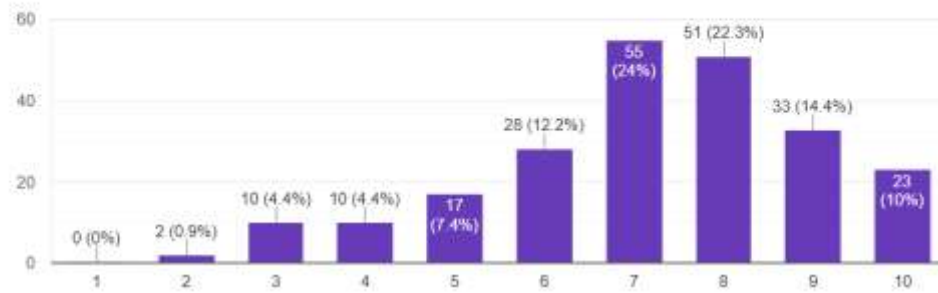


Fig. 86

- On-site Interpretation and information at sites in Caithness scores slightly lower, with 59.5% marking this as 7 out of 10.

16. Was the interpretation (i.e. information panels) at these sites adequate?

222 responses

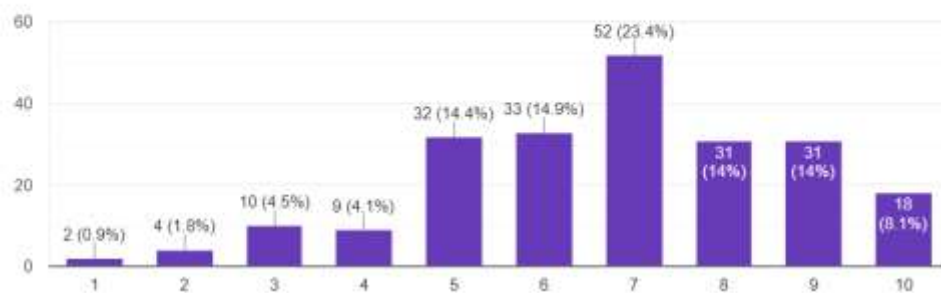


Fig. 87

- 67.7% marked the condition / preservation and presentation of sites as 7 out 10 or above

17. Was the condition / preservation / presentation of the site adequate?

226 responses

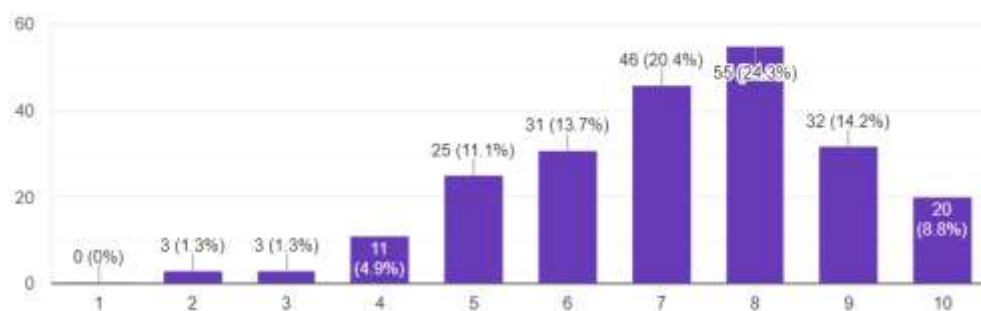


Fig. 88

- Site access conditions (e.g. paths) was scored at 61.4%

18. Was access to the site adequate (e.g. were the paths in good condition?)

223 responses

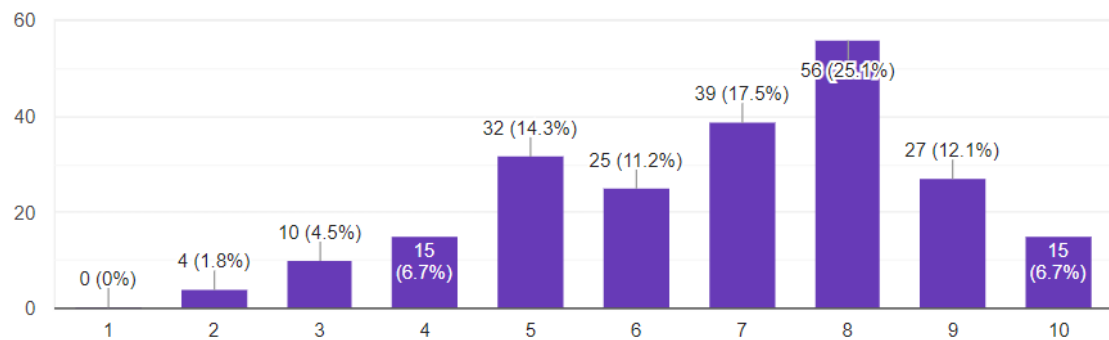


Fig. 89

- Generally speaking, visitors to Caithness ranked their site visits fairly high, with 92.4% providing a score of 7 out of 10 or above.

19. On a scale of 1 - 10, how would you rate your visits to these sites, generally?

225 responses

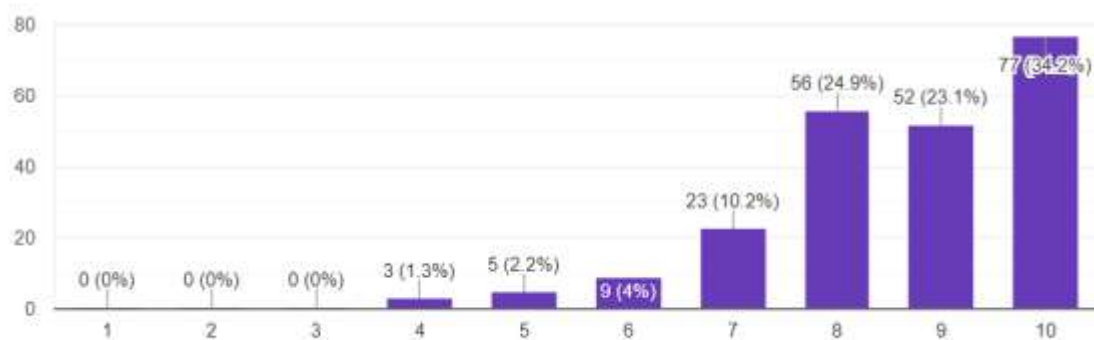


Fig. 90

- A high percentage (82.9%) of visitors felt that the visits increased their understanding of the archaeology/history of Caithness (see Fig. 91 below)

20. Did your visits to these sites increase your understanding of Caithness' archaeology / history?

228 responses

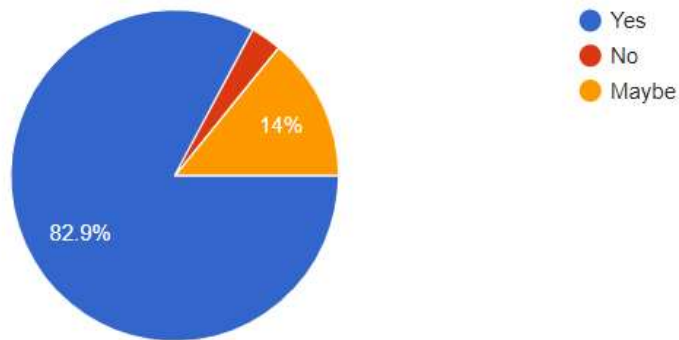


Fig. 91

- Similarly, most visitors felt that site visits increased their appreciation of Caithness' archaeology and history.

21. Did you visits to these sites increase your appreciation of Caithness' archaeology / history?

238 responses

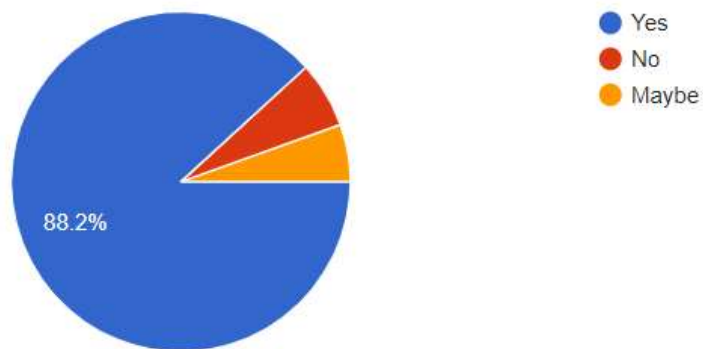


Fig. 92

- Likewise, visits to these sites made a beneficial impact on visitors' well-being.

22. In general, did these visits make you feel more positive / happier?

236 responses

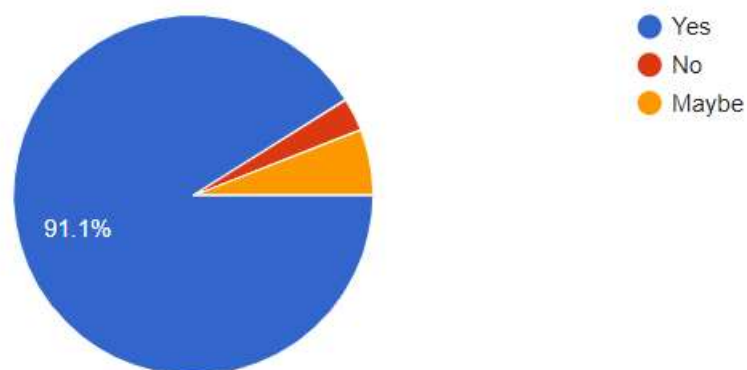


Fig. 93

General Comments

Comments remarked on a lack of signage, and the fact that some sites were difficult to find, whilst others bemoaned about a lack of on-site interpretation or information boards, which corresponded with the slightly lower score given on this matter. Others felt that these sites would benefit from more investment (see Fig. 95). Perhaps the comments were somewhat surprising, given the relatively high scores which were granted to the sites in terms of access, signage, information and so on. Regardless, the comments seem to chime with those made by local inhabitants (*see Chapter 6, Figs.41 & 54*)

Fig. 94 (overleaf) – Castlehill Heritage Centre

Caithness Heritage and Archaeology Site Visit Comments



"More investment needed – especially in signage and information boards"

"For myself, at the moment, I'm not bothered about improving access to the sites, I am always happy to stomp across fields, get muddy and tired etc. Archaeological sites, historical sites are always worth visiting. Sometimes it is best to leave access difficult so that they remain places where there is peace and quiet, where they are not damaged. However, I am very much aware how selfish this sounds when thinking of wheelchair access or any other kind of varied ability in being able to move around the countryside and visit these sites.

Therefore improvement in accessibility would be a good thing.[^]

"Caithness has a wonderful variety of archaeological/historical sites!"

"Most of the archaeological sites that I visit are off the beaten track and see few visitors, ability to map read and route find in sometimes difficult terrain are important. My most memorable places were not on the tourist route.[^]

"Lack of information and signage pointing to where they are."

"It was and is great to visit these places. Particularly loved Whalligoe Steps and Camster Cairns.[^]

"I wouldn't want paths and signage to be in perfect condition. I want to have an adventure and discover places for myself."

"There needs to be more investment in preservation and information and sustainable, responsible infrastructure such as parking (not at the expense of natural habitats/landscape). Highland Council needs to better prioritise Planning objectives to better protect its heritage assets from detrimental development. It's appalling at what's being built adjacent to and overtop of heritage assets is the name of tourism.[^]

"The sites speak for themselves to some extent but trails like the Yarrows were really poorly maintained so took away something from the experience and Camster suffered from human waste. You won't have a good reputation if that stays the same for very long I guess?"

Fig. 95

7.5: Museums

The next section deals with visitor interaction with museums in Caithness.

- Most people did not visit a museum, though Caithness Horizons (now shut, see 6.4, p.) and Wick Heritage Society scored relatively high with 28.8% and 27.7%)

24. Did you visit any of the following museums when you were here? You may choose more than one option.

256 responses

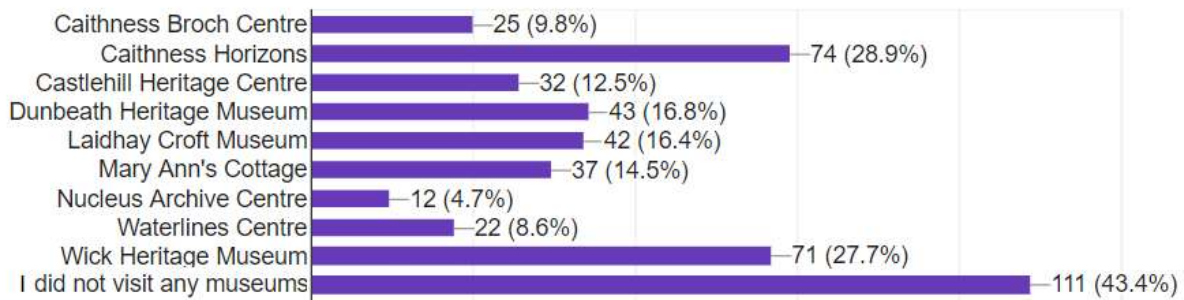


Fig. 96 – 8.4% chose 'other' museums or gave other comments, which have not been included here

- Generally speaking, visitors rated their visits to museums highly, with 91.4% scoring 7 out of 10 or more for their visits.

25. How would you rate your visits to these museums, generally?

140 responses

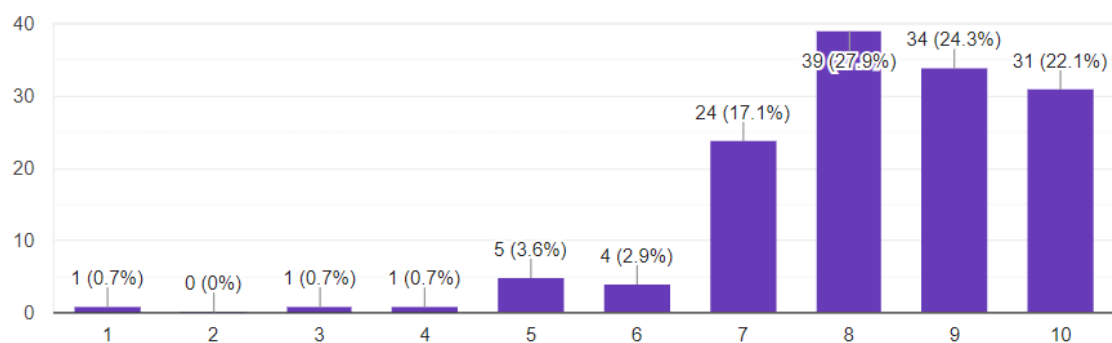


Fig. 97

- The vast majority of participants believed that the museums increased their understanding of Caithness archaeology and/or history.

26. Did your visits to museums increase your understanding of Caithness archaeology / history?

140 responses

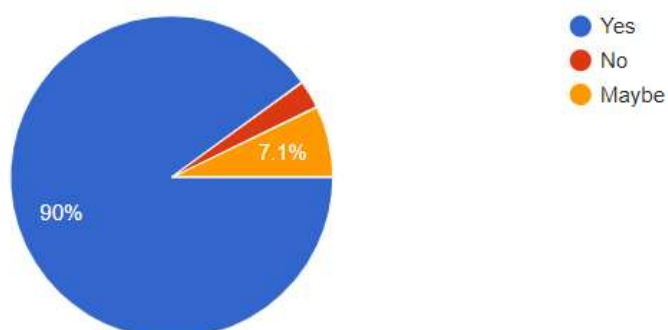


Fig. 98

- A similar number believed that the museum visits increased their appreciation of Caithness archaeology and history.

27. Did your visit to museums increase your appreciation of Caithness archaeology / history?

140 responses

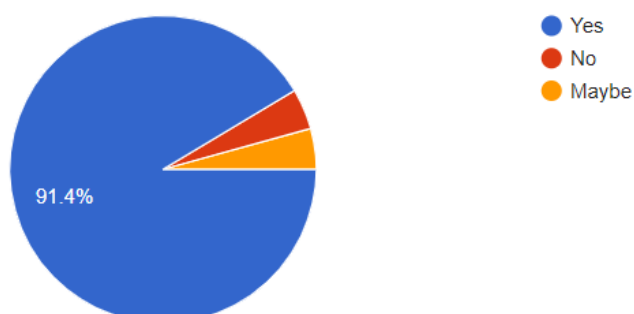


Fig. 99

- A similar high number of people felt that the visits to Caithness museums made them more positive / happier.

28. In general, did your visit to museums in Caithness make you feel more positive / happier?

137 responses

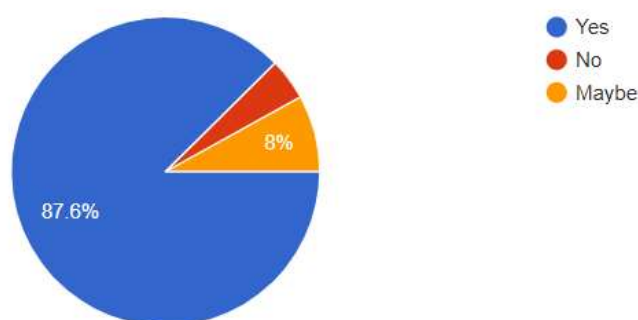


Fig. 100

General Comments on Museums

Comments made here largely corresponded with comments made by locals (see 6.4). Overall, visitors seemed to very much enjoy their visits, and Caithness Horizons and especially Wick Heritage Centre were afforded much praise. Again, Horizons' closure was lamented. Several believed that museums in the area were not promoted or marketed enough, and did not "fulfil their potential" due to lack of investment. Again, volunteers were commended for their knowledge and helpfulness – see Fig. 102 for details.

Fig. 101 (overleaf) – Caithness Horizons Museum



Caithness MUSEUM Visit Comments

"Very impressed, lots of information and very interesting. High quality, better than might be expected for the region (by some people who don't know better!)"

"Staff dedicated knowledgeable and professional"

"It's clear so much depends on local drive and participation."

"Hats off to the volunteer-run museums and visitor centres."

"See my above comment on archaeological sites - I'd love to return and visit these museums."

"Wick Heritage Centre is one of the best museums we have ever visited! Love it!"

"Shame what has happened with Caithness Horizons"

"Dull, fusty and dispiriting"

"Caithness Horizons was absolutely brilliant last time I was there! I went in to look around or buy gifts on every visit to family in Thurso."

"Wick Heritage Centre is immense!"

"Many of these rely on volunteer commitment of knowledge and enthusiasm, and are seasonal."

"Thank you all!"

"Shame horizons shut now"

"really enjoyed the three museums I visited. Wick museum was excellent, could do with more space, so much of interest. Castlehil - Flagstone museum - lovely setting and walks"



Fig. 103 - Wick Heritage Museum was especially praised in tourists' comments on Caithness Broch Project.

7.6: Tourist Spend

This section seeks to explore the average tourist spend in the region. Respondents were asked how much, in general, they spent on holiday to Caithness, through a range of options. This, however, meant that it was difficult to calculate the mean spend of tourist (see 8.1.2). Regardless, I decided to take the mean of the ranges (e.g. the mean for the £50 – £100 bracket was £75) and used this number against the number of people who chose that option to calculate the total average spend in each section.

- **Food and drink expenditure**

1. How much did you spend on food and drink during your visit to Caithness?

264 responses

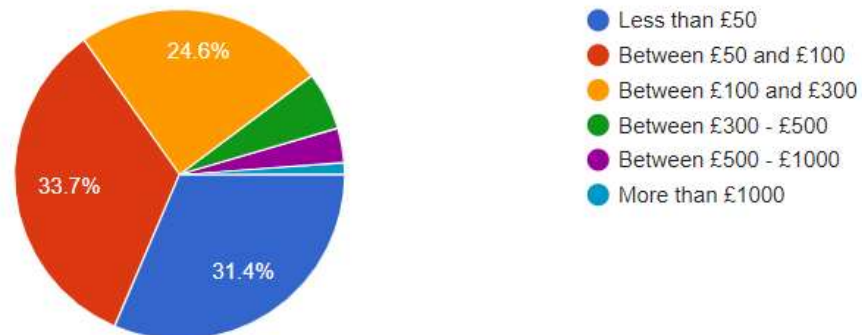


Fig. 104

Range (£)	Mean (£)	Number of respondents	Total (£)
0 – 50	25	89	2225
50 – 100	75	83	6225
100 – 300	200	65	13000
300 – 500	400	15	6000
500 - 1000	750	9	6750
1000	NA	3	3000
TOTAL		264	35,200
TOTAL AVERAGE SPEND	£132.58		

Fig. 105

- **Accommodation expenditure**

2. How much did you spend on accommodation during your visit to Caithness?

258 responses

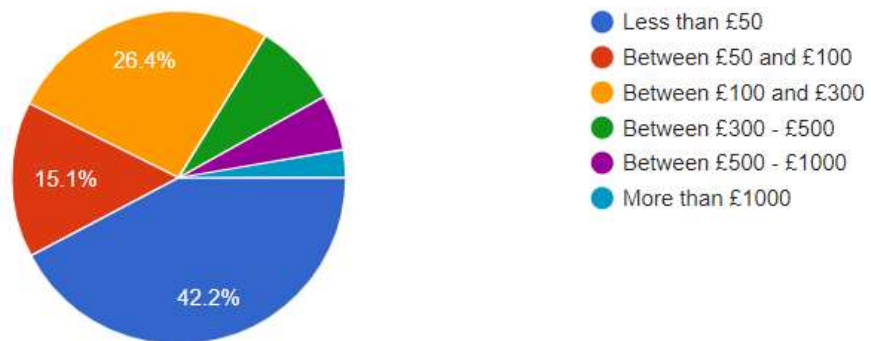


Fig. 106

Range (£)	Mean (£)	Number of respondents	Total (£)
0 – 50	25	109	2725
50 – 100	75	39	2925
100 – 300	200	68	13600
300 – 500	400	21	8400
500 - 1000	750	14	10500
1000	NA	7	7000
TOTAL		258	45,150
TOTAL AVERAGE SPEND	£175		

Fig. 107

- **Souvenirs / activities expenditure**

3. How much did you spend on activities (e.g. paying for boat trips, tours, activities, equipment hire etc) / souvenirs etc on your visit to Caithness?

260 responses

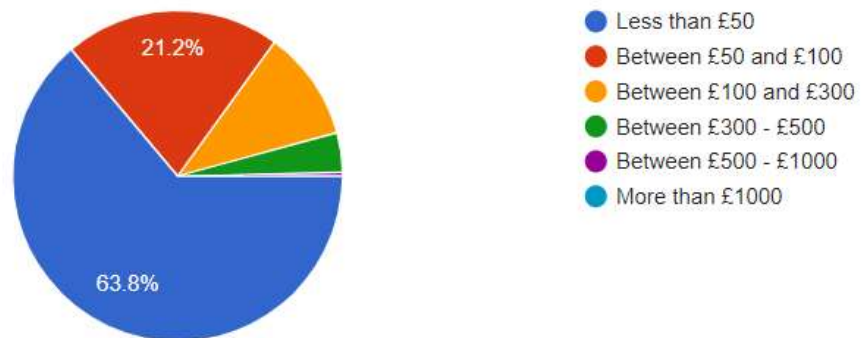


Fig. 108

Range (£)	Mean (£)	Number of respondents	Total (£)
0 – 50	25	166	4150
50 – 100	75	55	4125
100 – 300	200	28	5600
300 – 500	400	10	4000
500 - 1000	750	1	750
1000	NA	NA	NA
TOTAL		260	15,025
TOTAL AVERAGE SPEND	£57.78		

Fig. 109

- **Museum Spend**

29. How much did you spend / donate in your museum visits, specifically? (This includes any gifts you may have purchased)

132 responses

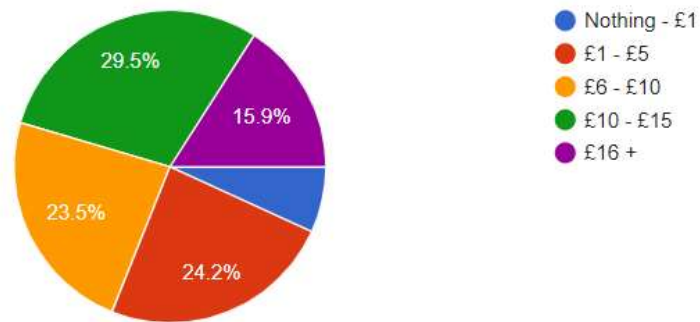


Fig. 110

Range (£)	Mean (£)	Number of respondents	Total (£)
0 – 1	.50	9	4.5
1 - 5	2.5	32	80
6 - 10	8	31	248
10 - 15	12.5	39	487.5
16+	16	21	336
TOTAL		132	1156
TOTAL AVERAGE SPEND (£)	8.76		

Fig. 111

General spend

With the above figures in mind, (£132.58 + £175 + £57.58 +£8.76) that the total average spend per visitor was **£374.12**. I decided to test the above figures by asking participants what they general spent on their visit to Caithness. This came to an altogether different figure of **£189.92**.

4. How much did you spend, generally, during your visit to Caithness?

258 responses

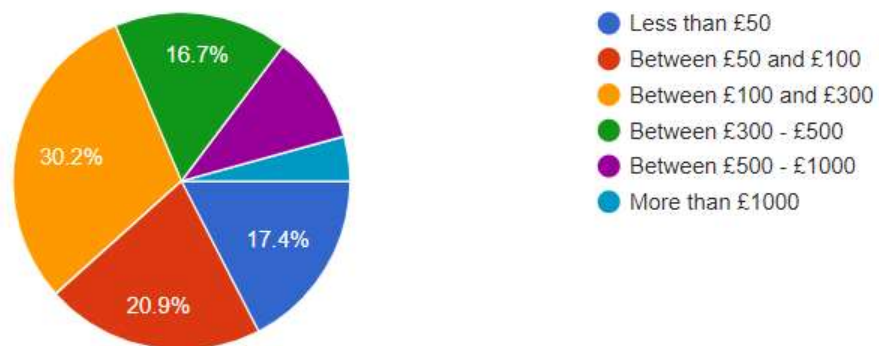


Fig. 112

Range (£)	Mean (£)	Number of respondents	Total (£)
0 – 50	25	45	1125
50 – 100	75	54	4050
100 – 300	200	78	15600
300 – 500	400	43	17200
500 - 1000	750	27	20250
1000	NA	11	11000
TOTAL			
TOTAL AVERAGE SPEND	189.82		

Fig. 113

These figures (£374.12 and £189.82) seemed both too high and too low when compared with VisitScotland's Highland visitor profile figures (see below). However, if an average of the two figures is taken, it comes to £281.87. This is then slightly higher than the figure of £235 suggested for domestic tourists by VisitScotland in the Highland visitor profile factsheet (2020c, p.7), but is much less than the £441 from international figures (*ibid.*, p.6). Of course, this likely a reflection of the high proportion (57.8%) of visitors from Scotland who participated in my survey.

7.7 Potential Visitors

The next section examines the potential visitors to Caithness, and their motivations for visiting.

- The first question asked whether respondents planned to visit Caithness, with a large majority saying they would (64.2%), and only 6.6% saying 'No'.

1. Are you planning to visit Caithness?

212 responses

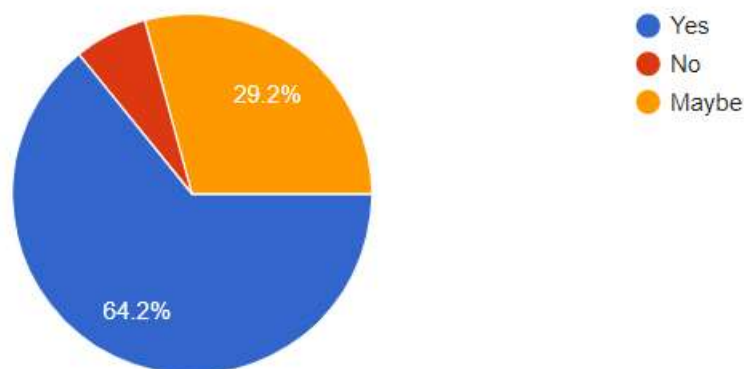


Fig. 114

- When asked why they intended to visit, or what motivated them to visit, 'Historical and archaeological attractions' was a popular answer, second only to 'the scenery / landscape / natural attractions', by 2 votes (*see Fig.115 below*). This reflects the results seen in 7.3.

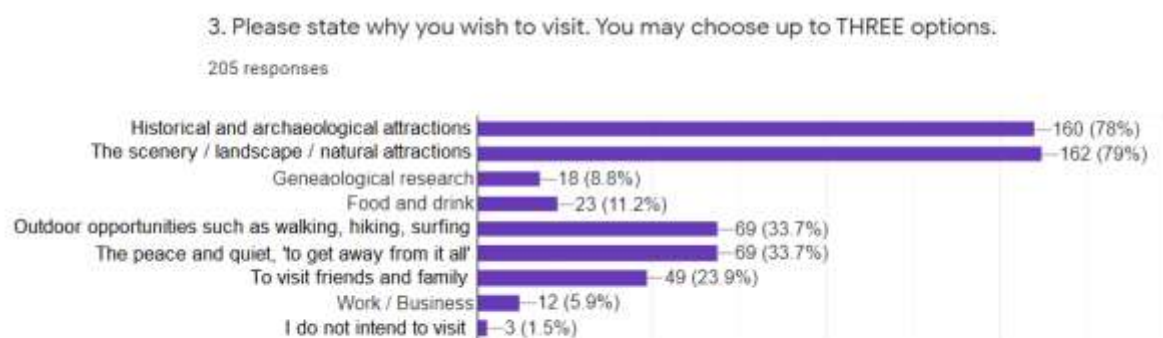


Fig. 115 – Please noted 5.5% chose other reasons not included here

- Holidaying specifically to Caithness was a popular option, second to ‘Holiday – as part of a tour around the Highlands’ by only one vote. Holidaying to Orkney was the third most popular reason, which would chime with previous comments regarding Caithness as a ‘stopping-off point’ for the Isles. Potential NC500 visitors figured relatively low in this question, despite it’s perceived popularity.

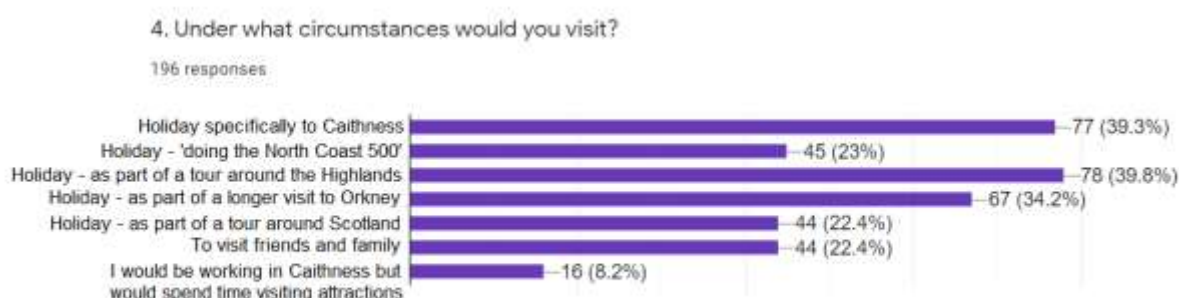


Fig. 116 – Please note that 10.5% chose ‘other’ reasons, not included here

- When asked what inspired their prospective visit, social media was the most popular answer by some distance (42.1%). This is likely reflective of the fact that the survey was shared by many people on social media (*see Fig. 117 below*)

5. What has inspired your prospective visit to Caithness? You may choose more than one option.

195 responses



Fig. 117

- Caithness Broch Project proved to be a popular social media site which helped to inspire prospective visitors to the region. Again, this is partly due to the page sharing the survey; it should be noted, however, that North Coast 500 also shared this survey, and had a much lower score.

6. If you answered 'Social media' to the previous question, can you advise which accounts, if any, influenced your decision to visit Caithness? You may choose more than one option.

92 responses

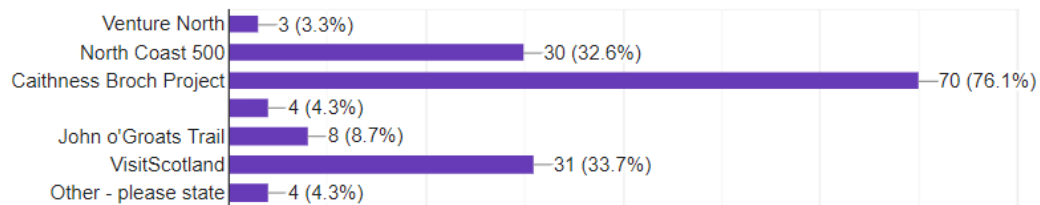


Fig. 118

- The archaeology and history of Caithness appears to play an important role in respondents' desire to visit Caithness, with 78.3% scoring this 7 out of 10 or more.

7. On a scale 1 - 10, how important is the archaeology and history of Caithness a factor in influencing your desire to visit Caithness?

203 responses

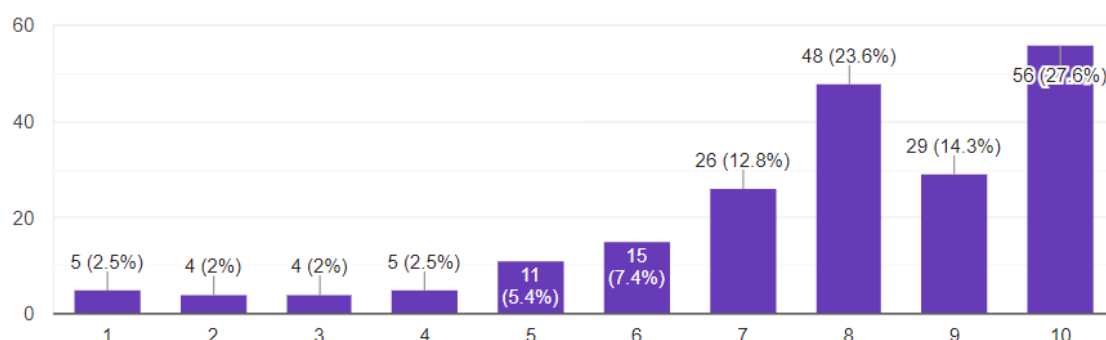


Fig. 119

- Ousdale, Nybster and Dunbeath Brochs were amongst the most popular sites which people planned to visit – again perhaps reflecting the engagement from those following Caithness Broch Project (see Fig. 120 below)

8. Are there any particular sites which are keen to visit? You may choose more than one option.

163 responses

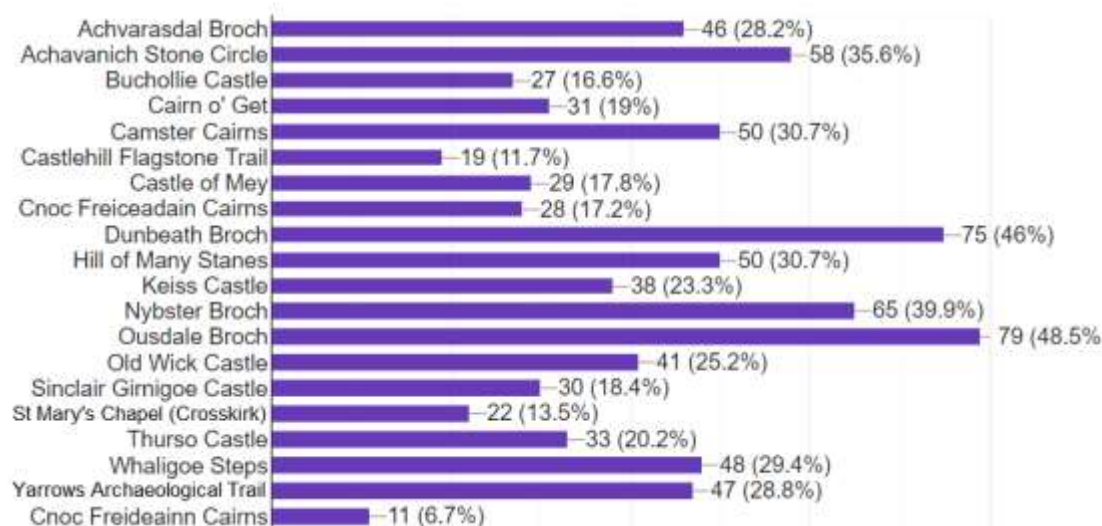


Fig. 120 – 13.8% chose other sites, not included here

- The Caithness Broch Centre was by far the most popular option in terms of prospective visits to Caithness museums. This is perhaps a surprising statistic, given that it only had 442 visitors in 2018 (The Moffat Centre, 2019, p.16).

9. Are there any museums you are keen to visit? You may choose more than one option.

121 responses

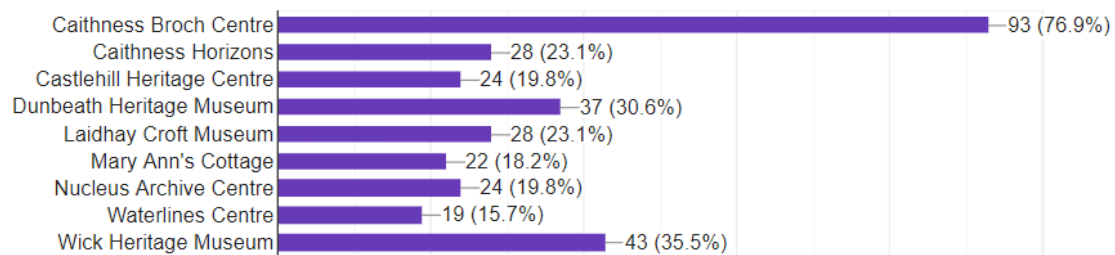


Fig. 121 – Please note that 9.6% chose other options, not included here.

- The final questions sought to understand if potential visitors thought that Caithness was represented well enough by national advertising campaigns (see Fig X) and whether 'Caithness' promoted itself enough (see Fig. X). In both instances, visitors overwhelmingly voted 'no' with 71.5% believing that Caithness was not represented enough in national advertising campaigns, and 60.7% believing that Caithness did not promote itself enough. this again chimes with the local sentiment (see 6.8 – 6.10)

9. Do you feel Caithness is represented enough in national advertising campaigns?

214 responses

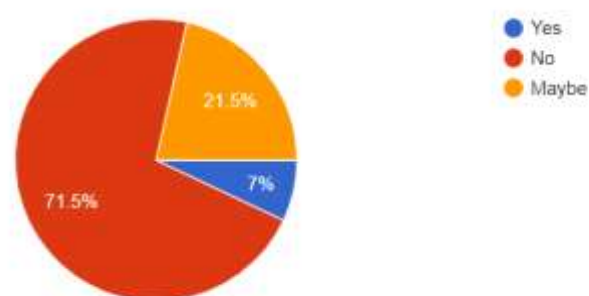


Fig. 122

10. Do you think Caithness promotes itself enough in terms of tourism?

214 responses

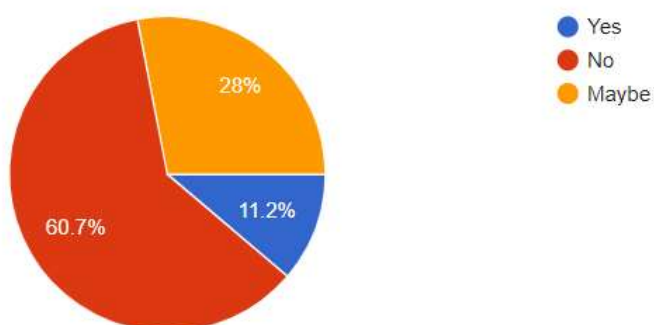


Fig. 123

General Comments:

Comments were generally very positive about Caithness and its historic environment. Many looked forward to visiting, or returning to visit, and that the region had a “plethora” of ancient sites. Despite having “so much going for it” visitors believed that the region was marketed poorly. Several comments praised the Caithness Broch Project for highlighting the region, with others disparagingly remarked on the effects of the NC500 (*see Fig. 125 below*).

Fig. 124 (overleaf) – Bucholie Castle

Prospective VISITOR Comments



Caithness has so much going for it history archaeology landscape wildlife but difficult to get information before a visit and very poorly advertised. I live in Orkney but would actually like to move to Caithness, it has everything I love about Orkney but isn't a ferry ride or flight away from Scotland or the rest of the UK. Orkney is also starting to feel crowded I love the space in Caithness

I think the NC500 Ltd company promote the highlands too much but this would be a good step to change it to promote it for its history and archaeological sites which might attract a more responsible tourist

Driving through Caithness it looks fairly bleak, we went to John o' goats once years ago and it was really underwhelming; I am generally well aware of places to visit in highland as I live here, but don't know about Caithness places listed in this survey. I think the population of Caithness is declining, if I lived there I'd want to leave too, sorry. Having said that my Mum raves about the flow country, so one some people like it

Really looking forward to travel again and spending a little more time. Sadly, in the past Caithness has mostly been a pass through place (but try to see as much as possible whilst doing so), therefore I'd like to spend longer, walk more and take it more slowly.

It's a stunning place, somewhat overshadowed by the West coast. Having said that a much stronger emphasis on its rich history (where it overshadows the West coast) is needed. There's so much to learn about Caithness that I didn't even know existed when I visited.

The magnitude of preserved historical sights in Caithness is unique and easily accessible. The solitude one feels in Caithness is profound and connects you to the past in a visceral way. I hope as tourism to the area increases, that spiritual connection to the land isn't lost.

We cannot wait to come back and I had no idea there were so many museums and things we had missed! I have pasted the list and will look into visiting some new places this August (Covid Permitting of course!)

Fig. 125

7.8: The Economic Value of Archaeology to Caithness

Having spoken to 73 accommodation providers in the region, some understanding to the total number of visitors to the region can be garnered. A total of 182,421 overnight visitors in 2019 was calculated.

To determine the economic value of archaeology to Caithness a blend of VisitScotland figures and calculations (see 3.3.4). First of all, the number of leisure visitors is calculated using VisitScotland's Highland leisure visitors statistic (86% of 182,421 = 133167.33). This figure is then multiplied by the average spend by the number of visits (281.87×133167.33), giving a total tourist spend figure of £33,535,875.30.

To understand the contribution archaeology made towards the total tourist spend figure, I would need to apply the percentage of those who selected archaeology as a contributing factor towards their visit (70.3%) to that figure, which gives £23,475,112.71. As per EKOS' calculation, 25% is then taken from this, which gives a total figure of £5,868,778.17 as the economic value of archaeology to Caithness. This seems like a reasonable estimate, given the £4,000,000 generated by the Western Isles (EKOS, 2017, p.8)

7.9: Discussion

Generally speaking, previous and prospective visitors to the region were positive about the region, and it is clear to see that the heritage and archaeology of Caithness figures high in their desires and motivations to visit the region; in both previous and prospective tourists to the region, it is the second-most popular reason to visit Caithness, falling short by only handful of votes. 70.3% of visitors to Caithness were attracted by the archaeological sites, and a comparison with EKOS' report, which suggested that 44% of visitors to the Western Isles and 80% of visitors to Orkney visited an archaeological site, is illuminating. It is clear that archaeology is a hugely important to the overall attraction to the region.

Perhaps it was somewhat surprising to see that holidaying specifically to Caithness was a particularly popular choice, contrasting to what has been said or is perceived by locals: that the region is just a by a stopping point for people on their way to Orkney, or as part of a North Coast 500 journey (see 6.10). The North Coast 500 is something of a paradox, however. Despite many visiting the region through the NC500, many seemed to 'put off' many from travelling to Caithness because of the rise in tourism; the effects of 'over-tourism' may be worth considering in an area which was considered to provide solitude and open space

Regardless, visitors to the region appeared to agree on the lack of signage and interpretation at these sites, as well as there being access issues. Given that archaeology is worth nearly £6,000,000 to the region, it may be prudent to invest in improving such conditions and aspects of the county's heritage.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Reflections on Research

8.1: Survey limitations and What I Would Have Done Differently

Given the scope and scale of the research, there was increased potential for aspects to consider for future research, as well as a number of small mistakes. It would be prudent to acknowledge some of the missteps in the creation of this survey.

It is clear, first and foremost, that this essay went over the word limit – this is largely because I expected not to write so much on the data. However, as has been noted, the response to both survey far surpassed expectations. Regardless, it would probably would have been feasible to tackle just one element of the topic – either the economic or social value, as opposed to both.

8.1.1: Social Value of Archaeology Survey

- For the *Social Value of Archaeology* survey, the questions 4 and 5 of the first section (see section 6.2) may have been somewhat leading. My aim here was to try and understand whether people who took this survey had an existing interest in archaeology, heritage and history in the first place, though people may have selected ‘yes’ as an answer because they believe it to be the ‘right’ answer.
- A couple of follow-up question appears to have been omitted from the ‘Archaeological Activities’ section (see section 6.7), and so *how* respondents found out about events and *what* particular events (i.e. talks, excavations, outreach events) they took part in has been missed out. This would have been useful information to obtain, but was not crucial to the overall survey.
- ‘Thurso West’ was an incorrect option in the demographics question – it should have been ‘Thurso’ and ‘Caithness West’. It is likely that many from chose instead of a ‘Thurso’ option, but this was quickly amended.

8.1.2: Heritage Tourism in Caithness Survey

- Finding the average spend was perhaps problematic, in that certain options could skew the data – for example, for the ‘Food and drink’ expenditure question, 7 people spent £7000 in total, bringing the average spend up considerably. Potentially finding the upper and lower bounds and having an estimate range rather than an exact figure may have provided a more cautious figure.
- By providing survey respondents with a ‘range’ of responses in their estimates of spend (e.g. £0 - £50, £50 - £100, £100 - £300), this made it more difficult to acquire definite spending outcomes and understand total spending by tourists. A median was taken from these ranges and used against the visitor numbers, but this could not be done for the ‘1000+’ bracket as there was no second range to choose from. In this case I opted to choose 1000, which would at least give a figure, albeit potentially lower than what was spent.
- Survey participants were also allowed to choose multiple options (up to three choices) as to why they chose to visit Caithness: this again made it more difficult to calculate the amount which could be directly contributed to archaeology.
- Across both surveys a number of small spelling errors and incorrect choices on the surveys e.g. ‘Other – please state’ but no ability to state, which was amended but meant that there were different ‘other’ answers, or an additional ‘yes’ question on ‘Have you Visited Caithness before. These, however, did not affect the overall result of the survey.

8.1.3: Collating Visitor Numbers

- The collation of visitor numbers was certainly not an ‘exact science’, and there were some issues in the collection of data here. First of all, some accommodation providers did not come back with numbers or were uncontactable: these included such as Dunnet Bay Campsite and the Royal Hotel in Thurso, both of which can accommodate a significant number of guests, and so a large number of visitors in 2019 have been missed here.

- Additionally, self-catering numbers were not taken, largely due to the length of time it took to compile hotel, campsite and bed & breakfast numbers. I began to contact self-catering but many did not respond, or were looked after by subsidiary companies such as cottages.com who did not respond. Future investigations should allow more time to carry out such an exercise.
- I was largely relying on the goodwill of accommodation providers to provide me with figures for 2019; for some this was quite a difficult task as their booking systems were not set up to collect this data quickly. Given this, I was happy for accommodation providers to suggest estimates for both visitor numbers and the average length of stay.
- Speaking with hoteliers and accommodation on heritage tourism was an stimulating process – it would have been interesting to include interviews to help add a professional outlook on the tourist narrative.
- With the above points in mind, future investigations would benefit from prior discussions with hoteliers and accommodation providers to discuss and create a means of capturing this data more easily and accurately.

CHAPTER NINE

Conclusions and Recommendations

This dissertation develops a deeper understanding of the ‘value’ of archaeology to Caithness, in economic terms and also its wider social value. but also of its wider social value. The archaeological environment - which encompasses historic and prehistoric sites and monuments, museums and events and activities – holds great value for the region and its inhabitants, both financially and socially. In addition, both tourists and locals shared the view that Caithness’ archaeology is an important and inspiring resource – yet one which is under-developed.

9.1 Economic Value

Archaeology seems to play a pivotal role in visitors’ motivation to visit Caithness; in the survey 70.3% of respondents chose this as a reason for visiting in the first place, whilst ‘Historical and archaeological attractions’ was the most popular reason for a return visit to Caithness. For prospective visitors to the region, it appears to be crucial to the overall lure of the county, with 78.3% scoring the importance of archaeology and history as a reason to visit at 7 out of 10 or more. It can therefore be stated with confidence that the historic environment is central in attracting people to Caithness and is of high importance to the Caithness economy.

Estimating a financial value for the historic environment to Caithness is difficult; the methodology combining overnight stays with average tourist spend data – neither of which are compiled from accurate data – meant that any figure produced by this study is likely to be imprecise. With this caveat in mind , the figure calculated for the economic value of archaeology to Caithness – nearly £6,000,000 per year - seems to be a reasonable estimate, especially when compared to the EKOS survey of the Western Isles, which valued archaeology at £4,000,000. Indeed, since the survey revealed that archaeology plays a more important part in people’s visits to Caithness (70.3% of respondents) than visitors to the Western Isles (44% of respondents), a higher figure was likely. Regardless of the exact value, it is evident that Caithness benefits financially from its archaeological landscape, and that this relationship warrants further study.

9.2 Social Value

The second part of this study, which investigates the social value of archaeology to Caithness, sought to understand intangible benefits associated with the archaeological environment: concepts

including 'identity', 'belonging', 'pride of place', 'community spirit / bringing people together' and general levels of happiness or 'well-being'. This study also attempts to understand if the role of Caithness' archaeology of Caithness helped in educational matters: whether that be increasing a general understanding of Caithness, or developing new skills via archaeological events.

The research found that archaeology is seen to promote and develop all of these concepts archaeology was seen to promote and develop all of these concepts: participants especially regarded archaeology as being an important component of their identity and in bringing communities together, though perhaps the learning of new skills or abilities was less keenly felt. However, participants particularly value the way in which archaeological sites and monuments promote good mental and physical health, through 'getting out and about' and enjoying fresh air and exercise. Though direct participation in archaeological activities such as excavation was somewhat limited, interviews with those who took part in events or activities in the region revealed a range of wider benefits, from inspiring individuals to learn more about or explore their historic environment, providing them with a stronger sense of identity, or even just learning to work with people. Archaeology is therefore not only of economic significance to the region, but also plays an important part in the overall sense of well-being for the local community.

The importance placed on archaeology, and the way in which it generates so many positive outcomes for inhabitants of the region, is seemingly undermined by a general perception by locals that the archaeology of Caithness is under-developed and that the region is instead overlooked in favour of Orkney, or only visited as part of the North Coast 500. Research from the survey, however, suggests that whilst many people undoubtedly interact with Caithness via Orkney or through the NC500, a higher proportion of respondents specifically choose to visit the county. Taken together with the relatively high interest shown by prospective visitors, this suggests that Caithness is a viable heritage tourism destination.

9.3: Recommendations and Conclusion

With this in mind, and as detailed tourism and heritage tourism research specific to Caithness are not available, this dissertation presents the beginning of a dialogue, and a further opportunity to understand ways in which Caithness might make more of the clearly-valued archaeological landscape. A number of matters were met with broad agreement from both locals and visitors: certainly it can be said that the archaeological and historic sites and monuments of Caithness, in terms of their signage, interpretation and access, seem somewhat under-developed according to both tourists and the local community. However, there is a perception, from both Caithnessians and

those outwith the county, that Caithness has a rich archaeological landscape, albeit one which does not reach its full potential. This study indicates that both locals and tourists believe the archaeology of Caithness to be an under-exploited resource in Caithness, especially when compared to that of Orkney. It may of interest, then, to conduct a study into the differences between the means and methods of promoting and developing archaeology between Orkney and Caithness.

The scope and scale of this dissertation was very broad; a more-focused a study into either the economic or social value of archaeology would still have provided plenty to discuss. However, it should be noted that the level of response to both surveys exceeded initial expectations and provides valuable insight into a burgeoning economy for the region. the study demonstrates the interest in the region as a heritage tourism destination, but, perhaps more importantly, the study clearly demonstrates a very discernible frustration with the level of investment and development into Caithness' tangible cultural resources: as mentioned above, local aspirations do not appear to have been met when it comes to showcasing the county's fine archaeological landscape. As this study shows, archaeology greatly benefits the region - both economically and socially. Caithness would therefore presumably profit from further investment, development and promotion into its archaeological landscape. The question is, to whom does the responsibility belong? Should national public bodies such as VisitScotland and Historic Environment Scotland take the lead, or is this a challenge for local heritage groups to tackle? Should local funding organisations consider heritage and archaeology more in their own outcomes?

This study has come at a point in time when the county is beginning to move beyond its affiliation with nuclear power, and difficult questions will be asked about the continuing socio-economic development of the county. As dependence on Dounreay dwindles, Caithness will need to embrace new, more sustainable activities and avenues of economic growth. The rich archaeological landscape of Caithness may be one such area which the region can prosper from, both economically and socially: the future of Caithness may, at least in part, owe a debt to the past.

Word Count: 20807

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Appendix

Raw Data from Google Forms can be found in the spreadsheets below.



Heritage Tourism in
Caithness.csv



The Social Value of
Archaeology to Caithr

Questions asked to interview participants:



Questions List.docx