Developing a Destination Archive in London

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WE ARE LONDON'S ARCHIVE
About Us

- London Metropolitan Archives (LMA) is the regional local government archive for Greater London
- Part of the City of London Corporation, the local authority for the ‘Square Mile’
- Over 100km of collections across two sites
- 1067 to the present
Our Spaces
Current Visitors

- Researchers
- Exhibition visitors
- Event visitors
- Groups
  - Schools, Universities, Lifelong learning, Community
Existing Offers

- Collections research
- Exhibitions
- Events
  - Talks
  - Conferences
  - Tours
  - Book group
- School sessions
- Mediatheque - onsite only digital
- Annual events
  - Open House
  - London History Day

But are we a destination for experience seekers with leisure time in London?
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Evaluation

- Pre Covid – 25k to 30k visits annually
- Post Covid visit patterns
- Growth in use of original documents, reduction in reference source visitors

- Audience research 2022
  - 800 current users
  - 2000 potential users
WHAT DID WE LEARN?
Audience Research

Current audience – survey respondents:
- 57% male
- 78% over 61
- 69% retired
- 66% based in London or South East region
- 18% live in nearby areas of London
- 97% visitor satisfaction
- 83% attend to research
- 76% interested in exhibitions
- 70% interested in image collections

They want:
- a café
- longer opening hours
- more digital resources
Future audience – survey respondents:

- 2000 people, representative of population in terms of age and gender
- All interested in cultural activities
- 74% live or work locally to LMA
- Events they would engage with – exhibitions and famous documents
- Top ‘history’ interests were war, crime and the development of the city
- Some found our name confusing – ‘metropolitan’ links to the tube and the police.
WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR LMA?
Challenges

• The future research group had pretty low awareness of us
• London is a busy leisure market, with lots of great offers
• Our main building
• Lack of facilities
• Limited opening hours for working people
• Our primary website doesn’t sell the service as a great destination
Creating an archive ‘destination’

- More work to define our audiences, understanding new audiences and improving our offer for current audiences
- Developing a new events program focused on leisure visitors – broad, accessible, repeatable
- Building our exhibitions program – with more resources and development time
- Developing new event formats with an archives usp – cinema, beer festival, supper club...
- Improving our public spaces – new facilities for exhibitions and groups, creating a welcoming, accessible space...a café?
- Marketing
- Brand and identity
THANK YOU

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