

‘That’s not who I was the last time I was here.’

A diverse heritage and England’s heritage: mutual
partners or mutually exclusive?

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores what impact thirteen years of Britain's New Labour government's (1997-2010) social exclusion policy agenda had on the representation of non-white communities within England's authorised heritage narrative, told through the places, objects and 'things' given heritage value by 'experts'. This thesis finds that certain mainstream heritage organisations in England perceive there to be an 'established' heritage that is agreed, therefore cannot be challenged even as we uncover more about the diverse realities of the country's past. Two ways are considered by which to understand the hegemony of this heritage and how it might be 'used' to the benefit of a more diverse national narrative: the first by accepting Laurajane Smith's assertion that there is an authorised heritage discourse (AHD) in England and seek ways to *harness* it rather than subvert it. The second follows on from the first in proposing how communities of interest might participate equally in the process of heritage making. The first way is drawn out through an interrogation of heritage sector policy and practice – from organisations such as the Heritage Lottery Fund, English Heritage, national museums, amongst others – to decipher the meaning of heritage in England and who it is for, according to those mainstream organisations that create and manage it. The second utilises case studies of major heritage projects in England that have sought to engage with non-white audiences to understand the methods mainstream heritage organisations have used to do so.

It is concluded that the model for heritage making in England acts as a barrier to a diverse heritage. Using the work of Rodney Harrison, an alternative 'dialogic' heritage is suggested that encourages it to be seen as fluid *and* contested and challenge the notion of any heritage being perceived as 'established.'

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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

This thesis is based upon original work and research, and as such, responsibility for any errors is entirely my own. While some aspects of this work have been presented as part of conference papers, the majority of the data analysis, discussions and conclusions are presented here for the first time.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ACE	Arts Council England
ACEx	African Cultural Exchange
AHD	Authorised Heritage Discourse
BAME	Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic
BCC	Birmingham City Council
BM	British Museum
BMAG	Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery
BME	Black and Minority Ethnic
BoT	Board of Trustees
BP	Birmingham Post
CAP	Community Action Panel
CBH	Cultural Built Heritage
CIS	Census Information Scheme
CSICH	Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage
CT	Collections Trust
DCMS	Department for Culture, Media and Sport
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
DHG	Diversity in Heritage Group
EH	English Heritage
GLA	Greater London Authority
HCC	Hull City Council
HDTF	Heritage Diversity Task Force
HLF	Heritage Lottery Fund
ICAHM	International Committee on Archaeological Heritage Management
ICOM	International Council of Museums
ICOMOS	International Committee for Monuments and Sites
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender

MCAAH	Mayor's Commission on African and Asian Heritage
MGAF	Museums and Galleries Access Fund
MLA	Museums, Libraries and Archives Council
MLD	Museum of London Docklands
NAO	National Audit Office
NBHA	Northamptonshire Black History Association
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NHA	National Heritage Act
NHMF	National Heritage Memorial Fund
NT	National Trust
OED	Oxford English Dictionary, Online Version.
ODNB	Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Online Version.
ONS	Office for National Statistics
PAT	Policy Action Team
RitR	Renaissance in the Regions
SCAWDI	Sparkbrook Caribbean and African Women's Development Initiative
SEU	Social Exclusion Unit
SPAB	Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings.
UCL	University College London
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
V & A	Victoria and Albert Museum
VC	Visible Community
WHC	World Heritage Convention

Chapter 1: Introduction

Talk of social inclusion has saturated the heritage sector, bringing with it notions of ‘public value’, ‘multiplicity’ and ‘cultural plurality’, but it is not yet clear how successfully this rhetoric will translate into practice (Waterton 2007: 8-9).

1.1 The origins of this research

In simple terms, this thesis seeks to respond to Waterton; it reflects on a period of time from the end of the last millennium during which England’s heritage sector experimented with various ways of engaging ‘excluded’ groups with the ‘Nation’s’ heritage – a concept that is explored below. Those determined to be excluded have, in the main, been seen as Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups, people with limiting disabilities, low socio-economic groups, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) groups and faith groups (excluding the Church of England and Catholics).

As this thesis will explore, efforts to include these groups have been hampered because ‘the heritage’ of England is largely conceived as a fixed entity and thus those who are charged with its keeping have found it difficult to redefine its boundaries in terms of *what* it is and *who* it includes. Despite this, as Waterton alludes, empowered by the New Labour government (1997-2010) through its social exclusion policy agenda the heritage sector developed a rhetoric of heritage as an

agent for social change. Writing in 2007, Waterton rightly points out that it was unclear what this rhetoric had actually done to 'the heritage'. This research has sought to find out if more clarity is evident in 2015 through an investigation of the way in which non-white ethnic groups in particular, have become part of 'the heritage' of England.

It is argued that ethnic diversity in England can no longer be presented as a modern phenomenon and its historicity is evident within the country's existing heritage stock. Bressey (2013a: 555) has asserted that understanding of 'our 'racialized past... demands a new emphasis on integrated multicultural histories of Britain...'. As will be described, the places, objects or other 'things' that are used to represent England's past are the tangible forms of 'the heritage' of the 'Nation'. Particular narratives are selected in order to interpret them and largely these narratives do not include non-white people. This thesis contends that there can be no more excuses for the lack of recognition of ethnic diversity as part of England's pre-twentieth-century past. Reimagining the narrative of the 'Nation' as one of 'integrated multicultural histories', told through these tangible 'things', is necessary to embed ethnic diversity as part of England's historic identity in the national psyche.

The initial inspiration for this research came from my own personal experience as project manager of two Heritage Lottery Funded (HLF) projects in Birmingham from 2009-2012 for a community group called the Sparkbrook Caribbean and African Women's Development Initiative (SCAWDI). These projects had, as their core priority, the engagement of local people with the histories of early (pre-1945) Black and Asian migrants to the West Midlands. During the course of these projects I collaborated with other works with similar remits: the National Trust's (NT) *Whose Story?* project¹ and Birmingham Central Library's *Connecting Histories*,² for example.

This experience left me acutely aware that work to uncover ‘hidden histories’ of ethnic diversity in Britain’s distant past was coming from a variety of sources funded by significant sums of public money, mostly from the HLF. Why then, I wondered, was the idea that non-white people had lived in Britain as early as the Roman occupation still treated as remarkable by the media and at mainstream heritage places? This question is at the core of my research: why has the significant amount of work that has told the stories of early Black presences in England not resulted in a sustained challenge to the narrative of England’s past as told through its heritage places, objects and other tangible ‘things’?

This question led me to the academic inspiration for this research, largely derived from three publications. The first, *The Politics of Heritage: The Legacies of Race* (Littler and Naidoo 2005) is a collection of essays discussing the challenges to ‘the heritage’ posed by academics, heritage professionals, political activists and community groups, amongst others. The contributors called for recognition of Britain’s historical ethnic diversity and argued the case to have this reflected in the story of the ‘Nation’. The essays reflected the political impetus behind a heritage sector that was desired to be more ‘representative’ of the myriad of people that were, are, and will be, a part of Britain’s national story. This impetus had been provided by the New Labour government elected in 1997 who created the Social Exclusion Unit and demanded ‘social inclusion’ as a necessary outcome of the work of all of its departments. This included the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) that sponsors many major heritage institutions in the country. This will be explored in-depth in Chapter Four but for understanding here, ‘social exclusion’ refers to the government policy and ‘social inclusion’ to its intended outcome. Three questions were asked by Littler (2005: 2) in her introduction to *Politics* that clearly resonate with

my personal reflections noted above and will feel familiar on reading further into this thesis:

What has been assumed to be part of British heritage, and how has this been marked in terms of 'race', 'ethnicity' and nationality alongside gender and class? Who has decided what constitutes "heritage"? And, most of all, what are the possibilities for radical heritage agendas that can imagine decentred, hybrid and culturally diverse narratives of British history and identity?

The second text is *Uses of Heritage* (Smith 2006) that describes the highly influential idea of an Authorised Heritage Discourse (AHD) that, Smith argues, exists in the West. The concept is described in more detail in Chapter Three. Having been introduced to the idea that there was a particular way of *seeing* heritage in England, I was interested to investigate the way in which this influenced the issues of representation, diversity, inclusion and engagement that have populated many policy and practice documents from the heritage sector since 1997.

The final text, heavily influenced by *Uses of Heritage* itself, particularly the AHD, is *Politics, Policy and the Discourses of Heritage in Britain* (Waterton 2010a). Waterton's book built on her 2007 PhD thesis 'Rhetoric and Reality' completed at the University of York under Smith's supervision. In her work, Waterton interrogates the New Labour government's efforts to use 'the heritage' to foster social inclusion. In so doing, she argues, there occurred a masking of the '*real*' problem of "heritage" – that it is inherently exclusive' (Waterton 2007: 2, emphasis in original). An intention in

this research has been to investigate whether the exclusive nature of ‘the heritage’ has been accepted by heritage professionals and, if so, what changes are necessary in order that ‘excluded’ groups might become a part of England’s national story?

These sources of inspiration provoked an interlinking question: can England’s heritage, as it is presently imagined, be ethnically diverse or are exercises in heritage inclusion doomed only to emphasise a distinction between ‘our’ heritage and ‘theirs’? Littler and Naidoo’s book talks of the frustration of trying to get non-white heritage narratives into mainstream heritage institutions; Smith’s argument that heritage in England must be something tangible and revered suggested why this might occur and Waterton’s analysis of England’s heritage policy under New Labour described how this rhetoric affected heritage reality.

Using these texts and my own experience as a basis my intention has been to provide a contribution to the following requirement:

...more work is required that demonstrates, in no uncertain terms, the political and ethical dangers of continuing to shore up ideals of cohesion and Britishness against a racially coded and class-based sense of heritage and belonging. This should not..., be the sort of project that reinforces the demarcation of different sorts of British subjects – between those who represent “diversity” and those who represent “us”. This should be the sort of research that powerfully and empirically asserts the rights of *other* groups to claim the nation and negotiate its meaning, values and symbols (Waterton 2010a: 212, emphasis in original).

This research seeks to carry out this work by ‘testing’ heritage projects that have sought to engage with non-white heritages in mainstream heritage contexts in terms of their impact on ‘the heritage’ of England. This will offer a response as to whether or not, in 2015, the story of the ‘Nation’, as told through its heritage places, objects, etc. is undergoing a process of re-imagination following thirteen years of rhetoric as to the need to create a more ‘inclusive’ society under New Labour, as well as the policy agenda of the subsequent Coalition government. From its election in 2010 this government, led by the Conservative party, abandoned social exclusion as a policy and pushed ‘localism’ which has had its own impact on the way in which heritage is expected to engage with diverse communities. The conclusions of this thesis as to the place of ethnically diverse heritages in England’s heritage in 2015 therefore, represent the cumulative influence, in the main, of these two political ideologies.

Furthermore, in response to Littler and Naidoo’s (2007 [2004]) argument that the problematic of the current iteration of Britain’s heritage is that it is aligned to a ‘white past/multicultural present’ position, this research will focus on instances where non-white heritage has been presented as part of the narrative of pre-1948 England. This reflects the period before the Empire Windrush brought immigrants from the Caribbean to Britain, often depicted as the ‘the beginning of “multicultural Britain”’ (Branston 2005: 146; also Naidoo 2005: 42-43). References to such heritage narratives will be referred to as ‘early’ heritage narratives.

1.2 Terminology

Visible Communities

There are various terms used to describe non-white people in Britain/England; the most common perhaps are BAME or BME (Black and Minority Ethnic). This research is concerned with highlighting instances of 'othering' that often have no basis other than visual difference i.e. skin tone. This is not to suggest that some non-white people in England might be described as culturally different to those who are defined, or define themselves, as white-British, but that this is a layer of difference recognised separately to the visual (the same can be said for people categorised as 'White'). For example, ethnic monitoring in the heritage (and indeed other) sectors often have one ethnic profiling category for 'White' and thus all other categories must logically be assumed to consist of 'non-White' people.³ This research has thus decided to use the term 'visible community' (VC) after Askins (2009), who herself took the term from Alibhai-Brown (2000). Askins argues that VC does not suggest a minority/majority binary as does BAME. This binary is, according to Alibhai-Brown, 'inaccurate and unhelpful' because it places 'White' people into a homogenous majority contrasting it with non-White minorities (Alibhai-Brown 2000: x). Furthermore, asserts Askins:

'Visible communities' is *not* intended to reify visible difference from a white 'norm', but..., as a *political signifier* to highlight that there are power inequalities endemic in English society, which are commonly grounded in perceptions of inferiority and threat attached to visible difference from a white 'norm' (Askins 2009: 367, emphasis in original).

It is these 'power inequalities' that are being investigated here in relation to the heritage sector and thus VC is viewed as an appropriate term for doing so.

Cultural Built Heritage

As is discussed in Chapter Four, English Heritage (EH), the non-departmental government body responsible for conserving 'the heritage' of England, have preferred the term 'historic environment' to describe 'All aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible or buried, and deliberately planted or managed flora' (EH 2008a: 71). Thus the 'historic environment' claims to be any evidence of human beings 'managing' the environment in the past. The inherent objectivity claimed by this term is challenged in Chapter Four and thus when describing places where the environment has been 'managed' by human beings in the past this thesis prefers the term cultural built heritage (CBH). CBH in this thesis refers to places where human beings in the past have added physical materials to a landscape that reflect their contextual experience. As recognised by Pendlebury *et al.* (2004: 27 fn. 1; see also Shore 2006), CBH is also 'officially acknowledged heritage, recognised through such designations as listed buildings or conservation areas.' The use of the word 'heritage' is of most import here as it reflects the position in this thesis (see below) that decisions over what from the past is of importance to the future are heavily value-laden and thus there is no objective 'historic environment'.

Heritage

A historiography of the term 'heritage' and its various uses is contained in Chapter Three. In order to be specific about how this chapter - and thesis as a whole - is understanding and using the term, Harrison's definition is useful:

...heritage is not a "thing" or a historical or political movement, but refers to a set of attitudes to, and relationships with, the past. These relationships are characterised by a reverence and attachment to select objects, places and practices that are thought to connect with or exemplify the past in some way (Harrison 2013a: 14).

Heritage then, is a process or 'cultural practice', not a fixed idea and will be explored as such through this research (Smith 2006: 11; also Carman 2009; Crouch 2010; Watson and Waterton 2010; Haldrup and Bøerenholdt 2015). However, it would be disingenuous to suggest that, in England, and indeed the West more generally, nations do not have 'a heritage'. This heritage is determined by a select group of 'experts' to be of utmost importance to the identity of the 'Nation'. For EH, for example, this is referred to as the 'established' heritage, a term that is interrogated in Chapter Four. For the purposes of this thesis therefore, when referring to 'the heritage' reference is being made to a heritage that has been presented by 'experts' as static, permanent and agreed: as authorised.

The Heritage Sector

The heritage sector has been understood in its broadest possible terms. Following Hall (2005 [1999]: 23), this sector should be viewed as encompassing:

...the whole complex of organisations, institutions and practices devoted to the preservation and presentation of culture and the arts – art galleries, specialist collections, public and private, museums of all kinds.., and sites of special historical interest.

Thus, although in places this research distinguishes between CBH and museums, the thesis as a whole does not see the heritage sector as encompassing one or the other but both. Organisations responsible for CBH and those responsible for museums have produced their own policy and strategic documents that set out how they planned to engage with New Labour's social exclusion policy agenda and the similarities and differences between them are discussed in Chapter Four. In brief, museums certainly embraced the idea that they might be agents of social inclusion more wholeheartedly than agencies that manage CBH (see for example Newman and McLean 1998; Research Centre for Museums and Galleries 2000; Sandell 2002; Nightingale and Sandell 2012) but this does not change the fact that, in England, the heritage sector as a whole under this government agenda was expected to engage with more diverse audiences, as is discussed in all of the main research chapters. This is reflected upon, in particular, at the 2010 heritage sector conference 'From the Margins to the Core'? (see Chapter Five) which provided a summary of the work to

engage with more diverse audiences that had been carried over the preceding years and welcomed delegates from museums, CBH and academia. Further, as is picked up in the discussion of the Mayor's Commission on African and Asian Heritage (Chapter Five) and throughout Chapter Eight, both museums and CBH used the bicentenary of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade as a way to develop a new ethnically diverse narrative of England's past. This research therefore, supports the observation of Young (1997: 7) that the dichotomy between museums and CBH is 'meaningless and even counter-productive'. As heritage can be found in any relationship with the past it is deemed unhelpful here to separate CBH from museums, both of which can be seen as facilitators of these relationships.

1.3 The objectives of this research

Having outlined the reasons for conducting this research and the terminology involved in the discussion, this section will state explicitly what the objectives of this thesis are:

1. To establish the influence of New Labour's social exclusion policy agenda and the Coalition's 'localism' agenda in England's heritage sector over time and the extent to which they are an appropriate approach to engaging with VCs.

This objective will be met by building on Waterton's study of heritage policy and practice in Britain under New Labour and their social exclusion policy agenda through a broader analysis of the way in which it has been translated by both state-

sponsored and private heritage agencies (Chapters Four and Five). The purpose of this work is to look at the heritage sector more holistically than was possible under Waterton's remit and thus discuss the evolution of the use of heritage as a tool for inclusion and, more recently, localism. Due to the proximity of 'localism' to this research, less can be said about what it has *done* to 'the heritage' but assessment of its influence on the forward strategic planning of mainstream heritage organisations can allow for some suggestion of what its impact might be on the creation of a diverse national heritage. By looking outside of the state-sponsored heritage this research is able to compare methodologies for engaging VCs through heritage. The purpose is to highlight the differences in approach of organisations not legislatively obliged to adhere to the government's agenda and suggest the merits and/or limitations of both.

2. To understand the characteristics of specific heritage projects designed to engage with an ethnically diverse audience.

This research is particularly interested in the way in which public funds were spent on New Labour's social inclusion mission. The HLF is argued in this thesis to have been the government's main weapon in the fight against exclusion from 'the heritage' by funding specific projects to diversify it, in terms of both its audiences and narratives. It is useful therefore, to investigate the characteristics of individual projects funded by the HLF that had as a core objective the engagement of VCs. This is done through two case study chapters. The first looks at diversity work in the context of CBH and the second focuses on museums. The purpose is to establish

what, in reality, diversity work designed to foster social inclusion actually looks like and what have been the legacies of it in organisations where it has taken place?

3. To investigate the narrative content of early VC heritage at mainstream heritage places.

It is argued, in particular in Chapter Eight, that although VCs have been discussed as ‘under-represented’ in ‘the heritage’ from the turn of the millennium, particularly in relation to narrative representation, no coherent strategy to remedy this was developed by the heritage sector until 2006. This year marked the start of the development of activities to commemorate the bicentenary of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade that took place the following year. This thesis will argue that the importance of this commemoration lay largely in its provision of an authorised narrative through which to include VCs in ‘the heritage’ of England. The subsequent hegemony of this narrative in relation to presentations of early VC heritages will be explored along with the possible consequences of this.

4. To investigate models of heritage making in England that might support a heritage narrative interpretation centred on diversity and equality.

Ultimately, this research is interested in whether or not the heritage sector sees itself as having the capacity to reimagine the narrative of England’s heritage as ethnically diverse. Although there is much goodwill and significant resources directed towards change, it is argued here that the present model of heritage making is inadequate for this task. This thesis will explore alternatives that are perhaps better placed to

recognise heritage as diverse, fluid and able to provide the opportunity for more people to have a say in its use.

1.4. The ‘uses’ of heritage

Given this thesis’s preoccupation with heritage narratives some background is necessary as to why this is. Heritage is something of many ‘uses’ (Smith 2006) and like anything with a determined use value it is managed. In England, where heritage is most often seen as *experienced* (Tunbridge and Ashworth 1996; Lowenthal 1996), the process of its management is negotiated through a complex set of practices that reflect the fact that what heritage *means* and what it should be *for* is understood differently from person to person and group to group (Cleere 1989; Carman 2002). Heritage therefore, is inherently dissonant (Tunbridge and Ashworth 1996). This does not mean however, that heritage is democratic and indeed one version of heritage - usually that of the dominant social group - is often given precedence over others (Wright 1985; Hewison 1987; Walsh 1992; Tunbridge and Ashworth 1996; Smith 2006; Smith and Waterton 2009a; Waterton 2010a).

Heritage narratives are no different. A narrative is ‘*the representation of an event or a series of events*’ (Porter Abbott 2002: 12, emphasis in original). They are therefore temporal and aligned to a sense of place. In a heritage context they provide a place, object, dance, language, etc. with *meaning*. How that narrative is constructed, by whom, for what purpose, with what funding, inevitably leads to some people identifying with that narrative more than others. A heritage narrative is interpreted and this interpretation closes off that narrative to other interpretations (Porter Abbott 2002). The interest of this thesis is whether the social exclusion policy

agenda, as implemented in the heritage sector, has recognised heritage narratives as in need of being more accessible to more people at the point of interpretation. This will be explored through the extent to which heritage narratives of VCs have been intertwined with existing narratives through re-interpretations at heritage places in England.

Waterton (2007; 2010a) has already considered in depth the impact of New Labour's social exclusion policy agenda on heritage discourse in England. In doing so she asserted that public policy enabled a 'particular understanding of "heritage"':

This idea of 'heritage' pulls together a very tightly crafted sense of what it *is* and what it *does*, and privileges the cultural symbols of the ruling elite. Rather than question the relevance such a construction of 'heritage' might have beyond the white middle-and upper-classes, the public policy path taken skates considerably closer to a programme of re-education and cultural assimilation (Waterton 2007: 2, emphasis in original).

It is argued in this thesis that by focusing our attention on narratives that are capable of being negotiated and challenged through official and unofficial channels, heritage can have more uses to more people whilst remaining fundamentally *experienced* though the same (tangible) stuff as before. Narratives can be at the core of a 'dialogic' heritage in England in 2015 because their diversity - or plurality - is not 'hidden' or 'unknown' but 'overlooked'. By *seeing* this diversity, and most importantly,

engaging with it, 'the heritage' can become a fluid process of negotiation between various stakeholders.

The central argument of this thesis is that inclusion/exclusion is a fundamentally flawed discourse because it confirms the existence of an 'established' or 'core' heritage to which the 'excluded' must be 'included'. A heritage that does not recognise its own constitution as having the potential for change is a heritage that requires others to adapt to it not the other way around. As is explored in Chapter Nine, this does not encourage multiple voices in the heritage making process and maintains the hegemony of the 'expert' within it. This is not the formula for a diverse heritage which emphasises that all have a right to influence the heritage of the place they call home. This thesis focuses on the influence of diverse or 'alternative' narratives and considers the extent to which applying them to authorised (or 'established') heritage places, objects and other tangible 'things' has forced a re-imagining of what the 'established' heritage is. A diverse heritage is not an either/or proposition like inclusive/exclusive as at its core is a search for difference as opposed to a desire for consensus.

1.5 Why England?

I have focused on England within this research because any discussion of an official British heritage would be somewhat disingenuous. For example, Great Britain has three separate heritage agencies funded by the state for each of its constituent nations: EH, Historic Scotland and Cadw. Each claims to look after the 'historic environment' within its own borders. Another example would be the NT; the largest keeper of natural and built heritage in England and Wales which also has a separate

corporate entity for Scotland. In short, the heritage of the 'Nation' is defined politically and geographically as that of an English nation, and so this study has focused on England as its area of interest. This is not to suggest England is unique in its conception what 'the heritage' *is*, whom it is *for*, and what it *does*. Indeed, the document that enshrined the idea of a national heritage in England in 1983, the National Heritage Act, draws on internationally agreed criteria for preserving CBH most obviously set out in the Venice Charter of 1964 and World Heritage Convention of 1972 (Harrison 2013a).

1.6. The structure and findings of this thesis

The structure of this thesis has been set out as follows: firstly, in **Chapter Two**, I have set out the methodologies used for data collection. This includes the reasons behind the two case studies chosen and how I have gone about understanding the heritage sector in England and its relationship with New Labour's social exclusion policy agenda from 1997-2010, as well as assessing its continuing influence, even in its absence, under the subsequent Coalition government from 2010-2013. This includes a review of heritage sector policy and practice documents and interviews carried out with heritage sector professionals.

Chapter Three is a literature review that serves to contextualise the subsequent arguments. This includes a review of the growing body of heritage studies literature and the evolution of the term 'heritage' within it over time. I also review literature regarding cultural identity that sets out the importance of place to one's own view of who they are. The role of narratives in identity construction is also reviewed before introducing literature that has recognised efforts to include VCs in

‘the heritage’. It is argued that, consistent with the AHD, in England the key narrator of heritage is the ‘expert’, to whom all others should defer. The involvement of the non-‘expert’ in heritage making has increased more recently, having a variable impact on authorised heritage values, a point that is engaged with in more depth in Chapters Four and Five. This chapter concludes with the suggestion of a ‘critical turn’ in heritage studies in recent years that, amongst other things, questions the universal value of heritage.

Chapter Four and **Chapter Five** review the way in which the state-sponsored heritage sector (Chapter Four) and non-state-sponsored heritage sector (Chapter Five) in England have talked about engaging with VCs. Beginning with a brief history of multiculturalism in Britain that placed VCs as a priority group in terms of ‘the excluded’ by the end of the twentieth century, policy and practice documents, conference reports and secondary literature relating to England’s heritage sector are then interrogated in order to develop a chronology of thought regarding how VCs might be engaged with ‘the heritage’ between 1997 and 2013. This period encompasses three terms of a New Labour government and the first three years of Conservative/Liberal Democrat Coalition. The intention here is to compare and contrast the development of a discourse of social inclusion within the diverse institutions that make up England’s heritage sector and identify the extent to which the idea of narrative change, as a stated method for fostering social inclusion, was considered as appropriate and feasible for engaging with VCs. The point I will make is that narrative change at the beginning of this period was brought up regularly as a way of including VCs in ‘the heritage’ without it ever really happening. The insistence that there was an ‘established’ heritage to which others might be added acted as a barrier to challenging ‘the heritage’ from within and kept diversity work at arm’s

length from core heritage activity. More recently, governance has become the method through which inclusion and a diverse heritage are most favourably imagined by the heritage sector. The findings in these chapters make it clear that despite the plethora of efforts in the mainstream heritage sector to engage with ‘under-represented’ audiences over the course of more than a decade, the approaches taken have generally been considered too experimental and unsustainable to penetrate everyday operational activity. In short, although the plurality of heritage has been recognised by mainstream heritage agencies, it was conceived as layered as opposed to intertwined, with the ‘established’ heritage maintaining its privileged position as the foundation stone of England’s past, present and future.

This thesis then presents two case studies that look at how social inclusion and a diverse heritage have been attempted in practice in England’s CBH (**Chapter Six**) and museum sector (**Chapter Seven**). Despite often being considered separately when it comes to audience engagement, this thesis argues that although the results and approaches have been different, museums and CBH have shown a remarkably similar consideration of the role of heritage narratives when it comes to engaging with VCs.

Chapter Six discusses the activities of three major ‘diversity’ projects at the NT that sought explicitly to engage with VCs. It is argued that despite more than £1 million of public money (via the HLF) being spent over the course of a decade by the organisation, one would be hard pressed to see a more ethnically diverse heritage narrative of England presented at their places as a result. The title of Chapter Six, ‘the experimental heritage’, alludes to the fact that although the NT could have learned faster and taken more risk on itself in carrying out this work, as an organisation, it speaks far more confidently subsequently about what it intends to do

to make itself an institution that engages with a more diverse range of people. Although it is not agreed in this thesis that governance alone – the NT’s preferred route to diversity - is sufficient, one can note a cultural change within the leadership of the organisation. A problem remains however, with the NT’s ‘Going Local’ corporate strategy that asserts that properties should reflect their immediate communities. With this strategy, it is argued, rural places that represent the heart of ‘the heritage’ of England will remain closed off to the idea that they are, in fact, home to a plurality of heritage narratives, some of which involve VCs.

Chapter Seven is a case study of the recently opened Birmingham history galleries at Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery (BMAG), investigating the way in which the discourse of social inclusion and local demographic change have influenced the way Birmingham presents its past at its flagship museum. Whilst praising the ambition of the BMAG galleries in re-imagining Birmingham’s heritage narrative in a permanent setting – something that this research shows has been lacking in the wider sector – this chapter notes the monopoly the narrative of the transatlantic slave trade appears to have over early the VC heritage narrative in Birmingham. This chapter also argues that ‘alternative’ narratives are best presented to visitors via the curatorial voice in order to provide them with the required authority to penetrate ‘the heritage’ of the ‘Nation’.

These two chapters suggest a heritage sector that, until 2006, offered only a fragmented paternalistic commitment to becoming more representative of VCs. The reasoning for this is explained in more detail in **Chapter Eight** that describes the level of engagement from the heritage sector with the commemoration of the bicentenary of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade that, it is argued, acted as a hammer with which to bash the existing authorised heritage narrative. This

argument is caveated according to its variable legacy at individual heritage institutions and places and issue some commentators have raised with the use of abolition as the lens through which to present the slave trade. This effectively places the benevolence of white British abolitionists at the centre of the narrative rather than the experiences of the enslaved.

Chapter Nine is a discussion of what the findings of the previous chapters suggest the place of VCs is in 'the heritage' of England in 2015. This is responded to with the suggestion that 'the heritage' will not be representative of England's past, present and future population until it challenges the hegemony of the 'established' heritage narrative. This includes the argument that a diverse heritage underpinned by a fundamental commitment to equality might be imagined through the existing dominant characteristic - its tangibility - of heritage in England.

The point of these arguments is to challenge the negative image that has been built up around the tangible in heritage discussions (Smith 2006; Smith and Waterton 2009a). It is argued that tangible heritage 'things' are contained by a plurality of heritage narratives that can engage with a plurality of identities. The AHD can be harnessed via its insistence on the inherent tangibility of heritage by reimagining the heritage narratives that are told through these 'things'. Furthermore, it is argued that heritage has no universalising discourse and individual heritages can be reimagined if they are considered to be part of a dialogic process that cannot be governed from above. Policy is only one dialogue that forms part of the process of heritage making that is *a/ways* up for discussion. It is argued that although little has actually changed in terms of the narrative interpretations of England's heritage over the last fifteen years or so, ongoing conversations within the sector and also more widely have ensured that there is a persistent challenge to the status quo of how

heritage is seen, felt and experienced in England in authorised contexts. 'Inclusion' is an unhelpful concept and should be abandoned in heritage terms. This thesis argues the case for Naidoo's (2009: 66; 2010: 79) 'cultural democracy' that recognises that 'the heritage' is not 'established' and, like any democracy, can be changed according to the will of the people. This thesis explores this will and how it might be harnessed for a dialogic heritage.

Chapter 2: The Research Methodologies

2.1 Research methodologies of this thesis

Four methods of data gathering have formed the basis for the original research element of this thesis. Data collected via these four methods has informed this research at various points. Three of these methods form the central aspect of particular chapters whereas the other (interviews) informs the discussion throughout. Each of these methods will be discussed individually below. In brief, the research methods employed were:

- Review of heritage sector reporting and conference proceedings from, or relating to, the heritage sector dating from the period 1997-2013. This includes heritage policy and strategic documents from the government department responsible for England's heritage sector – the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and those non-departmental bodies responsible to it. In addition policy and strategic documents from the privately run National Trust (NT) are interrogated as well as the reports generated from specific sector initiatives and conferences that engaged with the matter of diversifying England's heritage. 1997 reflects the coming to power of the New Labour government who brought with them a social exclusion policy agenda (see Chapter Four). 2013 indicates the end of the period allowed for this particular source material to be collected as set out in the planning of this research.

- Two case studies of individual heritage projects carried out at mainstream heritage institutions that explicitly sought to engage with VCs.
- Semi-structured interviews with heritage sector professionals who have been involved with heritage sector projects that explicitly sought to engage with VCs or else have played a wider strategic role in engaging VCs with ‘the heritage’ of England.
- A survey of visitors to Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery’s *Birmingham: its people, its history* galleries that opened in 2012 (see Chapter Seven).

These four methods collectively were designed to build towards an overview of what was happening in England’s heritage sector in relation to VC engagement activities from the late 1990s and the way in which heritage professionals, academics and ‘the public’ recognised resulting change. By employing these methodologies I have been able to provoke a discussion in Chapter Nine of the limits and opportunities for early VC heritage penetration into ‘the heritage’ of England.

2.2 Review of policy documents and conference proceedings

The heritage sector, as defined in Chapter One, has produced a wide variety of reports relevant to the subject of this research. The policies, strategic visions, reviews, action plans, amongst other things, that are held within them enable an analysis to be made as to what ‘the heritage’ *is*, how it is *made* and by *whom*. These questions have also been the subject of discussion at certain professional and academic conferences, thus materials from these events have also been considered

appropriate for analysis within this research. The findings of these analyses are contained in Chapter Four and Chapter Five.

In carrying out these reviews it became clear that they perpetuated a discourse of social inclusion. Discourse has been described by Hodder *et al.* as:

The structured conditions within which statements can be made... arranged according to systems and criteria of inclusion and exclusion [including] patterns of authority (committees and hierarchies, for example) and systems of sanctioning, accreditation, and legitimation (Hodder *et al.* 1995, cited in Carman 2002: 1).

These documents were produced by the heritage sector; various bodies both privately and publically funded who decided and debated amongst them the meaning of heritage, how under-represented groups might be included in it and what the consequences of that might be for 'the heritage'. By looking at the discourse of social inclusion i.e. the limitations placed upon its meaning by the language used to understand it and the authorities from which these understandings came I have been able to suggest how this discourse has shaped the way in which the narratives of early VC heritages have been able to penetrate 'the heritage' of England. This method resembles a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) in that it:

...takes as its focus (1) a set of discursive practices used to represent the world and (2) the material and symbolic affects of those discursive practices, particularly their ability to secure power (Waterton 2010a: 22).

Furthermore, as will be explored further below and throughout this research, the approach reflects the seven 'key aspects' of CDA highlighted by Waterton (Table 2.1). However, CDA is a prescribed method of analysing discourse with its own terminology which is not being claimed to have been followed during this work (see Fairclough 2003). The reason for this is that it was felt that following a prescribed method through which to analyse a whole sector's approach to New Labour's social exclusion policy agenda and that approach's impact on early VC heritage narratives would be unhelpful. As is described in Chapter Four, social inclusion, social exclusion, diversity, participation etc. have all held different and inconsistent meanings within the sector. As Law argues, 'simple clear descriptions don't work if what they are describing is not itself very coherent. The very attempt to be clear simply increases the mess' (Law 2004: 2). Although I identify a discourse of social inclusion in this research therefore and suggest what it might *do*, I have not tried to formalise my method in doing so and unapologetically take an ad-hoc approach to reading these documents, allowing my own self to make my own judgements. The point of this is to accept that there are no certain answers to the questions I am posing. This does not mean that there is no method to my analysis, but rather I have taken a more fluid approach. As Law argues, using one method to decipher clues may create a snapshot of the world but deludes us to thinking that we can see the truth of a single reality. By 'groping' instead, it may be less precise, 'but we will learn

a lot more about a far wider range of realities. And we will..., participate in the *making* of those realities' (Law 2004: 10).

Key aspects of critical discourse analysis
• A focus on social and discourse structure
• A focus on social issues and problems
• Aims to show how discourse figures in social problems/change
• Multi-, inter-, and trans-disciplinary approach
• Explanatory/interpretive
• Takes an explicitly political stance
• Self-reflective research
• An emphasis on power and ideology
• Includes non-verbal communication

Table 2.1: Key aspects of CDA

Source: Waterton 2010a: 21

This review of policy documents and conference proceedings has contributed towards the research in two ways: firstly, by responding to Smith's (2006) assertion that there is an Authorised Heritage Discourse (AHD) in England (see Chapter Three for further explanation) and this has influenced the creation and limitations of the discourse of social inclusion that permeates heritage sector policy and practice documents from the end of the last millenium. Secondly, the main interest of this thesis is in the extent to which early VC heritage narratives have been, and are being, interpreted at mainstream heritage places: as part of 'the heritage'. Through these sources I have been able to trace the heritage sector's activities in this regard and also, its changing views on narrative change as a method of engagement with VCs over time.

The wide-ranging nature of the heritage sector materials reviewed have allowed for an holistic view of how the heritages of VCs, and VCs themselves, have been engaged by the heritage sector. This has not been done to such extent in any other singular piece of research and therefore can make a useful contribution to debates around heritage equality and democracy (see Newman and McLean 1998; Littler and Naidoo 2005; Newman and McLean 2006; Smith and Waterton 2009a; Appignanesi 2010; Sandell and Nightingale 2012).

2.3.1 Case studies

This thesis contains two case study research chapters. It was considered that due to the project nature of work which considered VC engagement in the heritage sector a case study approach was the most appropriate for reflecting this. Simons (2009: 21) has provided a useful definition of a case study. It is:

...an in depth exploration from multiple perspectives of the complexity and uniqueness of a particular project, policy, institution, programme or system in a 'real life' context. It is research-based, inclusive of different methods and is evidence-led.

It is not appropriate to try and suggest that one project is representative of another and by taking the case study approach this observation is immediately ceded.

However, this is not to suggest that the projects analysed in this research cannot be seen to share some characteristics, not least in their desire to engage with an

‘under-represented’ audience through the use of exploring an ‘alternative’ heritage narrative or presentation method. The case studies used in this research should be considered ‘exemplifying’ in that the cases are ‘chosen not because they are extreme or unusual in some way but that either they epitomize a broader category of cases or they will provide a suitable context for certain research questions to be answered’ (Bryman 2012: 70). The case study approach is both intrinsic – of interest in and of itself – and instrumental – relevant more widely to the thesis subject matter – to the findings of this research (Stake 1995, cited from Simons 2009).

2.3.2 Choosing the case studies

Two case studies were selected to inform this research. These were:

- The *Whose Story?* project: NT project to increase participation of VC groups at four of their properties in the West Midlands. Received £547,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) over two project cycles. The first was a development phase running from 2005 to 2007 and the second a delivery phase that ran from 2007-2011. Project recruited seven members of staff and more than 150 volunteers specifically to carry out the work who were supported by existing staff and volunteers.
- Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery’s (BMAG) *Birmingham: its people, its history* galleries: development of local history galleries with a stated aim of engaging with the local VC population. This project received £4.2 million from the HLF towards the £8.9 million total cost. Ran from January 2010 to

November 2012. Project team consisted of freelance curator and filmmakers supported by permanent staff. Also advised by a selected Community Action Panel, Historians Advisory Group and Schools Advisory Group.

Central to the selection of these two case studies was the fact that I had been involved in both of the projects whilst working for SCAWDI between 2009 and 2012. I also worked directly for the NT in 2012 as a Community Outreach Officer so had first-hand experience of how audience development operates within the organisation, as well as a more general understanding of the organisational structure. In relation to BMAG, I was part of an expanded historian's advisory group which met annually during the development of the new galleries between 2010 and 2012 to discuss progress and contribute ideas to the process. I have therefore seen how the consideration of increasing the diversity of the audience at BMAG directly influenced curatorial decisions and outreach programmes during the making of the galleries.

These professional connections provided an entry-point in terms of setting up the interviews I required with project staff (see below) as well as gaining access to evaluation materials and invitations to discussion workshops organised by BMAG and the NT. Aside from these obvious 'convenience' factors however, the projects were still required to comply with a series of qualification criteria set out at the start of this research project: These were:

- The project must have VC groups as a stated target for audience engagement.
- The project must be connected with an 'authorised' (tangible) heritage place where resulting materials can be presented.

- The project must have received funding from the HLF.
- The project must be practically accessible for the researcher both geographically and in terms of information.
- The project must be completed by 2012 but not earlier than 2010.
- The project must have an element of internal or external evaluation.
- The projects must be suitably different from each other to warrant the conducting of two case studies.

These criteria require some explanation. On the first criterion, this thesis is concerned with presentations of early VC heritage narratives through heritage places in England and so it was considered projects which had a stated aim to engage with VC audiences were most likely to consider this as an avenue to explore.

The second point responds to Smith's AHD. In brief, the AHD states that heritage must be something tangible which can be visited (Smith 2006). Since a key element of this research is how (or if) early VC heritage narratives can exist within the parameters of the AHD, it stands to reason that the projects investigated must have a connection with a tangible heritage place. It was felt that researching projects which fell within this basic tenet of the AHD would provide useful examples of the possibility of narrative change within it.

The HLF is one of many bodies which fund heritage projects in the UK. Renaissance⁴ funding has been significant in the museums sector, and the Big Lottery Fund⁵ also supports a wide range of heritage initiatives. However, being funded by the HLF has been singled out as an imperative for inclusion as a case study project in this research because it is the 'largest dedicated funder of the UK's

heritage'.⁶ In addition, as mentioned in Chapter One, I have previously worked on heritage projects funded by the HLF and therefore was already familiar with its grants programmes.

Regarding the fourth criterion, since the research project was based in Birmingham, case studies had to be in geographical locations which could be realistically visited on multiple occasions during the course of the work, as well as with organisations that were amenable to being involved.

Since the timetable for the research necessitated that information on case study projects needed to be collected by the end of 2013 it was imperative that the case study projects were completed at least one year in advance of this so that some assessment of legacy could be made. This was also relevant to the criterion of not finishing prior to 2010 since the nature of project funding often encourages the recruitment of extra personnel by the grant receiver for the life-span of the project, thus it was likely that these staff would have moved on upon completion and would become harder to locate further from this time. Miller (2011), in his review of another large-scale audience engagement project carried out by the NT, found that trying to find people who were involved seven years after the event was very difficult, if not impossible.

Regarding the sixth criterion, in order to supplement my own analysis, it was deemed useful that the organisation involved in the case study project had conducted (internally or through a third party) its own assessment of how well the project had met its initial objectives. As well as providing a tool for comparison, this also useful to understand the extent of critical evaluation in relation to VC engagement work within the heritage sector (see Lynch 2011).

Finally, it would have been possible, for instance, to consider two NT projects for these case studies, since another similar piece of work took place in London at the same time as *Whose Story?* (see Chapter Six). It was considered more useful however, for the case studies to operate in different environments to reflect the diversity of institutions that comprise the heritage sector as recognised in this research.

Table 2.1 below demonstrates how the *Whose Story?* project and the BMAG galleries fulfilled the criteria set out above:

Case Study	VC engagement?	Attached to heritage place?	HLF funded?	Accessible?	Completed between 2010 and 2012?	Evaluation conducted?	Project environment
<i>Whose Story?</i> (NT)	Yes	Yes (four heritage sites)	Yes (£547,000 total over two project cycles)	Yes (based in West Midlands)	Yes (completed 2011)	Yes	CBH
BMAG: Birmingham galleries	Yes	Yes (BMAG)	Yes (£4.2 million)	Yes (based in Birmingham)	Yes (completed 2012)	Yes	Museum

Table 2.2: Agreement of criteria for inclusion by selected case studies

These projects were analysed and interpreted through the following means, some of which are elaborated upon in subsequent sections in this chapter:

- Interviews with project staff.
- Survey of visitors to the heritage place.

- Project evaluation documents produced by, or on behalf of, the lead organisation.
- Reviews of secondary literature and policy documents relevant to the institutions in which the case study projects took place.

These case studies have allowed me to compare what VC engagement in the heritage sector looked like in reality, as compared with the discussions from within the sector represented by its related documents and conferences reviewed in Chapters Four and Five. The divide between the reality and the rhetoric informs the discussion in Chapter Nine.

2.4 Self-reflexivity in the research

Self-reflexivity is an important aspect of any research, especially considering that I have had prior involvement with the two case study projects chosen. Simons has noted the importance of considering who we (as the researcher) are; what about us will influence the way we conduct our case study (Simons 2009). Using the work of Peshkin she introduces the subjective 'I' which must be identified in order to reflect upon its role in the case study process (Peshkin 1988, cited in Simons 2009: 83-87). Recognising my personal perspective is an important consideration when discussing the findings of my research, as well as acknowledging that my perspective is only one amongst many. This is an approach taken by McDavid (2000) in her work on a former plantation site in the United States where she has worked with descendants of former slaves and slave owners. By questioning her role as the 'expert' she was able to encourage conversation and gather different perspectives regarding the site.

It is crucial therefore that I question the provenance of my assertions and challenge them by seeking out the assertions of others. For example, I have been a 'heritage professional', working for both small (peripheral) and large (mainstream) heritage organisations. Having worked for a community heritage group, which sits outside the authorised institutions of heritage, I must consider how this experience of 'outsider' status might affect this research. There are many ways in which a person's perspective may influence their research, from the germination of the idea through to the concluding remarks, and it would be impossible to engage with them all.

Marmion, using the work of Rossman and Rallis, has asserted that throughout the research process 'each researcher and their unique "*lens*", shaped by "*personal biography*", influence the way they view the social world and how they make sense of the research phenomenon' (Rossman and Rallis 2012: cited in Marmion 2012: 70-71, emphasis in original). As has been acknowledged above, I was a participant in both of the case study projects that form a central element of this research and had pre-formed opinions as to their qualities before starting this project. These are explored below.

The importance of considering self-reflexivity in this research is to acknowledge that 'I' will inevitably influence all aspects of this work through the experiences that I have had that led to the creation of this project in the first place. This does not have to be a bad thing – having worked in the heritage sector I have had first-hand experience of some of the things discussed in the research and also built relationships with other heritage professionals that have enabled me to collect information from a range of sources to enhance this discussion – but it is important to recognise preconceptions and be open to reconsidering them based on the findings. This reflexion, according to Feighery is '...an attempt to bring to the fore the

assumption embedded in one's perspectives and descriptions of the world' (Feighery 2006: 270-271). With specific reference to my analysis of the case studies in this research it has been necessary at all times to ask what aspects of my own experience, and person, are present in my findings. It is impossible to measure one's own biases using empirical evidence. The most effective way to be self-reflexive therefore, and to allow the reader to gauge themselves how my own experiences have contributed to my findings, is to make clear here opinions that I have formed from my professional experience – particularly my involvement in the two case study projects prior to commencing this research - that have undoubtedly (knowingly or not) influenced my conclusions:

- Heritage projects that are not carried out by mainstream heritage organisations often rely on other organisations to provide them with an authorised heritage place of 'thing' to which they can attach their product for it to attain authorisation as part of 'the heritage'.
- VC heritage narrative interpretation is most often imagined as a temporary addition to mainstream heritage places and not viewed as a permanent feature of 'the heritage' of England.
- The transatlantic slave trade has become *the* narrative of early VC heritage in England.

By recognising these as formed opinions going into this research, essentially I am recognising that 'I' am interested in either being proved right or wrong by conducting this research. I have sought to test these opinions throughout in order to understand

if they are supported or dismantled by the evidence. It is up to the reader to decide the extent to which I have been led by them, as opposed to them providing a useful foundation upon which to construct this research project.

2.5 Semi-structured interviews

A total of twelve interviews with heritage sector professionals were carried out as part of this research, as well as one with volunteers who worked at one of the case study sites and another with a group of academics. Thirteen of these were face-to-face whilst one was a telephone interview. A schedule of these interviews and more detail regarding their context can be found in Appendix A. The purpose of these interviews was threefold: to gain an insight into the way in which heritage policies responding to New Labour's social exclusion policy agenda have been translated by various heritage institutions over time; insight into how this has been realised in ways to engage with VCs more specifically; to gain insight into the case study projects. Of course, these objectives are not mutually exclusive and questioning regarding one has informed the others.

At the outset it was decided that interviewees not involved specifically in the case study projects would be from as wide a range of heritage organisations as possible. This ambition was constrained by the desire and ability of interviewees to give up their time to take part. In addition, carrying out interviews in person was subject to my ability to travel to the location of the interviewee.

Interviewees were approached either directly or through a third party. For instance, whilst working for the NT in 2012, I was able to contact potential NT

interviewees via internal channels. I also approached organisations such as EH directly and asked them to provide details of members of staff who might support my research. Others contacted me following a request for interviewees posted via the Diversity in Heritage Group (DHG), a network of heritage professionals who are concerned with the subject of diversity in their sector and share information regarding this subject matter.⁷ This group enabled me to organise meetings with employees at two museums, the British Museum and London Transport Museum whom I had not originally considered as potential sources of interviewees.

Prior to each interview I sent the interviewee a candidate consent form I required them to complete (Appendix B). Rigorous preparation for semi-structured interviews is vital (May 2001) thus I ensured that I found out as much about their role and organisation prior to the interview as possible in order to tailor my questions more specifically to each interviewee and ensure that I was aware of how each person might contribute towards my overall research.

The interviews were semi-structured since this was deemed the most effective way of ensuring they provided the information required for the research, whilst also allowing the possibility for interviewees to interpret questions differently and supplement responses with information that was perhaps not originally considered in the preparation stage. Shore (2006: 163-164) has described this as 'qualitative depth' whereby interviewees are allowed to 'talk within their own frames of reference, drawing upon ideas and meanings with which they are familiar. At the same time guidance by the researcher ensures that outcomes reflect the research aims.' Interviews would tend to follow a 'chronological method' whereby discussion would be designed to ascertain the organisational and individual changes over time that have occurred as a result of social inclusion work, both internally and externally

dictated (Hall 2001: 5-7). For each interview a list of core questions was used (see Appendix C), supplemented by more specific ones dependent on the particular individual. As stated by Bryman (2008), this approach allows for broadly consistent question content between interviews, whilst allowing leeway for both the interviewer and interviewee. Each interview was proposed to last an hour but the actual length varied.

Interviews were carried out in the institutional 'home' of the interviewee. As Waterton has observed, this provides 'an opportunity to observe and contextualise the corporate identity of the material interpreted' (Waterton 2007: 14). Additionally, it was felt more likely the interviewee would agree to a meeting at their own institution due to their own time constraints, and also that they would feel more comfortable and relaxed in a familiar environment therefore less guarded with responses. Nine of the interviews were recorded using a digital recorder and then transcribed, with both recording and transcription kept for clarity. The other five interviews were transcribed by hand during the course of the meeting.

The responses from these interviews have been used throughout the central research chapters of this thesis both to inform the debate and to support arguments. Not all of the interviews have been quoted from directly in this thesis but all have in some way shaped my thinking during the course of conducting this research. The range of backgrounds of the interviewees, from heritage volunteers to senior managers of national institutions and also academics, has helped me to evidence this research with the opinions of individuals who have played an active role in creating early VC heritages in England. This has complemented the sector reporting review and case studies by allowing those behind the reported activities to have their

say on what, in their minds, these activities have *done* to 'the heritage' in England over the course of the research period.

2.6.1 Online survey

The final method of data collection was an online survey. The survey was constructed using the *Google Drive* online tool which also collates and tabulates the data received. As Henn *et al.* (2009) argue, online surveys have an advantage over postal surveys as time and financial costs are reduced. Henn *et al.* (2009), as well as Bryman (2008), have cautioned however, that the use of online surveys immediately excludes those members of the public who do not have access to the internet or are not IT literate. In Britain, in 2013, 83 per cent of households had access to the internet (ONS 2013). 17 per cent of the population therefore, are not easily able to complete an online survey unless they access it at work or elsewhere. Internet usage also drops considerably in the over 65 years of age demographic (ONS 2013). Although this exclusion of a significant proportion of the population by conducting an online survey is important to note, it was determined that the specific targeting of these surveys, discussed in more detail below, meant that an online survey was the best way of reaching an appropriate sample audience for this research.

Once built, the online survey could be sent out to prospective respondents as a web link or within the body of an email. All responses were then collected anonymously via the survey tool. The survey constructed for this research project was directly related to the BMAG case study outlined above, henceforth known as the BMAG survey.

2.6.2 BMAG survey

The reasoning behind this survey was to supplement data collected by the museum itself as part of its evaluation process regarding their new local history galleries and also to allow for more targeted questions relating to the research question.

The survey was designed at the beginning of 2013 and a pilot sent out to a limited audience in April/May 2013 requesting feedback specifically with regards to clarity of question, subject matter and format (Fowler 2002). As suggested by Fowler (2002), being a self-administered questionnaire the majority of questions were closed with only limited space for anecdotal replies. Following this test phase the full survey was sent out in May 2013 with responses collected in at the end of September 2013; a reminder to complete was sent to each of the initial recipients one month before the closing date. The full survey can be found in Appendix D.

A particular limitation of this survey should be noted: the survey was distributed via my own e-network which I had built up over the course of my professional and academic experience within the heritage sector. This consisted of forty-two people from a variety of backgrounds but who had all expressed some interest in my work. Immediately then, there can be suggested a bias of people who already have an interest in the subject matter of my research and therefore, are perhaps likely to respond in a way which reflects this. In order to try and mediate this I encouraged 'snowballing', whereby I requested that each of the initial contacts forwarded to their own e-networks who were less likely to have a particular interest in my research topic (Shore 2006: 161). Although it is still likely that these groups reflected the broad interests of the original recipient, it did at least widen the pool of prospective respondents.

This survey method was chosen for five reasons. Firstly, it was felt that 'snowballing' allowed me the best chance to reach the largest number of potential respondents, an opportunity that would not have been possible with a postal or on-site survey. Secondly, the web survey was free to construct and send and thus was possible within my own financial constraints. Thirdly, a web survey was not as temporally restricted as if I had conducted the survey myself on-site, which would have had to have been done over just a few days. Fourthly, the museum's own surveys had been conducted on-site so I felt this provided an opportunity to compare data from an alternate source method. Finally, logistically, conducting the survey in person on-site was not realistic given the time taken to complete a questionnaire and lack of human resources and would have likely resulted in fewer responses being collected.

The number and profile of the respondents and results of this survey are analysed in more detail in Chapter Seven. The results themselves, having been collected, were collated in *Microsoft Excel* which was used to present the data in the appropriate form.

This survey, although specifically used in the analysis of BMAG's galleries in Chapter Seven, has also fed into the discussion of Chapter Nine relating to people's perceptions of how heritage is authorised and by whom. It has also contributed towards the wider discussion regarding what early VC heritage can be in a mainstream heritage context.

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter has sought to provide clarity as to how data used within this research has been collected, from whom, and to what end. It has shown how each of the four methods has contributed towards the overall research questions and supplemented the secondary literature reviewed during this research. Of the four, the survey is the least controlled in terms of selecting who has contributed towards this research but this is viewed as a positive as it allows the potential to source views outside of my own sphere of interest. Since the possibility was identified at the beginning of the research that the BMAG survey sample might provide only respondents who already have an interest in VC heritage, the survey data has been supplemented by other data relating to *Birmingham: its people, its history* either by, or on behalf of, the museum.

The importance of many perspectives is paramount within a piece of work on ‘the heritage’ of England, which, as will be addressed in this thesis, is itself a contested concept. The sector documents and interviews are used to understand the variation in application and understanding of an ‘inclusive’ heritage according to the many voices that influence what ‘the heritage’ is, and to point out the consistencies and contestation over how ‘the heritage’ might identify with a broader range of England’s population. The case studies and survey support this work by seeing how an inclusive heritage was actually imagined in real terms; at a heritage place. The result of this work is a discussion in Chapter Nine that is able to start from an evidenced basis of what, following more than a decade of government policy to create a more inclusive heritage sector, had actually been done to engage with early VC heritages and what the future might hold for them.

PART I – ‘TO BE OR NOT TO BE’ HERITAGE

Chapter 3: The Contested Heritage

Literature Review

3.1 Introduction

Heritage is the recreation of the past in the present and for the future. The way in which this recreation has been understood will be interrogated in more detail below but at this stage it is necessary to point out that as a creation it is produced, arguably, in order to fulfil a perceived demand (Tunbridge and Ashworth 1996: 8-9). At the outset of this research then, it is argued that heritage responds to the needs of a consumer, as imagined by a creator. With this in mind the following assertion is vital to this research:

We must ask why, after so many decades of quality scholarship on the black and Asian presence in Britain, very little beyond the existence of a few isolated individuals such as Crimea nurse Mary Seacole has penetrated public consciousness or the national curriculum... This is not simply a question of having got the analysis wrong – there is a deep economic, political and psychological investment in this “white past/multicultural present” (Naidoo 2005: 43).

The scholarship Naidoo refers to records a VC presence in Britain as early as the third century AD and a continual one since at least the sixteenth century (see for instance Little 1947; Walvin 1973; Shyllon 1977; Lorimer 1978; Fryer 1984; Visram 1986; Gerzina 1995; Myers 1996; Ramdin 1999; Bressey 2002; Winder 2005; Chater 2009; Callaghan 2011; Kaufmann 2011; Onyeka 2013). The central research objectives of this thesis will respond to this assertion by assessing the extent to which the narratives of VCs in England prior to 1948 have been represented in ‘the heritage’ of England and how important this is deemed to be by those who are responsible for defining the national story through its places, objects and other tangible heritage ‘things’. This thesis will address what aspects of early VC histories are being engaged by heritage managers, whether these histories are positioned at the margins or at the core of the national story and what role VCs have themselves played in this process? This leads us to a further question: have early VC histories been successful in being imagined and *valued* as a part of England’s heritage? The purpose of this literature review is to establish the context within which these queries have become necessary to ask. Three key areas will thus be addressed in this chapter:

- What is ‘the heritage’ in England and what does it do?
- What is the role of narrative interpretation in heritage?
- How have academics, to date, considered the appropriateness of representations of VCs in ‘the heritage’ of England?

These questions will be addressed in the above order during this review which will culminate in a summary of the extent to which the heritage sector in England, in 2015, has acknowledged (or at least considered itself to have acknowledged) early VC histories as part of 'the heritage'. By answering the questions above this will provide the ontology of heritage within which the succeeding case studies must be considered.

3.2.1 Defining heritage

What *is* heritage? The word has been in use since the thirteenth century in reference to familial inheritance but as a critical term relating to a determined presentation of the past it came into use during the 1970s (OED 2013), most notably through the 1972 World Heritage Convention (WHC) (UNESCO 1972). Since then, recreations of the past referred to as heritage have courted scholarly attention in order to attempt to establish what it is, what it is for and arguably most importantly, what it *does*.

Various academic commentators have suggested approaches to solving this conundrum, predominantly via a growing field of literature that Carman (2002: 2) has referred to as 'commentary': 'Much of this literature is concerned with defining "heritage" as something separate from "history"... Ultimately it is concerned with the issue of representation, particularly in its rather narrow sense of public presentation through museums and heritage centres.' David Lowenthal has perhaps been most focused on establishing the difference between heritage and history. 'History', he argues, 'seeks to convince by truth and succumbs to falsehood. Heritage exaggerates and omits, candidly invents and frankly forgets, and thrives on ignorance and error' (Lowenthal 1996: 121). He does not see this as a negative but

as a necessary approach since competing truths in the heritage arena, he argues, unlike within historical scholarship, are counter-productive (Lowenthal 1996). This is not to say that history is any more 'true' and, 'in-fact', it is also 'a contemporary *interpretation* of the past, shaped by the *values* of each writer or reader that engages with it' (Marmion 2012: 30, emphasis in original). But history, unlike heritage, seeks to reveal a new 'truth' to those that have gone before it and has at its core a mission to revise and challenge orthodoxy, rather than perpetuate it.

Others, such as Wright (1985), Hewison (1987) and Walsh (1992) are in agreement regarding the limitations of heritage as an interpretation of the past but see a much more sinister process. Walsh, for instance, argues that the nature of heritage making in Britain, legitimised by law, allows that 'the collective long-term historical memory is controlled and produced by a small number of quasi-autonomous unelected bodies' (Walsh 1992: 80). They see governments, in particular the Conservative government under Margaret Thatcher (1979-1990), as using heritage to control how we see the past and thus influence how we regard ourselves in the present. John Urry (1990) is less convinced by the argument that heritage is an elite conspiracy to create a feeling of nostalgia about the past, suggesting this ignores the role of the consumer of heritage in transferring their own conceptions of the past onto 'things'. This - building on Bourdieu's work on the use of culture and Foucault's concept of 'the gaze' - he calls the 'tourist gaze' which posits that different people will see the same object in different ways and thus heritage is just a reflection of this position where all versions of the past are beholden to subjectivity both in presentation and consumption. These different positions of what heritage is can be crudely divided into a top-down nostalgic vision of the past which is made according to the political or economic interests of a few, or a necessarily

vague and malleable version of the past that represents the varying interpretations which its consumers themselves form. These positions form the starting points from which the heritage debate has developed and in a relatively short space of time heritage as a concept has found deeper roots and a wider grasp.

Tunbridge and Ashworth, writing in the mid-1990s, exemplify the complex nature of deciding what could be heritage when they formed these categories reflecting contemporary understanding:

- 'It [heritage] is used as a synonym for any relict physical survival from the past' from stately homes to locations associated with past events.
- Non-physical or intangible heritage such as individual or collective memory. Potentially 'any modern condition that may be attributed to, or even influenced by, the past becomes a product of heritage.'
- It has been incorporated into the set of activities and preoccupations that can be labelled as 'high culture'. Elements of which can include 'almost any aspect of national life which contributes to the effective functioning of society or to the favoured national image.'
- It has been extended to the natural environment such as plants and animals which are seen as typical or original to the environment for which a heritage is being discussed.
- A commercial activity: the 'heritage industry' where heritage is seen as a consumerable good.

(Tunbridge and Ashworth 1996: 1-3).

Heritage, as can be recognised from the diversity of meanings outlined by Tunbridge and Ashworth, is a phenomenon requiring a critical scholarship which questions what it is, who it is for and who presides over such decisions. This opening discussion has outlined the scholarly reaction to a phenomenon which was termed 'heritage' in the 1970s and therefore has only recently received attention in this guise. Through this attention however, a historiography of 'the heritage' in England, and elsewhere, has emerged.

3.2.2 When was heritage?: the monument as culture in England

The creation of a heritage of England - as a variously, but overtly selected presented past - is most often seen as having its beginnings in the nineteenth century (Walsh 1992; Carman 1996; Smith 2006; Harrison 2013a), although Harvey has argued that people have sought to manage and interpret the past as early as the medieval period (Harvey 2001). It is of no coincidence that the nineteenth century has also been associated with the consolidation of a national identity and as Dodd has argued, the insistent belief that England had a national culture which was rooted in the past. Once confirmed, he states, 'the past cultural activities and attributes of the people were edited and then acknowledged, as contributions to the evolution of the English national culture which had produced the present' (Dodd 1999 [1986]: 103). This process reflects the emergence of 'invented traditions' and 'imagined communities' in nation-states seeking legitimacy through continuity with the past, as described in the seminal work of Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) and Anderson (1991).

Vital to the placing of 'the heritage's' roots in this time was the creation of legislation in England which provided authority to value particular monuments as

worthy of representing *the* past (Carman 1996). The 1882 Ancient Monuments Act legislated for the selection of certain physical aspects of the past deemed important enough to warrant state protection for the future. Although weak in its powers, as Carman has argued, 'the fact of legislation itself had an effect on attitudes towards all archaeological material of all periods... Thereafter it would be possible to legislate the protection of other such material on the same basis as that of prehistoric remains' (Carman 1996: 98). Subsequently, other pieces of legislation have increased the power of the state to protect physical aspects of the past, as well as broaden the understanding of what that aspect could be, and what it could represent. The point to be made here is that the advent of legislation to protect certain physical aspects of the past gave value to those aspects, whilst at the same time, commencing an ongoing conversation into what else might be of value (Carman 1996).

The association of value through the selection to a national inventory of monuments and providing a commission with the authority to make such decisions fundamentally underpinned the idea of a national culture which could be enshrined in the arbitrary selection of physical aspects of the past. These developments formed the basis of what would later be formally recognised as 'heritage' in the late twentieth-century. This was not a uniquely English or British phenomenon, as Smith has observed, 'the new Modern Europe was to be expressed in the monuments that were to be protected and managed for the edification of the public, and as physical representations of national identity and European taste and achievement' (Smith 2006: 18). As the nineteenth-century drew to a close the 'industrial enterprise' encouraged the 'discovery' of a pre-industrial England, with monuments representing the Elizabethan and Georgian periods especially popular; providing a sense of timelessness and continuity with the past (Champion 1996: 125-126).

The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) held its first meeting in 1877 in order to prevent the kind of 'zealous restorations' which were 'scraping away the fabric of too many historic buildings' (SPAB 2009). The emphasis on preserving historic places as they *were* illustrates the primacy given to maintaining the integrity of the past. As demonstrated by Lowenthal's assertions above, this idea that heritage sites can represent a past has formed a substantial part of the heritage critique in later heritage debates, inspired by post-structural theories of historical relativism (see for instance Giddens 1981; Foucault 1988).

It was in the post-Second World War period that the idea of considering what heritage did stimulated such debates. To review this development it is necessary to move beyond national boundaries and consider how debates surrounding the preservation of tangible aspects of the past were crystallising on an international level.

3.2.3 Defining heritage on a global scale

The formation in 1945 of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) as an arm of the United Nations (UN) can be regarded as an important marker in the correlation between heritage and culture globally.

Although with a remit significantly beyond heritage issues, UNESCO's recognition as members of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) such as The International Council of Museums (ICOM), The International Committee for Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and the International Committee on Archaeological Heritage Management (ICAHM) provided the easily discernible concerns of these organisations with the opportunity to influence UNESCO policy. Between 1954 and

1972 UNESCO introduced five pieces of international legislation which progressed the idea of 'cultural property' culminating in the WHC (Carman 2002: 69).

The WHC distinguished between 'cultural heritage': in the form of 'monuments', 'groups of buildings' and 'sites', all of which must contain some man-made element, and 'natural heritage': consisting of 'natural features', 'geological and physiographical formations' or 'natural sites' all of which earned their selection according to determined aesthetic or scientific value. Cultural heritage then, was determined to be a tangible 'thing'. The WHC required each member state to provide a list of sites within their borders that conformed to their definition of 'cultural heritage' which would in turn be judged by the World Heritage Committee, formed of representatives of member states as well as various advisory bodies (UNESCO 1972). In other words, the WHC was asserting particular individuals and organisations as being qualified and authorised to value heritage on behalf of humankind. The WHC had determined that what heritage *is* could be based on a finite set of criteria, as well as decided who was qualified to judge places against these criteria. The WHC also established that some heritage could be recognised as of 'universal value' thus creating 'a totalising discourse representing a global hierarchy of value' (Harrison 2013a: 64).

Smith (2006) and Harrison (2013a) in particular, have argued that the WHC created a heritage discourse giving primacy to Western conceptualisations of what it could *be* with its roots in the nineteenth century preservation movement described above. Cultural heritage, internationally, was defined by its tangibility and given its heritage value by an 'expert'. Carman (2002: 65) has argued that 'Western traditions of professionalism' which determines 'what constitutes a heritage in the first place'

has provided ‘the basis for the charge of the West attempting to levy a “global imperialism” on the rest of the world by way of archaeological heritage practices.’

The increasing formalisation and professionalisation of heritage following the Second World War, and especially from the 1970s, has been described as a ‘heritage boom’ in the West and in Britain in particular (Hewison 1987; Walsh 1992: 95; Tunbridge and Ashworth 1996; Harrison 2013a). This refers to the rise in number of conservation societies, membership of the National Trust (NT) and visits to heritage sites and museums. The context of this ‘boom’ in England provides the focus for the next section.

3.2.4 Establishing the national heritage of England

As has already been described, since 1882, there has been a consistent growth in legislation designed to protect archaeological materials in England. This has impacted on what ‘the heritage’ is in different ways. For example, the NT, founded in 1895 with the intention of ‘saving our nation’s heritage’, was empowered by the 1927 Access to Monuments Bill to acquire and conserve great country estates in England. According to Carman (1996: 102), ‘this represented a shift in the Trust’s activities towards the promotion of the great country house as opposed to the countryside.’ The country house was firmly enshrined as part of ‘the heritage’ by a campaign to save them in the 1970s, centred on an exhibition at the Victoria and Albert (V & A) Museum in 1974 entitled ‘The Destruction of the Country House’. Adams (2013) has persuasively argued that this exhibition was a defining moment in establishing these particular monuments as representative of England’s past and therefore worthy of preservation. The exhibition has been perceived as ‘propaganda’ in reaction to a

proposed Wealth Tax by the Labour government with its key supporters the privileged and powerful who owned these crumbling estates (Hewison 1997; Adams 2013). The success of the exhibition and subsequent shelving of the proposed tax arguably demonstrates the way in which heritage, as an appeal to a nostalgic view of the past, could be a useful political tool.

Although with the significant caveat that ‘heritage should pay’, the National Heritage Acts (NHA) of 1980 and 1983 introduced by Margaret Thatcher’s Conservative government represent well the idea of heritage as a source of national pride through extolling the virtues of the past. Thatcher herself vowed only to “‘keep the best of the past’” (quoted in Lowenthal 1996: 153). The 1980 NHA established the National Heritage Memorial Fund (NHMF) which permitted a group of up to fifteen ‘Trustees’, appointed by the Prime Minister, to provide financial help to preserve and present ‘property, etc.’ which was deemed ‘of scenic, historic, archaeological, aesthetic, architectural, engineering, artistic or scientific interest’ (NHA 1980: S1, S3). The 1983 NHA established the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England which is now known as English Heritage (EH). This body was given the remit to ‘secure the preservation of ancient monuments and historic buildings situated in England.’ In addition they were tasked to ‘promote the public’s enjoyment of, and advance their knowledge of, ancient monuments and historic buildings situated in England and their preservation’ (NHA 1983: S32-33). In short, since this time, England’s ‘national heritage’ was to be decided by a select few on behalf of the public who would then be provided with the necessary knowledge with which to ‘enjoy’ this heritage.

These legislative apparatus can be seen as largely confirming the definition of heritage provided by The WHC but providing it with a national boundary. As has

been stated, the idea that certain physical aspects of the past were of value to the future had been legally approved in England for a century. What was in place by the 1980s however, was a single non-departmental government body to manage ‘the heritage’ of England and a dedicated and growing group of professionals to decide what could be heritage. This conception would broaden over time but only within the limits determined in the legislation that created it. The emergence of this focal point for deciding ‘the heritage’ of England, coupled with the ‘discursive turn’ in the social sciences encouraged academics to consider ‘the historical specificity of a particular form or “regime” of representation’ (Hall 1997a: 6). What would emerge from this period was a more clearly defined critical heritage studies that would interrogate the ideology behind this new set of structures that was responsible for deciding ‘the heritage’ of England.

3.3.1 Dissonant heritage

The events described in the previous section led Hewison (1987) to announce the emergence of a ‘heritage industry’ in Britain. He argued this industry was a tool of the Conservative government to promote nostalgia for a glorious national past in order to deflect attention away from social unrest and economic uncertainty in the present. A selection of essays within a volume entitled *Enterprise and Heritage* (Corner and Harvey 1991) echoed many of these concerns. For example, Robins argued that despite an obvious multicultural population in Britain, the heritage sector was trying to avoid confronting this reality and sought to ‘salvage centred, bounded and coherent identities – placed identities for placeless times’ (Robins 1991: 41-42). Hewison recounted his earlier work when stating that ‘heritage is gradually effacing

history, by substituting an image of the past for its reality', perpetrated by a 'new breed' of heritage managers (Hewison 1991: 174-175). Such substitutions impacted what it meant to be English or British. Wollen (1991) saw a nostalgic celebration of Britain's imperial past through film and television of the 1980s, whilst Ali argued that the far right of British politics managed to side-step anti-racism by superseding racial difference with ethnic difference, whilst at the same time maintaining that English identity was '*rooted* in the historical experience, culture religion and language shared...', and it cannot be conferred by the acquisition of a passport of even a generation's residence' (Ali 1991: 195, 202 emphasis in original).

These criticisms of how the national heritage developed during the 1980s placed much of the blame with Thatcher's Conservative government and those to whom they had given the power of selection over 'the heritage'. This is unsurprising since it had been in power throughout the decade. By the mid-1990s however, Tunbridge and Ashworth were foremost in arguing that widespread interest in heritage from government and population - a 'heritage boom' - had meant an inflation of its meaning. 'This', they argued, would mean 'more historical resources, more products, more social groups, more uses and purposes, which extend and diversify the problems [of defining heritage] rather than reduce or ameliorate them' (Tunbridge and Ashworth 1996: 4; see also Samuel 1994). Tunbridge and Ashworth also argued that consumers of heritage were not quite so passive in their acceptance of a heritage and therefore producers had to deliver different heritage products for different markets, albeit using the same resources. Heritage as a 'government advertisement' was too simplistic and instead there existed a 'plurality of producers' who responded to the needs of 'varied and selective consumers' (Tunbridge and Ashworth 1996: 12-13). Urry (1999 [1990]: 213-214) also dismissed the claims of

Hewison and others that the heritage sector was primarily a conspiracy of the political and social elite to form a national heritage that was for and of their own interests by arguing that this 'ignores the enormously important popular bases of the conservation movement.' The thrust of the argument from these commentators was that heritage was an interactive process and not simply an unchallenged transference of a historical vision from provider to consumer.

The natural conclusion of these arguments, highlighted in the title of Tunbridge and Ashworth's key text (1996), is that *all* heritage is essentially dissonant. In other words, if heritage involves the selection or valuation of a place, object, or other tangible 'thing' because of its historical, scientific, aesthetic or natural value, those which are not selected must therefore be assumed as unworthy of selection. The selection of one heritage is the rejection of another. What heritage *is*, stated at the outset of this chapter, should be repeated here. Heritage is a contemporary process which reimagines aspects of 'the past' according to present and anticipated future requirements. Who selects and who consumes a heritage will inevitably have an impact on what these requirements are. This is contrary to UNESCO's concept of 'universal value'. The idea of heritage as inherently dissonant made the point that there are competing requirements; there is no universally *appropriate* heritage. Heritage managers, these arguments suggest, need to respond to a diverse market and competing identities and thus a more complex understanding of the relationship between diversity, identity and heritage making is required. It would be apt here then to reference the academic literature around 'identity' which influenced these debates as it became clear that 'the heritage' is responded to in different ways by different people, depending on the extent to which they identify with it.

3.3.2 Identity in cultural theory

Identities, especially national identities, are created through promoting a shared past. This necessitates identifying in history particular traits which can be presented as unique to a nation-state and therefore its cultural identity. By establishing them as having a history, these traits gain legitimacy in the present. Those that do not hold these traits – ethnicity, language, culture etc. - are excluded from the 'Nation'. By establishing that identities can be forged in such a way, this argument also suggests that identities are malleable. The key texts which have informed this argument are Anderson's *Imagined Communities* (1983) and Hobsbawm and Ranger's *The Invention of Tradition* (1983) which argued that nation-states could demand no more loyalty based on common cultural traits (i.e. nationalism) than any other identity formation such as local, community, racial etc. since such commonalities are in fact 'invented' and thus 'imagined', making them susceptible to criticism as political propaganda.

Edensor (2002: 10-12), although agreeing with the imagined nature of nationhood, argues that these authors place too much emphasis on the ruling elite's ability to shape the spectacular or the historic into a national culture. Instead he argues that these 'traditional' beacons of nationhood have been (and continue to be) re-imagined through popular culture. Urry (2007 [1996]: 197) has argued that work on post-colonial cultures has suggested 'that all cultures are in a sense inauthentic and contrived.' This, he continues, has undermined the 'grand narrative' of the elite or ruling classes representing the nation and 'begun to de-legitimate the anglocentric, masculinist, home counties vision of Britain and British history' (Urry 2007 [1996]; 197-198).

Cultural theorist Stuart Hall has described the discourse of national culture in terms of 'narrating the nation' (Hall 1996: 613-614, emphasis in original). This narrative is:

...told and retold in national histories, literatures, the media, and popular culture. These provide a set of stories, images, landscapes, scenarios, historical events, national symbols, and rituals which stand for, or *represent*, the shared experiences, sorrows, and triumphs and disasters which give meaning to the nation. As members of such an "imagined community," we see ourselves in our mind's eye sharing in this narrative. It lends significance and importance to our humdrum existence, connecting our everyday lives with a national destiny that pre-existed us and will outlive us.

Within Hall's conception of 'narrating the nation' although popular culture does have a role in providing the nation with an identity, the narrative is to a large degree controlled by an elite who inform us of its content through history, literature and the media. One such example would be heritage places in England that convey narratives about England's past which are meant to reflect the national story. The 'National Heritage', Hall argues, conveys the ethnic and cultural meanings of the nation and thus 'it follows that those who cannot see themselves reflected in its mirror cannot properly "belong"' (Hall 2005 [1999]: 24). Hall also argues however, that the idea of a national culture being able to form a unified national identity is flawed since the post-modern view of identity sees it as 'de-centered', and therefore unable to adhere to such a coherent construction (Hall 1996: 597). He points out that

a unified national culture relies on 'imagined' perspectives of the nation - such as 'the heritage' - but increasingly, the forces of globalisation where 'economies and cultures are thrown into intense and immediate contact with each other' are impacting on the ability of imagined national cultures to maintain their hegemony (Robins 1991 quoted in Hall 1996: 622).

These arguments suggest that if national culture is a fabrication which caters towards a particular identity, or identities, those that are not represented will fall outside the conceptualisation of the 'Nation'. The impact of globalisation however, demonstrates that the 'Nation' is not 'fixed' and therefore has the potential to evolve its sense of self and recognise those at its margins. For 'the heritage' of England, this is an important argument. A de-centered national heritage would engage de-centered identities. As Adams (2010: 75) has argued, using the V & A museum as an example, prior to the 1990s, 'the prevailing view would have been that it [the museum] had no obligation other than to represent the margins to the core, in order to reinforce the status of the latter... the fact that the histories of margins and core are inextricably linked can no longer be ignored.' Smith and Waterton (2009a: 48-49) have emphasised identity as something that one performs, arguing that identity and heritage must interact. 'It is in a mix of doing, reacting, feeling and understanding' they argue, 'that heritage is created, as part of a wider cultural process within which people ascertain feelings of connection, belonging and a sense of themselves.' Identity then, is fluid, complex and in negotiation with other identities. These points can be seen as having a profound impact on understandings of heritage.

3.3.3 Plural heritage

The plurality of heritage will be engaged with in detail in Chapter Nine. Here it is sufficient to link plural heritage to the identity debates outlined above. Discussed in most depth by Ashworth *et al.* (2007), they developed their earlier ‘dissonant heritage’ argument by linking heritage to identity through place or the ‘Nation’. The authors saw global societies as becoming ever more complex culturally and rife with instances of ‘inclusion’ and ‘exclusion’ on cultural grounds. The authors argued that ‘heritage can... function as a form of resistance to such hegemonic discourses [e.g. nineteenth century derived ethno-nationalism] and a marker of plurality in multicultural societies’ (Ashworth *et al.* 2007: 4). This idea will be central to the arguments of Chapter Nine. As Ashworth *et al.* (2007: 46) point out, there is a lack of academic work investigating ‘the linkages between heritage, pluralism and multiculturalism’, a gap that this chapter will attempt to address.

3.3.4 Intangible heritage

As has already been highlighted, heritage both nationally (through the NHA) and globally (through the WHC) has been defined as a tangible ‘thing’. The inherent tangibility of heritage has been increasingly criticised at the beginning of the twenty-first century (Smith 2004; Turnpenny 2004; Smith 2006; Smith and Akagawa 2009a; Alivizatou 2012). Acknowledgement of this criticism, though not its acceptance, is demonstrated in UNESCO’s 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (CSICH). This considered that heritage could be ‘the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills..., [that] communities, groups and, in

some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage.’ It stated that this heritage could manifest via:

- (a) Oral traditions and expressions, including language;
- (b) Performing arts;
- (c) Social practices, rituals and festive events;
- (d) Knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe;
- (e) Traditional craftsmanship

(UNESCO 2003)

Britain has not however, ratified the CSICH, largely due to the country’s ‘prevailing vision of cultural inheritance as residing solely in the *materiality* of the past’ (Hassard 2009: 270, emphasis in original; see also Turnpenny: 2004; Smith and Waterton 2009b). Through the CSICH, UNESCO has drawn a line in the sand that says that heritage is *either* intangible or tangible and created a clear set of criteria for each. The academic debate led by Smith (2006: 3, emphasis added) instead asserts that ‘*all* heritage is intangible’ (see also Turnpenny 2004; Smith and Waterton 2009b). Heritage can thus be imagined through a place, object or other tangible ‘thing’, but it does not have to be. This would seem to level the playing field in terms of reimagining the heritage of England to include early VC heritages since no place or object would be seen as being heritage in and of itself. In this scenario, it is the intangible narratives that are told *through* these ‘things’ that are heritage and one ‘thing’ can contain multiple narratives.

The argument of this research is that narratives of the early VC presence in England exist within Western conceptions of heritage; places, objects, etc. and their

lack of infiltration of 'the heritage' of England should be considered one of *omission*, not ignorance, due to their propensity to complicate the authorised heritage narrative. As Bressey has argued of rural England, its cultural artefacts contain a complex of stories which include 'people of colour' but the desire to maintain its position as 'traditional, or true' maintains the heritage narrative of the rural as 'a place of tradition, transcendent, intact and white' (Bressey 2009: 389; also Watson 2013). When considering how the early VC presence can infiltrate 'the heritage' in England therefore, the UNESCO description of intangible heritage is arguably less helpful than the idea that *all* heritage is intangible. This is because the weight of authorisation provided to heritage 'things' in England would position an alternative intangible heritage as 'unauthorised'. By thinking of all heritage as intangible it encourages heritage narratives, not the value of 'things', to be challenged. This would allow objects, places, etc. which have already been designated as holding heritage value, to take on new meanings as opposed to producing a new (intangible) heritage to compete with the old (tangible).

3.3.5 The discourse of heritage

What has been alluded to above is that there have developed many ways of understanding heritage; what it is, what it does, how it does it. Harrison (2013a: 110) has referred to the challenge to the idea of 'universal value' as determined by the WHC, as well as the inherent tangibility of heritage, as the 'discursive turn' in heritage studies. Central to this 'turn' has been the work of Smith (2006), followed by others (Waterton 2010a; Watson 2013), who have persuasively argued that there exists a hegemonic Western understanding of heritage, perpetuated by an Authorised Heritage Discourse (AHD). Pointing to internationally influential heritage

charters: the Venice Charter (ICOMOS 1964), Burra Charter (ICOMOS Australia 1979), and the aforementioned WHC, amongst other broadly recognised definitions of heritage, Smith proposes the existence of an AHD ‘which works... to construct a sense of what heritage is – and is not’ (Smith 2006: 6; see also Waterton *et al.* 2006; Smith and Akagawa 2009b). Smith’s argument builds on a Foucauldian conception of discourse and ‘governmentality’. Governmentality describes how an official or authoritative voice, i.e. the state government, which controls access to knowledge of ‘the past’ via ‘the heritage’, can influence ‘identities, habits, customs and even thoughts of the population’ (Wilson 2010: 167). Discourse describes the place where knowledge and power intersect (Downing 2008). It is the controlling function of the socio-political world and institutions, such as those that manage ‘the heritage’. The AHD therefore, is based on an intrinsic link between a heritage framework which determines *appropriate* knowledge and defines the systems for communicating that knowledge, and the social and political hegemony of elite culture which enables heritage to be conceived in this finite way.

Rooted in nineteenth century nationalism, the central facet of the AHD is that heritage can be:

...aesthetically pleasing material objects, sites, places and/or landscapes that current generations “must” care for, protect and revere so that they may be passed to nebulous future generations for their “education”, and forge a sense of common identity based on the past (Smith 2006: 29).

Since selection is an integral concept to the AHD, it necessitates the creation of selectors who become 'legitimate spokespersons for the past.' With 'the past' the province of an 'expert' field e.g. historian, archaeologist etc., it follows that these spokespersons must be similarly 'expert' (Smith 2006: 29). Smith argues that the underlying principles of the AHD must be challenged in order to redefine the heritage process, relevant here since a redefinition of the heritage process could recalibrate the heritages of VCs within the national story (Smith 2006). As noted above, Smith considers seeing *all* heritage as inherently intangible as integral to this challenge. By considering heritage as intangible other aspects of it come into view. 'These elements' she argues, '...include the importance of acts of remembering and memory making, the dissonant nature of heritage' as well as highlighting the presence of political power in the heritage process (Smith 2006: 307). An additional challenge to the AHD would be to question the hegemonic role of the 'expert' in producing heritage and to consider them instead as one community alongside others who produce meaning as part of a process (Smith and Waterton 2009a: 138). Value, as opposed to being instructed, is negotiated between various communities of interest in order to establish 'trust' (Smith and Waterton 2009a: 140). It is notable to this research that there is a significant lack of heritage 'experts' from VCs (CBA 2012). Seeing non-'experts' as having the right and indeed responsibility to challenge the hegemony of the 'expert' over the right to value heritage could be a way of diversifying 'the heritage'. The practicalities of overturning a discourse that has reigned over the sector for more than a hundred years will be discussed during the course of the following chapters.

3.3.6 The dialogic heritage

As with plural heritage, the concept of heritage as dialogic will be discussed in detail in Chapter Nine so will only be outlined in brief here. Harrison (with Rose 2010; 2013a) has recently argued that the increasing focus on intangible heritage has perhaps led to a loss of the role of ‘things’ in the heritage process. Harrison argues that the heritage process ‘is not one that occurs only in the minds of humans, or one that functions solely in a discursive manner, but involves a range of material beings who co-produce heritage as a result of their own affordances or material capabilities’ (Harrison 2013a: 112-113). To this end, drawing on the work of Eduardo Viveiros de Castro (2004) and Deborah Bird Rose (Harrison and Rose 2010), Harrison argues that ‘the production of heritage emerges from the relationship between people, “things” and their environments as part of a dialogue or collaborative process of keeping the past alive in the present’ (Harrison 2013a: 216). By imagining heritage as an ongoing dialogue ‘things’ play a substantive part in the heritage process. The dialogic heritage as an unceasing model also allows for a reconsideration of the perpetual accumulation of heritage, a significant feature of heritage management, especially in England (Carman 1996). Harrison’s conception of a dialogic heritage is largely realised in relation to his work with indigenous Australian heritage through which he has recorded how ‘things’ are recognised as having subjectivity; their own meanings and values which do not require human discourse to be present (Harrison and Rose 2010). In an English context, considering heritage as dialogic would encourage decisions over what ‘the heritage’ means to be made via a constant collaborative process between various stakeholders which is able to respond to changes, not only in the needs and desires of people, but also in the material culture at the heart of this dialogue.

3.4.1 Interpreting heritage

Thus far the focus of this chapter has been on the various understandings of heritage that have developed in England and the West more generally. These understandings have set the theoretical context within which this research takes place. An integral part of what heritage *is* has been argued to be the narratives that give it meaning, but this meaning is variable depending on how a narrative is interpreted. The following sections then will deal with the idea of representation, interpretation and narrative, since an understanding of these terms is integral to understanding why this research has deemed them as important to the creation of a diverse heritage in England.

3.4.2 Representation and meaning

As Hall (1997a: 3-4) has argued, 'Meaning is what gives us a sense of our own identity, of who we are and with whom we "belong" – so it is tied up with questions of how culture is used to mark out and maintain identity within and difference between groups.' The meanings present in 'the heritage' therefore, through the stories attached to places, objects, etc., both for us and by us, contribute to how we see ourselves. Representation is a process by which a system of signs, or a language, is used to produce meaning (Hall 1997b); 'Meaning is a dialogue – always only partially understood, always an unequal exchange' (Hall 1997a: 4). The point is that meaning is fundamental to the identities we create for ourselves, and that meaning is affected by the way in which 'things' are represented to us and by us. These meanings however, are never complete or the 'truth' because they have been obtained within an exchange which is limited by its temporality, its actors and the limits of their power

and knowledge. Meaning, for which we constantly search, is held within narratives (Porter Abbott 2002).

3.4.3 Narrative

Porter Abbott (2002: 12, emphasis in original) has defined narrative as '*the representation of an event or a series of events*', with the event or action key to its designation as a narrative as it must relate to something that has happened or is happening. In a heritage context, assigning a narrative to a place, object, or other tangible 'thing' is not simply describing its past, it is actively inserting a past, or series of pasts, that place it within a particular context, usually temporal. Heritage as created at a heritage site can have many different narrators. They could be the curator, who tells the narrative through words or images, or through the way you are managed through the site. The narrator could be a tour guide who can embellish the 'official' narrative and change it if they wish, but only within the limits of their own knowledge. The narrator could also be one's self, producing one's own narrative for the site based on existing knowledge or experience. The point is that 'when you narrate you construct' (Porter-Abbott 2002: 64). A narrative can be sequential or non-sequential, this is dependent on the approach of the narrator, but it must have the goal of emphasising a particular point or points which make up a story and through these stories we acquire meaning. The purpose of the narrative is to make sense of time. The importance of narrative to heritage then, is clear, in that it allows 'the past' to be portioned for easier consumption.

Staiff (2014: 105) points out that narratives assume a beginning and an end; they are finite. This inevitably means that the interpretation of a heritage narrative will

exclude that which does not fall within the confines of that narrative. Perhaps most important here however, is that Staiff insists that we think about narratives in terms of 'official' and 'unofficial' (Staiff 2014: 113). Here he is arguing, along the lines of Harrison above, that 'heritage places are *produced* by the interactions and engagements of the visitors; the place and the visitor cannot be separated because both only have meaning in relationship with the other' (Staiff 2014: 24, emphasis in original). In other words, heritage places inspire a variety of narratives both sanctioned and unsanctioned by heritage managers that interact and inform each other to create the meaning of that place. This process applies to all tangible 'things' that are authorised as heritage.

Heritage 'things' then, are contained by narratives: the intangible. This argument would agree with Smith and others' assertion that material culture has no heritage in and of itself and can only exist as heritage through narratives. These narratives provide them with meaning. The importance of the heritage 'thing' however should not be forgotten as their very existence asserts influence over the various narratives they acquire and this can change over time. The issue that will be central to this research however, is the extent to which competing narratives can be interpreted so that they can accommodate each other. In other words, how can the narratives of early VCs be interpreted within the context of an 'official' heritage of England? Porter Abbott (2002: 79-80), drawing on Kermode's (1983) conception of 'underreading', argues that to interpret is to exclude other meanings and close narratives to questions. Through these exclusions a narrative can be brought into line. Such an interpretation can be said to connect with Naidoo's assertion of a 'white past/multicultural present' evident in England's heritage whereby ethnic diversity in the more distant past is omitted in heritage narrative interpretations (see also Littler

and Naidoo 2007 [2004]) . This does not represent an inevitability of interpreting narratives however, since, as Porter Abbott states, 'narratives have no borders but are part of an immense, unfolding (and hence ever-changing) tapestry.' They are, in fact, 'intertextual' (Porter Abbott 2002: 94-95). By emphasising the multiplicity of the narratives attached to heritage places interpretations would be themselves conceived as porous.

Narrative would appear to place human dialogue as central to the meaning of 'things' which, as noted above, Harrison has argued should not be considered as a given. This assumption is an easy one to make because events – that define the narrative – are so often considered to be communicated through language. This ignores the fact however, that the occurrence of events is not a new phenomenon that has arisen since the development of language. In the context of how heritage is understood in England, this asserts that 'things' have narratives that may not have been communicated but this does not mean they do not exist.

3.4.4 Methods of interpretation

Having outlined the mechanisms of narratives, the method by which they are interpreted in heritage contexts should be considered and how this has changed over time.

Writing in the last decade, Hems stated that the responsibility for interpreting EH's 'historic properties' lay with 'site staff and education officers, curators and inspectors of ancient monuments' (Hems 2006: 189). For Hems, interpretation is very much a realm for 'experts'. This understanding of interpretation is embedded in

the AHD, outlined above, and demonstrates the inherent conservatism of EH's attitude to heritage in comparison to Staiff above, who makes his comments in reference to international tourism. Interpretation of EH sites is determined by a 'Conservation Plan' that establishes a site's '*significance*' that could stem from a variety of themes (Hems 2006: 191-192, emphasis in original). This 'significance' could also be called the site's authorised narrative.

More recently however, as Hems asserts, the narrative of a site - its 'meaning' - has been made in consultation with non-'experts' which provides alternative narratives and possible interpretations (Hems 2006: 195). The point that Hems argues is that there is a move from 'closed' to 'intertextual' interpretation occurring at EH. This is not a situation unique to EH and the way in which this has occurred elsewhere in the heritage sector is central to this research and explored throughout.

This is of particular interest since it is considered here that the point at which a diverse heritage might exist is the point at which multiple narratives are told through the act of interpretation. For Staiff this is a possibility since 'Viewers can easily entertain more than one narrative' and 'heritage interpretation can *attempt*.., a facilitation of multiple meaning-making as a dynamic process within systems of representation' (Staiff 2014: 33, emphasis in original). The rise of the internet, Staiff argues, is central to this, providing the opportunity for alternative interpretations to be garnered immediately via internet search engines in what he refers to as a 'democratization' of heritage interpretation (Staiff 2014: 126-127). In this way, narratives are shared and visitors are empowered to challenge 'official narratives'. For Staiff, these mass interpretations of narratives challenge the authorised narration of heritage. This research, using the case studies, can engage with this assertion by

asking the extent to which 'the heritage' is changed by the challenges posed by 'unofficial' heritages.

3.5 Heritage and diversity in the literature

Chapters Four and Five analyse policy and practice relating to 'official' methods for 'including' VCs in the heritage sector. Describing how the place of VCs in the heritage sector has been understood by academic commentators will help introduce the arguments of these succeeding chapters.

Despite much support for the idea of the intrinsic intangibility of heritage (see Smith and Akagawa 2009a), it has not been widely accepted by the heritage sector in the UK and England. Hassard (2009: 270) has suggested this is 'due in part to a lack of understanding of the concept and its subsequent lack of formal recognition' as well as a prevailing commitment to the idea that heritage must be tangible. Smith and Waterton (2009b: 300) argue that the moment of heritage is 'when cultural, social and political values and meanings are recognised, scrutinised, accepted, reworked or otherwise negotiated' but the conservatism of England's heritage sector tempers this by failing to adequately challenge the AHD. What these arguments suggest, and what is asked during the course of this research, is the extent to which the idea of a heritage that is diverse is inherently oppositional to the way heritage is made and understood in England? In order to attempt to answer this question in this research, it is important here to note why academics have stressed the need for a diverse heritage at all.

Politically, the idea of heritage being unrepresentative of large portions of England's population is a relatively recent concern for the state and has been articulated through a discourse of 'social inclusion'. This discourse grew from New Labour's adoption of an ideology of 'social exclusion' that came from Europe in the latter part of the twentieth century. This described the experiences of members of society without the means to participate in social, economic, political or cultural life (Newman and McLean 1998). Social exclusion became a cross-departmental government policy managed by the Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) that was set almost immediately after New Labour came to power in 1997. The fundamental aim of the SEU was to investigate and implement new approaches to re-engage an 'underclass' whom were destined to 'remain on the margins of society' as well as develop preventative measures to avoid more people entering this group (Fielding 2003: 186).

At the same time as New Labour were embedding this discourse and developing responsive activities across its government, they were seeking ways to develop a cultural policy that reflected the 'remarkable public appetite in Britain for the arts and culture in all its forms' that has been described as present in 1997, epitomised in the press by the tagline 'Cool Britannia' (Hewison 2001: 537). An important change in the context of this research was the Department of National Heritage being renamed the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), emphasising a more forward-thinking and innovative approach reflective of this 'modern' government. In 1999 the SEU set up eighteen Policy Action Teams (PAT) that considered how social exclusion might be tackled across society. The resulting reports were published by the relevant government department, with DCMS responsible for reporting on the role arts and sport might play in PAT 10 (DCMS 1999). Waterton has described this as 'the most significant attempt to fold social

inclusion discourses into the cultural sphere' (Waterton 2010a: 116). Subsequently, DCMS published a response to this report focusing on how museums, galleries and archives would foster social inclusion (DCMS 2000) whilst EH published *Power of Place* (EH 2000) that positioned the role of CBH in this agenda. Both documents and related activities will be returned to in detail in the next chapter.

The creation of a discourse of social inclusion requires further interrogation since creating an inclusive heritage whereby the heritages of 'the excluded' are attached to a core heritage has come in for criticism. Smith and Waterton (2009a) have argued that social inclusion was an attempt by the government to smother difference rather than encourage it. More recently, voices from the academy have preferred the idea of heritage representing diversity through a discourse of equality and democracy. Logan (2008) was an early champion of a democratic heritage, i.e. one which sees it as a fundamental human right to maintain cultural diversity and supports the notion of plural heritage. Logan's pragmatic approach is:

Rather than cultural heritage being used to reinforce divisions in society and between societies, more inclusive understandings of cultural heritage are required to seek to include elements meeting common acceptance or that are important to each of the components within the overall society... Sometimes it may be necessary to accept that sharing is not possible at present and may have to be something achieved in the future. An alternative that may be more immediately applicable is the recognition of "parallel stories" told by currently irreconcilable voices (Logan 2008: 449).

Fisher (2010: 61) determined that cultural diversity should be considered within a human rights context because it is linked to the idea of 'social justice'. The suggestion here is that cultural diversity - rather than being applied on an *ad hoc* basis through the occasional heritage project to engage with VCs - should be considered as a fundamental aspect of how a heritage organisation was run, permeating all aspects of its operations (Fisher 2010). Cultural diversity should be considered within a strategic, not engagement discourse.

Naidoo has perhaps presented the heritage sector with the most comprehensive set of 'solutions' for how a diverse heritage might be reformulated as an equal, democratic heritage. These can be summarised as:

1. Move from thinking about 'inclusion' to a paradigm of 'cultural democracy' (Naidoo 2010: 79).
2. Stop 'celebrating' us. The fact that we live in a 'diverse' society is not a cause for 'celebration', but a simple and banal fact... And to paraphrase Ziauddin Sardar, rather than be celebrated, we need power, and that comes from occupying the mainstream (Naidoo 2010: 79).
3. Open up the possibilities of identity. By resisting the temptation to lock people into singular aspects of their identity, we can move to a place where people are allowed to be different, and the same, in many ways (Naidoo 2010: 79).
4. Rather than dwelling any more on politically toothless forms of diversity, policies should be reformulated to think about structural inequalities and cultural democracy. For example, is there a connection between the

almost total ignorance in this country of the economic relationships between Britain and its former colonies, and forms of popular racism and anti-immigration feeling? Those who set the cultural diversity agenda for museums, galleries, archives and the arts, would do well to focus on how their work impacts on such attitudes to “race” and migration in Britain, rather than continuing their obsessive focus on one-off projects for black and Asian youth (Naidoo 2010: 79-80).

5. Go for the long-term over the short term. Stop focusing solely on the money your arts organisation has been awarded for a diversity project and the short term scale you have to deliver tangible outcomes. Think instead about the deeper, long-term institutional shifts that have to occur to place a concept of diversity at the centre of all work. (Naidoo 2010: 80)

These points neatly sum up the complexity of conceiving and delivering a diverse heritage but also point out that, at least according to some, the heritage sector has a long way to go if it is to consider itself representative of, and representing, past, present and future diversity in England. Most relevant to establishing early VC heritages as part of England’s heritage is the insistence that it can be delivered by reaching out to *identities*. This resonates with the idea of plural heritage and will be picked up in the discussion of Chapter Nine.

3.6 ‘Official’ and ‘Unofficial’ heritage

The idea of official/authorised and unofficial/unauthorised heritage binaries has been referred to in passing above. Here it will be provided with a little more specificity.

Harrison (2013a: 14-15) refers to 'official' heritage as 'a set of professional practices that are authorised by the state and motivated by some form of legislation or written charter' and 'unofficial' heritage as 'a broad range of practices that are represented using the language of heritage, but are not recognised by official forms of legislation.' Merriman (2000: 129-130) makes a similar distinction between 'a personal past' and 'the impersonal heritage'. The impersonal heritage is the 'official' heritage' that is presented to people on their behalf and to which one has a certain detached relationship because of the perceived lack of personal connection. The 'personal past' 'is a sense of the past which is experienced in personal terms of which the best examples are memories and family histories' (Merriman 2000:129). This binary, as will be made clear in Chapters Four and Five, can be seen to have a relationship with Naidoo's distinguishing between 'inclusion' and 'cultural democracy'. That is, 'inclusion' is an 'official' act whereby a central aspect (in this case 'the heritage') is swelled by the active inclusion of other heritages according to the will of the state and the actions of its heritage managers. 'Cultural democracy', on the other hand, suggests that heritage can be something outside of these parameters and is governed by personal choice. A significant concern of this thesis is the extent to which heritage as a 'cultural democracy' has broken from the label of unofficial and into the official heritage, or indeed if this dichotomy is still relevant?

Before moving into the central research chapters brief consideration should be given to the recently coined 'critical turn' in heritage studies (Winter 2013), the outlining of which will be further developed in the discussion element of this thesis.

3.7 Critical heritage

Firstly, it should be pointed out that all of the work referenced in this chapter reflects a critical heritage; that is, the work of Wright (1985), Hewison (1987), Lowenthal (1996), Smith (2006) and the many others, have all critically reflected on what heritage *is*, and what it *does*. The ‘critical turn’, in heritage studies, as outlined by Winter (2013: 533):

...means better understanding the various ways in which heritage now has a stake in, and can act as a positive enabler for, the complex, multi-vector challenges that face us today, such as cultural and environmental sustainability, economic inequalities, conflict resolution, social cohesion and the future of cities, to name a few. Finally, it should also be about recognising there are critical challenges and benefits related to the safeguarding of culture and the preservation of heritage itself, an issue critical heritage theory too quickly dismisses or passes over.

The idea that heritage has a role in conflict resolution and social cohesion is perhaps best demonstrated through examples of public archaeology in the United States. Public archaeology has wide ranging implications (see Skeates *et al.* 2012) but is most often describing ‘community-based’ or collaborative work *between* archaeologists and particular communities (Smith and Waterton 2009a). Archaeologists in the United States have engaged with ‘descendent communities’ of former slaves through work carried out at former plantation sites and African-

American settlements (Handler and Gable 1997; McDavid 2000; Butler 2001; Agbe-Davies 2010; Davidson and Brandon 2012; LaRoche 2012). In doing so, Davidson and Brandon (2012: 607) have warned of homogenising communities and insist that they be recognised as consisting of ‘complex layers.’ The most significant relevance of this work to this research is that these projects often result in subverting the narrative of a heritage place. For instance, at a former sawmill that used enslaved labour in Arkansas that was well known locally because of the Van Winkle family who had owned it, archaeologists, at the invitation of Van Winkle descendants, sought to uncover the African-American heritage of the site, engaging with descendent communities in the process. An education programme was developed for school students that encompassed the multi-faceted heritage of the place and the authors noted that the ‘alternative’ heritage narratives of ‘diversity, modernity, industrialism, slavery and racism’ found it difficult to challenge the traditional ‘cultural memory’ of the place (Davidson and Brandon 2012: 621). This points to the challenges heritage professionals, academics and communities face when trying to challenge the authorised narrative of a heritage ‘thing’. The engagement of a narrative of slavery is particularly pertinent as this has become a key feature of ‘alternative’ narratives of heritage places in England following the 2007 bicentenary of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade (see Chapter Eight).

A more successful example of challenging an authorised narrative through engaging with the history of slavery in the United States has been described by LaRoche in her case study of George Washington’s house in Philadelphia (LaRoche 2012). Washington had several enslaved workers at his house in the late eighteenth century, despite legislation in the state that entitled enslaved persons the right to freedom if they had lived there for six months. Following a significant amount of

activism from groups and archaeologists who wanted stories of the enslaved African-Americans who had worked there told through the site's interpretation, work was carried out to do this. According to LaRoche, the narrative interpretation of the enslaved workers gave visitors to the site 'for the first time' a view of 'the founding of the nation through the lens of African-American history' (LaRoche 2012: 638). Washington himself remained present at the site but his presence had been fundamentally changed by intertwining his traditional narrative of 'founding father' of the United States with that of slavery. Unlike at the Van Winkle site, the narrative was reimagined as opposed to an attempt to create a series of narrative layers on top of the existing authorised narrative. Whilst this point will be returned to throughout this thesis, it is at this stage necessary to assert that these projects, and the many like other like them that have been carried out in the United States have sought to use heritage in this 'critical' way and bring communities together through a reappraisal of what an existing heritage place means.

As well as playing a role in those activities highlighted by Winter, the 'critical turn' requires a more sympathetic and constructive relationship between academics and heritage professionals (Witcomb and Buckley 2013). As a piece of academic research which has been undertaken with the knowledge and input of a wide range of industry professionals, this thesis attempts to recognise the environment in which 'the heritage' is made and take this into account when assessing the impact of diversity or inclusion work in the sector.

A further aspect that can be included in this 'critical turn' is Harrison's argument, referred to briefly above, that we cannot indefinitely add to 'the heritage' and that once valued as such it should not, as is currently the case, have an unchallenged right to maintain that status (Harrison 2013b: 580). In order to make a

'new' heritage we must forget another, lest heritage itself becomes without meaning. He refers to this as 'a "crisis" of accumulation of the past' (Harrison 2013b: 580). This is especially relevant in England which is committed (at least at present) to maintaining the primacy of tangible forms of heritage. Until it is willing to *replace* one heritage with another, arguably, early VC heritage will be considered 'the other' and therefore unofficial heritage by virtue of its recent addition and temporariness. Only by 'forgetting' the original narrative altogether and replacing it with one which represents a more diverse past will a reimagined heritage survive. Again, the extent to which heritage in England has shown itself capable of being 'reimagined' or 'reconstructed' through dialogue can be tested through this research.

3.8 Conclusion

Early VC history has been described here as owning an established historiography, placing a VC presence in England before England even existed. VC history engages with many established historical themes such as class, slavery, colonialism, political radicalism, art and a myriad of others demonstrating it as unrepresentative of any particular identity, sharing experiences with all other historical or contemporary groups. Two key points should therefore be recognised: the first that there exists a vibrant early VC historiography which can be utilised in any determination of England's heritage and second, that it exists in numerous permeations of the past.

The historiography of heritage has been discussed including how it came to be recognised as representative of the 'Nation'. The nationalisation or commercialisation commentary from the 1980s and 1990s described a formalisation of heritage requiring scholarly assessment, with much attention given over to the

way in which the value of heritage was decided and by whom. The existence of an AHD has been discussed which restricts the uses of heritage including whom it can be *for*, what it can *be* and *who* can decide this. The inherent dissonance of all heritages has described how no one heritage can represent every person, and recognising the plurality of heritage is required to speak to a plurality of identities. The various conceptions of heritage and its limitations will be explored further through the case study research chapters.

Finally, this chapter has explored the way in which the British government developed a political agenda that sought to use heritage to combat social exclusion. The relation of this to VCs is picked up in more detail in the next chapter. The case study chapters that follow can provide an integral contribution to this debate around the qualities of inclusion and diversity by critically appraising two related pieces of work which have been recently completed. Discussion of them can contribute to the current academic debates which require the AHD to be challenged in order for a diverse heritage to become a reality. This chapter has sought to engage with a range of academic debates surrounding heritage spanning thirty years. The following chapter will shift the emphasis to how heritage, and specifically the discourse of social inclusion in heritage, has impacted on how the term itself is imagined and used in the sector. This will be done through a review of policy and practice in England's heritage sector since 1997.

**PART 2 – HERITAGE POLICY AND PRACTICE
IN ENGLAND 1997-2013**

Chapter 4: The Rhetorical Heritage

Heritage and the state

4.1 Introduction

This chapter is a discussion of the way in which the ‘state-sponsored’ heritage has interpreted the social exclusion policy agenda developed by the New Labour government elected in 1997 followed by a brief overview of how this agenda changed under the Coalition government from 2010. This includes discussion of the heritage policies of the ministerial Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and the non-departmental institutions responsible to them, English Heritage (EH) and the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). In addition this chapter considers the role the museums sector played in this agenda through a review of related policy and practice documents. Figure 4.1 describes the heritage sector in England with ‘state-sponsored’ heritage referring to those organisations who receive ongoing financial support for operational activities directly or indirectly from DCMS. The Major Partner Museums who receive funding from Arts Council England (ACE) replaced the regional hubs of the Renaissance in the Regions programme in 2012 (see section 4.10.4):

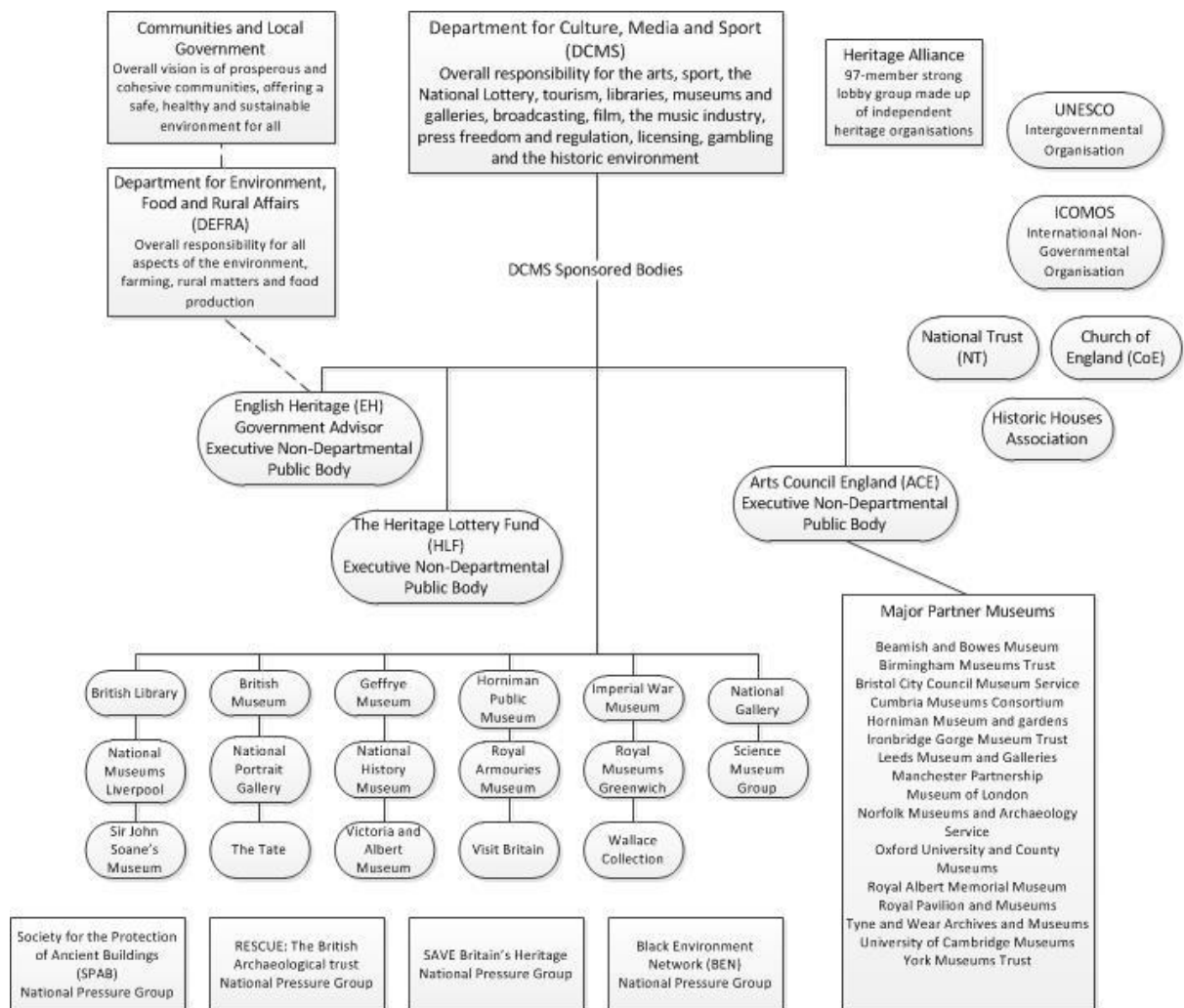


Figure 4.1: The heritage sector in England

(Adapted from Waterton 2010a: 75)

A discussion of policy, as argued by Street (2011), drawing on the work of Sandel (1996), is concerned not only with how policy is implemented, but with the ‘ideas that inform it’. With this in mind, this chapter will consider not only what heritage policy responding to social exclusion has been over the course of the past fifteen years, but the values and ideas that have driven it and how these have changed over time. This chapter will begin with an introduction to social exclusion as a political concept and its intended application in the heritage sector in England. The

discussion is made relevant to this particular research through a brief discussion of how ethnicity came to be at the centre of this policy at the end of the twentieth century. This will serve to contextualise the subsequent review of heritage policy and practice from 1997-2013.

4.2.1 Social exclusion as a political policy

As described in the previous chapter, almost immediately after their election the New Labour government set up the Social Exclusion Unit (SEU). This unit was designed to tackle exclusion from society which occurred through factors such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime environments, bad health and family breakdown (Newman and McLean 1998). As elsewhere in this thesis both social *inclusion* and social *exclusion* are referred to here and their usage needs to be explained. As Pendlebury *et al.* (2004) have argued, these two terms most often represent a dichotomy whereby the former is what happens when the latter is overcome, but the variety of ways in which they are used in policy and practice means that defining what each actually refers to is problematic. Having reviewed various policy documents from DCMS, EH and the HLF the authors found that:

...under the one term 'social inclusion' we have policy makers referring to the physical environment, the nature and accessibility of the historic environment and the contribution of CBH in overcoming entrenched social and economic problems (Pendlebury *et al.* 2004: 21).

They subsequently determined that:

...though social inclusion is useful for communicating a broad concept it lacks precision. We have therefore, used the term social inclusion in this broad way, embracing the various ways in which the CBH can be used in a socially progressive manner... For social exclusion, on the other hand, we use the more precise and restricted definition provided by the government's Social Exclusion Unit (Pendlebury *et al.* 2004: 21).

The same rule will apply here; social inclusion will be used when discussing attempts to raise participation in the heritage sector by specified groups, as well as what the desired resolution of social exclusion policy may be. Social exclusion will be used when referring to a specific policy that is directly attributable to New Labour's social exclusion policy agenda. As Newman and McLean (2004) argue however, policy documents themselves are inconsistent in their application of these terms so this rule may not always be easily applied when referencing related policy documentation or discussion and author discretion is required.

4.2.2 Social exclusion policy and 'the heritage'

Immediately after the creation of the SEU eighteen Policy Action Teams (PAT) were set up to report on the way in which social exclusion could be tackled. These reports were published by the relevant government department with DCMS's contribution focusing on arts and sport (PAT 10 1999). This document required responses from

both the state-sponsored CBH and museums sector considering their place in this agenda. These responses are discussed in more detail below (DCMS 2000; EH 2000). Thus, the heritage sector was identified as having the potential to play a role in the social exclusion mission by widening access to representations of the past through outreach and audience development, described by Martin (2005:198) as the 'mainstreaming' of social inclusion. In this way the heritage sector was to be an agent for social change. As Waterton has aptly put it, 'In a strange twist of instrumentalism, "heritage" is granted the power to *do* good, rather than simply *be* good' (Waterton 2007: 325, emphasis in original). However, in reality, the sector was largely unprepared for this responsibility. Newman and McLean clearly state the issues which the heritage sector faced with regards to the social exclusion policy agenda at the time:

The failure of museums and heritage organisations to address the concerns of communities is..., demonstrated by the fact that museums and heritage sites in their present form only attract a minority of a local community... The heritage sector needs to cease experimenting and to develop cohesive policies for taking on the challenge of combating social exclusion (Newman and McLean 1998: 152).

The policy documents, sector conferences, strategic plans and academic proposals that are reviewed in this chapter can be seen as a response to this criticism as they developed an agenda for change in the heritage sector which would dominate its rhetoric for the next decade.

Although social exclusion policies discussed below refer to a variety of groups who were considered excluded from the mainstream, only their impact on VCs will be considered here. It should also be noted that DCMS is a government department that has its remit throughout Britain, therefore discussion of its policies is not a discussion solely of heritage in England. The same can be said of the HLF which provides grant funding for projects throughout Great Britain and Northern Ireland. As stated in Chapter One however, the impact of their policies is only considered in relation to the political and geographic nation of England.

Before going into more detail about how the heritage sector engaged with social exclusion policies, in order to understand the political position of VCs in England at this time, it is useful to carry out a short review of the 'politics of race' that has permeated the country for half a century (for more detailed discussion see Gilroy 1987; Gilroy 1993; Hall 1997c). This is perhaps most recognisable through the term 'multiculturalism'.

4.3.1 A brief history of multiculturalism in Britain

The first decade of migration of Commonwealth citizens to Britain following the Second World War occurred, according to Favell (2001), with relatively little political fuss. Immigration of VCs became a central political issue following the Notting Hill and Nottingham 'race riots' in 1958. This led to the 1962 Commonwealth Immigrants Act which placed limitations on immigration from recently decolonised - predominantly non-white - countries, 'thus clearly demarking and limiting future coloured immigrants from others of (white) origin' (Favell 2001: 103). Despite growing hostilities towards non-white minorities, Favell credits the staunch anti-

immigration stance taken by Enoch Powell in his 1968 'Rivers of Blood' speech as forcing the hand of the mainstream political establishment to affirm the toleration of ethnic minorities, leading to the 1968 Race Relations Act which outlawed racial discrimination and incitement of race hatred (Favell 2001). Thus, the idea that Britain would legally protect VCs from discrimination was cemented in law. It was not until the 1990s however, following further 'race riots' in London and Birmingham that there was a 'shift in focus... from anti-discrimination and equality of opportunity to multiculturalism' (Favell 2001: 213). Multiculturalism had become, according to Baxter (2006: 169-170), 'a doctrine which supports and allows for cultural difference within a paradigm of coexistence.' Drawing on the work of John Rex (1996), Baxter makes the following comments regarding the expectations of the dominant majority in a multicultural state:

Minorities are expected to display loyalty to the state, acceptance of the system of governance, and acknowledgement of the privileged place of aspects of British culture (including Christianity). The dominant national group, however, appears to retain the right to question, if not condemn, the minority's religious and cultural practices. Therefore, institutionalised multiculturalism may have resulted in little reciprocal adaption (Baxter 2006: 170).

Multiculturalism then, by the election of New Labour in 1997, had created an official place for VCs within the system of the state but they were not considered as having a role in the *representation* of the state. Such a conception of the role of VCs in England clearly excludes positioning them within the narrative interpretation of the

nation's past in the present: 'the heritage'. It is within this environment that the SEU was established.

As Schnapper (2011: 78) has argued however, in the first years of its government New Labour actually 'had little to say about multiculturalism and the integration of ethnic minorities.' The catalyst for its inclusion into their social exclusion policy agenda was the publication of the MacPherson report in 1999, the result of an inquiry set up in the wake of the murder of a Black teenager named Stephen Lawrence in 1993. The report lamented the racial discrimination that was asserted as endemic within British society (Schnapper 2011).

In 2000, *The Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain* was published. This was the result of the findings of a Commission of '23 distinguished individuals drawn from many community backgrounds' chaired by Bhikhu Parekh, who had been tasked with analysing 'the current state of multi-ethnic Britain and propose ways of countering racial discrimination and disadvantage' (Parekh 2000: viii). Similarities with the objectives of the SEU are evident and Parekh aligns his report with this political context of tackling social exclusion to encourage social harmony (Parekh 2000). Parekh found a Britain which was in conflict with itself over who it was, compared with who it believed it used to be, the reconciliation of which it was believed could create a country that was 'at ease with its rich diversity' (Parekh 2000: viii).

Parekh's report was not well received by either the left or right wing media with suggestions from the latter that it had made Britishness into an 'inherently racist' term and the home secretary, Jack Straw, distanced himself from it (McGuigan 2005: 184). Its proposals were also condemned from sections of the academy with Brian Barry, in particular, claiming multiculturalism was illiberal and Parekh's idea of a

'community of communities' would remove the opportunity to ensure different groups shared responsibility for the common good (Barry 2001: 89). Such a reaction suggests that there was a fear that providing particular rights for separate ethnic and cultural communities not only politically, but historically, would be divisive. This also reflects the argument that multiculturalism had become 'unfashionable' by this time, too associated with 'political correctness' (Bennett 1998: 1). What is most poignant with regards to the rest of this chapter is that Parekh saw Britain as at a 'crossroads' whereby it could defend 'old values and ancient hierarchies, relying on a narrow English-dominated, backward-looking definition of the nation' or it could 'seize the opportunity to create a more flexible, inclusive, cosmopolitan image of itself...' (Parekh 2000: 14). This review of policy documents and heritage sector discussions can be seen as the real-time debate that decided in which direction, and how far, 'the heritage' of England would go.

4.3.2 Debating the place of visible communities in 'the heritage'

From 1-3 November 1999 a conference was held at the G-Mex in Manchester organised by ACE with support from other heritage agencies entitled 'Whose Heritage?'. This conference acts as a useful bookend for marking out the particulars of under-representation in 'the heritage' as voiced by some VC groups and heritage professionals. It also set out the first defined plan of action as to how heritages of VCs might infiltrate 'the heritage'. It had as its remit to discuss 'the one-sided-ness of the official version of British heritage and culture' (ACE 1999: 5). It brought together museum representatives, funders, individuals and groups representing VCs and art and policy-makers. In his keynote address Professor Stuart Hall - who had also been

part of the Parekh Commission - summed up some of the issues that would dominate the proceedings: the 'negative figuration' of '*otherness*', especially when referring to VCs who 'have never been separatist or exclusive' and the lack of heritage practitioners from these '*other*' communities (Hall 2005 [1999]: 30, emphasis in original). Hall used the term 'the Heritage' to describe how in England it formed a 'collective representation ... of *tradition*' and was therefore static. Hall argued instead that it should be thought of 'as a discursive practice', able to include more than just the 'high points' (Hall 2005 [1999]: 22-26, emphasis in original). 'The Heritage' did not have to be a celebration of 'the past' and could adapt through dialogue between its various stakeholders. His address has subsequently been referred to as 'the starting point for later work around heritage and diversity' (Khan 2009: 62).

The conference called for a debate over the 'nature of "British cultural heritage" and its selectivity – and the need to redefine both' (ACE 1999: 4). The gauntlet was being laid down for 'the heritage' of England to become more fluid and concede that its historical foundations were only partly represented through its heritage places, objects, etc. In short, this conference was a living, breathing, reproduction of the valuation, resulting dissonance, and identity production debates from academia that have been highlighted in the preceding chapter. Their recognition by a non-academic conference confirmed their relevance to any attempt to engage VCs with 'the heritage' of England. As the state agency for determining the nation's heritage, which also had representation at 'Whose Heritage?', the role in this debate of EH will now be considered.

4.4.1 Social exclusion policy and cultural built heritage: the parameters of the debate

Waterton (2010a) has produced a comprehensive review of the first decade of policies relating to New Labour's social exclusion policy agenda as reflected in the reports and activities of DCMS and EH. This has usefully highlighted how, almost immediately from the time that EH were required to participate in this agenda, they deemed that the word 'heritage' itself was exclusive. From the beginning of this period she notes a 'sleight-of-hand' which led to the rebranding of heritage as the 'historic environment' (Waterton 2010a: 9). The 'historic environment', she argues, was meant to be a more inclusive term than heritage and, since the late 1990s, 'has materialized in policy' (Waterton 2010a: 12; see also Waterton and Smith 2008). She notes also that it was '*the* historic environment... and that single conceptualisation is so broad and so encompassing, it arguably includes *everything*, or so the logic goes' (Waterton 2007: 326, emphasis in original).

This materialisation occurred through a series of consultations, working groups and resulting papers produced by EH at the turn of the millennium (for detailed discussion see Waterton 2010a). As Waterton continues however, 'the introduction of the concept historic environment did not..., mean jettisoning "heritage" altogether', rather that the historic environment was qualified as 'neutral' since the notion of value was less overt (Waterton 2010a: 125-126). EH's division of these terms was clarified in a document relating to their 'Conservation Principles' published in 2008:

Heritage – All inherited resources which people value beyond mere utility.

Historic environment – All aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including physical remains of past human activity, whether visible or buried, and deliberately planted or managed flora (EH 2008a: 71).

Clearly, ‘heritage’ has been singled out as an abstract value which can be individually or collectively determined as long as it is done so in the present. The ‘historic environment’ is a very specific thing which has its value in its historicity. Of course, to describe something as ‘historical’ is also heavily dependent on context. The point here is that EH introduced the term ‘historic environment’ to disconnect the things they recognised as worthy of protecting from the *emotional* judgement that was synonymous with heritage making. As Waterton (2010a: 125, emphasis in original) argues:

...‘historic environment’ is conceptualized as the *historic* components of the world we see around us. It is projected into the sector at a point above the idea of heritage, where it is able to account for *any* aspect of the past, irrespective of class, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, sexuality, and so forth.

The historic environment was conceived as inherently inclusive since it was devoid of emotional value. However, in response to her review of policy documents from the sector, Waterton (2010a) argues that despite the rhetoric of inclusion which permeates them, the idea of what heritage can *be* is never really challenged and, in

fact, the rhetoric served to conceptualise those determined as ‘the excluded’ as living purposefully outside the mainstream (also Levitas 2004). Invoking Smith’s AHD Waterton argues that the process of ‘including’ under-represented identities in the nation’s heritage was strictly controlled by the dominant majority. That which was included is required to be so because of its inherent difference from ‘the norm’. Its *otherness* was thus inescapable and that otherness was determined in relation to ‘*the historic environment*’ by the same people who had determined it in relation to ‘*the heritage*’.

As has been stated, Waterton has already carried out a thorough analysis of EH’s and DCMS’s interpretation and application of New Labour’s social exclusion policy agenda. The purpose of this chapter, and the next, is to enhance her analysis by consulting other reports from DCMS and EH, as well as compare them with others from the wider heritage sector. This will allow me to come to an independent conclusion as to the extent to which social inclusion through heritage was enacted through semantics or in practice and how far early VC heritages actually penetrated ‘the heritage’ of the ‘Nation’ because of it?

4.4.2 Social exclusion policy at DCMS and English Heritage

In response to the government’s social exclusion policy agenda EH created their own ‘Statement of Social Inclusion Goals’. These were:

- To increase access to the historic environment, particularly to those traditionally left out of cultural activities physically, intellectually and financially;
- To acknowledge, respect and celebrate the cultural diversity of England's heritage in all our activities;
- To improve access to the historic environment for people with disabilities;
- To articulate a more inclusive past and promote education opportunities;
- To promote cultural diversity internally within English Heritage and develop programmes to combat institutional discrimination.

(quoted in Shore 2006: 130)

These 'Goals' can be seen to immediately influence the strategic direction of EH. One of the earliest documents in which EH considered in more detail what social inclusion might actually look like was *Power of Place* in 2000. This report was the result of an extensive consultation with both 'specialists' and the general public carried out, at the behest of DCMS, to review policies relating to CBH in England. The report claimed to reflect 'the widely held views of the sector and the population at large' (EH 2000: 1). It was, according to Waterton, 'a direct response to the arrival of a discourse of social inclusion and.., developed in a political context still anxious over the accusations of institutional racism' (Waterton 2010a: 138). Pendlebury *et al.* suggest that *Power of Place* presents (although does not state) an ideal of a plural heritage, in emphasising "equality and valuing different cultural experience, whether they are due to ethnic identities, social or economic situations" (*Power of Place* 2000 quoted in Pendlebury *et al.* 2004: 14). Clearly, *Power of Place* can act as a useful

starting point for the articulation of policies and practice attempting to foster social inclusion by DCMS and EH.

The following statements from the report are useful to connect EH's 'Social Inclusion Goals' to more specific reasons why it was felt some people were excluded from 'the heritage' of England, particularly VCs:

- Many feel powerless and **excluded** [from the historic environment]. The historical contribution of their group in society is not **celebrated**. Their personal heritage does not appear to be taken into account by **those who take decisions** (EH 2000: 23, emphasis added).
- The study of history is incomplete if it does not take into account the way the historic environment reflects the multi-cultural and **many-layered** development of England (EH 2000: 23, emphasis added).
- Many people believe that heritage provision in England does not adequately represent certain groups. Three in four believe that the contribution of Black and Asian people is not adequately represented – a figure that is even higher among people from those backgrounds (EH 2000: 25).
- ...both Black and Asian people were less likely than White people to visit stately homes (EH 2000: 25).
- Work relating to small excluded social groups such as ethnic groups is not about favouring these groups. It is about shaping society we can all be proud of. The emergent **holistic history will belong to everyone** (EH 2000: 28, emphasis added).

The above statements described CBH that was not representative of its past or present population. The words and phrases highlighted constitute the emerging discourse of social inclusion identified by Waterton. 'Excluded' has been highlighted to demonstrate that this document is a response to the official social exclusion policy agenda of New Labour interpreted by EH through their 'Social Inclusion Goals.' It is interesting that the idea of personal exclusion from cultural activities, described in terms of certain histories being omitted from England's heritage, is prominent in these statements. This suggests that being able to identify with a heritage was what drives engagement with it, not ability – financially or physically – to visit it.

The idea of heritage being a 'celebration' is also noteworthy since embedded in the AHD is the idea that it is 'inherently good, safe and conflict-free' (Smith and Waterton 2009a: 30). Furthermore, Naidoo (2010) in particular, insists a diverse society should not be celebrated as it is merely stating fact. The use of celebration as method of inclusion has been noted as permeating the 2007 bicentenary of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade (Waterton 2010b; see Chapter Eight). It should be reminded however, that the National Heritage Act (NHA) of 1983 set up the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England (now EH) with the remit to 'promote the public's enjoyment' of heritage (NHA 1983: S32-33). With this in mind, the inherent positivity of heritage that will be seen in EH reporting should be viewed as reflecting its legislative obligations more than the ideological position of its employees.

'Those who take decisions', i.e. 'experts' play a central role in Smith's AHD and it is worth noting here that the statement above admits that 'experts' have been (or at least are perceived to have been) remiss in considering 'the heritage' as

agreed. The role of 'the expert' in making heritage will be traced throughout this chapter.

The final two phrases highlighted refer to the need to *reimagine* 'the heritage' as 'many-layered' so it 'belongs to everyone'. The latter phrase, in fact, was a comment made by The Black Environment Network⁸ in a consultation which informed *Power of Place*, found within a section of the report entitled 'Real participation in decisions' (EH 2000: 28). Interestingly, the report does not challenge the right of the 'experts' to make decisions regarding what heritage can be, but rather asks that they consider the implications of their decisions in terms of diverse representation.

The phrase 'many-layered' is worth interrogating. In theory, layers lie on top of each other without necessarily altering the integrity of each layer. If heritage was imagined in this way - as a number of separate layers - then the foundation layer would stay the same, as would the others. The foundation layer is also conceptually the layer upon which all other layers are built and thus without it the other layers cannot exist. This layer holds the authority through its 'experts' to determine what other heritage layers can be added. Figure 4.2 describes this process. This understanding of heritage suggests that the past is a series of linear narratives which never cross or influence other narratives. As suggested in Chapter Three however, narratives do not exist in vacuums and their meanings are neither fixed nor complete (Porter Abbott 2002). The legitimacy of such a model is also challenged by Hall's argument that a coherent national identity cannot be sustained in this way since identity does not centre round neat constructions such as a linear, uncorrupted narrative (Hall 1996). This many-layered suggestion is very close to the 'unfashionable' multiculturalism described above. It is therefore of interest whether a

policy of layered heritage is reflected in other policy and practice documents from the sector since it does not allow for heritage narratives to be conceived of as intertwined or discursive, as hoped for at 'Whose Heritage?'.

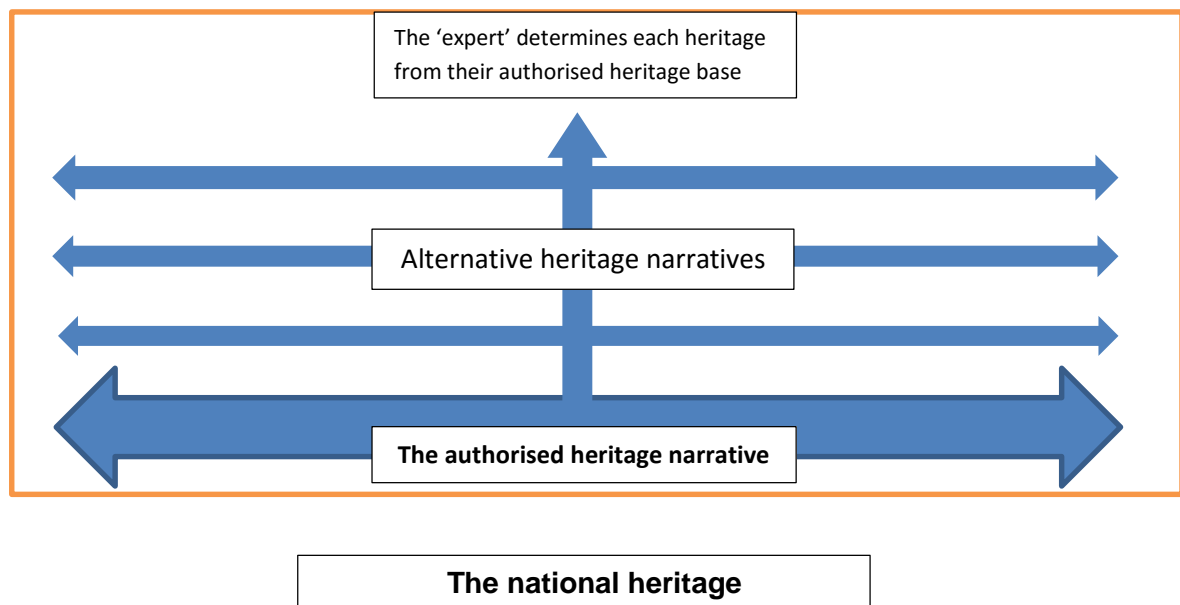


Figure 4.2: The 'many-layered' heritage

Regardless of its form, the suggestion that a change to the narrative of 'the heritage' would be a necessary requirement in order for the sector to engage with VCs was solidified in a DCMS document published in 2002. It asserted that the perception that heritage excluded certain groups could be tackled through:

...changes to presentation of the history of the place... The hidden histories that tell the diverse social, economic and cultural stories of a place can

engage more people than representation of exclusive and wealthy lifestyles (DCMS 2002: 12).

The extent to which this avenue was pursued will be reviewed through subsequent documents and commentary.

4.4.3 The Heritage Protection Review and Heritage Counts

The middle of the last decade represented a time when DCMS was undertaking a substantial strategic review of how heritage was managed based on internal and external consultations which culminated in the publication of a heritage White Paper in 2007. This review was known as the Heritage Protection Review (HPR). The HPR, as Waterton (2010a) has made clear, although ostensibly starting in 2003, had its foundations in *Power of Place*. Since Waterton has already conducted a thorough analysis of the various reports which made up the HPR it is my intention to review its influence on social inclusion discourse through a series of annual reports published by EH on behalf of the Historic Environment Forum⁹ entitled *Heritage Counts*.

Beginning in 2002, these reports explored a different theme relating to the social and economic role of CBH. Building on the momentum afforded by *Power of Place*, these reports sought to demonstrate the public value of CBH and thus secure its position on the political agenda (Baxter 2002). The themes each year can be viewed as representing well those being addressed concomitantly in the HPR.

The 2002 report was called the *State of the Historic Environment Report*. It reiterated the concern of *Power of Place* that ‘three out of every four people in

England believe that more should be done to recognise the contribution of black and Asian people to our heritage' (EH 2002: 2). 'Recognition' suggests an acceptance that VCs were overlooked rather than invisible in 'our' heritage narrative. Note also the use of 'heritage' as opposed to 'historic environment' which emphasises the value of what is 'ours' (not theirs).

The report set out the intention to gather knowledge relating to who was excluded from 'the heritage' and what were the existing barriers to 'greater access and participation' (EH 2002: 6). The message here seems to be that in the two years since *Power of Place*, little had been actioned in terms of removing barriers to participation for various groups who had already been noted as excluded, including VCs. The making of this report had encouraged an audit of what data was being collected relating to the heritage sector from the various agencies involved in its management. This process identified a lack of information that could be used to inform the sector of why certain people did not participate in it and thus heritage managers had little empirical evidence on which to base their work in fulfilling social exclusion policy requirements (Baxter 2002).

The following year the focus of *Heritage Counts* was the economic value of CBH. Falling as it did in the official launch year of the HPR, this report offers a useful insight into its priorities, significantly, that CBH needed to justify its value. A section of this report is dedicated to EH's response to social exclusion policy. A survey conducted as part of the report found that 72 per cent of respondents thought 'more should be done to recognise the contribution made by different communities to our heritage' (EH 2003: 4), in essence, the same point made in the previous year's report. It also stated that there existed 'barriers' which prevented some people from

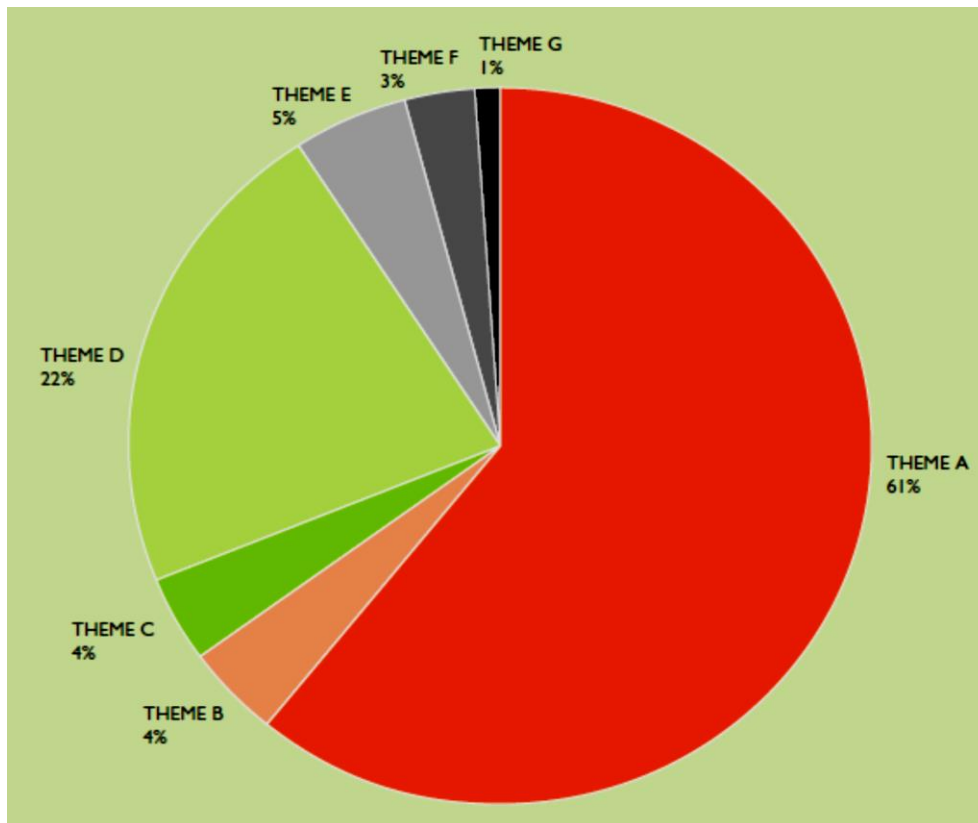
participating in CBH which should be a 'high priority for action' (EH 2003: 4), again restating the point from a year earlier.

This report introduced a series of projects which sought to link VCs with existing CBH. These projects were being run by major heritage organisations such as the Historic Houses Association¹⁰, EH and the National Trust (NT), usually in collaboration with a 'representative' group of an excluded community (EH 2003: 5). Examples of such projects will be explored in Chapter Six. The report highlighted a target set by the government of attracting 100,000 'new users' to CBH by 2005/06 (EH 2003: 4). This target was clarified elsewhere as relating to two 'under-represented' groups: low socio-economic groups and BME communities. A research plan was put in place to monitor EH's performance against this target (EH 2005a).

2004's *Heritage Counts* focused on a decade of the HLF, also directly responsible to DCMS (see Figure 4.1) The HLF's response to the government's social exclusion policy agenda will be considered separately below so this report will be considered only in brief. It detailed a meeting of the Heritage Forum in 2004 which discussed what was 'still' needed to facilitate social inclusion through heritage (EH 2004: 18). Five priorities were identified with a senior level 'champion' from the heritage sector to drive each of them. Broadening participation was still considered unresolved and so an aim was determined to 'develop a sector-wide programme of action to enhance access and inclusion to the historic environment, including the formation of a sector access and inclusion project plan' (EH 2004: 18). It is telling that four years on from *Power of Place*, such a plan had yet to be developed.

The following year's report, *Heritage and the Rural Economy*, did not mention practices linked to the social exclusion policy agenda (EH 2005b). A useful departure

here however, which can tie in with this thesis's focus on the use of narrative interpretation to increase VC engagement with CBH, is to review EH's 2005 *Research Agenda*. This formed part of the HPR and reviewed the research framework for the organisation. This report outlined seven organisational strategies which were informed by research (Figure 4.3), one of which was 'engaging and developing diverse audiences' (EH 2005c: 4). This represented 4 per cent of the value of total research activity with the vast majority directed towards 'discovering, studying and defining historic assets and their significance' and 'studying and assessing the risks to historic assets and devising responses' (EH 2005c: 4). The former places the role of the 'expert' as central to this research agenda. 'Studying historic assets and improving their presentation and interpretation' was allocated 5 per cent of the total value, suggesting that re-imagining the core heritage narrative of existing EH places was not a priority. This is despite the comments made in *Power of Place* regarding the existence of a 'many-layered' history of the 'historic environment' which needed to be recognised (regardless of its effectiveness) in order for history to be 'complete'.



Theme A: Discovering, studying the defining historic assets and their significance. (61%)

Theme B: Studying and establishing the socio-economic and other values and needs of the historic environment and those concerned with it. (4%)

Theme C: Engaging and developing diverse audiences. (4%)

Theme D: Studying and assessing the risks to historic assets and devising responses. (22%)

Theme E: Studying historic assets and improving their presentation and interpretation. (5%)

Theme F: Studying and developing information management. (3%)

Theme G: Studying and devising ways of making English Heritage and the sector more effective. (1%)

Figure 4.3: Value of English Heritage research activity by theme 2005/6

Source: English Heritage 2005c: 4

This report was complemented by a five year research strategy commencing in 2005 and intended for review in 2008 (EH 2005a). This set out the four ways through which EH planned to engage 100,000 'new heritage visitors' from the two aforementioned target groups:

- General Admissions to sites
- Heritage Open Days
- Outreach projects
- Events

(EH 2005a: 21)

In the first year (2004/5), EH claimed to have 'significantly exceeded their target' thanks largely to their outreach work that 'tackled important national issues..., through local projects which promote a sense of place and identity, build strong communities and encourage a greater understanding of our diverse histories' (EH 2005a: 21).

In the year 2005/06 DCMS were targeted by the government, over a further three year period, to raise the proportion of people 'attending heritage sites' from three 'under-represented' groups – including adults with a limiting disability or illness to the previous target groups (EH 2006: 5). In order to measure this, as well as attitudes towards participation in leisure activities more generally, a nationwide survey was set up in July 2005 by DCMS entitled *Taking Part*.¹¹ The 2006 *Heritage Counts* report stated that this survey, 'with responses from nearly 30,000 adults, gives us a sound evidence base for understanding patterns of participation and the

barriers to encouraging more people to enjoy heritage' (EH 2006: 5). The caveat of 'enjoyment' is an indicator of the continued need for heritage to be a 'celebration', as outlined above. The report also states that 'the sector as a whole is proactively trying, through various means, such as outreach, increased agency in heritage decisions for under-represented groups and research, to try and widen participation' (EH 2006: 6).

Although these statements emphasise 'participation', the majority of EH's methods for raising it suggest a conflation in its meaning with visitation. Only 'Outreach projects' from the list above could be suggested to be interactive whereby targeted groups might actually be *involved* in the making of heritage. The point being made is that EH's strategy assumed that by visiting CBH people are participating in it. To participate suggests a relationship with something beyond mere observation. A relationship is a two-way process whereby parties are able to affect one another. By 2006 however, very little had actually been done above the level of rhetoric to understand the relationship of VCs with 'the heritage' of England and thus it was impossible to assess levels of participation. This contradicts the statements made in *Power of Place* that emphasised the importance of personal engagement with heritage. The messages were clear but they were repeated, restricted in action and innovation by the little evidence as to *why* designated 'under-represented' groups were not participating in the first place. EH claimed that more people from the targeted groups were visiting CBH but no evidence could be pointed to as to what this had done in terms of fostering social inclusion. In other words, there was no evidence as to what increased visitation of CBH has done in regards to VC's relationship with it. The development of *Taking Part* should be seen then, as a major event in the potential for the engagement of VCs by the heritage sector. How this potential translated into practice is for further discussion.

4.4.4 The end of the HPR

In 2007, EH published a White Paper entitled *Heritage Protection for the 21st Century*. This set out their vision for CBH based on the preceding HPR. Waterton and Smith (2008: 201-202, emphasis in original) have offered a rather damning assessment of this White Paper and the HPR generally:

While the White Paper offers a simplified and unified system of heritage management practice, which is a laudable public policy objective, the accumulated effort of the HPR and the White Paper has only recreated and reinforced the legitimacy of the AHD, along with ‘expert’ and elite ideas of what ‘heritage’ is.

In summary, the White Paper was based on three principles: to develop ‘a unified approach to the historic environment’; to maximise ‘opportunities for inclusion and involvement; to support ‘sustainable communities’ (DCMS 2007: 6). These were to be delivered through a ‘single designation regime’ for the ‘historic environment’ which was to be devolved to EH and include a greater amount of consultation (DCMS 2007: 8). A significant element of this was to increase the role of local authorities in heritage designation and protection (DCMS 2007). Although there was considerable commitment to make the valuation process of heritage making more transparent and easier to understand, there was little suggestion that those who had been determined as ‘excluded’ or ‘under-represented’ from heritage over the

previous seven years were going to be empowered to play a part in this process. EH retained the final say over what was selected to represent the ‘historic environment’.

Although the White Paper in the form of the *Draft Heritage Bill*, published in 2008, never made it onto the statute books, its suggested changes were nevertheless largely implemented by DCMS and EH (Waterton 2010a). What these changes actually did is open for debate. By way of an introduction, Waterton and Smith (2008: 197) have argued that ‘many of the proposed changes [of the White Paper] operate at the rhetorical level only’ and did ‘little to challenge the dominant and elitist understandings of “heritage”.’ This following review then, of policy documents from 2008-2013, will serve to test this statement.

4.4.5 Beyond the HPR: The Conservation Principles

In 2008, EH published *Conservation Principles: Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment*. The document was the result of an ‘extensive’ consultation within EH and with other ‘experts’ with the aim of strengthening the ‘credibility and consistency of decisions taken and advice given by EH staff’ (EH 2008a: 1). Unlike *Power of Place* and *Heritage Counts* that were designed to assess existing structures and *suggest* future approaches to managing CBH, *Conservation Principles* should be recognised as a detailed ‘Action Plan’, with the aim of setting out ‘a logical approach to making decisions and offering guidance about all aspects of the historic environment’ (EH 2008a: 13). It was also targeted to a specific audience comprising of EH staff, ‘local authorities, property owners, developers, and their advisors’ (EH 2008a: 13). Although ‘community engagement’

and 'access' form part of the discussion, this should be considered a less political (although certainly not apolitical) document than the others referenced above.

Here, the inherent tangibility of the 'historic environment' is suggested to be a barrier to capturing its meaning. The report adopts the term "'place" for any part of the historic environment that can be perceived as having a distinct identity' (EH 2008a: 7). The report describes 'place' as going 'beyond physical form, to involve all the characteristics that can contribute to a "sense of place"' (EH 2008a: 14).

The concept of a many-layered heritage, first set out in *Power of Place*, is reimagined in the *Principles* through the idea 'that a particular geographical location can form part of several overlapping "places" defined by different characteristics' (EH 2008a: 14). Instead of the 'historic environment' that is populated by isolated narratives, overlapping 'places' suggests a set of discursive narratives used to create meaning, or a 'sense of place.' This is further developed in Principle 3 (of six defined 'Conservation Principles') serving the 'significance of places':

The significance of a place embraces all the diverse cultural and natural heritage values that people associate with it, or prompt them to respond to it. These values tend to grow in strength and complexity over time, as understanding deepens and people's perceptions of a place evolve' (EH 2008a: 21).

This statement sees heritage as a fluid process, although one that cannot retreat. Although this concept does not, in theory, privilege one heritage over another, the

complication here is that it requires the ‘significance of a place’ to be always expanding contributing to a “crisis” of accumulation of the past’ (Harrison 2013b: 580). Figure 4.4 suggests this process whereby an endless number of ‘heritage values’ are added to the ‘significance of place’ meaning that this significance must expand indefinitely. The issue with this, as argued in the previous chapter, is that such an accumulation is unsustainable since everything cannot hold heritage value. At some point in this process decisions have to be made regarding which heritage values are more important than others based on an ongoing determination of present and future need. This will be returned to in Chapter Nine.

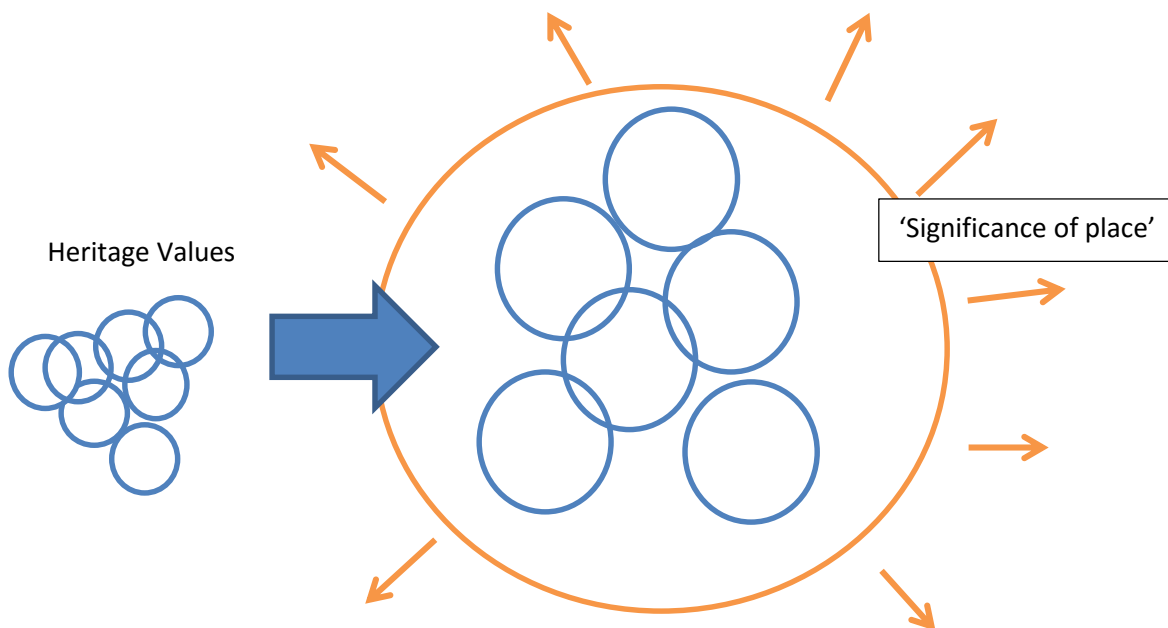


Figure 4.4: ‘Significance of Place’ concept of heritage

Several of the ‘Conservation Principles’ were clearly informed by the social inclusion and participation rhetoric which had dominated heritage politics over the previous eight years. Principle 1, for instance, insists that ‘the historic environment is a shared resource’ that ‘reflects the knowledge, beliefs and traditions of diverse

communities' (EH 2008a: 19). Principle 2 states that 'everyone should be able to participate in sustaining the historic environment.' This Principle insists that the 'experts' should *enable* others to 'learn about, value and care for the historic environment' but also that *they* were responsible for communicating the '**established values** of places' (EH 2008a: 20, emphasis added). The idea that a place could have an 'established' value suggests something fixed and agreed. This places any other heritage values e.g. those of VCs, as added, not negotiated. Although this Principle suggests participation in CBH is encouraged, this is not to the extent that the core (established) values of places can be re-imagined. The concept of 'established' value therefore, seems to limit the scope of Principle 1 since heritage 'places' can only reflect diverse communities so far as they do not interfere with their 'established' value. The contradiction between heritage as a process and heritage as established provides a useful example of the struggles within an organisation which was determined to 'include' a more diverse range of people into the national heritage but were hamstrung by more than a century of heritage making which served a particular vision of the past. Figure 4.5 demonstrates heritage making based on this summation that appears to be the reality as opposed to the rhetoric, as described in Figure 4.4.

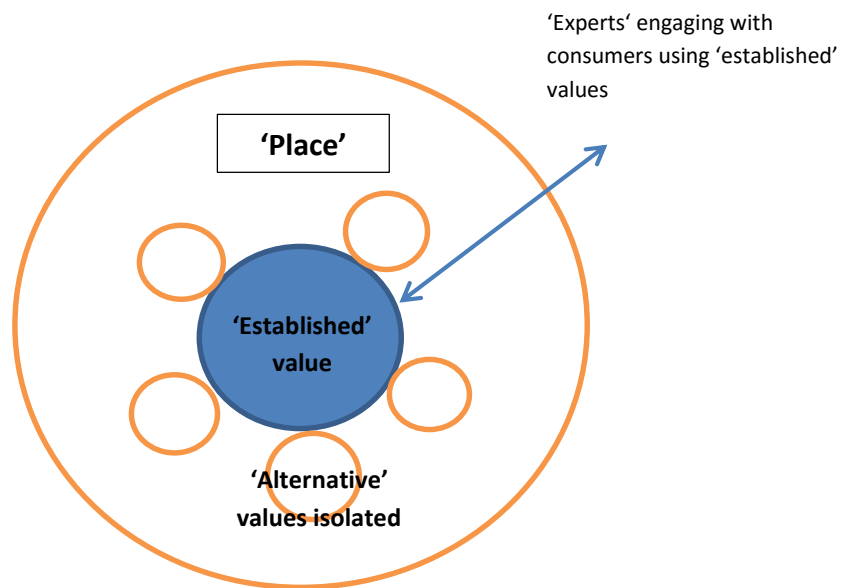


Figure 4.5: 'Established' and 'alternative' values of the heritage 'place'

Principle 5 alludes to the potential for the valuing of a 'place' to be a cause of conflict. Where the heritage value and 'other important public interests' come into conflict, it is asserted, this conflict should be minimised 'by seeking the least harmful means of accommodating those interests' (EH 2008a: 23). This suggests that if the 'established' value of a 'place' is the cause of dissonance, the minimal amount of concessions should be made to ameliorate that dissonance. This is described in Figure 4.5 whereby alternative values have the minimal amount of contact with the 'established' value and certainly do not penetrate it. Correspondingly, the 'established' value, authorised by 'experts', is the value through which consumers engage with the 'place'. This is not to argue that EH were determined to maintain the status quo, more they were unable to suggest a conservation strategy which might compromise their vision of heritage as a celebration: as positive. Waterton has noted that in an earlier draft of the *Principles* it was stated that "not all of the historic

environment is equally valuable or worth conserving; some of it indeed has a negative impact on all who experience it” (EH 2005d: 1, quoted in Waterton 2010a: 162). In a document that was less about inspiring change and more about inspiring professional consensus, the removal of this phrase suggests the managers of CBH were not ready to countenance this suggestion.

The *Conservation Principles* then, whilst continuing to espouse the discourse of social inclusion found throughout earlier documents with words like ‘participation’, ‘diverse’ and ‘shared’, confirmed that the way in which heritage was determined, valued and preserved would remain the business of the ‘expert’, and they would work from an agreed position of what was ‘established’.

4.4.6 Beyond the HPR: Heritage Counts

The first *Heritage Counts* (EH 2008b) report released after the *Draft Heritage Bill* was ostensibly about the impact of climate change on CBH. It also however, used the opportunity to discuss some of the findings from the *Taking Part* surveys relating to the participation of the three aforementioned under-represented groups in the heritage sector. It found that 99 per cent of working archaeologists, for instance, were white (EH 2008b). The report also cited that ‘adults from black and minority ethnic groups are significantly less likely to visit [CBH] even when other factors such as household income have been controlled for’ (EH 2008b: 48). Although this was a finding that had been assumed anecdotally for almost a decade, this was the first time EH could evidence it.

4.4.7 Raising participation: evidence based policy

2008 signalled the end of the three-year target set for DCMS - passed onto EH - to increase visitation to 'designated historic sites' by their target groups by three percentage points as well as involving members of these groups in outreach and volunteering activities involving CBH (NAO 2009: 5). Subsequently, 2009 saw the release of a report reflecting on the results of this mission. *Promoting Participation with the Historic Environment* stated that although DCMS achieved their targets in relation to raising VC participation, appropriate evaluation and reporting had not been put in place to determine how much of this was as a result of EH's engagement activities (NAO 2009). Faced with the question of whether EH had offered value for money in its work to 'broaden participation with the historic environment' the National Audit Office (NAO) who compiled the report surmised that no judgement could be made due to the 'weak' evidence base upon which participation work had relied (NAO 2009: 6). This perhaps led to the decision for DCMS to focus for the subsequent three year cycle on broadening participation in sport and culture across the population as a whole (NAO 2009).

Concomitant to the decision to drop the focus on particular group's participation in CBH, the NAO commissioned their own report entitled *Barriers to Engagement in Heritage by Currently Under-Represented Groups* (Rahim and Mavra 2009). This report was the result of visits to 'English Heritage properties and other heritage sites', reviews of specific projects carried out by EH to engage with the three stated under-represented groups, a survey of heritage sector organisations relating to the topic of participation and a consultation with members of the under-represented groups (Rahim and Mavra 2009: 5). Within this report, VC respondents highlighted several barriers to engagement: a lack of VC members of staff at sites;

that the heritage portrayed at the sites was 'not for them'; a lack of consideration of the historic role of VCs 'as a mainstream, rather than minority issue in order to make the general public as well as minority communities, aware of their relationship with heritage' (Rahim and Mavra 2009: 10-15). An intriguing observation made by the VC participants in relation to this thesis was that:

...while white groups attended heritage sites simply to enjoy their beauty, and viewed a trip to a heritage site as a day out or leisure activity, people from BME groups derived a greater meaning from them and therefore had different intentions for their visit (Rahim and Mavra 2009: 7).

The claim regarding white groups is arguable; Smith, for instance, has noted tensions experienced by white lower socio-economic groups when visiting sites of 'labour heritage', an observation, she argues, that reflects the 'diversity of social and cultural experiences', diversity that heritage managers often overlook when creating heritage (Smith 2006: 234). The point regarding how particular people experience places differently is important. In his discussion of the omission of slavery narratives at former plantations run with slave labour in the American South that have since become tourist attractions, Butler (2001: 172) points out that whereas a white visitor may appreciate the beauty of the places, an African-American might be left without the 'sense of heritage' they had hoped for. The point is that the same places can provide very different experiences. The country house in England has been linked significantly to the transatlantic slave trade, especially since 2007, and thus the beauty of the place may be overshadowed by this past for those who identify with it.

The same is seen to occur where 'labour' heritage provoked tensions for particular audiences. Acknowledging these particular ways of seeing is important. However, the move away from focusing on VC specific participation targets by DCMS suggests that these differences in how heritage identification occurs could (or would) not be specifically addressed. Waterton (2010a) argues that rather than consider that it was 'the heritage' itself that was the problem, heritage managers preferred to consider it an issue of perception on the part of the 'under-represented' groups. She links this with the 'retreat from multiculturalism' (see also Joppke 2004) which led to a social exclusion policy agenda 'driven by a commitment to familiarize all those groups labelled as "socially excluded" with the cultural norms of acceptability via a process of marketing, re-education and patronizing process of reassurance' (Waterton 2010a: 204). In other words, the issue of 'under-representation' was presented by heritage managers as not a problem with the authorised narrative of the past but how this narrative was perceived by certain groups. The solution therefore, was to alter perceptions not narratives. This solution is challenged by the evidence: despite an increase in visiting CBH from VCs from 2004-2008, it appears that many of the issues in relation to VC identification with 'the heritage' outlined at the start of this chapter remained. This suggests that *seeing* was not *relating*; 'the heritage' was/is part of the problem.

In 2011, data from the *Taking Part* survey showed that belonging to an ethnic minority decreased one's likelihood of visiting CBH (Wineinger 2011). With access to more robust data in relation to CBH participation, the policies and practices of EH and DCMS over the last few years of the research period can provide a vital insight into what the future may hold for early VC heritages in 'the heritage' of England.

Before this though, note must be made of the changing political and legislative context at the beginning of this decade.

4.5 The 2010 Equality Act

A brief review of the 2010 Equality Act (EA) is necessary since it influenced who was subsequently seen as 'under-represented' in the heritage sector. Essentially, it consolidated a group of existing Acts relating to discrimination in the workplace and wider society on the grounds of sex, race or disability, and broadened those characteristics that were deemed as requiring protection from discrimination. These characteristics are:

- age;
- disability;
- gender reassignment;
- marriage and civil partnership;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race;
- religion or belief;
- sex;
- sexual orientation

(EA 2010: S4)

The impact of this Act on heritage practices will be demonstrated below.

4.6 From New Labour to Coalition government: the 2010 general election

As well as the introduction of the EA, 2010 saw the forming of a new Coalition government led by the Conservative party. The Conservative party had campaigned for election under the tagline of 'The Big Society'. The main thrust of this policy was that social enterprises, charities and voluntary groups should take up the mantle from government of engaging with excluded or disadvantaged people.¹²

Correspondingly, in 2010 the Social Exclusion Task Force that had replaced the SEU in 2006 was closed down. This marked the end of the 'official' social exclusion policy agenda that had developed over more than a decade.

The 2011 *Heritage Counts* report responded to 'The Big Society' plan by discussing 'the role the independent sector and local communities and groups, in many different ways, play in caring for our national heritage' (EH 2011: 1). The message in this report regarding the importance of diversifying involvement in the heritage sector and raising participation remained, but with an emphasis change from the state-sponsored role in this to how independent organisations had and might contribute.

The report gives an overview of qualitative research commissioned by the Historic Environment Forum that explored barriers to increasing participation in local heritage. Noted barriers included a sense that those who ran groups interested in local heritage issues were 'not like me' and a lack of engagement face-to-face from local heritage groups with local communities about the purpose of their group (EH 2011: 12-13). The emphasis on local communities reflects the intention of the Coalition government's Localism Bill, introduced to parliament in 2010 and passed

into law in 2011. The Bill's devolving of power to local communities was seen as providing opportunities and threats for CBH in England (EH 2011).

With the closing of the Social Exclusion Task Force and preference for localism the Coalition government had produced their own agenda with regards to what heritage should do. Although it is important to note these changes stemming from a change in government, the research period considered here, ending as it does in 2013, means that in reality the impact of this change is limited with regards to the findings. For example, the first changes to heritage policy in response to the Localism Bill did not take place until spring 2012, so no meaningful discussion of its impact can be made here (EH 2011). However, the change in government and focus on localism has influenced the strategic plans set out by the state-sponsored heritage sector and so whilst the results of localism on VC engagement with 'the heritage' might not be known here, its impact on the approach to heritage meaning and making in policy terms is decipherable. This final section on EH then, details this strategic plan spanning the years 2011-15. It was developed in a context of cuts in funding for DCMS and the desire of the Coalition to empower local government and communities to take responsibility for CBH.

4.7 The National Heritage Protection Plan

The National Heritage Protection Plan (NHPP), introduced in 2011, was developed by EH as a business model for heritage protection, encompassing both its own actual and potential assets and those of the wider heritage sector. It provided an 'Action Plan' which could be adopted by other organisations to preserve CBH. The priorities set within this plan were that CBH:

- is not needlessly at risk of damage, erosion or loss;
- is experienced, understood and **enjoyed** by local communities;
- contributes to sustainable and distinctive places to live and work;
- helps deliver positive and sustainable economic growth.

(EH 2013: 3, emphasis added)

The overall purpose of the plan was to enable the management of CBH locally and can be seen as an extension of the HPR encouraged by the Coalition's localism agenda. Correspondingly, the discussion regarding heritage participation in the NHPP is based on localising CBH and inviting wider opinion on what should be protected (EH 2013). Within this intent, EH can be seen to shift from pushing VCs towards an 'established' heritage to making efforts to understand better their relationship with CBH. Evidence of this shift is contained in a report commissioned by EH, as part of the NHPP, to 'identify what is valued by groups that are currently under-represented by EH's work' (BOP 2012:1). The report was positioned as informing the '**social values** placed upon heritage' (EH 2013: 27 emphasis in original). Such an approach suggests an acceptance that heritage/s are engaged with differently by different people and no blanket method that enabled people to identify with an 'established' heritage was possible.

This report was the result of a series of consultations with 'experts' on the heritages of certain under-represented groups carried out by BOP Consulting.¹³ The EA clearly influenced which groups' heritages were engaged; individuals consulted discussed the heritages of African-Caribbeans, Asians, people with disabilities, faith groups, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people (LGBT) and women (BOP

2012). Here, I shall only consider the comments which came from the ‘experts’ of the first two groups as they relate specifically to VCs.

This report is largely couched within the terms of the AHD. Firstly, the overt statement that this report was the result of an ‘expert consultation’ should be highlighted. This was not based upon a public survey but a select group of individuals considered ‘experts’ on the heritages of particular groups (BOP 2012: 1). Secondly, the report and the ‘experts’ involved noted the need for ‘tangible’ heritage sites to be recognised which represented the heritages of these groups (BOP 2012: 1). Even where the recognition of intangible heritage was raised, this is through its relationship to historic sites. For instance, intangible heritage was described as ‘the interpretation of the historical environment that currently does not pay enough attention to the stories of under-represented groups **within the existing stock of listed sites**’ (BOP 2012: 5, emphasis added). This could well reflect the fact that, as pointed out in Chapter Three, Britain has not adopted UNESCO’s CSICH and therefore does not recognise their understanding of intangible heritage. As part of the NHPP - an operating model for the protection and conservation of the ‘historic environment’, an inherently tangible thing - this BOP report did not have in its remit the consideration of the meaning of intangible heritage. As set out in their legislative framework, EH are not concerned with heritage that is not connected to a physical place (EH 2012).

In the main, those consulted accepted that heritage was something one visited and heritage narratives of under-represented groups could suitably be interpreted within the existing stock of heritage assets (BOP 2012). In contrast to the discussion of a ‘many-layered’ heritage described in *Power of Place* however, which could be imagined as a series of separate heritages bound together by the ‘Nation’

but otherwise unaffected by each other (see Figure 4.3), these consultations sought to bring out the complexity of heritage narratives. Heritage was thus conceived as 'interlinking', closely resembling the 'significance of place' exemplified in Figure 4.4 (BOP 2012:10). These consultations had brought this concept beyond the level of the rhetorical to the discursive, although with the caveat that discussions still took place only between 'experts'.

Also of interest are comments within the consultations regarding EH's insistence that the 'historic environment' was to be 'enjoyed' and 'celebrated': 'Many felt that the elements of their group's history which were not enjoyable still needed to be presented' (BOP 2012: 10-11). EH responded:

EH seeks to celebrate the significance of sites in the historic environment and their survival to enrich our lives, while acknowledging that the histories behind them are often challenging and contested (EH 2012: 7).

It cited its involvement in the bicentenary of the abolition of the slave trade as an example of how it recognised contested heritage and was responsible for commemoration as well as celebration. As already highlighted however, EH are legislatively obliged to promote 'enjoyment' of heritage and thus the organisation itself cannot position heritage in opposition to this commitment. Indeed, it was noted that there is a lack of public knowledge regarding EH's statutory responsibilities, something that it is trying to address through building a wider communication network via the NHPP (BOP 2012; EH 2012).

In terms of actual heritage narrative change, the focus in the consultation was very much (driven by a pre-determined agenda, not by those present at the

consultations themselves) on the way in which the CBH might be interpreted online. On-site alterations to narrative interpretation were envisioned as being made via 'special initiatives or anniversaries' which would be temporary revisions (BOP 2012: 15). There was much discussion of the way sites were described via EH's National Heritage List which, it was argued, could include a greater array of search terms (BOP 2012). This would authorise competing narratives but only within a certain space: online. This consultation then, made it clear that EH remained concerned with diversifying the heritage it managed but was reluctant to, and was not hugely expected to by the 'experts' involved in the consultations, work outside of the AHD in order to do so.

4.8 Summary: EH, now and in the future

EH has, in the past few years, recognised that heritage is not 'enjoyed' by everyone, including VCs, but it still has a statutory responsibility to encourage its enjoyment. Its response to this has evolved from 'inclusion' into an 'established' heritage, to recognising that this 'established' heritage might be part of the problem.

On 1 April 2015 EH split into two organisations: Historic England will take up the work of heritage listing and grants provision, amongst other things; EH will become a charity, gifted £80 million by the government under the understanding that it will be self-reliant by 2023. This money will be used to 'create new exhibitions, renew existing ones and continue to improve the visitor experience through investment in presentation of the properties and visitor facilities' (DCMS 2013: 5). How, or if, these funds are used to reimagine the narrative interpretation of EH sites to promote a diverse English/British historical identity will be a strong indication of whether this will ever be a reality or whether the AHD is too engrained or inflexible to

break down the notion of an 'established' heritage. This will be picked up in Chapter Nine.

Having reviewed the way in which DCMS and EH have imagined the role of CBH in the social exclusion policy agenda of New Labour over thirteen years and more recently within the Coalition's localism and 'Big Society' agenda, this can now be compared and contrasted with other organisations in the heritage sector, starting with another state-sponsored agency, the HLF.

4.9.1 The Heritage Lottery Fund

The HLF was created by the Conservative government in 1994. It was allocated a proportion of money generated by the newly formed National Lottery and authorised to provide grants on an application basis to organisations for the benefit of the UK's heritage. It was not until 1997 that this included the funding of non-capital projects, which can be tied into the discussion in the previous sections over the political desire of New Labour to use heritage to foster social inclusion (Aitkin 2004). By 2006, four pence from every National Lottery ticket (costing £1) was spent, via the HLF, in the heritage sector (Accenture and NT 2006) and since its inception the HLF has supported over 36,500 projects, allocating more than £6 billion across the UK.¹⁴

Throughout the period 2002-2013 the HLF grants programme had three core streams: 'Heritage Grants' which provided grants of more than £50,000; 'Your Heritage' which provided between £5,000 and £50,000; and 'Awards for All' with grants ranging from £500 to £5,000. In addition, several programmes provided specialist grants, for example, targeting public parks and young people.

This section will review the way in which the HLF has influenced 'the heritage' of England through its approach to encouraging wider engagement in heritage

making. The discussion will then move into a more specific consideration of how this has impacted upon funding for VC heritages. A review of policy and practice at the HLF is a fundamental aspect of this research since, unlike the other organisations discussed which have tended to an 'expert'-led, top-down approach to fostering social inclusion, the HLF provide funds for non-'expert' groups to research and present their own conception of heritage. It is therefore, unique in allowing a better understanding of what heritages are *actually* valued by VCs, as well as how they might be interpreted.

4.9.2 The HLF and heritage making in England

Social exclusion policy can be seen to influence the HLF's strategic plans of 1999-2002 and 2002-2007. In the former, the emphasis was on 'supporting heritage', both national and local, whilst also making it accessible 'both physically and intellectually to more people' (Clark 2004:68). This commitment to 'access' in terms of more people being able to make a personal connection with heritage is consistent with the language used by EH and also in museums (see below) at this time. As occurred at EH, 'inclusion' came to be talked of at the HLF in terms of 'participation', this term being prominent in the latter strategic plan. Participation for the HLF however, was envisioned as a much more collaborative process that had a stated interest in actively involving more people in heritage making. People were to 'make decisions about their heritage'; the UK's 'diverse heritage' was to be conserved and enhanced; it should be ensured 'that everyone can learn about, have access to, and enjoy their heritage'; and finally, that heritage grants should be spread equitably throughout the UK (Clark 2004: 68). One can surmise therefore, from 2002, that the HLF's mission was not just to support heritage on behalf of the 'Nation', but that this heritage should

strive to be diverse throughout the process of determining its value, not just at the point of consumption.

This argument can be explored further through a report published on behalf of the HLF in 2004 which reviewed what the previous decade of heritage funding had achieved and, based on the findings, what should be the priorities for the future (Hewison and Holden 2004). The report focused significantly on the 'Public Value' the HLF provided, or as the authors preferred, 'Cultural Value' (Hewison and Holden 2004: 9-10, 23-31). The former had been an influential concept for the government since they published, in 2002, *Creating Public Value: An analytical framework for public service reform* (Mulgan *et al.* 2002). This had been significantly influenced by the work of Michael Moore in the United States (Moore 1995). According to the HLF report 'Public Value is the value added by the government and the public sector in the widest sense. It is the difference between what citizens give to and what they receive from public bodies' (Hewison and Holden 2004: 28; see also Waterton 2010a). In relation to the HLF, the notion of public value meant that the processes by which they allocated funding were as important as the end result of that funding (Hewison and Holden 2004).

As has been seen in the documents reviewed so far, as well as those others below, it is widely accepted that heritage has more public or cultural value if a diverse range of people engage with it, although the level of engagement considered necessary is variable. Hewison and Holden (2004: 31) argue that this has meant that 'heritage practice has moved from seeing the definition of value as something driven by experts on behalf of society, to one that recognises the importance of wider public participation in identifying and caring for what is important.' This is an interesting point since, as we have seen with EH, widening participation in CBH, although an

agreed priority, has still been largely driven by 'experts' who reserve the right to 'establish' a value prior to the act of participation. However, there is a fundamental difference between participation as *passive*; heritage organisations develop a concept to encourage visitation of a finished heritage product and rarely require contact in the development stage; and participation as *active*; a group conceives its own idea of what heritage will encourage it to participate and this is either delivered by a mainstream organisation or it delivers it itself. The former, in side-lining the agency of 'the people', assigns them the role of 'inheritors, audiences and beneficiaries', whilst the latter would embrace the 'emotional responses, personal engagements and embodied experiences with heritage' (Waterton 2007: 324).

There is, of course, a grey area in-between passive and active participation. Moser *et al.* (2002) define seven steps to fulfil in creating a truly collaborative heritage, but not to cover them all is not to designate a heritage as passively participatory. This grey area is reflected in the way in which Hewison and Holden (2004) talk about the participatory nature of the HLF's role in heritage creation. They argue that the process of applying for a grant, whether successful or not, increases trust in the organisation and heritage as a whole. However, the process of selection requires that the heritage one would like to produce fulfils certain pre-defined criteria. The level of participation therefore, is still governed by the HLF, however broad its criteria for what heritage may be are. One would be hard-pressed to describe this as wholly *active* participation in heritage making but it would also be unfairly described as *passive*.

Although this appears a criticism of the level of participation afforded to grant applicants to the HLF this needs to be placed into context. As has been highlighted, their updated strategic plan for 2002-2007 demonstrated a revision in terms of the

way in which participation was envisioned. Consider Smith's (2012: 2) description of heritage as 'the multiple processes of meaning making':

Heritage is a process of negotiating historical and cultural meanings and values that occur around the decisions we make to preserve, or not, certain physical places or objects or intangible events, and the way these are then managed, exhibited or performed.

By shifting from a desire for people to be able to access a heritage, to a desire for them to play a role in making *their* heritage, the HLF had, to an extent, broken from the idea of an 'established' heritage to supporting a *negotiated* heritage. This is a significant challenge to the AHD. At EH, as shown in the previous sections, several times over the same period it had determined that it, and others, had a responsibility to engage more people with CBH but the methodology for this predominantly involved only the point of consumption. The HLF, on the other hand, altered its strategy to one that encouraged a greater degree of *active* participation over the same period, though it must be remembered that there remained rules governing the extent of that participation. At the level of policy then, the HLF has shown itself adaptable. This can in large part be put down to the NHA 1997 which provided the HLF with more flexibility regarding what it could support. This included anything relating 'to an important aspect of the history, natural history or landscape of the United Kingdom' that was deemed of 'public benefit' (NHA 1997: S3A). This gave staff at the HLF room for manoeuvre over what they could value as heritage that was not available to staff at EH. In terms of policy then, the HLF supported a more collaborative heritage. This should be assessed in practice.

4.9.3 The HLF and visible community heritage

The changes brought by the 1997 NHA and New Labour's social exclusion policy agenda provided, according to Davies (2004: 16), new 'opportunities for minority groups to explore their own history and its presentation' which allowed them autonomy from 'institutional racism' that had prevented diverse heritage from being made and presented previously. Despite this, heritage projects relating to VCs represented a disproportionately low number of grant applications. Consequently, between 2005 and 2013 applications for HLF grants for projects for, or benefitting VCs, were prioritised in the West Midlands, London, North East and Scotland. During this time numerous organisations have undertaken HLF projects relevant to this research. Examples include the Northamptonshire Black History Association (NBHA) which has investigated VC history in the county dating back over eight hundred years and published numerous educational packs on the subject. They have received various HLF grants ranging from £25,000 to £250,000 since 2005.¹⁵ The Sparkbrook Caribbean and African Women's Development Initiative (SCAWDI) in the West Midlands received several small grants of up to £50,000 to research and publish findings of the early VC presence in the region (see Willis-Brown and Callaghan 2010; Callaghan and Willis-Brown 2011). Dorset's 'Hidden Histories' exhibition¹⁶ explored almost half a millennia of VC presences in the county and Exeter has a trail of early VC presences funded by the HLF.¹⁷ These community initiatives, and many others, have been made possible by the HLF and have created a mine of data relating to early VC presences in England. The point here is that the funding pool provided by the HLF for non-capital projects has resulted in a significant and rapid rise in the potential number of early VC heritages available to the public, whilst also enabling a reconfiguration of who could make and present heritage.

4.9.4 The HLF 2013-2018 Strategic Review

This chapter has already noted the adaptability shown by the HLF in how it allowed heritage to be conceived between two of its Strategic Reviews from the last decade. This can be investigated further through its most recent Review. This document was informed by two consultations carried out by the HLF which received more than 2,000 responses to two surveys. The first was focused on its existing grant programmes and strategy, the second on the HLF's approach to funding heritage (HLF 2012). That the latter was distributed to the 'lottery-paying public' certainly suggests that the HLF were adopting consultation from a democratic basis (HLF 2012: 38).

Following the 2012 London Olympic Games and a review of its proportion of lottery funding the HLF had the amount available for grants increased from £180 million per year to £375 million per year for 2013-2018 (HLF 2012). Below are a selection of quotations from the Strategic Review that can be used to gauge how the HLF views a participatory heritage over this period:

- Heritage Lottery Fund investment has truly broadened the horizons of heritage, ensuring that people from all communities see their heritage reflected in our national story (HLF 2012: 6).
- We do not define "heritage", instead encouraging people to identify their own heritage and explain why it is valued by themselves and others (HLF 2012: 10).
- As an organisation we are committed to increasing diversity in our governance, work-force and grant-making (HLF 2012: 10).

These statements suggest a national heritage that has been reimagined with the help of the HLF through the funding of a diverse range of community heritages, defined and produced according to communities of interest. Although the language used here describes an organisation which is led by those who request grants and does not dictate to them what heritage can be, two key questions must be asked to test this description. Firstly, how far do community heritages penetrate 'the heritage' of England? Two examples of heritage projects relating to VCs are noted in the Review. The first was an oral history project in Luton where members of the various ethnic minority communities in the area were interviewed with the recordings subsequently held in the local archive. The second project was in Huddersfield; another oral history project whereby young people interviewed African-Caribbean elders to learn of their experiences immigration to Britain. The quality of the experiences of those involved in these projects is not being questioned but it is suggested here that these two examples are not now 'reflected in our national story'. Naidoo has gone so far as to suggest that the common practice of doing diversity by collecting the stories of 'Caribbean elders' is a somewhat superficial approach which ignores the need of 'looking deeper for diversity...' (Naidoo 2010: 72-73). In other words, she is arguing that projects such as these never really challenge the lack of diversity in the national story. This recalls the difference between many-layered and intertwined heritages imagined through EH policy.

This lack of work that challenges how VC heritages might be told can be argued to be a result of the grants process to which the HLF adheres. As is described in Chapter Eight, the transatlantic slave trade has come to dominate early VC heritage presentations in mainstream heritage institutions funded by the HLF

since, thanks to the bicentenary, it has proven its suitability in these contexts. Subsequently, these institutions have been less willing to take a chance in establishing other ways of intertwining early VC heritage with the national story, through colonial heritage or the World Wars, for example. The project nature of HLF funding encourages bidding for 'safe' projects in order to secure positive evaluations and better the chances for further funding. Arokiasamy (2009: 6) has criticised the repetition of topics such as fashion, post war migration and slavery when it comes to engaging with VC heritage in mainstream heritage contexts that, she argues, 'pose little or no threat to the professionals' and the institutions' comfort zones.' The project nature of HLF funding therefore, might be argued to have limited the extent to which the 'horizons of heritage' have been broadened.

Secondly, inevitably, the HLF have some role in defining what heritage is, even if it has attempted to keep its judgement as unobtrusive as possible. It has a series of outcomes that an application must fulfil in order to be successful. These outcomes range from the better interpretation and explanation of a heritage to a change in attitudes of individuals towards a heritage (HLF 2012). They are broad and open to many interpretations but they still mean that there exist criteria for what heritage must *do*.

Although it is arguable that 'people from *all* communities truly see themselves in the national story', by focusing more on what heritage does as opposed to what it is, possibilities for a more diverse heritage are opened up. Returning to Smith (2012: 4), by asking this question we are entering a negotiation regarding 'meanings and the legitimacy of particular historical and cultural narratives' which then 'may be rejected, embraced or transformed.' Heritage that is produced by grants from the HLF does not conform to the AHD in all the ways the heritage of EH does. The HLF

does fund intangible heritage; although an 'expert' is involved in the decision of the grant, there is no stipulation that the heritage itself, once realised, needs be signed off by an 'expert'. But it is still heritage. Later in this thesis it will be considered in more detail if heritages which do not adhere so strictly to the confines of the AHD can survive outside of it? If not, can the AHD be reformed to include them or are they destined to remain unauthorised heritages? The HLF, over the course of the last decade, has played a significant part in allowing the opportunity to have this debate.

4.10.1 Initial responses from museums to social exclusion policy

Having outlined some of the policies and practices relating to the social exclusion policy agenda that have been applied to CBH via EH and the HLF, the following sections will consider the role in this of state-funded museums to draw comparisons and prepare the ground for the museum sector case study in Chapter Seven. As Figure 4.1 describes, DCMS directly funds a number of 'national' museums and also indirectly supports many others via ACE. From 2011 ACE took over many of the responsibilities of another non-departmental public body the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) that was responsible, in particular, for the *Renaissance in the Regions* (RitR) programme that is discussed below.

As already outlined in Chapter Three and above, in 1998 eighteen PATs were set up to consider how social exclusion might be tackled with DCMS tasked with considering the role of arts and sport through PAT 10 (DCMS 1999). Unlike EH, which has control over a significant portion of England's CBH and could be tasked with conducting a holistic response as to how CBH might be more inclusive (EH 2000), as Figure 4.1 shows, the nation's museums operate as standalone

organisations, albeit with the same reporting line to their funder. It fell to DCMS therefore, to outline the museum sector's initial response to PAT 10 by publishing *Centres for Social Change: Museums, Galleries and Archives for All* (DCMS 2000). This document contained eleven policy objectives that museums, galleries and archives should adopt in order to combat social exclusion and provided a six-point plan to deliver against them. One of these objectives alluded to changing what these institutions provided visitors in terms of cultural meaning as a way of being more 'inclusive.'

Where appropriate, collections and exhibitions should reflect the cultural and social diversity of the organisation's actual and potential audiences (DCMS 2000: 5).

The opening of a Transatlantic Slavery Gallery in the Merseyside Maritime Museum in Liverpool and a Slavery History Trail in the same city that built on related heritage projects run by local African-Caribbean groups were highlighted as examples of this policy objective in action (DCMS 2000). Similar to the approach of EH, the report also highlighted the importance of outreach activities in order to engage with 'excluded' audiences (DCMS 2000). Other objectives focused on the use of technology in engaging with new audiences, involving non-'experts' in planning and selection decisions and developing better local partnerships.

This, along with the other ten objectives, was seen as an element of a 'journey towards social inclusion' that involved three stages:

First Stage: Access - becoming inclusive and accessible organisations;

Second Stage: Audience development - reaching out to new audiences, and creating events or exhibitions that are relevant to them;

Third Stage: Museums, galleries and archives as agents of social change.

(DCMS 2000: 12)

Unlike EH (EH 2005a: 21), that emphasised standalone 'events' as a way of reaching target audiences but without considering long-term change, this report asserted the point that projects such as 'special exhibitions' targeted at specific groups could form part of an 'ongoing programme of action' to tackle social exclusion within an institution but that they must not form the only aspect of its strategy, which must be sustainable for the long-term (DCMS 2000: 26). This sustainability is reflected in the third stage of social inclusion which identifies what the effect of audience development work might be on the sector in terms of its long-term aspirations. It is interesting however, that the report positioned this strategy as running 'alongside... responsibilities for safeguarding and displaying the national and local heritage' (DCMS 2000: 26). The inference here is that social inclusion activities were not a part of these responsibilities i.e. local and national heritage would be unaffected by an institution's social inclusion strategy. The suggestion is that social inclusion was not about challenging 'the heritage'. When arguing for 'appropriate' exhibitions that reflected the cultural diversity of audiences the report would appear to suggest that it was not appropriate for 'established' local and national heritages to

change as a result. Whilst arguing the need for a more joined-up and sustainable approach to engaging with excluded audiences than was described at the same time by EH, like *Power of Place*, *Centres* was not openly challenging the existence of an 'established' heritage that required protection.

Evidence that museums themselves recognised this as problematic is found in the response to *Centres* from the MLA that highlighted the need for a distinction to be made 'between general issues of broadening access for all, and the special needs of socially excluded individuals and groups' (MLA 2000). The separation between core activities and social inclusion work in museums was noted with the response that by not suggesting a social inclusion strategy should be embedded within all other 'primary' activities *Centres* had ensured it would be seen by museums as a separate activity (MLA 2000). The MLA's core message was that whilst it supported DCMS in relation to its role in fostering social inclusion, much of the sector was not ready or appropriately resourced to deliver it (MLA 2000).

A few months later, the Group for Large Local Authority Museums¹⁸ (GLLAM) released their own response to *Centres*, produced by the University of Leicester's Research Centre for Museums and Galleries (GLLAM 2000). This report demonstrated through a series of short cases studies how many museums in Britain were already carrying out what might be described as 'social inclusion' work and used this to identify some 'principles of good practice' (GLLAM 2000: 45). A key feature of this was the need to develop 'a terminology and appropriate language around inclusion' (GLLAM 2000: 45). This differs from EH that did not seek to define the terms populating the discourse of social inclusion that grew throughout the last decade. This may be the result of this report representing a number of museums who were concerned with what social inclusion actually meant in operational *and*

cultural terms i.e. as activities and organisational change. *Power of Place* and the other reports from CBH from the early part of the last decade reviewed above, perhaps reflective of the fact that much less work had already been done in that environment around audience engagement, focused more on ideological reasons why certain people were not engaging with 'the heritage'. The following statement emphasises the more focused thinking around social inclusion from museums:

Social inclusion is not just another 'service' museums offer. It is about transforming traditional concepts of museum-community relationships; it is about involving communities and empowering them to transform the museum. This requires involving the community early on during the process and jointly establishing project expectations and objectives (GLLAM 2000: 46).

At this point in time, those who managed CBH were providing little attention to this level of *active* participation in heritage making on the part of diverse communities. The initial response of this particular group of museums to New Labour's social exclusion policy agenda then contained much more substance in terms of developing a holistic plan for engaging with target audiences and *involving* them in the heritage making process than was evident within CBH.

A year after the GLLAM report, regional museums were given further attention with the publication of *Renaissance in the Regions: A new vision for England's museums* resulting from a Task Force set up by the Minister for Culture, Media and Sport to consider the state of regional museums (Resource 2001). The report set out

how regional museums might become the 'centres for social change' they were required to be and clearly defined the financial resources needed in order to do so.

Regions set out five main aims for the UK's museums:

- To be an important resource and champion for learning and education
- To promote access and inclusion
- To contribute to economic regeneration in the regions
- To use collections to encourage inspiration and creativity
- To ensure excellence and quality in the delivery of core services.

(Resource 2001: 7-8).

This review will focus on their plans to 'promote access and inclusion' in-keeping with the research interest of this thesis. It is worth noting, as described above, that an action plan to do the same was not suggested until 2004 in the state-sponsored CBH demonstrating that the museums sector was further advanced in its development of specific activity to foster social inclusion (EH 2004).

Promoting access and inclusion - consistent with the strategy of the HLF - was to be achieved by: focusing on increasing intellectual and physical access to museums for those who were presently under-represented, ethnic minorities being a stated example; improving ICT; and delivering more and better outreach work with local communities that involved them in 'collecting and interpreting objects so that exhibitions tell their stories' (Resource 2001: 8). The plan set out in the report was for nine regions in England to have designated 'regional hubs' that would support the

enhancement of museums services in their regions. Hubs would be a museum 'of status' (selected according to determined qualifying criteria) and would receive funding in order to set a benchmark for quality for other local museums and support those museums to improve their own standards and thus build the quality of museum services across the region. This included demonstrating 'genuine commitment to social inclusion' (Resource 2001: 13).

Table 4.1 below shows the funding that was deemed required by Resource¹⁹ in order to deliver its RitR programme. The majority of the money for this programme would come from government but the report envisioned significant funds also coming from 'other stakeholders' (Resource 2001: 14).

COSTINGS

8.1 The total sum required to meet the objectives and recommendations of this report is £267.2m. This can be broken down – by key outcome headlines – thus (£million):

<i>Outcomes</i>	2002/3	2003/4	2004/5	2005/6	2006/7
Education and Learning	4.5	8.5	15.1	21.4	29.1
Access and Social Inclusion	2.5	8.5	24.4	26.1	28.0
Economic Regeneration	–	–	9.5	9.5	9.5
Inspiration and Creativity	–	–	4.5	4.5	4.5
Excellence and High Quality (Standards)	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Modernisation	2.0	2.0	2.9	2.8	1.8
Cultural Change	–	–	2.0	2.0	2.0
ICT Investment	–	–	9.0	9.0	9.0
Rationalisation	–	–	0.5	0.3	0.2
Cross-cutting	–	–	2.4	1.8	2.4
TOTAL	10.0	20.0	71.3	78.4	87.5

Table 4.1: Proposed allocation of funding for the *Renaissance in the Regions* programme

Source: Resource 2001: 14

The first two years of the programme - 2002/3-2003/4 - represented the period in which the regional hubs would be provided with extra funding in order to transform their services and become ‘focal points for developing and delivering regional museum services to the public’ (Resource 2001: 145). Funding would then be increased from 2004/5 to allow these hubs to further develop their role. Note the huge increase in money allocated for ‘access and social inclusion’, especially from 2004/5. This suggests two things: first that Resource felt this was an area that had not benefitted historically from significant investment across the country and second

that by positioning this activity as a priority they were more likely to receive the requested financial support from the government, responding as it did to their social exclusion policy agenda.

Woodham (2009) has usefully described what happened to the proposed RitR programme following this report. Instead of the requested £267.2 million Resource received £70 million; the majority of that funding coming from DCMS but with a contribution from the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) who also operated as co-founder of RitR. As a result the hubs model was restricted to only operating initially in some of the regions in the hope that by rolling out the 'Renaissance vision' in some places, the benefits could be demonstrated and thus more investment in the programme encouraged (Woodham 2009: 41). This was considered phase one of the programme. Three regions were chosen for this phase, the West Midlands, the South West and North East. It is worth noting here in light of the case study of Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery in Chapter Seven that it was part of the regional hub for the West Midlands and thus received investment via RitR of which a significant proportion was designated for access and social inclusion.

A detailed account of this phase is not intended here (for more information see Heal 2002; Everitt 2009; Woodham 2009) but one detail should be noted as directly comparable to the approach to fostering social inclusion taken in CBH. Museums in the selected regions were, as a result of the programme, expected to achieve 500,000 new-user visits by 2005/6, particularly by low socio-economic groups and ethnic minorities (Woodham 2009). The suggestion is that although museums had demonstrated a more comprehensive vision for how they would engage with more diverse audiences than CBH, inclusion was to be measured by DCMS through the number of visitors rather than the experiences those visitors had

with heritage places. This is very similar to the participation targets set for EH over the same period and demonstrates that although approaches to inclusion differed between state-sponsored CBH and museums, DCMS measured the results in the same way i.e. through outputs rather than outcomes. The RitR programme as it developed is returned to below.

4.10.2 Understanding the Value of Museums

IN 2005 DCMS published *Understanding the Value of Museums*. The desire to demonstrate value shows clear parallels with discussions elsewhere in the heritage sector seeking to determine the 'Public Value' or 'Cultural Value' of heritage (see above and Chapter Five). This imperative came from the heritage sector search for an evidence base to demonstrate *how* they were agents of social change in order to obtain the resources from funders - both public and private - to develop this position (DCMS 2005a). In essence, it was not enough to say they could tackle social inclusion, they had to prove it through empirical evidence.

The Minister for DCMS, Tessa Jowell, who also took a prominent role in the value debate in relation to CBH (see Chapter Five), wrote the foreword for the report in which she stated that museums and galleries were:

...a way for us all to see our place in the world. This is all the more important as society changes, and new values of nationality and community emerge. The fixed points of history and heritage have an even greater meaning as our world becomes smaller, and our values develop (DCMS 2005a: 3).

What is interesting here is Jowell's assertion that history and heritage have 'fixed points'. This suggests that there are points that are unchallengeable and agreed, consistent with EH's suggestion of an 'established' heritage. What these points are is not clear but this may be taken to mean that 'our values' will develop according to these points, not that new points will replace them as new values emerge.

This report was a consultation paper, asking heritage sector stakeholders for their input on the strategic and policy direction of museums and galleries. The issues being consulted on were:

- Collections and their uses
- Learning and Research
- Careers, Training and Leadership
- Coherence and Advocacy
- Partnership and Measuring Value

(DCMS 2005a).

With its potential link to the narrative of a museum the first issue is of particular interest here. The report referred to the challenge for museums of being inclusive and valuing and reflecting diversity, suggesting that this must be tackled through 'encouraging full and *active* participation of under-represented groups, at all levels, through collecting, learning and access' (DCMS 2005a: 15, emphasis added). Note the similarity with the HLF's consideration of participation where it is akin to being involved in the process of making heritage rather than the act of visiting it. In doing

this museums would be afforded the tools to ‘renew and re-examine their collections’ in order that they become more representative of the communities they served (DCMS 2005a: 15). The suggestion of renewing *and* re-examining suggests the possibility of challenging the authorised narratives of objects, a point that had been less considered as a requirement of ‘inclusion’ in *Centres*. Like *Centres* however, *Understanding* was particularly interested in how ICT advances might be used to reach non-users (DCMS 2005a). It was also concerned about the lack of diversity in the museum’s workforce, something that was not overtly discussed in relation to CBH at this time.

Later in the same year DCMS released a summary of the responses they had received to the consultation document. Respondents agreed that more needed to be done to engage with under-represented audiences but also that this work had to be sustainable. This might be achieved if museums ‘properly engage in the diversity debate’ by examining all of their practices and proactively working with external partners to be seen differently (DCMS 2005b: 15). Respondents also agreed that the lack of diversity of staff was a major problem, particularly the lack of women, disabled people and VCs in senior management positions (DCMS 2005b). In relation to VCs, it was through asserting the relevance of their collections that these audiences might be engaged, although whether this was by reimagining existing collections or adding to them was not clear.

Although there can be drawn similarities with CBH in the way in which outreach work was emphasised as important to engaging with more diverse audiences in order to be ‘inclusive’, in *Understanding* and the responses to it, the fact that there was a dialogue around sustained change, re-examining and renewing collections and diversifying governance demonstrates that the museum sector was

further advanced in the diversity debates than CBH by the middle of the last decade. Similarities can be drawn however, with the way in which – despite the acknowledgement of its importance by museums – social inclusion work that was sustainable still only existed at the rhetorical level. The next section will consider one method developed for developing the reality of sustained change through the idea of challenging the authorised meanings of existing collections.

4.10.3 Revisiting Collections

In 2006 a programme was developed by the Collections Trust²⁰ (CT) called *Revisiting Collections* with a stated aim of supporting ‘museums and archives to open up their collections for reinterpretation and knowledge capture by community groups and external experts to build and share a new understanding of the *multi-layered* meaning and significance of objects and records’ (CT, no date, emphasis added). In essence, *Revisiting* is a toolkit or methodology for engaging a diverse range of people in considering the presented narrative behind museum objects and to include more people in the process of reconsidering their meaning. It has been made available via the CT website free of charge along with a series of case studies of instances where it has been applied (CT, no date). The toolkit was revised in 2009 and 2011, the latter focusing on engaging young people with the process (Reed 2013). ‘Multi-layered’ has been highlighted as it is similar to the terminology used by EH in *Power of Place* which, it has been argued, resists challenges to the authorised heritage narrative. Where *Revisiting* differs however, is that it sees this as a reimagination process, rather than an additive one. Reed (2011: 1) has argued that the programme has a particular focus on ensuring that collections have ‘meaning

and value for “hard to reach” audiences as well as for our more traditional users.’

The method takes the position that it is by exploring the global origins and meanings of objects and specimens, and recognising that they can be seen from ‘multiple perspectives’ that ‘we learn much about the historical diversity of our society’ (Reed 2011: 1). This is done by working with internal and external stakeholders to ask questions that challenge why certain objects have been chosen to be in the museum in the first place and what questions that object raises for particular individuals.

Reed (2013) was commissioned to review the success of the *Revisiting* method. In her report she argued that it had been ‘used by many museums, galleries and archives... but no resources were available to evaluate how effective it was as a participative tool’ (Reed 2013: 3). This report positioned itself as conducting such an analysis in order to judge what impact the programme had had on its original stated aim and how its methodology might be improved.

Although the report was able to point to several museums that had used the method to good effect despite issues such as ‘curatorial resistance’ to ‘user-generated content in the main database’ and a lack of formal promotion, no quantitative data exists for how many museums have used the methodology or a comprehensive review of what changes this has resulted in (Reed 2013: 43). Reed’s report identifies fifty individuals from ‘regional and national strategic bodies and in museums (and some archives) of every size’ who have knowledge of the methodology, many of whom had ‘direct experience of running *RC* sessions or managing *RC*-based projects’ (Reed 2013: 5). It appears to be a widely recognised tool having received endorsement from ‘some of the key strategic bodies supporting the sector’ but this ‘endorsement’ does not seem to stretch to recommendation with key funders in the sector not generally promoting it as a potential tool for participative

working to those who apply for grants (Reed 2013: 46). One reason suggested for this is that the CT who 'own' the methodology have 'no specific budget allocation for actively promoting [it]' (Reed 2013: 51).

The implication here is that the museums sector has produced a methodology or toolkit that was designed to challenge the AHD by challenging the historical decision-making structures that have ascribed heritage value to 'things'. Its purpose was to reimagine heritage 'things' according to present-day needs and through multiple voices. The possible outcome of using such a method would be that 'the heritage' would become 'the heritages', with no one value given the weight of authority over another. However, there is no empirical evidence as to how far this method has penetrated the sector. That is has been updated twice since its creation in 2006 and reviewed seven years later confirms that it has maintained a presence but this is not enough to argue that it is prevalent. Since no comparative method can be identified as existing in relation to CBH however, this does again suggest that the museum sector has been more open to challenging the idea of what is 'established' in heritage terms.

4.10.4 Renaissance in the Regions: phase two

By 2006, following the initial phase one of the programme, regional hubs were established in the other six regions as planned in the initial mission statement, although with significantly less funding than had initially been requested. Two years later the MLA commissioned a project to report on the community engagement activities of these hubs (ERS 2010). The engagement activities, the report stated, were 'motivated by aspirations to make the profile of visitors more diverse and

involve visitors in shaping services' as well as building the skills of the sector's workforce to 'engage with some under-represented visitor groups' (ERS 2010: 3). The point was made that RitR funding had been the catalyst for museums to 'explore new forms of engagement' with young people being the most often targeted group for these activities but also including older people, VCs, disabled groups and offenders (ERS 2010: 3). The suggestion is that the sector was reliant on this funding to carry out this work. Although positive results were provided in this report, in particular around museums gaining confidence in working with 'new users', issues were raised such as projects being too focused on outputs i.e. numbers engaged rather than outcomes i.e. quality of engagement, consistent with the expectations of DCMS in relation to CBH. In addition, staff with the skills and experience to engage with 'under-represented' audiences were often only retained on a project basis and therefore their skills were not embedded into the organisation (ERS 2010). This reflects the point above that RitR funding was not being used to change the way in which museums engaged with a more diverse audience through everyday activities. With this in mind, the report made the recommendation that museums needed to be clear about *why* they were doing community engagement work rather than articulating 'loose aspirations' (ERS 2010: 7). Again, sustained change appeared to be neglected.

Also in 2008, a Task Force made up of heritage sector consultants informed by a wide range of sector professionals²¹ was appointed by the MLA to conduct a review of RitR. The Task Force reported back in 2009. In her supporting contribution, Selwood (2009: 4) pointed out that DCMS considered RitR of 'vital importance' and thus had ring-fenced its funding having achieved its aims in terms of getting more schools and priority groups to visit and doing more community work in the process. It

was noted specifically how the programme had been seen by some as contributing towards 'supporting social inclusion and sustainable communities' and 'developing innovative programmes for non-traditional audiences' (Selwood 2009: 8).

In the review itself there was some criticism of how the original aims of the programme had been realised in the regions. A lot of this was directed towards the temporary nature of work funded in museums by RitR which ran counter the objective of 'long-term transformation and consolidation' with too many staff employed on short-term contracts to deliver short-term pieces of work (Renaissance Review Advisory Group 2009: 11). This was a result, the report argued, of museums being concerned with arresting the effects of long-term neglect and thus focusing on improving facilities whilst looking less to the outside and articulating their place within their locality (Renaissance Review Advisory Group 2009). Although there is a recommendation for more partnership working from the review, there is less consideration in this report of the role museums might play as centres for social change and the recommendations are mostly concerned with streamlining the programme – dismantling the regional hub system for instance – and organisational change (Renaissance Review Advisory Group 2009; Phillips *et al.* 2015).

Largely the RitR programme has been viewed as successful by commentators in improving the services in regional museums but the initial vision that they would 'promote access and inclusion' has been hampered by short-term initiatives. Its future has been in doubt following the closing of the MLA in 2012 by the Coalition government (MLA 2010). As Woodham (2009: 42) has noted, even before this change social inclusion was an 'implied priority' within the various work streams that made up RitR and the education strand of this took centre stage. Social inclusion as a determined outcome of RitR has not been required since the closure of the Social

Exclusion Task Force in 2010. The RitR programme was never explicitly about changing the narratives of museums in order to address the under-representation of certain groups and was broad in what it meant by promoting access and inclusion. The original RitR 'vision' set out that this would be achieved through 'encouraging social inclusion and cultural diversity, acting as focal points for their local communities, and providing public spaces for dialogue and discussion about issues of contemporary significance' (Renaissance Review Advisory Group 2009: 7). As Woodham (2009) has argued however, the shortfall in funding from DCMS highlighted above, compared to that which Resource had claimed was required to deliver the programme, led to a shift in approach in order to secure further funding. This resulted in moving from fostering social inclusion through targeting specific under-represented groups to talking about 'reaching a wider community' (Woodham 2009: 48). Also, as noted above, a target was set for regional museums to increase the number of 'new users' by 2005/6. The influence of the DfES as co-founder meant that increasing engagement with school children and education superseded other 'under-represented' audiences - including VCs - as a priority (Wilkinson 2009; Woodham 2009). The point is that although RitR has always has engaging with new audiences as a priority, this has changed much from the vision set out in the original mission statement partly due to funding constraints and partly due to education becoming the main theme through which 'new users' would be engaged.

The scaling down and change in approach of RitR was confirmed with the revised *New Renaissance* programme that was to be managed by ACE from 2011 with a 15 per cent reduction in funding (Phillips *et al.*). In the document that considered how RitR – and ACE's other enhanced responsibilities – might fit into both its ten-year strategic vision and short-term priorities, ACE can be seen to reflect

the spirit of localism rather than social exclusion, responding to the new Coalition government's priorities. Reference to a lack of diversity in the sector was considered mostly in terms of its workforce which, it argued, was 'important to museums and libraries building diverse collections and developing new perspectives' (ACE 2011a: 25). The implication is that the narratives of museums might be changed through a more diverse workforce. The *New Renaissance* programme abandoned the previous 'hub' model and instead comprised of four main strands:

- a programme of major grants
- a strategic support fund
- a body of national programmes
- a final strand that underpins the Arts Council's commitment to museum development.

(ACE 2011a: 32).

The major grants strand would provide up to £2 million per year over a three-year period to museums on an application basis which – amongst other criteria – was awarded based on a museum's ability to demonstrate that its audience 'reflects the demographic profile of the local population' (ACE 2011b: 9). The programme agreed to support sixteen 'major partner museums' (ACE, no date) compared with forty-two museums within the regional hubs model of the previous incarnation. Phillips *et al.* (2015) argue that this might lead regional museums to retreat from their role as agents of social change with six of the nine regions seeing at least a 50 per cent

reduction in the number of museums supported directly by the *New Renaissance* programme.

4.10.5 Museums and social inclusion: summary

At the beginning of the last decade, although ill-defined, a discourse of social inclusion was clearly identifiable within the museum sector through its policy documents. Unlike in the CBH, there was less focus on the ideology of why certain communities were not engaging with museums, and more discussion of what museums might do to be more inclusive, the key word being 'access'. In the main this focused on embedding social inclusion as an organisational philosophy and developing outreach activities and ICT. However, this was activity that would sit *alongside* preserving the 'established' heritage. In reality, as with CBH, inclusion work has taken the form of short-term projects made possible through short-term funding. An exception to this rule can be found through the *Revisiting* methodology but the lack of evidence of the extent this has been used means that an assessment of its impact on reimagining the meaning of heritage 'things' that are found in museums is not possible. In policy terms then, although state-sponsored museums have been argued to be more advanced than CBH in terms of creating a programme of activity to foster social inclusion, as in the CBH this has not insisted that challenging the narrative of 'the heritage' is a necessary requirement. As will be shown in the commentary from museum professionals in the next chapter, and also the case study of Chapter Seven, policy in the museum sector does not necessarily reflect practice in this regard.

4.11 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the role of the state-sponsored heritage in enacting New Labour's social exclusion policy agenda with specific reference to VCs. This has been directed by DCMS, the government body that holds the purse strings for the major heritage 'providers' in England, but all have responded very differently. EH established early who was 'excluded' from 'the heritage' and suggested reasons for this but without empirical evidence on which to base them it struggled to form a coherent plan for engaging with identified 'under-represented' audiences.

Subsequently, its approach to raising 'participation' was fragmented, unsustainable and poorly recorded. More recently, it has been argued, EH has taken a more collaborative approach to engaging with VCs, informed by the *Taking Part* survey, inspired by the 2007 bicentenary and enabled by the NHPP. The major hindrance to EH's rhetoric regarding engaging with VCs is the hegemony of the AHD within the organisation and its statutory duty.

The HLF, on the other hand, has been argued to be far more flexible and innovative in its response to New Labour's social exclusion policy agenda. Despite this, mainstream heritage places have not been infiltrated by the mass of 'alternative' heritage narratives that have come from community-led HLF projects relating to early VC heritages.

State-sponsored museums have been argued to have spent less time considering the ideological reasons why certain people did not engage with 'the heritage' and instead acted straight away to create an action plan for 'access and inclusion' inspired by the RitR programme. The *Revisiting* project represented a significant contribution to challenging the way in which heritage is made that has not

been replicated in CBH in any planned or sustained way. This is provided with the caveat that there is a lack of empirical evidence as to the extent this methodology has been used by museums. The role of museums in reimagining heritage narratives to include early VC heritages is considered in more detail in Chapter Seven. The following chapter will broaden the discussion to consider how the inclusion and participation methodologies identified here resonate in the wider heritage sector that is not explicitly bound to the government's political agenda.

Chapter 5: The Selected Heritage

Heritage in the wider English context

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter highlighted the influence of New Labour's social exclusion policy agenda on organisations directly or indirectly responsible to DCMS. The objective of this chapter is to analyse how the policy and practice developments highlighted have been translated elsewhere in the heritage sector. This includes: non-publicly owned CBH; a London Authority heritage commission; and heritage sector discussions more generally as communicated through professional and academic conferences and reports. Although public money does support these other aspects of the heritage sector, because none have reported directly to DCMS they have not been required to adhere to the specific approach to fostering social inclusion required by it, as described in Chapter Four.

5.2.1 The National Trust

As discussed in more detail in Chapter Six, the National Trust (NT) ran several major projects from the middle of the last decade designed to engage with VC audiences. The purpose of this section is to highlight the internal policies and practices that were influencing and informing their approach to this work.

By way of introduction, the NT is England's largest keeper of the country's natural and built heritage from coastland to palaces and has over four million members. A member is someone who either pays an annual subscription, has a subscription paid on their behalf, has bought life membership via a one-off lump sum, or has been gifted membership by the NT. Members can enter all NT places free of charge. Although the categories of membership have changed, the determining of a member as someone who has paid a set subscription as set out by a Board of Trustees (BoT) has been in place since the 1953 National Trust Act (NT 2013a). This BoT is selected by an elected council, half of whom are elected by the members of the NT. The other half are appointed by a group of 'appointing bodies' who are selected by the members (NT 2013a: 23). Members can submit resolutions at Annual General Meetings (although these can be rejected by the BoT) and can vote at these meetings on any matter under discussion.

Despite this structure being in place for over half a century, it is in the past few decades that membership of the NT has become popular practice. In 1970, for example, at their 75th anniversary, they had 226,200 members; this had reached two million by 1990 (NT 2013b). This significant growth period reflects what Hewison has termed the 'Heritage Boom' in Britain (Hewison 1987; see also Walsh 1992; Lowenthal 1996; Harrison 2013a).

The NT has more than 350 historic buildings to visit which are pay-for-entry, as well as over 200 gardens and various other countryside and coastal locations. In 2010 over fifteen million visits were made to pay-for-entry sites under NT management (NT 2010a). By comparison, English Heritage (EH) opens more than 400 sites to the public, the majority of which offer free entry to some element of the site. These include gardens, prehistoric sites, castles, houses, palaces and

monuments. Sixty of these sites are classed as 'houses and palaces.' They receive almost 11 million visits per year and have almost 750,000 members.²² To be a 'member' of EH however, does not afford the same voting rights as with the NT, allowing them only the ability to enter pay-for-entry EH managed sites free of charge.

Of course there are other private, independent organisations which support elements of CBH (see Figure 4.1 for examples) but along with EH, the NT is by far the most significant custodian of CBH in England. This means it plays a significant role in constructing the national historical narrative through the choices it makes as an organisation over what to protect and deciding how to interpret its historical significance.

As a point of departure for the divergent strategy in relation to fostering social inclusion through heritage at the NT compared with EH the 2006 co-organised conference 'Your Place or Mine? Engaging New Audiences with Heritage' can be useful. The purpose of the conference was to ask 'how do we reach out to wider audiences and tell the stories of the diverse communities who make up our society?' (EH 2007: 2). Tellingly, the conference was claimed to be the 'first conference of its kind', despite the fact that this central question was very similar to that of 'Whose Heritage?' seven years earlier. This reflects the argument made in the previous chapter that, despite the regular discussion of how some people were 'excluded' or 'under-represented' by the heritage sector, little had actually been executed in any consistent way to change this before the middle of the last decade. 2006, in particular, can be seen as the real starting point for the implementation of a coherent approach to raising 'participation' of particular groups in 'the heritage' by DCMS and its subsidiaries.

We have seen that EH, as dictated by DCMS, focused on a quantitative target-orientated approach to increasing participation in CBH. As another organisation that own and manage CBH nationally, it is of interest to compare this to the NT's approach.

5.2.2 The Public Value of heritage

In 2006 the NT published a report entitled *Demonstrating the Public Value of Heritage* which had been produced in partnership with the consultancy firm Accenture. This report can be viewed as significantly influenced by a sector conference discussing the same issue at the beginning of the year (Clark 2006), discussed in more detail below. Accenture had developed a 'Public Service Value Model' that 'examines the value organisations deliver from the perspective of the citizen, and how cost effectively this value has been delivered' (Accenture and NT 2006: 7). The report detailed the results of the Model when applied to three NT sites. Significantly, the report criticised the usefulness of the kind of quantitative targets for measuring participation in 'the heritage' that had been given to EH (and also museums) by DCMS (EH 2005a). These targets were described as having:

Insufficient focus on citizens and their requirements

... simply measuring increasing numbers of new visitors to heritage sites fails to capture other aspects of the visit such as visitor satisfaction or success in learning about the past.

Focus on outputs not outcomes

In emphasising the impact of heritage on quantifiable outputs this ignores qualitative outcomes such as increased cultural awareness, skills and identity which come closest to demonstrating the impact of heritage.

Failure to reconcile outcomes and cost effectiveness

There is no appropriate measure to consider the cost of desirable outcomes so managers are unsure at the impact of resources applied to increase the overall value of heritage.

(Accenture and NT 2006: 10).

The focus on 'outcomes' not 'outputs' brings comparisons with the ambitions of the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) highlighted in the previous chapter; it looks for heritage grant applications that better *explain* heritage and change attitudes towards it, i.e. outcomes (HLF 2012). Outcomes are an important measure of the impact of heritage but are difficult to quantify. Quantitative targets do not encourage the asking of questions related to what aspects of heritage are most valued by particular groups, information which could be used to ensure resources for raising participation are targeted appropriately. Such targets do not encourage heritage managers to consider the public value of heritage holistically and long-term. The outcomes for heritage determined in collaboration between the NT, EH, the Historic Houses Association, and the HLF in developing the Model were to:

- optimise user experience
- optimise impact on local community
- optimise benefit to the National Interest

(Accenture and NT 2006: 15).

Clearly, to achieve these outcomes a greater knowledge of the consumer is paramount to understand *how* different people engage with heritage. They require the heritage sector to understand its user (and non-user) better in order to understand *what* heritages they value and *why*. This can only be ascertained through the collection of better data - not just more data - across the sector (Accenture and NT 2006). Instead of setting arbitrary targets the heritage institution should focus its efforts on understanding the consumer and consider the way they experienced heritage, in particular the heritage that was located close to them geographically. Although they were involved in determining these outcomes, as described in the previous chapter, EH were required to focus their efforts on delivering outputs. As has already been noted, on receipt of its first specific participation target relating to VCs EH planned to achieve it via general admissions to sites, Heritage Open Days, outreach projects and events. This does not suggest that a thorough due diligence had been conducted to assess if these were the most appropriate ways of engaging with certain potential audiences but appears more of a blanket, resource-heavy approach. The fact that EH could not evidence *how* it had achieved its target for raising 'participation' in CBH by VCs suggests that the quality of evaluation of its engagement work had not allowed them to measure the results against these

outcomes. The following sections will consider how the approach of the NT differed and to what end.

5.2.3 'For ever, for everyone' and 'Going Local'

The influence of *Public Value* can be seen in the NT's corporate strategy from 2007-2010 which stressed the importance of 'looking after special places for ever, for everyone' (NT 2010b: 12). The 'quality of visitor experience' was emphasised in aiming to win support from new audiences (NT 2010b: 16). It stated that it would focus more on 'people' than 'things' and claimed that 'sharing both the enjoyment and care of iconic places can be part of the glue which holds our multicultural society together' (NT 2010b: 22, 24). Although the rhetoric is very similar to that of EH with its concern to involve local communities in establishing 'significance', the NT was not tied to achieving quantitative targets in order to be judged 'inclusive'. The NT instead re-branded itself as 'for everyone' and then developed a series of projects which reflected this ideal. Essentially, this was a starting position of declaring that it had the potential to engage with anyone and then it set about experimenting with how this might become a reality. This is very different from EH who, as has been seen, consistently reminded itself and others throughout this same period that there remained barriers to 'participation' in the 'historic environment' and these must be overcome *before* everyone can enjoy it. By focusing on the needs of the consumer the NT was, in theory, suggesting that 'the heritage' would adapt to their needs, not the other way around. Despite this claim to focus on 'people' rather than 'things' the use of the word 'iconic' is interesting as it suggests agreement in this quality was required *before* people could share in its care and enjoyment. The NT then, claimed

to want to understand better their existing and potential consumers but not to the extent that this challenged their view of the type of place that 'holds our multicultural society together.' This is to ignore the argument made by Kinsman (1995: 306) in his review of the photography of Ingrid Pollard that the rural landscapes that are home to the majority of the NT's iconic places are, for VCs, 'insecure spaces.' How far the NT have looked to challenge this perception through their VC engagement work is picked up in Chapter Six.

The NT's approach to audience engagement was developed in the subsequent corporate strategy for the decade from 2010, 'Going Local'. This plan was viewed as a move away from the perception of the NT that it took 'top-down decisions *for* people, rather than *with* them' (NT 2010b: 2, emphasis in original). It was, for instance, to 'open dialogues with local communities about new uses for our properties' and 'encourage dialogue and local participation in decision-making' (NT 2010a: 6, 10). Also of import was its commitment through this strategy to develop 'opportunities for all our properties to experiment with innovative presentation' (NT 2010a: 9). Similarities in approach can be seen with EH's NHPP that privileged the geographical - i.e. local - community over all others. What this suggests is that moving forward, for the NT, the extent to which heritage places will be explored for their historical ethnic diversity will be directly related to the extent to which their contemporary local community is ethnically diverse. In other words, to develop Littler and Naidoo's binary (2007 [2004]), a multicultural past *is reliant on* a multicultural present to exist at a heritage place. As is explored in more detail in Chapter Six, this does little to encourage the reimagination of those sites that dominate 'the heritage' of England - such as rural stately homes that have been shown to have explicit

connections to early VC heritages (see Dresser and Hann 2013) - because of the lack of present day ethnic diversity in their immediate locality.

5.3.1 London Mayor's Commission on African and Asian Heritage

The intention now is to move from national organisations that saw VC participation as an element of a holistic strategy to raise the profile of, and interest in, heritage for a wider audience. An alternative approach can be taken through a review of the work of the Mayor's Commission on African and Asian Heritage (MCAAH), a London-focused investigation that commenced in 2003. As a piece of work with a specific remit in terms of 'whose heritage?', both geographically and demographically, analysing its approach will be useful as a comparison to the way in which policy and practices to 'include' and raise 'participation' noted above were supported by a group dedicated to VC representation in 'the heritage' of England.

5.3.2 The background to the Commission

In May 2000 Ken Livingstone became the first elected mayor of the Greater London Authority (GLA). Livingstone had been the mayor of the previous devolved London authority, the Greater London Council, that was abolished in 1986 after sustained 'direct confrontation with the Thatcher government' (McNeill 2002: 75). Although Livingstone's leadership bid was actively campaigned against by Tony Blair's New Labour for fear that he would work against the more centrist political position of the government, his first years as mayor have been described as 'largely uncontroversial' (McNeill 2002: 75). This can, in some part, be put down to the limited powers

attributed to the role. The GLA has 'restricted tax-raising powers and service provisioning mechanisms' and lacks responsibility for 'key parts of the welfare state' (Harrison *et al.* 2004: 905). One area that the mayor did have responsibility for in the capital was over culture, media and sport. This included developing a strategy for culture in the city and to 'represent London's cultural interests at the regional, national and international levels' (Tomaney 2001: 236). As part of his cultural programme, Livingstone made a 'commitment to celebrate and champion London's hidden history' (Fusillo *et al.* 2005: 3). From this commitment the MCAAH was born with the remit to:

...develop the strategic framework and action plan for engaging London's mainstream and community heritage sectors in uncovering, promoting, documenting and preserving the many strands and stories that make up the real picture that is London's heritage (Fusillo *et al.* 2005: 3).

Arokiasmay (2012) considers the MCAAH as part of a response to *Whose Heritage?*, one of a number of initiatives to act upon its recommendations including targeted exhibitions, lottery funding for community projects, the support of positive action recruitment by the Museums Association and the Renaissance in the Regions programme. The MCAAH then, was born of an environment in which culture was one of the few ways in which the mayor of London could exert real influence over the city's policy as well as a period of growing momentum for VC heritage initiatives.

5.3.3 The findings of the Commission

A full report of the MCAAH's findings was published in 2005 (Fusillo *et al.*), followed by a summary in 2006 (Odumosu and Coaston). The range of people who acted on behalf of the MCAAH, presented at its inquiry programme, or attended this programme, was broad, with employees from national and local heritage organisations, funders, government departments and sector consultants. This included members of DCMS, EH, the HLF and the NT (Fusillo *et al.* 2005). The point is that the MCAAH was a significant inquiry and was informed by organisations and individuals from the heritage sector who played a significant role in the wider sector's approaches to fostering social inclusion through heritage at this time. The discussions and findings then, are arguably a distilled version of the policies and practices that reflect the inclusion or participation work occurring at the organisations discussed elsewhere in this research since they are less tempered by mitigating organisational concerns.

The MCAAH was chronologically placed at the centre of the debates in the heritage sector over how to represent cultural diversity in 'the heritage' in a sustainable way and was therefore vocal of the need to develop models of best-practice to do so (Odumosu and Coaston 2006). Although geographically focused on London's heritage, the MCAAH saw itself as being relevant beyond its borders. Of all the reports and policies discussed thus far, the MCAAH was the most vehement in declaring that the existing heritage of England was not representing the nation's diversity, past or present:

Without question, there was agreement that the traditional monoculture inherent in mainstream heritage organisations had not only biased the way in which history and heritage was being interpreted, but also how the sector manages its workforce and infrastructure. Cultural diversity had been perceived as a ‘policy exercise’ – consistently marginalized into project activity, but not embedded into the organisational cultures that determine everyday principles and practice (Odumosu and Coaston 2006: 5).

The MCAAH was arguing that despite the rhetoric of diversity permeating the sector, organisations were yet to implement a methodology to make themselves, or their heritage narratives, more diverse, a position observed already of EH. These organisations recognised diversity as important but could only conceive of it as separate to the core activities and narratives of the ‘established’ heritage. In other words, a diverse heritage and the policy intentions that underpinned it were not part of the AHD.

‘Mainstream heritage respondents’ noted that in order to engage with VC audiences they needed to ‘develop research and interpretation’, as well as ‘broadening the use and interpretation of collections, and modernising heritage delivery to become fully inclusive of African and Asian histories and heritage’. This required expertise from VC heritage organisations and consultants (Odumosu and Coaston 2006: 7). This suggests a real commitment from those present to reimagine the narrative interpretation of heritage, reflective of the aforementioned (unrealised) ambitions of the state-sponsored heritage sector at this time.

Perhaps most usefully for this research, Odumosu and Coaston (2006) summed up the limitations of the existing approaches to diversifying heritage in England. As with Accenture and the NT, they were most concerned that the sector did not understand why certain audiences did not engage with 'the heritage'. For instance, they required greater efforts in understanding:

- The visiting patterns and experiences of BME communities.
- What interpretive mechanisms BME audiences need to gain value from their visiting experiences.
- What changes need to be made to the attitudes and communicative approaches of front-of-house staff.

(Odumosu and Coaston 2006: 10).

The MCAAH voiced its concern with the temporary nature of VC heritage presentations, in particular in relation to the upcoming bicentenary commemorations and worried that once this event was over, the consultations with VC 'experts' that were taking place would be discontinued by mainstream heritage organisations (Odumosu and Coaston 2006; see Chapter Eight for further discussion). In response, the MCAAH created the Heritage Diversity Task Force (HDTF). The HDTF would be populated by representatives from the heritage sector nationally with the mission to maintain strategic dialogue regarding cultural diversity issues beyond the MCAAH 'with a view to impacting sustainable change in the sector' (Odumosu and Coaston 2006: 17).

The situation regarding the place of VC heritages in mainstream heritage presentations, as expressed by the MCAAH, largely reflects the observations that have been made in Chapter Four. Significantly for this research, narrative interpretation was regarded as an issue worth exploring in relation to engaging with potential VC audiences. Given its focus on VC heritages and the range of people and organisations who participated, the MCAAH has provided a useful tool for understanding perceptions of VC engagement by the heritage sector. A follow-up report from the newly created HDTF in 2009 can offer a useful measure for how much it was felt a diverse heritage remained peripheral to the 'established' heritage a decade after 'Whose Heritage?' and what the social exclusion policy agenda had actually *done* to 'the heritage'.

5.3.4 Embedding Shared Heritage.

Along with its strategic role, the HDTF was tasked with implementing the recommendations of the MCAAH. The HDTF's 2009 report, *Embedding Shared Heritage*, reflected on progress in this stated mission through a series of essays written by those involved in the project. The London mayor (not the same mayor who implemented the first Commission) in his introduction to the report stated that 'there are many communities in London who would like to see the collections in our heritage institutions reflect their contribution to our city' (Johnson 2009: 3). The HDTF chair argued that they had been given an opportunity 'to enable heritage agencies to locate and reposition African and Asian history and heritage in the British narrative' (Arokiasamy 2009a: 7). The Director of the National Portrait Gallery argued that 'diversity issues start with content – objects, places and collections – and then

become matters of process' (Nairne 2009: 54). Diversifying the national heritage narrative, along with the heritage workforce, were the most commonly identified necessities in order to embed diversity within 'the heritage'.

Museums were well represented on the HDTF and arguably showed the most commitment to an holistic programme of diversity incorporating both narrative interpretation and governance. *Intertwined* as opposed to multi-layered heritage - the latter being the contemporary iteration of an 'inclusive' heritage (see Figure 4.2) - was promoted as a viable ideology for museums. The Chief Executive of the Collections Trust, for example, reflective of its approach to challenging the 'established' meanings of museum objects (see Chapter Four), argued that curators should 'welcome a multiplicity of voices to the process of interpretation' and the museum should not present 'a single authoritative, celebratory or pejorative view on world events' (Poole 2009: 17). In other words, for museums there should be no 'established' heritage which acted as a barrier to connecting this multiplicity of voices, and these multiple narratives did not have to 'celebrate' the past. Here, the idea that the consumer could also be interpreter demonstrated that museums were engaging in the idea of 'the heritage' as subjective and value-laden and questioned the hegemony of the 'expert' in heritage creation (Daswani 2009; Poole 2009). Possibly the most important observation here was that 'diversifying collections is not a project' (Poole 2009: 18). This spoke of the way in which 'inclusion' and 'participation' work had, to this point - as demonstrated by the large increase in funding from the HLF for VC heritage projects and lack of sustainable change in museums (Chapter Eight) – largely been seen as a piece of work with a beginning and an end but not inherently entwined with the long term strategy of an organisation.

The HDTF report claimed success in delivering a 'Statement of Intent' for museums to diversify their collections as well as producing a directory of VC consultants with experience of informing the sector on interpreting VC heritage narratives (Coaston 2009: 46). Additionally, a Diversity in Heritage Group (DHG) was established consisting of senior heritage professionals that would maintain a dialogue beyond the life of the HDTF (Coaston 2009).

The area where the work of the HDTF had managed least impact was in diversifying governance (Coaston 2009). As described in Chapter Four, this was viewed as an integral area for development in the heritage sector in policy documents but this report found that in reality it was little appreciated by heritage managers who struggled to understand the business case for it (Coaston 2009).

The role of the bicentenary commemorations in diversifying 'the heritage' was also discussed in the contributions to the report (Holden 2009; Nairne 2009). Nairne (2009: 54-55) discussed how the sector could apply the significant learning from the bicentenary activities:

To move from a particular commemoration to a wider set of changes implies continuing thinking within museums, galleries and historic sites. First, there should be recognition of core values including tolerance, understanding and respect. Secondly, the acknowledgement of the positive contributions to British society and culture made by diverse ethnic groups over many centuries. Thirdly, the creation of programmes that promote a fascination and engagement with other cultures, and seek to celebrate diversity while recognising that identity is fluid and hybrid.

Nairne was calling for the sector - following a year of intense learning regarding partnership building with VC groups and the interpretation of an 'alternative' heritage narrative - to take stock and ensure that this learning was not shelved without the commemoration to support it.

Naidoo's contribution reported on a symposium in 2008 entitled *Heritage, Legacy and Leadership: Ideas and Interventions* that was linked to the MCAAH. She recalled discussions that questioned the way in which social exclusion policy had been translated in the heritage sector. She, for instance, asserted her support for 'cultural democracy' as opposed to 'inclusion' (Naidoo 2009: 66). In essence, this was a shift from seeing the heritage of 'other' groups as separate to a core national narrative, to reimagining an English or British narrative as diverse throughout and with various groups able to assert their narratives into the story of the 'Nation'. Figure 5.1 illustrates this difference whereby in a 'cultural democracy' various narratives can populate the same conceptual space with no one narrative dominant whereas in an 'inclusive' heritage 'alternative' narratives are not allowed to infiltrate the 'core' or 'established' heritage.

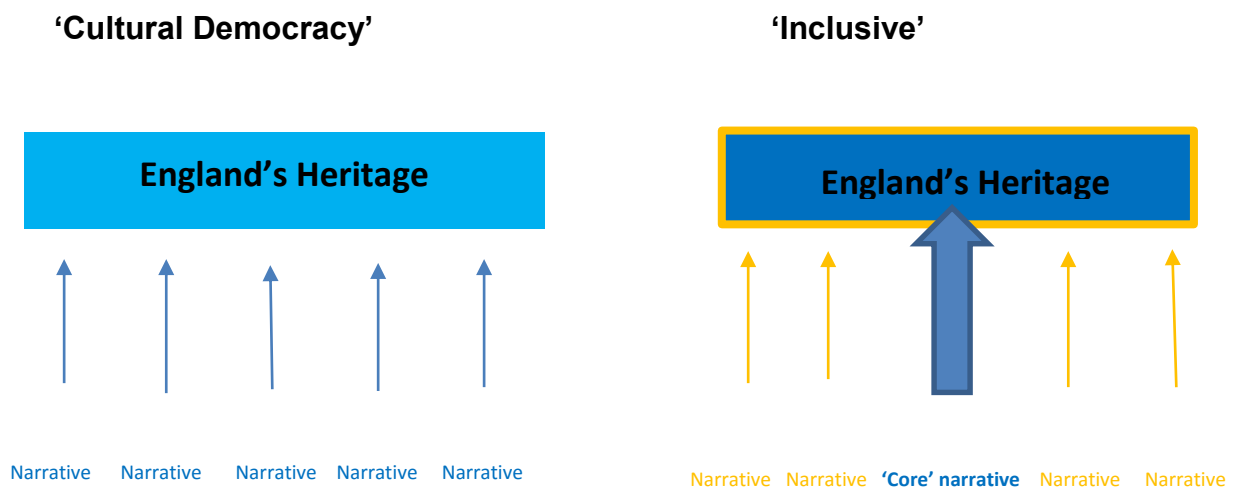


Figure 5.1: England's heritage as 'cultural democracy' and 'inclusive'.

The point was made during the symposium that diversity and heritage were not striking up a relationship for the first time and the discussion was sufficiently advanced to have an expectation of change. Unlike at the 'Whose Heritage?' conference in 1999 for example, it was argued that diverse histories should no longer be considered 'hidden'. Instead, they should be considered 'overlooked', an important distinction (Naidoo 2009: 67). By targeting representations of historical diversity and national identity holistically, not just through the heritage sector - such as in education and the media - more long-term change might be achieved (Naidoo 2009). Prescod (2009: 70-71) echoed Naidoo's sentiment:

Astonishingly, as we approach the end of the first decade of the 21st century, the establishment has turned away from its own multicultural policy agenda, to an emphasis now on "common values" and "social cohesion"... Put starkly, the debate lies between: a) those who mobilise around the call to "integrate"

and “assimilate”, with the status quo largely unchanged, and b) those who suggest that this is a time to question, change and repair the social fabric.

Prescod, like Parekh almost ten-years previously (see Chapter Four), is talking of a crossroads whereby the heritage sector, and society more generally, was required to decide if it wanted to pursue a policy of ‘inclusion’ or ‘cultural democracy’. The former had formed the basis for the majority of heritage policy over the course of the 2000s. The idea of heritage as a ‘cultural democracy’ had been introduced as the next challenge, but one which was, or is, by no means universally acknowledged.

5.3.5 The MCAAH: summary

The MCAAH has provided a useful comparison between the discourse of social inclusion present within mainstream organisational heritage policies and what the sector ought to be doing according to the views of those most dedicated to demonstrating the diversity of the ‘Nation’s’ heritage. The fact that the people involved were overt in this commitment meant it could be described as an ‘undiluted’ methodology for creating a diverse heritage; indeed a leading figure within it described the initiative as representing ‘best-practice’ in embedding cultural diversity in London’s heritage sector (Arokiasamy 2009b: 5). Another involved in the Commission explicitly made the link between the importance of ‘inclusive heritage narratives within London’s museums and heritage institutions’ and ‘the case for racial equality’ (Cheddie 2012: 270). The point of a diverse heritage as equal as opposed

to inclusive is one that was encapsulated by the idea of a 'cultural democracy'. The possible impact of this distinction for 'the heritage' will be picked up in Chapter Nine.

5.4.1 Debating the success of an 'inclusive' heritage

The final sections of this chapter will be a review of the intra-sector debate that has taken place during the research period in order to compare understandings of theory and practice (as envisaged) by particular organisations and individuals in relation to VC engagement. The fact that the reports considered below are dominated by museums is both representative of the cross-sector dialogue related to social exclusion policy over the past decade, as well as necessary due to the dominance of CBH in the policy and practice review thus far. The first review however, will be of the conference in 2006 that informed the joint Accenture/NT report discussed above.

5.4.2 Capturing the Public Value of Heritage

'Capturing the Public Value of Heritage' was a sector conference jointly organised by the HLF, EH, DCMS and the NT and was part of the government agenda to highlight the value of heritage to contemporary society. This vision was crystallised in 2004 and 2005 by the Secretary of State for DCMS, Tessa Jowell MP, who had written two essays challenging the sector to 'increase diversity in both audiences and the workforce' and 'capture and present evidence of the value of heritage' (Clark 2006: 1; Jowell 2004; Jowell 2005). Jowell herself spoke at the conference claiming modern Britain as 'a country of many peoples, many stories, and many cultural perspectives and experiences, but it is vital that we understand that this is not a particularly

modern phenomenon' (Jowell 2006: 8). This conference then, represents a juncture whereby the *values*, as opposed to *value* of heritage, were in need of debate regarding how they might co-exist and be recognised as making a positive social and economic contribution.

Hewison and Holden presented their findings in relation to the HLF, partially communicated in their report for the HLF cited in Chapter Four. They concentrated here on the three different types of heritage value that they had determined through their work (Hewison and Holden 2006: 14-18). The first was 'intrinsic value': this value is experienced individually and determines how one feels connected to heritage. 'Instrumental' value 'refers to those ancillary effects of heritage where it is used to achieve a social or economic purpose.' Finally, 'institutional' value is one that 'relates to the processes and techniques that organisations adopt in how they work to create value for the public.' In other words, the way in which a heritage organisation approaches its creation and presentation of heritage is itself value-laden. Hewison and Holden argued that it is intrinsic and institutional values which matter most to the public who are not looking for evidence of prescribed social inclusion but an emotional attachment to a place and a sense that those who manage that place want them to make that attachment (Hewison and Holden 2006). The consumer is active in ascribing meaning to heritage not a passive being whose needs can be deciphered by 'experts'. What is interesting here is that all of these values were conceived as variable. This can be contrasted with the concept, favoured by the Chief Executive of EH, of 'established' value introduced in Chapter Four. This has been described as 'something in which *everybody* agrees and which is embodied in the work of the listings and scheduling systems' (Jowell 2006: 11 emphasis added). It is perhaps telling that EH, who have been shown to be more constrained by the

AHD than the HLF, support the idea of a heritage that is ‘fixed’, embodied in lists and schedules that are decided by a small group of ‘experts’ but determined to represent the agreement of ‘everyone’.

This conference also recognised the difference in talking about participation by under-represented audiences as *passive* actors to seeing it as a broader *active* engagement in a diverse heritage. There was a call for ‘re-creating’ a heritage movement that was appropriate for twenty-first-century Britain from MP David Lammy (2006: 67) for example, a much more drastic measure than ‘including’ certain groups in ‘the heritage’. As in the HLF discussions reviewed in Chapter Four, the notion of ‘participation’ as more than visitation was central to what a diverse heritage might be. Jowell (2006:12) made it clear however, as has already been noted, that the sector was only just waking up to this possibility:

Instead of funding what we think is important, we should start by asking people what is important to them and then consider how to protect it... Instead of experts making all the decisions, experts would share their knowledge with the public, and facilitate people making more of their own informed judgements... Am I describing a radical departure from the current way of doing things? Absolutely.

There is a clear conflict here with Jowell’s acceptance of ‘established’ value as a category of meaning positioned *alongside* other more contested values. From this

position, even with all the *active* participation in the world, 'the public' would only be able to contest those values not deemed 'established'.

5.4.3 From the Margins to the Core?

Perhaps the most useful conference for analysing the progress the heritage sector as a whole felt it had made in reimagining England's heritage as diverse - and establishing a best practice for doing so - over the course of a decade was held at the Victoria & Albert Museum (V & A) in 2010 and entitled 'From the Margins to the Core?'. Although there was a bias towards museums in terms of representation, the NT and various heritage diversity professionals were also present.

Particular arguments made at the conference included: a rejection of the museum as neutral, with de Joia of Liverpool Museums citing the International Slavery Museum in the city as having made such a leap (de Joia 2010); the need for permanent staff dedicated to diversity work to sustain relationships beyond project lifecycles (Taylor 2010); fixing ethnicity as the defining characteristic with which to engage with new audiences was problematic since as a category it 'reproduces the division between BME and everything that it is not' (Dewdney 2010); the need for better relationships and communication between academics and diversity practitioners (Smith, T. A. 2010). The underlying message from, and for, the heritage sector was that it was still operating from the same fixed understanding of what mainstream heritage *was*, and what and who it was *for*, and diversity work had, in the main, operated separately to this. In other words, the AHD, despite a decade of policies promising 'inclusion' and 'participation' to create a diverse heritage, was still the hegemonic force in England's heritage sector. There had developed a

discourse of social inclusion that considered what a diverse heritage might be but this had not infiltrated the AHD; it had not challenged the 'established' heritage. Also, as demonstrated by the increasing levels of grant funding for VC heritage from the HLF over the previous decade (Chapters Four and Eight), work to increase ethnic diversity in the heritage sector had been undertaken but there was no real consensus on what this had achieved or what lessons had been learned regarding how to *do* diversity (Smith, T. 2010). Arguably, the most prominent topic at the conference was how to diversify the heritage workforce across the range of operations (Taylor 2010; Orna-Ornstein 2010; Shaw 2010; Wilkinson 2010).

What this demonstrates is that there was an emphasis within the sector on challenging the status quo of who had the authority to value heritage. An example of this can be found in a recent EH commissioned piece of research to investigate the ethnic diversity of the 'historic environment' workforce. This research considered factors such as the take-up of heritage related subjects at university by ethnic minorities and likelihood of volunteering in the sector of these groups in carrying out its analysis (UCL 2012). The survey concluded that barriers to an ethnically diverse workforce included the colonial history of the UK, the image of the sector as dominated by White middle-class people and that it only served the interests of a small section of society (UCL 2012). These issues raised are similar to those barriers referenced at the 'Whose Heritage?' conference in 1999, as well as the NAO research of 2009 (see Chapter Four). The point is that despite a decade of policy and practice designed to engage VCs with heritage, the same issues relating to why they were not engaging with it remained.

The presentations made at 'From the Margins to the Core?' highlighted that the sector had a great desire to understand what they had achieved over the last

decade, with the answer commonly being ‘not what we needed to’. In other words, implementation of social exclusion policy had failed to recognise difference and the agency of non-‘experts’ in the valuation of heritage. Subsequently, although the margins were much better defined, they had failed to have a significant influence on the core. The consensus at the conference was that heritage organisations needed to diversify from within, at the core, in order to represent the margins. The Head of National Programmes at the British Museum argued for the necessity that ‘every piece of work we do looks inward as well as outward, and is as much about changing our institution as it is about being accessible to a particular audience’ (Orna-Ornstein 2010: 83).

5.4.4 Whose Cake is it anyway?

The final report reviewed here relates specifically to museums but with its focus on localism, it is useful in summarising how the heritage sector as a whole saw the past, present and future direction of audience engagement work. *Whose Cake is it anyway?* was a report commissioned in 2009 and published in 2011 to study the engagement practices of museums with their local communities, often communities recognised as ‘excluded’ or ‘under-represented’; the community as a community of difference.

At the outset the report argued that ‘despite presenting numerous examples of ground-breaking, innovative practice, the funding invested in public engagement and participation in the UK’s museums and galleries has not significantly succeeded in shifting work from the margins to the core of many of these organisations’ (Lynch 2011: 5). This agrees with the above observations regarding the impact of inclusion and participation work in the heritage sector as a whole. The author also noted that a

culture of 'positive reporting' of community engagement projects and a lack of self-reflexivity for fear of lessening the chances of receiving the further funding on which such projects relied was partly to blame for this lack of progress (Lynch 2011: 6). Because such work was most often a temporary exercise contained outside of core operational activity there was an abundance of evidence of outputs resulting from it but limited reference to outcomes. In other words, projects could point to the number of under-represented groups or individuals engaged with, and research undertaken into 'hidden histories', but because of their reluctance to be critical about their own work in the interests of self-preservation, organisations had little idea of what this work had actually achieved in terms of changing attitudes of the target audiences towards 'the heritage' and the heritage sector.

The report argued that the project driven work in museums had not been successful in bringing the desired results and funding instead should be directed at organisational change (Lynch 2011). Interestingly, at 'From the Margins to the Core?' and in *Whose Cake is it Anyway?*, changes to narrative interpretation as a way of diversifying heritage were discussed much less than had been done so in the MCAAH, for instance. There seemed to be a collective decision that a more diverse narrative interpretation of England and Britain's past would be a natural reaction to empowering under-represented groups to be involved in the creation of heritage. Here, the 'expert' remains the key to valuing heritage but the 'expert' could be from a more diverse pool of people. The issue remains however, of how the heritage sector would recruit more diverse employees in strategic/curatorial roles if these people did not feel that the sector represented them in terms of the heritage product. The work by the CBA found that it was both the lack of diversity in the narrative interpretations *and* workforce that made people think the sector was not 'for them' and so dealing

with one but not the other seems an inappropriate response. This will be picked up in Chapter Nine.

5.5 Conclusion

The purpose of the last two chapters has been to make sense of the rhetoric and reality²³ regarding the way in which the state's adoption of social exclusion as a policy driver influenced the strategic priorities of the mainstream heritage sector. There has been an attempt to draw out the extent to which the interpretation of the historical narratives of VCs was viewed as an appropriate way of diversifying 'the heritage' of England and raising participation - with its variable meanings - in it. As has been shown, there has been much disparity throughout the sector as well as within organisations in this regard. That the heritages of VCs are not part of 'the heritage' has been consistently recognised throughout this period. What this means for VCs and how this might be changed is still under debate although there is a recognisable shift from affecting narrative change to organisational change in order to engage a more diverse audience with 'the heritage'.

In 2007, EH announced the launch of *Our Place*, 'a new online networking site for people involved in broadening access to heritage' (EH 2007: 2). In announcing the launch of this tool they asked, 'in another seven years, will the historic environment be seen by everyone as Our Place?' (EH 2007: 2). In 2011, the Outreach Team which was responsible for the site was disbanded, victim of a 32 per cent cut in government funding for EH. This is indicative of the fragmented approach to diversifying 'the heritage' of England since 1997, seeking to 'include' or encourage 'participation' in order to bring about its diversification. Such approaches have

suffered both in a lack of a coherent vision for what inclusion and participation entail and in the reality that efforts that are not supported i.e. funded for the long-term, cannot be sustained in the long-term. This period should be seen as one of experimentation and exploration in which the idea of a diverse heritage has crept closer towards challenging the AHD without ever really penetrating it. As demonstrated by conferences such as 'From the Margins to the Core?', practice such as the NHPP and mission statements such as *Embedding Shared Heritage*, diversity is very much here to stay and the consensus is that the period of experimentation is over and a period of change must commence. What this looks like, is debatable. Changing the narrative interpretation of heritage, it would seem, has become less popular. Governance is the most recent focus for considering how diversity is best pursued in the heritage sector, led by museums but recognised also in relation to CBH (INTERVIEWEE [4]: NT, 11 December 2012). It is believed that diverse governance will precede a diverse heritage.

This thesis is, at its core, concerned with how the narrative interpretation has changed at heritage places since 1997 to include the contribution of VCs to the 'Nation' dating back further than 1948. In essence, it is a review of the extent to which England's heritage, in 2015, represents a 'cultural democracy' so that diverse narratives are not layered but intertwined; they occupy the same conceptual space. It would seem from the policy and practice review of these two chapters that this does not presently exist. The heritage sector itself though, is diverse and complex. The central part of this thesis is therefore concerned with moving from 'inclusion', 'participation' and a diverse heritage as imagined and debated, to seeing it in action. What follows then are three chapters that more accurately describe the way in which

diverse narratives have actually been recognised (or not) at mainstream heritage places.

PART 3 – DIVERSITY IN PRACTICE

Chapter 6: The Experimental Heritage

The National Trust, ‘hidden histories’ and the Whose Story? project

6.1 Introduction

Having introduced the National Trust (NT) and its corporate strategy for raising participation in the places under its management in the previous chapter, this chapter is centrally concerned with a specific NT project designed, in particular, to engage with VCs in the West Midlands region of England. This case study will offer a useful juxtaposition to the subsequent museum focused chapter for two reasons: firstly, unlike the museum study, this project took place partly in a rural context. This encourages a discussion of the impact of heritage diversity work focused on ethnicity in the rural environment which, as will be explored in more detail below, ‘occupies a particular and racially coded place in Britain’s “national story”’ (Neal and Agyeman 2006: 99). Secondly, unlike the majority of civic museums in England’s major cities (see Figure 4.1 for examples), the NT is not directly responsible to national or local government and receives its core funding through its business activities, not the public purse. This is not to say that the organisation has not received direct support from government through legislation; indeed the government has enshrined in law the NT’s right to ‘hold land inalienably’ and ‘take into its care historic houses’ (Carman 1996: 102). As a privately run organisation however, responsible to paying members, it has not been subject to the same political obligations to recognise and

incorporate New Labour's social exclusion policy agenda. Yet, as this chapter will discuss, the NT ran several significant projects during the last decade in order to try and engage with more ethnically diverse audiences. Two particular reasons may be proposed for this: first, that as a charity which relies on visitors and memberships to operate its strategy has been a response to the changing ethnic composition of England with VCs significantly increasing as a percentage of the total population over the past two decades (ONS 2011a). This reasoning has been articulated by the organisation's leadership:

I think a lot of the diversity work for organisations like the Trust is being driven from social factors and I think that driver is going to become a business driver. If you want to exist as a business then you're going to have to be in tune with a diverse population. So I think that will drive us as much as anything (INTERVIEWEE [3]: NT, 17 Dec 2012).

This approach, beyond the level of business necessity, also reflects the NT's ideological position of being 'for ever, for everyone', introduced in the previous chapter and still a key driver for the NT's strategy in 2012 (NT 2013c). More specifically this spawned the objective of changing perceptions of the Trust (NT 2013c). In addition to the business driver suggested by the interviewee then, diversifying audiences reflected the NT's stated key principle of being *for* a more diverse range of people.

Secondly, and in reaction to this imperative, although the NT is privately funded the diversity projects which are discussed below have been funded

substantially by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). As shown in Chapter Four the HLF, during New Labour's time in office, emphasised the importance of widening participation in heritage as stipulated by DCMS in response to social exclusion policy. Therefore, indirectly, the NT has had to acknowledge and incorporate these objectives into its operations in order to successfully apply for grant funding to reach new audiences. The fact that audience engagement work linked specifically to VCs has relied significantly on outside financial resources over the last decade is perhaps reflective of the NT's attitude towards it during this period. The development of approach towards widening participation from a project based exercise to an organisational philosophy is charted within this chapter concluding with an assessment of the usefulness of the NT's present approach.

Before going into detail regarding specific pieces of work at the NT that have sought to engage with VCs, the relationship between the rural, ethnicity and 'the heritage' in England must be explored to put into context the case study discussion.

6.2 The rural, visible communities and cultural built heritage in England

In contrast to the city, the countryside in England has often been perceived as a place of homogeneity - ethnically (white, British/English), socially (middle/upper-class), religiously (Anglican) and environmentally (unspoiled/natural). Edensor asserts that the rural is imagined as fixed against a changing world, 'a bulwark and a resource which can be mobilised in the contest over national identity' (Edensor 2002: 42). Watson (2013: 104, 111-112) has argued that this 'authentic' England is presented 'in polar opposite to urban-industrial culture which is inscribed with modernity and multiculturalism and therefore not quite English,' a vision that is

enforced through the AHD that 'takes its cue from the grand narratives of nation and class' (Smith 2006: 11). Wright (2005) has identified the emergence of this 'pure' vision of the rural from the time when it was most economically depressed during the nineteen-twenties and thirties. The countryside, Wright argues, became representative of an unchanging England in an age where 'the very thought of difference or change is instantly identified with degeneration, corruption and death' (Wright 2005: 12). Less vehement but equally polarising of modern Britain and rural Britain, Prime Minister John Major claimed the following in 1993:

Fifty years from now Britain will still be the country of long shadows on country grounds, warm beer, invincible green suburbs, dog lovers and pools fillers and - as George Orwell said - 'old maids bicycling to Holy Communion through the morning mist' and if we get our way - Shakespeare still read even in school. **Britain will survive unamendable in all essentials** (Major 1993, emphasis added).

It is clear that Major did not consider the majority urban population, or non-Christian population for that matter - who presently make up more than 40 per cent of the population in England and Wales - as 'essentials' in his vision of Britain's future (ONS 2011b). Watson (2013: 106) has used the term 'rural-historic' to describe this cultural construct; 'an ensemble of imagery and meaning based on an idealised English countryside and "heritage" that is projected almost exclusively onto the national identity or national sense of itself.'

In recent times however, as Panelli *et al.* (2009: 355; see also Askins 2009) have argued, 'greater attention has been given to the ethnic and racial diversity of rural society showing that despite the veneer of cultural homogeneity, the countryside is – and always has been a multicultural space.' In relation to the subject matter of this thesis, this is most evident in ever-growing ties between the stately homes of England's countryside and the transatlantic slave trade, as well as multi-cultural legacies of British colonialism (Naidoo 2005; Bressey 2009; Naidoo 2010; Bressey 2012; Dresser and Hann 2013). This is an important development since the stately home is seen as synonymous with 'the heritage' of England.

The beginnings of this trend can be traced to an Access to Monuments Bill in 1927 which empowered the NT to acquire and conserve such properties. This 'represented a shift in the Trust's activities towards the promotion of the great country house as opposed to the countryside' (Carman 1996: 102). Their place at the centre of England's heritage was assured by a campaign to save them in the 1970s, centred on an exhibition at the V & A Museum in 1974 entitled 'The Destruction of the Country House', introduced in Chapter Three. Adams (2013: 1) has described this as 'a watershed in heritage politics' which determined that 'not only were England's great country houses under threat, but that if these richly symbolic buildings were lost, so too would be important aspects of English national history, culture and identity.'

A project developed by English Heritage (EH) entitled 'Slavery and the British Country House' has produced extensive research connecting various sites with the slave trade as well as more explicitly with the lives of people of African descent home and abroad (Dresser and Hann 2013). Elsewhere, a project run by University College London (UCL) entitled 'Legacies of British Slave Ownership' has traced the

£20 million paid by the British government to slave owners following the abolition of the practice in 1833, as well as building biographies of slave owners themselves.²⁴ This has informed a recent BBC documentary entitled *Britain's Forgotten Slave Owners*.²⁵ A significant amount of the money derived from slavery financed the building of stately homes in rural England as well as many commercial initiatives which drove the industrial revolution (Draper 2010). This has rekindled the arguments of Eric Williams some seventy years ago regarding the impact the slave trade had on Britain's industrial development in the eighteenth century and its positioning as *the* world power of the time (Williams 1944).

Even for those stately homes without direct ties to the slave trade, it would be difficult for any that have their roots in the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries to be presented as if they were born in a cultural vacuum. Bressey (2009: 389) has argued that 'It is only by disconnecting contemporary sites of rurality from their histories of empire and trade (be it herbs, spices or humans) that the multicultural heritage of English landscapes can be ignored.' She continues that in order to deconstruct the foundations that tie whiteness with the rural:

...those managing sites of rural heritage..., [must] revise their conceptions of those places in order to allow the margins to be written to the centre... It also requires new relationships to be built between heritage organisations and black communities (Bressey 2009: 394).

Despite the growth in contrary research, many examples of CBH in rural England maintain a position as examples of the 'pure' homogeneity of the past outlined above. Edensor has pointed out that VCs are not shown in images of rural England, 'fostering a myth of the historical purity and immemorial presence of a (white) English racial stock (Edensor 2002: 44; see also Agyeman and Spooner 1997). This sense of 'timelessness' matched with 'whiteness' was also recognised by Waterton in her analysis of heritage sector promotional material to market Britain as a tourist destination (Waterton 2010c; Waterton 2013).

The relationship between rural England and VCs then has clear implications for the relationship between VCs and England's heritage. The projects discussed in this chapter will discuss the differing examples of heritage places in rural and urban contexts when presenting the diversity of narratives they contain.

6.3.1 Audience development strategy at the National Trust

Smith and Waterton (2009a: 30) have been particularly critical of the way in which the NT have imagined England's heritage. It has, they argue, been complicit in the:

...preservation of particular cultural values represented by the country house, stately home and designed landscape. This is not an idea of heritage that is capable of sustaining genuine calls for social inclusion and multiculturalism, as it regularly rejects heritage experiences that do not share the same social and cultural markers. Moreover, it asserts that heritage professionals have a

duty to educate and inform, thereby ensuring that the cultural symbols of the elite are imparted to, and upheld by, everybody else.

Heather Smith, Equality Specialist for the NT, has outlined the beginnings of audience development work in the organisation that sought to respond to such criticism:

In 2007, we launched a new Strategy with a focus on 'engaging supporters.' This really enabled a focus on the 'for everyone' part of our commitment and we began to develop partnerships with organisations, community groups and individuals to broaden our engagement and increase our support. These partnerships challenged our current activity and particularly provided opportunities for innovative work in transforming our visitor experience (Smith, H. 2010: 41).

Within the NT's 2008/09 Annual Report there is a clear emphasis on community engagement as a new but integral element of all NT activities, positioned as a fresh direction for the organisation away from a previously more insular approach. The report, for instance, claims that 'In the past, consultation has sometimes come too late in decision-making' and that the implementation of community engagement workshops throughout the NT form part of a desire 'to become a more open, listening organisation' (NT 2009: 28).

The 2009/10 Annual Report mentioned two projects that will be considered in more detail below. *London Voices* and *Whose Story?* (the focus of this case study) were credited a part in reaching a record 3.7 million members through engaging 'enthusiastic support from new, multicultural **urban audiences**' (NT 2010a: 16, emphasis in original). The use of 'new' here is interesting as it suggests that the NT considered itself to have, in the past, only been supported by a monocultural audience, ignoring differences between them. The polar opposite to 'new, multicultural urban audiences' would presumably be old, monocultural rural audiences, the latter describing the 'rural-historic' construct of England.

This push for support from new audiences was part of a wider strategy to prioritise community collaboration, a strategy given the name 'Going Local', which was to inform the next decade of operations (NT 2010b).

We must challenge the perception that we are some sort of exclusive club for connoisseurs... Above all we will try to strengthen a sense of belonging and connection. What we care for belongs to us all. It unites us. Yet over time, vital links have become frayed, for instance between our largely urban nation and its countryside (NT 2010b: 5).

There is recognition here of a rural/urban divide and insinuation that it has been the rural that, despite representing a minority of the population, has held the exclusive right to a 'sense of belonging'. Those 'multicultural urban audiences' therefore, have

been disconnected from the national sense of self that the NT claims to 'strengthen' through its activities.

Although the NT does not claim that the rural is not multicultural, its plan for engaging with VCs is largely imagined within an urban setting. This can be seen in the acquisition of the London terraced home of Kenyan poet Khadambi Asalache by the NT, in stark contrast to the rural stately homes for which it is best known. Also recently restored has been the Birmingham Back to Backs, a collection of urban dwellings, within which have been interpreted the narratives of a number of past occupants including a tailor from the West Indies and a Jewish family. The point is that the reporting of the NT at the end of the last decade saw the heritage of 'new, multicultural urban audiences' best presented through new, multicultural urban places. The inference is that reimagining the narrative interpretation of existing (rural) sites was not a viable way of engaging with these 'new' audiences.

In contrast, the 2012 Annual Report suggested the narratives of their places were perhaps open to negotiation in stating that 'Our aim is to bring places to life, to move from a static view of their history to an interactive and involving one' (NT 2012: 18). This is the first overt reference in a NT Annual Report to seeing narratives as changeable and, as will be seen later, reflects the learning taken from the previous decade of engagement work with VCs and other groups under-represented in 'the heritage'.

There is less emphasis on community engagement in the 2012 report, as well as the subsequent 2013 Annual Report. Although this could be seen as part of a move away from it as a strategic emphasis, in fact, the focus on it over the preceding years and roll out of the 'Going Local' strategy placed it as a core objective for all

sites, so perhaps its lack of presence in these reports reflects its acceptance as a core organisational activity.

These comments drawn from the official reports of the NT over the past five years point to a significant change in approach which, amongst other things, has prioritised community engagement and targeted 'new' audiences in an attempt to (re)connect the city with a 'sense of belonging'. The purpose of this section has been to highlight the changes in approach to audience engagement that have taken place in the organisation since the latter part of the last decade. These changes can now be put in context by a review of three significant audience development programmes which sought to engage with VC heritages and audiences. The question being asked is how can the changes seen in organisational approach to audience engagement be seen to reflect the learning claimed from these projects? Finally, these projects will contribute towards the overall research question by demonstrating, in practice, the way in which a major heritage organisation has attempted to engage with early VC heritage narratives.

6.3.2 Engaging with visible communities at the National Trust: The Untold Story

Work to engage with VCs at the NT is represented best by three major projects, the last of which, *Whose Story?* will form the main focus of this case study chapter. A review of the others is necessary in order to show the development of learning related to engaging with VCs through CBH.

The first project, *The Untold Story*, as the others, was supported by a grant from the HLF and sought to explore 'new perspectives on heritage' at several properties around England (NT 2011 cited in Miller 2011: 20). The work and the legacy of this project at one of the sites which took part in 2003, Quarry Bank Mill (QBM) near Wilmslow, Cheshire, has been recently analysed by Miller (2011).

QBM is a former cotton mill. The Greg family who owned it prospered during the Industrial Revolution owing much of their fortune to their Caribbean sugar plantations worked by enslaved Africans. They were also implicitly involved in slavery through the supply of raw cotton to their mill from slave plantations in the United States. These narratives were highlighted in pieces of work carried out at QBM that formed part of *The Untold Story* but this did not result in any long-term alteration to the narrative interpretation of the site (Miller 2011). Indeed, Miller has pointed out that this was a familiar story at other sites which took part in the project, where despite research and new temporary presentations referencing 'untold stories', they did not infiltrate the standard or 'official' interpretation of the sites where they took place and were largely forgotten as the project finished and the staff involved in it moved on (Miller 2011).

In 2013 however, QBM redeveloped one of their galleries and included the connections between the Greg family and the transatlantic slave trade (Fenton 2015). Further, the site's web page now has a section on its ties with slavery.²⁶ It would seem that a decade after the original work to tell 'untold stories', those who manage the site are prepared to acknowledge that it does have a plurality of heritage narratives and that they can share the same space. This lead-in time suggests that the project on its own was not enough to inspire such change since, as has been

seen in Chapter Five and above, there was little organisational impetus before the second half of the last decade to engage with 'new' communities.

What appears clear from Miller's critique of *The Untold Story* is that the sites involved did not really understand who they were trying to attract to their properties and to what end; 'new perspectives on heritage' provided only a vague objective with little articulation of who these new perspectives were for and why they were important. They recognised that some historical narratives connected with QBM, for instance, had been overlooked, but the project had no long-term plan to integrate these 'untold stories' into the core narrative interpretation of the heritage site. The timing of this project is important here and can be seen to reflect the disparate and fragmented approach towards a diverse heritage described in Chapters Four and Five.

6.3.3 Engaging with visible communities at the National Trust: London Voices

The second project under consideration here was called *London Voices* and was explicitly based on the methodologies of *The Untold Story*, although it is also evident that lessons had been learned from its predecessor (Mayo 2009). Even before the start of the project in 2007 a more joined-up approach to diversity and raising participation was being adopted at the NT. In 2005 for example, an equality and diversity policy was implemented across the organisation and more senior members of staff were subscribing to the idea of the need to diversify audiences. This encouraged the development of *London Voices* and *Whose Story?* as a way to achieve this (INTERVIEWEE [5]: NT, 10 Sept 2012). A member of the *Whose Story?*

project, for example, recalled their experience of discussing audience engagement with the NT in 2006:

I was sitting there in these meetings going ‘what are the Trust doing?’ and ‘is it really that bad?’ So I was quite amazed at how much work the Trust have got to do, but I was quite pleased as well that they were doing this work (INTERVIEWEE [6]: NT, 15 Dec 2011).

These actions point to a period in the middle of the last decade at the NT where there was a real emphasis on organisational change to affect a more diverse organisation. It is in this context that *London Voices* came into being.

London Voices was a three year project beginning in 2007 and received just over £400,000 from the HLF (HLF 2007). The project was based in London and its aim was to connect four properties in the city with five local primary schools. Its core objective was to engage with family audiences from VC backgrounds, low income backgrounds or outside of formal education and encourage a connection with ‘our heritage’ whilst influencing ‘cultural change within the National Trust, whereby diversity in all aspects of the organisation is valued’ (Mayo 2009: 7). This last aim suggests that learning from *The Untold Story* necessitated a more considered approach to the impact the project could have on the organisation as a whole. Although not mentioned specifically within the project literature, this approach, focusing on the qualitative outcome of ‘cultural change’, also suggests inspiration from Accenture’s Public Value model (see Chapter Five) developed around the same time as the *London Voices* project.

The objectives were to be achieved through four different approaches:

- Creative projects led by artists held at the schools and NT sites.
- A programme of 'cultural research' in order to expand knowledge of the narratives of the properties involved which would inform the creative projects and site interpretation.
- A 'new model of volunteering' introducing student placements and new skills training for other volunteers.
- New property interpretation created in collaboration with local families.

(Mayo 2009: 3)

The activities of the project will not be considered in depth here but the stated desired outcomes of the project are useful for comparison with the following *Whose Story?* case study. This legacy aspect has been described through four different areas:

- Partnership: Requiring properties involved in the project to use their own initiative to continue relationships with families involved.
- New Interpretation: Developed in partnership with the families involved in the project which it is hoped will help it relate to other family audiences.
- Dissemination: Learning from the project has been shared throughout the NT.

- Embedded Learning: More volunteering opportunities and change in attitudes towards family learning at the sites involved.

(Mayo 2009: 51)

It has been recorded that the project did result in changes which have been embedded in the 'official' interpretation of the sites involved, demonstrating that by setting this as an objective from the outset sustainable change could be achieved (Mayo 2009).

Although the reported project legacies suggest an overall positive outcome to the project, two points which were recognised in the project evaluation should be noted due to their resonance with more general complaints of heritage diversity projects highlighted elsewhere in this thesis. These are that *London Voices* lacked a significant physical and cultural presence after its conclusion due to its reliance on external resources via the HLF, and there was a disconnect between project and property staff who had different, conflicting, objectives (Mayo 2009).

Perhaps most interestingly, an outcome of the project was that it 'demonstrated that the history of properties is not over' (Mayo 2009: 63). This philosophy clearly informs the statement from the NT's 2012 Annual Report quoted above that desired 'to move from a static view of their history to an interactive and involving one.' This small statement, in 2009, was relatively radical for managers of CBH who, as has been shown, had been reluctant to concede that their valuation of what heritage is could be challenged and altered by non-'experts'.

These two projects then, demonstrate a developing attitude towards the relationship between CBH and the people who did not visit it. Whereas *The Untold Story* included places in rural and urban areas and lacked a vision for what its legacy might be, the urban environment of London provided a more focused area and audience in ‘the family’, broken down further into particular under-represented groups. *Whose Story?* represents a project that focused exclusively on engaging with VCs and also took place in both a rural and an urban setting. It thus provides a useful opportunity to review how the NT, in its third major project considering VC engagement, approached this objective.

6.4.1 Case study: Whose Story?

Whose Story? consisted of two phases: the first a development phase running from 2005 to 2007 and a second phase in the form of a large scale project delivered over the subsequent four years. Both phases received HLF funding amounting, in total, to almost £550,000 (Anait and Hawthorne 2007; HLF 2007). Its mission was to pioneer:

More inclusive ways of working by developing links with cultural heritage, researching links with cultural heritage, researching new stories and programming a wide range of events to connect the National Trust to local BME communities in rural and urban areas across the West Midlands (Hawthorne 2011: 2).

It included four properties in the region: Croome Park and Charlecote Park (rural) and Birmingham Back to Backs and Wightwick Manor (urban).

Over the course of *Whose Story?*, thirty-two separate sub-projects were carried out to engage VCs with these properties. Some were concerned with presenting alternative narratives associated with the properties on site. Others concentrated more on alternative interpretation techniques such as dance and spoken word poetry to attract new audiences and also excite existing ones. Comments based within this case study are based on the reading of evaluation materials produced by the project, as well as semi-structured interviews with NT staff members who were involved.

6.4.2 Whose Story?: phase one

The initial planning phase of the project was focused heavily on developing relationships with VCs local to each property involved (which did not at this stage include Croome Park), conducting historical research of each site focusing on links with VCs, trialling events targeting VC attendance and carrying out ‘mystery visits’ to gauge the experience of VC visitors to these sites (Anait and Hawthorne 2007: 3). The historical research element of this phase was of central importance, dominating much of the short report detailing the activities carried out. Correspondingly, significant research documents were commissioned (Grosvenor and Myers 2006a; Grosvenor and Myers 2006b). At Charlecote Park, for instance, research focused on the presence of a young Black boy wearing what appears to be a ‘slave collar’ in a seventeenth century portrait hanging in the main hall. This painting provides an illustration of the desire of wealthy men and women of the period to be depicted with

their Black servants as a sign of their status, examples of which can be found throughout the stately homes of England (Dabydeen 1981). Evidence of several young Black slaves living in the region during this period, including, one Philip Lucy who was baptised in 1735 at Charlecote parish church, suggested that the Lucy family did have enslaved Africans in their household at one time (Anait and Hawthorne 2007). This also points to a wider narrative of how the diaspora of African men and women resulting from the transatlantic slave trade touched the West Midlands and in particular, its rural stately homes (Callaghan 2011).

There are also several items in the house appropriated from India during British rule there, including an elaborate sword and miniature portraits, as well as numerous items of furniture collected from across Asia. These items provide links between rural Britain and the lives of its colonial citizens in the Age of Empire, and, in the case of many of the Indian artefacts, connected specifically to uprisings against British imperial rule.

Wightwick Manor is a 'Mock Tudor' Victorian property in Wolverhampton, built and lived in by the industrialist Mander family from the 1880s. Research here centred around the marriages of two members of the Mander family, Lionel and Alan, to two daughters of the Maharaja and Maharani of Cooch Behar, India, named Princesses Prativa and Sudhira. The sisters' parents had been heavily influenced by the British in their upbringing. The Maharani's father was in fact the Hindu reformer Keshub Chunder Sen, who himself had come to the West Midlands in 1870 to lecture on his beliefs (Grosvenor and Myers 2006b; *Birmingham Daily Post* 1870).

Although there is no evidence the sisters even came to Wightwick, there is a picture of Sudhira in the house, as well as some of her and Alan's descendants.

These stories provide examples of the interaction between wealthy British families and their Indian counterparts which are not often told at heritage places in England. The possibility for the interpretation of an early VC heritage narrative within the house is also suggested by a photograph in the basement of the house showing an occasion in 1899 when a trade delegation from China came to Wightwick to meet the Manders. This image offers a reminder of how multicultural links have been formed through trade, bringing diverse peoples to Britain for millennia (see Winder 2005).

This first phase of the project then, provided evidence that at least two of the sites involved had pasts which linked them with VCs dating back as far as the seventeenth century. Having established these links - as well as more recent examples of VC narratives at Birmingham Back to Backs - and carried out some small scale outreach work, the NT successfully applied for a more significant grant to develop the project over the next four years.

6.4.3 Whose Story?: phase two

Whose Story? phase two set out four key aims:

- Raise the profile and change perceptions of the National Trust with BME audiences.
- Create opportunities for people to get involved.
- Empower BME communities to use and enjoy NT properties.
- Ensure more individuals from BME backgrounds want to work for or become supporters of the NT.

(Hawthorne 2011: 3)

In order to achieve these aims a team was recruited which consisted of an Audience Development Manager, two Outreach Officers and four Community Ambassadors to act as liaisons between the project headquarters (based in Digbeth, Birmingham) and the properties, the furthest of which was Croome Park at thirty miles away. Additionally, over 150 volunteers were recruited during the four years from a VC background to work on the various projects (Hawthorne 2011). Recruiting them for the project and not for the properties involved was noted as an issue in terms of sustaining their involvement beyond *Whose Story?*:

...it was natural for the project that volunteers were recruited in and we managed to get them to support us in events and projects but I think that the project kept hold of them too tightly because we weren't quite sure how the properties would react. I think we should have done more work around integrating them into the property (INTERVIEWEE [6]: NT, 15 Dec 2011).

Despite the above, there was some success in integrating project volunteers into the properties:

So some have been integrated – Wightwick is a really good example actually and part of this reason it has worked there is because there was a pull there

with the garden project so the volunteers have stayed on there
(INTERVIEWEE [6]: NT, 15 Dec 2011).

The garden project was a collaboration between the project team, Wightwick Manor and volunteers from the African Caribbean Community Initiative²⁷ and involved the creation of a 'British Caribbean healing herb garden' as well as a supporting booklet that described some of the herbs being grown and their uses (Hawthorne 2011). The garden has been maintained by volunteers beyond the *Whose Story?* project. This suggests that a bond was forged between the volunteers and the work of the project and that this was unsustainable if the activities that brought more diverse audiences to the properties involved did not remain visible after the project's completion.

Due to the number of individual sub-projects within the overall piece of work, this case study will focus on two in particular as a source for discussion. The first at Wightwick Manor called 'And Tigers Mingle' and the second at Charlecote Park called 'The Journey Home.' Both were part of a larger project called 'This is Britain!' which received additional funding from the Arts Council 'to experiment with using contemporary arts activity to bring fresh perspective on property stories as a way to attract new audiences and intrigue our existing ones' (Hawthorne 2011: 9). Details and discussion come, in the main, from an evaluation report carried out by the NT following the completion of this sub-project (NT 2010c).

6.4.4 'This is Britain!'

'This is Britain!' comprised of a development phase from July 2008 to January 2009 followed by the delivery of an event in the summer of 2009 at each property involved in *Whose Story?*. It was described as:

...a dynamic artistic programme in partnership with four regional organisations, using the Trust's histories, archives and collections to inspire creative practice relevant to new BME, arts and existing (traditional) audiences (NT 2010c: 3).

The use of the word 'traditional' to describe non-BME audiences here is interesting as it reflects the position highlighted above that 'traditional' equates to 'white'.

For each event the property involved was partnered with an external organisation based in the Midlands. The evaluation report was also carried out by an external party who carried out a 'consultation' throughout the development and delivery phases of the project utilising methods including:

- face-to-face interviews
- written surveys
- telephone interviews
- group discussion
- observation
- visitor information

(NT 2010c: 4)

Each of the four project streams is discussed individually in the evaluation document which is able to draw on this consultation as evidence.

6.4.5 'And Tigers Mingle' at Wightwick Manor

This project was in partnership with a local promoter of dance and theatre called Black Country Touring and involved developing and providing 'alternative' guided tours of the site led by a performance poet, Richard 'Dreadlock Alien' Grant and a Kathak choreographer and dancer, Sonia Sabri (Hawthorne 2011: 9). Given two weeks preparation time, the two artists created a tour which incorporated various narratives of the property using their respective performance art. There was no specific remit to use the research carried out in phase one within these tours and indeed the project was viewed as 'replaying old histories' rather than creating new ones (NT 2010c: 25).

These 'alternative' tours were made available to the public over two days outside of normal property hours, totalling eight performances. Because of this limitation, and also because only twenty people could attend each tour, VC groups were prioritised when publicising the event to reflect the overall aims of the *Whose Story?* project (NT 2010c). There was an 83 per cent take-up on ticket sales although an issue was raised regarding the lack of information about the performances available through the 'usual means' such as the property website and on-site telephone message service (NT 2010c: 20-21). Despite the prioritisation of the publicity, the audience was 72 per cent 'white', 1 per cent 'black', 16 per cent 'Asian' and 10 per cent 'other', although it should be mentioned that the property manager described it as 'the most diverse I've seen an event' which suggests a

success in engaging with more diverse audiences (NT 2010c: 22). This statement cannot be backed up with quantitative data since the NT had not at this point incorporated ethnic monitoring of visitors to their sites in any consistent way (Miller 2011).

The project evaluation considered, on the whole, the project to be a success with the main weaknesses being logistical issues. The collaboration between all parties was praised and the two-week lead in time to the project was seen as particularly useful for building bridges between the property and project staff. A member of the team singled out this project as a particular success:

Why that ['And Tigers Mingle'] stood out to me was because if somebody was to hold up a project of how to do something at a property where there is usually restrictions, the volunteers might not be on board, there is lots of things happening. They took the route of spending two weeks at the property, getting to know the staff and volunteers and got a feel of the property – what is possible and what isn't (INTERVIEWEE [6]: NT, 15 Dec 2011).

A concern not raised in the evaluation but relevant here is that the performances were pushed outside of normal operating hours, suggesting that an 'alternative' presentation of 'the heritage' of the house was not appropriate for core opening times and that anything 'unusual' was also to be separate. That the evaluation suggested the event could be repeated during Black History Month²⁸ also suggests that something of this nature could not be envisaged by the NT as part of

the property's everyday core presentation (NT 2010c). This supports Waterton's (2010a) concerns, cited in Chapter Four, that inclusion work can have the result of further marginalising identified 'excluded' groups. In this context, the very act of placing VC engagement activity outside of the core operating times of the site served to emphasise that it was not an authorised interpretation of the place.

This project then, is a good example of how *Whose Story?* utilised art to present properties in a different way and targeted VC audiences to gauge their response. From this point of view the project was a success as it did - at least anecdotally - attract a larger VC audience than usual and also the property staff themselves demonstrated a willingness to get involved in a more radical reinterpretation of their site. A reservation here is the apparent lack of consideration that an alternative interpretation such as this could be anything other than a 'diversity' event.

6.4.6 'The Journey Home' at Charlecote Park

'The Journey Home' was a collaboration between the NT and the African Cultural Exchange (ACEX), a contemporary dance company based in Birmingham. The aim was to create a dance performance with youths aged 10-19 based on various historical aspects of Charlecote. The performance took place over two weekends in July 2008. Although visitors had to pay to see the performance, the cost was 50 per cent of the usual entry rate for non-members thus in reality, visits to Charlecote during the course of the event were subsidised by the *Whose Story?* project (NT 2010c). The evaluation states that almost one quarter of visitors over the two days came specifically to see the performances but because the performance occurred

during normal opening hours, visitors who had come to the property but had no knowledge that this event was occurring were still able to see it. Although respondents to an on-site survey were generally positive about the performance, when asked if they had 'learned about other cultures' affirmative responses were minimal (NT 2010c: 8). This suggests that respondents were unsure what 'cultural' aspect other than visual they were meant to take from the performance and that cultural exchange was not an obvious element of it.

In terms of the relationship between ACEx, their performers, the project staff and the property staff, responses were generally favourable. ACEx described lines of communication as 'easy and frequent' and the property manager stated that she had gained confidence in working with VCs. However, the property felt they could have been involved more in the development phase of the project (NT 2010c: 8-10). Of the audience development aspect, regret over the low level of VC audiences was expressed (audience was 89 per cent 'white') but a positive was drawn in exposing more traditional NT visitors to a different style of interpretation, to which they responded positively (NT 2010c). As with 'And Tigers Mingle', despite the wide array of hidden histories uncovered in phase one of the project, the emphasis here was reinterpreting the existing narrative in an innovative way which (it was hoped) would engage with a more diverse audience.

6.4.7 Summary: diversity work at Charlecote and Wightwick

Despite the relative success of these two projects, at least in terms of internal and external responses to experimenting with new approaches to interpretation, their intrinsic uniqueness and assessment as such by those involved must be highlighted.

Neither project was designed to alter the core narrative interpretation of the sites, which this research has demonstrated formed a significant element of the social inclusion and diversity conversation which has developed in the heritage sector over the past fifteen years. This is despite the fact that numerous 'alternative' narratives had been made available to the NT in phase one. The main thrust of these two projects was clearly to develop new audiences through the suggestion that the NT can provide an alternative to the conservative, white, middle-class interpretation of the past but without challenging the site's existing authorised narrative. The assumption would appear to be that the narrative is not the issue and VCs will respond more favourably to an alteration in the performance of 'the heritage' i.e. the same story told in a different way.

The fact that these events were temporally restricted provided any new or existing audiences who witnessed them with no evidence to suggest that attitudes to heritage making by a mainstream heritage organisation had changed, more that re-interpretations of the existing authorised narratives will be tolerated as long as they are time-constrained. The reaction to this suggestion cannot be tested as there is little consideration in the project materials of what the responses might be of VCs who have witnessed these 'alternative' presentations only to return to be faced with a reversal to the same conception of heritage which fostered their lack of interest in the first place.

From the perspective of the NT, the most lasting legacy of these projects has been exposing existing NT visitors and staff to alternative ways of working to encourage VC visitors and build confidence that this can be achieved. What is of import here then, is how individual elements of *Whose Story?*, such as these two sub-projects, have formed an overall vision of how to *do* diversity at the NT.

6.5 The legacy of *Whose Story?* at the National Trust

As detailed above, research was commissioned by the NT, in particular during phase one of the project, into the culturally diverse histories of the properties involved. However, little of this has survived the project at the sites themselves and many of the sub-projects made little or no use of it. The various evaluations of activities developed throughout *Whose Story?* suggest that the *method* of engagement with new audiences was the priority - i.e. creating a one-off 'alternative' presentation specifically aimed at VCs such as 'And Tigers Mingle' - whilst permanently re-addressing the historical narrative of properties to include culturally and ethnically diverse stories garnered little attention. For example, the only publically available resource directly resulting from *Whose Story?* which discusses Charlecote Park's culturally diverse past is a 'treasure trail' of some of its 'international histories' which is designed for a younger audience and available in the on-site shop. This trail has problems discussing potentially sensitive issues meaning it does not place these narratives within their historical contexts. For example, the Black page in the painting mentioned above is suggested to be a slave and from the Caribbean, but no mention is made elsewhere in the booklet or at the property of what this story represents in a wider sense, i.e. what was a slave; why would he be from the Caribbean; what was the link between that area of Warwickshire and the transatlantic slave trade? Since this book is meant for children some explanation is required. This context could be provided by staff at the property but a group visit organised by myself in the spring of April 2011, shortly after the trail had been released, found that the staff were not aware that it existed and the information folders in each room could not add anything to the stories that were included (see Appendix E). This is further evidence of the disconnect between the project and the property. Another object in the trail focused

on the Indian sword which had belonged to Tipu Sultan. One member of the visit commented that the lack of context in the trail of how the sword would have ended up at Charlecote (having been looted from Tipu Sultan's palace after he was killed fighting the British in 1799) demonstrated that perhaps the NT was not ready to tackle 'difficult' cultural interactions of the past.

Despite much resource and effort going into uncovering early VC histories in the early stages, these elements are not recognisable as part of the project's legacy. They have not become part of the properties' authorised heritages. This is readily observed by the leadership of the NT:

...that level of [narrative] interpretation at properties, for good or ill, is not really where a lot of our fire is being directed. That is not where most of the energy for change is going... If we are going to articulate these places as being relevant [to a wider audience], their role as spaces that can have new meaning and new interaction seems to me, to be a much more positive way of moving forward than to keep harping on new ways to re-hash a quite narrow historical narrative (INTERVIEWEE [4]: NT, 11 Dec 2012).

It is interesting that despite all of the historical research which formed much of phase one of the project, as well as the wider discussion in the heritage sector regarding the broadening of the national historical narrative to include more diverse histories, the NT considers it still too narrow to be useful in making its sites more relevant to VCs. Perhaps the use of the word 'positive' here is poignant, since many narratives

of the early VC presence in England are intertwined with narratives of slavery and empire building which have unwanted negative connotations. This can lead to either the search for a positive message within, or avoidance altogether of, these themes. This is an issue which has been raised elsewhere in relation to narrative interpretations of Britain's involvement in the transatlantic slave trade and a desire to insulate heritage visitors from negative content (see Chapter Eight).

The apparent lack of commitment to any permanent alteration of the historical narratives of NT sites is also evident in the final evaluation of the *Whose Story?* project. Of the nine recommendations made for improving engagement with VCs only one mentions 'new models of interpretation' and for this to be done through 'developing programmes of activity celebrating hidden stories' (Hawthorne 2011: 20). 'Programmes of activity' suggests a temporariness that would not affect core narratives. The act of 'celebrating' hidden stories must also surely be interpreted as forming an act outside the norm or everyday. The very notion of 'celebrating' as a discursive act in diversity work has been criticised by Naidoo who argues that it ignores the fact that diversity should by its nature be viewed as 'simple and banal', or, the norm (Naidoo 2010: 79).

For the NT then, although the narratives of its sites were clearly seen as important for engaging with VCs at the outset of *Whose Story?*, resulting in a significant amount of research into the properties involved, a legacy of the project, and indeed the others mentioned above, has been to discount this approach as appropriate. Governance – internal change – is seen as the most effective way of becoming relevant to new audiences along with developing an offering which is more family friendly, with a focus on outdoor places:

...because this [governance] is comparatively small, it is relatively easier to influence so if you relatively succeed in getting a more diverse governance then there is high impact, in terms of internal pressure, cultural change and then the external imperative on whoever happens to be in a management position – they really can't ignore it – that seems to be a really high leverage place to put your effort (INTERVIEWEE [4]: NT, 11 Dec 2012).

The priorities that have been identified and the things we think are most within our control include staff makeup, our governance, our volunteering – so how we run and the people who are our volunteers - , and also our volunteer experience, but that is particularly in the areas of getting outdoors and closer to nature which is part of a big programme to get our outdoor spaces as recognised. The reason for this is that we know a lot of our outdoor spaces..., already attract a more diverse audience than our indoor spaces so that feels like we are pushing at a slightly open door. So that is where we want to tackle in terms of priorities (INTERVIEWEE [3]: NT, 17 Dec 2012).

These positions relate to the business case for engaging with more diverse audiences highlighted at the outset of this chapter. However, this is not the whole story. As has been shown, the NT equates the rural with 'traditional', 'monocultural' audiences i.e. white audiences. With this position in mind, it should not be surprising the difficulty it has had in considering narrative change at its rural places, despite all the evidence linking them with early VC narratives developed as part of phase one of *Whose Story?*. Outdoor spaces do not carry the same requirement to challenge

authorised narratives. The caveat to being 'for everyone' is that this is applied readily to a place but not at the cost of challenging the authorised meaning of that place.

It is perhaps at the cultural level of the organisation that the impact of *Whose Story?* is most noticeable. For instance, in 2012 a task group of senior managers was formed to look at diversity across the NT which has influenced the Trustees and executive team:

It feels as though the Trustees and the executive team who head of the management of the Trust are quietly coming to grips with diversity across lots of different elements of our work, and wanting to do something about it... One of the big drivers we talked about was the fact that we have been quite bitty in the way we have approached it [diversity] in the past. It has been a lot about small scale community engagement projects often externally funded by people such as the HLF. It hasn't been a coherent, Trust wide approach, so that is where the Trust as a whole has got to (INTERVIEWEE [3]: NT, 17 Dec 2012).

The objective of this task group is to create an environment where diversity colours 'the way the whole organisation does everything' (INTERVIEWEE [4]: NT, 11 Dec 2012). The result of the project work to engage with more diverse audiences has been for the NT to appreciate that it needs to consider the inherent limitations in terms of sustainability, and seek alternatives (INTERVIEWEE [4]: NT, 11 Dec 2012). For example, the employment of a full-time Audience Development Manager in the

West Midlands region, a position which previously was attached to the *Whose Story?* project, ensures that at least there is continuity of staff between one piece of audience development work and another.

The way the organisation presents itself is another way in which *Whose Story?* has influenced internal change and outside perception. Generic marketing materials for instance, now include images of VCs whereas prior to the project such images would have been restricted to materials directed specifically at this particular audience. Changing the way the NT presents itself to visitors, members, and also staff, 'can have a backwards influence within the organisation' (INTERVIEWEE [4]: NT, 11 Dec 2012). Lack of representation in presentation materials has been found to be a particular barrier to attendance at CBH for VCs so this change does respond to a widespread issue (Rahim and Mavra 2009).

At the property level, although one would be hard pressed to see the legacy of *Whose Story?* on a visit to the those involved, staff have responded by making changes to how they approach training and recruitment, in particular with regards to volunteers. This is most evident at Back to Backs in Birmingham which has the most ethnically diverse local community. Here regular 'diversity days' are held whereby speakers from local community groups are invited to give a talk to existing and potential volunteer staff on a particular social, ethnic, religious etc. heritage in Birmingham. This has enabled this property to promote the fact that it reflects many heritages that can resonate with the diverse local demographic (INTERVIEWEE [7]: NT, 10 Jan 2012).

6.6. Conclusion

Whose Story? is an example of how a large heritage organisation has reflected upon how it engages with audiences and seek out new ways to do so. It also demonstrates that despite a significant amount of diversity rhetoric, breaking with the hegemonic historical narrative of 'the heritage' is a slow process and not recognised as a central priority within the NT.

VC respondents to a National Audit Office (NAO) report into barriers to attendance of CBH emphasised the importance to them of the acknowledgement of VC presences at CBH in England (Rahim and Mavra 2009: 15). For the NT however, the emphasis of diversity has shifted from site narrative interpretation to organisational culture in the belief that diversifying the latter will naturally diversify the former. Where audiences are considered, there is a shift away from targeting VC groups to defining audiences according to their proximity to a property. This is in keeping with the over-arching 'Going Local' strategy which the NT has applied since 2010. An issue which seems incumbent in this strategy however, is that it maintains a rural/urban divide in terms of who can be included in the heritage of a site and reinforces the former as a white space. Birmingham Back to Backs has both an ethnically diverse history and ethnically diverse contemporary community so the connection between them is made more easily. Charlecote Park however, in rural Warwickshire, has a much less ethnically diverse local community and thus it is considered that its ethnically diverse past need not form part of the presented past of the place. As has been argued in the discussion of the rural above however, this merely re-emphasises a false dichotomy.

The final external evaluation of the *Whose Story?* project claimed that ‘the programme established a cycle that sought out and delivered more complex histories of Britishness and recognised the need to include BME communities who had largely been excluded from the National Trust’s “for ever, for everyone” corporate philosophy (Hybrid 2011: 3). In reality however, these ‘complex histories’ have been, not forgotten, but *overlooked*, in the efforts to encourage a more ethnically diverse visitor profile. The claim that ‘the programme worked within both urban *and* rural sites and effectively delivered change and audience development’ seems somewhat generous (Hybrid 2011: 23, emphasis added). This claim could be argued to an extent for the urban locations. The Back to Backs property in Birmingham responded to the project by employing a permanent member of staff to continue developing links with diverse local communities. At Charlecote Park, on the other hand, there are few examples of ‘change and audience development’ and the four properties collectively no longer discuss the *Whose Story?* project and its impact (INTERVIEWEE [7]: NT, 10 Jan 2012). The experience of QBM however, whereby it has taken more than a decade for the narrative of the site to change to include VC heritages first engaged through *The Untold Story*, urges restraint in writing off the possibility of a greater legacy of *Whose Story?* in relation to its influence on the narrative interpretation of the places involved.

The materials reviewed here relating to NT strategy and its projects to engage with VCs describe an organisation that has made its first forays into changing its culture, and has inevitably encountered resistance as well as support for its actions. As described in Chapter Five, the NT certainly responded to the political agenda that positioned certain groups as ‘excluded’ from heritage but this did not result in sustained narrative change at its heritage places – at least in the short-term. What is

apparent however, is that the organisation, at the top, has been affected by the discourse of social inclusion and a core component of it, diversity, is now embedded in its vocabulary. This will be picked up further in Chapter Nine but the last words here can go to one member of that senior team:

So I think it [*Whose Story?*] had a mixed impact at the properties it was actually concerned with. Some elements were more successful than others. I think some elements have proved to be more enduring than others. In terms of the Trust as a whole, I think alongside other work that has been going on at the same time it made the Trust pause and reflect. I don't think it transformed us, but I think it made us pause and reflect. I think that has led to the [subsequent] approaches towards diversity (INTERVIEWEE [3]: NT, 17 Dec 2012).

Chapter 7: The Compromised Heritage

Reimagining heritage narratives in museums

7.1 Introduction

The focus of this chapter is a case study review of a particular project in the museum sector which had the diversification of its audience and narrative interpretation as a core objective, including (but not exclusively) with regards to VCs. This thesis argues that it is unhelpful to separate museums and CBH when discussing the act of interpreting the national narrative. Regardless of this argument however, as highlighted in Chapter Four, it is clear that the museum sector has its own policy agenda and this in turn has produced its own dedicated literature. Having reviewed the former it is important that the latter is introduced prior to the case study discussion.

7.2 The museum and ‘cultural capital’

Perhaps the most comprehensive academic research into why people visit museums in the United Kingdom was originally published by Nick Merriman in 1991.²⁹ This was a nation-wide postal survey that asked questions relating to personal background and museum visiting habits (see Merriman 2000: 165-171 for full list of questions). Merriman drew, in particular, on the work of Pierre Bourdieu (1977; 1984) who, in considering how societal institutions and structures impacted on social hierarchies,

coined the term 'cultural capital'. This term describes the capital that one acquires through exposure to 'higher, or bourgeois culture', most effectively through teachers or parents. Cultural capital can be materially manifested in educational qualifications which provide a link between culture and economic capital; accumulation of cultural capital leads to educational attainment which in turn leads to increased employment opportunities (Merriman 2000: 78-79). There is a direct link therefore, between the accumulation of cultural capital through access to museums and social inclusion.

Merriman's survey, sent out to 1500 people (of whom 963 responded) chosen at random from the UK electoral registers, sought to establish 'patterns of people's heritage visiting, their attitudes towards them, their images of the past, and on other, non-museum, ways in which they experience the past' (Merriman 2000: 4). From his results he argued that museums had a potential role 'to enable people to produce their own sense of the past in a creative way' (Merriman 2000: 42). This suggested that the meaning of the past in museums could be invented and thus they held the capacity to be more inclusive, should they wish it. Museums, controlled by 'experts', were the creators and keepers of imagined connections with the past.

In essence, Merriman's survey demonstrated that it was a lack of cultural capital which acted as a barrier to museum visiting in the UK. This suggests two solutions: a wholesale questioning of the social and economic characteristics of a system that does not provide some people with sufficient cultural capital; or for museums to open up a dialogue with more, and a more diverse range of, people through the objects they collect and the narratives they tell. Certainly New Labour's social exclusion policy did not entertain the former (Levitas 2004). This chapter will consider how far it, through museums, encouraged the latter.

7.3 Commentary regarding museums and social exclusion policy in England

Fleming (2002: 213, emphasis added) has argued that ‘traditionally’, ‘museums have not been democratic, inclusive organisations, but agents of social exclusion, and not by accident but by design.’ As Smith suggests, the emphasis of social inclusion work has been on encouraging non-traditional users to enter museums where they previously have been lacking in numbers, as opposed to incentivising museums that do attract ‘non-traditional’ users to encourage visitation by ‘traditional’ audiences – white middle and upper-classes. For Smith, this ‘reveals the degree to which it is assumed that social inclusion can be achieved through the assimilation of a wider audience in to the dominant heritage discourse and a consensus view of history and heritage’ (Smith 2006: 206-207). Despite this, Sandell has been vehement in his assertion that ‘all museums, regardless of the nature of their collections, the resources available to them, their mission and the context within which they operate, can contribute towards greater social equity’ (Sandell 2002: 4). Correspondingly he has devoted scholarly attention to New Labour’s social exclusion policy agenda, describing it as incorporating four dimensions: economic, social, political and cultural (Sandell 1998). It is in the cultural dimension, he argues, museums consider themselves most able to make a contribution. This dimension is further made up of three core elements: representation of a diverse cultural heritage in the mainstream arena, ability to participate in one’s own representation and access to cultural services – which itself could form an aspect of the preceding elements.

Newman and McLean have contributed significantly to the academic debate regarding the way in which museums incorporated social exclusion policy into their operations (Newman and McLean 1998; Newman and McLean 2004; Newman and McLean 2006). In the early years of this millennium, they argue, ‘existing [social

exclusion] policy was confused and ineffective because of a lack of understanding about what museums and galleries were capable of doing and, therefore, what their role in society is' (Newman and McLean 2006: 49). This was reflected in the way in which data relating to museum visitation was collected, focusing on measuring activities rather than 'impact and change' (Selwood 2002: 75). The 2000 report for The Group for Large Local Authority Museums (GLLAM) asserted that although there existed a 'wealth of evidence' that demonstrated museums' 'contributions towards social inclusion', there was no discernible framework from the sector for recording and recognising this contribution (GLLAM 2000: 53). These comments resonate with the findings of the review of museum sector policy in Chapter Four that described how despite much rhetoric regarding becoming 'centres for social change' and projects pointed to that might be regarded as fostering social inclusion, no clear strategy for sustainable change in museums was developed. Such an argument also resonates with CBH, about which rhetorical statements were made regarding what an inclusive heritage might be without a clear path to how that might be attained (see Chapters Four and Five). Additionally, as with the state-sponsored CBH, the act of getting 'non-users' to come to museums was viewed as naturally resulting in social inclusion with very little consideration given to what impact visitation actually had on a user's feelings of exclusion (Newman and McLean 2004).

As a result, the last few years has seen a concentration of evidence gathering to understand better how people interact with museums. In consequence, the social value of museums has been investigated to such an extent that it has been argued museums are no longer required to justify their role in terms of social justice (Nightingale and Sandell 2012). Nightingale and Sandell (2012: 1) have added that attempts in museums 'to construct new narratives that reflect demographic, social

and cultural diversity and represent a plurality of lived experiences, histories and identities..., are increasingly widespread.' A more detailed discussion of this diversification of museum displays and the responses of audiences forms an integral element of this chapter.

7.4 Funding social inclusion through museums

The ability and impetus for museums to be able to experiment with ways to engage with more diverse audiences was considerably aided by policy changes made at the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) that allowed it to provide grant money to non-capital projects from 1998. Lottery distributors were also freed to solicit applications which responded to strategies that 'specifically address issues of social inclusion and ethnic and geographic equity, the two groups considered to be 'more generally at risk of social exclusion' (DCMS 1999: 56, 66). For museums, the initial benefit came with the creation of the Museum and Galleries Access Fund (MGAF):

MGAF was envisaged as a culture-changing programme, aimed at encouraging museums to think differently about getting people involved in projects and to experiment with partnerships which would help to reach different sorts of people. MGAF encouraged projects which created new audiences for museums or developed the relationships with existing ones (Aitkin 2004: 8).

The programme, which ran to 2001, provided grants totalling almost £750,000 to seven projects specifically benefitting or led by VCs.³⁰ This represented 10 per cent of the total number of funded projects and almost 20 per cent of total grant funding provided under the scheme (Aitkin 2004). Following a change to the grants schemes in 2001, museums have applied to the broader grants programmes open to all, dependent upon the amount requested.³¹ The point being made here is that, since this time, museums have been subject to the same HLF grant processes as other heritage organisations and thus museum projects in receipt of HLF funding (of which this case study is one) have been subject to the same guidelines as all other grant seekers regarding what a heritage project should *do* (see Chapter Four). Although other avenues of funding are available to museums, in particular through the *Renaissance* programme (although less so following the 2010 Comprehensive Spending Review), the HLF, as for the wider heritage sector, is the majority grant provider for museums outside direct government provision.

7.5.1 Case study: heritage and ethnic diversity in Birmingham

In 2012, 42 per cent of Birmingham's population identified itself as not of exclusively 'white' ethnicity.³² In brief, Birmingham has a very significant VC population.

Recognition that this diversity needs to be reflected in the heritage of the city is evident. In 2007 the city's five year heritage strategy stated 'Heritage can make a major contribution to promoting diversity through projects which represent and interpret the history and culture of Birmingham's varied communities' (BCC 2007: 13).

This report went on to say:

If this objective is to be fully achieved, the City Council needs to embrace and promote a redefinition and more diverse ownership of 'heritage', and ensure that the way it delivers heritage projects and services is representative of the changing demographics of the city.

In order to achieve this the City Council needs to be actively working with new audiences from different communities who traditionally have not been engaged in or by the city's heritage. This is already happening with a number of high profile projects which have clearly demonstrated that there is real appetite amongst BME communities for projects which address their own cultural heritage.

However, although such projects are on the increase, they remain the exception rather than the norm. The challenge now is to ensure they become a part of mainstream service delivery.

(BCC 2007: 18).

This heritage strategy also represented a reaction to the DCMS Heritage White Paper of 2007 (see Chapter Four) and thus considered itself in line with wider heritage sector trends and concerns (BCC 2007). As a major heritage institution both locally and nationally, Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery (BMAG) was well placed to respond to both local imperatives based on demographic change and national imperatives coming from government.

BMAG, the city's flagship museum, had already delivered a temporary exhibition relating to early VC heritage for the bicentenary commemorations (see

Chapter Eight). This exhibition had come under the local authority objective of 'audience development', an objective that also resulted in Birmingham Central Library's creation of an online tool called 'Connecting Histories'. This pointed to sources held in the library relating to the city's ethnically diverse past. Clearly, Birmingham's VCs were being targeted as an under-represented group in heritage terms. BMAG's five-year Audience Development Strategy in place from 2008 set out clearly how this under-representation might be rectified within this particular institution:

- 1. Community engagement:** to build effective, positive and proactive relationships with local people and communities
- 2. Access:** to achieve the widest possible access to all of our buildings, collections, facilities and services
- 3. Representation:** to reflect the diversity of society in BMAG's representation of history and culture
- 4. Social Impact:** to act as a catalyst for social change, contributing to the quality of people's lives and the well being of local communities
- 5. Organisational development:** to build BMAG's capacity as a pioneer in audience development work, with consistently high quality, progressive and sustainable work

(Fort 2011: 5, emphasis in original)

The first three of these in particular demonstrate clear parallels with Sandell's description of cultural inclusion above. It is in this context that BMAG began a plan to re-develop its local history galleries in order to present the city's heritage as diverse.

7.5.2 Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery

In 2006, BMAG launched Britain's first art exhibition of Black Victorians. The curator from the National Portrait Gallery in London, Jan Marsh, included art works where 'black figures played central roles in the paintings, rather than marginal parts' (BP 2006). That Birmingham was willing to house such an exhibition reflects its track record of challenging visitors' perceptions of heritage, in particular in relation to ethnicity and identity. BMAG's role as part of the West Midlands' hub for *Renaissance in the Regions* (RitR), having been selected as one of the museums to prove the benefits of the programme (see Chapter Four), created an imperative for the museum to establish its credentials in terms of access and inclusion and can be seen an inspiration for this, and other exhibitions that have presented the 'Nation's' heritage as diverse.

This is not to suggest however, that Birmingham did not have a record of delivering exhibitions that challenged the authorised narrative of 'the heritage' of England prior to RitR. An example of this can be pointed to dating back more than 20 years. In 1990 *Gallery 33* opened; designed to be an ethnographic display of cultural difference it has been described as 'one of the landmarks of museum ethnography in the United Kingdom in recent times' (Wingfield 2006: 49). It was argued to have a dual purpose in that it was 'designed to reflect the multicultural nature of the city'

whilst also imagined ‘as an *anthropology* gallery’ (Wingfield 2006: 49, emphasis in original). The lead advisor for the project argued that the result was a re-presentation of ‘the museum’s ethnography collection..., [which] reflects the heritages of local ethnic minority communities.’ This had the effect of challenging all Birmingham’s communities to focus not just on the objects of different cultures, but the contexts in which they came to be in the museum in the first place (Peirson Jones 1992: 240). The move away from the ‘Eurocentric bias’ of BMAG’s galleries was hoped to encourage ‘non-traditional’ audiences to visit the museum (Wingfield 2006: 53). Although not realised because of financial restraints, *Gallery 33* was supposed to contain an exploration of Birmingham’s industrial links with the wider world, as well as the experiences of migrants to and from Birmingham (Pierson Jones 1992). This ambition was finally realised on a much larger scale through new local history galleries opened over twenty years later.

The galleries that are the subject of this case study are called *Birmingham: its people, its history* and opened to the public in November 2012. The project received £4.2 million from the HLF towards the £8.9 million total cost and included a complete re-design of the gallery area, as well as new exhibits and interpretation. The interpretation of Birmingham by the curatorial team is a reflection of the contemporary demographic of the city, influenced by changing attitudes to the social function of heritage highlighted above and inspired by funding changes, policy concerns and intellectual developments described in previous chapters.

In order to decide which historical narratives to present within the galleries the museum worked with a selected ‘historians advisory committee’ of academic and community historians. An expanded group of historians was consulted annually during the three year delivery phase to discuss the proposed narratives and their

planned interpretation. This group included a more diverse range of contributors with community engagement practitioners, as well as academics. Additionally, a schools advisory group was set up to develop the learning aspects of the galleries and a Community Action Panel (CAP) was consulted on the community engagement work throughout the galleries' development.

The motivation for the creation of these galleries was stated as to 'provide a comprehensive exploration of the history and development of Birmingham and its people - celebrating the city's significance and examining ideas of place and cultural identity' (Fort 2013: 3). The idea that these galleries are a product of the discourse of social inclusion that has been highlighted elsewhere in this research is clear when the word 'diverse' or 'diversity' is used three times in the short evaluation summary, published a few months after the galleries opened (Fort 2013: 3-4). What is of interest here is how diversity is conceived and applied within these galleries.

Community consultation was a central element in the development of the galleries as a way of collecting personal histories, creating interpretation and discussing potentially sensitive issues in order to provide a sense of ownership over the exhibition for a wide range of local people. The stated objective was to create galleries 'that were about local communities, developed with local communities and are a source of pride for local communities' (Fort 2013: 3, emphasis in original). Four main audiences were targeted through the community engagement aspect of the galleries' development who were described as representing the museum's 'core and under-represented/excluded audiences': Birmingham people, families, schools and BAME communities (Fort 2011: 6). The differentiation between 'Birmingham people' and the three other groups is not explained in the evaluation materials or which of these were 'excluded' and which were 'core.' Judging by the actual community

projects that informed the final galleries, families became less of a priority group as the project developed, with the actual groups engaged described as ‘market traders’; ‘metal workers’; ‘college drama students’; ‘Afro-Caribbean elders’; ‘school children’; ‘veterans’ and ‘fashion students’ (Fort 2013: 7-8). In other words, working people, young people and older people were targeted for engagement work. Those that engaged with the heritage of VCs will be the main focus of this case study.

‘Representation’ formed one of five ‘key principles’ for audience development during the making of these galleries (Fort 2011: 5). This, it was stressed, could be measured through ‘how the projects have involved a diverse range of people, how they have communicated diverse histories, if they have had an impact on the representation of diversity with the new displays etc.’ (Fort 2011: 15).

7.5.3 Visitor analysis at BMAG’s new galleries

Four visitor analyses were carried out in relation to the new galleries following their opening. Details of each analysis can be found in Table 7.1 below.

Visitor Analysis	Completed	By whom	Number of responses	Description
COM survey	Feb 2013	BMAG	Unknown	Survey of visitors in relation to the new galleries
COM focus	Feb 2013	BMAG	Unknown	Two focus groups in relation to the new galleries. One group comprised of people who had visited the galleries before, the other of people who had not
DEM survey	Jan 2013	External	100	Survey commissioned by BMAG to compile demographic information of visitors to the new galleries over two days as well as general feedback regarding visitors' overall impressions of the galleries
RES survey	May-Sep 2013	Researcher	30	Online survey of visitors conducted by researcher focusing on VC aspects of new galleries

Table 7.1: Details of Analyses used within this research carried out in relation to BMAG's *Birmingham: its people, its history* galleries.

The data collected by the DEM and RES surveys will not be conflated since they are designed for different purposes: the DEM survey's stated aims were 'to collect information on attendee profile and community presentation, reactions to the gallery and satisfaction measures among visitors' (Vector 2013: 3). The RES survey was specifically to gauge opinion on the early VC heritage aspects of the galleries as most relevant to this research. The DEM survey however, can be useful in judging whether the RES survey should be considered to have been informed by a representative audience of the galleries based on a comparison of the demographic information collected by them both. For instance, 85 per cent of the DEM surveys

were completed by people who identified as 'White' compared with 90 per cent of the RES survey. Both surveys had one respondent who identified as 'Black' but the RES survey had no respondents who identified as Asian, Mixed or Chinese, as opposed to 13 per cent of the DEM survey. 57 per cent of the RES survey respondents were female compared with 54 per cent of the DEM survey. The biggest discrepancy in responses was in that of age profile; where almost a quarter of respondents to the DEM survey were under twenty-five years old and 45 per cent forty-five or older, 87 per cent of respondents to the RES survey were older than fifty and only one under thirty years old. The RES survey then, can be considered broadly representative of the galleries' 'usual' audience in terms of gender and ethnicity but not so in age profile.

In addition to these data, three annual evaluation reports produced by BMAG from 2011-2013 that discuss the progress of the community engagement aspects of the development of the galleries have been consulted (Fort 2011; Fort 2012; Fort 2013). These will be referred to in support of arguments made throughout this section. These reports were intended to be tools for staff at BMAG 'to enable ongoing reflection and improvement, and as an annual update for the programme's funders' (Fort 2011: 5). As a report for the funders as much as for internal reflection caution must be taken as to the extent to which BMAG felt they could be self-critical. There has been an understandable tendency in the museum sector to be reluctant to publicise negative experiences in relation to community engagement in reports to funders. The source and result of this being 'a consistent feeling of pressure to produce positive reports in the form of advocacy to secure further funding, rather than taking the time to reflect on the work' (Lynch 2011: 6). This is not to suggest

that these reports avoid self-criticism but that the nature of project funding suggests it would be unlikely this would go too far given the evaluations' audience.

7.5.4 The galleries

The galleries themselves take you on a packed tour of Birmingham from its medieval origins through to present day in the shape of five chronological sections. Migration forms one of three themes which run throughout the galleries, along with Childhood and Health. As an act of interpretation, these themes are introduced to the visitor through a series of colour coded information points (see Figure 7.1). Here the focus will be on how the galleries present early VC heritage which is woven amongst a myriad of stories relating to migration and Birmingham's international status as a major industrial centre, in particular during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.



Figure 7.1: Colour-coded panels which are present throughout the interpretation of *Birmingham: its people, its history* to show that a particular exhibit or narrative relates to one of the three key themes of the galleries.

Of immediate relevance from the RES survey results is the prevalence of migration being recognised as a core theme compared to the other two. Figure 7.2 describes the responses given when visitors were asked to choose three themes which stood out for them from five provided and with the option to select 'other'.

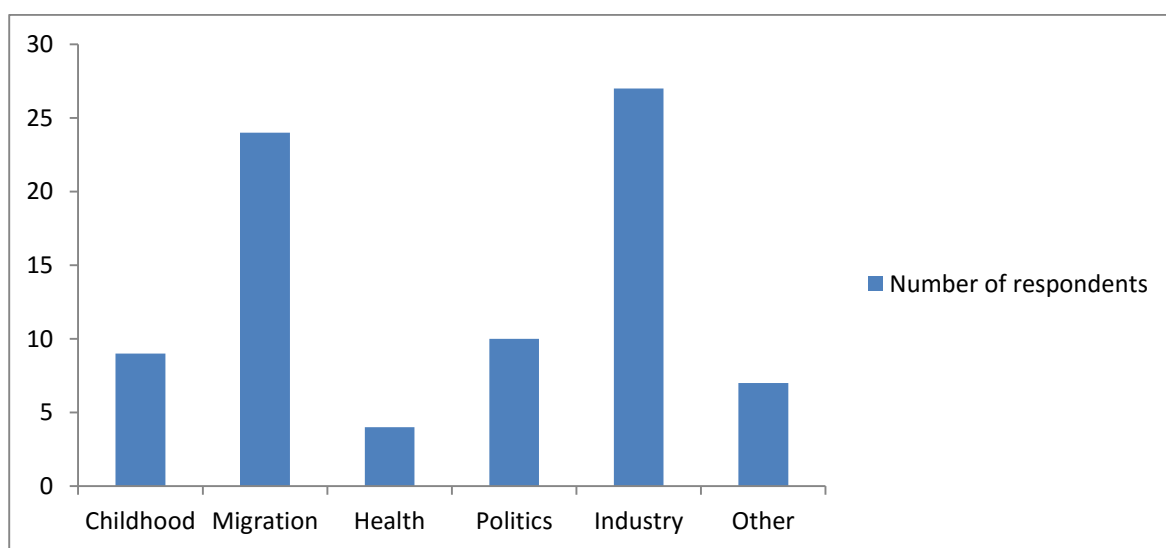


Figure 7.2: Responses to question in RES survey ‘Which three historical themes were most prominent within the galleries?’.

These responses suggest that prior knowledge could have been a more significant factor than immediate experience of the galleries when answering this question.

Although ‘Industry’ is not a recognised core theme of the galleries it is seen as the most prominent. When asked to rate their prior knowledge of Birmingham’s history prior to visiting the galleries 25 of the 30 RES survey respondents rated their knowledge as at least 3 out of 5, and 21 respondents at least 4 out of 5. Birmingham

and the West Midlands are well known for having an industrial past and thus the expectation that this would feature prominently, coupled with the fact that various Birmingham industries are discussed through the narrative interpretation, might have impacted on it being such a popular response. Arguably, the actual core themes are less obvious associations with Birmingham when considering the city holistically from its origins to present day. The dominance of migration, almost as noted as industry, is evidence of its visibility in the galleries but could also have been influenced by the fact that the RES survey was explicit in its interest in VCs. The point being made is that of the official core themes, migration was significantly more recognised in the galleries than the others but the bias of the survey may have influenced this. However, migration was also recognised as a stand-out theme of the galleries in the COM focus so the RES results are supported by other data (Fort 2013).

The galleries commence with a section called 'Origins' which charts Birmingham's development from a small village of fifty in 1086 to a population of 11,500 in 1700 and a 'national reputation for metal trade.' The migration theme starts with a Stone-Age hand-axe excavated in the area. Here the narrative is of the evolution of early humans in Africa some two million years ago and their gradual migration into northern Europe.

From here, Birmingham's migration story initially develops on the theme of local movement of peoples from the surrounding villages into the town during the medieval period. Diversity in terms of ethnicity in Birmingham is not referenced in the narrative interpretation of this gallery. The migration theme focuses on religious diversity, stating that people were allowed more religious freedom in Birmingham compared with other large towns. A centrepiece of this gallery is a unit displaying objects relating to this migration (Figure 7.3). Videos of actors portraying stories of

these early migrants to Birmingham are shown here. The COM focus found that although the importance of migration in Birmingham's early history is recognised some confusion over who were migrating was apparent. One focus group commented that the use of Black actors in the videos could be misleading. The museum commented that this was not a case of political correctness but just down to the diversity of the community group who produced the videos (Fort 2013). This is somewhat contradicted however, in the evaluation of the community engagement work in the early stages of development for the galleries which stated that these videos were 'aimed to represent people from BME communities, particularly to address a gap in the exhibition which would have little to no diverse representation otherwise' (Fort 2011: 9). Since other comments from the COM survey requested more information relating to the presence of VCs in Birmingham from this period, when, at least at the time of writing, none exists, this could leave the museum open to criticism of misleading interpretation (Fort 2013). Certainly though, as is referenced in Chapter Three, there is significant evidence of VCs living in other areas of the country during, and significantly before this period, and so it could be argued that this provides a challenging discussion point for visitors to take home with them, and indeed proved to be the case in the COM survey and COM focus.



Figure 7.3: Interpretation in 'Origins' including images and video of actors who told stories of early migrants to Birmingham.

The next gallery is called 'A Stranger's Guide' and covers 1700 to 1830. It is designed to explore the key people, places and industries of Birmingham as it transformed during the Industrial Revolution. Here, early VC elements are dominated by Birmingham's involvement with the transatlantic slave trade, especially its role in the manufacture of guns which were traded for enslaved Africans on the west coast of the continent. Metal works in the city also produced shackles for slaves and adverts for these markets are in the gallery. The story of Olaudah Equiano (Figure 7.5), a former slave who became a champion for the abolition campaign in late eighteenth-century Britain is also told through text and images of contemporary sources referring to a visit he made to Birmingham in 1790 to promote his anti-

slavery inspired autobiography (Equiano 1789). There is also an interactive touch screen at the front of the display which allows you to navigate slavery related stories attached to particular locations in eighteenth-century Birmingham (Figure 7.6).



Figure 7.4: Exhibits relating to Birmingham's involvement in the slave trade in 'A Stranger's Guide' (The circled elements point to the placement of Figures 7.5 and 7.6 in the display).

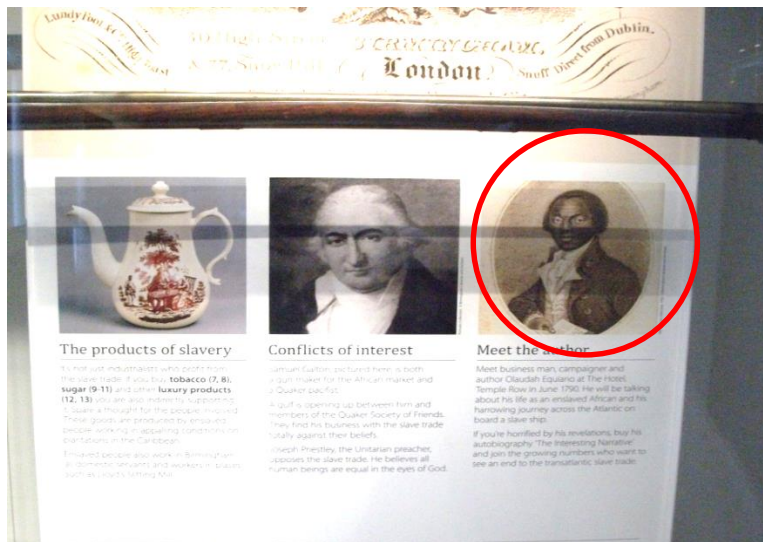


Figure 7.5: Interpretation of Olaudah Equiano's visit to Birmingham and other slavery related narratives.

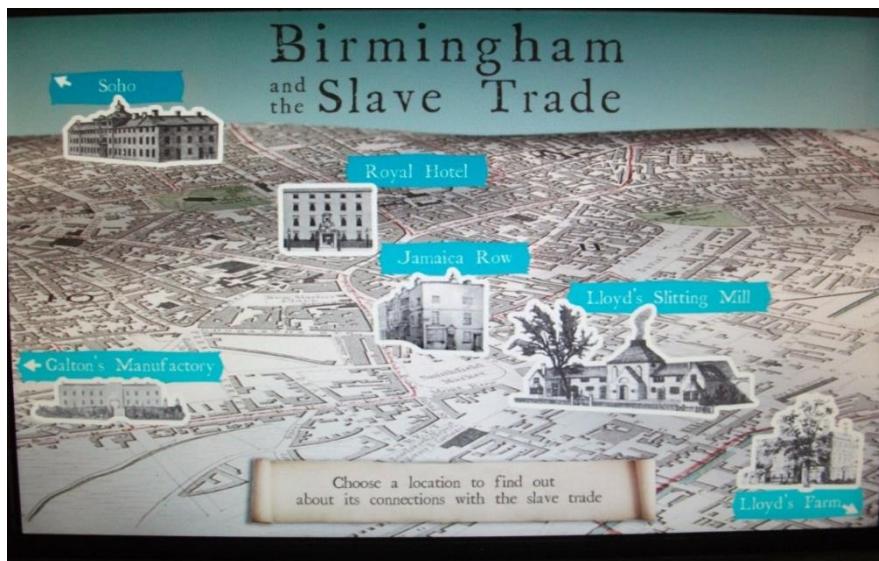


Figure 7.6: Interactive screen showing places in Birmingham with historical links to the slave trade.

Also introduced to the visitor is William Davidson (Figure 7.7), a Jamaican cabinet maker and allegedly the son of a governor of Jamaica who lived in Birmingham during the early 1800s before moving to London (Knapp and Baldwin 1828). His later involvement in the Cato Street conspiracy to blow up a meeting of the cabinet in 1820, for which he was executed, is not mentioned. Since he is afforded only a few lines of text along with his image in the act of interpreting his story, this may not be surprising. As his reflects a fascinating tale that is not enveloped within the slavery narrative but within political radicalism in Britain at the time, this could be considered a missed opportunity to associate early VC heritage in Birmingham with something other than slavery.

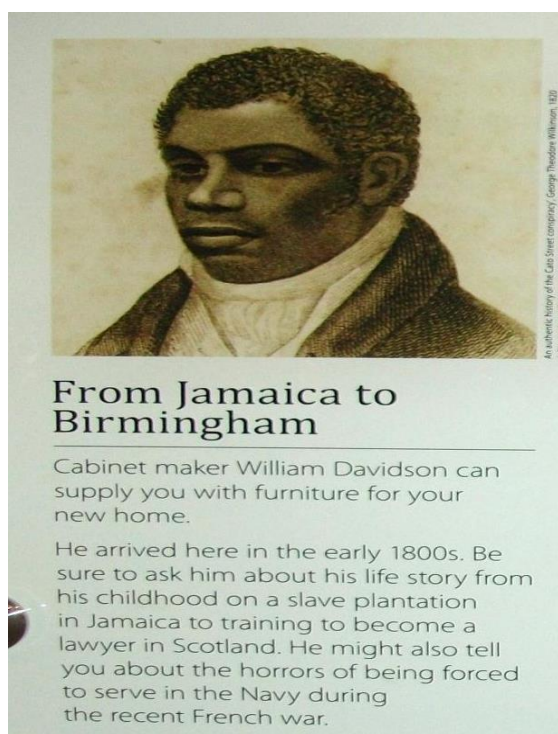


Figure 7.7: Interpretation of William Davidson’s narrative in ‘A Stranger’s Guide’.

The element of community participation in this section comes from a project with African-Caribbean elders to produce a series of poems that form part of a coffee house display. These poems are available via an interactive 'coffee table' (Figure 7.8) and are designed to help visitors form connections between the people of Birmingham's past and those of the present (Fort 2013: 7). The COM survey found that 84 per cent of those who used this display agreed that it was successful in making this connection (Fort 2013). This could be viewed as an example of challenging normative perceptions of who can present the past in terms of ethnic background, but conforming to norms around age; the elderly as the authorised voice of the past. It is perhaps interesting that the elderly are used to narrate the distant past whereas in the galleries describing modern Birmingham (see below), young people - of various ethnicities - are preferred.

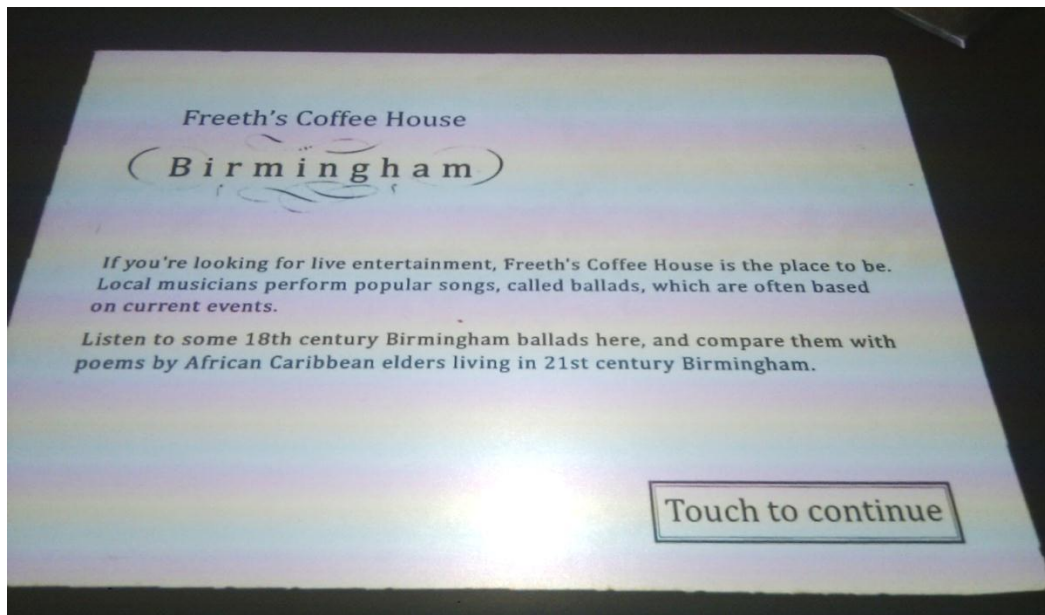


Figure 7.8: Interactive ‘coffee table’ display in ‘A Stranger’s Guide’ allowing visitors to read poems by African-Caribbean elders that talk of modern life in Birmingham compared with that described in eighteenth century ballads.

The next gallery, ‘Forward’, covers the period 1830-1909. The abolition of slavery campaign in Birmingham plays a central role in the interpretation of Birmingham’s narrative. This includes prominent British abolitionists such as Joseph Sturge, as well as former slaves from America who came to Britain to campaign against slavery in their country which continued legally until 1865. The panel shown in Figure 7.9 tells the stories of Frederick Douglass, Amanda Smith and Peter Stanford who all came to Birmingham to speak out against slavery during this period. Stanford’s story, in fact, goes well beyond this since he settled in the city and became the popular minister of a local Baptist church.³³

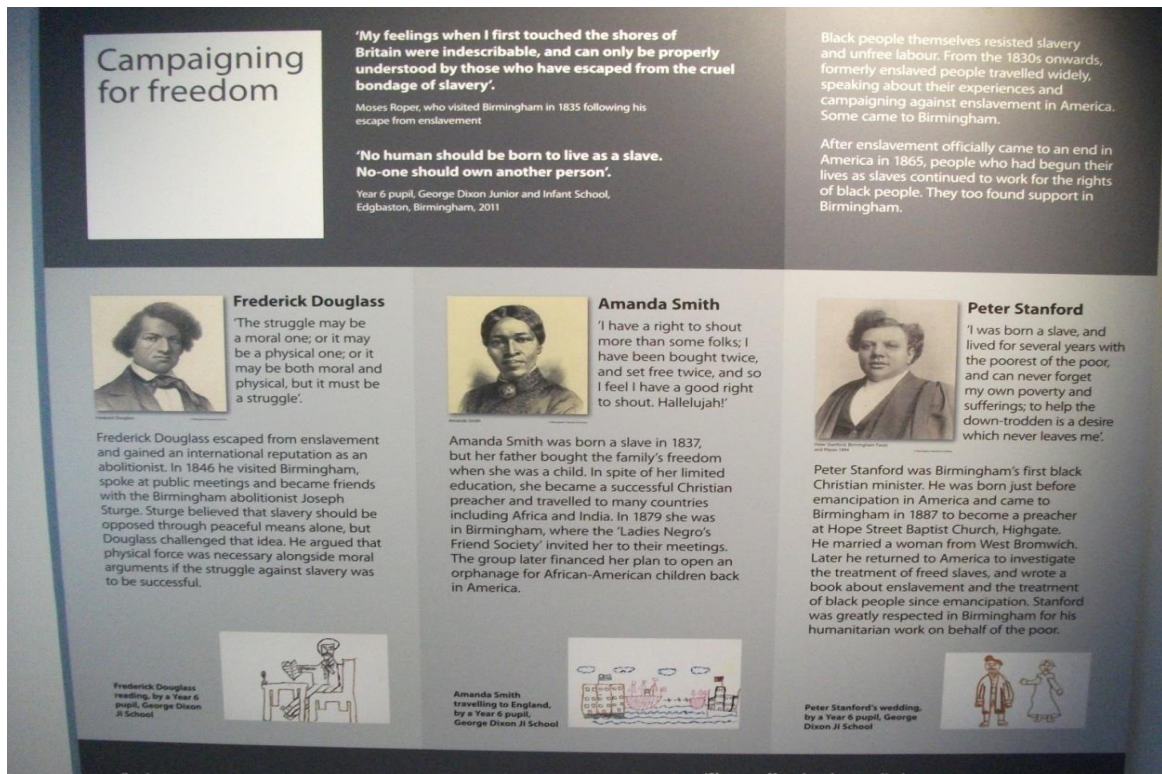
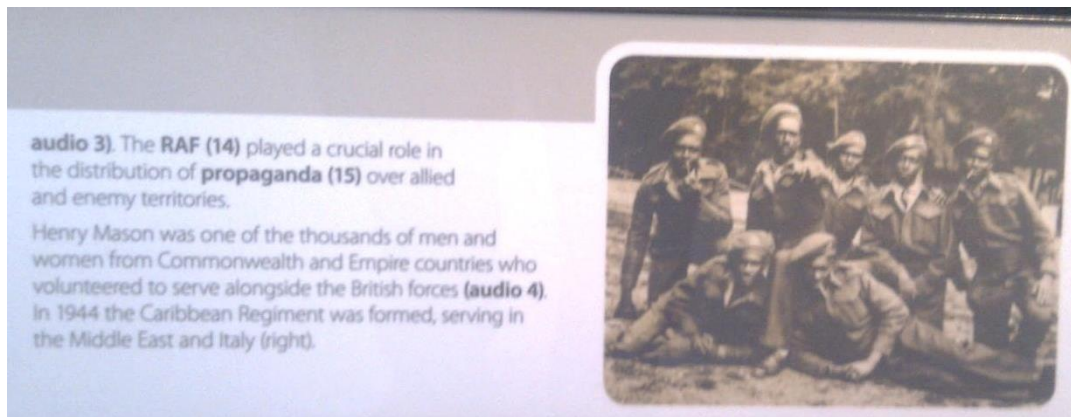


Figure 7.9: Display from 'Forward' of former slaves from the United States who came to Birmingham in the 1800s to campaign against slavery.

Although the migration theme is also present in the next gallery, 'An Expanding City' 1909-1945, it largely concentrates upon white migrant groups who were arriving in the city, such as Irish, Jewish and continental Europeans. One VC narrative is interpreted relating to Henry Mason who served in the Caribbean Regiment during the Second World War and subsequently moved to Birmingham (Figure 7.10).



On active service

Henry Mason

Henry Mason served in the Caribbean Regiment during the second world war.

Henry: When England declared war the Prime Minister of Barbados made a statement by saying 'Well, you haven't got to be afraid of anything because we in the West Indies are behind you'. And quite a few men volunteered to join the Army, some of them joined the Air Force, the Royal Navy, Merchant Seamen, and so forth you see.

But I didn't join the Army, not until 1942. Because during that time the Americans had a base in the northern part of the island, and they had also a base on the southern part of the island, and I was working there, you see.

There was no conscription, all of us joined the Army voluntarily. In St. Lucia, we had what you called the Windward Island Battalion. The Windward Island Battalion consisted of islands from Dominica, Grenada, Saint Vincent and Saint Lucia. So we formed a regiment called the Caribbean Regiment.

And I made a lot of friends there. And that regiment left the West Indies for service overseas in 1944. That was March '44. And the regiment finally settled in America where we had advanced training in America. From America we went to Italy.

It was very difficult in Italy, because the conditions there, we had to sleep under bivouacs, small tents, you see. Unfortunately we didn't see action in Italy because I think the war then was coming to an ending. So they decided we'll have the regiment, the Caribbean Regiment, to escort the German prisoners of war from Italy to Egypt. And we took them there, that was in 1944.

We left Egypt in December '45 actually. But before we left Egypt, and before the war was ended, while we was there, we were on the verge, the regiment was on the verge of going to the Far East, you see. But when the Americans dropped the bomb on Japan, Japan surrendered, and shortly afterwards we returned to the West Indies in December of '45. But we actually reached West Indies in January '46.

Figure 7.10: Narrative interpretation for Henry Mason in 'An Expanding City'.

No specific reason for this change in focus is provided by the evaluation materials. Although this is nowhere stated, the impression is given that the narrative of early VCs in Birmingham is intrinsically linked to the slave trade whereas other migrant groups' narratives are told through industry, politics or religion. For example,

the migration panels from 'Forward' and 'An Expanding City' talk of a Jewish businessman who started a cinema chain, an Irish Protestant who gave anti-Catholic lectures, the opening of Jewish schools in Birmingham and the influence of French fashion in Birmingham. Contrast this with the almost exclusively slavery related narrative interpretation of early VC heritages in the galleries.

An interesting observation can be made here based on the RES survey. When posed the question, 'within which sections did you see information relating to BAME people living in, or associated with, Birmingham?', 'An Expanding City' was the most popular answer (Figure 7.11).

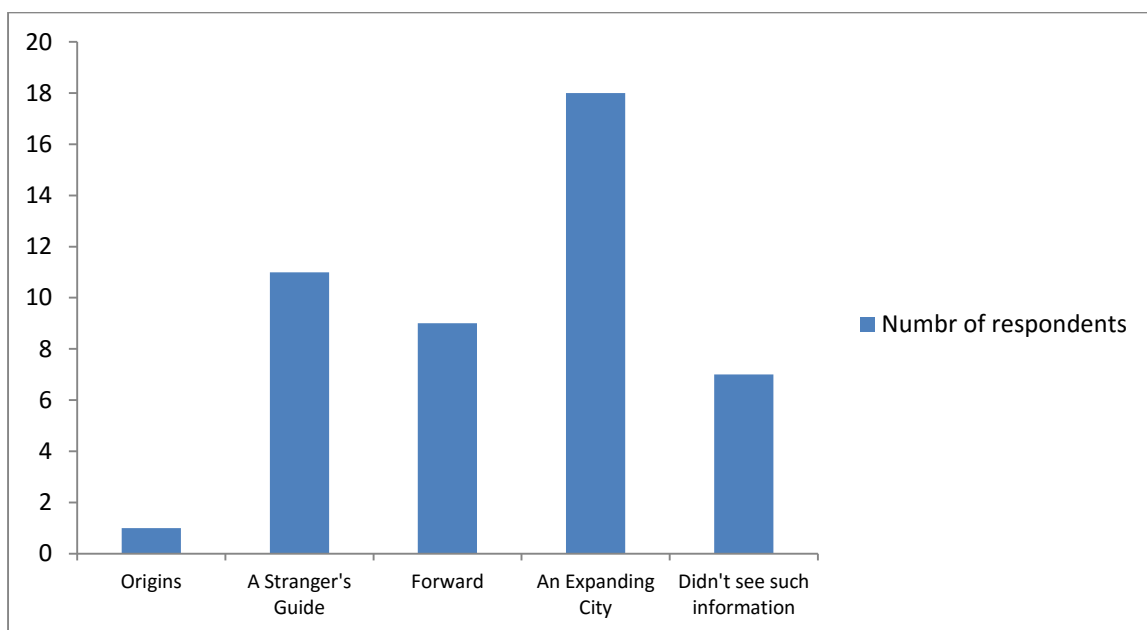


Figure 7.11: Responses to RES survey question 'Within which sections did you see information relating to BAME people living in, or associated with, Birmingham?'.

This is a curious finding because, in fact, 'An Expanding City' has the fewest number of narratives relating to VC heritage; just one compared to three and four in the preceding two galleries respectively. This gallery is dominated by the two World Wars and developments in home life. Arguably, the connections between Birmingham and the wider world via these global conflicts might suggest to people that the city was now connected to more diverse ethnic and national groups but this understanding would be preconceived. Another possible reason for the large numbers seeing VCs as connected to Birmingham at this time is because VC immigration is still viewed as a more recent phenomenon, part of Littler and Naidoo's (2007 [2004]) assertion that a 'white past, multicultural present' heritage alignment exists in Britain. Another possible reason could be suggested. In her analysis of interviews with 'white-British' visitors to exhibitions linked to the bicentenary, Smith (2010) found that this group were less likely than VCs to find any personal attachment to slavery related presentations and dissociated the narratives involved from British or English history. Smith argues that the regular portrayal of slavery through the 'triangular trade' – whereby ships from Britain collected slaves in West Africa to take to the Americas then return to Britain – encourages white-British people to distance themselves from it as something that happens 'over there' (Smith 2010: 203). The point is that visitors may unconsciously decouple displays that challenge authorised narratives in preference to stock narratives i.e. 'known' or 'comforting' narratives because this is what they have been conditioned to by the AHD. This suggests that contestation of authorised narratives must be normalised in mainstream heritage contexts in order to encourage people to think of 'alternative' heritages as part of their own. The small scale of this survey makes such arguments

impossible to analyse in more depth but certainly raises a possible subject for further research.

The final gallery, 'Your Birmingham', 1945 to present day is a collection of personal objects and stories of Birmingham residents of this period which represent a variety of ethnic backgrounds as well as a running film of interviews with young people living in two districts of modern day Birmingham. The passing over of control of the narrative interpretation of Birmingham's past from the curator to the visitor is suggested by the title of this gallery. Indeed, curatorial voice is less prominent than in the other sections of the gallery where clear historical narratives are present. This is a result of the decisions taken by the museum, for example, to outsource the making of the film to a freelancer. The museum states that this was to facilitate the presence of 'contemporary voices in the exhibition rather than to re-interpret historical events so there was less necessity of intervention involving curators and items from the collection' (Fort 2011: 23). A similar reason is given in the approach to interpreting the objects in this gallery. The museum describes 'representation' as the 'main focus' here, 'with the explicit aim to collect, interpret and display stories and objects from a very wide diversity of people (including BME, disabled, gay etc.) including those often over-looked or excluded in traditional histories' (Fort 2012: 19). There is no active curatorial voice as is the case in the preceding galleries.

Response to the approach of 'Your Birmingham' was mixed in the evaluation report. Some felt that the lack of curatorial voice led the objects to lack context and ended up leading them to appear 'a bit random' (Fort 2013: 20). The report stated that 'it is important to note that visitors felt they did need narratives and that this way of arranging exhibits was effective' (Fort 2013: 20). This gallery scored lower compared to the rest of the galleries in terms of 'interest' and 'relevance' (Fort 2013:

20-21). This suggests that although visitors want to feel that the voices of Birmingham people are present within the galleries, they do not carry as much authority as heritage without the presence of an 'expert' to validate their importance. Authorised narratives which guide the visitor are held pre-eminent. The importance of the presence of the museum 'expert' in the making of narratives was also found within the community engagement work that informed the making of the galleries as a whole. When a curator attended a community engagement workshop that was being led by a freelance outreach worker participants felt that their contribution was more valued (Fort 2012). The curator is seen as the keeper of knowledge on behalf of the museum and is rarely challenged outside this environment (Watson 2007). Such a conclusion is consistent with the work of Peter Davis who argues that a museum is seen as 'a building that houses experts, collections, knowledge and exhibitions that is both physically and philosophically a discrete entity.' He continues that although participation of communities in creating museum displays is common, the incumbent terminology such as 'outreach' reinforces the separation between this work and work carried out by museum professionals (Davis 2011: 37). Here, the 'Your Birmingham' interpretation, although inside the museum, was metaphorically external without the active presence of the museum i.e. the curator or 'expert'. These comments from visitors to the museum reinforce the hegemony of Smith's AHD, even in museum displays that have tried to re-create heritage with diversity at its core.

A further reason for why this gallery is not responded to as well as the others by visitors might also be suggested. If we are reminded that narrative is '*the representation of an event or a series of events*' (Porter Abbott 2002: 12, emphasis in original) then this final gallery is lacking in a narrative to interpret; no events are

used to frame the gallery's content as is done in the other galleries. In the previous galleries there is a clearer sense of temporal progression whereas this final gallery, although provided with a time frame, does not have an official narrative with which to make sense of this time. Staiff (2014) has suggested that objects and places can inspire narratives and thus they do not need to be applied by an 'expert'. The findings here suggest that authorised narratives are treated with less suspicion by the visitor than the unauthorised ones they provide themselves, or that are presented to them by a non-'expert'.

A final point of interest based on the RES survey engages with the question of how we categorise people. Consider the responses to the open question: 'Are there any particular groups of people you feel are not included or are under-represented in these galleries?'.

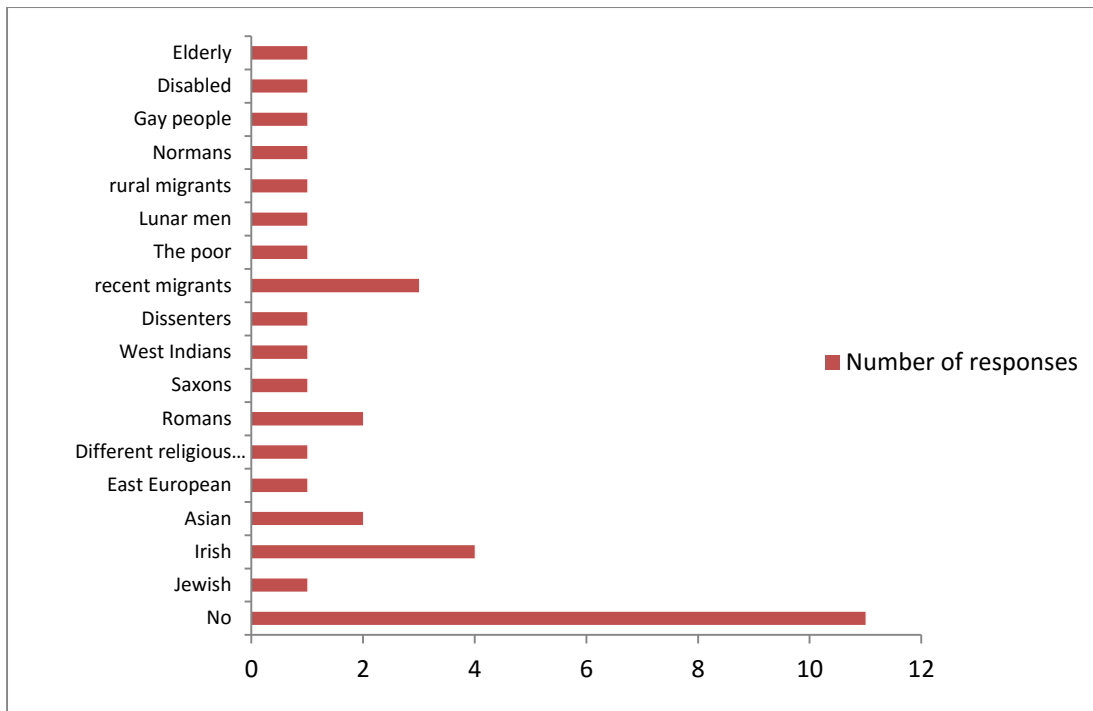


Figure 7.12: Responses to the question ‘Are there any particular groups of people you feel are not included or are under-represented in these galleries?’.

Thirty respondents produced seventeen different answers to this question. If this survey can represent visitors to BMAG generally, which it has been argued it can in terms of gender and ethnicity, more than half of visitors feel that someone is under-represented. That nine of these represent non-English ethnic or national groups suggests that, even though migration has largely been considered to feature at the core of the galleries, more could have been done to interpret its impact on Birmingham’s heritage. This dominance of ethnic or national categories also suggests that these, more than age, disability, gender, sexuality, etc., are the hegemonic heritage identifiers. This also demonstrates the difficulty museums have in representing diversity, which has the appearance of the proverbial can of worms.

7.6 Conclusion: what has diversity *done* at BMAG?

Having outlined the objectives and profile of the BMAG galleries then, discussion shifts to its relative successes and failures regarding its representation of Birmingham as a diverse city and engagement and resonance with VC audiences as set out in its initial objectives. Judgement will be made in terms of its correspondence to an 'interrogative hybrid heritage': that is, where a relationship is established between past and present diversity which recognises 'the inequalities that have and do exist' (Littler and Naidoo 2007 [2004]: 111-112). Essentially this requires that diversity be recognised as normative for the entire historical development of Birmingham through its narrative interpretation, but also that the galleries encourage visitors to challenge the narratives provided; to challenge the notion of the presented past and its relationship with the present more generally.

After the first year of the galleries' development phase staff expressed concerns that the community engagement aspect was too concerned with outputs rather than outcomes (Fort 2011). The final evaluation report published shortly after the galleries opened emphasised the importance of visitors 'agreeing' with the key messages of those parts that were produced via community engagement (Fort 2013: 7). This does not suggest that these concerns were addressed. There was little space allowed for dissonance which would allow for a critical dialogue between museum and visitor to be part of the galleries' *raison d'être*.

Nevertheless, comments from the COM survey can be instructive. Firstly, the exhibits regarding the slave trade regularly had an impact on visitors in terms of what they recalled as 'compelling'. The trade ranked fourth most compelling in an open question behind other themes which were provided with significantly more attention,

such as the two World Wars (Fort 2013: 11). Secondly, discussion of how ethnic diversity in the galleries had been recognised overwhelmingly features some reference to the slave trade with comments suggesting non-African migrant groups such as Asians, Irish and Jewish were less included (Fort 2013). Finally, and perhaps most interestingly in the context of an 'interrogative hybrid heritage', COM focus made the point that the galleries did not 'acknowledge there are still problems with cohesion and harmony between different ethnic and cultural groups' (Fort 2013: 19).

With reference to the elements of early VC heritage which stood out in visitors' minds, it is clear that the connection to the slave trade is dominant. This is for obvious reasons: the slave trade is expected to be discussed more openly at heritage places in the UK, especially those which represent a place with a well-documented link to the trade, of which Birmingham is an example. The increased interest in the topic, in particular following the 2007 bicentenary (see Chapter Eight), has meant a greater amount of source material which can and has been used to develop this narrative. It is perhaps inevitable then that early VC heritage is presented within this context.

The point to be made is that affixing the early VC experience in Birmingham almost exclusively to the enslavement and forced transportation of Africans can leave BMAG open to the accusation of not addressing the perhaps more complex relationship between Birmingham and VCs in other pre-Second World War contexts; colonial, for example. There is plenty of evidence of a VC presence in Birmingham during the major empire building years of the nineteenth century demonstrating that Birmingham has seen many non-white personalities not involved in the slave trade who could help to tell of other contributions to the city's past (Grosvenor *et al.* 2002;

Tait 2004; Callaghan 2011). Criticism was made of an over-reliance on the slavery narrative in presenting early VC heritages in mainstream contexts by Clara Arokiasamy, when speaking as the keynote speaker at the 2009 Museums Association conference (Arokiasamy 2009). With such comments coming at a high profile event such as this museums have been warned that relying on narratives they produced during the bicentenary should not be where their attempts to entwine VC heritage with England's heritage end.

Curation of an ambitious project such as these galleries with a finite amount of space, time and resources is an exercise in compromise and correspondingly, dissonance - despite the wishes of the museum - occurs. The data relating to whose histories were missing are testament to this. This is also supported by the fact that, despite the RES survey being largely representative of a 'normal' sample of visitors to the BMAG galleries, one third of the respondents felt that the galleries did not represent them.

The reality is that these galleries do more to change the historical image of Birmingham in terms of who has contributed to it than has ever been seen in the museums and other heritage sites of the city; perhaps with the exception of the National Trust's Back to Backs site which follows a similar theme of migration as a fundamental element of Birmingham's past.³⁴ The presence of historical ethnic diversity is arguably as creative and successful as at Liverpool and Bristol's museums, which have more material to work with as port cities that have seen the presence and labour of significant and numerous transient and permanent migrant communities for centuries (see Costello 2000; Dresser 2009).³⁵ As an exercise in changing perceptions of Birmingham's past, these efforts should not be unnoticed. Migration and, by association, diversity, has been shown to have been well

recognised throughout the galleries and, in this way, they could arguably be recognised as presenting an interrogative hybrid heritage: Birmingham's presented past has been reimagined.

Social inclusion through diversification has indeed been considered throughout the process of developing these galleries, from the community consultations, to research and narrative interpretation. Recall the three elements of cultural inclusion that Sandell argued museums considered within their reach: representation of a diverse cultural heritage in the mainstream arena, ability to participate in one's own representation and access to cultural services – which itself could form an aspect of the preceding elements. The galleries have been shown to represent a diverse cultural heritage and do so in a *permanent* setting. Community participation has dominated the development of these galleries and is present within the final product (Fort 2011; Fort 2012; Fort 2013). The presence of these two factors has made these galleries, in theory, - although there is still a disproportionately low number of VCs attending according to the DEM survey (Vector 2013) - more accessible to a diverse audience. The core narrative of Birmingham's past has indeed been affected by these galleries in the sense that the core/margins binary is no longer so obvious.

What is evident though is that history and heritage that take place in a traditional museum context are inextricably bound to the AHD. Narrative, told through the curatorial voice, is expected and even needed by the museum visitor in England. If we are not to do-away with these types of museums reimagining heritage as diverse within this space needs to maintain this voice to lend authority to the 'new' heritages that are created. Once ethnically diverse presentations of heritage have become accepted so that diversity is preconceived – likely far into the future –

experimentation regarding the removal of the curatorial voice might be more successful.

The final question to be addressed here that has posed itself through this case study is: what does an early VC heritage narrative have to look like in order for it to become part of 'the heritage'? The evidence here suggests that the price of admittance for early VC heritages is almost exclusively set as the narrative of the transatlantic slave trade. The possible consequences of this will be debated in Chapter Nine. Before that however, this conversation will move to a more in-depth look at how and why the slave trade has come to dominate the narrative of early VC heritage in England.

**PART 4 – CHALLENGING THE HERITAGE OF
A ‘WHITE PAST/MULTICULTURAL PRESENT’**

Chapter 8: The Invested Heritage

The 2007 bicentenary of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade

8.1 Introduction

As highlighted elsewhere in this thesis, the bicentenary represented an event that significantly increased the presence of VCs at mainstream heritage sites; as staff, in narratives, and as visitors. The visibility of the commemoration was so great that the slave trade was made a compulsory part of the national school curriculum following the events of 2007 (Smith, L. 2010). The *1807 Commemorated* project (see below) recorded more than 180 individual presentations relating to the event at heritage places across the UK (Wilson 2010). As an example of the effect of this event on the act of interpreting heritage, in the two financial years from 2006-2008, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) provided grants for 246 projects totalling over £9.3 million relating to slavery and described as 'led by or benefitting BAME communities' (see Appendix F). This represented almost a third of all funds allocated to VC heritage projects by the HLF in this period and more than a third of the total number of VC projects. In short, slavery was by far the most often used narrative of VC heritage during this period and contributed significantly to raising the profile of early VC heritage in England. Before 2007, only Liverpool Maritime Museum and the Wilberforce Museum in Hull had permanent interpretation of the slave trade narrative (Gwyn 2012). The question for this chapter is, how was this narrative interpreted and

what did it *do*? As this research is concerned with how ‘the heritage’ of the period before 1948 has been reimagined as more ethnically diverse, this chapter will focus on the bicentenary as it occurred in the mainstream heritage places that authorise the national narrative/s.

8.2.1 Bicentenary exhibitions from the inside: 1807 Commemorated

The purpose here is to consider the impact of bicentenary exhibitions from the point of view of those who made and delivered them at mainstream heritage institutions.

This section references interviews conducted by an academic research project that investigated the bicentenary commemorations in Britain entitled *1807*

Commemorated.³⁶ This project comprised three phases: the first looking at media representations of the bicentenary; the second analysing related museum and art displays; the third analysing audience responses to particular bicentenary exhibitions located at major museums, all in England. Interviews carried out with those involved in producing these exhibitions can give an idea of how heritage professionals saw the bicentenary impacting on their present and future work, and the narratives they might interpret.

Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery (BMAG), which is the subject of the case study in the previous chapter, partnered with the Equiano Society³⁷ in order to develop an exhibition detailing Olaudah Equiano’s life and specifically his contribution to the abolition campaign in Britain during the late eighteenth century. The Head of Museums and Heritage Services at BMAG, Rita McLean, saw the bicentenary as an opportunity to ‘focus on creating more diverse interpretations of Birmingham’s and indeed the UK’s history’ and the telling of Equiano’s story as

contributing 'to a bigger picture of reinterpreting Britain's history and heritage' (Cubitt 2007a). McLean stressed the importance of not losing the knowledge created during the bicentenary throughout the country and stated that BMAG were considering how to integrate their Equiano exhibition into their permanent displays (Cubitt 2007a). Indeed, Equiano's story has been included in BMAG's recently opened local history galleries.

The British Museum (BM) in London developed an exhibition called *Inhuman Traffic* as its contribution to the bicentenary. This exhibition looked at the impact of the slave trade on people and cultures in the nations and regions involved, as well as the economic impact of the trade in Britain (Weinstein 2007). The curator stated that the legacy of this exhibition internally was that they had identified many objects that she would like to see embedded in the permanent galleries 'so it's part of the story we are telling' and they had been able to use this work to build trust with different communities (Weinstein 2007). The onus was now on the museum, according to the curator, 'to keep going and to keep showing the commitment to the communities we engage with' (Weinstein 2007). A Community Partnerships Team (CPT) had been established at the museum concomitant to the development of the bicentenary related work and its mission reflects this message of 'trust'. This was recorded by a member of staff at the BM:

The overall objective for us is to make sure that all of our local audiences in all of their diversity have the opportunity to come and visit and have the best experience of the British Museum. The long-term aim is that through stepping stones and supporting frameworks – and I don't mean that in a patronising

way – people essentially, museum visiting in its broadest sense and cultural access become part of their, and their families’ cultural repertoire I suppose. That obviously opens up opportunities and it is a fundamental human right to be able to access your culture (INTERVIEWEE [8]: BM, 16 Apr 2013).

The CPT is dedicated to building relationships with local communities based around the objects in the BM’s collections as part of a holistic strategy to ensure that social justice is part of how the museum operates. The endurance of this team since 2006, especially when budgets have been squeezed since the 2010 Comprehensive Spending Review (BM 2011), would seem to support an argument for the museum’s ongoing commitment to community engagement.

Another project delivered for the bicentenary was entitled *London, Sugar and Slavery* and took place at the Museum of London Docklands (MLD). This museum is placed in one of the most ethnically diverse local authorities in England (CIS 2012). During his interview with researchers from *1807 Commemorated* one of the curators of this exhibition saw the bicentenary as an opportunity to tie the history of the museum’s building to the trade, since it was initially built by the London Committee of West Indian Merchants and Planters to house produce imported from slave plantations (Cubitt 2007b). Working in consultation with ‘community representatives’ and ‘experts’ from outside the museum, the curator describes how this helped the exhibition to abandon neutrality and to be explicit in the politics of the slavery narrative being presented (Cubitt 2007b). The exhibition was to be a long-term addition to the museum and was created with the help of additional funding from *Renaissance in the Regions* (£230,000)³⁸ and the HLF (£506, 500).³⁹ The Director of

the museum stated that developing this exhibition had highlighted to him that 'museum institutions are not organised in their structures, academic, curatorial structures, to be able to allow other narratives to be heard in the institution' (Smith and Weinstein 2007). The point here was that it was only through working with outside partners that 'alternative' narratives to those previously authorised were able to be recognised and interpreted. Declaring his intention to continue to explore more diverse narratives the Director stated that this was the only way 'if we wanted the people who live round here to come to the museum and have any sense of veracity in the stories they're hearing' (Smith and Weinstein 2007).

The final project that will be referenced here is the *Wilberforce Project*. This took place at Wilberforce House Museum in Hull, former home of the abolition campaigner and MP William Wilberforce (for biography of Wilberforce see Wolffe 2009). Since Wilberforce is arguably most famous due to his campaigning for abolition, the transatlantic slave trade was already a prominent feature of the museum's narrative interpretation. Following a series of surveys and a community consultation in the lead up to the project, it was decided that the museum could broaden the discussion of slavery to represent different cultures (Weinstein and Fouseki 2007). The *Wilberforce Project* built into the museum a gallery conveying the many cultures of West Africa. In addition, the existing slave trade galleries were re-developed and a new gallery was added that discusses the endurance of slavery in the contemporary world. As part of the project the museum collected and displayed objects donated by the diverse communities of Hull (Weinstein and Cubitt 2007).

What these interviews demonstrate is the central role that external collaboration played in developing the narrative interpretation to commemorate the

bicentenary. Also of note, in three of these four projects, the bicentenary exhibition has either formed a long-term addition to the museum, or, as in the case of BMAG, has been subsequently reinterpreted within a local history narrative (Chapter Seven; HCC 2015; MLD 2015). Only at the BM has the discussion of slavery and more broadly, early VC presences in England, not survived beyond the 2007 commemoration (Bowring 2012). The heritage professionals interviewed by *1807 Commemorated* regarding the bicentenary have spoken of positive and lasting experiences that have had the legacy of reimagining the narratives they present at their heritage places.

8.2.2 Bicentenary exhibitions from the inside: English Heritage

Since the *1807 Commemorated* project focused on the bicentenary in museums, this section will consider how the bicentenary infiltrated CBH by a review of the related activities carried out by English Heritage (EH).

In 2006, EH employed a Head of Social Inclusion and Diversity (HSID) who had previously been working for the National Archives. Having been working on plans to commemorate the bicentenary in her previous role, the HSID began to do the same at EH with the support of a newly appointed board champion for diversity. This culminated in the creation of a working group to consider how EH could contribute to the bicentenary (INTERVIEWEE [1]: EH, 30 Oct 2012). A decision was made to hold an exhibition at Kenwood House in London, former home of Lord Chief Justice Mansfield and his great-niece, Dido Elizabeth Belle, during the late eighteenth century. As detailed in material relating to her story on EH's website:

Dido was the illegitimate daughter of Lord Mansfield's nephew, Sir John Lindsay, a British Navy captain, and a woman (of whom it has been previously suggested, was enslaved) whom Sir John encountered while his ship was in the Caribbean.

She was sent to England by Lindsay, and from the 1760s, Dido was brought up the aristocratic surroundings of Kenwood House by the childless Lord and Lady Mansfield, along with her cousin, Lady Elizabeth Murray, whose mother had died.⁴⁰

In addition to Dido's obvious connection to the transatlantic slave trade, her story was enhanced further by the fact that Lord Mansfield presided over arguably the most famous legal judgement on the issue of slavery in England in 1772. He decided in the Somerset case that it was illegal for any person to be forcibly returned from England to slavery in the colonies (Paley 2002). This is an important legal and political moment in England, but also Britain and its colonies, and represents the changing tide of attitudes towards slavery. EH were able to obtain on loan a painting of Dido alongside her cousin from the collection of the Earl of Mansfield, a rare example of non-white residents of England at this time being portrayed as independent of a 'master' (Dabydeen 1981).

The on-site interpretation of these narratives was supported by an online exhibition called *Sites of Memory* which has subsequently discussed other themes connected with the slave trade: abolitionists, the VC presence in England during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and the wealth derived from slavery. This project also marked the beginning of a larger piece of work to look at the links between slavery and EH's portfolio of places:

The working group was the start of seeing how properties in the EH portfolio were linked to the transatlantic slave trade as it was clear from initial discussions that we did not have sufficient information on the families who owned the properties to interpret this. EH has focused mainly in the past on architectural history not social history of its properties (INTERVIEWEE [1]: EH, 30 Oct 2012).

Accordingly, research was commissioned to explore possible links between slavery and properties managed by EH. This led to more detailed research by academics of four properties which were identified as having significant slavery ties. These reports are published online via the 'Slavery and the British Country House' web page (Brown 2010a; Brown 2010b; Seymour and Haggerty 2010a; Seymour and Haggerty 2010b).⁴¹

In 2009 a conference entitled 'Slavery and the British Country House' was co-organised with the University of the West of England (UWE) and the National Trust (NT) to share these findings and map out the current state of research into the subject with interested parties; predominantly academics, educators and social activists. EH staff gained much learning in terms of research and audience engagement through this conference:

At the conference, I was aware that we had a really diverse audience and it was a very good mixture of ethnicities, academics etc. When we asked for

feedback from the conference we got some positive and slightly negative feedback and that made me be aware that we needed to be more conscious of the sensitivities than maybe we had been. One comment was that all of the ethnic minority speakers had been in one session which had happened by coincidence because they were organised by subject matter. But we need obviously to be careful of not being seen to ghettoize different groups. It made me aware that are we unconsciously not being as even-handed as we should be. I think that is something we need to be conscious of in our interpretation as well. I don't think anyone sets out to be deliberately exclusive or push a biased narrative but are we unconsciously doing so in the way we choose to present sites? (INTERVIEWEE [2]: EH, 5 Mar 2013).

Following this conference, several academics who had presented papers were invited to contribute to a subsequent publication edited by the leader of the historians' team at EH and Professor Madge Dresser of UWE. This was released in 2013 (Dresser and Hann 2013):

We think that it is the first sort of, full-length monograph exploration of the relationship between slavery and the country house that we know of. We haven't come across any other comparative studies... I think it was certainly breaking new ground then with that and obviously the launch of the UCL database⁴² is creating a nice sort of nexus of things coming out (INTERVIEWEE [2]: EH, 5 Mar 2013).

The legacy of the bicentenary at EH then, has been significant. The organisation developed a related on-site and online exhibition, created a network via a conference and published new research on the subject of slavery and the country house in Britain. Two key points should be recognised here that suggest that although this work represented significant progress in terms of making a place for early VC heritage in the national narrative, there were limitations. Firstly, this research is academic ('expert') led. 'Slavery and the British Country House' was at no point envisioned as a project which in itself could be used to include non-'experts' in creating heritage narratives. The conference speakers and those who contributed to the publication were all academics. Subsequently, it has received limited attention from outside academia - although more so recently with media interest in making a link between the American slavery portrayed in the Academy Award winning film *12 Years a Slave* and the British slave trade (Doward 2014). This by itself can arguably be accounted for by the need for the research to be considered credible and authorised in order to enable these 'alternative' heritages of EH places to become 'established'. Regardless of this, the lack of non-'expert' involvement in this project means that even though alternative narratives have been recognised by a mainstream heritage institution, their mode of production remains strictly controlled.

Secondly, as outlined in Chapter Four, EH allocates only a small proportion of its budget to renewing the on-site narrative interpretation of heritage places and so this research will find it difficult to take on tangible form, a form which is essential to being valued as heritage within the AHD:

Usually we invest in two or three sites per year with major projects, and those sites, what tends to happen is we rank our sites in terms of visitor numbers..., and the investment is very much targeted at the top ten sites out of the 400 we own. So, if your site that has strong slavery links is number thirty-seven down on the list the chances are that site might not get any new interpretation for ten years in which case that avenue for disseminating the findings is closed off. Even when we do get new interpretation on a site, often the decision of what sort of project to dream up is driven by visitor research and what they want to know about the site. If the links between slavery and the country house is not one of the things that come up in the tick boxes of what they say is interesting or they want to know about then they might not get the priority of investment (INTERVIEWEE [2]: EH, 5 Mar 2013).

If choices over interpretation are influenced by *visitor* research i.e. people who already visit EH places, then views are only being collected from those who already identify with the existing authorised narratives. As in the case of the NT and its 'Going Local' strategy, this restricts the possibility that different narratives will be authorised because they are restricting the pool of people who are engaged in such decisions. It is only considering the assertions of a select few in terms of what people 'want to know'. What this suggests is that narratives that existing visitors are not comfortable with will not be interpreted. The possible consequences of this are discussed in the following section.

At EH then, the bicentenary had a significant knock-on effect which has led to the research and dissemination (at least online and through a publication) of early

VC narratives connected to some of its places. Internally, members of staff involved in the project have continued to see the importance of such work for increasing the diversity of their audiences. Before 2006 EH was uninformed about how it could provide a more diverse story at its properties since the necessary research was less widely available. The work around the bicentenary has had the result of showing employees of EH and its partners what can be done and what resources EH has to bring about change in diversifying heritage narratives (INTERVIEWEE [1]: EH, 30 Oct 2012). The understanding of the need for change is reflected in comments made by a member of staff at EH who has played a significant role in developing these narratives:

...it is very easy to see why, if someone thinks a site is not talking to them, why would they want to visit that site? (INTERVIEWEE [2]: EH, 5 Mar 2013).

‘Slavery and the British Country House’ is an example of how the discourse of inclusion and participation that developed at EH (Chapter Four) was translated into practice. The reported lack of a coherent approach to diversifying its heritage product prior to the bicentenary supports the findings of Chapter Four that rhetoric around a more inclusive heritage had not found an appropriate narrative vehicle before this point.

8.3 Bicentenary exhibitions from the outside

Having considered the development and legacy of bicentenary exhibitions from the point of view of the heritage professionals who delivered them, this can be compared with the reaction from academics.

Bressey (2009: 386) is cautious in her assessment of the bicentenary commemorations, arguing that many heritage places ignored the event and a significant number who did take part focused on the 'great white leaders' of abolition, such as William Wilberforce, ignoring the agency of the enslaved in their own emancipation (see also Ligali 2005; Adi 2008). Elsewhere, Bressey (2012) does suggest that DCMS's success in raising the number of VCs who visited the 'historic environment' by more than three per cent between 2005 and 2008 could be credited to events connected to the bicentenary. If this is the case, she argues, then there should be acknowledgement that 'inclusion of difficult histories in heritage sites will lead to more diverse audiences' (Bressey 2012: 102). As stated in Chapter Four however, the actual reasons behind this increase are unknown.

Keith (2012) has lamented the lack of a long-term impact on narrative content, particularly in museums, a position challenged by those working inside museums discussed above and the case study of Chapter Seven. Arguably less contested is Keith's argument that ethnic minority staff hired by museums to help with bicentenary activities were not retained, without whom 'there can be no systematic change in the museum's narrative of ability to increase accessibility to museum collections' (Keith 2012: 52). The issue of losing staff with the skills to carry out diversity work due to its temporary nature was recognised in Chapter Six, as well as in interviews with other

museum professionals (INTERVIEWEE [9]: London Transport Museum, 16 Apr 2013).

Waterton (2010b) is critical of the use of abolition through which to commemorate the enslavement of Africans since it celebrates benevolence rather than recognises injustice (see also Wilson 2010). 'Paradoxically', she argues, 'while there is a strongly-held view that one cannot feel guilty about those things you did not commit, there is no such injunction against feeling pride in a temporally distant group's achievements' (Waterton 2010b: 133). Waterton (2010b: 138) argues that a more useful approach to this 'heroic nation' would have been to assert the agency of the enslaved and consequently, issues of 'racism, oppression, brutality and depravity.' For Waterton then, the politics of nationhood that permeated the bicentenary undermined its potential to challenge the AHD.

Wilson (2010: 169) described the museum response to the bicentenary as 'immense'. Although he agrees with Waterton that the abolitionist lens failed to conduct 'an assessment of the responsibility or repercussions of Britain's role in enslavement', he does point out that there were 'numerous' instances of 'institutions providing alternative histories which challenged the dominance of the abolitionist vision' (Wilson 2010: 170, 173). Wilson (2010) is critical however, of the overall homogeneity of exhibitions that responded to the bicentenary, with the same or similar themes being replicated at heritage places throughout the country.

Arokiasamy, drawing on the work of Littler and Naidoo (2007 [2004]), has made the point when addressing the Museums Association conference in 2009 that this lack of imagination about what VC heritage can be has continued beyond the bicentenary:

...poor representation in some cases, or the total lack of a challenging black presence in other situations, has resulted in programming, focusing largely on familiar and popular topics like language, dance, religious festivals, hair dressing and fashion, black history month, post war migration and slavery. These have usually been constrained by short term funding and or staged as one-off events thus rendering them unsustainable. Despite the repeated use of these topics the interpretations remain unimaginative, sometimes factually inaccurate, lacking in depth, and above all “safe”, in the sense that they pose little or no threat to the professionals’ and the institutions’ comfort zones (Arokiasamy 2009b: 6).

Wilson (2010: 175) also addresses the prominence of community consultations in bicentenary events which has been noted in the interviews above. The results of these consultations, he argues, could come in three forms: ‘counterbalance’: interpretation based on community consultation was placed alongside pre-existing displays; ‘validate’: where sections from communities ‘supplemented’ permanent displays; ‘pluralist’: which places ‘alternative histories at the core of the exhibition’ so that dominant perceptions are refuted. Wilson points out that the latter approach was rarely seen since to work in this way would be to challenge the AHD and the privileged position of the ‘expert’ in heritage creation. Wilson (2010: 175-176) continues that the advice from the HLF that community groups and heritage institutions work together in creating bicentenary events actually acted as a facilitator for the AHD in this context since this advice was given on the

basis that community groups needed the 'knowledge and proficiency' of heritage institutions in order to secure funding. In other words, by being included in mainstream bicentenary commemorations this prevented community groups from developing their own interpretations of abolition and slavery. Wilson's suggestion is that even though non-'expert' community groups became part of the decision making process in events relating to the bicentenary, in the end, they had to defer to the 'expert' who also held the advantage of operating on home soil.

Laurajane Smith (2010) detailed her findings from 1,498 interviews conducted with visitors to eight museum exhibitions marking the bicentenary, specifically the responses to the exhibitions of people who self-identified as white-British. Like Waterton, Smith (2010: 194-195) picks up on the 'comforting reassertion of British moral identity' that the abolition commemoration provided for white-British visitors to exhibitions but argues that the museum sector largely 'attempted to challenge the celebratory narrative.' That museums struggled to do this, she argues, was less down to their approach during the bicentenary and more due to the lack of tradition in British heritage narratives of dealing with the dissonance and complexity of the bicentenary displays. The result was that white-British people disengaged themselves from the displays and very few considered that the narratives represented British or English history (Smith, L. 2010). Smith lays the blame for this inability to engage with dissonance at the feet of the AHD: 'if heritage is not "good", grand or monumental, it is not heritage within the AHD. Thus such areas of history do not need to be considered in terms of heritage or inheritance' (Smith, L. 2010: 207). For Smith, these findings illustrate that despite the heritage sector developing a discourse of social inclusion that emphasised the importance of diversity over the course of a decade, by 2007 there had been 'a palpable failure to promote an

inclusive sense of citizenship'. However, she reflects that given time, the resources allocated to the bicentenary may be able to affect the relationship between the heritage and diversity (Smith, L. 2010: 209). Further removed from the event, this research can respond to this reflection and this will be picked up in Chapter Nine.

Finally, Cubitt (2010: 143) has considered the way in which bicentenary exhibitions discussed the subject of 'resistance or rebellion by the enslaved.' He argues that although this theme was often present in the exhibitions, it was regularly 'limited in character' and 'not always woven into the larger narratives of the exhibition.' He does however, note some exceptions to this, predominantly found in institutions with significant resources. The most challenging of these from the point of view of the visitor and the museum he labels 'gestural' in their presentational emphasis. 'Gestural' displays are designed 'not simply to challenge pre-existing perceptions or assumptions (or perhaps to re-affirm ones that are perceived to be under challenge), but to draw attention to the fact of this challenging or re-affirming, and to draw out its significance' (Cubitt 2010: 149). Such presentations were few and like Smith, Cubitt points out the difficulty people had in identifying with exhibitions that challenged a previously orthodox history and to recognise the politics incumbent in any presented past (Cubitt 2010). Nevertheless, the argument that bicentenary exhibitions have, in some cases, created a space for debate on how this might be done could be viewed as a contribution to changing the way in which museums engage in dialogue, not only with regards to the content of their narratives, but also their authority to present those narratives.

8.4 The legacy of the bicentenary on the presented past

Table 8.1 shows the total spend and number of projects funded by the HLF for VC heritage between 1995 and 2012:

Financial Year	Total number of projects	Total value (£)
1995-96	3	260,250
1996-97	2	473,700
1997-98	4	480,300
1998-99	12	662,150
1999-00	48	1,339,788
2000-01	77	1,348,485
2001-02	136	4,269,669
2002-03	207	3,669,522
2003-04	278	5,999,103
2004-05	313	9,999,137
2005-06	305	14,986,157
2006-07	340	13,888,191
2007-08	375	17,607,544
2008-09	190	18,467,464
2009-10	138	10,523,503
2010-11	126	6,447,300
2011-12	150	16,963,400
Grand Total	2,704	127,385,663

Table 8.1: Number and value of HLF awards for projects ‘led by and benefitting’ BAME communities by financial year.

Source: *The Heritage Lottery Fund*

Even taking into account inflation there is no doubt that there has been a steady and substantial increase in funding for VC heritage projects over this period as Figure 8.1 demonstrates:

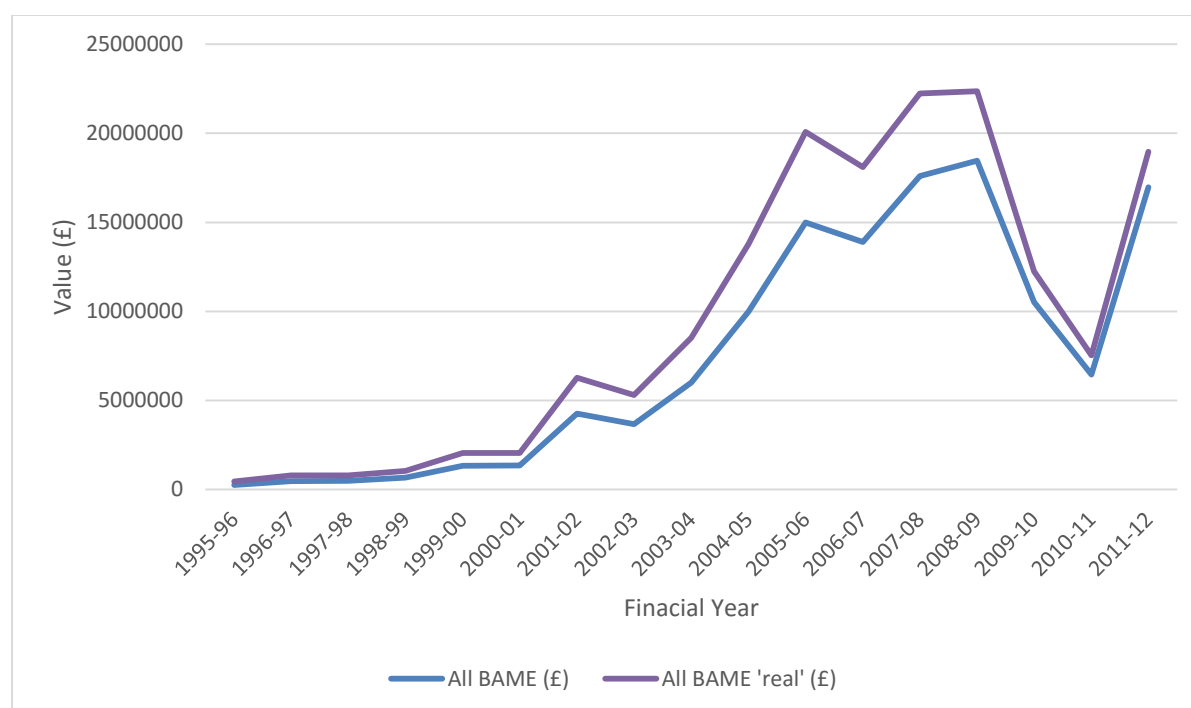


Figure 8.1: Comparison of 'actual' and 'real' terms HLF grants for BAME heritage projects using Retail Price Index.

Source: <http://www.thisismoney.co.uk/money/bills/article-1633409/Historic-inflation-calculator-value-money-changed-1900.html>

One significant sustained growth period can be identified running from 2002/03-2005/06 which reflects the growing influence of social exclusion policy at the HLF at this time (see Chapter Four). The years 2005/06-2011/12 represent something of a plateau in grants with the lull of 2009-2011 attributable to the cut in the HLF's budget

to pay for the London 2012 Olympics (HLF 2009). The particularly interesting figures for this chapter relate to 2008/09 and 2011/12. In these years the monetary grants for VC heritage are commensurate with bicentenary levels (2006/07-2007/08), but have been awarded to far fewer projects. This suggests that post-bicentenary, much larger-scale projects relating to VC heritage were being supported. Table 8.2 provides data for projects funded by the HLF defined as 'led by BAME groups' over the same period, i.e. this does not include projects specified as 'BAME benefitting' (see Appendix F for further explanation):

Financial year	Total number of projects	Total value (£)
1995-96	3	260,250
1996-97	2	473,700
1997-98	3	438,300
1998-99	5	337,550
1999-00	37	659,323
2000-01	59	538,095
2001-02	99	2,432,038
2002-03	157	2,033,817
2003-04	174	3,178,035
2004-05	218	2,834,492
2005-06	197	8,103,367
2006-07	180	6,187,301
2007-08	199	7,157,474
2008-09	82	3,682,312
2009-10	62	3,856,703
2010-11	72	2,906,700
2011-12	88	3,757,900
Grand Total	1,637	48,837,357

Table 8.2: Number and value of awards for HLF projects ‘led by’ BAME groups by financial year

Source: *Heritage Lottery Fund*

In the two aforementioned key years (2008-09 and 2011-12), just 20 per cent of the HLF’s grants went to ‘BAME led’ only projects, but this accounted for 50 per cent of

all BAME heritage projects. The means that 'BAME benefitting', most likely to be run by mainstream heritage institutions that have few employees from VCs in curatorial or strategic positions (CBA 2012), accounted for 80 per cent of HLF grants paying for the same number of projects as 'BAME led'. This means that, post-bicentenary, non-'BAME led' organisations were requesting - and winning - grants for major projects relating to VC heritage. Although the HLF is by no means the only funder of heritage projects in the UK, as the major national heritage grant provider, this fact can claim some authority as 'representative' of a trend in the heritage sector. This trend is that major heritage organisations were seeking large grants specifically related to VC heritage and engagement. This seems to support the commentary from within the heritage sector above that pointed to increased confidence in presenting more diverse narratives at heritage places due to their activities around the bicentenary, and to engage with more diverse communities in order to do so.

8.5 Conclusion

This chapter has shown that the heritage sector, to a significant degree, embraced the bicentenary commemorations as a way to develop alternative, ethnically diverse narratives for their heritage places. The interviews detailed here with the leaders of these exhibitions talked of the importance of collaboration with people outside their institutions in developing these narratives and were generally positive about how these collaborations had influenced the exhibitions, and the way in which the heritage places themselves would operate in the future more generally. The ongoing approval of grants from the HLF to mainstream heritage organisations for VC heritage projects since the bicentenary suggests that these organisations have

recognised the role they have to play in representing diversity, both internally and through the narratives they interpret.

Unsurprisingly, the academic commentary consulted is less enthusiastic suggesting, for example, a paternalistic approach to the commemoration on the part of heritage institutions (Wilson 2010) echoing the comments made in the report of the museum sector's relationship with local communities *Whose Cake is it Anyway?* (see Chapter Five). Others discussed the lack of resources directed towards presenting the role enslaved Africans themselves played in bringing about the abolition of the trade (Bressey 2009; Cubitt 2010; Wilson 2010) as well as criticising the use of abolition as the 'lens' through which to tell the slavery narrative (Waterton 2010; Wilson 2010). It would be harsh to go too far with this last criticism however, since it was not the decision of these individual heritage institutions to have abolition as the theme for commemoration and indeed many were argued to have challenged its 'celebratory' narrative (Smith 2010; Cubitt 2010).

The key success of the bicentenary commemorations cannot then be considered to be challenging the AHD, although a few examples of this have been noted in the commentary. Instead, the success was in creating an environment where 'experts' were provided with the political and financial resources to experiment with how they made heritage and for whom. The legacy of this can be seen in the way in which BMAG approached their local history galleries from 2009 (Chapter Seven) which used the slavery narrative they produced for the bicentenary but in a way which considered the trade as more than a story of abolition. The centrality of working with people from outside the museum to the way the bicentenary was commemorated has also been continued beyond the event, again demonstrated in Chapter Seven. The bicentenary then, was a 'game changer', but not in the

immediate sense that some may have hoped. Curators created exhibitions that could cause dissonance; BMAG interpreting the narrative of Birmingham's role in the slave trade, for instance, but still covet 'agreement' with what they have done (Chapter Seven). Permanent galleries including early VC heritages have also appeared as a direct result of the bicentenary; narrative interpretations of England's heritage have been changed. What the bicentenary has not been able to do is challenge the idea of the authorised heritage. The transatlantic slave trade has become the authorised narrative of early VC presences and other narratives - for instance colonialism, the role of VCs in Britain's global conflicts (see Visram 1986; Hall 2002; Winder 2005 - are not being told. There are exceptions to this rule - MLD does include narrative interpretation of early VC presences in London during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries - but these are rare (MLD undated). The suggestion is that the bicentenary has not created an environment in which challenging what heritage *is* in England is an everyday part of heritage making. It would seem that the heritage sector is waiting for another national commemoration for the next chance to do so:

With these big anniversaries - the national imagination seems to be pricked at the moment by them – because you get huge splashes on the media, national interest and the government throw money at it as well. We obviously need to be seen as a key government institution really feeding into that. We know that these anniversaries are coming up so several years beforehand we convene together and talk about how we want to mark it. That is where..., [the HSID] will get on the case and say is there a diversity angle to this you should be focusing on? It would be quite easy for WWI to pass us by without the issue of diversity being discussed if someone doesn't encourage it. It is a case of what

sites can we link these diverse stories to best, and how we want to mark those with the budgets we have and decisions that have been made (INTERVIEWEE [2]: EH, 5 Mar 2013).

...it is important to show ourselves as willing and able to use their resources to add to public knowledge at times of commemoration, e.g. the bicentenary and the upcoming First World War centenary. Through such involvement, we can work with a more diverse set of groups and demonstrate their role in English history as relevant to a wide range of people (INTERVIEWEE [1]: EH, 30 Oct 2012).

The HLF have a dedicated grant scheme for projects that mark the commemoration of the First World War. At the end of 2014 the West Midlands region had made grants to six projects that considered VC engagement totalling a little over £180,000. It is still early in the commemoration but the number of applications for grants considering VCs has been lower than expected.⁴³ Having reviewed a great deal of policy and practice that has discussed the nature of heritage making in England, and its relationship with social inclusion and ethnic diversity, the following chapter can now discuss where that leaves the national story in 2015. As noted above, in 2010, Smith argued that although the bicentenary had little impact on heritage making and attitudes to heritage in England, this was not to say that it would not have an impact in the future. This chapter has suggested that Smith was right to be cautious in her assessment. Five years on, 'the heritage' of England is still feeling the waves of 2007. What this might mean for its present and future is where we move to next.

Chapter 9: The Democratic Heritage

Discussion

9.1 Introduction

This chapter will draw together the themes of the previous chapters in order to demonstrate how they contribute towards answering the central research question. These themes can be summarised as:

- How the heritage sector responded to New Labour's directive to 'include' the 'excluded' in society.
- The heritage sector's reaction to demographic change in England in relation to VCs.
- The role of the museum in presenting an ethnically diverse heritage as something more than a late-twentieth century phenomenon.
- The role of the National Trust (NT) in the same process.
- The significance of the bicentenary of the abolition of the slave trade in instilling the mainstream heritage sector with the confidence to produce narrative interpretations of early VC heritage.

The research question being asked is the extent to which narrative interpretation, in 2015, has become an integral element of *doing* diversity in heritage and what impact this has had on 'the heritage' of England? In other words, have early VC heritages

become part of England's heritage and indeed, is this even how a diverse heritage is imagined by those who are empowered to value the past as heritage? Before attempting to answer this question, first must be considered the different ways in which multi-vocal heritages might be conceived and what consequences this might have in order to place the research findings within their theoretical context.

9.2.1 Establishing a point of departure

As has been seen from previous work researching the link between heritage and social exclusion experienced by VCs in England:

...evidence did not support claims of exclusion from CBH. Nor was an impression that CBH represented a hegemonic, ethnocentric conservation philosophy witnessed in the findings. Contrary to prevailing belief, in this instance lack of personal socio-psychological (felt-experiential) attachment did not equate to a sense of exclusion or cultural debarment from CBH (Shore 2006: 275).

For Shore, writing in the middle of the last decade, people were just as likely to self-exclude themselves from the CBH as a way of confirming a contested identity than be excluded based on the grounds of cultural diversity (Shore 2006).

Shore's findings indicate that there was no widespread feeling of alienation from England's heritage from VC groups identified as 'excluded' by the New Labour

government. This chapter will initially argue that this assertion, while perhaps true at the time, is no longer so. The reason has everything to do with timing. The timing of Shore's work has been identified within this research as representing a period where, despite much rhetoric declaring VCs were not included in 'the heritage' of England both in terms of participation (as employees, volunteers and visitors) and narrative representation, very little actually happened to change this. 2006 onwards was a defining period which incorporated:

- The *Taking Part* survey providing the first nationwide data regarding reasons why people did, or did not, engage with heritage.
- The analysis of new data relating to reasons for non-participation in heritage by VCs.
- An increase in funding for VC heritage projects from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) linked to the bicentenary of the abolition of the slave trade.
- The widespread participation from mainstream heritage institutions in the commemorations for this bicentenary.
- An acknowledgement of the need to broaden audiences to raise the Public Value of heritage across the sector, but in particular from the NT and the HLF.
- A number of heritage sector conferences discussing the matter of a diverse heritage such as 'Your Place or Mine?', 'Capturing the Public Value of Heritage' and 'From the Margins to the Core?'.
- A major project in the Mayor's Commission on African and Asian Heritage (MCAAH) dedicated to raising the profile of African and Asian people in England's heritage.

Although each of these points is highly variable in what it actually achieved, cumulatively they make up a considerable amount of weight directed towards raising the representation of VCs in England's heritage. Prior to 2006, apart from a few piecemeal projects - as recognised by Shore (2006) - the narrative interpretation of early VC heritages at mainstream heritage institutions had not actually been attempted in any consistent way. Despite the decades of historical research that had placed VCs in England as early as the Roman period, their stories had not been interpreted as part of England's heritage; as part of a heritage site, object or other tangible 'thing's' historic narrative deemed suitable for present and future consumption. It is unsurprising therefore, that the VCs who participated in Shore's work did not see CBH as something to which they could connect as it was not something they had been encouraged or even allowed to connect to. Since Shore's research there has been greater use of historical narratives by heritage managers that suggest that 'the heritage' of England might be ethnically plural and can therefore engage with a plurality of ethnic identities.

This chapter will develop this point further with reference to the research detailed in the previous chapters and other secondary literature and seek to establish what place, in 2015, early VC heritages have - or could have - in 'the heritage' of England, and what form this might take.

9.2.2 A note on terminology.

It has been noted throughout this research that social exclusion policy has been interpreted in different ways over the course of the research period in relation to England's heritage and VCs. It has evolved, invoking discussion of visitation,

participation or engagement, forming a discourse of social inclusion. 'Inclusion', in particular, has been criticised for its ironic tendency to exclude and thus has lost favour (Dewdney *et al.* 2010; Waterton 2010a). In 2015, 'diversity' has come to dominate this discourse, particularly in scholarly analysis. Nightingale and Sandell point out the importance of this:

Diversity policies and practices generally embody measures intended to celebrate, promote respect for, and enhance understanding of difference... Equality and diversity are closely linked; there can be no equality of opportunity if difference is not understood, taken account of, valued and harnessed (Nightingale and Sandell 2012: 3).

In the course of this chapter therefore, a diverse heritage that emphasises *equality* is recognised as the preferred term for what the heritage sector should aspire to. The extent to which diversity has been found to be widely imagined as representing equality within this research, as Nightingale and Sandell insist it must, will be assessed as necessary.

9.3.1 Plural heritage

Anderson (1991) in his seminal work on 'imagined communities' has used the example of newspapers to explain how characters in a story can be introduced to the reader at various points in time. Once introduced, the reader does not imagine that they have disappeared from the face of the planet because the newspaper stops

reporting on them and they are reassured that when they have a further role to play they will reappear. Anderson's analysis suggests that by introducing characters, themes, places, etc., related to VCs at the earliest possible moment in a narrative interpretation, the consumer will appreciate that they are still there, present in the story, even if they are not part of the rest of the interpretation. The point is that heritages of VCs do not have to be ever-present in the narrative interpretation of the 'Nation', told through heritage places, objects or other tangible 'things' in order for audiences to appreciate they fill the same conceptual space; they coexist, crossing each other, and many other heritages, at various points in time and space. If VCs are introduced at the earliest possible moment in the context of the overarching narrative of the 'Nation' they will be considered an ongoing element of that plot. Introducing the presence of VCs at the earliest potential moment of a heritage narrative interpretation that engages with the 'Nation' will allow heritages of VCs to intertwine and become a part of the official or authorised heritage narrative of that 'Nation', in this case England.

An overarching heritage narrative therefore, must be populated by a selection of sub-narratives that link at various points which is where they will be interpreted. What is required is the appreciation by the heritage consumer that within 'the heritage' a plurality of heritages exist and that they are not mutually exclusive. Ashworth *et al.* (2007) have produced the most comprehensive discussion of this possibility.

Firstly, consistent with the arguments of this thesis, they establish ethnicity as *the* primary sense of identification, more so than class and gender, for instance. Other identities are, of course, present, but where ethnicity is engaged through a heritage narrative interpretation this will most often have hegemony over other

identity markers (Ashworth *et al.* 2007). It is for this reason, they argue, that in both policy and academic commentary that conceive societies as being made up of a plurality of identities, ethnicity is most often used as the exemplar of their existence.

Ashworth *et al.* (2007: 79-81) describe Britain as representing a 'Core+' type of plural society. In this model there is an established core identity to which others can be added, but they will not penetrate or fundamentally alter the core. 'Core+' resonates with the review of British multiculturalism at the end of the twentieth century as described in Chapter Four. This relates to the argument made throughout this thesis that heritages of VCs, although produced, have been done so in isolation to mainstream heritage in most instances. Their position as temporary and alternative only serves to ensure that they will not seek to influence the core beyond the extent to which is allowed by those who manage and protect the core. Whereas the margins in this model do not influence the core, the core can influence the margins:

...it [heritage] can be used to promote the values and norms of the core among the peripheral add-ons thus preventing society fragmenting into non-communicating cells. This is the social inclusion role of heritage much in evidence in many recent official cultural policies (Ashworth *et al.* 2007: 81).

As has been seen in Chapter Four, although there was much discussion about altering the national heritage narrative to include VCs during the early 2000s, this did not really happen and instead, the existing heritage was deemed appropriate to

engage with peripheral audiences; they just had to reach out to them in different ways. The 'core' can be translated in this context as the 'established' heritage as claimed to exist by, in particular, English Heritage (EH). Recall the avenues EH pinpointed as key to engaging with new audiences in 2005:

- General Admissions to sites
- Heritage Open Days
- Outreach Projects
- Events

None of these provides a fundamental re-valuation of what 'the heritage' is and rely on an idea that by taking existing values to peripheral audiences this will have the result of increasing their participation. The 'Core+' model is not a dialogue but a dictation.

This approach has been increasingly questioned in recent years and thus emphasises the timeliness of this research. This is illustrated in the discussions from the 2010 conference 'From the Margins to the Core?' reviewed in Chapter Five. At this conference, it was argued, especially in the museum sector, that heritage professionals i.e. 'experts' had to consider how they and their organisations could change in order to engage with more diverse heritages and audiences. Should the periphery gain influence over the content of the core this, according to Ashworth *et al.* (2007), could result in three possibilities: the first was that the core remains but evolves, representing a plurality of cultures but still with one dominant lead. This would look like the many-layered heritage imagined by EH within *Power of Place*

(Figure 4.2). Secondly, cultures remain distinct but equal with no obvious lead culture. Finally, cultures become segregated from one another with only the 'Nation' as a unifying feature. Each of these possibilities will be discussed in more detail.

9.3.2 The 'core' survives

Ashworth *et al.* (2007: 145-146) point to several heritage projects carried out in England since the late 1990s that sought to promote diverse histories to reimagine a diverse heritage with the assumption that 'once established, minority heritages would become part of the mainstream heritage.' The projects run by the NT described in Chapter Six are examples of this approach. The issue raised in these instances was not in the difficulty of heritage managers accepting alternative heritages existed, but being prepared to maintain access to these heritages in the long-term. 'Hidden' histories have been 'found' and they have been interpreted as heritage at mainstream heritage places. However, their lack of, or limited, authorisation beyond the period of inspiration of whatever project or individual produced them, has meant that they remain subordinate to the 'core' heritage. In this scenario, discursively and ideologically they shift from being 'hidden' to being 'overlooked' (Naidoo 2009: 67).

The *Whose Story?* project demonstrated that the NT did not really consider what impact this work might actually have on the narrative interpretation of the sites involved in the long-term. A central reason for this was identified as a disconnection between the property teams and the project team who had different strategic targets that were not necessarily aligned. The message here is that a diverse heritage can only be produced *and* maintained if all of those involved are committed to this eventuality from the start. The organisational structure of the NT, where each

property is generally run as a standalone business with limited board level involvement, means that the buy-in of front-line property staff to the importance of diversity to the organisation, in all its guises, will be the only way in which progress in these terms will be made. Although it was evident that this was not the case at the NT during the last decade, its senior managers have more recently stated that they see diversity as an internal culture issue, believing that changing attitudes to diversity within the organisation will lead naturally to a more diverse audience. Changing the heritage narratives of their sites is not seen as a fundamental aspect of this process.

The NT are not alone in this approach. Senior staff at the British Museum also feel that diversity as a policy should be more about looking inwards than outwards (Orna-Ornstein 2010). This approach seems to ignore the question of why people would want to get involved in governing a product that they don't identify with? It is argued here that narrative interpretation should form an integral element of any diversity strategy if it is to claim an objective of equality. Recall Nightingale and Sandell's argument that 'there can be no equality of opportunity if difference is not understood, taken account of, valued and harnessed.' Looking to diversify governance can harness difference but it cannot value and understand it alone. Heritage narratives are by their nature instructive and informative. As has been shown in Chapter Seven, people expect to be taken through heritage narratives by 'experts', taking in authorised information they can then challenge or supplement through their own experiences. Heritage narratives that present diversity as a normative aspect of England's plural heritage can play an important part in understanding and valuing difference and thus should not be side-lined in diversity policy. This would assure a wider range of people that 'the heritage' is *for* them

(understanding leading to valuing), and thus can be made *by* them (harnessed).

Although this discussion is focussed on VCs, this argument also applies to the other 'under-represented' or 'excluded' groups that have been intermittently engaged with through a social exclusion policy agenda.

Additionally, by not considering changes to narrative interpretation as part of a holistic diversity strategy this could have the result of creating suspicion amongst VC visitors to heritage sites, especially from those communities who have a well-documented past associated with, for instance, the transatlantic slave trade. As work by EH has demonstrated, such information is becoming increasingly available in the public domain (Brown 2010a; Brown 2010b; Seymour and Haggerty 2010a; Seymour and Haggerty 2010b; Dresser and Hann 2013). This heightens the sense of marginalisation if these histories are ignored in the narrative interpretation of the sites to which they relate (Bressey 2012).

During their work in 2007 with local community groups in the Bristol area and the NT, Mitchell and Sobers (2013) found that where there were silences regarding an aspect of history (in the case of this work they were silences relating to NT properties and their relationship with the slave trade) people fill these silences themselves, often with myths which perpetuate feelings of a difficult history being purposefully overlooked. What this suggests is that it is the gaps between things which are most intriguing to people. Porter Abbott (2002: 86-87) has argued that 'Our minds seem to abhor narrative vacuums. We try to fill them in.' Where there are narrative gaps readers, in this case heritage visitors, fill them in from a personal perspective which 'cannot be directly supported by the narrative' (Porter Abbott 2002: 87). This process is known as over-reading and would be a natural response from someone who is aware a narrative exists at a place but that narrative is not

recognised through the 'official' or 'authorised' narrative interpretation. The point here is that narrative interpretation is *the* central element of heritage, whether this is the single authorised interpretation of a heritage place or the unauthorised interpretations that consumers create themselves. The moment of a truly diverse heritage will occur when these accounts are compatible. Since all heritage is contested however, it would make sense that the only way to authorise diversity would be to authorise the contestation of authorised heritages. An interpretation that is diverse and centred on equality places that message at the forefront of heritage valuation. If contestation is going to be a recognised element of heritage making there must be trust between all parties involved. A possible methodology for this is considered in more detail in section 9.5.

The issue raised with focusing on governance as a diversity toolkit is that it doesn't immediately require heritage 'experts' to challenge their own conception of the 'established' heritage. This concept must be challenged from within and the 'experts' who assert it must play an active role in contesting it. In the case of the NT, their 'Going Local' strategy was argued in Chapter Six to perpetuate the survival of the 'core' by making VC engagement an issue only for properties with a local ethnically diverse population. The narratives the NT present at their sites however, are not just local, they are national and international and they risk ignoring this link. This is no more obvious than in the case of early VC histories published by EH looking at the links between country houses and slavery in Britain (Dresser and Hann 2013) and the numerous other studies into early VC presences in England (see Chapter Three). As has been established in the discussion of heritage and the rural in England in Chapter Six, this environment is *the* 'core' of England's heritage and without contesting a rural/white, urban/multicultural set of binaries this 'core'

cannot be challenged. In short, it is argued here that the NT's strategy will perpetuate Littler and Naidoo's 'white past/multicultural present' heritage alignment (2007 [2004]).

The activities of the NT in urban areas have been more effective in challenging this alignment but, as has been noted, the message that England's heritage is ethnically diverse is very much restricted to the city. This argument, of course, could also be made of BMAG's efforts to reimagine the city's past, but they only claim to represent a city, not a nation. 'Going Local' is a corporate strategy which does not supersede the organisation's 'National' brand. BMAG has demonstrated that an entire re-imagination of what a place's heritage *is* can be the most effective way of challenging Littler and Naidoo's binary. By requesting a substantial one-off sum with the intention of building permanent galleries that both involved a diverse group of people and presented a diverse narrative, BMAG has been more successful in eliminating the presence of a dominant 'core'. As the findings in Chapter Seven demonstrate, migration is a constant theme running throughout the galleries so that the narrative of Birmingham has moved away from prioritising a particular ethnic group. This is noted with the caveat however, that early VCs in Birmingham are almost exclusively tied to the narrative of the slave trade, therefore they might not be ethnically defined, but are thematically restricted. It was also noted that VCs not of African heritage were excluded from the galleries until the post-war section.

It would be disingenuous to suggest that the 'Core+' model is not still prevalent in 'the heritage' of England, especially in CBH, but the comments reviewed from the heritage sector have suggested that mainstream heritage organisations are committed to equality over inclusion moving forward. This commitment will take on

different guises with the NT, for instance, more focused on equality through governance than through heritage narratives. Nevertheless, it has been noted that the margins are expected to influence the core, but in a rather lopsided way. Figure 9.1 expresses the bias of a diverse heritage as it has been recognised in this research where although rural heritage is the dominant element of the 'core' it is receiving less attention in regards to diversity policies:

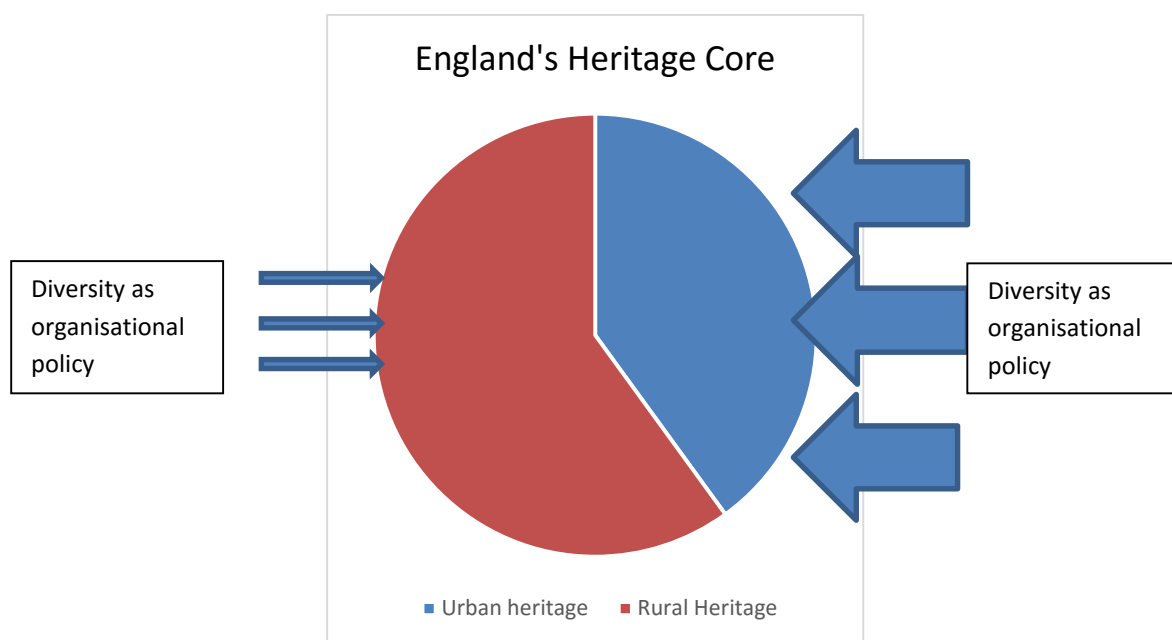


Figure 9.1: The existing sector approach to a diverse heritage in England

All heritage places will be rightfully asked why they remain silent on some histories. It is not imperative that heritage managers present heritage as universal but by sticking to one linear historical narrative they leave themselves open to a charge of omission. It has been suggested here that although internal change is important, this does not change the fact that the NT, EH and national museums,

amongst others, are viewed by some, including themselves, as the keeper of 'the heritage' of the 'Nation' for the future. They select physical elements of the past to protect and assert their value into the public consciousness by adding them to heritage lists or declaring them preserved 'for the Nation'. It is argued here that those who are tasked with producing and authorising the 'official' narratives of these places, objects or other tangible 'things' need to consider heritage as like history, as a perpetual quest to seek a new 'truth'. The narratives that are attached to heritage 'things' therefore, are vital in how visitors view themselves, the local area, the 'Nation', and the nation's relationship with the rest of the world. As has been made clear above, sense of place is central to human identity therefore who is included in these narratives and how they are constructed matters.

9.3.3 The 'Salad Bowl' model

The second impact that diversity policies can have on a 'Core+' model is that it could change more closely to resemble the 'Salad Bowl' model. Here, as in Nightingale and Sandell's assertion, diversity and equality can become synonymous. This model is best recognised as equated to the multi-ethnic Britain imagined by Parekh (2000), as the necessary evolution of the multiculturalism of late twentieth century Britain. This model can be democratic, whereby all groups are invited to contribute their heritages to a collectively imagined national narrative, and desire to do so; or exclusive, where heritages can be conceived not only as something to protect, but as something to exclude others (Ashworth *et al.* 2007. Shore has argued that the latter was occurring in relation to England's CBH in the last decade:

...under cultural diversity, CBH in its personal legitimization can be as meaningful for informing people who they are not as for informing who they are. In either instance the nation provides the frame of reference, the 'whose heritage' question emerging as a means of legitimating and perpetuating one's own historically embedded identity, not as a demand for inclusion in an 'other', shared ownership of the past or greater cultural recognition (Shore 2006: 276).

As has been argued here however, the increasing presence of VC heritages in CBH and the wider heritage sector has encouraged greater expectation of 'cultural recognition' and the growth of funding for VC heritages since Shore's work has acted as an invitation to contribute towards a collective heritage narrative, regardless of the extent to which this has actually occurred.

There is a glaring problem in the foundations of the 'Salad Bowl' model which is how to encourage equality from a basis of a 'Core+' model since this relies on particular groups being told that they are the 'excluded', thus perpetuating a discourse of inferiority to the hegemonic social group. Waterton (2010a: 182) noted this in relation to DCMS's discursive shift from heritage to the 'historic environment', the latter being imagined as being 'inherently inclusive' (see Chapter Four). Changing the name of something alone does not alter what it *is*, or what it *does*. In order to create and maintain an open and equal heritage the 'core' also needs to accept that it must change more than just how it describes itself.

Despite this inherent reliance upon the core volunteering to give up its hegemony in order for it to diversify, Ashworth *et al.* (2007: 206) claim that this model

is 'the most welcoming and accommodating option available' and thus it 'must remain the focus of our aspiration for the pluralisation of heritage.' Indeed, this model, in its democratic form, resonates with Naidoo's description of heritage as a 'cultural democracy' (Naidoo 2009: 66; Naidoo 2010: 79). This is not a new term; for instance, Sitzia (2010) has used it in reference to the growth in interest of community history in Britain during the 1970s. Here it was used to describe the control by community groups of the production and distribution of community history. Cheddie (2012: 270-271) has distinguished between cultural democracy and cultural diversity:

I make a distinction between cultural diversity work – primarily focused on issues of visibility and the representation of individuals and communities of colour – and those concerned with wider issues of social justice and cultural democracy... Equal access, participation and representation within museum and heritage institutions can only be progressed by placing, at the institution's core, a concern with underlying issues of structural inequality and moving away from an exclusive, singular focus on issues of visibility.

In a cultural democracy then, diversity is seen as the norm; all 'diversity strategies' from heritage narrative change to recruitment are not defined by an emphasis on representing the 'under-represented', but used for re-defining the parameters of what the norm is making such emphasis unnecessary and irrelevant. A clear parallel can be drawn with the aims of the HLF to empower a diverse range of communities to produce their own heritages. The point was made in Chapter Four however, that these heritages have largely been unable to infiltrate the national

historical narrative. Where heritage institutions are encouraged to work with community groups to produce diverse heritages by external funders the institution takes the lead role and directs the form of the presentation, as seen within the bicentenary discussion of Chapter Eight (also Watson 2007; Keith 2012). A cultural democracy imagines that each has the same opportunity to influence the negotiation and thus the heritage product.

As argued in their construction of seven key components that must make up any community archaeology project, Moser *et al.* (2002), drawing on the work of Derry (1997), point out that if those for whom a heritage is meant do not feel they are valued in the decision making process then they are unlikely to be interested in the results. Although true, even the labelling of such work as 'community archaeology' positions it as somewhat inferior to the serious (academic) practice of understanding the past (Marshall 2002). These issues are replicated throughout the various activities that involve presenting the past and point to the structural inequalities involved.

Harrison (2008), drawing on the work of Gupta and Ferguson (1997), has argued that the idea of community reinforces differences between a host society - which is community-less - and minority groups that are constantly labelled in this way, with the result that they are separated from the norm and internally homogenised (see also Smith and Waterton 2009a). As Anderson (1991: 6) has observed, it is not the reality of a community which is most important, but 'the style in which they are imagined.' If communities are imagined as static entities and at the same time as containing different qualities to the idea of the authentic 'Nation', they are not going to be considered capable of becoming part of that 'Nation'. Discussing heritages in terms of being made and belonging to a community then, does not place them within

the cultural democracy as imagined by Naidoo and Cheddie that goes beyond their authorised inclusion to an established 'core' and instead reimagines what that 'core' is: diverse. Heritages that are *defined* as for and/or by a VC have not been able to penetrate the AHD of England because they are imagined as for and by a community and thus not for and by the 'Nation'.

At BMAG, approaching the interpretation of Birmingham's past through a migration theme that did not emphasise diversity as something that happened in addition to Birmingham's core narrative past allows this to be considered an exercise towards a cultural democracy. At the NT, on the other hand, there has been a consistent emphasis on the visibility of diversity and how diverse heritage narratives were an *alternative* to how 'the heritage' was imagined on a *normal* visit to a NT place. Only recently purchased urban sites that have been preserved with the express intention of representing a diverse local community, such as Birmingham Back to Backs, present a diverse heritage as part of the place's core identity. The idea of the heritages of 'things' being 'established' has meant that despite the efforts of projects such as *Whose Story?* diverse heritage narratives have, in the main, only been sustained at 'new' heritage places.

A plural heritage that reflects a cultural democracy, with all parts being capable of influencing its content equally, based on this research, is an attainable aspiration but has only very recently really been considered a viable option concomitant with the discursive shift, most visible in the museum sector, from inclusion to equality.

9.3.4 The 'Pillar' model

The 'Pillar' model sees society as a set of pillars which are self-contained but support the superstructure of the nation-state. 'It depends upon the idea of maintaining separation, and minimal contact between groups without privileging any particular group' (Ashworth *et al.* 82-83). None of the policies reviewed in Chapters Four and Five has sought a situation whereby an under-represented group is in charge of its own heritage. This represents an oppositional position to the ideal of New Labour's cross-departmental social exclusion policy agenda. The Con/Lib Dem Coalition government would also not support such a segregationist policy, indeed declaring that minority groups, particularly Muslims, must do more to integrate and embrace 'British values' (Kirkup 2011). Since funding for heritage is largely from the public purse, via the HLF and *Renaissance* for example, the heritages of VCs will likely be envisioned, regardless of the reality, of contributing towards a holistic national culture.

9.3.5 Plural heritage: the future?

This section has engaged significantly with the work of Ashworth *et al.* because the research presented in this thesis has suggested that increasingly the heritage profession has come to terms with the idea that heritage is a process and one which has a number of competing narratives (for instance EH 2008a). Ashworth *et al.*'s in-depth analysis of plural heritage therefore, is best suited to understanding where the heritage sector stands conceptually; the potential for transition from 'Core+' to 'Salad Bowl' describes well the discursive happenings in the heritage sector since 1997. The huge change that must occur for a diverse heritage to be a reality is also reflected by the fact that, in essence, for the 'Salad Bowl' to emerge from the ashes

of the heritage policies and practices of the past fifteen years the 'core' must loosen its grasp on the authority to interpret 'the past'. As Ashworth *et al.* (2007: 208) argue, 'the continuous regeneration of the past in the present demands that places carry more layers of meaning, which enhances the potential for dissonance and conflict and for resistances to authorised discourses.' This is of course reliant on those layers being allowed to interact.

Ashworth *et al.*'s aspirational 'Salad Bowl' model is just that at present but, according to their analysis, it is the most likely progression from the 'Core+' model. The research here has suggested that there is certainly imagined to be 'a heritage' of England, to which others have been allowed to attach themselves. It has also suggested that although the 'Salad Bowl' represents the diverse *and* equal heritage that has grown in popularity in more recent years, there is not yet agreement on how to get there. The biggest stumbling block appears to be that the idea of an 'established' core heritage has to be overcome and reimagined as a series of intertwining heritages that have been valued through a process of negotiation in which power is equally distributed; a cultural democracy.

9.4 The unintentional consequences of the tangible/intangible divide for England's heritage

It is argued here that the dichotomy of heritage as tangible *or* intangible, as set out by UNESCO (Chapter Three), is not helpful for producing a diverse heritage for England. An ICOMOS UK conference in September 2014 entitled, 'Intangible Cultural Heritage in the UK'⁴⁴ asked attendees to encourage the British government to ratify the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible

Cultural Heritage. As an attendee at this conference, speaking to people I noted that for most this was their first experience of being introduced to the concept of intangible heritage. Describing what it could be the speakers covered topics such as poetry, crafts and music. By suggesting that such things were part of this 'new' incarnation of heritage, despite the fact that all take on tangible forms (the book, the craft piece, the sheet music/instrument), emphasised to me the misguidedness of trying to establish such finite categories and the confusion rather than clarity it can often create. Likewise, although the assertion that '*all* heritage is intangible' is certainly more useful (Smith 2006: 3, emphasis added), this does overlook the fact that, in England especially, places, objects and other tangible 'things' *are* fundamental elements of 'the heritage'. As Carman (2009: 206) argues, 'while the value of heritage is always intangible, it is to tangible objects that they attach' (also Harrison and Rose 2010: 269).

At a conference organised in recognition of the fortieth anniversary of the 'Destruction of the Country House' exhibition at the V & A Museum in 2014⁴⁵ (see Adams 2013 for discussion of the original exhibition), these places were not challenged as to their right to carry heritage narratives, but as to what these narratives might be. It is in the relationships that form between narratives, 'things', makers and consumers that heritages in England are made and, perhaps more importantly, sustained.

Throsby (1999) has commented on the relationships between the cultural value of heritage and economic value, which the 'Public Value' discussion in the heritage sector (Chapter Five) has demonstrated to be of inescapable relevance to the survival of a heritage. According to Throsby, tangible heritage can have economic value deriving from its physical existence and this value can be

augmented by its cultural (intangible) value. Like anything of economic value, the price is dependent on what someone is prepared to pay for it and many factors influence this decision. The point is that heritage values are in constant flux and are dependent upon the relationships outlined above that have no fixed point of agreement and thus are constantly negotiated.

The case study chapters have shown that early VC heritages can and do exist through existing authorised heritage places, objects, etc., but are often 'overlooked', at best becoming available as a 'resource' which is made available online. Staiff (2014) has argued that new media have democratised heritage, meaning that anyone with access to a computer or smart phone can play a part in determining what a place or object means to them, and share this interpretation. However, that view still requires places and objects in order for people to connect to a heritage. Drawing on the work of Harris (2010), Staiff argues that 'objects at.., museums or heritage sites serve as triggers for the creation of highly individualized narratives that then jostle with the authorized interpretation provided by site managers or these personalized narratives by-pass altogether the formally provided interpretation' (Staiff 2014: 127). Museums and heritage places, especially in the West and even more especially in England, need tangible 'things' for their heritages to come to life; to inspire authorised and unauthorised interpretations. Diverse narrative interpretations therefore, cannot influence 'the heritage' if they are restricted *only* to 'cyberspace' (Bressey 2012: 100).

What all of the above suggests is that rather than focusing all of our attention on what heritage *is* (tangible/intangible), or what it *does* (include/exclude), it would be more useful to consider neither of these questions as having a finite answer and instead concentrate on organising the variables in the heritage process. In other

words, in order to allow a heritage in England that encourages us to think of Englishness as diverse, we might think of the act of interpreting the past as a dialogue that is always unequal but in which these inequalities are constantly negotiated.

9.5.1 A dialogic heritage?

Harrison (2013a: 216) has suggested heritage should be conceived as 'dialogical' where 'heritage emerges from the relationship between people, "things" and their environments as part of a dialogue or collaborative process of keeping the past alive in the present.' Here, meaning is not simply given to 'things', but these 'things' are part of a dialogue in which meaning is constantly negotiated. Seeing heritage as a dialogical process would view confrontation between different identities as the norm. It moves the discussion away from heritage being seen as tangible or intangible and instead focus lies with how it acquires meaning rather than how that meaning may be described.

Harrison argues that to concentrate on heritage as arising only through discourse is to deny the possibility that 'things can have meanings in and of themselves and therefore things are not given meaning only through language... Heritage is thus both tangible and intangible, embodied, material, and equally mindful and emergent' (Harrison and Rose 2010: 265-266). The point that 'things' have meaning in and of themselves is difficult to imagine in the context of heritage in England. Perhaps the most apt approach to describing how heritage can be conceived in this way in this country is to suggest that 'things' should be allowed to have their own place in the heritage negotiation or dialogue. In other words, places,

objects and other tangible 'things' have cultural meaning beyond that which is assigned to them by human beings. Value should not only be viewed as a man-made concept but one which also exists autonomously of 'us'. If this is the case then an individual or community does not have to attach importance to a thing for them to recognise it has heritage value. What has been seen throughout this research is that heritages find their meaning in the relationship between the narrative and the place, object, 'thing', etc., and that this meaning is a part of an ongoing negotiation. By arguing that 'things' can have value that is not ascribed allows them to have a heritage that does not *always* have to be agreed by human beings.

What can be agreed upon, in the light of the findings of this research, is that early VC heritages have been part of a 'conversation' about what heritage in England *is*, and what it is *for*, during the course of the past fifteen years. This has been driven by a specific - now ended - state-led social exclusion policy agenda, with contributions from a wide range of people and organisations. This has had the result of making the concept of an inclusive, diverse, equal, accessible, etc., heritage, difficult to define. Perhaps a more appropriate question that poses itself - in that it puts the substance of heritage as less important than the process - as a result of this 'conversation' is: has it resulted in a heritage which bases itself in dialogue; a dialogical heritage? This question requires further discussion.

Harrison (2013a: 223-225), drawing on the work of Callon *et al.* (2011), argues a dialogic heritage exists via a 'dialogical democracy' whereby issues relating to the creation, conservation and presentation of heritage are determined by a 'hybrid forum' which includes experts, non-experts, ordinary citizens and politicians. Such forums can contribute to a continual re-evaluation of heritage identities and use the inherent dissonance of heritage as a source for productive dialogue around its

meaning and purpose. Figure 9.2 describes this process whereby a series of heritage identities and issues are presented as a dialogue between these groups. 'Things' have been added to Harrison's list of stakeholders to reflect the idea that they change and evolve independent of human beings and thus influence the heritage process. The dialogue is an interactive process where identities and issues are shown to intersect, which could be at a point of dissonance or agreement. The end result is a heritage that has been produced through a collaborative, democratic process where no stakeholder has had a clear run to determining 'the heritage'. This heritage is immediately returned to the forum for debate so that this cycle of dialogue regarding heritage value is never broken or considered 'solved'. The important point here is that conceiving a heritage in this way would challenge the idea of any one heritage being fixed, which both underpins the AHD and also 'community' heritages that are seen to represent a homogeneous entity separate to the community-less dominant national group. Importantly however, it can use aspects of the AHD to its advantage in that it can reimagine the values attached to existing heritage places, objects, etc. Thus, the tangible form a heritage takes can remain but what it *means* can be altered. Each heritage identity that is 'added' to the metaphorical heritage pot in the hybrid forum can be picked up, or not, according to the heritage identities and issues required in any given interpretation. The point is not that every heritage is represented, but that each heritage is provided that opportunity and decisions are made according to a democratic process not an elite-managed autocracy.

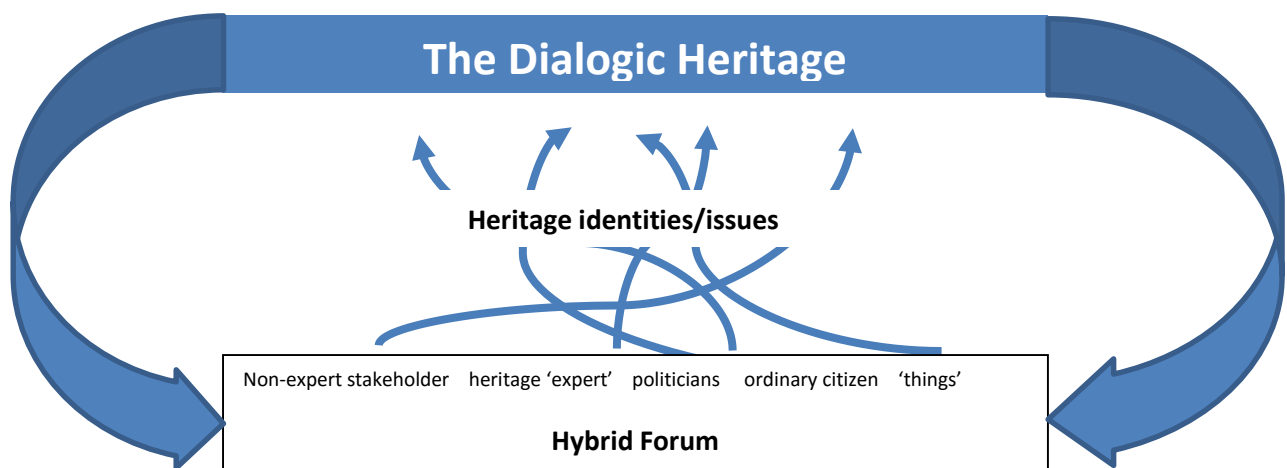


Figure 9.2: The dialogic heritage and the hybrid forum

Harrison then, sees dialogue as the integral element of a heritage that is never fully conceived but is instead 'an emergent property of the relationship between people and other human and non-human actors [that] forces us to focus on the active role of heritage, and broadens the debate from one about heritage as power, to a wider debate about the future' (Harrison 2013a: 229). Carman (2005) recognises this process in action in his review of McDavid's (2000) work with 'descendent communities' in the United States. Here, the 'conversation' between the various stakeholders is identified as the most important element of making heritage in that 'disagreements between actors become not problems to be overcome but opportunities to engage more deeply with colleagues. He continues:

The outcome is an approach grounded in four principles: reflexivity, multivocality; interactivity; and contextuality designed to maintain the conversation and by doing so to build trust with the community whose project it is (Carman 2005: 89).

Importantly, the hybrid forum recognises that there are many groups who can rightly claim to have an interest in shaping heritage which include government, heritage professionals and those for whom the heritage might be considered *of* or *for* (Witcomb 2007 [2003]). Perhaps the closest thing to a 'hybrid forum' that has been identified through this research was the MCAAH (Chapter Five) which - although led ostensibly by a politician, but in reality by a group of 'experts' - encouraged members from 'over 100 African and Asian community organisations' to take an active role throughout the process (Arokiasamy 2012: 342). The MCAAH was praised as 'a departure from previous interactions often characterised by an element of defensiveness, hostility and disaffection, with minorities usually being confined to a consultee role' (Arokiasamy 2012: 342). By placing a wide range of contributors on a more equal footing any dissonance was able to be engaged with through constructive debate. This can be contrasted with the BOP consultation on under-represented heritages commissioned by EH (Chapter Four). Although this included representatives from pre-identified under-represented groups the process was much more exclusive and valued and sought the opinions of 'experts' over 'ordinary citizens'. Interestingly, those who participated agreed that consultation with community groups was an important course of action to learn more about their heritage requirements and forge meaningful relationships (BOP 2012). Occurring half a decade after the MCAAH it would have been reasonable to expect EH, who

were involved in the Commission, already to recognise the value of wider involvement.

To be clear how this relates to the central question of this thesis regarding the importance of heritage narratives in challenging the idea of an 'established' heritage, it is argued that both the demand and supply side of heritage must always consider the heritage product to be agreed as not agreed. In other words, early VC heritages need not be part of the national heritage at every heritage place but they should be considered of equal worth to any other heritage and their narrative interpretation should not rely on special funding or temporary staff. In such a scenario they are outside of the hybrid forum.

9.5.2 Other heritage dialogues

Others have contributed to the argument that heritage should be considered as dialogic. Lucy (2005) has pointed out that ethnic categories are created in a dialectic process. Lucy argues that ethnic groups are defined through an ongoing process by both those who identify within and those who identify against an ethnicity. Assigning a heritage to a specific ethnic group therefore, can provoke that group to either adjust their self-image accordingly or resist such categorisation.

This point is important since the appropriateness of creating categories of the excluded has been questioned, with some regarding it as a self-fulfilling prophesy. This was reflected in the comments made by *Tate Encounters* at the 'From the Margins to the Core?' conference discussed in Chapter Five (see also Dewdney *et al.* 2010; 2012).

The policy of targeting individuals and groups according to BME categories..., structurally..., reproduces racialised thinking. While the intentions that lie behind targeting strategies reflect a democratic impulse – equality in access and participation – the outcomes and effects are limiting precisely because the category reproduces the division between BME and everything that is not (Dewdney 2010: 75).

What is being argued here is that ethnicity is a dialogic construction which is neither wholly self-made or provided, and is certainly not intrinsic. Here a dialogic heritage would view cultural diversity a tautology (Appignanesi 2010) in which Englishness or Britishness is itself part of the dialogue.

As Waterton has pointed out in her review of policy documents relating to social inclusion and heritage from DCMS and EH, the conceptualisation of the excluded serves to position them as living purposefully outside the mainstream (Waterton 2010a). In other words, they were conceived as *choosing* not to participate, for whatever reason. This would agree with Shore's findings above and is a fundamental reason why it is necessary for the heritage sector to look beyond an inclusion/exclusion binary when conceiving a diverse heritage and look to discourses of equality and plurality as prominent in a dialogic heritage. Smith and Waterton (2009a) have stressed that viewing 'experts' as a community themselves, who like other communities act in a way that protects their interests and aspirations, focuses attention on the dialogues between communities of expertise and communities of interest. By considering the actions of 'experts' as consistent with those of non-

‘experts’ serves to place importance on the *encounter* which is where meaning is negotiated and made and where approaches to engagement are best analysed.

Staiff, drawing on the work of Fairclough (2012), has included digital media in his conception of a dialogic heritage. He argues that digital media allows non-‘experts’ to participate in interpreting heritage. ‘This’, he states, ‘directly challenges the authorized voice of heritage specialists and the highly regulated and controlled canons of masterworks subject to protection regimes’ (Staiff 2014: 130). Bressey however, as noted above, asserts that in order for the histories of VCs and other under-represented groups to be considered part of England’s heritage they need to be ‘integrated into the core narratives of sites, not occasionally “celebrated” or segregated out into cyberspace’ (Bressey 2012: 100). She credits the internet for allowing ‘heritage sites to develop and expand the analysis and content of their collections without the larger costs and disruption of capital projects’ but is adamant that ‘if the narrative structure of the heritage site remains untouched by this new material, these histories remain marginalized’ (Bressey 2012: 100). In other words, the AHD does not allow for web-based heritages to challenge official narrative interpretations that take tangible form. Since digital heritages have not been reviewed substantively during this research the merits of either side will not be argued in-depth here. Suffice to say the explosion of online media over the past decade is raising the profile of online heritage and encouraging further exploration of what it *does* to heritage meaning (for example Smith and Waterton 2009a; Giaccardi 2012).

The fact that this research has largely encountered heritage in England as engaged with through the physical visit - consider EH’s and state-sponsored museums’ quantitative targets for getting more under-represented groups to *visit*

them (NAO 2009; Woodham 2009) - this suggests that it is in the physical environment that diversity needs to be acknowledged to challenge the idea of what 'the heritage' is. BMAG's re-imagination of Birmingham as a diverse city is explored almost entirely within the galleries; online presences were not considered central to any of the NT's diversity projects outlined in Chapter Six; the bicentenary exhibitions discussed in Chapter Eight all emphasised that they were telling unconventional narratives but via conventional means i.e. on-site displays. There is still a distinction in England between conventional and digital heritage. Heritage is certainly now viewed as a participatory process (Giaccardi and Palen 2008; Ciolfi *et al.* 2008; Simon 2010; Ciolfi 2012) but this participation is most often in the form of an 'expert'-led consultation and according to an institutional agenda, as demonstrated in the discussions of bicentenary projects in Chapter Eight. It is argued here that challenging the structural inequalities of this process will be more useful for creating a diverse heritage than the belief that the internet will empower people to deliver it unto themselves. The dialogic heritage outlined above has within it a place for online interpretations but even the dialogic forum relies on a measure of control in order for the dialogic heritage to have integrity. The porous boundaries of the internet are not well suited to this structure and thus, in England, some measure of control over what level of influence the internet can have on 'the heritage' is maintained.

This section has broadened out the idea of a dialogic heritage to discuss its usefulness to creating a diverse heritage. It has been argued that the diversity conversation of the past fifteen years has challenged the content of an 'established' heritage but that this concept will retain its hegemony until those that control it are prepared to contest it from within. A contested heritage, in the form of a dialogic heritage, can be a constructive way of imagining the nation's past, present and future

as diverse. The final sections will consider what the possible consequences of this challenge might be.

9.6 Choosing the path to a diverse heritage

The ethnic demographic of England is on a trajectory which will see the presently dominant 'White British' ethnic group increasingly proportionately less so. Figure 9.3 represents this change.

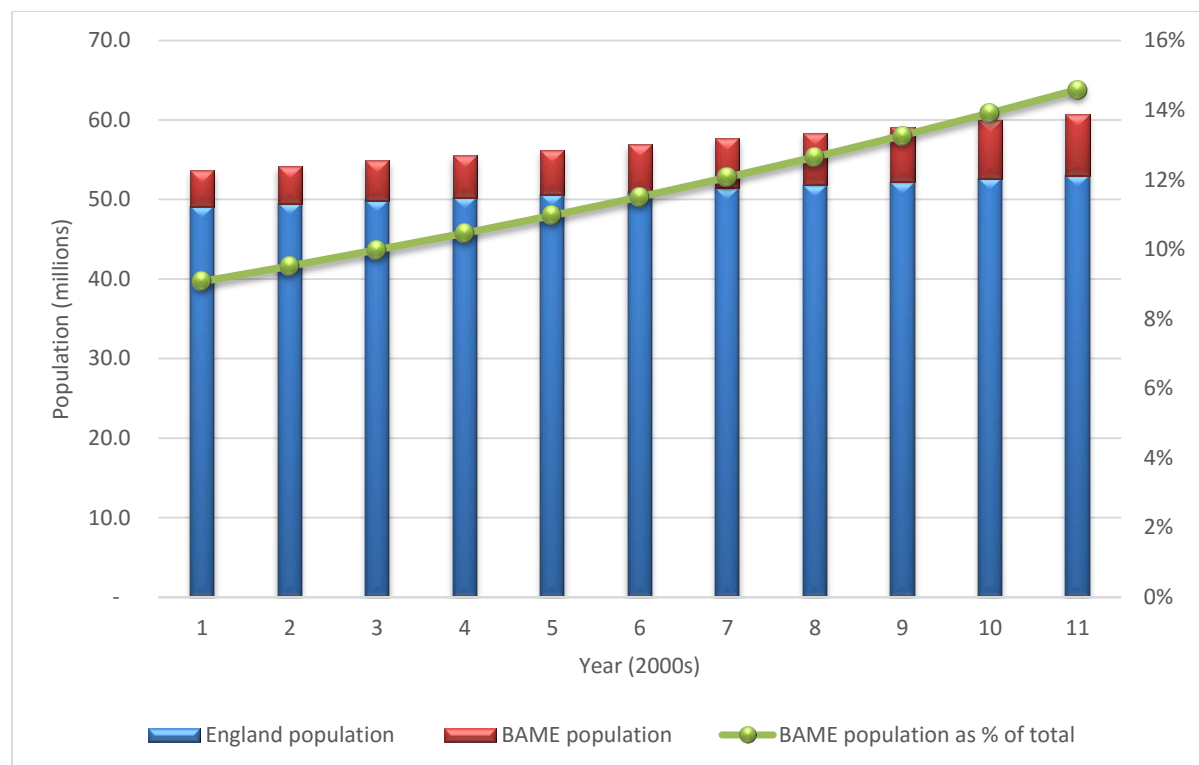


Figure 9.3: England's BAME population 2001-2011

Source: *Census 2001 and 2011 from the ONS*

In ten years the proportion of the population identifying as BAME has risen from 9 per cent to 15 per cent. Numerous policy documents and conferences highlighting the need to reflect this trend in ‘the heritage’, discussed in Chapters Four and Five, as well as reaction to this trend from the NT, BMAG (Chapters Six and Seven) and through increased funding for VC heritages (Chapter Eight) have been reviewed in this research. A consistent message among them, starting with EH’s *Power of Place* in 2000, was that the narratives of VCs needed to be included in the ‘Nation’s’ heritage:

Many people believe that heritage provision in England does not adequately represent certain groups. Three in four believe that the contribution of Black and Asian people is not adequately represented – a figure that is even higher among people from those backgrounds (EH 2000: 25).

Revisiting Collections went beyond the rhetorical by providing museums with a toolkit that would help to reimagine collections so that they have ‘meaning and value for “hard to reach” audiences as well as for our more traditional users’ with the former commonly identified as VCs, low socio-economic groups and people with limiting disabilities (Reed 2011: 1). The existence of this toolkit is evidence of invention to try and challenge ‘the heritage’ of England but in museums as well as CBH, largely VC narratives have been seen as separate to the ‘established’ heritage narrative by heritage professionals, certainly prior to the bicentenary.

Government funded research into CBH with VCs a decade later found that they still did not feel a part of 'the heritage' of England, with complaints that 'many heritage sites are presented to the general public as completely devoid of an outside, non-English involvement and that this made some BME groups less inclined to attend. In addition, it left those who did attend feeling excluded' (Rahim and Mavra 2009: 14).

In one sense this is a consequence of the initial social exclusion policy agenda of New Labour, as actioned by state-sponsored heritage organisations. Instead of attempting to challenge the product - 'the heritage' - they sought to present it as meaningful to a more diverse range of people without actually altering it in any managed or sustainable way. Others, like the NT, followed suit with *The Untold Story*, *Whose Story?* and (to a lesser extent) *London Voices*. As a consequence, discussion of an 'inclusive' heritage actually cemented the idea of an 'established' heritage, that, whatever else happened, would remain the bedrock of England's past, interpreted in the present for the future and not for negotiation.

It would be too much to say that this is a permanent situation but the models of heritage outlined above that may support a cultural democracy - the 'salad bowl' or the 'hybrid forum' - are not presently recognisable in England's heritage sector. These two models have been suggested as useful because it is argued that they can operate within the current mechanisms that support England's heritage sector; they do not deny that places, objects or other tangible 'things' play a key role in the heritage process and maintain 'experts' as one community amongst others who have the right to protect their interests. They can thrive within a harnessed AHD.

The final question here is: is it likely that pluralising narrative interpretation to enable a cultural democracy will be supported from within the heritage sector? It has been found in this research that increasingly, senior heritage professionals prefer diversifying governance as opposed to narrative interpretation when it comes to efforts to be more relevant to a wider audience. Since the very essence of cultural democracy comes from the idea that cultural diversity is a tautology, it is argued here that narrative interpretation is fundamental to this aspiration and presenting early VC heritages as part of England's heritage at the earliest possible moment in the narrative is fundamental to the diversity task. The alternative is the continual loading of early VC heritages to a particular theme (slavery), or post-war migration told through particular members of these communities (usually young people or African-Caribbean elders) which serve to exceptionalise VC heritages (Naidoo 2010).

9.7 Conclusion: will early visible community heritages become part of the narrative interpretation of England's heritage? A glimpse into the future.

The 'Whose Heritage?' conference held in Manchester in 1999 was at the time, and subsequently, regarded as a catalyst for inspiring the heritage sector to recognise their responsibility to create a more diverse heritage. Clara Arokiasamy (2012: 341) recently detailed its importance:

...the Whose Heritage conference placed the cultural rights of Black and ethnic minorities firmly onto the heritage agenda. It also empowered Black activists and campaigners to be even more vocal in their demands for equal cultural rights and it acted as a catalyst for some exemplar initiatives,

including targeted exhibitions, lottery for community projects, affirmation of the new positive action recruitment initiative led by the Museum Association, and the government-funded Renaissance programme that aimed at revitalising museums in local authorities by increasing Black and ethnic minority audiences.

In his keynote address Stuart Hall argued that ‘the secure ground of “heritage”’ had been subverted by: ‘new versions of democratic “history from below”’; a growing awareness by the marginalised of the power of representation’; a ‘dethroning of the concept of dispassionate knowledge’; ‘an increasing sense of culture as a determinant identity; as well as ‘decreasing acceptance of the right of authority to authenticate, interpret, classify and evaluate [heritage]’ (Arts Council England 1999: 20-21). Hall’s address has been republished, in full, no fewer than four times since the conference (Hall 1999; Hall 2005; Hall 2007; Hall 2008). Clearly, the academic community with an interest in representations of cultural heritage believe that Hall’s arguments were worth repeating within the ongoing debates around ‘whose heritage?’. This suggests a heritage community in which diversity, with equality at its core, was *expected* from those who saw ‘the heritage’, as it was, as exclusive. Essentially, Hall’s remarks are a challenge to the AHD with its ‘dethroning’ of the ‘expert’, the disassembly of the idea of one ‘authentic’ heritage and the importance of a fluid heritage that could accommodate multiple cultural representations. Hall’s message remains pertinent because the ideas of what heritage can be discussed in this chapter, to different degrees, reflect Hall’s subversive heritage. What has been argued here is that rather than challenging the AHD head-on, an equal and diverse heritage in England, i.e. a cultural democracy, can be realised by subtly altering its

own discourse through dialogue. Incumbent in this argument is that the 'expert' has a right to assert power, as do others; that diverse narratives should be told through the places, objects, etc., that already hold heritage value, thus allowing those narratives to contest the idea of an 'established' heritage.

Harrison (2013b) has argued that there is little discussion of 'how many' heritage 'things' are too many? The current popular culture of widening the representation of heritage may require forgetting some heritages in order to remember others but heritage in England is legislatively underpinned as an additive process (Carman 1996). To work within the AHD heritage places must be authorised to carry intertwined plural meanings, and this re-imagination might take the form of the dialogical heritage detailed above. Through this process they will maintain their original heritage value but their *meaning* will be decided through an ongoing negotiation. The alternative would be an endless accumulation of heritage until it becomes a universal concept whereby it has no value because everything is of value.

Reimagination of 'the heritage' has not been widely recognised in this research. However, as has been detailed throughout, largely due to the HLF but also the individuals behind projects such as *Whose Story?*, EH's 'Slavery and the British Country House', the MCAAH, and many others, there are now hundreds, even thousands of early VC histories recorded in this country. Bressey has suggested that the MCAAH inspired DCMS and EH to revisit the issue of participation within the 'historic environment' after their 'insistence that historical narratives are key to individuals' sense of belonging and society's sense of social cohesion' (Bressey 2012: 89). Correspondingly, the 'Slavery and the British Country House' project opened up a whole new series of narratives that are widely available, in particular via the EH website. The authority of this medium however, has already been questioned,

but, importantly, the story does not end here. The narrative that could be said to have started it all at EH, that of Dido Belle and Kenwood House (Chapter Eight), has escaped from the arguable segregation of cyberspace. What this means needs more attention.

In 2006 Hems (2006: 199) wrote that the omission of the story of Dido Belle in the onsite interpretation at Kenwood House ‘might be forgiven;’ the story was known but overlooked. Subsequently, her story became the primary narrative for EH’s bicentenary commemorations. Bressey (2013b) conducted a case study looking at how the traditional narratives present at Kenwood House had been challenged following the bicentenary exhibition. In her findings she was critical of the lack of legacy stating that ‘like many of the exhibitions that were held by major institutions to mark the bicentenary, few of the disruptions it created had been incorporated into the overarching narrative’ (Bressey 2013b: 123). Following the events of the bicentenary, Bressey was in a less forgiving mood than Hems in the omission of Belle from the on-site narrative interpretation (it should be noted that Hems was Head of Interpretation for EH and the book in which she was writing was published by EH).

Throughout 2013 Kenwood underwent significant renovation during which time it saw the inclusion of a reproduction of a painting of Belle and her cousin into the house’s itinerary (Lezard 2013). Dido is now physically present at Kenwood House. Her story has also inspired a major British film entitled *Belle*, released in 2014. It has been almost a decade since her omission from Kenwood’s onsite interpretation was deemed ‘forgivable’; now it is integral. A similar process has occurred at Quarry Bank Mill where, ten years on from *The Untold Story* that explored the links between the slave trade and the site, this narrative finally made it into the onsite interpretation. These examples demonstrate that there is the drive

and demand for diverse narratives to take their place in the narrative interpretation of heritage sites in England, and that this can be done alongside other narratives in one overarching interpretation of England's past for the present and future. They also suggest that such changes will only occur given time and dedication. Actions can and will be taken to diversify the heritage narrative interpretation of England but this should not be considered inevitable. Harrison (2013a 164-165, emphasis in original) has argued that:

Despite the clear positive good of diversity in the world, the relationship between diversity and heritage needs to be managed carefully. Diversity and difference must be emphasised as *inherited* but not *inherent* or *inevitable* – rather as a series of qualities which are constantly chosen, recreated and renegotiated in the present

Such a statement emphasises the fact that England has inherited a diverse past that is now in the open. The narrative interpretation of this past will not change overnight, but it is changing, being selected and discussed. As with any inheritance, it can be subject to dispute by those who claim a stake in it. Narratives will change, but not without consistently requiring them to.

What does this mean in relation to my research question: what is the place of early VC heritage narratives in 'the heritage' of England following thirteen years of political impetus to make 'inclusive' England's presented past and a more recent shift towards equality, despite the reduction in political interest in heritage as a social tool? The answer, on the basis of this research, is minimal, but seeds have been sown. This chapter has argued that England presently has a 'Core+' model of heritage that

privileges the existence of an 'established' heritage that cannot be imagined as diverse. It has also been argued that the trajectory of heritage practice and policy over the past decade, with greater emphasis on equality over inclusion, might challenge the 'established' heritage through dialogue, with the aim of developing a 'salad bowl' model of heritage. The 'hybrid forum' has been argued as a possible environment to establish trust and equality in the construction of heritages. In this environment 'community' heritages that have been marginalised by their community-ness and lack of 'expert' authority can be recognised as having equal rights to be a part of the 'Nation'. The forum itself will ensure that they don't become fixed entities that end up defining that community as internally the same but different to everyone else.

It has also been argued that the bicentenary was a catalyst for change that has proven significant in terms of providing early VC heritages with a *permanent* place in 'the heritage' of England. The proverbial cat – that England's past is contested and populated by multiple perspectives – is well and truly out the bag. Smith (2010) suggested that it would be of interest to see if, further removed from the event than when she was writing, the bicentenary would prove a game-changer in terms of challenging what heritage could be in England. It has, but not in the form of a challenge to the AHD. It has been argued here that the authorised discourse of heritage in England can accommodate early VC heritages and, in fact, can enable them to thrive.

Returning to my interest in how narratives that present ethnic diversity as more than a recent phenomenon in England have been interpreted using existing heritage objects, places, etc., the short answer is they have; the longer and more complex answer delves deeper into the mechanisms of heritage meaning and

making. During the process of conducting this research I have come to appreciate narratives as a useful gateway into deeper conversations about challenging the processes through which heritages are made. Narratives are interchangeable, fluid and responsive. Heritage practitioners might begin to (or continue to) contemplate heritage processes as operating with the aim of renewal as opposed to accumulation. Some heritages will, for all sorts of reasons, seem more important at any given time. What might be more helpful is to see no heritage as 'core', 'established' - whatever you want to call it - but instead imagine a constant state of heritage renewal that exists not to perpetuate the idea of the 'Nation' as a fixed point, but to enable it to evolve. Isn't that, in the end, what heritage is for – to recreate the past *for* the present and the future? The future is unwritten; we can't yet know what heritage it will need.

Chapter 10: Conclusions

10.1 Introduction

This thesis has been concerned with the extent to which visible communities (VCs) are, in 2015, part of the heritage narrative interpretation of pre-1948 England. The objectives of this thesis have been two-fold. The first has been to analyse and interpret how heritage is experienced in an English context, and imagined to be experienced, by heritage academics and professionals under conditions of ethnic diversity. The second has been to identify the extent to which England's heritage has changed following almost two decades of discussion of how to make it more diverse/representative/inclusive etc. of VCs who are part of the 'Nation's' past, and who form an increasingly significant element of its present.

The central questions that have been engaged through this analysis have been:

- To establish the influence of New Labour's social exclusion policy agenda and the Coalition's 'localism' agenda in England's heritage sector over time and the extent to which they are an appropriate approach to engaging with VCs.
- What have specific projects designed to foster social inclusion and diversify 'the heritage' looked like?
- What is the narrative content of early VC heritage at mainstream heritage places?
- What models of heritage making might allow for a heritage narrative interpretation that is centred on diversity and equality?

These questions have enabled this research to establish the trajectory of social exclusion policy as imagined in relation to VCs by New Labour policy makers and translated by heritage professionals. It has been shown how political realities pushed VCs to the front of the queue of the 'excluded' at the end of the last millennium but that the lack of empirical evidence available as to why certain people did not engage with 'the heritage' meant that any actions designed to 'include' were largely piecemeal and temporary, serving to emphasise and valorise the essential 'otherness' of those who were being engaged. It has been pointed out that whilst at regular intervals over the past fifteen years or so heritage professionals have talked about the lack of presence of VCs in the narratives authorised as England's heritage, the bicentenary excepted, there have been few resources allocated, or collective approach agreed, to do anything about it. Ultimately, the first half of the last decade has been positioned as a 'phoney war' on the 'established' heritage of England that in reality few believed to be part of the problem. Although 'localism' at the time of writing had not had a significant impact on 'the heritage' it has been argued that heritage places that focus on their locality as their sphere of interest can risk ignoring the diversity of their own heritage. The bicentenary in 2007 is where the third question at the centre of this thesis has really been allowed to be explored since it, for the first time, placed VCs within - although not necessarily at the centre of - a narrative that allowed them to enter England's past before the docking of the Empire Windrush at Tilbury in 1948. Never before had such a challenge to the essential whiteness of England's presented past been offered.

In focusing on heritage narratives and their interpretation in this research, the aim has been to highlight their importance to any attempt to have a national heritage that can speak to a range of identities; that is plural. This, it has been argued, is just

as important as diversifying the governance of heritage since it encourages those who have traditionally held the keys to the heritage door - the 'experts' - to challenge their own beliefs regarding *what* the national story is, *who* is a part of it and *how* it is made. By focusing on heritage narratives as a way of challenging heritage discourses, it has also been argued that rather than requiring a complete breakdown of Smith's (2006) Authorised Heritage Discourse (AHD), to imagine a national heritage that does not only speak to the hegemonic social group it is perhaps more practical to work within the AHD and re-negotiate certain of its aspects. It has been argued that the monumental heritage of England can be *harnessed* for the valuing of a plural or diverse heritage. This can be achieved by diversifying the narratives that are authorised for 'established' heritage places, objects, or other tangible 'things'. Through these means England's authorised heritage 'things' will challenge themselves (if allowed by the 'experts' that manage them) and the perceptions of those that interact with them, allowing a heritage environment to evolve that re-negotiates the traditional whiteness of England's heritage. Thus, the physical form that dominates England's authorised heritage can actually work to re-negotiate the criteria for authorisation. In arguing this case, I have tried to move away from the dichotomy of heritage as *either* tangible or intangible, and even the totalising notion that it is *all* intangible, despite recognising the merits of such a position in Chapter Nine. Instead, heritage has been presented as having no constant form and being essentially fluid.

10.2 The bases for the thesis arguments

This thesis has relied heavily on the theoretical and methodological contributions of Littler and Naidoo (2007 [2004]), Smith (2006), Ashworth *et al.* (2007), Waterton (2007; 2010a) and Harrison (2013a; 2013b).

Littler and Naidoo have been influential through their use of the binary 'white past/multicultural present'. This binary describes the way in which Britain appears ready to 'celebrate' its contemporary multiculturalism whilst simultaneously preserving the whiteness of its roots. It was with this position in mind that I decided to focus this research on instances of VC heritage interpretations at mainstream heritage places presented as part of a pre-1948 narrative.

Waterton's review of heritage policy and practice found in her *Politics, Policy and the Discourse of Heritage in Britain* (2010a), a revised and updated version of her own PhD thesis (2007), informed the approach to analysing heritage policy found in Chapters Four and Five, as well as providing a great deal of research material relating to the discourse of social inclusion in the heritage sector. The key point taken from Waterton's arguments was the contradictory reality of social exclusion policies that, she argues, actually served to further exclude those defined as excluded. In recognising the limitations of an 'inclusive' heritage, this thesis has discussed more effective alternatives, most notably, a diverse heritage that recognises the fundamental quality of equality. In addition, by taking Waterton's findings and arguments outside of the world of the 'state-sponsored' heritage, this research has been able to build on her work by assessing the impact of New Labour's social exclusion policy agenda where it was not adhered to as a matter of legislative imperative.

As the dominant understanding of heritage in a Western context for almost a decade, it was important to engage Smith's (2006) AHD in regard to its impact on the place (or lack of) early VC heritages at mainstream heritage places in England. As highlighted above, it is difficult to deny that England's heritage adheres to the criteria identified by the AHD when assigning heritage value. It has been argued here however, that early VC heritages can penetrate this discourse and the fact that this has not occurred to any great extent in 2015 should not be seen as meaning they cannot. Harnessing the hegemony of the AHD can ultimately result in a diverse heritage that is seen as standard, rather than exemplary.

Ashworth *et al's.* (2007) *Pluralising Pasts* has been fundamental to this research's assertion that the hegemonic social group has to challenge its own idea of what heritage *is*, *who* it is for and *how* it is made in order for those 'outside' the core – at the margins – to penetrate that core and help to reimagine it from within. This has been key to the argument that diversifying heritage governance is important, but in order to diversify governance the 'experts' have to demonstrate that England's heritage can resonate with a plurality of identities. This is best explored through the diversification of authorised heritage narratives.

Harrison's (2013a) conception of a 'dialogic' heritage, reproduced via a 'hybrid forum', was then offered as a useful structure for the heritage process in which this re-imagination could take place and, most importantly, continue to take place. The purpose of the dialogic heritage as presented here was to emphasise the fluidity of not just the present and future, but also our relationship with the past/s.

In order to evidence the core arguments of this research three methods of data collection were utilised. The first was an analysis of heritage sector documents

dating from the research period 1997-2013. The second was through a series of in-depth interviews with heritage sector professionals, academics and volunteers (see Appendix A) all of whom were, or had been, engaged directly with attempts to diversify heritage audiences and/or narratives. The third was through a survey conducted to gauge the public's responses to a particular set of museum galleries at Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery (Appendix D) that had been overtly influenced by the political rhetoric of social inclusion over the previous decade and more, as well as the demographic changes in the city.

10.3 Final remarks

Despite fifteen years of concerted pressure from government, academics, and from within the sector itself, 'the heritage' of England has not been able to subvert its authorised narrative, which remains largely unchanged. Although they no longer explicitly target increasing the number of grant applications from VCs in particular regions, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) continue to highlight VCs as a 'target audience' which is testament to the argument that there is still much work to be done to create a place for VCs in England's heritage (HLF 2015: 58). The project nature of such work that is encouraged by the HLF's grants approach has been argued to be part of the problem as to why VC heritages - as well as other under-represented heritages - struggle to be sustained and thus embed themselves within the national heritage narrative.

This research has argued that the transatlantic slave trade is presently the authorised narrative of early VC heritage in England. Inevitably this has led VCs of African heritage to be the key characters in early VC heritage presentations. A

possibility for further research could consider, for instance, how VCs defined by their faith are being presented in mainstream heritage contexts. The HLF in 2015 have looked to develop their Grants for Places of Worship programme, encouraging applicants to 'build community outcomes into their projects, resulting in more heritage-focused community outreach work' (HLF 2015: 59). The level of take up of this programme by Mosques could give an indication of the extent to which Muslim heritages are being engaged with in a period of heightened religious tension, globally and in Britain, in particular due to the growth of the Islamic State and their recruitment of British Muslims (Wyke 2015). Muslim heritages have also been included in the First World War Commemorations.⁴⁶ The *Everyday Muslim* project,⁴⁷ part funded by the HLF, is the largest single piece of work identified during this research that focuses on Muslims in England. Its aim is to 'build a comprehensive and unique portrayal of Muslim life that allows the community to take ownership of their history and heritage' (Khizra 2015). The resulting archive will be stored at the Bishopsgate Institute in London as well as being made available via the project's website. What impact these developments have on creating an authorised narrative of Muslims and the 'Nation' and whether this can influence the place of Muslims in England's past, present and future is an open debate.

This research started with the intention of asking why, despite these years of funding and other resources dedicated to uncovering the 'hidden' histories of early VCs, they were still largely invisible in England's heritage narrative interpretation. The answer has largely pointed to a heritage profession that challenges others, rather than itself, to change. There is evidence however, that 'the heritage' is for turning. English Heritage, identified as most securely fastened to the AHD has recently reimagined one of its places to tell the story of a young Black woman who

lived at one of their sites in the eighteenth century. This reinterpretation has been a decade in the making. Arguably this is how a diverse heritage will happen; one conference at a time, one policy at a time, one commemoration at a time, one heroine at a time.

NOTES

¹ Chapter Six is a case study of this project.

² Birmingham City Archives, University of Birmingham, University of Warwick, *Black Pasts, Birmingham Futures*. 'Connecting Histories', <http://www.connectinghistories.org.uk/> (accessed 23 Dec 2014).

³ See, for example, Heritage Lottery Fund ethnic monitoring form. Available at http://www.hlf.org.uk/HowToApply/programmes/Documents/OH_Application_Form_SF4.pdf (accessed 26 Aug 2013).

⁴ Renaissance was a funding programme supported by Arts Council England that provided grants of up to £2 million pounds for museums and libraries in England. It has been discontinued as of 2015. <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/funding/apply-funding/funding-programmes/renaissance/> (accessed 9 May 2015).

⁵ Big Lottery Fund UK. 'About the Big Lottery Fund', <http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/about-big> (accessed 28 Apr 2014).

⁶ HLF. 'About us', <http://www.hlf.org.uk/aboutus/Pages/AboutUs.aspx#.U1-j6ZVZrIU> (accessed 29 Apr 2014).

⁷ The Diversity in Heritage Group (DHG) was established in 2009 following the London Mayor's Commission on African and Asian Heritage (MCAAH) discussed in detail in Chapter Five. See <http://diversityheritage.org/> (accessed 5 Mar 2015).

⁸ The Black Environment Network (BEN) 'works to enable full ethnic participation in the built and natural environment'. See <http://www.ben-network.org.uk/index.asp> (accessed 8 May 2015).

⁹ The Historic Environment Forum is 'the top level cross-sectoral committee, bringing together chief executives and policy officers from public and non-government heritage bodies.' See 'Historic Environment Forum', <http://www.theheritagealliance.org.uk/historic-environment-forum/> (accessed 8 May 2015).

¹⁰ The Historic Houses Association supports privately and charitably owned listed places in Britain. See <http://www.hha.org.uk/> (accessed 8 May 2015).

¹¹ The *Taking Part* survey is a government managed national survey relating to participation in leisure, culture and sport in England. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/taking-part> (accessed 8 May 2015).

¹² Conservative Party. Undated. 'Big Society not Big Government'. Available at <https://www.conservatives.com/~media/Files/Downloadable%20Files/Building-a-Big-Society.ashx> (accessed 29 Oct 2014).

¹³ BOP Consulting specialise in 'culture and the creative industries'. See <http://bop.co.uk/> (accessed 8 May 2015).

¹⁴ HLF. 'About us', http://www.hlf.org.uk/aboutus/Pages/AboutUs.aspx#.U2dXTZUU_IU (accessed 8 May 2015).

¹⁵ The NBHA researches and disseminates Black history in Northamptonshire. See <http://www.northants-black-history.org.uk/index.aspx> (accessed 8 May 2015).

¹⁶ DEED works with teachers and pupils to develop understandings of global and cultural diversity issues. For details of Black history exhibition see <http://www.deed.org.uk/category/exhibitions/> (accessed 8 May 2015).

¹⁷ <http://www.exeter.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=2835&p=0>

¹⁸ GLAAM was a collection of 22 museum services managing over 120 museums and art galleries funded by local authorities in England, Scotland and Wales.

¹⁹ Resource were the non-departmental public body with oversight of Museums, Archives and Libraries. They became The Museums, Archives and Libraries Council in 2004.

²⁰ The Collections Trust is a UK-based, worldwide professional association that supports organisations in collections management. See <http://www.collectionstrust.org.uk/> (accessed 8 May 2015).

²¹ For a full list of those involved see Renaissance Review Advisory Group. 2009. *Renaissance in the Regions: realising the vision, Renaissance in the Region 2001-2008*. London.

²² EH. 'About Us', <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/about> (accessed 27 Sep 2013).

²³ 'Rhetoric and Reality' is the title of Emma Waterton's 2007 PhD thesis that has been an important piece of work, along with the revised published version '*Politics, Policy and the Discourses of Heritage in Britain*' (2010), in informing the approach of these two chapters.

²⁴ UCL. 'Legacies of British Slave Ownership', <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/> (accessed 22 Jul 2014).

²⁵ BB2, *Britain's Forgotten Slave Owners*, 1-8 Aug 2015.

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- ²⁶ NT. 'Quarry Bank', <http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/quarry-bank-mill/history/article-1355785945879/> (accessed 3 Apr 2015).
- ²⁷ The African Caribbean Community Initiative is a support service based in Wolverhampton for African Caribbeans with Mental Health issues, <http://acci.org.uk/> (accessed 15 Aug 2015).
- ²⁸ Black History Month (BHM) has been held during October in the UK since 1987 having been a federally recognised annual commemoration in the US since 1976, taking place in February.
- ²⁹ Data for Merriman's survey is available via the UK Data Archive, <http://www.data-archive.ac.uk> (accessed 5 Feb 14).
- ³⁰ Data relating to grants for BAME heritage projects provided by Aretha George, Policy Advisor, Participation and Learning at the HLF, 2012. (See Appendix F).
- ³¹ For details of HLF grant schemes available see <http://www.hlf.org.uk/HowToApply/programmes/Pages/programmes.aspx#.Uo3xLdKsiSo> (accessed 23 Dec 2014).
- ³² Birmingham City Council. 'Population in Birmingham', <http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/cs/Satellite?c=Page&childpagename=Planning-and-Regeneration%2FPageLayout&cid=1223096353755&pagename=BCC%2FCommon%2FWrapper%2FWrapper> (accessed 3 Sep 2014).
- ³³ Walker, P., Undated. 'AMERICAN SLAVERY TO ENGLISH MINISTRY: THE REVD. PETER THOMAS STANFORD (1860-1909)', <http://www.search.connectinghistories.org.uk/engine/resource/exhibition/sequential/default.asp?txtKeywords=ex002&lstContext=&lstResourceType=-1&lstExhibitionType=&chkPurchaseVisible=&txtDateFrom=&txtDateTo=&x1=&y1=&x2=&y2=&scale=&theme=&album=&viewpage=%2Fengine%2Fresource%2Fexhibition%2Fsequential%2Fchild%2Easp&originator=%2Fengine%2Fsearch%2Fdefault%5Fhndlr%2Easp&page=&records=&direction=&pointer=23&text=0&resource=1042> (accessed 3 Sep 2014).
- ³⁴ NT. 'Birmingham Back to Backs', <http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/birmingham-back-to-backs/> (accessed 12 Nov 2014).
- ³⁵ Liverpool is home to the International Slavery Museum that opened in 2007 and tells of the Black experience in the city dating back many centuries. See http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/ism/slavery/europe/black_people.aspx (accessed 23 Dec 2014). Bristol used to have a significant slave trade related exhibition at the British Empire and Commonwealth Museum called 'Breaking the Chains', funded by the HLF, that opened in 2007. Since the museum's closure in 2008 this narrative has been told at the city's M-Shed museum. See <http://www.bristolmuseums.org.uk/m-shed/> (accessed 23 Dec 2014).
- ³⁶ *1807 Commemorated: The abolition of the slave trade*. Project supported by AHRC, IHR and University of York. Available at <http://www.history.ac.uk/1807commemorated/reports.html>. (accessed 17 Jul 2014).
- ³⁷ The Equiano Society, see <http://www.brycchancarey.com/equiano/eqs.htm> (accessed 19 Sep 2015).
- ³⁸ MLD. Undated. *London, Sugar & Slavery*. http://archive.museumoflondon.org.uk/NR/rdonlyres/C0CD2D0D-1ED3-4187-87CF-03DA3014A4DF/0/LSS_press_pack.pdf (accessed 15 Aug 2015).
- ³⁹ See HLF, 'London and Slavery Project', <http://www.hlf.org.uk/our-projects/london-and-slavery-project> (accessed 15 Aug 2015).
- ⁴⁰ EH. 'Slavery and justice exhibition at Kenwood House', <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/discover/people-and-places/the-slave-trade-and-abolition/slavery-and-justice-exhibition-at-kenwood-house/> (accessed 14 Dec 2014).
- ⁴¹ EH. 'Slavery and the British Country House', <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/discover/people-and-places/the-slave-trade-and-abolition/slavery-and-the-british-country-house/> (accessed 31 Oct 2014).
- ⁴² Referring to the 'Legacies of British Slave-Ownership' project' at the University College London.
- ⁴³ Data and discussion provided by HLF Development Officer for the West Midlands, November 2014.
- ⁴⁴ International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) Intangible Cultural Heritage in the UK conference, 20 Sep 2014. See <http://www.icomos-uk.org/about-us/events/> (accessed 15 Nov 2014).
- ⁴⁵ Conference entitled '40 Years of English Heritage: The Legacy of "The Destruction of the Country House"', King's College London, 1 Oct 2014. See <http://www.kcl.ac.uk/artshums/depts/cmci/eventrecords/2014/forty-years-english-heritage-legacy-destruction-country-house.aspx> (accessed 3 October 2014).

⁴⁶ For example 'Connected Histories: Muslim Contributions in the First World War'.

<http://www.hlf.org.uk/about-us/media-centre/press-releases/connected-histories-muslim-contributions-first-world-war> (accessed 15Aug 2015).

⁴⁷ The *Everyday Muslim* project is a five piece of work jointly funded by the Bishopsgate Institute, HLF and One Agency. It is being managed by the Khizra Foundation. For more information see <http://www.everydaymuslim.org/> (accessed 20 Aug 2015).

Appendices

Appendix A: Interview Schedule

INTERVIEWEE 1 – *Senior member of the Government Advice Team for English Heritage.*

30 October 2012, English Heritage, 1 Waterhouse Square, 138 - 142 Holborn, London.

INTERVIEWEE 2 – *Member of the Property Historians team consisting of 6.5 staff.*

5 March 2013, English Heritage, 1 Waterhouse Square, 138 - 142 Holborn, London.

INTERVIEWEE 3 – *Regional Director for the National Trust. One of ten for England and Wales.*

17 December 2012, National Trust, Birmingham Regional Office, The Custard Factory, Gibb Street, Birmingham.

INTERVIEWEE 4 – *Senior staff member for Visitor Services for the National Trust.*

11 December 2012, National Trust, London Regional Office, 20 Grosvenor Gardens, London.

INTERVIEWEE 5 – *Equalities Specialist for the National Trust.*

10 September 2012, National Trust, Chedworth Roman Villa, Gloucestershire.

INTERVIEWEE 6 - *Member of the Whose Story? project team for the National Trust.*

Team consisted of seven dedicated paid members of staff including an Audience Development Manager, two Outreach Officers and four Community Ambassadors.

15 December 2011, National Trust, Birmingham Regional Office, The Custard Factory, Gibb Street, Birmingham.

INTERVIEWEE 7 – *Project Manager for the National Trust responsible for diversity in the Birmingham portfolio.*

10 January 2012, National Trust, 55-63 Hurst Street/50-54 Inge Street, Birmingham, West Midlands.

INTERVIEWEE 8 – *Member of Community Partnerships Team at the British Museum. The team consists of thirteen staff: one full-time, four part-time and the others on zero hour contracts.*

16 April 2013, British Museum, Great Russell Street, London.

INTERVIEWEE 9 – *Member of the curatorial team at the London Transport Museum. The museum has ten curators in total.*

16 April 2013, London Transport Museum, Covent Garden Piazza, London.

INTERVIEWEE 10 – *Senior Member of the learning team at the National Trust.*

13 September 2012, National Trust, Chedworth Roman Villa, Gloucestershire.

INTERVIEWEE 11 – *Group of three volunteers involved at the National Trust's Birmingham Back to Backs property.*

31 January 2012, National Trust, 55-63 Hurst Street/50-54 Inge Street, Birmingham, West Midlands.

INTERVIEWEE 12 – *Curator at Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery.*

7 September 2012, Birmingham Museums Trust, Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, Chamberlain Square, Birmingham.

INTERVIEWEE 13 – *Group of five academics researching aspects of the transatlantic slave trade at UCL.*

25 September 2013, UCL Department of History, 23-26 Gordon Square, London.

INTERVIEWEE 14 – *Policy Advisor for the Heritage Lottery Fund based in London.*

10 September 2012, Heritage Lottery Fund. Telephone Interview.

Appendix B: Consent form completed by those involved in semi-structured research interviews

Candidate consent form

Project Title:

Review of heritage programmes in England that are designed to engage with Black and minority ethnic (BME) groups.

I have agreed to be interviewed as part of this PhD research project. I consent that information provided can be used as a part of this research. All personal details of the candidate will remain confidential unless further permission is granted. The candidate reserves the right to withdraw their consent any time.

Signed (Investigator)

.....

Signed (Candidate)

.....

Appendix C: Core questions for semi-structured research interviews.

Background

- Can you please tell me what your role is at your organisation?
- What kind of audience does your organisation mostly cater for?

General

- Does your organisation have a remit for engaging with under-represented audiences? If so, how are they identified and for how long has this been the case?
- Again – if so, how has the approach to this work changed during your time with the organisation?
- Are VC audiences represented proportionately as visitors and staff at your organisation (if this information is recorded)?
- Have you run projects specifically with the remit to encourage more under-represented audiences to visit your museum? Example; what audience?
- If so – how was the project funded?

Wider industry

- Do you think modern interpretations of England's heritage reflect an idea of contemporary diversity contrasted with a homogeneous cultural past, regardless of the intentions of the interpretations?
- Is it socially helpful to suggest through heritage that British/English identity has long been fluid? Do you believe this is the case?
- Do you think British/English heritage offers the best value (financial, social) if utilised as a tourism product or a social leveller?

Appendix D: Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery Visitor Survey.

‘Birmingham: its people, its history’: Representing multi-ethnic England in Heritage

This survey is part of a University of Birmingham PhD research project analysing the way in which museums and built heritage sites in England represent historical ethnic diversity in the country. The survey aims to identify how the exhibition galleries at Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery - ‘Birmingham: its people, its history’ - can be considered to be inclusive of both contemporary and historical ethnic diversity in the city.

Please complete this survey following a visit to the galleries. The museum is located in Chamberlain Square in Birmingham's city centre. For further details, including opening hours visit www.bmag.org.uk

This survey asks visitors to consider how well the galleries inform them about who has contributed towards the making of Birmingham.

This is an anonymous survey. All data collected will be kept strictly confidential and used only by the researcher, David Callaghan for academic research, and by the research supervisor, Dr John Carman and other academics responsible for assessing the final thesis. All authorised parties have the same duty of confidentiality to you, the respondent, in accordance with current university guidelines and guidance from the UK Research Councils.

Please forward this survey to anyone else who might wish to visit, or already has visited these galleries. Please do not comment if you are an employee of Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery.

By completing this survey you are consenting to your answers being used for the purposes of this research project.

If you would like to contact the researcher or the supervisor for this project contact details are:

Researcher

David Callaghan

College of Arts and Law

University of Birmingham

Supervisor

Dr John Carman

Arts Building

University of Birmingham

Please check the appropriate response unless otherwise indicated.

1. Before this visit, when was the last time you visited Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery?
 - Within the last 12 months
 - More than 12 months ago
 - I have never been there before

2. When was the last time you visited any museum?
 - Within the last 12 months
 - More than 12 months ago
 - I have never been to a museum before

3. If you do visit Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery what are your main reasons?
- Visit the temporary galleries
 - Visit the permanent galleries
 - Use the restaurant
 - Visit the shop
 - I don't usually visit the museum
4. How knowledgeable, on a score of 1-5 would you say you were about Birmingham's social history generally before visiting the gallery? 1 being not knowledgeable at all and 5 being very knowledgeable.
- 1
 - 2
 - 3
 - 4
 - 5
5. Where did you learn most about Birmingham's history prior to your visit to these galleries?
- Primary and/or secondary education
 - University education
 - Local history society
 - Birmingham libraries
 - Birmingham museums
 - Other
6. Choosing from the following options, which three historical themes would you say were most prominent within the 'Birmingham: its people, its history' galleries?
- Childhood
 - Migration

- Health
- Politics
- Industry

7. Which of the five sections of the galleries was the most interesting to you?

- Origins (up to 1700)
- A Stranger's Guide
- Forward (1830-1909)
- An Expanding City (1909-1945)
- Your Birmingham (1945-Today)
- Don't know

8. If you did specify a particular section of the galleries what, in particular, was the information you found interesting and why?

9. Within which section/s of the galleries did you find information relating to Black and other Minority Ethnic people living in, or associated with, Birmingham?

- Origins (up to 1700)
- A Stranger's Guide
- Forward (1830-1909)
- An Expanding City (1909-1945)
- Your Birmingham (1945-Today)
- I didn't see such information

10. Has your view of the historical role of Black and other Minority Ethnic people in Birmingham changed as a result of your visit?

- Yes
- No

11. If you answered yes, how has your view changed?

12. Are there any particular groups of people you feel are not included or are under-represented in these galleries?
13. Is feeling represented in the historical interpretation at museums, galleries and other heritage sites an important factor in why you visit them?

If you do not visit museums or other heritage sites please answer N/A

- Yes
 - No
 - N/A
14. Do you think that 'Birmingham: its people, its history' represents you?
- Yes
 - No

15. Please state your gender

- Male
- Female

16. Your age: please tick appropriate age range.

- Under 18
- 19-30
- 31-50
- Over 50

17. Do you regard yourself as having a limiting disability?

- Yes
- No

- Prefer not to answer

18. When you visited this exhibition were you...?

- On your own
- With family (no children under 18)
- With family (with children under 18)
- With a friend/s
- As part of an organised group visit
- Other

19. What is your ethnicity?

*Ethnicity: *Ethnic group options are taken from the Office of National Statistics recommendations*

- Asian – Bangladeshi
- Asian – British
- Asian – Chinese
- Asian – Indian
- Asian – Pakistani
- Asian – Other
- Black – African
- Black – British
- Black – Caribbean
- Black – Other
- Mixed – White and Black African
- Mixed – White and Asian
- Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
- Mixed – Other
- White – British
- White – Irish
- White – Other
- Other ethnic background
- Prefer not to answer

Appendix E: Feedback for SCAWDI visit to Charlecote Park in relation to National Trust's *Whose Story?* project: 16 April 2011.

This visit was organised between David Callaghan, Heritage Officer for the Sparkbrook Caribbean and African Women's Development Initiative (SCAWDI) and the *Whose Story?* project, specifically Outreach Officer for Charlecote Park, Glenis Williams. The purpose of the visit was for SCAWDI members to follow the new trail booklet for Charlecote produced by the *Whose Story?* project that introduces the visitor to some of the objects in their house with multicultural links. The booklet is called 'Treasures Travelled' and is sold for £4.50 on-site. On the visit, SCAWDI members were met at the property by a Community Ambassador, Alycia Smith-Howard, who provided us with a copy of the new trail booklet. Below is the feedback from SCAWDI members regarding the group visit. I have broken it down into feedback regarding the property and 'Treasures Travelled' more specifically.

Property

Visitor 1

'Both my daughter and I found the trip enjoyable and informative. I have quite a short concentration span but did find myself taking time to go around the rooms and also asking questions about the history of the house and relevance of the room contents etc.'

'My daughter also was participative which I think it is of vital importance for the younger generation of my daughter's age group to be aware and enquiring of all types of history. It was also good to get out of the inner-city and appreciate how pretty parts of England actually is.'

Visitor 2

'The grounds were a joy to explore, it was especially nice to see some wildlife and various sculptures dotted around. The carriage exhibition was informative and a nice addition to the other exhibits.'

The house was well presented and staff informative on the way round. The diverse furniture in the house made it more interesting and added to its character.

The tour around the other points of interest as well such as the family museum and shop where again the staff were very informative and passionate was also very enjoyable. It was great to have the opportunity to be guided round and introduced to the various areas of the property and Alycia's pointers were appreciated.'

Visitor 3

'The grounds of the property were beautiful and it was fascinating to see different interpretations of history on show throughout the property.'

The visit to Charlecote was very informative... It might be useful for information available elsewhere such as the Heritage, Diversity and Interpretation

report produced in 2006 (as part of the WS? Project) to be made available to visitors wanting to know more about these international connections'

Visitor 4

'Me and my son felt that the location was excellent, the house was clean and the out buildings had plenty of information to read.

My son found the Treasure Trail quite good, really enjoyed the topics and everything in the book was relevant to the house, the only thing that he found quite confusing was the pages that had the question regarding where the items came from (around the world). He said it would have been better if the countries had their names because without them he found it hard to work out which country was which.

I would recommend visiting Charlecote Manor but with reservations as a few of the 'staff' I found were very rude, when I or my son asked questions, a few even walked away without responding.'

Visitor 5

Visitor 5 provided feedback only relating to the trail.

'Treasures Travelled'

Visitor 1

'I found the page in the trail literature which described the (Captain Lucy) picture as patronising and it was if it was worded at an audience that have never encountered or seen black people which defeats the objective of opening national trust properties to different audiences. It is such a pity that in 2011 we can be seen as novelties and not fully functional human beings contributing to society.'

Visitor 2

'The Trail was nicely presented and it was good to see efforts made to highlight some of the different cultural aspects of the property.'

'However, it was quite difficult to follow and some important information seemed to have been missed from the text. For instance, the Indian Dress Sword information in the house made no reference (that I could find) to it belonging to Tipu Sultan and so the link with the sword and looking at the hilt for the Tiger is not obvious. It was not until the next room (Ebony bedroom) that we found any information regarding the Sultan.'

The information provided for the Kneller painting I felt was not presented as well as it could be. Mentioning the metal collar without its significance of being a slave collar should not be made as things like this should be brought into the open to help people understand the practice of slavery.'

Finally, the map was not easy to place the objects on, especially without country borders. I would be surprised if many children could determine different geographical

areas in India and Italy for instance without some guidance. The Caribbean link was also tenuous and no mention in the house or Trail was made to the painting, or its subjects coming from the region. The suggestion was that the boy was from here but this is not based on any evidence and again, is not helpful without any information regarding how or why he may have come to England from here, if indeed he did.'

Overall, the Trail has a lot of potential but I feel that these points could make it open to criticism from those who hope that it educates visitors as well as stimulate.'

Visitor 3

- *Booklet difficult for adults so would be difficult for Young people/schools to complete*
- *More suitable for upper key stage 2/3 pupils more able pupils etc.*
- *Too many words*
- *Map assumes that pupils know the countries, (would be easier if the countries were included on map)*
- *The Great Hall questions may be seen as offensive and confusing. Portrait of Captain Lucy and the black servant (lower down question asks "can you see the little black boy" reader may think that people/pupils may think that they are looking for two different people) reference needs to be consistent Black servant or black boy .*
- *Booklet difficult to walk round and fill in due to design (opening up and folding back difficult to do).*

Visitor 4

My son found the Treasure Trail quite good, really enjoyed the topics everything in the book was relevant to the house, the only thing that he found confusing was the pages that had the question regarding where the items came from (around the world). He said it would have been better if the countries had their names because without them he found it hard to work-out which country was which.

Visitor 5

OVERVIEW

The booklet is not cheap at £4.50 but is well printed on good quality paper and of an easily transportable size. For the most part, the drawings are attractive and informative, and the graphic design works well – for example, the way in which a photographic image of an object to be spotted is placed in a drawn image of the room in which it is to be found. The booklet represents a laudable attempt to engage visitors through a treasure hunt based on items in the house that have been brought from across the world. It is intended for families as they go round the house and there is a useful follow-up section for children to complete at home. There are however serious questions to be asked about the precise purpose of the booklet, how it is to be used, and what it actually says.

WHAT THE BOOKLET COMMUNICATES

The Captain Lucy painting is not in the left hand corner (as stated in the text) but above the door (as in the drawing). The text tiptoes round whether or not the black boy was a slave and by-passes the mystery of whether he is or is not the Philip Lucy

christened in 1735 – surely an opportunity for posing questions that children could be asked to think about?

The Indian dress sword in Drawing Room presents two problems. The label says nothing about either Tipu Sultan or his preference for tiger images, but presumably the laminated sheet for the room does. If not, there is no point in asking the question as the answer can simply be looked up in the back of the booklet. The text neglects to state that the sword would have been looted from Tipu Sultan's palace after he was killed (defending his own territory, rather than rising against the British) at the Battle of Seringapatam in 1799. If the booklet really is about how things came to Charlecote, some historical accuracy - especially on how nations interacted with each other in the past, even if that is problematic - is necessary.

I apologise for the length, detail and negativity of these comments. I felt however that it would be of no value to simply say the booklet is overall a poor piece of work without substantiating why. Furthermore, I feel strongly that a booklet published under 'Whose Story?' and intended for use by families as an educational tool, should have been better researched in terms of both content and usage, and better presented.

Appendix F: Heritage Lottery Fund information relating to BAME projects



Data supplied to David Callaghan from Heritage Lottery Fund

Data: 01 April 1994 – 31 March 2012

1. Data on projects led by and benefitting black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) communities

HLF defines the term BAME as people living in the UK who define themselves as belonging to a particular ethnic group using the categories listed in our application form monitoring documents. We define BAME-led organisations as being where the lead applicant/grantees main objective is to work with and benefit these communities.

Since 1994 across all programmes including Awards for All, more than £125 million has been awarded to over 2700 projects led by or benefitting BAME communities.

Of these, 61% (1,637) of projects have been led by BAME groups; they have received 38% (£48.8 million) of the total value of these grants.

See appendix 1 and 2 for tables 1-6, highlighting our funding in this area by Country and Region, Financial year and Programme.

2. Data on projects related to slavery, led by and benefitting Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) communities

We have awarded more than £15.5million to over 295 projects related to the abolition of the slave trade and exploring the subject of slavery in general.

Of these 61% (119) of projects have been led by BAME groups; they have received 27% (£4.1million) of the total value of these grants.

These figures do not include a grant award of £11.6million to redevelop the Museum of Bristol which included a large gallery exploring Bristol's role in the Slave trade.

See appendix 3 for tables 7-12 highlighting our funding in this area by Country and Region, Financial year and Heritage area.

Aretha George

September 2012

Appendix 1: HLF funding for projects led by and benefitting BAME communities (tables 1-3). Data supplied 1 April 1994 to 31 March 2012.

Table1: Number and value of awards led by and benefitting BAME communities by country and region

Country and Region	Total number of projects	Total value (£)
East Midlands	210	8,618,470
Eastern	187	5,760,964
London	1033	55,004,741
North East	65	1,492,052
North West	271	11,565,046
Northern Ireland	16	1,157,900
Scotland	57	3,977,312
South East	231	6,367,399
South West	144	5,996,490
Wales	55	1,986,971
West Midlands	247	15,664,369
Yorkshire and The Humber	188	9,793,949
Grand Total	2,704	127,385,663

Table 2: Number and value of awards led by and benefitting BAME communities by financial year

Financial Year	Total number of projects	Total value (£)
1995-96	3	260,250
1996-97	2	473,700
1997-98	4	480,300
1998-99	12	662,150
1999-00	48	1,339,788
2000-01	77	1,348,485
2001-02	136	4,269,669
2002-03	207	3,669,522
2003-04	278	5,999,103
2004-05	313	9,999,137
2005-06	305	14,986,157
2006-07	340	13,888,191
2007-08	375	17,607,544
2008-09	190	18,467,464
2009-10	138	10,523,503
2010-11	126	6,447,300
2011-12	150	16,963,400
Grand Total	2,704	127,385,663

Table 3: Number and value of awards led by and benefitting BAME communities by programme

Programme	Total number of projects	Total value (£)
Awards for All, Home Front Recall, Millennium Festival Fund and Micro Grants	1,189	6,376,658
Collecting Cultures	4	513,500
Heritage Grants	168	67,288,167
Joint Places of Worship	4	570,350
Local Heritage Initiative	30	558,567
MGAF	7	744,800
Parks for People	1	2,685,500
Parks for People Project Planning	1	30,000
Project Planning Grants	11	451,645
RPOW England	19	1,476,142
Skills for the Future	5	1,590,000
Townscape Heritage Initiative	1	282,000
Young Roots	335	7,495,530
Your Heritage	929	37,322,805
Grand Total	2,704	127,385,663

Appendix 2: HLF funding to projects led by BAME groups (tables 4-6). Data supplied 1 April 1994 to 31 March 2012.

Table 4: Number and value of awards led by BAME groups by country and region

Country and Region	Total number of projects	Total value (£)
East Midlands	145	3,033,454
Eastern	104	2,471,366
London	702	23,622,307
North East	29	510,946
North West	158	4,368,898
Northern Ireland	4	456,000
Scotland	24	2,408,709
South East	132	2,837,781
South West	70	1,137,364
Wales	28	492,546
West Midlands	144	4,861,987
Yorkshire and the Humber	97	2,635,999
Grand Total	1,637	48,837,357

Table 5: Number and value of awards led by BAME groups by financial year

Financial year	Total number of projects	Total value (£)
1995-96	3	260,250
1996-97	2	473,700
1997-98	3	438,300
1998-99	5	337,550
1999-00	37	659,323
2000-01	59	538,095
2001-02	99	2,432,038
2002-03	157	2,033,817
2003-04	174	3,178,035
2004-05	218	2,834,492
2005-06	197	8,103,367
2006-07	180	6,187,301
2007-08	199	7,157,474
2008-09	82	3,682,312
2009-10	62	3,856,703
2010-11	72	2,906,700
2011-12	88	3,757,900
Grand Total	1,637	48,837,357

Table 6: Number and value of awards led by BAME groups by programme

Programme	Total number of projects	Total value (£)
Awards for All, Home Front Recall, Millennium Festival Fund and Micro Grants	861	4,594,473
Heritage Grants	58	18,602,042
Joint Places of Worship	4	570,350
Local Heritage Initiative	14	263,218
MGAF	2	350,300
Project Planning Grants	8	328,445
RPOW England	18	1,370,142
Skills for the Future	1	321,400
Young Roots	143	3,306,022
Your Heritage	478	19,130,966
Grand Total	1,637	48,837,357

Appendix 3: HLF funding for projects relating to slavery in general, led by and benefitting BAME communities (tables 7-12). Data supplied 1 April 1994 to 31 March 2012.

Table 7: Number of projects led by and benefitting BAME communities by Country and Region

Country and Region	BAME led	Benefitting BAME communities only	Grand Total
East Midlands	8	4	12
Eastern	13	18	31
London	39	45	84
North East	2	9	11
North West	16	24	40
Northern Ireland		2	2
Scotland	2	11	13
South East	8	11	19
South West	5	19	24
Wales	5	6	11
West Midlands	18	11	29
Yorkshire and The Humber	3	17	20
Grand Total	119	177	296

Table 8: Value of awards led by and benefitting BAME communities by Country and Region

Region	BAME led	Benefitting BAME communities only	Grand Total
East Midlands	252,059	65,610	317,669
Eastern	370,045	797,739	1,167,784
London	1,470,260	1,820,287	3,290,547
North East	72,300	234,712	307,012
North West	268,323	2,422,732	2,691,055
Northern Ireland		44,200	44,200
Scotland	70,600	364,703	435,303
South East	179,155	306,328	485,483
South West	90,020	1,402,700	1,492,720
Wales	60,801	390,600	451,401
West Midlands	842,445	1,704,015	2,546,460
Yorkshire and The Humber	466,500	1,898,100	2,364,600
Grand Total	4,142,508	11,451,726	15,594,234

Table 9: Number of awards led by and benefitting BAME communities by financial year

Financial Year	BAME led	Benefitting BAME communities only	Grand Total
1995-96	1		1
1999-00	1		1
2001-02	1		1
2002-03		1	1
2003-04	2	3	5
2004-05	3	7	10
2005-06	5	8	13
2006-07	25	72	97
2007-08	72	77	149
2008-09	5	7	12
2009-10		1	1
2010-11	1	1	2
2011-12	3		3
Grand Total	119	177	296

Table 10: Value of awards led by and benefitting BAME communities by financial year

Financial Year	BAME led	Benefitting BAME communities only	Grand Total
1995-96	92,400		92,400
1999-00	5,000		5,000
2001-02	10,920		10,920
2002-03		281,000	281,000
2003-04	74,250	56,361	130,611
2004-05	47,040	1,274,400	1,321,440
2005-06	146,200	3,748,600	3,894,800
2006-07	1,860,951	4,239,795	6,100,746
2007-08	1,596,597	1,607,170	3,203,767
2008-09	146,250	176,000	322,250
2009-10		49,500	49,500
2010-11	48,500	18,900	67,400
2011-12	114,400		114,400
Grand Total	4,142,508	11,451,726	15,594,234

Table 11: Number of projects led by and benefitting BAME communities by heritage area

Heritage area	BAME led	Benefitting BAME only	Grand Total
Historic buildings and monuments	1	3	4
Industrial maritime and transport		1	1
Intangible heritage	110	144	254
Land and biodiversity		2	2
Museums libraries archives and collections	8	27	35
Grand Total	119	177	296

Table 12: Value of awards led by and benefitting BAME communities by heritage area

Heritage area	BAME led	Benefitting BAME only	Grand Total
Historic buildings and monuments	20,900	98,100	119,000
Industrial maritime and transport		18,000	18,000
Intangible heritage	3,772,958	5,898,726	9,671,684
Land and biodiversity		869,900	869,900
Museums libraries archives and collections	348,650	4,567,000	4,915,650
Grand Total	4,142,508	11,451,726	15,594,234

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