



# Evaluation Report:

# The Clockwork Garden

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*Event and Exhibition Interns*



*This word cloud is made up of comments from the guest book; the larger words are those that appear most frequently.*

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## **Abbreviations Used**

RFQ	Request For Question
NT	National Trust
HoFT	House of Fairy Tales
CG	Clockwork Garden
VE Survey	Visitor Enjoyment Survey
SI	Supporter Intelligence
MI Dashboard	Management Information Dashboard

## **Executive Summary**

The Clockwork Garden was Quarry Bank's 2016 summer programme, which ran from 30th April to 11th September. Quarry Bank sought to use an external company and the House of Fairy Tales (HoFT), an external artist-led company, were chosen to curate the exhibition. The brief was to create a physical exhibition and accompanying activities, which would be fun and creative, and promote and enhance Quarry Bank's 'Spirit of Place', which involves a unique combination of formal and informal gardens and industrial heritage. The intended audience was families with primary school age children, but modern art installations were also to be provided as a source of interest for older visitors.

The main feature of the programme was an indoor exhibition which provided a range of creative, imaginative and interactive activities, based around the 'story' devised by HoFT. There was also a complementary garden trail, designed by HoFT, and a second, under-5s trail, devised by Quarry Bank. The story of the exhibition was also presented to Quarry Bank's two local partner schools in a series of workshops delivered by HoFT. The aim of these was to provide cultural enrichment for the children, and to generate outputs that went on to feature in the main Clockwork Garden exhibition.

Quarry Bank also ran a launch event with House of Fairy Tales and a programme of themed holiday events.

An evaluation was conducted to assess the extent to which the objectives of the exhibition were met. Methodologies included direct evaluation from visitor surveys of parents and children as well as interviews carried out with the collaborating schools and the volunteer invigilators who were present in the exhibition across the period. A separate questionnaire was used for the garden trails. Indirect evaluation was also used by means of comments left in guest books and some social media platforms, and the Trust's general visitor engagement surveys.

This report presents the findings of the evaluation conducted on the Clockwork Garden programme. It concludes that the majority of the project's objectives were met; visitor numbers increased, the event proved extremely popular with the target audience of families, and over 90% stated that they would plan a return visit to Quarry Bank and recommend it to others based on their experience of the Clockwork Garden.

Recommendations are included to improve marketing to targeted postcode areas, enhance the physical layout of installations to maximise their impact, and to consider the designs of materials provided for visitor use.

## **1. Introduction**

The Clockwork Garden (CG) was Quarry Bank's summer programme in 2016, and ran from 30<sup>th</sup> April 2016-11<sup>th</sup> September. It was designed and installed by House of Fairy Tales (HoFT), an external artist led company, in accordance with Quarry Bank's Spirit of Place. The main aspect was the exhibition, which included many creative, imaginative and interactive aspects to appeal to family audiences. There was also a complementary garden trail, designed by HoFT, and a second, under-5s trail, which was designed by Quarry Bank.

In terms of visitor numbers, the exhibition was an undoubted success. During the period of 30<sup>th</sup> April to 11<sup>th</sup> September in 2015, Quarry Bank received 88,618 visitors. In 2016, during the course of the exhibition, there were 101,599 visitors to the property, an increase of 12,981 visitors, or 15%.

This evaluation report is designed to assess the extent to which the aims and objectives set out by Quarry Bank in the Request For Quotation (RFQ) Summer Programme were achieved. These aims informed how we conducted our research and structure of this report.

The key aim and objectives for this exhibition were:

### **Aim:**

To attract a broad family audience and to give them an unforgettable experience of Quarry Bank that is personal, creative, and surprising.

### **Objectives:**

- Attract a family audience and encourage repeat visits.
- Present a new and unexpected story and experience of Quarry Bank.
- Enable visitors to have a creative, stimulating, playful and immersive experience.
- Broaden and deepen our relationship with our local communities.
- Encourage visitors around the site and to discover hidden or little known spaces.
- Develop our on-site team and their creative and audience focussed approach.

These objectives create the structure of the report and for each there is a discussion of findings and a selection of recommendations. More detailed recommendations can be found on page 4 of this report.

## **2. Methodology**

The evaluation programme has examined the Clockwork Garden experience, from the exhibition itself through to the accompanying garden trail. It has utilised both direct and indirect methods in order to achieve the most convincing, diverse and robust outcomes to assist with the planning of future projects.

### Direct Evaluation Methods

Key forms of direct evaluation were visitor surveys as well as interviews carried out with the collaborating schools and the volunteer invigilators who were present in the exhibition across the period.

To achieve a robust outcome, 300 surveys were carried out – 195 with adults in the exhibition, 98 with children in the exhibition and 17 adult surveys on the garden trail<sup>1</sup>. Surveys were conducted from 20<sup>th</sup> July - 27<sup>th</sup> August 2016. This period was chosen as it targeted the busiest period of the summer holidays when the highest visitor numbers were expected.

The questionnaire (Appendix 6.2) was made up of mainly checklist style questions for ease and speed for visitors.

The RFQ procurement document explained that while Quarry Bank appeals to all ages ‘we would like a summer programme which is aimed specifically at family groups’. For this reason, surveys were designed and surveyors were briefed to focus on visitors from this audience segment. There was an awareness that parents might not want to be distracted for too long if they had children with them and hence a children’s survey was also designed (Appendix 6.3). This included questions about connection, enjoyment and perceptions of the exhibition and gardens. The questions were very straightforward and included pictures to enhance engagement.

A third questionnaire was attached to the garden trails in order to evaluate the success of getting visitors to explore the gardens. As these were optional and carried out independently, only 17 were returned. This data did feed into the main questionnaire and supported the wider findings of complexity and understanding of the overarching story.

### Indirect Evaluation Methods

The comments left in guest books, invigilator notes, VE surveys, the reverse of the children’s drawings and on some social media platforms were collated and analysed using a selection of keywords (highlighted on the following page) drawn from the RFQ’s ‘Big Idea’:

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<sup>1</sup> Using visitor figures from 2015 as a baseline, the website ‘Survey Monkey’ recommended that to achieve a margin of error below 7%, there would need to be 195 visitors surveyed.

This summer programme will be the centrepiece of our programme: - it will engage our audiences with the **fun** and **adventure**, the personal **memories** and connections, the **inspiration** and awe and the simple pleasure of being in the **garden**.

Aim: To attract a broad **family** audience and to give them an unforgettable experience of Quarry Bank that is personal, **creative, and surprising**.

In addition, comments which referred to **the trail, interactives, the story, learning** and **likelihood to return** were analysed.

While some comments directly referenced the ages of group members, there is a limit to how much can be learnt from these with regard to audience demographics. They are more useful for the insight provided into the lasting impressions of visitors who identify whether they just had fun, or whether they made things as families or learnt something new.

Other metrics were used, such as VE surveys and Supporter Intelligence, to build a bigger picture of the numbers and types of visitors. Comparisons were drawn between the CG and the previous year's Explorer Family targeted exhibition, 'Apprentice Adventure' to provide baselines for evaluation.

The majority of social media feedback has been excluded (Facebook, Twitter etc.) as there is a fairly limited usage from our target audience and greater evaluation can be formed through other methods. We have, however, incorporated some comments from Trip Advisor which specifically mention the Clockwork Garden. These comments are not considered an unbiased review given the nature of Trip Advisor, but have been used to feed into insights gained from more reliable sources.

Other sources of information used include conversations had with volunteers who had worked in the exhibition throughout the period it was running, and an interview with a teacher from Crossacres School.

The findings feed into a list of recommendations which can be found at the end of this report (page 43).

### **3. Findings**

### **3.1. Objective 1: Attract a family audience and encourage repeat visits**

#### **Aims:**

- **Family audience**
  - We want this programme to appeal very directly to family groups, but with elements that will attract and intrigue all members of the family. It needs to have elements that will cross a broad range of ages in a family that looks for hands on activities, fun and unusual ideas and enjoys being in the outdoors.
  - Quarry Bank appeals to visitors of all ages and motivations. We would like a summer programme which is aimed specifically at family groups but that could also work alongside and enrich the visit for other visitors as well.
- **Repeat visits**
  - Encouraging repeat visit is a secondary aim of the programme.
  - Attract a family audience and encourage repeat visits.

#### **Summary of findings:**

The above objective was evaluated via data gathered from exhibition surveys, Supporter Intelligence, and comments from the guestbook, VE survey and social media.

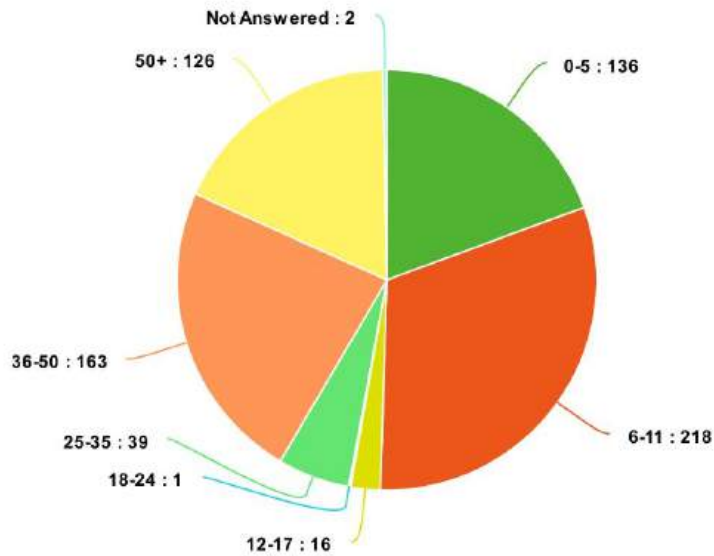
The exhibition was highly popular with both children and adults within family units – with many comments highlighting specifically the cross-generational appeal of the Clockwork Garden – particularly from the Explorer Family audience segment. The National Trust website was the most common way in which people had heard of the exhibition prior to visiting. 5% of respondents to the visitor survey were new visitors to the property, and 1% of those said that they would return to Quarry Bank based on their experience of the Clockwork Garden, and 97% said they would recommend the property to others.

#### **Detailed findings:**

##### **Family Audience**

The pie chart on the following page was created using the data from visitor surveys. While the 6-11 age range made up the largest number of child visitors, the 0-5 range was not much smaller, demonstrating it was popular with both under-11 categories. In terms of adult visitors, the largest number came from the 36-50 category, followed by the 50+. This correlates with the target audience being young children accompanied either by parents, grandparents or both.





Far fewer were the number of visitors aged 12-17 and 18-24. However, they were not a target of the exhibition, and 18-24 is a category that has a traditionally low visitor profile at the property.

The popularity of the exhibit with both children and adults within a family was a recurring theme in comments in the guest book and visitor survey:

*'Loved the garden, the staff were brilliant and it was very interactive for all ages.'*

Helen and Leo  
(Guest book)

*'Lovely and imaginative setting. All of us 10 months to 37 years made something.'*

Family  
(Exhibition Survey)

*'Very amusing and interactive! Great for "grown-ups" as well as children, very broad age spectrum!'*

(Guest book)

*'Absolutely wonderful! Great, fun and educational. Something for all ages – we were a group aged 18 months – 68 years!'*

Anne aged 60  
(Guest book)

*'Quarry Bank has something for all ages. The Clockwork Garden exhibition has interaction for both children and adults alike.'*

rhodes120  
(Trip Advisor)

### **Target Audience Segments**

The target audience segments were primarily Explorer Families and Kids First Families, given the family-oriented nature of a summer exhibition. However, it was of equal importance that any such exhibition did not alienate other audience segments, primarily Curious Minds, who are one of Quarry Bank's key existing visitor groups.

The exhibition was successful in this with the majority of visitors surveyed being children under 11, and adults over 36. Far fewer visitors were teenagers and young adults between the ages of 12-24. While this age group was not the target of the exhibition, the inclusion of contemporary art was partly designed to provide interest and stimulation for older visitors. However, the art was not overly successful in this regard (more on this on page 26), and in the future there could be more provided in order to cater for this age group.

Supporter Intelligence data for June-August was compared between 2015 and 2016, looking at the number of family membership visits. This year does demonstrate an increase of family visits during this period, from an average of 27% in 2015 to 33% in 2016. It is possible to suggest that this increase is a result of the family-oriented focus of the Clockwork Garden exhibition, though this is not conclusive.

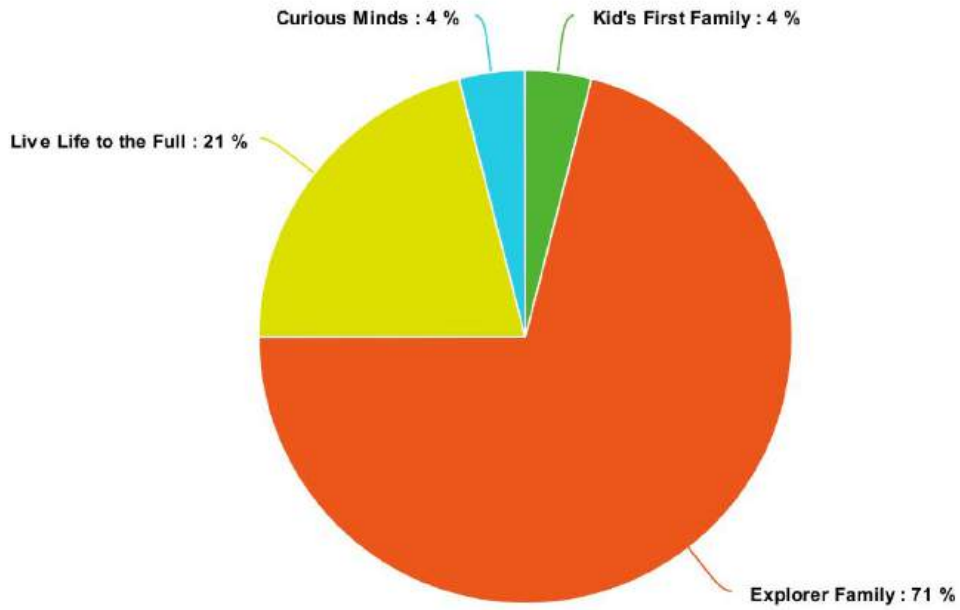
Using comments from the VE survey made specifically by Explorer Family visitors during the time the Clockwork Garden was open, there was an overwhelming amount of positive feedback. Comments include:

*'The activities for the children, the clockwork garden, were wonderful and the kids really loved it. They got to do a lot of things which kept them entertained, unfortunately the rain was too heavy to carry on the activity outside but we will be back to visit the gardens again.'*

Explorer Family – 02/05/16  
(VE Survey)

*'Mechanical Seed display was great. Newly opened areas of garden look interesting, looking forward to more to come.'*

Explorer Family – 15/06/16  
(VE Survey)

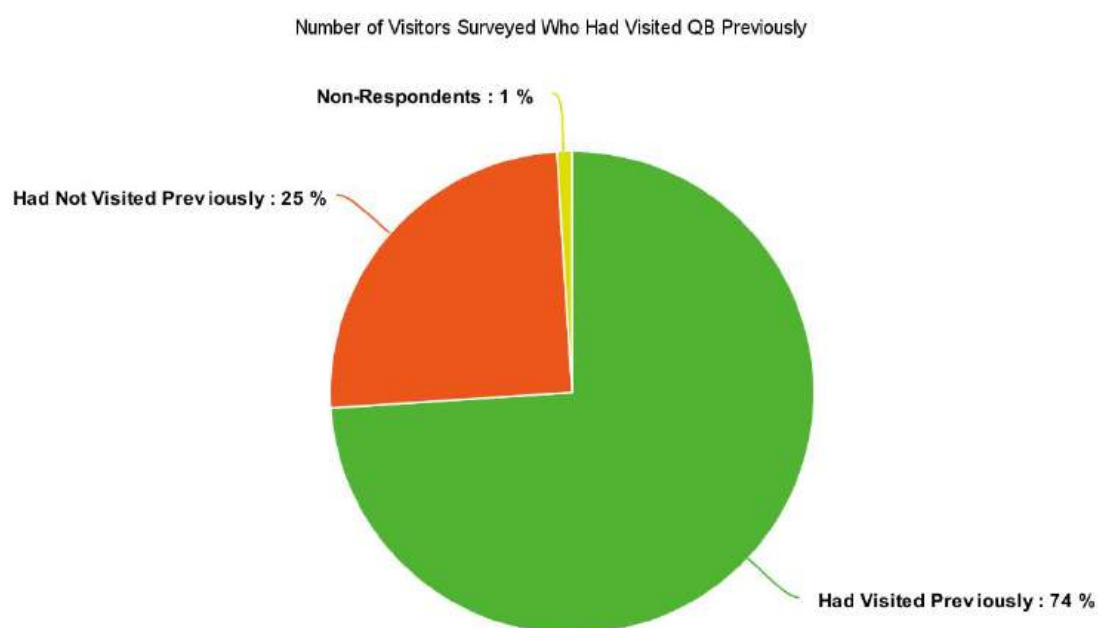


There were also far more respondents from Explorer Families than Kid's First Family – which was expected due to the demographic of visitors to this site. The breakdown of VE survey respondents (24 in total) who mentioned the Clockwork Garden from each segment is in the pie chart above.

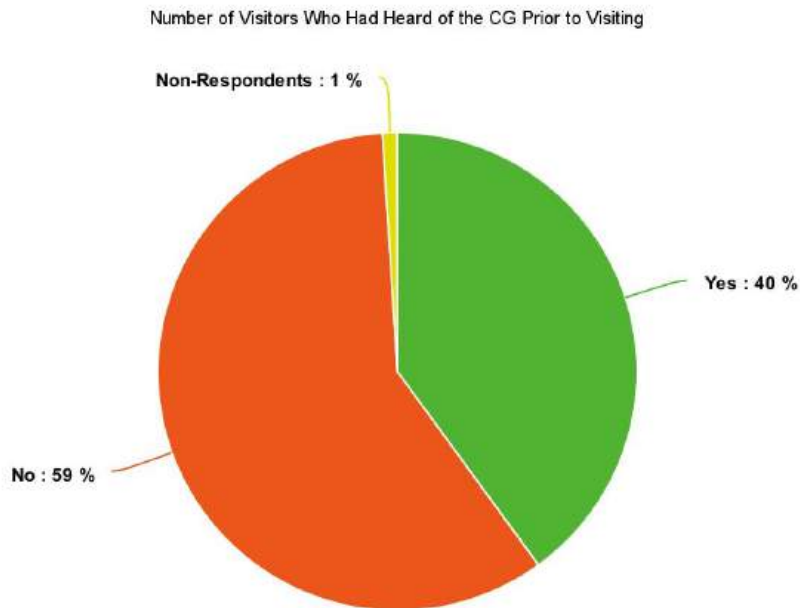
The exhibition therefore met its expectations in regards to appealing to family groups, specifically Explorer Families. It was less successful in attracting the attention of older visitors when not accompanied by children, specifically Curious Minds.

## **Repeat Visits**

The first two exhibition survey questions (see Appendix 6.2) addressed whether or not the respondent had visited Quarry Bank before, and if they had heard of the Clockwork Garden prior to their visit. The aim of this was to discover whether or not the exhibit was successful in attracting new visitors to the property. From the chart below, it is clear to see that a quarter of those surveyed were new visitors to Quarry Bank. Of the 25% who had not been to the property before, the majority (80%) had not heard of the Clockwork Garden before their visit. Of the encouraging 20% that had, however, the overwhelming number – 67% – heard about it through the website. 23% found out about the exhibition through word of mouth, and 10% via the National Trust app.



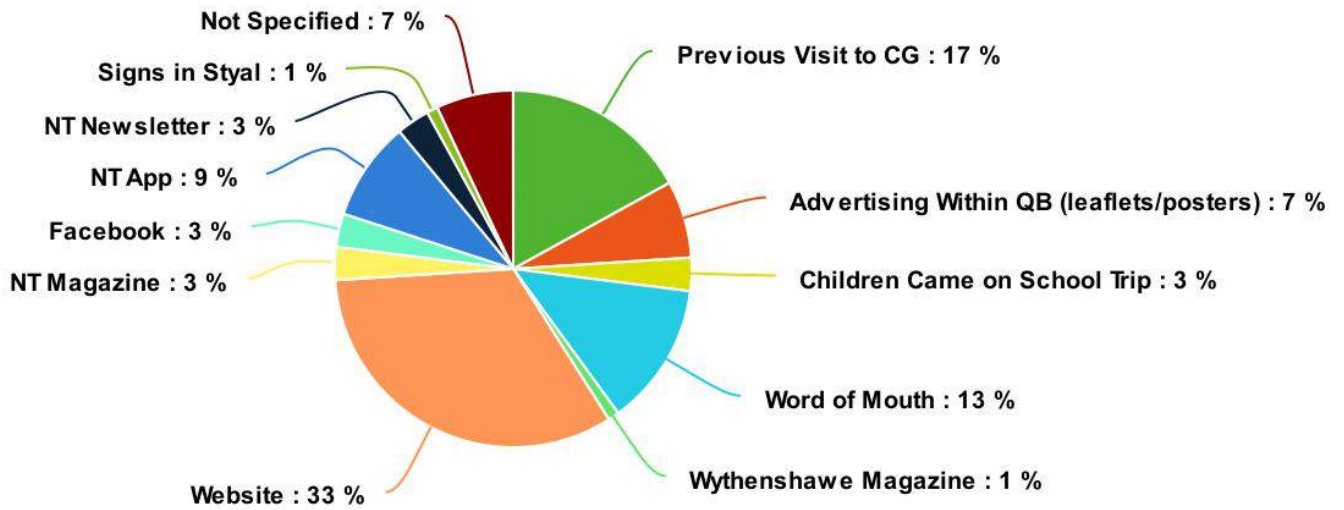
This small selection of data is substantiated by the larger sample from the rest of the survey respondents, recorded on the following page as to whether or not they had visited the property previously:



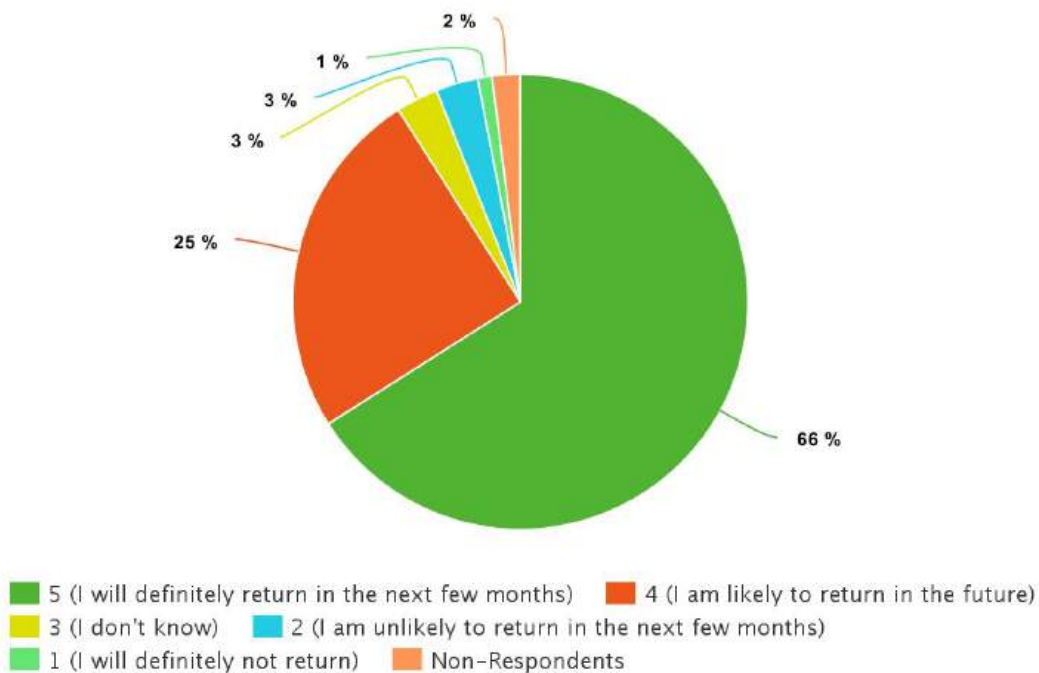
The majority of respondents had not heard of the Clockwork Garden prior to visiting, as demonstrated in the pie chart above. However, this is an improvement on the previous year's 'Apprentice Adventure' exhibition, in which 65% of people had not heard of the exhibition prior to visiting. This is actually a very positive trend as we move to raise the profile of our programmes and use them as an 'attractor'.

Of those who had, the majority heard about it through the National Trust website (see pie chart overleaf), followed by previous visits to the property and word of mouth. Of the number of visitors who selected previous visits, many also commented that they had visited the exhibition itself previously. One visitor commented that, while they did find out about it from the website, the information on the website was not clear about what exactly to expect. Despite this, it is evident that the website was the most successful form of communication about the CG.

Ways in Which Visitors Surveyed Had Heard of the CG Prior to Visiting



Later in the survey, visitors were asked how likely they were to return and recommend Quarry Bank as a property, based on their experience of the Clockwork Garden (see Appendix 6.2). Using the data (presented in the pie chart below) from question 8, it is clear that the overwhelming majority (91%) of respondents would return to Quarry Bank based on their experience of the Clockwork Garden.

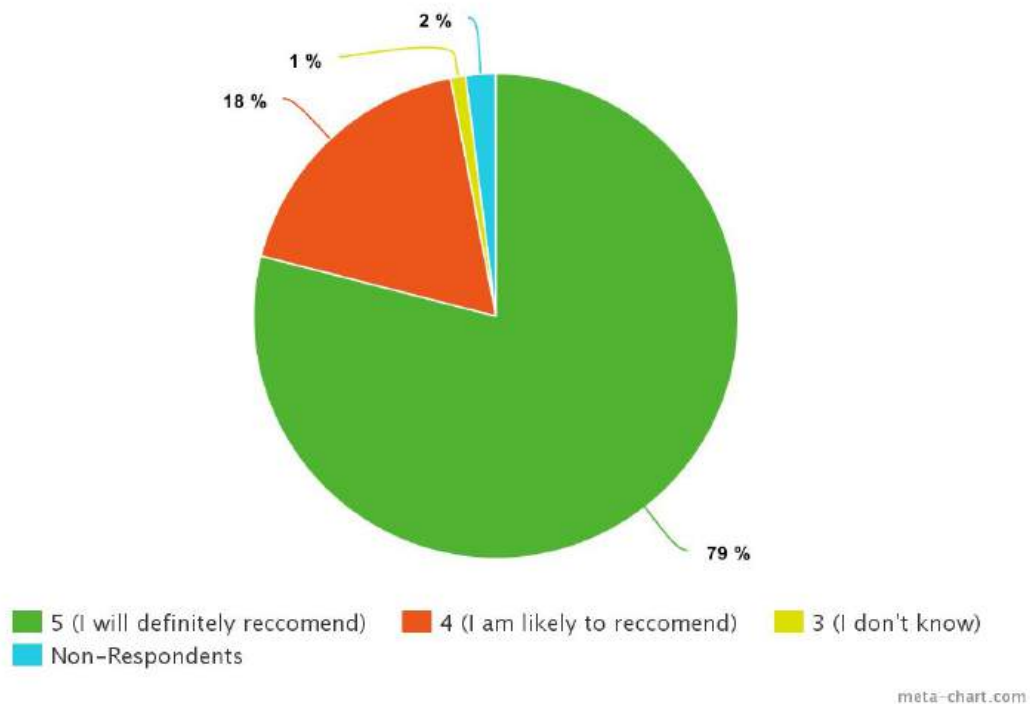


meta-chart.com

The data for recommendations (see pie chart below) was even more positive, with 97% of respondents saying they would, or were likely to, recommend Quarry Bank based on their experience of the Clockwork Garden. No one gave a 2 or 1 for recommendations. Of the two respondents who selected 3, both were on the trail survey, and one included a comment:

*'It is far too complicated – needs simpler words and less clues. Even the adults struggled to understand it!'*

(Trail Survey)



Of the respondents, 11 selected that they would definitely return (5), but were only likely to recommend (4). Several left comments explaining this:

*'The trail was great and we enjoyed that although I'm not sure that my children totally understood the story. The exhibit in the mill was amazing to look at when you entered but it was quite a small space and [the children] didn't really know what to do in there – definitely felt like they were a little old [three children between 6-11] for this part of the trail'*

(Exhibition Survey)

*'Children a little young for it [two children between 0-5]. Think better for slightly older ones.'*

(Exhibition Survey)

*'Disappointed about the trail as we have already been around the garden and did not have the trail offered to us.'*

(Exhibition Survey)

*'Didn't understand it [the trail] as did it before coming into the exhibit and learning about the story.'*

(Exhibition Survey)

As demonstrated, the majority of respondents would both recommend and return to the property.

The data indicating high repeat visits is backed up by comments from exhibition volunteers who spoke to visitors and observed general visitor trends. Towards the end of the exhibition, volunteers noticed many repeat visitors who wanted to see the Clockwork Garden again before it finished. Similarly, as the exhibition went on, there were a number of remarks that visitors had visited the exhibition previously. One volunteer recalled a young girl who came back four times; her father did not take her through the rest of the mill, and just brought her to the CG.

This is supported by several guestbook comments:

*'Fantastic. We'll be back several times this summer to make sure we enjoy it all.'*

The Everetts, Handforth  
(Guestbook)

*'I really wanted to see the mill but can't get the kids out of the Clockwork Garden. GRRR. Looks like we'll have to come back!'*

The Collagan Family, Didsbury  
(Guestbook)

*'I absolutely loved it and will definitely come again.'*

Molly  
(Guestbook)

Although there were a number of respondents who said they were unlikely to return, these were mostly visitors who had come from far away. The overwhelming number who would recommend the property indicates that, even if a visitor could not return to the property they still enjoyed the exhibit enough to recommend it.



### 3.2. Objective 2: Present a new and unexpected story and experience of Quarry Bank

#### Findings:

This objective was analysed using data from the visitor survey, comments from the guestbook, TripAdvisor and volunteers, and property VE scores.

The story of the Clockwork Garden certainly hits the brief for ‘fun’ and ‘creativity’ (as noted by guestbook comments), and visitors were overwhelmingly delighted with their experience. The volunteers interviewed agreed that families were drawn to the activities within the exhibition and, as these were not dependent upon the story, the story itself faded into the background. The theme enhanced the design and the intrigue but was ultimately lost on the majority of visitors with collated data suggesting that the story might have been too complicated to be fully understood by the majority of visitors. Some noted that volunteers had explained the story to them – this is positive objective **3.6 Develop our on-site team and their creative and audience focussed approach** (see page 40) but suggests that if visitors did not manage to talk with a volunteer they were left confused.

‘The story is very complicated and should be simpler’

(Visitor Survey)

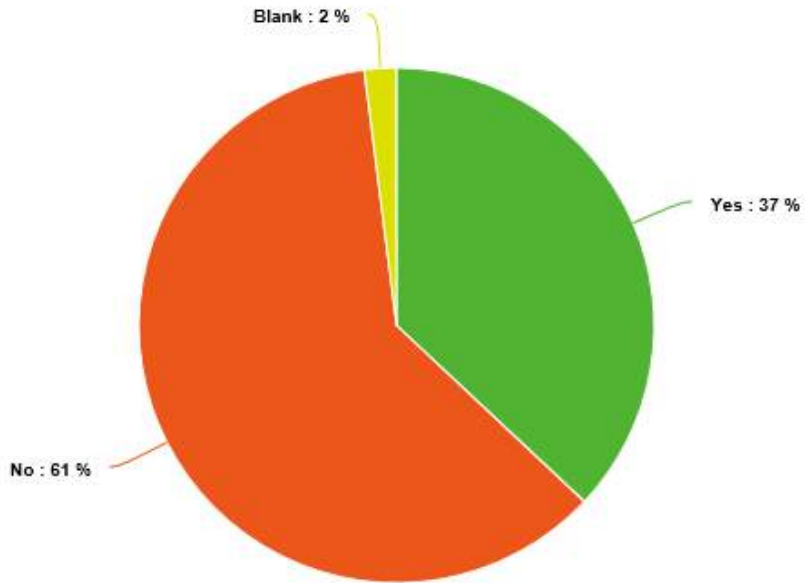
‘Thank you Sandra – you explained the exhibition very well for the little ones.’

(Guest book)

‘Thank you for explaining your lovely story.’

Grandad and Grandma Moores,  
(Guest book)

Users of the trail commented on its complexity and their inability to understand the story and the language – the full findings of this can be found on page 37. The pie chart on the following page presents the results of question 5 of the visitor survey (Appendix 6.2): ‘Have you read the story behind the Clockwork Garden?’. The results from which demonstrate the lack of awareness for the story behind the exhibition.



In terms of presenting a new and unexpected story and experience of Quarry Bank, the data gathered does indicate that visitors did not engage with the story of the CG.

However, VE scores for the 'story' of Quarry Bank as a whole increased from 78% between January and April, to 84% during the period of the exhibition. Despite the fact that visitors to the exhibition did not engage with the story of the Clockwork Garden, this appears to have not affected their understanding of the site more generally.

### **3.3. Objective 3: Enable visitors to have a creative, stimulating, playful and immersive experience**

#### **Aims:**

- To attract a broad family audience and to give them an unforgettable experience of Quarry Bank that is personal, creative, and surprising.
- We want the exhibition to have real wow factor, to be playful and hands-on for all ages.
- We would like an experience that could be different for each visitor, where they make their own personal connections and leave behind some trace of their own experience.

#### **Summary of findings:**

The above objective was evaluated through visitor surveys, guestbook analysis and VE comments, all of which were overwhelmingly positive. There were several notable trends in terms of areas of engagement for various age groups and, in line with the National Trust Audience Insight recommendations, Explorer Families enjoyed being able to tailor their experience to their own preferences. The majority of those interviewed cited creativity as their main area of enjoyment and engagement with under-fives specifically drawn to flower making and craft. Older children preferred the storytelling opportunities like the puppet show but the activity that united respondents of all ages was the Spirograph. Parents and grandparents enjoyed the reminiscence element and being able to share something from their past with their children and grandchildren through intergenerational engagement.

#### **Detailed findings:**

##### **The Exhibition**

The layout of the exhibition was intriguing and 'surprising', and as there were so many activities available, families were always able to explore and find things to do. Visitors were able to choose which activities they engaged with and to what extent, as recommended by the National Trust Audience Insight Pack which says that 'although they will create their own day out, they appreciate lots of ideas to choose from' (4)

*'Lovely to have so many creative activities that have whichever purpose you want them to. All children (and big kids) are interested.'*

Aira from Chorlton  
(Guest book)

The vast array of activities allowed for families to create their own experiences as hoped.

Several volunteers expressed that they had been initially concerned about the layout of the exhibition, believing that too many sections were hidden and that it was too difficult to find the Mill entrance for those visitors wishing to pass straight through. This was, however an intention of the exhibition. By creating a strange and intriguing path, visitors were encouraged to explore and discover new things on their way to the Mill. This confusion on the part of the volunteers could be put down to certain failures in initial briefings. To find a full discussion of the role of staff and volunteers, refer to page 40 of this report.

One aspect of note which all volunteers interviewed referred to was the positioning of the introductory video. Visitors walked straight past, often failing to notice it. Evaluation of this aspect showed that the video was a very last minute addition and hence the placement was not thoroughly considered. The first image below shows the view from the entrance where there was so much to see that many visitors did not think to look behind them where they would have been able to watch the introductory video and engage with the Field Botanist's Barrow, pictured in the image overleaf.





The visitor surveys, guest book comments and volunteer feedback have shown that visitor experience within the exhibition was overwhelmingly positive and a selection of these comments can be read below.

*'I wish my National Trust property would do something like this'*

Research student

*'This has been fantastic. We just wish it had been available at other Trust properties in different parts of the country! It's a shame so many will have missed it!'*

David from Yorkshire  
(Guest book)

*'We all belong to the National Trust but this has to be the best. We're from the South West.'*

The Conway Family  
(Guest book)

*'Amazing - children loved it, faces lit up! (Whatsapped friends to tell them about it while there)'*

Family  
(Visitor Survey)

*'I loved it, it was one of the best things I've done in my life!!!'*

Lottie aged 9  
(Guest book)

*'The Clockwork Garden is a magically enthused adventure for children of all ages...wonderfully creative and very exciting. Brilliant.'*

Derek & Anne Jones from Wrexham  
(Guest book)

*'We love it all!!'*

Hugo, Milo, Gran and Grandpa  
(Guest book)

*'Absolutely brilliant, great experience for children and adults. Could have spent hours here – Grandmother and four grandchildren!'*

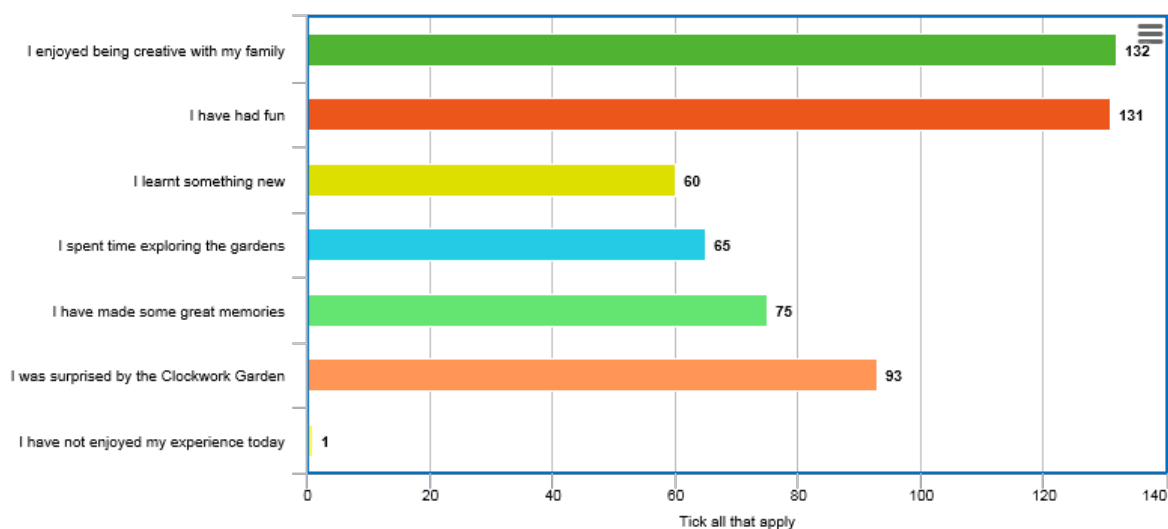
Anna aged 60  
(Guest book)

*'Absolutely wonderful! Great, fun and educational. Something for all ages – we were a group aged 18 months – 68 years!'*

McManus Family  
(Guest book)

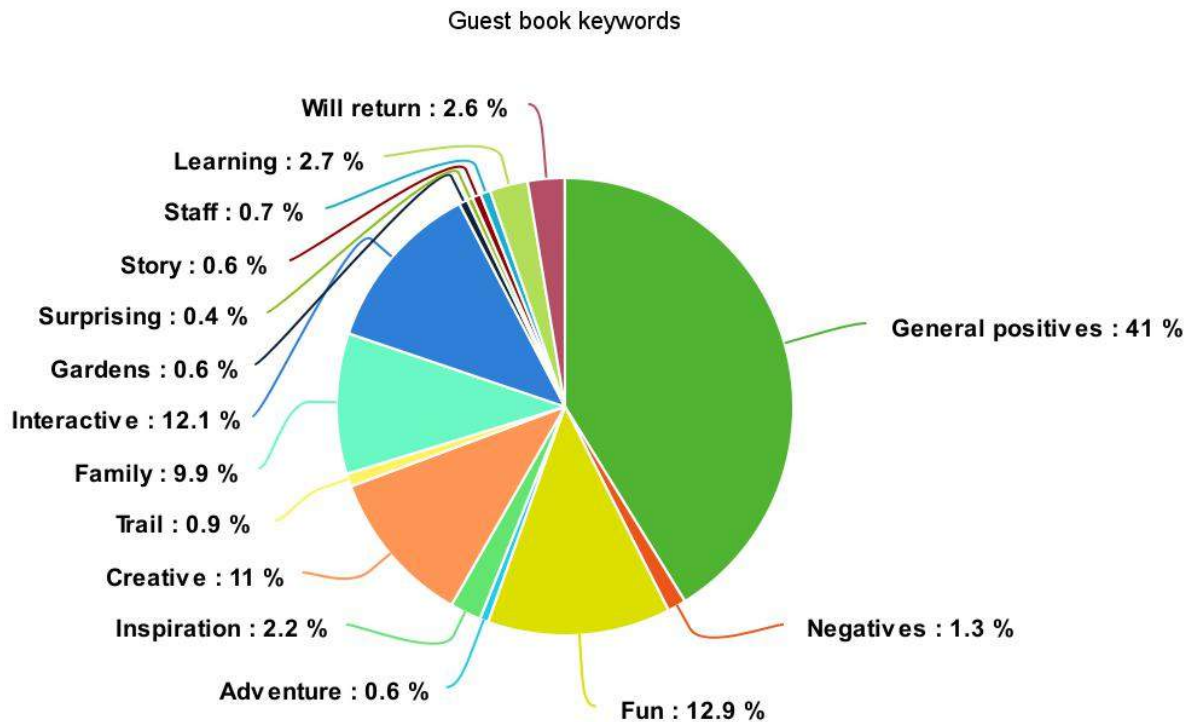
Of 955 guest book comments, 940 – 98% – were positive. The few negative responses referred to bad weather and some overcrowding at the busiest times. Some criticism was made of the accompanying Clockwork Garden trail; further discussion and examples of this can be found on page 37 of this report.

One of the survey questions sought to assess whether the visitor experience matched with the exhibition objectives relating to creativity and personalisation. The results showed that creativity and playfulness were indeed the key contributors to positive experiences (see Appendix 6.2)



This data can be enhanced by tracing changes in visitors scoring of 'fun' in the VE surveys. Comparing the scores with those from the start of the year, the average has increased from

71% to 80%. While the data placed fun and creativity ahead of learning, and this was echoed in the guest book comments (see pie chart below), visitors did refer to learning new things through the activities. This sits in accordance with the key exhibition objective in the sense that families were stimulated by the playful and engaging activities offered.



General positive comments such as 'brilliant', 'fantastic', 'we loved it' dominated the guest book, but creativity, interactivity, fun and family were mentioned in 400 comments.

## Top activities

We would like an experience that could be different for each visitor, where they make their own personal connections and leave behind some trace of their own experience.



*Exhibition launch weekend.*

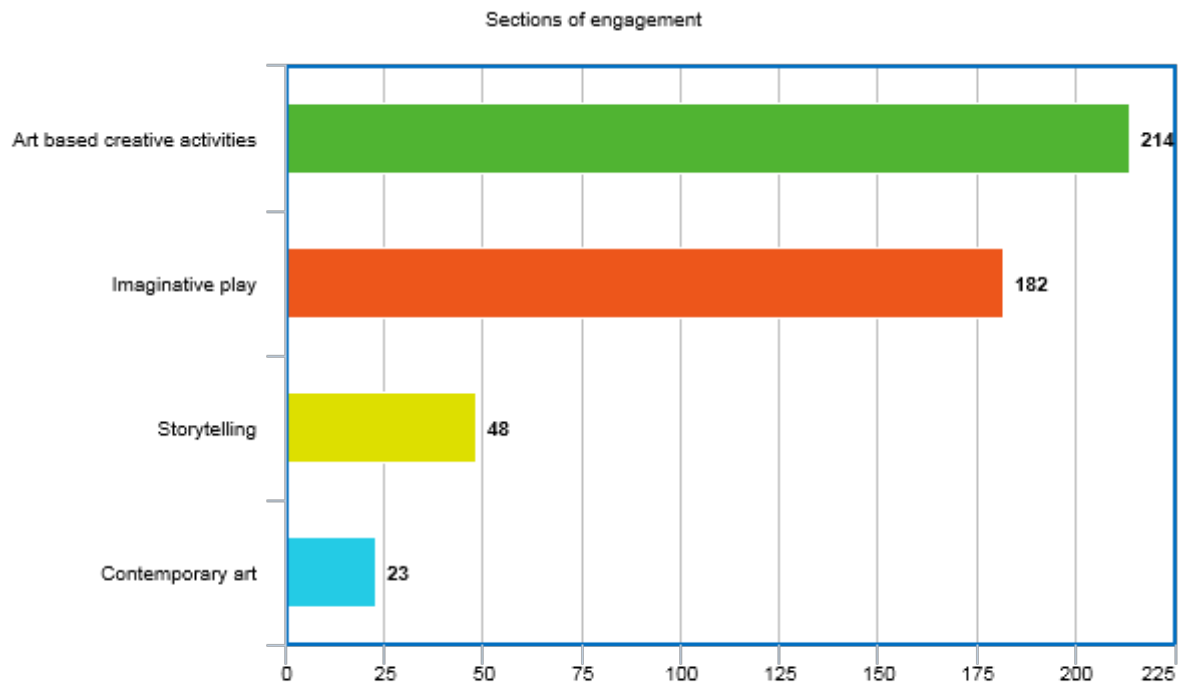


*Exhibition closing weekend.*



The images on the previous page show that visitors certainly were able to leave a trace of their own experience, filling the exhibition space with their tissue flowers, as well as their spirographs designs, mechanicals and other drawings. Some chose to take their creations home with them, but the ability to contribute to the exhibition by leaving their creations clearly appealed to a large number of visitors, as can be surmised from the 10, 844 drawings left behind.

The most popular activities have been identified through question 4 in Appendix 6.2.



Art based activities included flowers and drawings, while imaginative play referred to the puppet theatre and cloud appreciation society. Visitors engaged with the creative and interactive aspects over the storytelling and contemporary art options. Many expressed intentions to try some of the activities at home, inspired by the experiences they had at Quarry Bank.

‘Brilliant – we **loved the drawing things** – should do **more** of it!’

Mum and Roxie (2): ‘**Loved making a flower and the Spirograph art.** Loved memories of doing Spirograph when I was little’

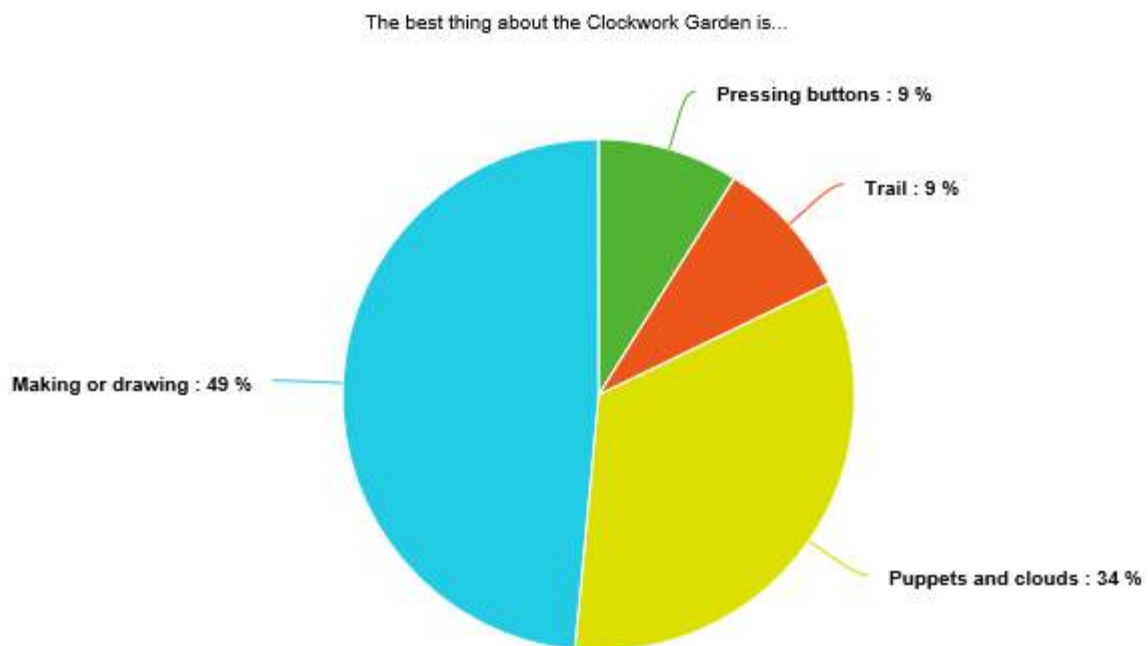
I thought the Clockwork Garden was amazing! **I liked the drawing parts the best’**

‘Loved it – **especially the Spirograph!** Plenty to amuse the children both young and old.’

‘Great. It’s amazing. **All of this craft! 5 stars’**

‘Fantastic – very **creative ideas to take back home’**

The children interviewed in the exhibition expressed a similar preference; when asked what 'The best thing about the Clockwork Garden is', 49% gave answers that referred to flower making or drawing, with another 34% saying puppet theatre or the cloud appreciation society (see pie chart below). Their experiences were led by the activities they chose to engage with rather than the story. However, in order to create a mechanical or a seed design, children had to have some grasp of what the seed and the mechanical planet were. The overall experience was most likely heightened by the sounds and narrative around the exhibition, but the activities were what made it particularly enjoyable and engaging. Further discussion about the story and its significance can be found on page 17 of this report.



Volunteers noticed these trends during their time in the exhibition, with all three of those interviewed agreeing that younger children enjoyed making flowers while older children played in the puppet theatre. They referred to the amount of parents and grandparents who enjoyed the simplicity of these activities and the ability of their children and grandchildren to leave technology behind for a period.

### **Contemporary Art**

When curating a family focussed exhibition it is important not to alienate visitors of other ages and demographics. The installation of contemporary art sought to add an extra layer to the exhibition but, as can be seen from the aforementioned data and the fact that no comments on the MI dashboard referred to contemporary art, its installation as a means of inspiring children and providing elements to appeal to Curious Minds and other adult segments fell short of full success. Children were drawn to activities and even adults found primary excitement from nostalgic activities, such as Spirograph drawing which many were

able to share with their children and families and expressed the intention to get their own spirographs out of storage. Inspiring families to go away and continue the activities engaged with at Quarry Bank is an excellent way of securing memories and enhancing their relationship with the site.

The lack of engagement with the exhibit's contemporary art is reiterated by feedback from the visitor survey. When asked which area of the exhibit the visitor engaged with the most, contemporary art was the least popular, as demonstrated in bar chart on page 25. A volunteer commented that: 'If it was aimed at adults it wasn't clear as they saw this overwhelming space and just wanted to go to the Mill'.

One volunteer felt that *Spirograph Drawing* by Ian Dawson was well placed and engaging as it was positioned beside the Spirograph activity table and visitors could compare their own designs with it and marvel at the scale of the piece.

## Spirographs

9209 Spirograph designs were drawn over the period of the exhibition. 348 of these had descriptions on the back describing the design and offering garden advice to Clever\_Jin.

		<p>(Phoebe)</p> <p>Artist's name: Phoebe Age: 4</p> <p>Short description of your idea/design: Flower</p> <p>What is the best message about gardens you could give to CLEVER_JIN? Gardens = flowers are lovely</p> <p>Some of your most ingenious thoughts and ideas will get posted to the HoFT Examiner children's online player, for others to learn from.</p> <p>www.houseoffairytales.org www.hoftexaminer.org</p>	<p>When the Clockwork Garden has returned to RECCA_BONK you will get a thank-you message from CLEVER_JIN if you give us your email. Some of your most ingenious thoughts and ideas will get posted to the HoFT Examiner children's online player, for others to learn from.</p> <p>Artist's name: _____ Age: _____</p> <p>Friendly adult's name: _____</p> <p>email address: _____</p> <p>Short description of your idea/design: _____</p> <p>What is the best message about gardens you could give to CLEVER_JIN? _____</p> <p>www.houseoffairytales.org www.hoftexaminer.org</p>
		<p>When the Clockwork Garden has returned to RECCA_BONK you will get a thank-you message from CLEVER_JIN if you give us your email. Some of your most ingenious thoughts and ideas will get posted to the HoFT Examiner children's online player, for others to learn from.</p> <p>Artist's name: Thomas Eccleson Age: 9</p> <p>Friendly adult's name: Helen Eccleson</p> <p>email address: hchaney100@hotmail.com</p> <p>Short description of your idea/design: a petunia flower</p> <p>What is the best message about gardens you could give to CLEVER_JIN? water your flowers every day!</p> <p>www.houseoffairytales.org www.hoftexaminer.org</p>	<p>When the Clockwork Garden has returned to RECCA_BONK you will get a thank-you message from CLEVER_JIN if you give us your email. Some of your most ingenious thoughts and ideas will get posted to the HoFT Examiner children's online player, for others to learn from.</p> <p>Artist's name: Hannah Eastwood Age: _____</p> <p>Friendly adult's name: Dad</p> <p>email address: celine.0250-004150@bt.com</p> <p>Short description of your idea/design: Sun flower eyes up</p> <p>What is the best message about gardens you could give to CLEVER_JIN? _____</p> <p>www.houseoffairytales.org www.hoftexaminer.org</p>
		<p>When the Clockwork Garden has returned to RECCA_BONK you will get a thank-you message from CLEVER_JIN if you give us your email. Some of your most ingenious thoughts and ideas will get posted to the HoFT Examiner children's online player, for others to learn from.</p> <p>Artist's name: Chloe Williams Age: 9</p> <p>Friendly adult's name: Chloe Williams</p> <p>email address: chloewilliams@bt.com</p> <p>Short description of your idea/design: A magenta flower</p> <p>What is the best message about gardens you could give to CLEVER_JIN? They are what protect THEM!</p> <p>www.houseoffairytales.org www.hoftexaminer.org</p>	<p>When the Clockwork Garden has returned to RECCA_BONK you will get a thank-you message from CLEVER_JIN if you give us your email. Some of your most ingenious thoughts and ideas will get posted to the HoFT Examiner children's online player, for others to learn from.</p> <p>Artist's name: Eleanor Eccleson Age: 4</p> <p>Friendly adult's name: Helen Eccleson</p> <p>email address: hchaney100@hotmail.com</p> <p>Short description of your idea/design: A fluffy flower</p> <p>What is the best message about gardens you could give to CLEVER_JIN? Gardens are fun!</p> <p>www.houseoffairytales.org www.hoftexaminer.org</p>
		<p>When the Clockwork Garden has returned to RECCA_BONK you will get a thank-you message from CLEVER_JIN if you give us your email. Some of your most ingenious thoughts and ideas will get posted to the HoFT Examiner children's online player, for others to learn from.</p> <p>Artist's name: Joseph McInerney Age: 9</p> <p>Friendly adult's name: Ann McInerney</p> <p>email address: joseph.mcinerney@hotmail.com</p> <p>Short description of your idea/design: A flower in the garden</p> <p>What is the best message about gardens you could give to CLEVER_JIN? it's pretty</p> <p>www.houseoffairytales.org www.hoftexaminer.org</p>	<p>When the Clockwork Garden has returned to RECCA_BONK you will get a thank-you message from CLEVER_JIN if you give us your email. Some of your most ingenious thoughts and ideas will get posted to the HoFT Examiner children's online player, for others to learn from.</p> <p>Artist's name: Amelia McInerney Age: 4</p> <p>Friendly adult's name: Lucy McInerney</p> <p>email address: jmcin@bt.com</p> <p>Short description of your idea/design: my dog</p> <p>What is the best message about gardens you could give to CLEVER_JIN? wow beautiful</p> <p>www.houseoffairytales.org www.hoftexaminer.org</p>

# Mechanimals

669 Mechainimals were created during the exhibition.

		<p>When the Clockwork Garden has returned to RECOA_BORN you will get a thank-you message from CLEVER_JIN if you give us your email. Some of your most ingenious thoughts and ideas will get posted to the <b>HaFT Examiner</b> children's online playpage for others to learn from.</p> <p>Artist's name: _____ Age: _____</p> <p>Short description of your idea/design: <i>Accomp making worm</i></p> <p>What is the best message about gardens you could give to CLEVER_JIN? _____</p> <p>Some of your most ingenious thoughts and ideas will get posted to the <b>HaFT Examiner</b> children's online playpage for others to learn from.</p> <p>www.houseoffairytales.org www.haftexaminer.org</p>	<p>When the Clockwork Garden has returned to RECOA_BORN you will get a thank-you message from CLEVER_JIN if you give us your email. Some of your most ingenious thoughts and ideas will get posted to the <b>HaFT Examiner</b> children's online playpage for others to learn from.</p> <p>Artist's name: _____ Age: _____</p> <p>Friendly adult's name: _____</p> <p>email address: _____</p> <p>Short description of your idea/design: <i>add to the looking at a flower</i></p> <p>What is the best message about gardens you could give to CLEVER_JIN? <i>flowers are special things that grow in the soil</i></p> <p>www.houseoffairytales.org www.haftexaminer.org</p>
	<p>by lesson A TwitchClock</p>	<p>When the Clockwork Garden has returned to RECOA_BORN you will get a thank-you message from CLEVER_JIN if you give us your email. Some of your most ingenious thoughts and ideas will get posted to the <b>HaFT Examiner</b> children's online playpage for others to learn from.</p> <p>Artist's name: <i>Albie</i> Age: <i>6</i></p> <p>Short description of your idea/design: _____</p> <p>What is the best message about gardens you could give to CLEVER_JIN? <i>Encourage more butterflies they are beautiful</i></p> <p>Some of your most ingenious thoughts and ideas will get posted to the <b>HaFT Examiner</b> children's online playpage for others to learn from.</p> <p>www.houseoffairytales.org www.haftexaminer.org</p>	<p>When the Clockwork Garden has returned to RECOA_BORN you will get a thank-you message from CLEVER_JIN if you give us your email. Some of your most ingenious thoughts and ideas will get posted to the <b>HaFT Examiner</b> children's online playpage for others to learn from.</p> <p>Artist's name: <i>Larissa</i> Age: <i>7</i></p> <p>Short description of your idea/design: <i>Mechanical butterfly with clocks on its wings &amp; gears</i></p> <p>What is the best message about gardens you could give to CLEVER_JIN? _____</p> <p>Some of your most ingenious thoughts and ideas will get posted to the <b>HaFT Examiner</b> children's online playpage for others to learn from.</p> <p>www.houseoffairytales.org www.haftexaminer.org</p>
<p>blasebondobo JJTB S00</p>	<p>Mechat by Daisy</p>	<p>When the Clockwork Garden has returned to RECOA_BORN you will get a thank-you message from CLEVER_JIN if you give us your email. Some of your most ingenious thoughts and ideas will get posted to the <b>HaFT Examiner</b> children's online playpage for others to learn from.</p> <p>Artist's name: <i>ollie</i> Age: <i>7</i></p> <p>Short description of your idea/design: <i>5 Spiky wings, tracks, leeches</i></p> <p>What is the best message about gardens you could give to CLEVER_JIN? <i>growing stuff and eating FRUIT &amp; VEG</i></p> <p>Some of your most ingenious thoughts and ideas will get posted to the <b>HaFT Examiner</b> children's online playpage for others to learn from.</p> <p>www.houseoffairytales.org www.haftexaminer.org</p>	<p>When the Clockwork Garden has returned to RECOA_BORN you will get a thank-you message from CLEVER_JIN if you give us your email. Some of your most ingenious thoughts and ideas will get posted to the <b>HaFT Examiner</b> children's online playpage for others to learn from.</p> <p>Artist's name: _____ Age: _____</p> <p>Short description of your idea/design: <i>think about a key</i></p> <p>What is the best message about gardens you could give to CLEVER_JIN? <i>well only in the garden</i></p> <p>Some of your most ingenious thoughts and ideas will get posted to the <b>HaFT Examiner</b> children's online playpage for others to learn from.</p> <p>www.houseoffairytales.org www.haftexaminer.org</p>
<p>Rebo</p>	<p>Mdraight</p>	<p>When the Clockwork Garden has returned to RECOA_BORN you will get a thank-you message from CLEVER_JIN if you give us your email. Some of your most ingenious thoughts and ideas will get posted to the <b>HaFT Examiner</b> children's online playpage for others to learn from.</p> <p>Artist's name: <i>EVA</i> Age: <i>7</i></p> <p>Friendly adult's name: <i>Claire</i></p> <p>email address: <i>Claire_barber1esky.com</i></p> <p>Short description of your idea/design: <i>Rebo Robot help in to reap time so worker get to Hillantw</i></p> <p>What is the best message about gardens you could give to CLEVER_JIN? <i>lots of flowers, Make sure you water and care for them</i></p> <p>www.houseoffairytales.org www.haftexaminer.org</p>	<p>When the Clockwork Garden has returned to RECOA_BORN you will get a thank-you message from CLEVER_JIN if you give us your email. Some of your most ingenious thoughts and ideas will get posted to the <b>HaFT Examiner</b> children's online playpage for others to learn from.</p> <p>Artist's name: <i>Sade Knight</i> Age: _____</p> <p>Short description of your idea/design: <i>dragons golden coin not health fire</i></p> <p>What is the best message about gardens you could give to CLEVER_JIN? <i>Gardens are places to have fun and play games</i></p> <p>Some of your most ingenious thoughts and ideas will get posted to the <b>HaFT Examiner</b> children's online playpage for others to learn from.</p> <p>www.houseoffairytales.org www.haftexaminer.org</p>

## Seed Designs and Compost Creatures

In addition, 478 seed designs and 488 compost creatures were left in the exhibition by children.

This data illustrates that far more spirographs were completed than any of the other creative areas in the exhibition space. This activity engaged people of all ages with many adults reminiscing about spirographs from their childhood, while children were inspired by the fun and unusual activity. Other creative and interactive elements such as the Mechanimals were far more child focused and hence the disjuncture in quantities.

How lovely to introduce my daughter to spirographs after all these years

Dave aged 45  
(Guest book)

Loved the Spirograph – took me back 40 years

(Guest book)

Fun for all ages, good to see Spirograph again, always fun whatever age you may be

Childminder  
(Guest book)

## Conclusion

The key objectives of the exhibition were undeniably met; the exhibition was transformed by the creativity of thousands of children and their families with each blank space filled with tissue flowers and drawings. It was the art based activities rather than the featured contemporary art pieces that inspired creativity and stimulation and which were referred to most through the evaluation process. Of these, the Spirograph was the most universally popular with all generations enjoying the activity, as reminiscence, as an intergenerational engagement or as an opportunity to try something new.

As hoped these visitors were stimulated through fun and creativity and were able to create their own experiences depending on their own interests and preferred activities. A recognised trend emerged of older children and their families engaging most with imaginative play such as the puppet theatre, while the younger families preferred the simple craft activities. Something which was very apparent was the low importance placed on the conceptual story of the Clockwork Garden and this will be discussed in the following section.

### **3.4. Objective 4: Broaden and deepen our relationship with our local communities**

#### **Aims:**

- **Location**
  - We want to grow our existing family audience, specifically in SK8/9, but also think this programme and our external partners will help us grow our Manchester audience in M20/M21.
  - We also want to use this programme which is light hearted and fun, to attract our community audiences in M22/M23 (Wythenshawe) and will hold a free community day with community transport to facilitate this.
- **Local Community Engagement**
  - We want to look at specific elements of the programme to engage with audiences in Wythenshawe, as part of our wider community engagement work, but we want the overall experience to have a broad appeal that will feel exciting and welcoming to this audience as well.
  - To provide development and confidence building for Quarry Bank and Crossacres staff to enable future creative work.

#### **Summary of findings:**

The above objective was evaluated through data from visitor surveys, Supporter Intelligence, written and verbal feedback from a teacher from Crossacres, and data from the take-up of the free passes given out to children at Crossacres and Styal schools.

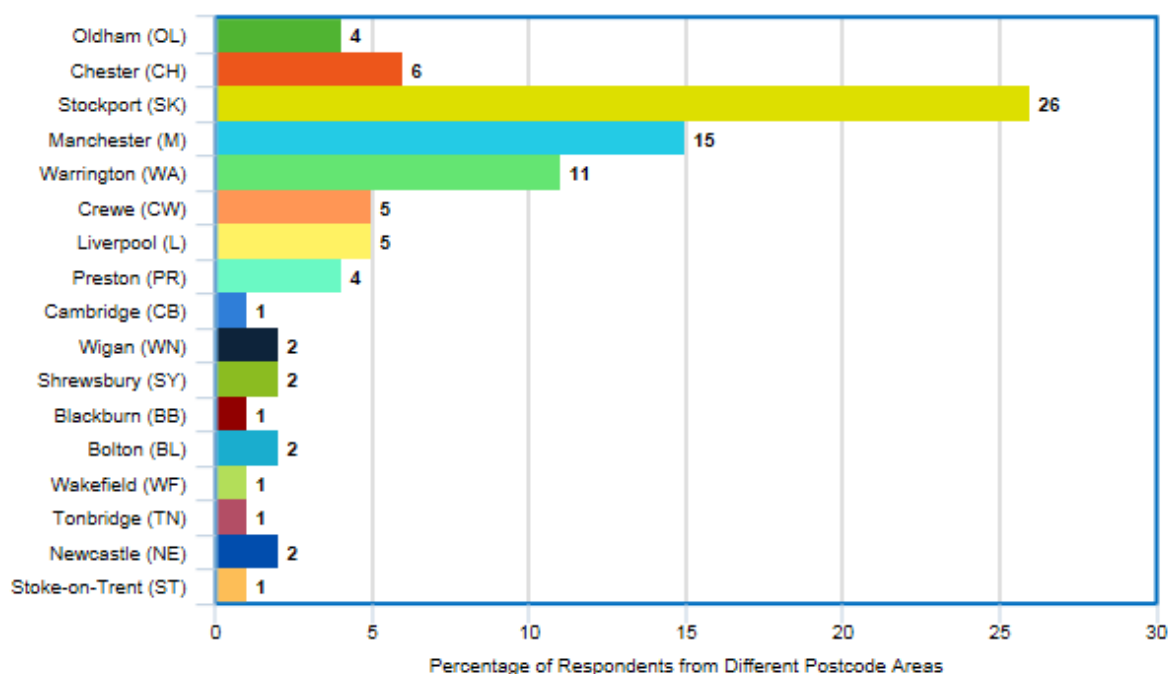
Following postcode analysis, the largest number of visitors to the Clockwork Garden was from Stockport, followed by Manchester and Warrington. Visitor numbers from the specific target postcodes of SK8 and SK9 saw the most dramatic increase (of 588 visitors) for 2015-2016 for the summer period. The other target postcode areas of M20/21 and M22/23 also saw an increase in visitor numbers, although on a smaller scale.

The primary form of local community engagement took place in the form of workshops with Quarry Bank's local partnership schools of Crossacres and Styal Primary. The workshops were successful, with a teacher from Crossacres commenting that she was very pleased with the results, and that she was keen to be involved with similar exhibitions in the future. While some community free passes were used, and their continued use encouraged, there is much potential for their usage to be increased through better explanation.

## **Detailed findings:**

### **Location**

Using data gathered from both the exhibition and trail surveys, the location from where visitors were coming from has been compiled into the bar chart below:

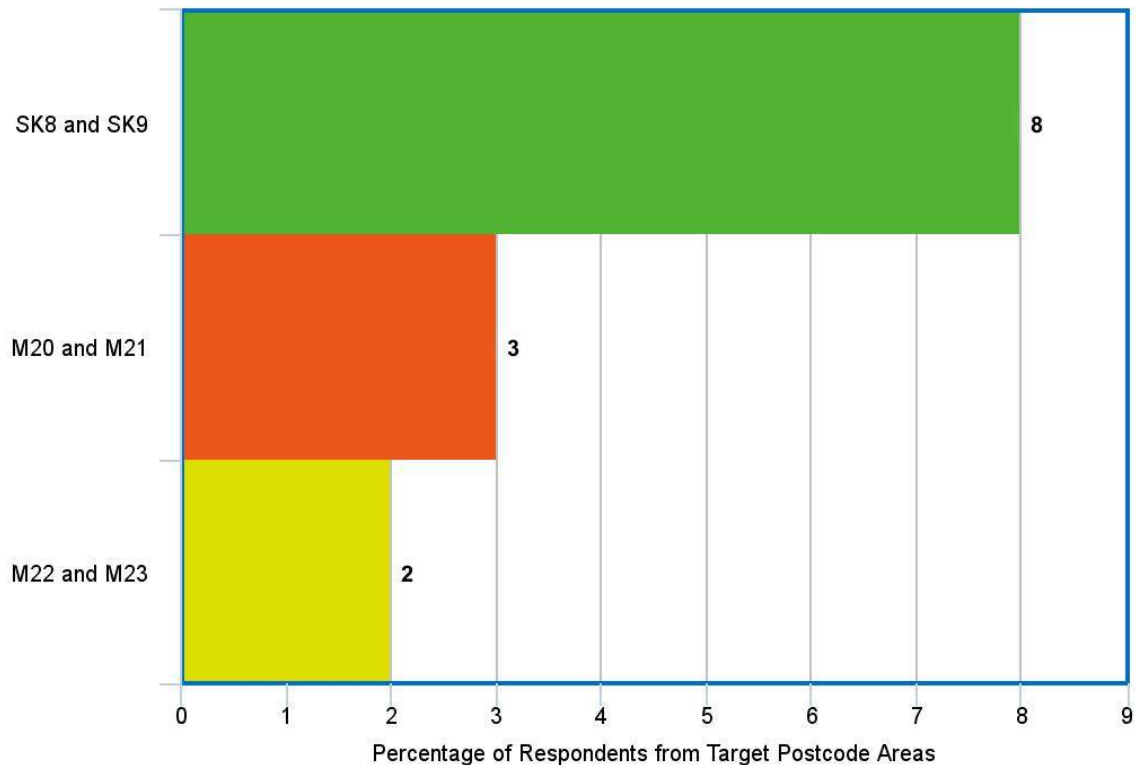


Not included in the chart are the following postcode locations from which only one group visited:

- Enfield
- Harrogate
- Leeds
- Brighton
- Peterborough
- Colchester
- Bournemouth
- Perth
- Llandudno
- Northampton
- Chelmsford
- Torquay
- Dumfries and Galloway
- Bristol
- Bolton
- Huddersfield
- St. Albans
- Newport
- Derby

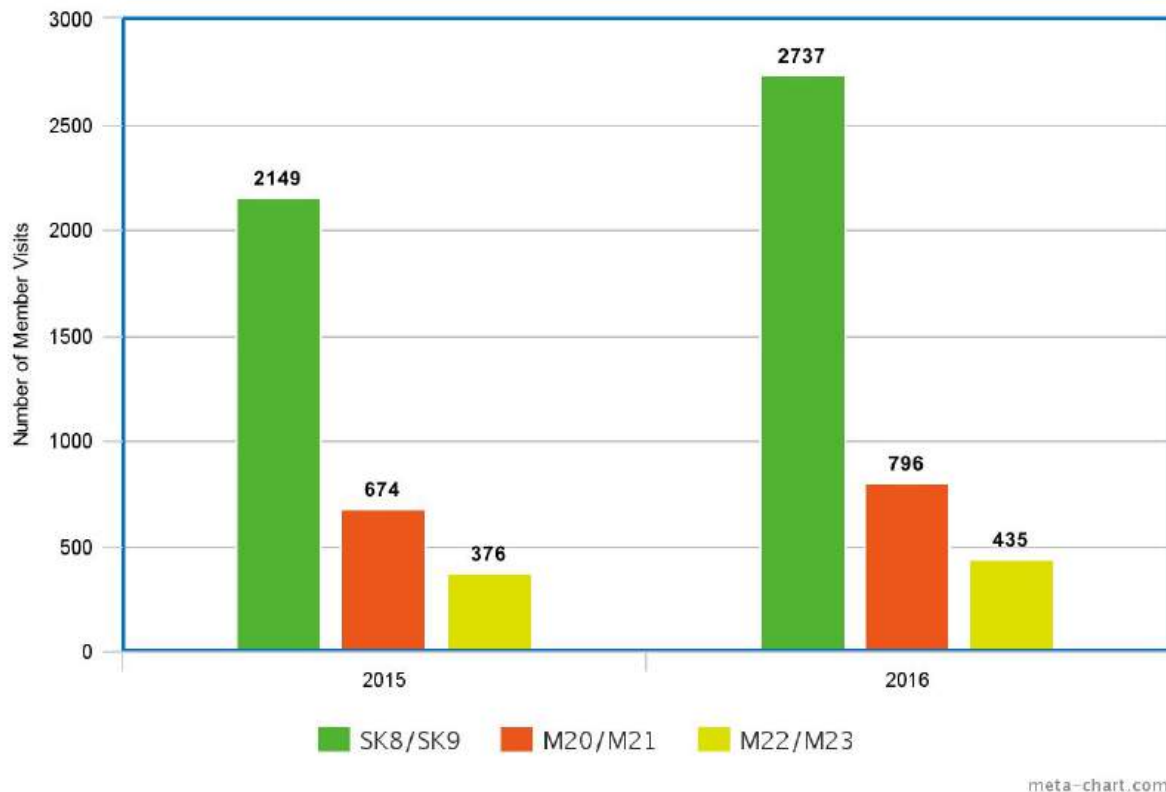


As the chart demonstrates, the highest proportion of visitors was from the Stockport area, followed by Manchester, Warrington and Chester. The breakdown as regards specific target postcodes as a percentage of survey respondents is as follows:



Echoing the trend in the wider postcode analysis, the largest number of visitors was from the Stockport (SK8/SK9) postcode, which is a large base of the property’s existing family audience. 8% of the total respondents to the survey were from SK8 or SK9. This indicates the exhibition’s success in attracting and maintaining appeal to families in this area. It was hoped that, by working with HoFT, a greater number of visitors from Manchester would be attracted to the property, specifically in the M20 and M21 postcode. However, the low numbers – 3% of total respondents – suggest this has not been as successful as hoped. Similarly, an objective was that local community audiences in Wythenshawe (M22 and M23) would be attracted by the exhibit, and 2% of survey respondents were from this area.

This can be further demonstrated with data from Supporter Intelligence of the number of family (teen and young) visitors to the property from these specific postcodes between 2015 and 2016. The dates compared were 30<sup>th</sup> April-11st September both years, as this is the length of time the exhibition ran for. The resultant bar chart is on the following page.



This information is of total property visits by members of the NT, and does not track those who entered the Mill, or non-member visits, which is especially relevant as membership is low in Wythenshawe (M22/23), and there is no data for non-member visits, but it does act as an indicator of wider visitor trends. As suggested by the data from the visitor surveys, visitor numbers from existing family audiences in the SK8 and SK9 postcode areas have not only been maintained, but have grown from 2015-2016. Additionally, the target postcode areas of M20/21 and M22/23 have also increased, although less dramatically than SK8/9. This may be explained by the lack of targeted marketing in these areas, although there are other barriers to people from the M22/23 visiting, such as transport accessibility.

The aim of growing and developing existing family audiences from Stockport – specifically SK8/9 – has definitely been met. Although the data from Supporter Intelligence is only of members, when combined with the information from visitor surveys this indicates that the majority of family visitors to the CG were from the Stockport area. Furthermore, the number of visitors from Stockport has increased by 588 from 2015. The second target postcode areas of M20/21 also increased by 122, although much less dramatically.

The aim of appealing to local community audiences in M22/23 had similar success, with an increase of 59 from 2015-2016. Engagement with this area is addressed in more detail in the following section.

## Local Community Engagement

There were a series of workshops conducted with Quarry Bank's partner school Crossacres, in Wythenshawe. The workshops were conducted in conjunction with HoFT, and involved staff from HofT conveying the story of the Clockwork Garden to the children in different and exciting ways. The aim of these workshops was to provide cultural enrichment for the children, and to generate outputs that went on to feature in the main exhibition. This can be considered a success on both fronts. Comments from one of the teachers at Crossacres demonstrate how beneficial she, and the children, found the workshops:

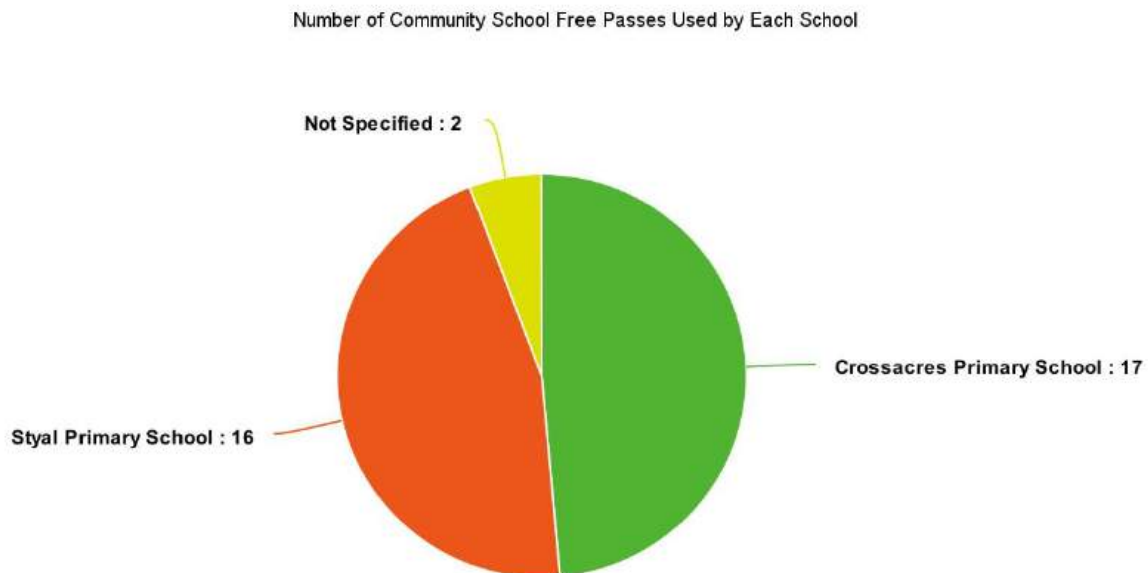
'The way in which the story of Clever\_Jin was revealed to the children was **inspiring and refreshing** - I have not taken part in such a **wonderfully creative** and exciting day before, which captured the imagination of all our pupils! The **children were hooked** from the moment they entered the hall and were **buzzing and excited** all day, and it has since continued in class...It was a delight to see the children **come out of their shells** and 'buy in' to the **magic** of it all!'

Comments from pupils themselves support this, with many of them commenting on what they learned and enjoyed about the workshops. The creative results from the workshops were used to enhance the exhibition, some of which are pictured below:



The second aim of these workshops was to enhance the confidence in the relationship with Crossacres in order to secure ease in future planning and collaboration. This has undoubtedly been achieved. In feedback from one of the teachers at Crossacres, she commented that they would definitely want to be involved in any similar exhibitions or events in the future. The benefits from their point of view had been numerous; the sessions adhered to the national curriculum, were creative and fun, and provided different types of stimuli for the children. They also felt that these sessions, in addition to the regular visits every year group made to Quarry Bank, has generated an increasing sense of familiarity and attachment to the site.

Another way in which the relationships with both Crossacres School and Styal Primary School were hoped to be developed was in the distribution of passes which enabled the children to visit Quarry Bank for free with their families over the summer. The number of passes used by each school is detailed below:



As can be seen, it was an even spread of passes used from both schools, however, considering that all pupils and teachers were presented with passes, the scheme was unsuccessful in terms of the quantity used. The passes were given out in previous years and have been enduringly popular, one teacher commenting that some of 'our children have been with family on the passes issued last time and this helps change their perception. Lots are eager to come back again with family.' Although there is no data for the numbers of passes used in previous years, Julie Pugh, the Learning Officer at Quarry Bank, does believe the numbers are steadily going up each year, and that Clockwork Garden did generate a boost in their usage.

Similarly, one of the exhibition volunteers for the Clockwork Garden commented that there were a lot of local visitors that visited several times. They did not know if these visitors had used the passes to do so, but it does demonstrate that the exhibition was popular with local audiences. Holding workshops generates interest on the part of children to visit Quarry Bank, and the distribution of passes helps to facilitate this, demonstrating the benefits of both. The fact that these have also helped “change their perception” of the property is also hugely worthwhile in developing good relationships with the local communities.

Expanding and deepening the relationship between QB and the local community was a set objective of the CG, which the postcode data from the visitor surveys and Supporter Intelligence, along with the feedback on school passes, indicates has been achieved. Although the numbers themselves are not high, in the cases of both the postcode data and school passes, both indicate an increase in visitors from the local community compared to the previous year. The primary form of community engagement that took place was with local primary schools Styal and Crossacres. This form of engagement was undoubtedly a success, with very positive feedback from pupils and teachers and successful use of the free passes.

### **3.5. Objective 5: Encourage visitors around the site and to discover hidden or little known spaces**

#### **Aims:**

- A fantastic adventure for families, using artistic interventions in secret and special places in the garden.
- Encourage visitors around the site and to discover hidden or little known spaces.

#### **Summary of findings:**

Two trails were designed as part of the Clockwork Garden experience to encourage under-fives and older children around the gardens. Visitors appreciated this offer, though feedback has shown that both trails had their problems. The version for older children was too wordy and ultimately too complicated and the A2 design was impractical both in terms of ability to lean and write on and to withstand certain weather conditions. Similarly the symbols for the under-fives version were difficult to recognise. The House of Fairy Tales recognised that the designed route was quite confusing and put this down to capital works preventing them from trialling this. Quarry Bank staff have pointed out that HoFT failed to meet the deadline for the trail and that they would have wanted to trial it themselves before launching. The key issue with the trail was the complexity and in future simplicity should be favoured.

#### **Findings:**

Volunteers noticed a clear trend in visitors coming into the exhibition first and planning to move onto the trail afterwards. Some even said that visitors were unaware of the trail before speaking with them and that they consequently referred to it in their welcome to encourage families to go up to the Upper Garden and use the café and facilities up there.

76% of those interviewed had made use of both the exhibition and the trail and over 11000 trails were given out across the period meaning that families were inspired to explore the gardens and discover new areas that they might not otherwise have thought to seek out. In this sense the garden trail was a success, though in terms of content, the feedback has shown that families and children struggled to understand the story, the clues and the symbols.

*'It is **far too complicated** - needs simpler words and less clues. Even the adults struggled to understand it'*

*'Very **disappointing**. Too busy. Too many different things going on - signs **too wordy**, symbols sometimes missing, didn't realise we were looking for ... till halfway through. Needed to be simpler'*

There were some positive responses, one family said it was 'the best trail we've ever done!', though a majority of those who enjoyed the trail often also found it to be too complex:

*'I felt the trail was charming and exceptionally creative. We lost track of time! I felt the story was **a bit obscure** and **hard to sequence** or extract the main message but overall we loved it'*

*'The trail was great and we enjoyed that although I'm **not sure that my children totally understood the story**'*

When speaking with Nicola Bell, HoFT professed a regret at not trialling the trail before opening due to capital issues of garden openings and accessibility. This did contribute to visitor confusion as did the length of the trail which was too much for some with several explaining that they ran out of time. However, Quarry Bank staff explained that this was due to a delay in receiving the trail and having no time to edit it before the launch and noted that capital works did not prohibit HoFT from entering the upper garden. Refer to page 40 for more detail on staff and collaborative relationships.

The design was also impractical as, once fully open it was A2 and as it was printed onto standard paper it was difficult to write on. Multiple best practice guides dictate that trails should be simple, fun and should have as many open questions as possible. In addition, they should be easy to write on, so either made of a firm material or handed out with clipboards<sup>2</sup>.

The quantity of trails used demonstrates success in terms of encouraging visitors to explore the gardens. The complex language and the unclear symbols used, however, meant that those families using the trail often failed to understand the story or what they were looking for. For some, this affected the visit, though most remarked that they simply enjoyed exploring. In future it would be best to design a trail with much simpler language.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/d/designing-museum-activity-backpacks-for-families/> See also: [https://www.lutonculture.com/uploads/documents/1369826537\\_GoodPracticeGuidelines.pdf](https://www.lutonculture.com/uploads/documents/1369826537_GoodPracticeGuidelines.pdf)

### **3.6. Objective 6: Develop our on-site team and their creative and audience focussed approach.**

Collaborating with an external creative company was a new venture for Quarry Bank. This brought its own challenges including those of communication, external deadlines and uncertainty over responsibilities. There was also an intention to unite the offer across the site in order to enhance commercial appeal for Clockwork Garden visitors in the café and the shop. Decoration was placed in each of these areas just before the exhibition opening but better communication and planning from all teams would enhance commercial success and efficiency in the future.

#### **Findings:**

##### **Core team**

The programming team at Quarry Bank have learnt a lot from this initial external collaboration and have flagged several areas for improvement and better planning in the future. The first refers to initial agreements; when consumables ran out in the exhibition it was unclear who was responsible for replenishing them and Quarry Bank had to spend extra money on craft materials originally supplied by HoFT. Communication was difficult with HoFT as they had begun another project by the time the exhibition had been installed and due to the fact that creative companies often work in different ways and during different hours to the National Trust. Responses were often delayed and this was a problem for managing school work, deadlines and exhibition monitoring. Furthermore, working with local companies would make meetings easier and reduce the expenditure for travel and accommodation for HoFT.

In terms of internal relationships, there were opportunities for other departments to get involved with and benefit from the Clockwork Garden. Early conversations with both catering and retail sought to develop commercial links through Clockwork Garden themed decoration. Reflection from Quarry Bank staff has suggested that better communication and planning from all teams would enhance the success of this in the future. The relationship with Retail was productive but the Catering team were unable to plan in any additional activity.

##### **Volunteers**

A volunteer was always present in the exhibition during opening hours and assisted families and children with activities and their understanding of the story.

‘Everything is great. I made a flower, the lady helped me.’

(Guest book)



Interviews with several of these volunteers were carried out in order to assess the levels of staff interaction as well as to obtain their thoughts on the success of the exhibition.

All volunteers interviewed recall greeting visitors at the entrance and welcoming them into the exhibition space. They explained that some older visitors wanted to go straight through to the Mill, and while many children were immediately drawn to the art and craft activities, very few were engaged with the story. All said that kids just wanted to play and thought that as the activities were not dependent upon knowing the story, this was not an issue; consequently these volunteers chose to tell a very brief version of the Clockwork Garden to new arrivals, before highlighting what they could do within in the space.

However, part of the role of these volunteers was to explain the story and direct visitors around the exhibition. This could be put down to an issue with the volunteer briefing; HoFT ran a briefing session for staff who were then expected to pass information onto volunteers. The Programming team ran a briefing for all welcome team volunteers as well as drop in sessions for all staff and volunteers on the property. Continued attention needs to be given to staff and volunteer training to ensure people are in full understanding of the exhibits and feel confident in explaining stories and concepts to the best of their abilities. The role of Heads of Department in managing this with their teams needs to be developed.

In addition to the initial welcome, volunteers found that many of the activities required their assistance – telling children that they could press the Mechanical buttons for example, and opening drawers for them. One volunteer even felt that during busier periods it would have been good to have had two invigilators as interacting with one family sometimes left others wandering around without an introduction or assistance.

### **Conclusion**

Interdepartmental relationships can lead to greater commercial success and a unified offer. Plans should be drawn as early as possible and communication scheduled to avoid any last minute rush. Future external collaborations should also have clearer planning and distribution of responsibilities to avoid confusion and excessive spending.

## **4. Recommendations**

There are five main areas of recommendations. These concern: the trail/story, the use of space, exhibition activities, marketing, and local community engagement.

### **Trail/Story**

#### Age range

- Providing different trails for two separate age groups is certainly recommended, though further consideration of tone, language and purpose needs to be undertaken.
- Trails to be piloted on the target audiences before the launch, to gauge both understanding and enjoyment.

#### Story

- Using stories as a foundation for trails is recommended in multiple best practice guides, but unfortunately the story created by the House of Fairy Tales proved too complicated for families to follow.
- For future exhibitions, it would be better to design a trail that clearly stated the ability to stop and pick up at a later date.
- Developing this into a hunt with simple language, clear clues and more interactive elements would be the best way to improve garden trails in the future.

#### Materials

- Use card or a smaller sized paper for future trails and ensure routes are trialled before launching.

### **Use of Space**

- It is therefore recommended that future exhibitions have better signposting to ensure visitors are aware of all aspects.
- It would have been effective to have played the video on the opposite wall or perhaps to have offered it on the website or app, as both of these were popular forms of engagement with the Clockwork Garden prior to visiting.

### **Exhibition Activities**

#### Activities

- Use a clicker to better evaluate visitor figures, currently only have numbers to the entire site.
- The exhibition was successful as it provided enough options for all ages to engage with and hence it is recommended that a variety of activities are incorporated into family exhibitions in future.

- Recommended that activities are installed for different ages of children as this offers the most potential for engagement across the board of families. 93% of those interviewed expressed a desire to return and hence future exhibitions would benefit from providing activities for these repeat visitors.
- Incorporate elements to cater for audience segments outside of the targeted families.

#### Equipment

- For future collaborations such practicalities should be written into initial agreements so that both sides are aware of their responsibilities

### **Marketing**

#### Local Community Audiences

- Of respondents to the visitor surveys, only 3% were from M20/M21 and only 2% were from M22/M23. In future, targeted marketing should be planned far in advance of programmed launches and should be sustained throughout.
- This marketing could be displayed within wider community institutions such as community centres and libraries, and promoted at family event days.

#### Digital Marketing

- An awareness of the range of activities installed across the event may have encouraged more audiences to come along.
- Encouraging visitors to share photographs or comments about their experiences might have led to further spreading of awareness through word of mouth. Printing hashtags onto panels or across the trail would have encouraged visitors to get involved online.
- As this report highlights the success of the NT website and app in informing audiences about the exhibition prior to visiting. The use of these digital platforms should continue to be capitalised upon and developed into the future.

### **Community engagement**

#### Schools

- The Clockwork Garden was only intended to be promoted to Quarry Bank's two schools (Styal and Crossacres), but the positive response to the CG has identified the opportunities for the involvement of other schools in next year's exhibition.
- It is recommended that, in the future, relationships with these partner schools can be developed and expanded. The physical components of the exhibition opening the education staff's eyes to the potential of schools contributions in similar ways to future exhibitions.

- While the free passes are useful, they could be more so. More could be made of their distribution, such as by holding assemblies in the selected schools.
- In addition, there are demands on both Quarry Bank and collaborative schools. For Quarry Bank there is a limited programming budget and hence projects must be planned accordingly, while for schools, curriculums must be adhered to which can require restructuring of teaching plans. Both should be considered going forward.

#### Wider Community

- Build a focus group or meeting into the timetable early on to ensure that collaborations are evaluated as deeply as possible, bearing in mind the busy school calendars and difficulty to get feedback after the event.

### **Staff**

#### Volunteers

- Volunteers were always present in the exhibition space and provided initial information and context for visitors. For future exhibitions, volunteers need to be better briefed on the concept in order to unite the overarching offer.

#### Internal Team

- Plans across internal departments need to be clearer from the outset when aiming for a united offer and optimum commercial success.
- External collaborations can be difficult and hence require detailed schedules and frequent meetings to monitor progress.

## 5. Appendices

### 5.1. Table Summary of Aims, Results and Recommendations

Aim and Objectives	Findings	Recommendations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attract a family audience and encourage repeat visits.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Highly popular with both children and adults within family units.</li> <li>Less popular with other audience segments – i.e. Curious Minds – and the use of contemporary art to attract their interest was not successful.</li> <li>91% of survey respondents said they would return to Quarry Bank based on their experience of the Clockwork Garden, and 97% would recommend a visit to their peers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clearer definition and explanation of future exhibitions would be useful, as there was confusion over what the Clockwork Garden actually was.</li> <li>Continue to capitalise on the popularity of the website and app for promoting exhibitions in the future.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Present a new and unexpected story and experience of Quarry Bank.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The majority of visitors were either unaware of the story, or felt that it was too complicated.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keep the story or concept simple.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enable visitors to have a creative, stimulating, playful and immersive experience.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There were trends between certain age groups and various activities. The majority preferred the creative activities but appreciated the opportunity to tailor experiences to their interests.</li> <li>Many of the props broke through use.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offering a range of activities allows for visitors to tailor their experiences.</li> <li>Tying certain activities with social media hash tags could help to spread the word.</li> <li>Use more durable materials for props, especially when they are to be used by young children.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Broaden and deepen our relationship with our local communities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continued to attract large numbers of visitors from Stockport (SK8/SK9).</li> <li>Aim of attracting increased visitors from Manchester (M20/M21 specifically) and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Using targeted marketing in both the M20/M21 and M22/M23 areas for future exhibitions.</li> <li>While the free passes are useful, they could be more</li> </ul>

	<p>local audiences from Wythenshawe (M22/M23) was met but with less success.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engagement with local schools in Wythenshawe and Styal was successful, both in broadening and deepening relationships with the schools, and in the distribution of free passes to the pupils and their families.</li> </ul>	<p>so. More could be made of their distribution, perhaps by holding assemblies in the selected schools.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engagement with schools prior to future exhibitions is highly encouraged, especially by building on the positive aspects of this exhibition, e.g. in getting children out of the classroom, providing new stimuli, and maintaining interest in a creative way (in the case of the CG, emails from Clever_Jin).</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage visitors around the site and to discover hidden or little known spaces.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offering trails for different age groups meant that more members of the family could be involved.</li> <li>The story and the language were too complicated.</li> <li>The symbols for the under-fives trail were unclear.</li> <li>The A2 paper design was not durable for weather or for leaning on.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As with the story section, it would be better to keep the story/concept simple.</li> <li>Use language which can be easily understood.</li> <li>Use card or a smaller paper booklet.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop our on-site team and their creative and audience focussed approach.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Volunteers enhanced the visitor experience, both through helping visitors understand the story and by assisting with certain activities.</li> <li>Internal staff communications could have been stronger in the build up to the opening in order to enhance the offer and secure commercial success.</li> <li>External companies can work differently to the NT.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure volunteers are well-briefed if the concept might need explaining.</li> <li>Plans across internal departments need to be clearer from the outset when aiming for a united offer.</li> <li>External collaborations require detailed schedules and frequent meetings to monitor progress.</li> </ul>



## 5.2. Clockwork Garden Exhibition Survey

### Clockwork Garden Feedback

1. Have you visited Quarry Bank before?

Yes No

2.

a. Had you heard about the Clockwork Garden before your visit today?

Yes No

b. If so, how?

---

c. And has it met your expectations?

---

3. Have you used, or do you plan to use, the Clockwork Garden trail today?

Yes No

4. Which sections of the exhibit did you engage with most as a family?

Art based activities		Imaginative play	
Storytelling		Contemporary Art	

5. Have you read the story behind the Clockwork Garden?

Yes No

6. Which statement best describes your experience today?

	Please tick all that apply	Any additional comments
I enjoyed being creative with my family		
I have had fun		
I learnt something new		
I spent time exploring the gardens		
I have made some great memories		
I was surprised by The Clockwork Garden		
I have not enjoyed my experience today		

7. Any other comments you'd like to leave?

8. Based on your experience of the Clockwork Garden, how likely are you to return to Quarry Bank?

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<i>I will definitely not return</i>	<i>I am unlikely to return in the next few months</i>	<i>I don't know</i>	<i>I am likely to return in the future</i>	<i>I will definitely return in the next few months</i>

9. Based on your experience of the Clockwork Garden, how likely are you to recommend Quarry Bank to others?

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<i>I will definitely not recommend</i>	<i>I am unlikely to recommend</i>	<i>I don't know</i>	<i>I am likely to recommend</i>	<i>I will definitely recommend</i>

10. Postcode (first three digits)

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11. Ages of group?

0-5	
6-11	
12-17	
18-24	
25-35	
36-50	
50+	





### 5.3. Children's Clockwork Garden Exhibition Survey

## Children's Clockwork Garden Feedback

Please fill in the gap:

1. I am \_\_\_\_\_ years old.

Draw a ring round your answer:

2. Have you been to Quarry Bank before?

Yes No

3. Do you want come back to Quarry Bank again?

Yes No

Draw a ring round the face that matches your answer:

4. Before today, I thought Quarry Bank would be...



Excellent



Good



OK



Bad



Rubbish

5. Now, I think Quarry Bank is....



Excellent



Good



OK



Bad



Rubbish

Please finish these sentences:

6. Today at the Clockwork Garden I found out about \_\_\_\_\_
7. The best thing about the Clockwork Garden is \_\_\_\_\_
8. The worst thing about the Clockwork Garden is \_\_\_\_\_

If there is anything that would make the Clockwork Garden more fun, please write it here:



#### 5.4. Clockwork Garden Trail Survey

## Clockwork Garden Trail Feedback

**This questionnaire will help us to plan for future trails. Please hand your filled in forms to a volunteer at the end of your garden trail.**

***(If you have already completed this evaluation in the Clockwork Garden then please disregard.)***

12. Have you visited Quarry Bank before?

Yes No

13.

d. Had you heard about the Clockwork Garden trail before your visit today?

Yes No

e. If so, how?

---

f. And has it met your expectations?

---

14. Are you aware of the Clockwork Garden exhibition?

Yes No

a. Have you visited, or do you plan to visit the Clockwork Garden exhibition today?

Yes No

15. Which statement best describes your experience of using the trail today?

	Please tick all that apply	Any additional comments
I have enjoyed exploring with my family		
I have had fun		
I have seen or learnt something new		
We have found it easy to follow		
We have understood the story		
I have not enjoyed my experience today		

16. Any other comments you'd like to leave?

17. Based on your experience of the Clockwork Garden, how likely are you to return to Quarry Bank?

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<i>I will definitely not return</i>	<i>I am unlikely to return in the next few months</i>	<i>I don't know</i>	<i>I am likely to return in the future</i>	<i>I will definitely return in the next few months</i>

18. Based on your experience of the Clockwork Garden, how likely are you to recommend Quarry Bank to others?

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<i>I will definitely not recommend</i>	<i>I am unlikely recommend</i>	<i>I don't know</i>	<i>I am likely to recommend</i>	<i>I will definitely recommend</i>

19. Postcode (first three digits)?

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20. Ages of group?

0-5	
6-11	
12-17	
18-24	
25-35	
36-50	
50+	