SHARE Museums East
a network of know how

Report on the Survey Results from 'Benchmarking in the East of England' 2010-11

Dr. Harriet Foster

SHARE Museums East
a network of know how

Contents

1. Introduction

1.1 About Benchmarking

'Benchmarking Museums in the East of England' is an annual survey aimed at museums that are accredited or working towards accreditation and has been running since 2001/02. This report focuses on the results for 2010/11, i.e. the tenth consecutive year in which the survey has run, although it does discuss, where relevant, historic data for comparative purposes. For the second year running, the survey was delivered largely online, but with the option of completing it on paper for those museums who stated this preference. The format of the questionnaire largely followed that which has been devised over the last two years and broke questions down into the following sections:

1. Museum Information
2. Audiences
3. Resources (Finance, Staff and Volunteers)
4. Your Collections
5. Benchmarking in the Future

There were many benefits to delivering the form online as stated in last year's report. It is also fair to say that lessons learnt from delivering the survey online last year were applied when developing the scheme this year. As a result there were just a few instances of technical problems or recommendations for improvement reported by museums. Furthermore, this was the first year that museum services were also invited to respond online, due to developments made to the design and functionality of the online survey. Spontaneous feedback from some of these museum services has been very positive, welcoming the fact that they no longer needed to rely on a paper form.

As already indicated, the content of the questionnaire was largely kept the same, although certain sections on Collections were omitted (as these were used last year to gain a snap-shot of the region's museums at that particular point in time) and there were a few 'new' questions, which are identified, where relevant, in the discussion below.

Once again, a review and trial of the online form was undertaken with the support of the Regional Museum Development Manager and Museum Development Officers, who also provided, for each county, a current list of relevant museum participants and their contact details. Museums were approached by e-mail (with the exception of a few for which we only had postal addresses who were contacted by letter) and were sent several reminders during the six week period that the survey was 'live', from 15th September to the 31st October 2011.

There are still further developments that could be made to the functionality of the survey, but these are reported on elsewhere as explained below.

This year, the Benchmarking survey was delivered in parallel with a number of other pieces of complimentary work. This included a training programme, offered free to all East of England museums through SHARE, with the purpose of providing staff with the necessary skills to interpret Benchmarking data and make greater use of it in future for their own purposes. Resources developed for the training programme will be made available via the SHARE Museums East website (www.sharemuseumseast.org.uk). Additionally, a further report accompanies this one which examines the benefits of the survey and puts forward a number of discussion points for stakeholders to consider in assessing the future direction of the survey. For this reason, no recommendations have been made at the end of this document as these are covered in the accompanying report.

1.2 Numbers responding to the survey

Last year (2009/10), the survey achieved a 67% return rate overall, which was significantly higher than previous years. For 2010/11 the response rate is broadly comparable at 68% (**Table 1**). It was hoped that a slightly higher response rate would be achieved (around 70%), but this in part may be due to the figure for Essex pulling down the overall average. Indeed, the fact that no Museum Development Officer was in post in Essex immediately before or during the survey period may have negatively affected these museums' awareness of the survey (and so their likelihood to respond). It should also be pointed out that the list of participating museums for Essex needs reviewing and so museums may have been approached that are no longer open or in a position to respond – this is very much borne out by the lower response rate for the county. If Essex is omitted from the table below, then the overall response rate rises to 73%.

County	Number of responses	Number expected	Response rate
Bedfordshire	5	8	63%
Cambridgeshire	24	29	83%
Essex	19	38	50%
Hertfordshire	17	23	74%
Norfolk	24	33	73%
Suffolk	27	38	71%
All	116	170	68%

Table 1: Response rate to the survey by county.

A full list of museums, by county, that did not respond or only partially responded is provided in **Appendix 1**.

2. Audience Figures

This section reports on the audience figures provided by museums for 2009/10 and 2010/11, which include total visits, visits by children (a new measure for this year), visits by school age children in organised groups, instances of outreach participation with children (a new measure) and with school age children as well as instances of outreach participation with adults. **Appendix 2** provides a summary of the proportion that is actual vs. estimated figures and **Tables 2 and 3** provide summaries of all audience data by county and for the region as a whole.

For the most part, figures reported for total visits, visits by children and visits by school age children are made up of actual counts. The outreach figures comprise a larger proportion that is based on estimates.

For all measures, a comparison is drawn with the previous year, based on a constant sample, to assess if there have been any changes in the number of museum audiences. In most cases, the data is discussed in terms of total figures as well as averages (the mean), since this also provides a useful way of highlighting any differences between counties and over time. Where museums have provided additional information, this narrative is used to place observed audience data trends in context (**Section 2.6**).

Two key terms used in this Section are defined below for the purposes of clarity.

A **constant sample** excludes museums from the sample for that particular question where there is missing data, for one or both years. ‘Missing data’ can include that which is not supplied, as well as instances where a museum has been closed for part or all of a year and so has incomplete audience figures.

Market penetration can be considered as a measure of the degree to which a product or service (e.g. museum visit) is taken up compared to the total potential market for the product or service. The ‘potential market’ can be somewhat subjective and will depend on a number of factors. For example, a smaller, locally-focussed museum may receive most of its visits from the immediate community, whereas a larger, more urban museum may have a much wider-reaching audience in geographical terms.

County		Total visits 2009/10	Total visits 2010/11	Total visits children 2009/10	Total visits children 2010/11	Total visits school age children 2009/10	Total visits school age children 2010/11	Outreach children 2009/10	Outreach children 2010/11	Outreach school age children 2009/10	Outreach school age children 2010/11	Outreach adults 2009/10	Outreach adults 2010/11
Beds (*)	**Total**	82,745	72,376	3,726	4,094	6,649	2,349	2,513	521	1,765	4,041	5,285	2,304
	Average	16,549	14,475	1,242	1,365	1,662	587	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	n =	5	5	3	3	4	4	2	2	2	2	1	1
Cambs	**Total**	1,311,684	1,291,601	212,452	219,709	90,417	86,069	7,309	8,802	6,487	6,202	8,146	7,506
	Average	57,030	53,817	11,803	11,564	4,306	4,099	579	668	590	564	479	442
	n =	23	24	18	19	21	21	13	14	11	11	17	17
Essex	**Total**	398,031	382,694	113,160	106,906	91,253	88,707	6,458	12,535	12,991	17,412	6,886	10,291
	Average	20,949	21,261	7,073	6,682	6,084	5,218	718	1,567	1,299	1,935	626	858
	n =	19	18	16	16	15	17	9	8	10	9	11	12
Herts	**Total**	372,068	404,091	143,058	146,817	48,569	48,089	19,186	22,207	18,520	20,665	13,309	13,283
	Average	21,886	23,770	9,537	9,788	3,469	3,435	2,398	2,221	2,058	2,067	1,210	1,022
	n =	17	17	15	15	14	14	8	10	9	10	11	13
Norfolk	**Total**	439,598	473,833	86,125	98,284	52,050	54,374	4,612	4,121	4,058	3,806	5,585	4,906
	Average	19,113	19,743	4,306	4,680	2,739	2,472	384	275	369	254	372	289
	n =	23	24	20	21	19	22	12	15	11	15	15	17
Suffolk	**Total**	388,247	381,622	87,310	80,236	64,082	59,637	15,711	19,328	14,505	18,451	6,423	10,946
	Average	14,380	14,134	4,851	4,012	3,373	2,711	1,309	1,487	1,209	1,153	401	576
	n =	27	27	18	20	19	22	11	12	12	16	16	19
East of England	**Total**	**2,992,373**	**3,006,217**	**645,831**	**656,046**	**353,020**	**339,225**	**55,789**	**67,514**	**58,326**	**70,577**	**45,634**	**49,236**
	Average	**26,249**	**26,141**	**7,176**	**6,979**	**3,837**	**3,392**	**1,014**	**1,107**	**1,060**	**1,120**	**643**	**623**
	n =	**114**	**115**	**90**	**94**	**92**	**100**	**55**	**61**	**55**	**63**	**71**	**79**

Table 2: Total and average (mean) figures for all audience data by county and region for 2009/10 and 2010/11. 'n=' gives the number of museums in the sample for that particular measure. (*) Averages for outreach are not reported on for Bedfordshire as the sample size is too small to be meaningful.

County	Total visits 2009/10	Total visits 2010/11	Total visits *% difference*	Total visits children 2009/10	Total visits children 2010/11	Total visits children *% difference*	Total visits school age children 2009/10	Total visits school age children 2010/11	Total visits school age children *% difference*
Beds	41,241	42,160	2.2%	3,726	4,094	9.9%	746	751	0.7%
Cambs	1,143,088	1,156,305	1.2%	208,479	211,233	1.3%	88,228	81,118	-8.1%
Essex	384,533	382,694	-0.5%	108,660	106,886	-1.6%	91,253	88,625	-2.9%
Herts	364,122	370,851	1.8%	138,986	136,867	-1.5%	45,922	45,900	0.0%
Norfolk	433,810	454,628	4.8%	85,398	94,783	11.0%	51,956	53,512	3.0%
Suffolk	387,424	374,307	-3.4%	86,711	78,375	-9.6%	63,156	58,938	-6.7%
East of England	**2,754,218**	**2,780,945**	**1.0%**	**631,960**	**632,238**	**0.04%**	**341,261**	**328,844**	**-3.6%**

(a)

County	Outreach children 2009/10	Outreach children 2010/11	Outreach children *% difference*	Outreach school age children 2009/10	Outreach school age children 2010/11	Outreach school age children *% difference*	Outreach adults 2009/10	Outreach adults 2010/11	Outreach adults *% difference*
Beds (**)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Cambs	6,946	8,018	15.4%	4,978	5,427	9.0%	7,220	6,121	-15.2%
Essex	6,458	12,535	94.1%	12,960	17,412	34.4%	6,886	9,391	36.4%
Herts	17,436	18,460	5.9%	18,520	20,265	9.4%	13,309	11,177	-16.0%
Norfolk	2,308	2,674	15.9%	3,431	3,064	-10.7%	5,585	4,646	-16.8%
Suffolk	15,082	18,924	25.5%	14,119	17,704	25.4%	6,037	10,322	71.0%
East of England	**48,230**	**60,661**	**25.7%**	**54,008**	**63,872**	**18.3%**	**39,037**	**41,657**	**6.7%**

(b)

Table 3: Total figures for all audience data by county and region for 2009/10 and 2010/11 based on a constant sample of museums for each measure, including the percentage difference between each year's figures.
(a) gives figures for total visits, total visits by children and total visits by school age children
(b) gives figures for instances of outreach participation, by children, school age children and adults.

(**) Outreach is not reported on for Bedfordshire as only one museum could be included in the constant sample which therefore does not allow for comparison at county level.

2.1 Total Visits

The 116 museums that responded to the survey this year reported just over 3 million visits for 2010/11 (3,006,217) (**Table 2**), although it is important to remember that this figure is representative of approximately two thirds of the region's museums; so the total number of all museum visits for the region will be even higher than this, although perhaps not substantially so. This is because this year the response from the larger museums and museums services, which tend to report high visitor numbers, was particularly good. Only Museums Luton, Southend Museums and Welwyn Roman Baths did not take part (although data for Mill Green Museum was supplied).

On average, visits were highest in Cambridgeshire (at 53,817 visits per museum) (**Table 2**) but this is mainly because two of the largest venues (in terms of audience numbers) can be found in the county, namely the Imperial War Museum and the Fitzwilliam Museum, which together account for 25% of all total visits in the region, as reported by museums responding to this survey.

To give a sense of the number of visits per head of population, where population is taken to be that of the 'East of England', the total number of visits broadly represents a visit by every other person in the region[1] which compares well with 2009/10, demonstrating that museum visits overall have remained fairly stable.

Indeed, from information supplied by those museums that responded to the survey, that provided their total number of visits for both 2009/10 and 2010/11 and were fully open throughout this two year period, it is possible to see from this 'constant sample' that the figure has remained fairly stable over the two years, from **2,754,218** in 2009/10 to **2,780,945** in 2010/11, or a 1% increase over this period, although this cannot be described as a statistically significant increase. Essex and Suffolk saw a slight downturn in their overall visits, but other counties experienced an increase, although these were mostly small rises (**Table 3a**). Investigating these figures further, it becomes clear that there is no particular pattern of slight increase or decrease at county level, but that individual museums report differing patterns with overall visitor numbers, depending on a number of factors, which are reported on in **Section 2.6**.

Lastly, taking the results for total visits from the first Benchmarking survey in 2001/02 and comparing this with the same figure for 2010/11 (based on 27 museums that were open both years and provided figures for both years), reveals initially that there has been an increase of 60.2% in total visits, from 397,704 to 636,943. On closer inspection, a large proportion of this increase can be attributed to the Fitzwilliam Museum which more than doubled its visitor numbers during this period, from 128,975 to 334,973. In 2001/02, according to its annual report, the museum was undergoing its Courtyard Redevelopment which affected galleries within the vicinity and also resulted in lower than usual visitor figures. For this reason, omitting the Fitzwilliam Museum from the constant sample is advisable, in which case total visits for 26 museums in the revised sample between 2001/02 and 2010/11 rose by 12.4% from 268,729 to 301,970[2]. Unfortunately it is not

[1] The annual mid-year population estimates published by the Office for National Statistics (www.ons.gov.uk) give the East of England population in 2010 as 5,832,000. It is recognised that not all of the reported visits to museums will have been made by people living within the region, and indeed some people may have made repeat visits. Nevertheless this comment is offered as a very crude assessment of market penetration.

[2] Some care should be taken when using this figure. For 2010/11 information is available about the closure or partial opening of museums, this information is not recorded in the 2001/02 return and therefore it is possible that some museums were included in the sample that were not fully open in 2001/02.

possible to repeat such a calculation with other audience data reported on below because the terminology of the measures collected in 2001/02 is different to that for 2010/11.

2.2 Total visits by school age children in organised groups

There were a total of 339,225 visits by school age children in organised groups in 2010/11 (**Table 2**). This includes visits made by schools as well as other extra-curricular groups, such as brownies, scouts or after-school clubs for example. On average, visits by school age children were highest in Essex (5,218 visits per museum) and Cambridgeshire (4,099 visits per museum), although most counties (excepting Hertfordshire and Norfolk) saw a noticeable decrease in the average number of these visits between 2009/10. This is also illustrated when looking at the constant sample for the East of England over this time period, which saw a 3.6% reduction, from 341,261 in 2009/10 to 328,844 in 2010/11. Only Norfolk museums in the constant sample saw an increase over the two years (of 3.0%) (**Table 3a**). Swaffham Museum for example witnessed a 30.1% increase, from 615 visits to 800 visits, which it has attributed to “increased knowledge of learning services [that we] provide [has] spread by word of mouth [and we have had] bookings from larger (60 plus) school groups.”

In fact, several museums that witnessed a downward trend in visits by school age children, have noted that their outreach figures with this group are in fact higher in 2010/11 than they were last year, suggesting that they are still catering to audiences but in a different way (**Section 2.4**). Some museums account for the reduction because schools are no longer able to afford the cost of transportation.

It is encouraging that museums without any separate space to offer groups when they visit still achieved around 47,000 visits by school age children in 2010/11 (**Table 4**). This is nearly 14% of all visits by school age children in groups.

	Beds	Cambs	Essex	Herts	Norfolk	Suffolk	East of England
Total with separate space	5	13	11	12	14	14	69
Total visits to museums with separate space	2,349	71,537	67,684	46,102	48,344	56,237	292,253
Total visits to museums without separate space	0	14,532	21,023	1,987	6,030	3,400	46,972

Table 4: Summary by county of the number of museums that have a separate space and the proportion of visits by school age children in groups to museums with and without a separate space.

2.3 Total visits by children

This is a new measure for 2010/11 and was included for the purposes of calculating the impact of museum tourism on the region, although this has proved problematic (**Section 2.7)**. A total of 656,046 visits by children were recorded by 94 museums (**Table 2**). Furthermore, those museums that could be included in a ‘constant sample’ demonstrated **631,960** child visits in 2009/10 and **632,238** child visits in 2010/11, or a 0.04% increase which is not statistically significant (**Table 3a**). Three counties in fact reported a reduction for this measure but Cambridgeshire and particularly Bedfordshire and Norfolk bucked this trend (with a 1.3%, 9.9% and 11.0% increase respectively). It is encouraging that despite a decrease in visits by school age children in organised groups as already noted, overall visits by children has remained stable over the two years.

Museums that reported an increase include Norwich Castle Museum & Gallery and Lynn Museum, both part of Norfolk Museums & Archaeology Service, which is attributed to the opening of new galleries or temporary exhibitions, as well as the Nelson Museum which has appointed a new Access Officer who has worked on developing school visits and outreach opportunities. The Dad's Army Museum and Diss Museum also enjoyed increased visits and the reasons for this are discussed in **Section 2.6**. Several museums in Cambridgeshire also reported an increase for this measure, such as Chatteris Museum, Prickwillow Engine Museum, Sedgwick Museum of Earth Sciences and Whittlesey Museum to name a few.

2.4 Outreach with children (all ages and school-age children)

There were 67,514 instances of children participating in museum outreach in the region for 2010/11, with the highest averages being recorded in Hertfordshire (2,221 instances per museum), Essex (1,567 instances per museum) and Suffolk (1,487 instances per museum) (**Table 2**). For school age children, the corresponding total for the region was 63,942, with the same counties recording the highest averages: Hertfordshire (2,067 instances per museum), Essex (1,935 instances per museum) and Suffolk (1,153 instances per museum) (**Table 2**). In fact, closer examination of the figures reveals an anomaly with the Suffolk total, which is higher for schools outreach than it is for all outreach with children, when it would be expected to be the opposite. This is because Chelmsford Museum & The Essex Regiment Museum has only provided figures for school age outreach.

Furthermore, child participation in museum outreach (a constant sample) witnessed a significant increase between 2009/10 and 2010/1, a rise of 25.7%, with a similar phenomenon occurring for school age outreach (a constant sample), which saw a boost of 18.3% (**Table 3b**). So despite 'in-reach' contacts with school age children decreasing (i.e. visits), work with these audiences taking place outside museums grew substantially. Many museums themselves note this difference, for example:

> Essex Police Museum: *"[Our visits are down because of the] recession! Clearly more schools were happy for us to visit them rather than pay for a coach and come to us! And the introduction of new online Engage Live school sessions [may have played a part]."*
>
> The Museum of Harlow: *"We believe that the current financial pressure on users coupled with cut backs on advertising and events is probably the main cause for the dip in figures. It is interesting to note that outreach (which is a cheaper way of accessing museum collections) is the only area to have increased."*

A large proportion of outreach figures for children of all ages and school age children can be attributed to a particular project run by Colchester & Ipswich Museums Service, which has caused a discrete peak in figures for 2010/11. This is discussed further in **Section 2.5** below.

Particular museums have seen a real boost in instances of outreach participation with school age children. St. Albans Museum for example has increased its provision which has resulted in its figures more than doubling (from 642 in 2009/10 to 1425 in 2010/11). The same can be observed for Bedfordshire Museum and Cecil Higgins Art Gallery whose numbers rose from 1705 to 3971 over the same period, because they were offering more outreach opportunities to account for reduced opening caused by redevelopment work.

2.5 Outreach with adults

Outreach with adults recorded 49,236 instances of participation for the East of England in 2010/11 (**Table 2**). Hertfordshire recorded the largest average at 1,022 instances per museum (attributed mainly to Letchworth Museum & Art Gallery, Mill Green Museum, Hertford Museum and Stevenage Museum). Overall, the region saw an increase of 6.7% for this measure, based on a constant sample, from 39,037 instances of adult outreach in 2009/10 to 41,657 instances in 2010/11 (**Table 3b**). Most counties however witnessed a reduction in adult outreach with only two counties going against this trend; Suffolk recorded a substantial 71% rise and Essex a 36.4% increase. This is almost entirely because of a Suffrage project, run by Colchester & Ipswich Museums Service, in partnership with Essex Libraries and Parliamentary Outreach, which has resulted in a significant, one year spike in outreach figures. Indeed, their adult outreach figure for 2010/11 (11,124 instances) is almost five times that for the previous year (1,922 instances). Furthermore, one other museum, the Longshop Museum in Suffolk, also recorded just over a 50% increase in adult outreach, from 160 in 2009/10 to 246 in 2010/11 because of 'extra Friends activities off site activities'.

2.6 Understanding patterns in audience figures

For a significant number of museums reporting a noticeable reduction in visitors, this was due to the general economic downturn and/or poor weather conditions over the summer but particularly last winter (2010/11) when the country experienced heavy snow over a prolonged period, for example:

> East Anglian Railway Museum: *"despite [a] mainly improved weather in early season, [there was a] definite downturn through [a] combination of bad summer weather and recession."*
>
> Southchurch Hall: *"Snow in winter 2010 disrupted important Christmas sessions."*
>
> Leighton Buzzard Railway: *"[A] combination of indifferent weather, declining level of discretionary spend and general feeling of living in straitened times."*

Some museums have also reported that they have had to reduce opening hours in general or were unable to open on specific dates and this has impacted negatively on visitor numbers, for example:

> Mundesley Maritime Museum : *"[The] museum [was] closed [on] Saturdays because of a lack of stewards."*
>
> Mincarlo : *"[We have had] fewer days open [and] fewer volunteers."*
>
> Suffolk Punch Heavy Horse Museum: *"[We were] unable to open [the] museum on the free "heritage" weekend when we usually get about 100 visitors."*
>
> Stevenage Museum: *"In March 2011 the Museum suffered major cutbacks, losing over half the staff. Opening hours were also cut from 6 days to 4. Between July and November 2011 we had no Education and Events person in post."*

This highlights just how dependent audience numbers can be on an investment in resources, a point that was raised in last year's report on the Benchmarking data.

A few museums pointed out that 2009/10 produced an unusually high peak in visitor numbers, perhaps because of a particularly popular exhibition or a special event or for outreach figures because a project has now come to an end, and that they have now dropped back to more typical levels:

> The Fitzwilliam Museum: *"2009/10 was a record high year for Fitzwilliam attendances, because of two very successful exhibitions, Endless Forms and Sargent Sickert Spencer and the Cambridge 800 and Darwin Festivals. This is reflected in all attendance and participation figures."*
>
> Kettle's Yard: *"The figures for the total number of adults that took part in outreach projects are lower for 2010-11 because two outreach projects run in the previous year had ended."*
>
> Imperial War Museum, Duxford: *"Outreach figures [are] lower in 2010/11 because [we are] no longer involved in [the] 'Partners in Time' project."*
>
> Hitchin Museum And Art Gallery: *"[We had an] extremely busy 'Dr Who' exhibition in [the] Summer [of] 2009 which brought in huge number of 1st time visitors from the area, and visitors from further afield. [The] public perception of [the] museum [is that it is] not operating as normal [which is] unfounded, due to much publicised (and mis-reported!) development plans."*

This last quote illustrates how important 'good' publicity is to museum audience figures. The following comments demonstrate how the opposite of many of the above mentioned factors will positively impact on visitor numbers, such as improved opening hours or the opening of new galleries as well as increased provision of staff or volunteer resources:

> Epping Forest District Museum: *"New gallery development and a focussed temporary exhibition programme have assisted in bringing in increased general visitors."*
>
> Stotfold Watermill and Nature Reserve: *"Increased publicity and marketing. Increased opening occasions, as more volunteers have been recruited."*

Specific events that occurred in 2010/11 also helped to boost audience numbers for some museums:

> Little Hall Museum: *"More special events were held in 2010/2011."*
>
> Dad's Army Museum Thetford: *"The statue of Captain Mainwaring unveiled in June 2010 increased the number of visitors to the museum."*
>
> Prickwillow Engine Museum: *"We held a ploughing festival in October 2010 which attracted a lot of visitors."*

Several museums have reported the benefits of targeted audience development work, for example improvements to or newly created websites, targeted exhibitions or an increase in partnership working:

> Woburn Heritage Centre Museum: *"Our website, set up in July 2010, has widened our audience. We have also seen more foreign visitors this summer."*

> Sedgwick Museum of Earth Sciences: *"The Museum's visitor figures have been increasing steadily over the last 10 years or so. This is due to several factors, Museum development projects have improved displays and also access for those with mobility problems. The Museum has also benefited from promotion both through working with other University of Cambridge museums and through extended Saturday opening and a series of family events funded by Cambridge City Council. It is likely that the current economic climate has also led to increased visitor figures since admission is free."*

It is interesting to note from this last point how the general economic climate may have benefitted some museums, such as those that offer free entry, despite some museums reporting above that it has negatively affected their audience numbers. There were also some charging museums that cited the positive outcome of the "staycation" effect, namely more numbers of local visitors who are holidaying closer to home to try to make savings.

It is also encouraging that particularly small museums, heavily staff by volunteers, are making efforts to build audiences, even when these aren't necessarily paying off:

> Norris Museum: "*more effort [has been] made by [the] committee to go into schools [and] more interesting talks [are being] held monthly."*

> Little Baddow History Centre: "*Although we have contacted schools personally in the locality to use the History Centre and have specifically asked them to certain exhibitions ... we have been very disappointed to have had no response or interest shown by the Schools. We have run a Discovery day for the last 2 years during half term which has been attended by children."*

2.7 Economic Impact

In 2010, the Association of Independent Museums (AIM) commissioned DC Research Associates to assess the economic value of the independent museum sector and as a result a report and toolkit were published later that year. The objectives of this research were to:

- Understand how and to what degree independent museums contribute value to local, regional and national economies.
- Produce benchmarks to gauge the economic value generated by different categories of independent museums and draw conclusions from them.
- Produce data that can provide the basis for further research work.

(AIM 2010: 1[3])

Evidence was collected from AIM members via survey and a number of museums were selected to act as case studies, based on the number of visitors per annum, the significance of tourism to the museum's local economy and whether the museum had employed staff or not. The toolkit that resulted provides museums with calculations that they can perform to demonstrate three economic impacts, (1) tourism impacts, (2) employment impacts, and (3) impacts of spend on goods and services, should they be collecting the necessary data on which to base these calculations. The

[3] AIM (2010). The Economic Value of the Independent Museum Sector, Association of Independent, Museums Final Report. DC Research. Available from www.aim-museums.co.uk.

guidance contains assumptions upon which the various calculations are founded, devised according to the data supplied by small, medium and large sized museums[4].

It should be noted that the toolkit was intended to be used by museums on an individual basis, to calculate these impacts for their museum alone. There are inherent issues with using the advised calculations on a regional basis as follows:

- Not all museums responding to Benchmarking are Independent museums - the 'assumptions' used in the toolkit to make the various calculations are based on averages (means and medians) compiled from independent museums – these assumptions may not be directly applicable to other types of museums, such as Local Authority, University or National museums.

- For Tourism Impacts, the calculations rely on museums having available the total number of adult visits in a given year and the proportions of these visits that can be classed as 'local', 'day' and 'overnight' visits. However, there were a number of potential problems identified with calculating this measure regionally:
  - Calculating totals for each group of museums that fall within the small, medium and large categories assumes that any one visitor is only visiting one museum, it does not account for double counting of individuals across several museums.
  - The proportion of day vs. local vs. overnight visitors will vary according to museum and ideally should be based on a museum's own visitor profile; using the averages calculated for small, medium and large sized museums is not particularly precise.
  - Many museums taking part in Benchmarking did not provide a count of their child visits, only the number of visits by school age children in organised groups. Anecdotal evidence suggests that this is because many museums do not separate out child visits from the total number of all visits.

- To calculate 'Employment Impacts', it is advisable to know the proportion of FTE staff that live outside the local authority area in which the museum is based, as well as apply a 'displacement ratio' based on how significant the museum is to the local visitor economy, whether this is moderate or low. This really needs to be done on a museum-by-museum basis.

- Impacts of Spend of Goods and Services: the necessary data required to calculate this measure as provided by the Benchmarking survey is not sufficiently robust to use.

Nevertheless, tourism impacts have been calculated for the region as a whole. In particular, tourism impacts for three 'case studies' are provided below that illustrate how economic impacts can best be articulated at museum level. The museums selected fall into the small, medium and large categories used by AIM's toolkit. Employment impacts are also calculated for the small museum (see below) as it was able to supply the necessary information.

[4] Small museums are classed as receiving 1 – 9,999 visits per annum, medium museums as receiving 10,000 – 49,000 visits per annum and large museums as receiving more than 50,000 visits per annum.

Tourism Impacts

Dragon Hall, Norfolk (small museum) ([1])		Total adult visits in 2010/11 were 4,160, which equates to ...	Spend per visit
Local Visits	47%	1,955	£42,036.80
Day Visits	40%	1,664	£71,535.36
Overnight visits	13%	541	£25,309.44
TOTAL gross visitor impacts in the local economy in 2010/11			**£138,881.60**

Longshop Museum, Suffolk (medium museum) ([2])		Total adult visits in 2010/11 were 10,396, which equates to ...	Spend per visit
Local Visits	19%	1,975	£42,467.66
Day Visits	36%	3,743	£160,892.65
Overnight visits	45%	4,678	£218,939.76
TOTAL gross visitor impacts in the local economy in 2010/11			**£422,300.07**

Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambs (large museum) ([3, 4])		Total adult visits in 2010/11 were 283,154, which equates to ...	Spend per visit
Local Visits	31%	87,778	£1,887,221.41
Day Visits	42%	118,925	£5,112,571.99
Overnight visits	27%	76,452	£3,577,933.94
TOTAL gross visitor impacts in the local economy in 2010/11			**£10,577,727.35**

The breakdown of visits by local, day and overnight was provided by:
([1]) The museum based on its own calculations
([2]) Analysis of postcode data by the author of this report
([3]) The assumptions set out in AIM's Economic Impact Toolkit as this information was not readily available for the museum itself
([4]) The Fitzwilliam is not an independent museum but there were no such museums responding to the survey that fell in the 'large museum' category. Care should therefore be taken with these figures as they are based on calculations more applicable to independent museums.

Employment Impacts

Dragon Hall	
No. of FTE non-project staff	3.0
No. of FTE project staff	0.8
Total FTE staff	3.8
Employment leakage ([5])	0%
Displacement value ([6])	25%
Multiplier ([7])	1.2
Total direct, indirect and induced employment value of:	**6.4 jobs**

([5]) A measure of the proportion of FTE staff that live outside the local authority area in which the museum is based. This information was kindly supplied by the museum additional to the survey data
([6]) A measure of employment and spend that takes into account how significant the museum is to its local visitor economy, the toolkit advises this should be 25% for museums of low or medium significance and 37.% for museums of major significance
([7]) A conservative sector specific multiplier to take into account employment and spend

3. Museum Resources (Financial, Staff and Volunteers)

As noted in the report on Benchmarking data for 2009/10, museum services responding to the survey provide data on their resources as service-wide figures, since a breakdown by museum is not possible. It should also be noted that financial information is provided by museums based on financial years that cover slightly different periods (this is reported on further in the accompanying report). Where comparisons are drawn below, for example between different years, this is based on different (not constant) samples, therefore the number of museums in each sample is always cited.

It should also be noted that not all financial information provided by museums is wholly reliable. Anecdotal evidence gathered through communication with various museums suggests that for certain measures in particular (e.g. total annual revenue costs, total annual income and total additional project income) there were differing interpretations as to what could and could not be counted, despite clear instructions in the guidance notes that were provided with the survey. Care should therefore be taken when using or reporting on these figures.

3.1 Revenue and Staff Costs

The total annual revenue costs reported by 106 museums for 2010/11 were £22.6 million. The mean figure was £213,319, in 2009/10 the comparable figure was £258,846 (for a sample of 93 museums). Total and mean revenue costs per county are reported in **Table 5**. The highest mean annual revenue costs are found in Norfolk (£320,005 per museum) and Essex (£313,304 per museum) and the lowest in Suffolk (£120,702). Revenue costs are also used to calculate 'cost per visit' which is reported on separately below.

Total staff costs reported by 72 museums in the region came to £20.2 million or £281,075 per museum (**Table 5**). In 2009/10, 63 museums provided information that indicated they spent nearly £14.3 million on staff costs. The comparable figure for 2008/09 is £14.1 million (based on a sample of 61 museums). The mean for both previous years works out around £230,000, which is therefore lower than that for 2010/11. The highest mean staff costs were recorded in Cambridgeshire (£582,753) and the lowest in Suffolk (£130,967).

3.2 Annual Income and Project Income

Total annual income (excluding time-specific project grants) for 108 museums came to £19.1 million, or a mean of £177,408 (**Table 5**). In 2009/10 comparable figures for 95 museums were £16.8 million (total) and £176,848 (mean). In 2008/09 the total annual income reported by 94 museums was £16.5 million. This demonstrates well how annual income on average has remained very stable over the last three years. The highest mean annual income was recorded for Cambridgeshire (£523,308) and the lowest for Bedfordshire (£60,170).

Income secured from time-specific project grants ('additional project income') totalled nearly £14.4 million for the region (based on a sample of 89 museums) (**Table 5**). In 2009/10 almost £11 million pounds (£10,925,195) was secured by 72 museums in the region. This therefore results in a fairly stable mean income per museum from project funding over the two years, of £151,739 in 2009/10 and £161,380 in 2010/11. Mean additional project income for 2010/11 was highest in Essex (£315,464) and lowest in Hertfordshire (£20,381). A significant proportion of the total for Essex comes from Chelmsford Museum & The Essex Regiment Museum which recorded project income of £5 million for 2010/11 as coming from "Friends, Renaissance, Regiment & Yeomanry Trust Appeal, and Local Authority capital funding."

County		Annual revenue costs	Staff costs	Annual income	Annual income - retail sales	Additional project income	No. of FTE paid staff (not project funded)	No. of FTE paid staff (project funded)	No. of volunteers	No. of volunteer hrs per annum
	Total	£1,141,561	£616,648	£300,849	£69,501	£358,166	15	2	356	36,109
	Average	£228,312	£308,324	£60,170	£13,900	£119,389	n/a	n/a	71	7,222
Beds	**n =**	5	2	5	5	3	1	1	5	5
	Total	£3,480,253	£9,324,041	£11,512,773	£636,079	£2,788,210	278	48	955	129,559
	Average	£158,193	£582,753	£523,308	£31,804	£139,411	15	5	55	7,144
Cambs	**n =**	22	16	22	20	20	18	9	19	19
	Total	£5,952,782	£3,514,590	£1,717,321	£206,609	£5,678,347	79	11	536	32,502
	Average	£313,304	£270,353	£90,385	£10,874	£315,464	6	1	30	1,912
Essex	**n =**	19	13	19	19	18	13	9	18	17
	Total	£1,780,215	£1,511,345	£1,241,621	£152,331	£244,575	59	5	459	48,636
	Average	£136,940	£151,135	£88,687	£12,694	£20,381	5	1	31	3,474
Herts	**n =**	13	10	14	12	12	12	4	15	14
	Total	£7,360,118	£3,568,197	£2,787,937	£370,219	£3,950,921	133	40	938	44,804
	Average	£320,005	£198,233	£121,215	£16,828	£219,496	7	3	41	3,200
Norfolk	**n =**	23	18	23	22	18	18	13	23	14
	Total	£2,896,840	£1,702,576	£1,599,541	£519,402	£1,342,620	90	17	1,325	100,485
	Average	£120,702	£130,967	£63,982	£22,583	£74,590	7	2	51	4,019
Suffolk	**n =**	24	13	25	23	18	12	9	26	25
	Total	£22,611,769	£20,237,397	£19,160,041	£1,954,141	£14,362,838	654	122	4,569	392,095
East of	**Average**	£213,318.58	£281,074.96	£177,407.79	£19,347.93	£161,380.20	8.8	2.7	43.1	4,171.2
England	**n =**	106	72	108	101	89	74	45	106	94

Table 5: Total and mean figures for museum resources (financial, staff and volunteers) by county and for the region as a whole.

These regional figures, for mean annual income and additional project income figures, suggest that East of England museums have enjoyed some stability over the last two years, despite the economic downturn. It is likely that the effects of this will not be visible until financial information for 2011/12 and 2012/13 is forthcoming.

A wide range of funding sources was accessed by museums and these are summarised below.

Local government grants and sponsorship
Many museums mentioned 'council funding' or support from their 'local authority' but those that were specifically cited included:

- Cambridgeshire County Council (including their Small Grant Fund)
- Fenland District Council
- Forest Heath District Council
- Hertford Town Council
- Norfolk County Council Arts Project Fund
- Suffolk County Council
- Swaffham Town Council

Central Government

- Extended Schools Funding (DfE)
- Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS)

Arts/Heritage Funding
Some of those included below can also be considered under the heading of 'charitable giving' but have been included here as they specifically relate to the heritage sector.

- Association of Independent Museums
- The Art Fund
- Arts and Humanities Research Council
- Big Lottery Fund (including Awards for All)
- British Academy (Humanities and Social Sciences funders)
- Creative and Cultural Skills Council
- English Heritage
- Essex Heritage Trust
- Heritage Lottery Fund
- Iran Heritage Foundation
- MLA (including Designation Development Fund, PRISM, Future Jobs Fund and Learning Links) and 'Renaissance' (including Museum Development Fund)
- National Museums (e.g. British Museum, the Victoria & Albert Museum Purchase Grant Fund, Tate)
- PINTA museum acquisition funding (Modern and Contemporary Latin American Art)
- Portable Antiquities

County level museum funding / partnerships:

- Association for Suffolk Museums (AfSM)
- Herts Museum Funding
- Museums in Essex Committee (MIEC)

University grants:

- Santander Universities
- Suffolk University

- University of Cambridge

European Funding:

- Interreg Programme (2seas)
- Fens Adventurers Rural Development Programme (a Local Action Group which distribute EU financial support)

Charitable Giving

A large proportion of museums mentioned funding from their Museum Friends or Society as well as local history or local charities, ‘private sponsorship’, ‘donations’ and ‘legacies’. Specifically noted were the following sources of charitable trusts or funds:

- Askew Charitable Trust
- Elephant Trust
- ERANDA Foundation
- Esmée Fairbairn
- Fitzwilliam Museum Development Trust
- Gatsby Charitable Foundation
- Geoffrey Watling Charity
- Hendley Trust
- Henry Moore Foundation
- Hervey Benham Trust
- Heveningham Hall Trust
- Hitchin Historical Society
- Home of Horseracing Trust
- HSBC Charity
- Isaac Netwon Trust
- Mersea Island Lions
- Monument Trust
- National Manuscripts Conservation Trust
- National Trust
- Newton Trust
- Norfolk and Suffolk Broads Charitable Trust
- Paul Hamlyn Foundation
- Regiment & Yeomanry Trust Appeal
- Rotary Club
- St Albans Museums & Galleries Trust
- Suffolk Horse Society
- The Masonic Lodge
- The Pilgrim Trust
- Thriplow Charitable Trust
- Wolfson Trust

Other funding sources:

- Broads Authority
- Comic Relief
- Cory Environmental (a large waste disposal company)
- Skills Funding Agency

3.3 Income from retail spend

Nearly £2 million worth of income (£1,954,141) was secured by 91 museums from retail spend (**Table 5**). This measure is not available for either 2009/10 or 2008/09 as it was not included in the survey previously. Cambridgeshire recorded the highest mean retail spend this year (£31,804) and Essex the lowest (£10,874). This measure is used to calculate the retail spend per visit, reported on separately below.

3.4 Paid staff

There were 74 museums that provided information on the number of FTE paid staff (not project funded), for which the total came to 654 members of staff or 8.8 per museum. In 2009/10 the mean reported figure was 5.3, i.e. slightly lower.

Furthermore, 45 museums also recorded that they employed a total of 122 FTE project funded paid staff. No comparison is drawn with 2009/10 as the data for that year was suspected to be incomplete.

3.5 Volunteers

In 2010/11 a total of 4,569 volunteers were recorded as working in 106 museums, on average this equates to 43.1 volunteers per museum. In 2009/10 and 2008/09 the comparable mean figures per museum were respectively 42.5 volunteers and 51 volunteers.

Furthermore, 94 museums indicated that their volunteers had devoted a total of 392,095 hours, or 4,171 hours per museum. In 2009/10 the comparable mean was 5,305 hours per museum and in 2008/09 it was 3,472 hours per museum.

Based on the same guidance from Volunteer England that has been used in previous Benchmarking reports, it is possible to assign a financial value to the work carried out by volunteers. In this instance, 392,095 hours equates to a substantial **£3.6 million invested in museums** in the East of England in 2010/11[5]. This figure is likely to be an underestimate of the actual total, since there are more regional museums being supported by volunteers than were counted by this survey. Norfolk Museums & Archaeology Service, one of the largest museum services in the region, also did not provide the total number of hours given by volunteers and so their figures may add substantially to the financial investment cited above.

3.6 Visits per hour

Visits per hour ranged from 0.4 to 171.7 (although 10 museums out of the total 116 museums did not supply their total opening hours and so were not included in this calculation). This large range results from comparing museums that vary significantly, from small independent museums up to large museum services and national museums for example. It is more useful to consider the mean number of visits per hour which is 20.6 (for 106 museums). In 2009/10 the comparable mean was 15.5 (for 103 museums) and the previous year to that it was 15.3 visits per hour (for 101 museums).

---

[5] The exact figure is £3,615,118. Based on advice from Volunteer England, when working out an hourly rate it is best to take a value between the national minimum wage (£5.93 for workers over 21 from October 2010) and the median hourly wage (£12.50 in April 2010, Office for National Statistics). In this instance, the hourly rate was therefore taken to be £9.22.

So the figure is higher this year than it has been in recent years, although not significantly so. It is likely that this is being inflated by the increased number of museum services (i.e. larger museums) responding to the survey this year.

3.7 Cost per visit

The calculated cost per visit ranged from £0.08 per visit (Lavenham Guildhall Museum) to £258.38 (Dacorum Heritage Trust), based on a sample of 91 museums. The average cost per visit was £11.04, compared with £8.06 for 2009/10 (a sample of 95 museums). Cost per visit is worked out using total annual revenue costs, a measure that has proved problematic for a number of years as museums can interpret the definition of this term differently, and include varying costs under this heading. It is suspected, for example, that the cost per visit for Dacorum Heritage Trust may be an artificially inflated figure. 'Cost per visit' should therefore be used with care as it is not a wholly reliable way to compare museums.

3.8 Retail spend per visit

Retail spend per visit was calculated as being between less than £0.01 per visit (Lavenham Guildhall Museum) and £22.15 per visit (National Horseracing Museum), with the mean being £1.18 (based on 86 museums). Total retail spend is a new measure for 2010/11, therefore no historic data exists with which to make a comparison.

4. Museum Collections

Only two questions were included in the survey this year that relate specifically to museum collections. The first, which records the number of objects in a museum's collections, has been used for a number of years. As it uses pre-defined categories of answer ('Under 1,000', '1,001-5,000', '5,001-50,000' etc.) it is hard to make any assessment of changes in collection size from year to year, as museums may have made new acquisitions but continue to fall in the same category. Furthermore, national data on collection size uses different pre-defined categories that are not wholly comparable to those given here, so this means that any discussion of collection size in the East of England cannot be easily placed in context.

The second measure, which records visits by different specialists, has been developed from previous years to include a wider range of professional specialists.

4.1 Number of objects in museum collections

The majority of museums in the region fall into the first three categories, these are 'Under 1,000 objects', '1,001-5,000 objects' and '5,001-50,000 objects' (**Table 6**) which reflects the large number of small and medium sized museums in the region.

No. of objects in collection	Beds	Cambs	Essex	Herts	Norfolk	Suffolk	East of England
Under 1,000	3	5	3	1	3	5	20 (22%)
1,001-5,000	1	2	2	2	9	5	21 (23%)
5,001-50,000		12	5	6	2	5	30 (33%)
50,001-250,000	1	2	3	3	0	2	11 (12%)[(2)]
Over 250,000		3	1	3	1	0 [(1)]	8 (9%) [(3)]

Table 6: Number of museums or museum services that fall into each category for the number of objects in their collections. Museum services have each been counted as one entity.
[(1)] Ipswich Museum and Christchurch Mansion are not counted here but included under the total for CIMS in Essex; [(2)] Includes four museum services which comprise a total of 10 museums that responded to the survey; [(3)] Includes two museum services which comprise a total of 15 museums that responded to the survey.

4.2 Visits by different specialists

Museums in the East of England appear to have benefitted from a wide range of professional advice in 2010/11 (**Table 7**). Support from professional conservators seems to have been particularly strong, with 75% of museums reporting that they have received a visit from one. Many museums also report visits by Museum Development Officers (58% across the region, although this figure would could be higher if Essex still had such a post in operation). Museums also seem to be making good use of other available support, with nearly half of them (45%) reporting that they had received advice from other sources. This covered a wide range of types, not all of which can be easily summarised here, but the more commonly given answers included advice on crime prevention and security, fire safety, display, marketing, curatorial issues, governance and funding. SHARE was specifically mentioned several times.

		(a) An intruder detection system is in place	(b) We have had a visit from a Museum Development Officer in the last 12 months	(c) We have had a visit from a Curatorial Adviser in the last 12 months	(d) We have had a visit from a professional conservator in the last 12 months	(e) We have had a visit from the National Security Advisor in the last 5 years	(f) We have received other professional advice in the last 12 months which is not listed here
Bedfordshire	**Total**	4	0	4	5	1	2
	%	80%	0% (1)	80%	100%	20%	40%
Cambridgeshire	**Total**	17	19	9	23	7	11
	%	71%	79%	38%	96%	29%	46%
Essex	**Total**	15	5	5	13	3	8
	%	79%	26% (2)	26%	68%	16%	42%
Hertfordshire	**Total**	17	8	7	15	9	8
	%	100%	47%	41%	88%	53%	47%
Norfolk	**Total**	18	19	12	15	7	9
	%	75%	79%	50%	63%	29%	38%
Suffolk	**Total**	19	16	16	16	4	14
	%	70%	59%	59%	59%	15%	52%
East of England	**Total**	**90**	**67**	**53**	**87**	**31**	**52**
	%	78%	58%	46%	75%	27%	45%

Table 7: Summary of visits by specialists to museums, by county and region.

(1) Bedfordshire does not have a Museum Development Officer

(2) Essex has been without a Museum Development Officer in 2010/11

Appendices

Appendix 1: Proportions of Audience Figures that are 'Actual'

The proportion of 2010/11 audience figures that can be attributed as being actual counts is very high for total visits, visits by children and visits by school age children (Table 'a') and compares well with the percentages for last year (Table 'b'). However, this is lower for the outreach figures – at just over half for instances of outreach participation with children, school age children and adults. In the latter two instances, the percentage of the overall total for the region that has come from an actual count is noticeably lower than the corresponding percentages for last year.

(a) 2010/11	Total Visits	Visits by children	Visits by school age children in organised groups	Instances of outreach participation, children	Instances of outreach participation, school age children	Instances of outreach participation, adults
Total reported	3,006,217	656,046	339,225	67,514	70,577	49,236
Total that are actual	2,712,613	568,010	322,796	34,476	40,164	26,773
% that are actual	90%	87%	95%	51%	57%	54%

(b) 2009/10	Total Visits	Visits by children	Visits by school age children in organised groups	Instances of outreach participation, children	Instances of outreach participation, school age children	Instances of outreach participation, adults
Total reported	2,427,724	Not collected	177,183	Not collected	73,797	42,033
Total that are actual	2,295,821		169,305		48,754	31,777
% that are actual	94.6%		95.6%		66.1%	75.6%