



Arts & Humanities
Research Council



1807 Commemorated

The abolition of the slave trade

The British Empire and Commonwealth Museum, Bristol

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Introduction

As part of the work of **1807 Commemorated**, the large-scale audience surveys carried out at partner museums included specific questions regarding the demographics of museum visitors. This information reveals the types of visitors to the museum and their motivations for visiting. This forms a highly useful resource for questions of social inclusion and the outreach of museums, both within specific regions and within the country as a whole

Visitor demographics

Gender

During the period 22nd to 23rd July 2007, 45 male and 47 female visitors were interviewed at the British Empire and Commonwealth Museum in Bristol (fig.1).

Gender: The British Empire and Commonwealth Museum, Bristol

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	45	46.9
Female	47	49.0
Total	92	95.8
Missing	4	4.2
Full Total	96	100

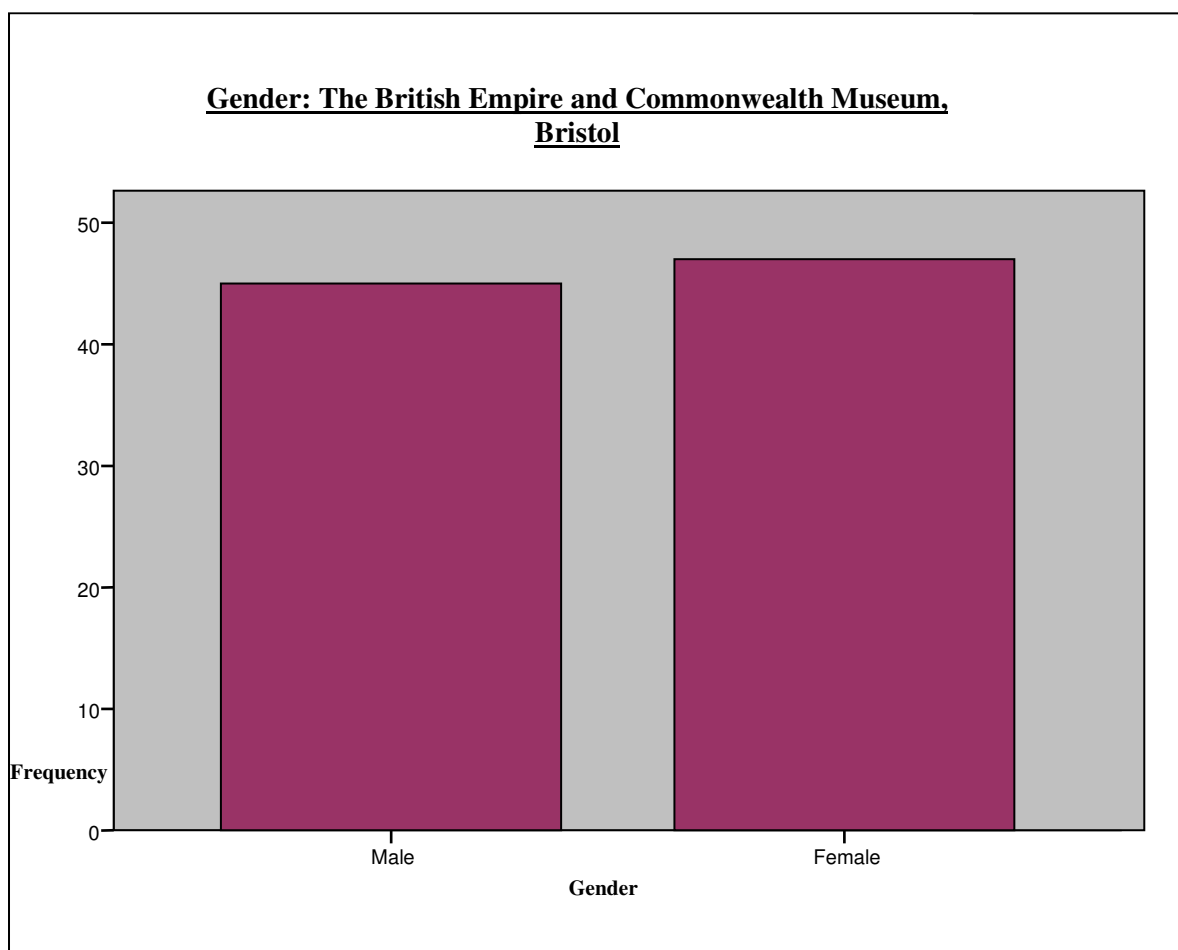


fig. 1: The British Empire and Commonwealth Museum, Bristol: Gender

Age Distribution

The age of the majority of the respondents (21.9%) was between 45 and 65 (fig.2).

Age Groups: The British Empire and Commonwealth Museum, Bristol

Age Group	Frequency	Percent
16 or under	4	4.2
16-24	7	7.3
25-34	13	13.5
35-44	14	14.6
45-54	21	21.9
55-64	16	16.7
65 or over	21	21.9
Total	96	100.0

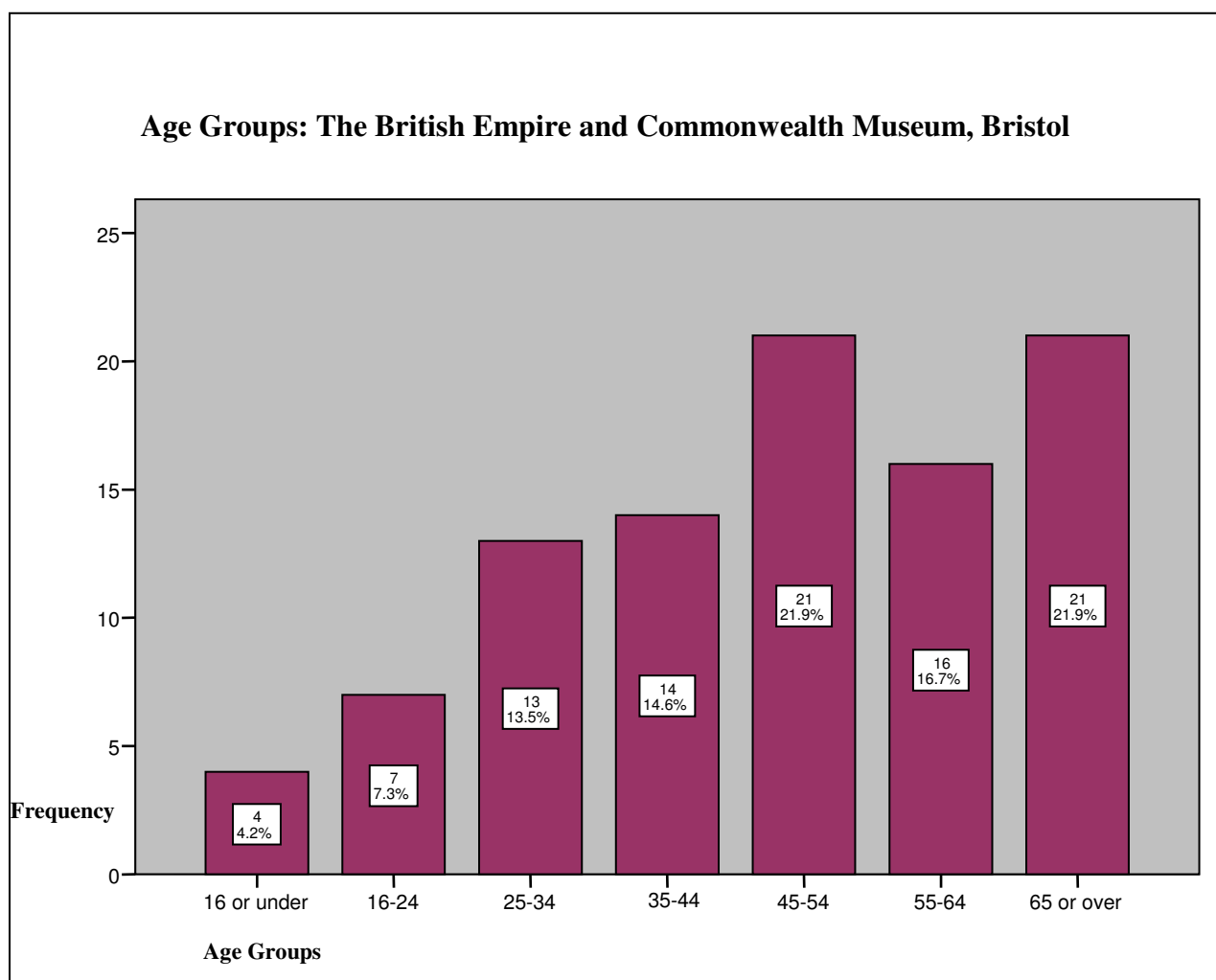


Fig. 2: Age groups at the British Empire and Commonwealth Museum, Bristol

Occupations

In Bristol the majority of the respondents stated that they had a higher managerial and professional occupation (37.5%) (fig. 3).

Occupation: British Empire and Commonwealth Museum, Bristol

Occupation	Frequency	Percent
Higher managerial and professional occupations	36	37.5
Lower managerial and professional occupations	32	33.3
Intermediate occupations	7	7.3
Small employers and own account workers	2	2.1
Lower supervisory and technical occupations	2	2.1
Semi-routine occupations	5	5.2
Never worked and long-term unemployed	11	11.5
Total	95	99.0
Missing	1	1.0
Full Total	96	100

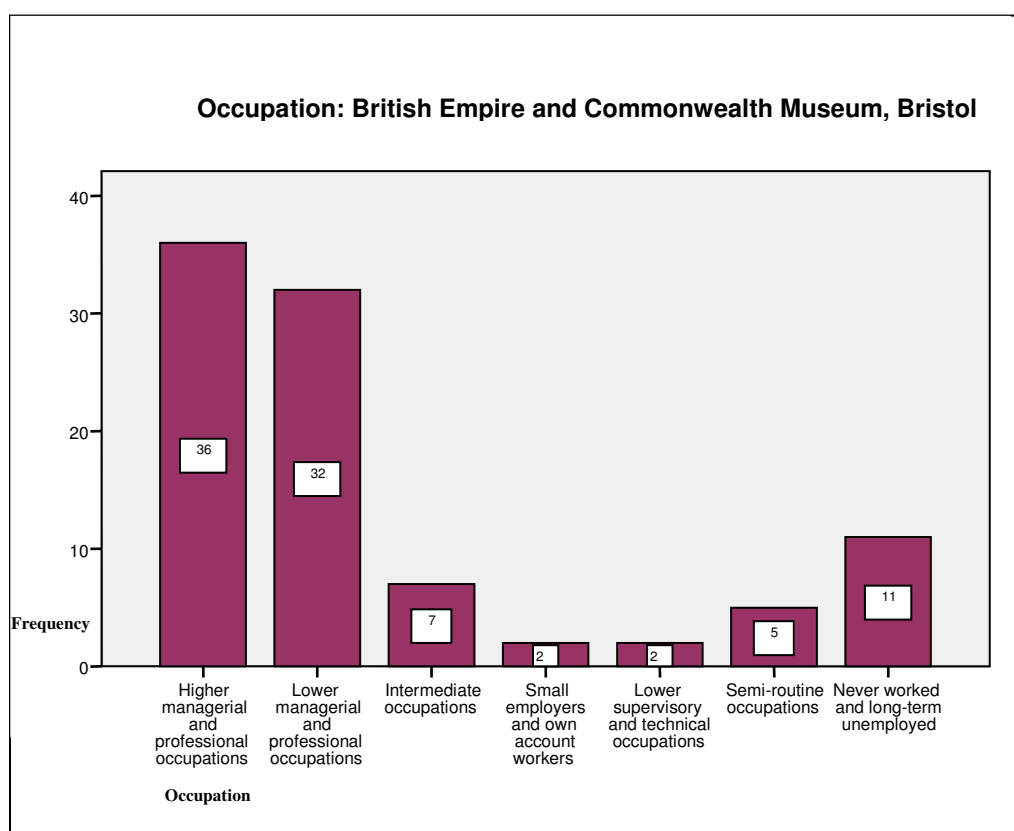


fig. 3: Occupation: British Empire and Commonwealth Museum, Bristol

Education

The majority of the visitors have a university degree (65.6%), a proportion which is much higher than the national average (46%).¹ Only 6.3% of the visitors did not have any formal qualifications (fig. 4).

Education: The British Empire and Commonwealth Museum, Bristol

Education	Frequency	Percent
GCSE/O Levels	10	10.4
A Levels	9	9.4
Undergraduate University Degree	26	27.1
Postgraduate University Degree	37	38.5
Trade/Technical Qualification	8	8.3
No formal qualifications	6	6.3
Total	96	100.0

Education: British Empire and Commonwealth Museum, Bristol

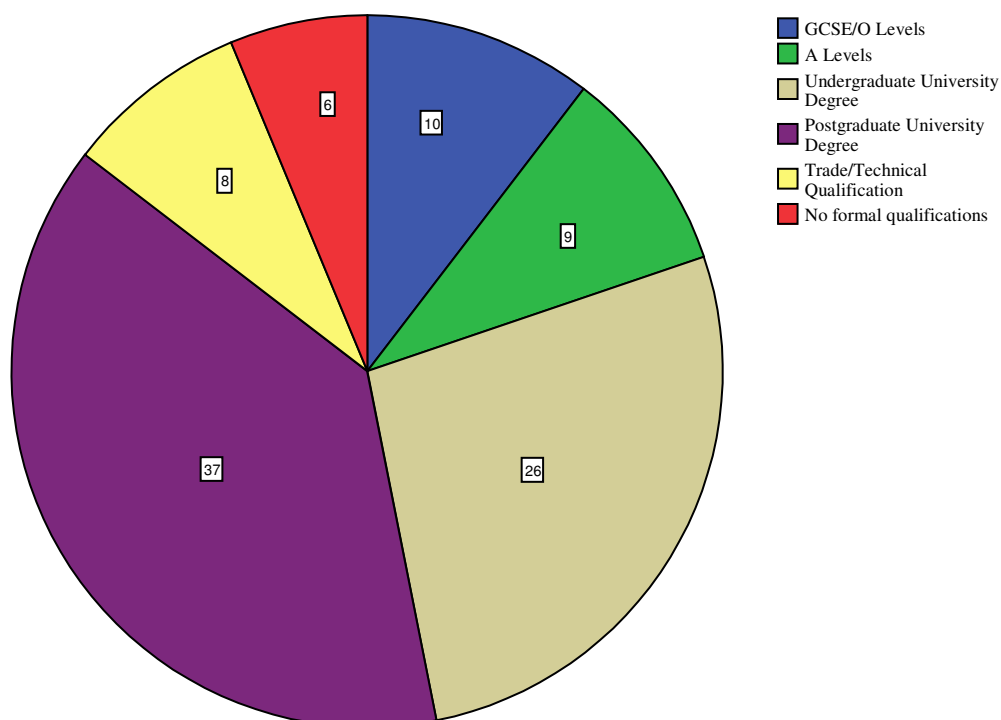


fig. 4: Educational qualifications of visitors at the British Empire and Commonwealth Museum, Bristol

¹ For information on national results regarding visitor profiles in museums see Renaissance Hub Exit Survey 2006

Ethnicity

The majority of the respondents defined themselves as white or white British (79.2%) whilst only 16 visitors (16.7%) defined themselves as black or from an ethnicity minority (fig. 5).²

Ethnic background: The British Empire and Commonwealth Museum, Bristol

Ethnicity	Frequency	Percent
White/British	76	79.2
BME/British	16	16.7
Other international	4	4.2
Total	96	100.0

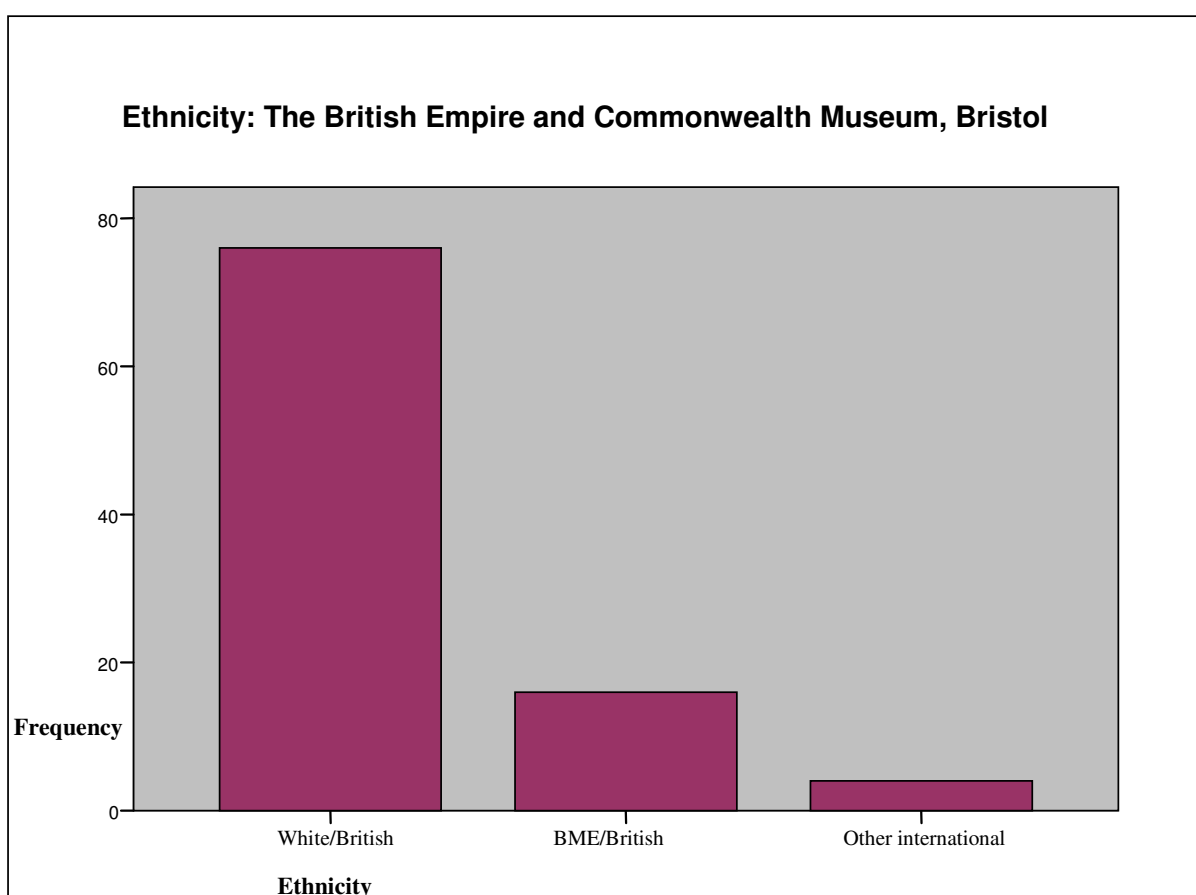


fig. 5: Ethnic background: The British Empire and Commonwealth Museum, Bristol

² Statistics taken from Commission for Racial Equality, 2007.

Visitor profiles

Party profile

The majority of the interviewees (31.3%) visited the museum with other adults while only 7.3% of the respondents visited the museum in organised groups (fig. 6).

Group Type: The British Empire and Commonwealth Museum, Bristol

Group Type	Frequency	Percent
On your own	19	19.8
As group of adults	27	28.1
Adult family group	30	31.3
Family with children	12	12.5
Organised group	7	7.3
Total	95	99.0
Missing	1	1.0
Full Total	96	100

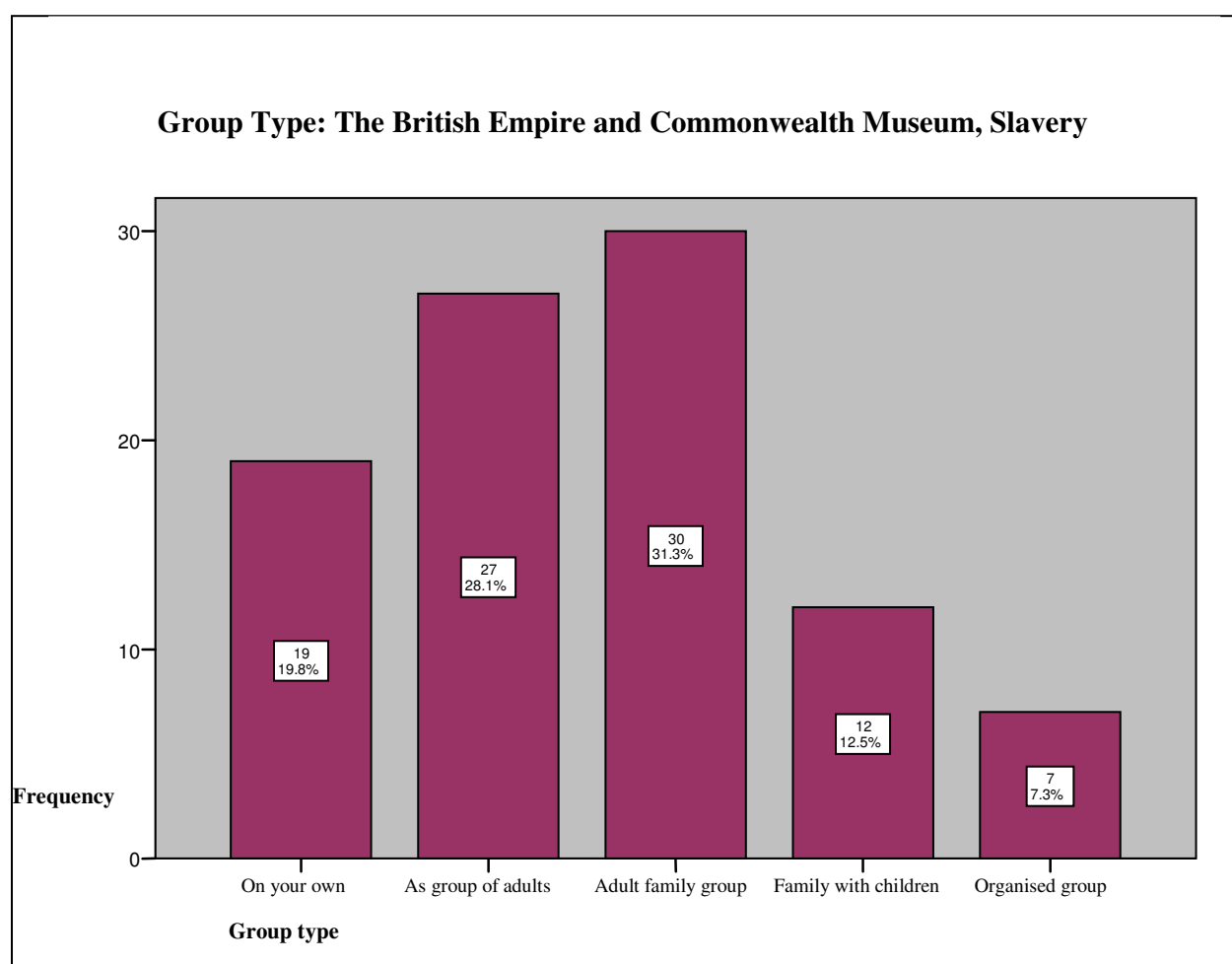


fig. 6: Visitor group type: The British Empire and Commonwealth Museum, Bristol

Origin

More than eight in ten visitors (84.4%) to the Bristol museum come from the UK. About a third of visitors (32.3%) come from Bristol, a proportion that is larger than the national result (27%) (fig. 7).

Origin: Bristol Commonwealth and Empire Museum

Origin		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Local area	31	32.3
	England	44	45.8
	UK	6	6.3
	Overseas	12	12.5
	Total	93	96.9
Missing	99.00	3	3.1
Total		96	100.0

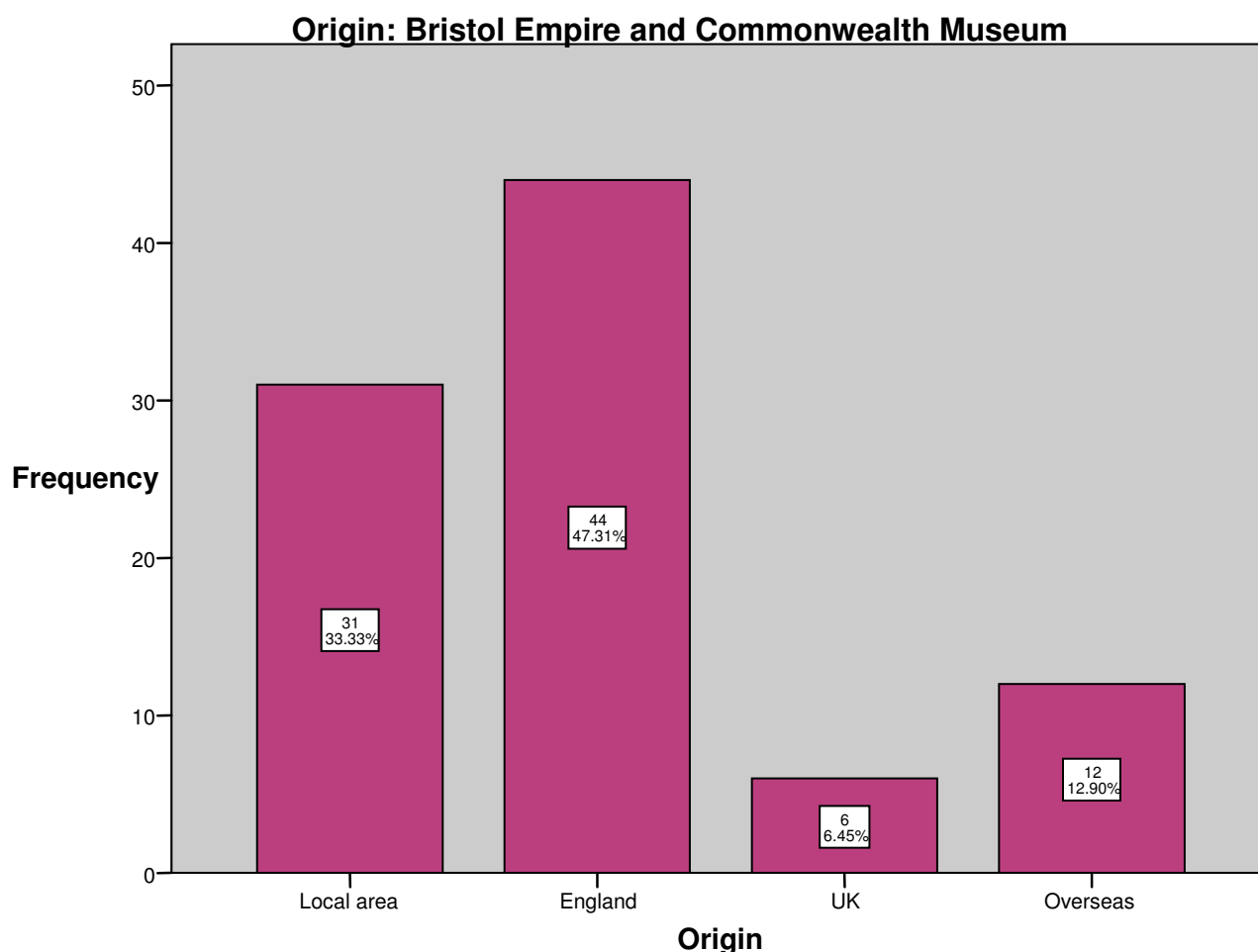


fig. 7: The Bristol Empire and Commonwealth Museum: Origin

Around six out of ten visitors (61.5%) stated that they travelled from a home address (fig.8).

Did you travel from home or from a holiday address?

Response	Frequency	Percent
Home	59	61.5
Holiday	37	38.5
Total	96	100.0

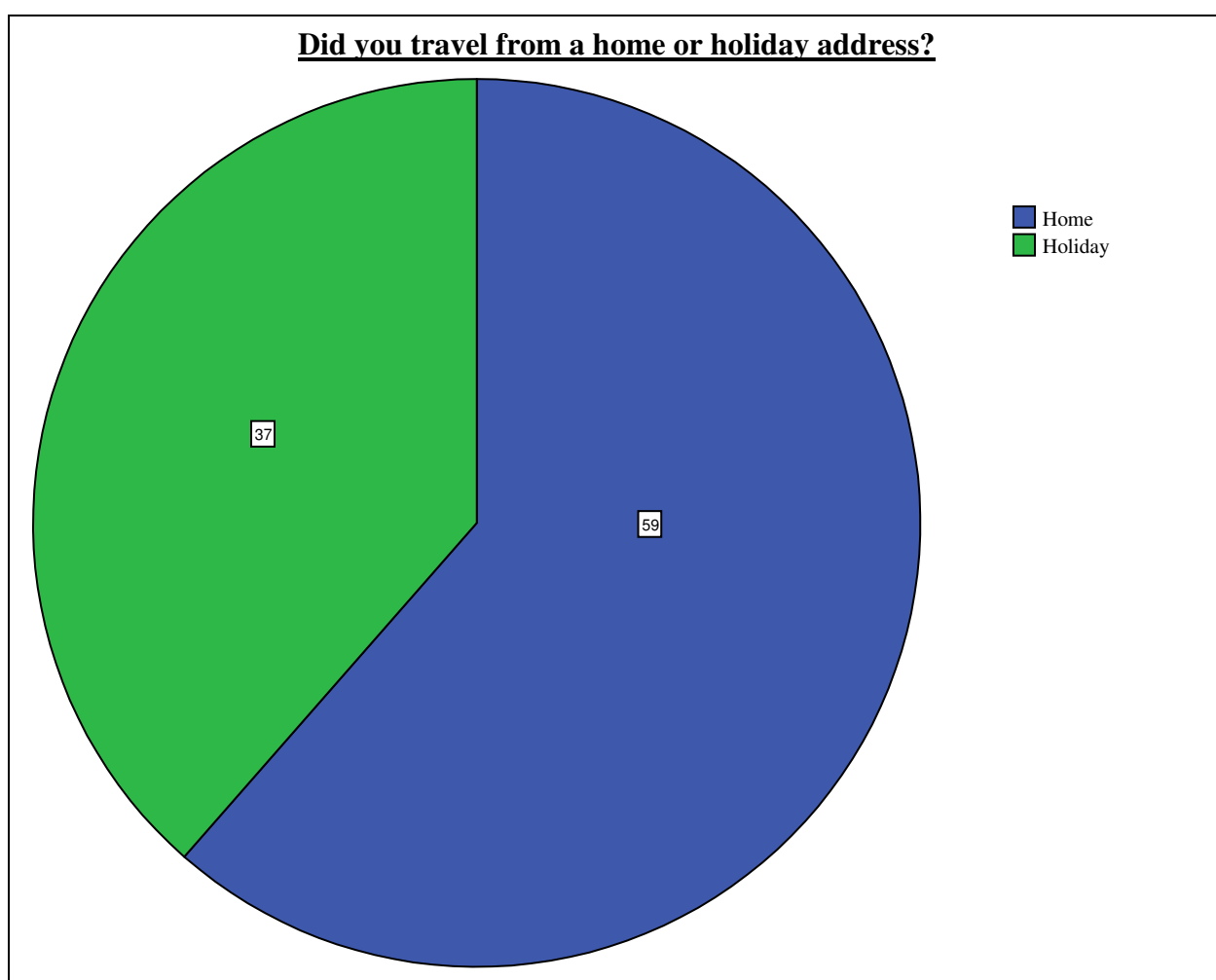


fig. 8: Did you travel from home or from a holiday address?

Museum visiting

First time or repeat visitors

Most of the respondents came specifically to see the exhibition, 'Breaking the Chains' at the British Empire and Commonwealth museum (64.6%) (fig. 9).

Did you travel specifically to see the 1807 exhibition?

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	62	64.6
No	34	35.4
Total	96	100.0

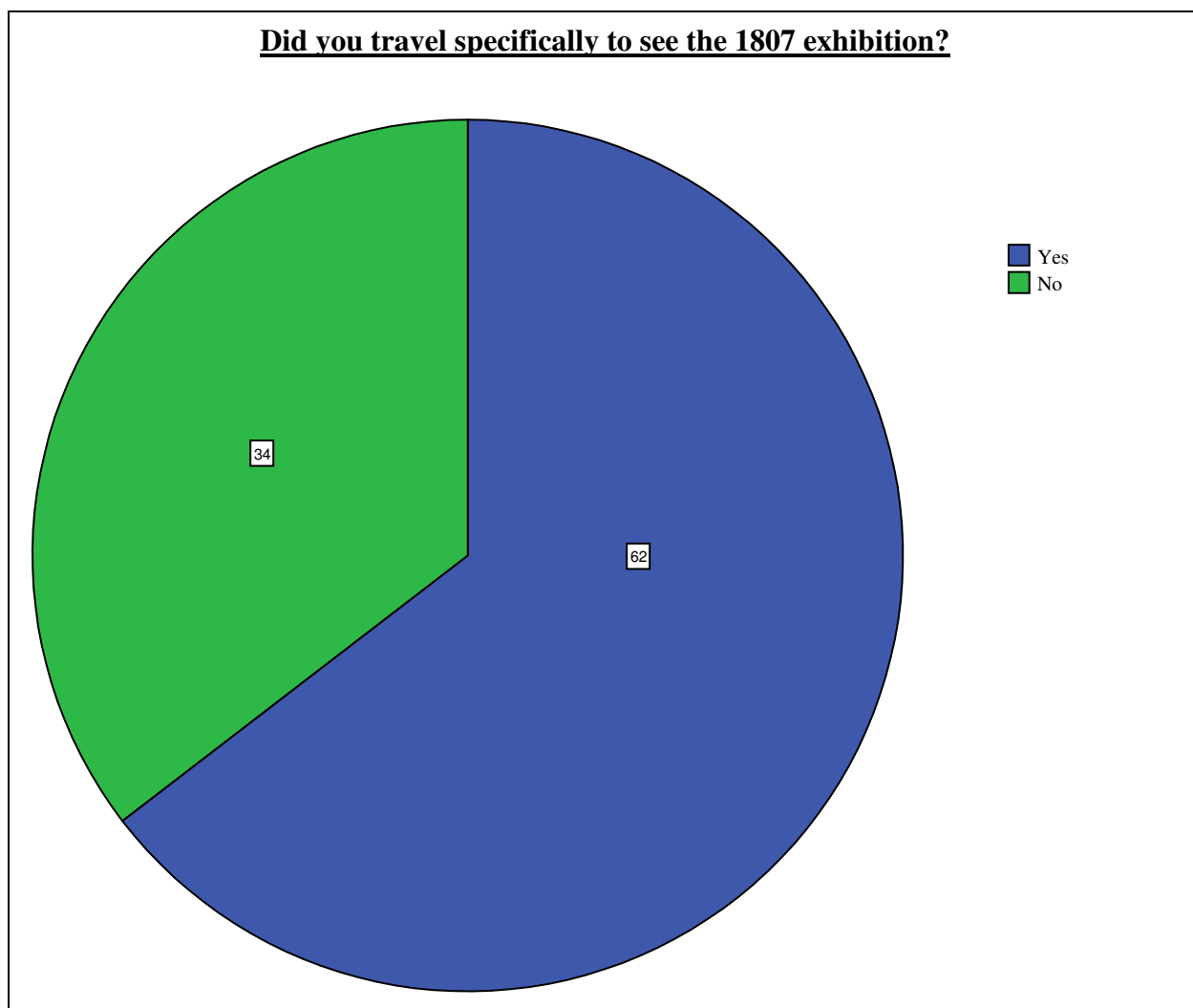


fig.9: Did you come specifically to see the 1807 exhibition?

Most of the visitors who came specifically to see the ‘1807 exhibition’ had not visited the museum before (Table 1).

Table 1: Visiting the museums

		Is this your first to the museum?		Total
		Yes	No	Yes
Did you come specifically to see the 1807 exhibition?	Yes	46	16	62
	No	29	4	33
Total		75	20	95

Visiting trends

The majority of the interviewees (84.4%) described themselves as typical museum visitors, whilst only 15 visitors stated that they did not visit museums on a regular basis (fig. 10).

Museum and non-museum visitors: The British Empire and Commonwealth Museum, Bristol

Response	Frequency	Percent
Museum visitors	81	84.4
Non-museum visitors	15	15.6
Total	96	100.0

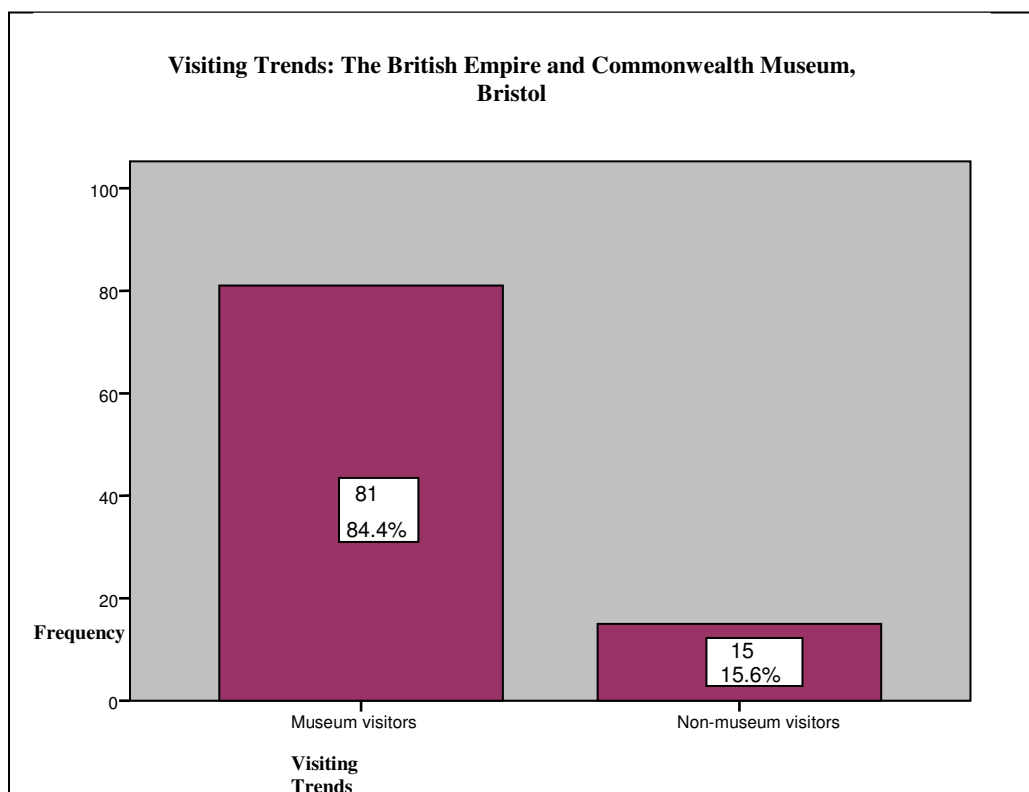


Fig. 10: Museum and non-museum visitors at the British Empire and Commonwealth Museum, Bristol

Reasons for visiting: The British Empire and Commonwealth Museum, Bristol

The main reasons for visiting the museum were *education in generally*, to *find out about Britain's involvement in the slave trade* and *think about the lives of enslaved Africans* (what they endured and achieved) (fig. 11).

Reasons for Visiting	Frequency	Percent	Category
Recreation/leisure	15	15.6	A
Education generally	17	17.7	B
Taking the children	4	4.2	C
To find out about Britain's role in slavery	17	17.7	D
To mark the abolition of Britain's involvement in the slave trade	11	11.5	E
Think about the abolitionists and their movement	4	4.2	F
Think about the lives of enslaved Africans, what they endured and achieved	17	17.7	G
Other	8	8.3	H
Total	93	96.9	-
Missing	3	3.1	-
Full Total	96	100	-

Reasons for visiting: The British Empire and Commonwealth Museum, Bristol

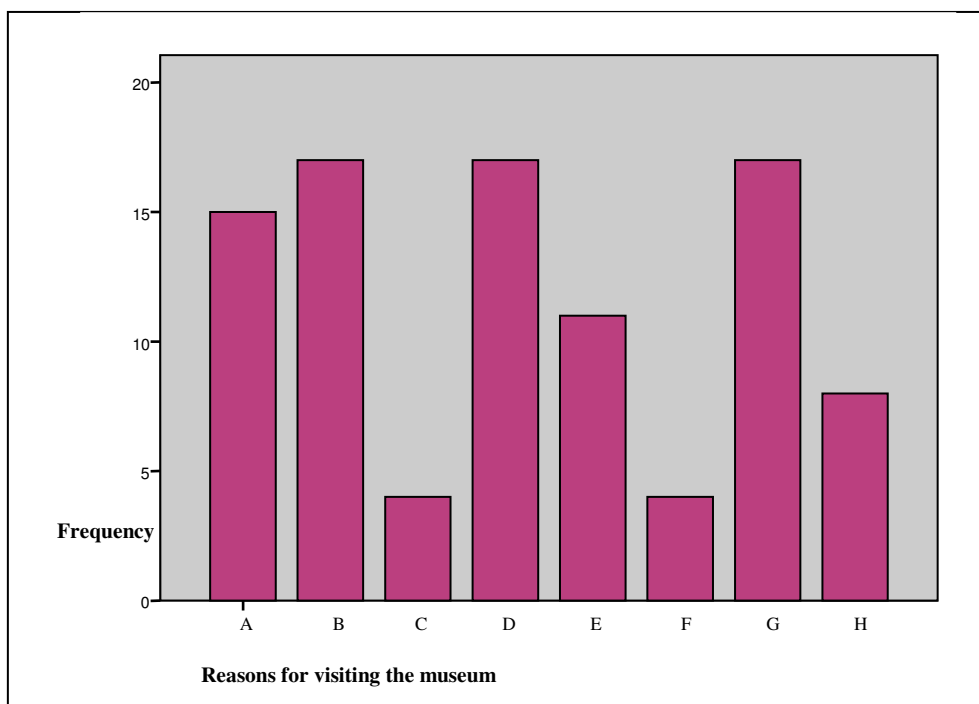


fig. 11: Reasons for visiting: The British Empire and Commonwealth Museum, Bristol

The majority of the non-museum visitors (10 out of 15) are white, hold higher or lower managerial positions (11 out of 15) and have a university degree (9 out of 15) (tables 2,3 and 4).

Table 2: Museum/ Non-museum visitors and ethnic background: Bristol Empire and Commonwealth Museum

		Museum visitors	Non-museum visitors	Total
Ethnic background	White	69	10	79
	BME	9	5	14
	Other	3	0	3
Total		81	15	96

Table 3: Occupation of Museum and Non-museum visitors: Bristol Empire and Commonwealth Museum

		Museum visitors	Non museum visitors	Total
Occupation	Higher managerial and professional occupations	32	4	36
	Lower managerial and professional occupations	25	7	32
	Intermediate occupations	6	1	7
	Small employers and own account workers	2	0	2
	Lower supervisory and technical occupations	1	1	2
	Semi-routine occupations	5	0	5
	Never worked and long-term unemployed	9	2	11
Total		80	15	95

Table 4: Education of museum and non-museum visitors: Bristol Empire and Commonwealth Museum

		Museum visitors	Non-museum visitors	Total
Education	GCSE/O Levels	10	0	10
	A Levels	6	3	9
	Undergraduate University Degree	20	6	26
	Postgraduate University Degree	34	3	37
	Trade/Technical Qualification	7	1	8
	No formal qualifications	4	2	6
Total		81	15	96

Implications: social inclusion

In contrast to the International Slavery Museum in Liverpool, the Bristol Empire and Commonwealth Museum attracted mainly visitors holding a higher or lower managerial occupation. Despite the fact that the percentage of ethnic minority groups (16.7%) was higher than the national average (5%), the proportion of ethnic minority groups at the Liverpool Museum was much higher (23.4%). In addition, while at the International Slavery Museum in Liverpool more than half of the non-museum visitors did not hold a university degree, at the Bristol Empire and Commonwealth Museum education was not a major social inclusion indicator.

References

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Unpublished document. [previous Hub exit surveys can be accessed on http://www.mla.gov.uk/website/programmes/renaissance/hub_data/]