

Rural Museums Network Building Relevance Programme

Report on the Susie Fisher Research Programme

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Prepared for:

Rural Museums Network MERL University of Reading Redlands Road Reading RG1 5EX

Prepared by:

Susie Fisher The Susie Fisher Group 44 St. Leonards Road London SW17 7NA Tel: 020 8392 2343

Fax: 020 8392 2096

susie@thesusiefishergroup.co.uk

Four Sources Of Input

Audience Views

- Relationship with the countryside
- Visitor experience
- Product

Desk Research

- Recent trends
- · Audience breakdown
- · Performance of related sectors



Creative forum of professionals

- · Directions for development
- Parallel experiences
- Perspective of fellow professionals

RMN

- Specialists
- · Collections expertise
- Guardians of the tradition
- Implementers

Intention

To use these ideas as a platform

To ask 'How could this benefit Rural Museums?'

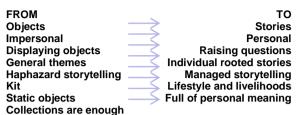
A RICHER VISITOR EXPERIENCE USING PHYSICAL INVOLVEMENT

FROM TO Hands off Hands on Intellectual Intellectual, physical, emotional Food in the abstract Real food, eating Boring Entertaining Visual only Animated, hands on, participant Object focused Visitor focused Single experience **Textured experience** Dead Alive and growing

MORE WELCOMING AND INCLUSIVE FOR URBAN VISITORS

FROM TO Excluding Welcoming Country audience White Multi-ethnic

WILLINGNESS TO GET INVOLVED IN PEOPLES' STORIES



A WIDER ROLE

A CENTRE FOR COUNTRYSIDE NATURE, LANDSCAPE, FOOD, HERITAGE

FROM TO
Rural Countryside
Machinery Nature, landscape, soil, people
Farming only Guardian of local identity, heritage
Agriculture Food, food chains, trendy foods

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS FOR RURAL MUSEUMS

WIDER STAFF SKILLS TRAINING

FROM TO
Backwater staff
Curatorial training Empowered staff
Curatorial/education/
storytelling training

MORE ENGAGED WITH THE WORLD AT LARGE

FROM TO Narrow focus **Broad focus** Rural City and country Self contained Connected to the world Excluding Including **UK** only **Third World** Accepting Challenging **Apolitical** Political History, preservation Life's big issues Picture of the past Contrast with the present

TECHNOLOGY CONFIDENT

FROM TO
Low tech
Old technology Hi-tech, virtual web
New technology

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH EACH OTHER AND THE COMMERCIAL WORLD

TO **FROM Partnership** Single museums Leadership Isolated initiatives Multiple financing Local authority only **Business partners/sponsors** Academically aloof **Smart** Naive Big time Small time Partners with supermarkets Hostile to supermarkets **High profile** Low profile Clustered with others Out on their own High quality

MODERN, EXCITING, SURPRISING

FROM TO Staid Edgy, shocking More kick Old relics Bland Contrasting Exciting, Wow! Dull Safe Danger Closed in Fresh air **Anonymous** Celebrity Poky Spacious Still Moving

MORE PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

FROM TO
Hands off Hands on
Factual Foody
Inactive Active, demonstrations
Looking Experiencing

MORE FUN ON THE DAY

FROM TO
Glum Smiling
Serious Fun
Dull Bright
Arid A treat

AUDIENCE WISH LIST

MORE MODERN TECHNOLOGICALLY AND FINANCIALLY ASTUTE

TO **FROM** Modern Old fashioned Young Old Technology confident No technology Up to date Yesteryear Talking to banks Willow weaving Reality Mvth Hot deals Expensive

ANIMALS, NATURE

Close to animals and plants Seeing and recognising them. Relationships and feelings Spiritual belonging to the land Who depends on whom?

CONTRASTS THEN & NOW

Parallel worlds, the unknown. Then and now, farming life, town life. Surprises, changes, differences. The unexpected, evolution.

WHAT THEMES INTEREST THIS AUDIENCE?

TOWN & COUNTRY

How do their ways of life compare?
What does each assume?
What don't they know about each other?
Townspeople buying up the countryside, country ways being marginalised
Wars, power struggles, success stories.

PERSONAL CHALLENGE

Reality check. Back to our roots
People have grown too insulated, soft
Could we make a living from the soil if we had to?
Could we do the heroic things they did?
After the Apocalypse?

FOOD

Where does it come from, how do you grow it? How does it get to us? What does it taste like? Tasting the best

Waitrose Food Fairs UK, post apocalypse How much of a reality is the City/ Country divide? **Travelling exhibitions** in town Sustainable living Zones of different characters in the Museum **SOME IDEAS TO PLAY WITH Subsistence** farming in Africa **Horse dentistry** in France Ray Mears, the voice of the interpreter Children's play area designed as a rolling mill Museum brand Ice-cream

Sponsorship

Taste 20 rare

varieties of apple

Probiotics

Questions To Ask Yourself

FUNDAMENTALS

What is unique in my collection?

Whose stories am I the guardian of?

How is my account connected to the wider world?

Where is my funding coming from?

Who are the partners who could help me?

How can our operation be made sustainable?

AUDIENCE PROPOSITION

Which audiences?

What is my audience proposition?

(How much is core, how much is individual?)

Which people are involved?

Which stories will I tell?

What is the most evocative name for my site?

How will I let my audiences know?

IMPLEMENTATION

What mix of visitor experience?

How can modern media help?

What should I measure?

What is the best role for each of my staff?

What training will mystaff need?

