



Deliverable D5.3 – Integrating the Sciences of the Past with Sustainable tourism

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Dissemination level		
PU	Public	X
PP	Restricted to other programme participants (including the Commission Service)	
RE	Restricted to a group specified by the consortium (including the Commission Services)	
CO	Confidential, only for members of the consortium (excluding the Commission Services)	





One of the goals of the *Mend the Gap* project is to commercialise and integrate the CrEAMA Initiative research with the needs of society at the local, regional, national, European and global level. This holistic approach to studying Eastern Adriatic archaeological sites will result in a body of information that holds great potential of being turned into a valuable resource for sustainable tourism that benefits the economy, society and the environment.

Sustainable tourism - assessment of heritage potentials (MS11)

In order for any Eastern Adriatic archaeological site to be developed into a valuable resource for sustainable tourism it is essential to develop partnerships with stakeholders. It therefore follows that it is first necessary to identify which key partnerships will help with the achievement of sustainable tourism goals for any given archaeological site and the locality it is in. In order to do this, the people who are (or who should be) involved must be identified and a mutual understanding of the heritage involved must be developed. This then allows all the stakeholders to develop goals and objectives together.

Case Study: Vela Spila

ArchaeoLink identified stakeholders by:

- reading existing reports;
- publicly seeking interested persons or organisations such as visitors, communities, local and regional governments, tourism organisations, cultural heritage agencies and local businesses;
- holding community meetings and residents' feedback sessions;
- using the media to ask for input.

ArchaeoLink researched what food and accommodation services there were in Vela Luka and the surrounding area as well as what transport services there were.

ArchaeoLink also consulted with tour operators and spoke to focus groups of visitors in order to determine which groups take, or might take, a particular interest in Vela Spila and the heritage places of Vela Luka.





In addition they spoke to specialists, such as those at the Vela Luka Cultural Centre, who were particularly interested in the heritage of Vela Spila and Vela Luka.

Furthermore, the guides and staff at Vela Spila were consulted and gave valuable information about whom was involved as well as the expectations and feedback from visitors to the cave site. *ArchaeoLink* also spent considerable time identifying other individuals and organisations that relied heavily on tourism in order that all stakeholders could be identified so that a mutual development plan could be devised. *ArchaeoLink* discovered that the local high school printed the tourist guides and *ArchaeoLink* consulted the head teachers and educators of schools in Vela Luka and the immediate surrounding area.

Identifying stakeholders in this way and then devising a mutually agreed development plan for sustainable tourism for any given archaeological site is vital for the future success of the project.

To be successful in developing an archaeological site into a valuable resource for sustainable tourism it is essential to determine the heritage assets and values of the site and local area. This will allow the stakeholders to develop a common understanding of what is significant so that they will present the local heritage in a unified way to visitors. In order to determine the heritage assets, and heritage significance, all the values that are known (evidential value, historical value, aesthetic value and communal value) should be taken into account. Once the stakeholders have developed a common understanding of what is special about an archaeological site and the best way to present the values to visitors they need to assess how well these values are currently being recognised and communicated to visitors. Finally they need to consider whether there is any added potential to use these values in tourism.

ArchaeoLink conducted many interviews with residents, workers and visitors in Vela Spila and Vela Luka in order to determine the known cultural values of Vela Spila and the immediate locality. *ArchaeoLink* then determined what values of Vela Spila, Vela Luka and the island of Korčula were already used in tourism and what values were of particular interest to the current visitors. *ArchaeoLink* also sought other key heritage assets in Vela Luka and the immediate area and collected visitor data by, for example, recording numbers of visitors to Vela Spila and by conducting visitor surveys.



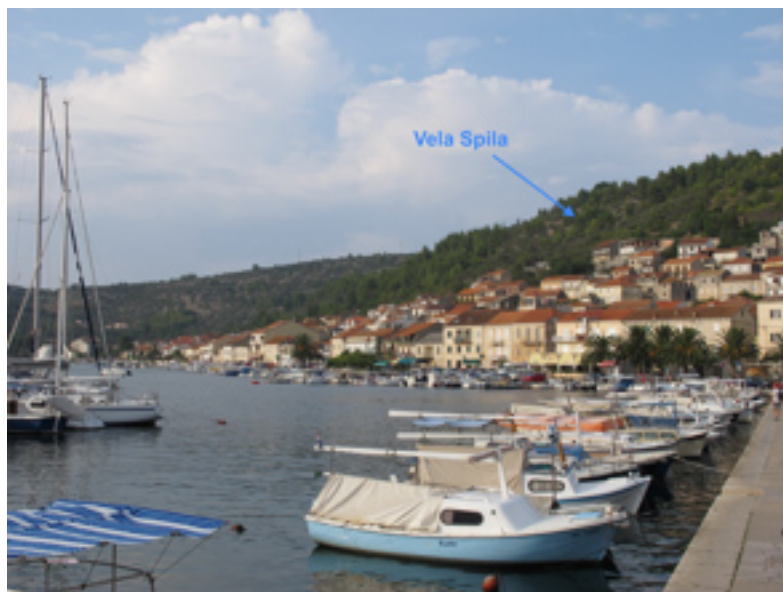


Once the data had been collected *ArchaeoLink* drew up a development plan that reflected the heritage assets and special values of Vela Luka and Vela Spila so that these could be better represented in tourism and communicated more effectively. In addition, *ArchaeoLink* recognised that stories provided by local people based on heritage values make a place attractive to visitors and so the concept of Vela Luka Memories came about. Vela Luka Memories was a project carried out by pupils from the Vela Luka High School whereby they recorded oral histories provided by residents of varying ages (with an emphasis on the senior citizens) from Vela Luka. This combination of values, stories and landscapes creates a 'total experience' for visitors and they share this with others when they return home.

Summary

This report, the result of a visit to Vela Luka in March 2016 (Low Season), lays out a strategy for outreach and development specific to the archaeological site of Vela Spila and to the research of the *Mend the Gap* team. Recommendations comprise the formation of a "Friends of..." association; the creation of a site-specific children's education programme; establishment of a young archaeologists club; creation of a tour guides' training programme; construction of a museum activity programme. Also included are proposals for the demonstration of impact; suggestions of ways to enhance the commercial viability of the area; and recommendations of several low

cost mechanisms for encouraging visitors to the area and enhancing their experience.



Location & Description

Vela Spila (Big Cave) the multi-layered prehistoric site, is situated 120m above sea level and the town of Vela Luka. It has a single, large, limestone chamber approximately 50m long, 30m wide, and 17m high; and is well lit by two holes in the





roof. Its 4m wide, 10m high entrance faces southwest, overlooking the bay of Vela Luka.

Archaeological excavations began in 1951, continued under Božidar Čečuk (1974–1995), followed by Dinko Radić (1996–2006) and then Dinko Radić with Preston Miracle (2007–present). Evidence indicates a very long sequence of occupation from the



Late Upper Palaeolithic (Epigravettian) through the Bronze Age. Vela Spila is a particularly rich source of both organic remains and material culture.

The cave can be accessed by road or by a cement foot-path, lined with native plants and flowers, which gently climbs the terraced hill through numerous olive groves.

The town of Vela Luka (Large Port) is situated on the western end of Korčula Island, in the southern Dalmatian archipelago of Croatia and has a population of approximately 4,500. It grew over the last two hundred years with an economy of commercial wine production, fish processing and shipbuilding. These industries have since ceased to exist and today the economy is based around tourism and a health facility.

Stakeholder Goals

Dinko Radić, Director and Curator of the Archaeological Collections, Cultural Centre [DCC] Vela Luka, wishes to convey a number of concepts important to the role of mankind in the passage of time: including the presentation of phenomena such as the rise of sea level, volcanic eruptions and their effect on humans, and a graphical explanation of the “Neolithic revolution”. His prime objective is to promote greater knowledge of Vela Spila and to highlight its importance in our understanding of the human journey, to the local community.





Preston Miracle, co-Director of MtG identifies the project's principle goal as enabling academics in Croatia to confidently and successfully apply for tranches of EU funding. He hopes that the cave will gain in national and international recognition, consequently providing a focus for tourism development and a source of economic prosperity.

Ino Čurik, co-Director of MtG hopes that the people of Vela Spila will come to understand the significance of their cave in the story of the development of humankind and that every tourist who reaches Korčula town will make a visit to Vela Spila a priority.

Rada Dragojević Ćosovi, Curator of Arts, Cultural Centre Vela Luka , organises several exhibitions a year and has curated a successful oral histories programme. She would like more display space so certain works of art may be on permanent exhibition. She wishes for greater numbers of people to be convinced that their heritage and art are important.

Dorian Dragojevic, General Manager of Vela Luka Tourist Information Office and member of the Tourist Board, [DTO] wishes for updated information on Vela Spila which he sees as a major attraction. The Tourist Board's web-site is currently being renovated and, to accompany it, he would like to see newer panels at the cave, an interactive programme and perhaps virtual reality displays. He lamented the lack, for two years, of an informative Vela Spila brochure.

Nevenko Zuvela, Managing Director of the *Mediterrano* Travel Agency, believes the traditional tourist season of July and August is lengthening to include May, June and September and wished this to be strengthened by improved promotion of Vela Spila and Vela Luka's other assets. He would like to see informative signs at the beginning of the path to the cave which indicate opening times and provide contact phone numbers to get access to the cave's gate key. He believes guides, financed by the Municipality, would be an asset.





Tonko Gugić, the Mayor, would like to see more recognition of Vela Spila as a valuable archaeological locality to enrich the tourist offer of Vela Luka as a unique destination. He would also like to have the tourist season extended.

Lucijana Mirošević, Headmistress of the Elementary School, desires an educational resource programme be written for a project based on Vela Spila. She was keen to extend an invitation to visiting specialists to pop into the school to talk to the children. English is taught from the age of 7 and opportunities for conversation would be appreciated.

Residents expressed much interest in archaeological activities at Vela Spila and looked forward to learning more. Individually they welcomed new ideas for developing tourism, but several have reservations about their neighbours' enthusiasm for participating in growth.

Challenges

The fish-processing plant closed in 2005 and the *Greben* shipyard, also once a major employer, began down-sizing in 2011 and has recently effectively closed. These closures have contributed to a general malaise which was verbalised on several occasions as reason why “people” were slow to contribute to the social well-being of the community.

It was further suggested that the legacy of the communist regime has resulted in the depression of entrepreneurship and that consequently many people were lacking the confidence to instigate commercial enterprises.

Resources

Vela Luka is situated in an area of natural beauty with a large and curving inlet and surrounding coastline dotted with bays looking out to a number of islands. There are several archaeological and historical sites within easy reach which could be developed advantageously to offer an array of points of interest.





Areas of interest

Vela Spila

The cave is featured as a major attraction in tourist brochures, although its significance is not widely understood by the inhabitants of Vela Luka. A 5m fence screens its entrance to prevent injury both to visitors and the site. During the season a guardian opens the gate in the afternoons and is paid by commission from the € 2 entrance fee; he supplements his income with the sale of water and souvenirs. At other times a key is available at the Korkyra Hotel and another at the Tourist Information Office for anyone wishing to visit. One information panel is at the entrance and can be read even if access is locked; 7 more panels line the walls of the cave. The area of excavation is loosely roped off; there are no warning signs.

The Cultural Centre

Partly built of traditional stone as a school in the mid 19th century, the Cultural Centre has an attractive arched entrance leading to a courtyard where 20th century mosaics are displayed. As well as offices for the Director and for the Curator of Arts, the building houses the public library; a function room; an 'L' shaped art gallery; a room exhibiting images and information on traditional stone houses; and the museum which displays finds from Vela Spila as well as from the local area.

Acquisitions include a unique collection of hand crafted wooden boats by a self-taught artist; a number of works by local and national artists; and international art works donated to Vela Luka after an unusually high tide caused much damage in 1978.

In his quest for a greater display area, the Director has been trying to repossess a room previously given to the now defunct kindergarten. Ultimately he would like to see the area leading to Vela Spila and its immediate vicinity become a designated 10ha Archaeological Park and a museum of the 21st century constructed with a multi-media hall, inter-disciplinary centre, laboratories, services etc. as outlined at a workshop in 2007.

Churches

As well as the Parochial Church of St. John with its separate bell tower, there are 14 other churches and chapels in the area, dating from the 12th to the 21st centuries. Their histories have been researched and documented and several have signs in Croatian and English to inform the visitor.

Archaeological site of Kopila





This Iron Age settlement on the crest of Kopila hill, 5km to the east of Vela Spila, dominates views of the Korčula channel and spilled down the southerly hillside overlooking fertile fields, as it expanded. Some excavation of the necropolis below has revealed sepulchres, beads, amber and weapons of those Illyrians who lived at the site before Augustus Caesar's troops massacred them to end their piracy. The site, although not yet ready for visitors, is on a hiking trail.

Terracing

All the hills on Korčula are heavily terraced. Hundreds of thousands of kilometers of stone walls were constructed to provide fertile ground for vineyards in the late 19th century. This was in response to the phylloxera epidemic which destroyed most of the vineyards in Europe, but had not yet reached Korčula which exported its wines throughout the Mediterranean basin.

Fortification

Overlooking Vela Luka, on the top of Hum hill, is the 19th century Austro-Hungarian military installation.

It offers splendid views.

Kalos Rehabilitation Hospital

Built in the 1970s, because of the proximity of mineral rich muds and thermal spring, the facility offers a range of treatments to those suffering from chronic disease, trauma, congenital malformations or recovering from surgery. Half of its 250 beds are used annually by ca.3500 Croatian Health Insurance beneficiaries and the remainder mostly by self-financing patients from Bosnia & Herzegovina. Employing less than 200 people, it is affiliated to the Split Medical School and thus provides clinical teaching in Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine.

High School Training Programme

An initiative, affiliated to the High School, to prepare young people for the job market with practical skills training, successfully produced a 76 page touristic brochure entitled *Welcome to Korčula*. The material was researched and resourced, collated and produced by the students.





Events

Most events are scheduled from the end of June to the beginning of September on an almost nightly basis. These include traditional *Klapa* (capella) singing; *Kumpanjija*, a traditional sword fight; folk dances; brass band and other musical performances; wine tastings; food festivals (e.g. pasta making & tasting); also organised are art exhibitions, photographic displays, regattas and tennis tournaments.



Practicalities

Access

Vela Luka is reached by ferry or catamaran from Split, the journeys taking 4 and 3 hours respectively. In February a daily sea plane service was inaugurated offering a 15 minute trip.

Accommodation

There are 5 hotels of various classes with about 800 beds.

The private rental of rooms, apartments and houses is commonplace with over a hundred properties available.

Transportation & Tours

Regular small boats ferry people from one side of Vela Luka to the other, or to nearby islands or beaches. Several picnic & swimming boat trips and tours are on offer in the season. Cars, scooters and bikes may be rented. Bus connections to other parts of Korčula are available all year.

Local Food

The terraces and rich fertile plains produce olive oils, wines and a wide range of produce. Homemade cheeses, locally smoked meats and freshly caught fish offer the possibility of an abundant Croatian gastronomy. An array of locally grown herbs and spices are used in traditional culinary and curative recipes. These and a variety of fruits, vegetables and leaves are used to make a wide range of liqueurs.





ArchaeoLink Recommendations

The following recommendations will assist the *Mend the Gap* team in extending the community impact of their research in the area of Vela Luka, and thereby also help the community obtain the widest possible educational, economic and societal benefits from its archaeology and heritage, and to encourage as many visitors as possible. <http://www.archaeolink.org/projects/VelaSpila/community/>

Archaeological Research, Outputs, Education and Enrichment

The establishment of a non-profit, non-political association: "Friends of Vela Spila"* club or society.

This would assist several objectives related to the archaeology and heritage of Vela Luka and its surrounds; it would:

- encourage a feeling of homogeneity among existing volunteers and interested parties;
- assist multi-directional dissemination of information & knowledge;
- form a volunteer base for community projects and events.

It is suggested that a Chairperson and, or Events Coordinator, Secretary, and Treasurer be chosen who have time to give to the society. It is recommended that the Director of the Cultural Centre [DCC] Dinko Radić be appointed Chief Executive Officer so he might steer the group and have oversight of activities.

To maintain momentum and interest, it is suggested that the core committee organise activities / events on at least a once monthly basis, perhaps more frequently when more archaeologists are in residence.

*This name is purely a suggestion; Friends of Vela Luka or Friends of Archaeology & Heritage or some other name may better suit the group's terms of reference.

A site-specific Educational Resource Pack specific to Vela Spila as revealed by its archaeology, be written for use in the Elementary School. This will include notes for teachers so that they fully understand the objectives of each activity and the archaeological context, thus no prior knowledge is required; lesson plans to assist





with project organisation; children's work sheets etc. Some of the worksheets might be retained in English to be used in conjunction with the teaching of English.

This Resource Pack will include activities to be completed before, and after a museum visit and will be supported by the opportunity for the children to handle 3D copies of objects on display as well as original artefacts.

Working with the Elementary School and referencing the Croatian National Curriculum, *ArchaeoLink* carefully assesses the best pedagogical approach for use of educational resources. Our resources develop the investigative skills of children while nurturing an interest in the world around them. Children are encouraged to understand and appreciate their unique heritage, thus an important aim is that children feel a sense of belonging and pride in their local community. Research has shown that the enthusiasm of children will lead to, and encourage, the enthusiasm of their parents.

Initially this education programme will be developed for Upper Primary aged children, blending elements from the National Curriculum where possible; it is then proposed to be extended into the High School.

A Young Archaeologists Club be established for 10-18 year olds.

The objectives include to:

- encourage an interest in the archaeology, history and heritage of the past, as it relates to Vela Luka and its surroundings;
- provide fun, inspirational and motivational activities, events and visits;
- promote knowledge exchange.

It is suggested, to maintain momentum and interest, that meetings are held at least every other week and that a Facebook page be created to advertise and record members and events.

ArchaeoLink can assist in the organisation of a "Dig the Garden" project where the youngsters will be trained in the basics of excavation: digging, drawing sections, recording, cleaning & labelling finds etc. Ideally members of the "Friends of..."

Association will volunteer to assist with supervision. Digging a meter square test pit in a number of gardens will not only offer training, but will encourage community involvement.





Enhancement of Vela Spila could be achieved by:

- placing a sign at beginning of the path with opening times and a phone number to call at other times for information / a guide &/or a key;
- removing the gate and fence from the mouth of the cave, and bringing it forward by some 10 meters, with the top designed to prevent climbing, to allow an unrestricted view of the entrance to the cave;
- creating a display area of 3D copies of major artefacts found;
- creating a stratigraphic display e.g. within a broad upright clear, cylindrical tube;
- reposition display panels to be legible near the entrance;
- a narrow circular wooden walk-way might be considered, if visitor numbers increase considerably, to avoid unnecessary wear on the cave floor and to keep visitors safe from falling on slippery surfaces;
- a replica Neolithic hearth and loom (as per Archaeological Museum of Zagreb) might be installed;
- installing a panorama table identifying all that can be seen from the cave;
- creating small information panels about the plants along the path;
- as VS plant remains are identified, plant the modern equivalent along the path with appropriate labels.

A Tour Guides Training Programme will provide a number of individuals with the ability to lead groups and accurately inform them about Vela Spila. It is anticipated that *ArchaeoLink* will create the programme and a Guide's Resource Pack in association with the existing High School training programme.

The Museum was closed as major exhibits were in Zagreb for an exhibition, *Korčula before Christianity*. Thus it will be reviewed later.

Museum Activity Programme: designed to inform and entertain resident and visiting young people, the provision of a fun and instructive programme for children to include touchable materials. This will comprise:

- an Activity Pack;
- a Museum Guide; and





- an Activity Trail,

to be used by both visiting families and school groups accompanied by a teacher.

This programme, which will be a bespoke package, will include original artwork and promote investigative learning.

A web-based interactive learning resource, designed to transmit information and to capture responses, will also be implemented. The resulting database could be interrogated by teachers, researchers, museum staff and impact assessors in order to monitor and demonstrate the impact of the project.

Ethnographic museum : the establishment of a permanent museum space to illustrate ways of living, would give Vela Luka an additional feature of interest. Exhibits could be based on Neolithic finds and MtG's research, together with information relating to historical as well as pre-industrial living, still remembered by many today. Residents could participate, therefore engendering pride in their heritage, by offering articles on permanent loan from their family collections.

Strategy for Tourism and Visitors

The research of the MtG team is seen not only as an additional attribute to the heritage of Vela Luka and the appreciation of such, but also as being of benefit economically in assisting to augment the tourist potential of Vela Luka which is a well-established 'summer holiday' destination. The potential exists for lengthening the traditional tourist season; however it has to be recognised that, unlike the summer holiday-makers, it is a different clientele that needs to be catered for. The following are recommendations for its facilitation.

The Recreational Activity tourism market could be tapped into by offering a variety of work-shops where classes are conducted in the mornings, leaving the afternoons free for sight-seeing.

Entrepreneurial members of Vela Luka community have the potential for offering the following:

- olive picking and olive oil making (make your own olive oil);
- make your own liqueurs (collecting ingredients and initial processing);





- cooking classes;
- soap making;
- jewellery making;
- sketching & watercolour painting;
- pottery making;
- yoga / meditation.

Afternoon sightseeing would include:

- walk to Vela Spila (preferably guided);
- visit to Museum (also perhaps guided);
- visit to Korčula old town;
- guided visit to Kopila;
- scenic boat trip (possible even in cooler months);
- guided nature walk.

Skilled Demonstrations: people enjoy watching others at work; viewing processes of production. Where health and safety allow, viewing areas can be a draw. OPG Grbin offer a range of locally made products: sweets, soaps, jams, oils and liqueurs. Conceivably some of the producers would be happy for visitors to watch or participate in their work. Similarly, craft producers could make their studios or workshops, open to the public at certain times.

Churches: a brochure with a brief description, taken from *Churches & Chapels of Vela Luka*, by Rada Dragojević Ćosovi, of a selection of the nearby churches and chapels would offer information on these points of interest to some.

Vela Luka Website: is currently being upgraded so will be reviewed at a later date.

Forteca: this point of interest would be enhanced by:

- an information panel about the fortress and life within; and
- a panorama table identifying all that can be seen from the hill.





Thermal Spa – Hydrotherapy: If the current *Kalos* facilities were upgraded, it would be possible to attract a wider clientele, possibly all year round, not only to enjoy the thermal waters and the mineral rich, curative mud, but to take advantage of a complete range of well-being and health-tourism options including, but not limited to, special diets, cleansing, massages, exercises, reflexology, spa treatments and meditation. Such offerings, if coupled with sightseeing activities would make a stay in Vela Luka very attractive and extend tourism into the winter months. Indeed, in this way, Kalos could become a major employer.

It is recommended that the *Općina* Vela Luka and the Tourist Board be in contact with Neda Telišman Košuta, the head of the national Action Plan for Health Tourism Development at the Institute for Tourism in Zagreb for assistance in bringing this to fruition.

Wine: Although phylloxera did eventually reach Korčula, it may well be possible that not all original strains were wiped out. If certain vines which were not affected by the disease have been tended over the years and are still cultivated, such a rarity would attract much attention as well as prosperity. If plant geneticists could be involved in a programme of the successful discovery of such a vine, the tangible impact would be extremely valuable.

Demonstration of Impact: Qualitative and quantitative data could be obtained by brief "Before & After" surveys in Croatian and English for both adults & children.

Features to include:

- anonymous online survey with assigned reference numbers;
- accessed by a QR code for use on personal phone; and/or
- a computer terminal at the entrance to museum; an area for comments;
- incentives to provide feedback information ranging from the promotion of the satisfaction of assisting with change, to the promotion of the satisfaction of puzzle, mystery or game solving;
- pathway/gate counters to monitor visitor numbers to Vela Spila for comparison over the course of the project;
- collaboration with the local tourist board and local government to monitor changes in tourist numbers and revenue;





- working with local schools to monitor changes in academic achievement in students participating in the 'Young Archaeologists' programme;
- working with local craft people to monitor production and sale of local artistic and cultural items;
- working with local government to monitor the growth of new arts, culture and tourism-based enterprises connected to the work of MtG.

Promotion: *ArchaeoLink* will assist in promoting both the site and the location by providing archaeological-tourism articles for publications such as *Current World Archaeology*, *Minerva* etc.

This assessment is a result of a visit during the early Spring 2016 when there were scant visitors in Vela Luka, few restaurants open and no market.





The following assessment was made from observations during the tourist season in September 2016.

High-Season

Vela Luka is completely transformed during the high Tourist Season, July and August. Overflowing bars and restaurants, accommodation at a premium and frequent performances of traditional *Klappa* songs and *Kumpanija* sword and chain dances, characterise this period. There are numerous events and exhibitions to entertain the summer visitors, mainly families, who are primarily interested in relaxing in the sun.

As to be expected, there are more flights to and from Split and Dubrovnik, more ferries to Vela Luka as well as a sea-plane service.

Many small cruise boats stop in Vela Luka but few include a visit to Vela Spila in their itineraries.

The 10,000 promotional/informative brochures on Vela Spila, printed at the beginning of the season, were consumed before the end of August.

The cave enjoyed a continuous stream of numerous visitors, some in groups as large as 60 persons, throughout the summer; at times too numerous for the single guide to attend to.

Figures from the tourist board and also from the cave show that visitors in September are still numerous. The gift shop at the cave closed in mid August. *Klappa*, *Kumpanija* and other events currently cease at the end of August.

Further Strategy for Tourism and Visitors

Marketing Plan

Current policy is directed from the Dubrovnik Nevertva County. The local Tourist Board has 8 members who sit with 2 representatives from the County together with the mayor.

With the aim of lengthening the tourist season, there is a need for a long term and broader marketing strategy for Vela Luka. The low or off-season visitor is of a more mature age, is not usually accompanied by children and is looking for areas of cultural and / or historic interest, preferably accompanied by good food and





beverages. If other tourist markets are to be reached and supplied, they must be identified and contacted. There must also be adequate air, ferry and other services.

A two layer plan needs to be simultaneously developed as to how Vela Luka will:

- a) ensure these services: transportation; accommodation; food and beverage establishments; traditional entertainments; cultural and heritage sites - Vela Spila and the Museum; are made available; and
- b) communicate with and attract those new markets.

Information Dispersal

Ideally information, brochures, flyers, websites, tours etc. should be updated at least annually. In this, our more visual world, photographs are important and also need to be up-dated.

The excellent website giving much information on Vela Spila is currently 'down' and thus a loss for promotional purposes. For the future, a more diverse online presence is recommended, in different languages, with downloadable guides.

A second, perhaps part-time, guide is needed at the cave during July and August.

SWOT Report

ArchaeoLink carried out a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis for both Vela Spila and Vela Luka. Present strengths and weaknesses were considered as were the future opportunities and threats and this gave an overview of the main issues concerning Vela Spila and Vela Luka.

An informal cost-benefit analysis was carried out whereby the value of the benefits of a particular approach or idea were added up and then the associated costs were subtracted from this. For example, *ArchaeoLink* considered whether the increased exposure and interest in Vela Spila would lead to greater risk of damage to the site (cost) and whether visitors would stay in the region longer if Vela Spila and Vela Luka was developed for sustainable tourism (benefit).

ArchaeoLink also carried out priority analysis whereby each issue was considered and judged as to importance and urgency. For example the lack of guides out of season at Vela Spila was judged to be both very important and urgent and was therefore addressed as a top priority with the introduction of audio guides. In the same way the reopening of the museum was judged as being both very important





and top priority, but the construction of the stratigraphic layers in a plastic tube was seen as being very important, but not urgent.

S.W.O.T Report for Vela Spila & the Museum, Vela Luka

Strengths

International recognition and publicity provided (Mend the Gap/ EU Horizon 2020)

Cave is well lit naturally offering good viewing opportunities

Long archaeological sequence (Upper Palaeolithic to Bronze Age)

Rich source of organic and material culture – some of which is of international importance

Artefacts found are on display in the museum in town.

Visited by increasing numbers of visitors.

Access by road.

Access provided for walkers by a path.

Path for walkers marked and lined with plants.

There is a museum in the town.

The museum is light and bright.

Audio tours are available – downloaded to personal mobile phones.

Cave overlooks the bay of Vela Luka and offers outstanding views.

Easily accessible from other areas of Croatia by ferry.

Cave open or available all year round.

Cave is securely locked when unattended.

Cave is staffed in summer months for collection of entrance fees.

Some examples of good cooperation nationally and internationally.

Local community are aware of the cave and its importance.

Information boards are on display in the cave.

The schools in Vela Luka have ArchaeoLink's archaeology programme and English grammar exercises based on Vela Spila.

Children's trails are being developed.

There are occasional Archaeology workshops run by *ArchaeoLink* for the children of Vela Luka and the island of Korcula as a whole.





Weaknesses

Poor visibility of signage to hiking route (many people miss the hiking route).
Artefacts of significant importance are not on display in the Museum.
Hiking route not marked on google maps.
Road to cave can be congested when busy.
Very limited accessibility (if any) for disabled/elderly people who do not have a car.
Road access in winter in adverse weather conditions could be difficult.
Limited parking spaces outside the cave.
No risk assessment in regard to safety in the cave.
Lack of first aid service / facility.
Lack of toilet facilities / baby changing etc.
Lack of refreshments.
No shop to sell souvenirs or guidebooks etc.
Poor waste management.
No infrastructure on-site for disabled visitors.
No cave walking platform so cave floor can be damaged and floor poses trip hazards.
No internet accessibility.
Audio guides only available for download to personal mobile phones.
Audio guides are in English only.
No guided tours on offer in cave.
No scheduled tours from Vela Luka or by tourist agencies.
Insufficient / poor promotional material provided in Vela Luka and on ferries and to mainland tourist agencies.
No interpretation of the natural environment given at entrance to cave or along the hiking trail.
Lack of coordination among government agencies.
Tourist Board and Cultural Centre are autonomous with no bridging body.
Lack of museum programme for children and families.
Many information boards too high up for disabled visitors or children to read.
Little tangible evidence of occupation and importance of cave.
Most visitors enjoy the views, but spend only a short time in the cave.
Without extensive reading, it is difficult to interpret the cave.
Poor public transport & timings from other areas of the island to Vela Luka / Vela Spila.





Poor marketing strategy.

Poor branding strategy for Vela Spila – no brand identity, logo or tag line.

Previous well-presented dedicated web site on Vela Spila now unavailable.

No advance booking available

Out of season there is no-one to collect entrance fees and so entry is free.

Lack of space / available land to extend car park.

Lack of space / land available to provide toilet facilities and refreshments etc.

Museum opening hours are restrictive and unpredictable – tourists arrive to find it is closed.

No children's guide books at museum.

No museum souvenirs or shop.

No staffing within the museum.

Displays within the museum need developing further to enhance the visitor experience.

Many of the major and more interesting finds from Vela Spila are not on display.

Display information boards are in Croatian and English only.

No toilet facilities / baby changing facilities at the museum.

No disabled access to the museum.

No archaeological / historical trail around the town of Vela Luka.





Opportunities

Tourism to Croatia is increasing rapidly.

Tourists are looking for 'authentic' places to stay away from the mass market resorts.

Developing Vela Luka as a tourist destination will enhance Vela Spila.

Potential for eco-tourism including Vela Spila.

Landscape and countryside in Vela Luka area introduced to tourism development.

Develop accessibility for visitors such as the disabled/wheel chair users, those with push chairs and elderly people.

Develop resources to help visitors interpret the cave such as 3D artefacts and models.

Possible use of virtual reality to enhance visitor experience.

Use renewable energy sources at Vela Spila.

Improve interpretation boards – with regards to height, language, and amount of information on one board.

Improve signage to Vela Spila (road and hikers' path).

Improve car parking facilities.

Provide parking slots for bikes.

Write a risk assessment for Vela Spila.

Increase awareness among residents of the island and Dalmatia of the natural and cultural heritage of Vela Spila.

Extend existing and introduce new tourism to Vela Spila.

Develop biking and hiking trails across the island that include Vela Spila.

Create incentives to develop traditional souvenirs related to Vela Spila.

More promotion and marketing needed of Vela Spila (and Vela Luka) in order to improve the image of Vela Luka as a tourist destination.

Develop a wine/liquor tasting service in Vela Spila cave.

Cooperate with big companies and institutions for cross marketing.

Integrate local entrepreneurs - guest houses, taxi drivers, producers of traditional products - in promoting tourism to Vela Spila.

Establish contact with tourist agencies re archaeology tours and day trips to Vela Spila.

Develop a "Friends of Vela Spila" Association.

Enhance the involvement of local communities in tourism (businesses, etc.).

Intensify cooperation with local media.





Develop the schools (education programme) further.

Develop a Young Archaeologists Club.

Possibility to introduce regular transport to cave from Vela Luka.

Threats

Road conditions and maintenance of roads to Vela Spila.

Degradation of natural and cultural assets (cave and local environment) due to excessive use.

Natural catastrophe resulting in cave damage .

Lack of financial resources for development and maintenance.

Limits to growth because of lack of investment.

Lack of human resources to implement project plans.

Lack of marketing plan/ strategy.

Slow development of project.

Slow development of stakeholders' cooperation.

Low response of stakeholders in terms of cooperation.

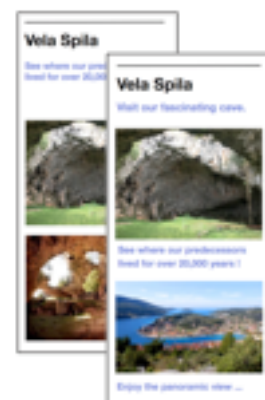




The following visitor experience enhancements to Vela Spila were highlighted in September, 2017, as being achievable for the 2018 tourist season.

Vela Spila promotional flyer for hotels, apartments, agencies etc.

At the request of the Tourist Office Manager This was produced in April 2016. It has not been used. Having a promotional flyer separate from an information leaflet saves costs and, with the map only on the promotional flyer, gives more space for information on the cave leaflet.

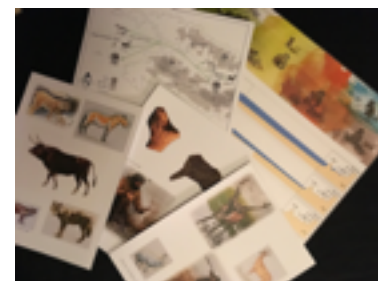


Information leaflet for the cave.

At the request of the Tourist Office Manager this was produced in April 2016. It has not been used. Instead an amended version of the previous combined promotional and informative leaflet was produced, using some of the text *ArchaeoLink* provided. It was not given to *ArchaeoLink* for review before printing and has 15 errors of English, a duplication, an inconsistency and an error of fact.

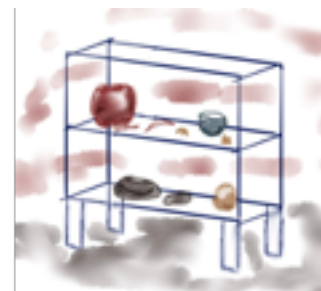
Information booklet with photographs for sale in the cave and elsewhere.

A first edition could be produced using the audio tour text amended, as a base and updated each year with relevant information.



Creating a display area of 3D copies of major artefacts found.

An *ArchaeoLink* team member, specialist in museum quality replicas, is available to take the appropriate data which can be printed as 3D copies in Croatia. The choice of artefacts for copying needs to be made.





*Installing a touch table for children
to handle the existing bones.*

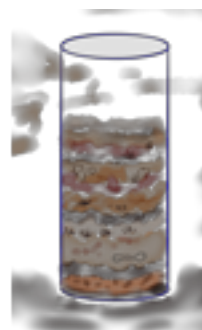
This has been made by a local
volunteer, Jadranko Oreb and is
awaiting installation.



Creating a stratigraphic display.

The plexiglass tube was delivered in
March 2017 and awaits locating and
filling.

The model shows different colours
to be used.



Creating new display panels.

The text from the audio tour can be edited and used ,with photographs,
for panels displayed on stands in appropriate locations in the cave.

See plan below for suggested locations.*



Installing a replica Neolithic hearth and loom

These items, currently in store in the Cultural Centre,
could be used to create a facsimile of a Neolithic
home such as is on display in the Archaeological
Museum of Zagreb.





Creating activity trails for children

These are in the final stages of preparation.



Creating small information panels about the plants along the path.

Identification of Mediterranean plants with a brief text and botanical sketch could be created by a volunteer or volunteers: perhaps members of the HPD "Mareta".



Installing a panorama table identifying all that can be seen from the cave.

A local cartographer could produce the necessary diagram.



Other facilities

A blue loo ; the sale of water; a souvenir stall.





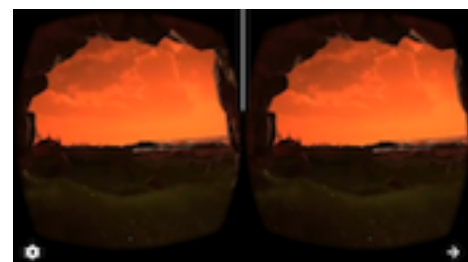
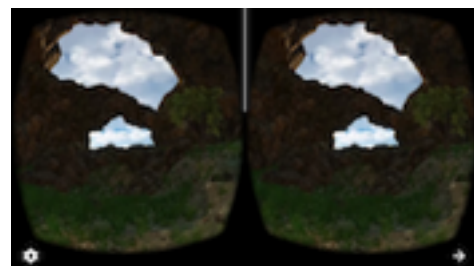
Note: it is important that text for panels, brochures and booklets is appealing to the non-specialist while maintaining the accuracy of the academic research; which should always be credited. The online audio tour page gives all citations at the foot of the page.

Involving local volunteers is beneficial as it gives residents a sense of ownership and pride in their archaeological heritage.

For future consideration

A Virtual Reality experience telling the story of the cave.

Requested by the Director of the Cultural Centre, the proposal is available here:



<http://www.info.archaeolink.org/VelaSpila/VSVRproposalBDHs.pdf>

Brief sample here: <https://vimeo.com/210463173/d2fc34d2fb>

Solar Powered Wifi Bench

First suggested by the Tourist Office Manager, these come in many shapes and sizes.

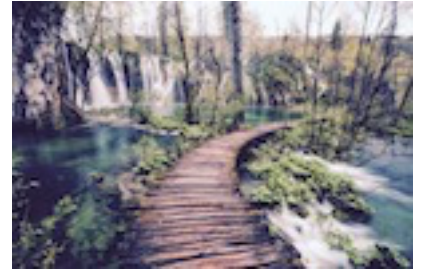
As the cave is in line of sight from the roof of the Cultural Centre, it is possible a good internet connection could be achieved.





Access for All

A narrow circular wooden walk-way might be considered, if visitor numbers increase considerably, to avoid unnecessary wear on the cave floor, to increase accessibility and to keep visitors safe from falling on slippery surfaces.

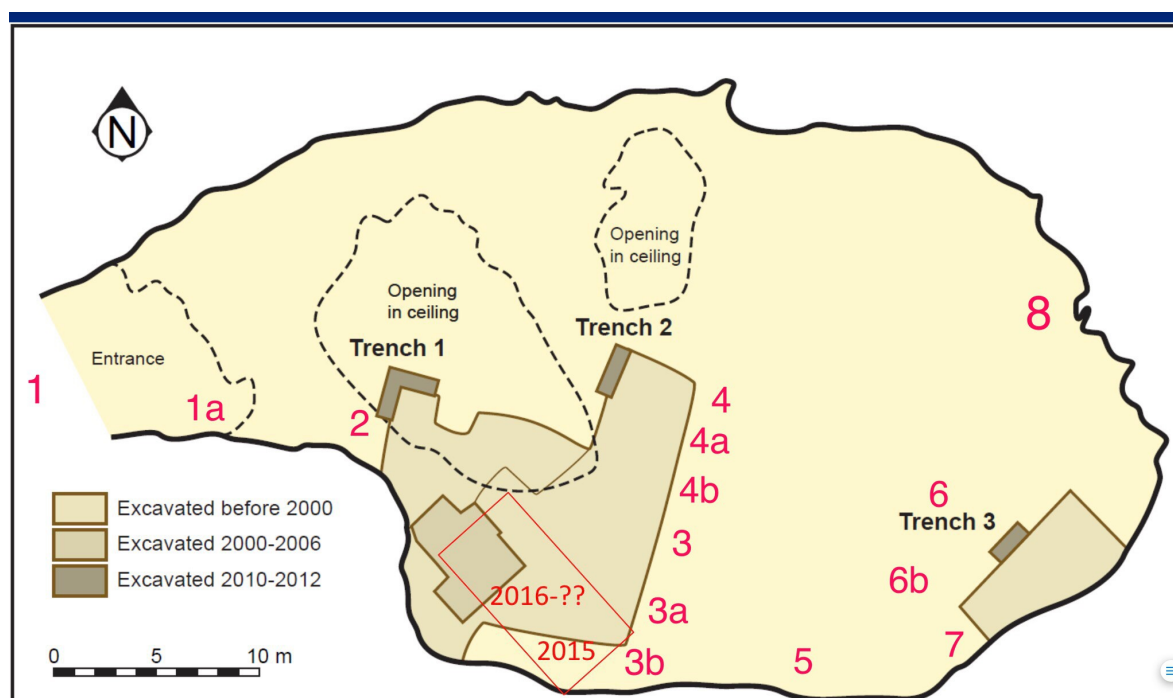


Removing the gate and fence from the mouth of the cave, and bringing it forward by some 10 meters, with the top designed to prevent climbing, to allow an unrestricted view of the entrance to the cave.





*Suggested locations for info panels



Suggested size of panels: A3

Content adapted from text of audio tour with photographs

- 1 No sea
- 1a Roof
- 2 Going back in time
- 3 Hunting & tools
- 3a Figurines
- 3b Volcano
- 4 Strata 4a Roof fall
- 4b Meso & fish
- 5 Burial Stanco
- 6 Burial children
- 6b Neolithic
- 7 Pastoralists
- 8 Departure





**The following additional suggestions were made to the Municipality and
Tourist Board in September, 2017.**

To encourage the beautification of Vela Luka

A certificate/award and small gift from the Mayor could be presented every month or every two weeks to people who decorate their entrances or windows with plants or have tidy gardens; accompanied by appropriate publicity.



To enhance visitor experience

Brief explanations of the stories portrayed in the various dances and songs would make these wonderful traditions more meaningful to visitors. A couple of sentences about each, printed on a simple sheet of paper, would be enough.



To assist access to Vela Spila

1. Key - Difficulties in obtaining the key out of season especially when the key is with someone else, could be avoided by using a key/code lock: with the number given out instead of a key.



2. Road - Difficulties of the narrow access road, could be eased by laying a surface on the track leading to the Bočići Road and having a one-way traffic system – perhaps only from July to September.

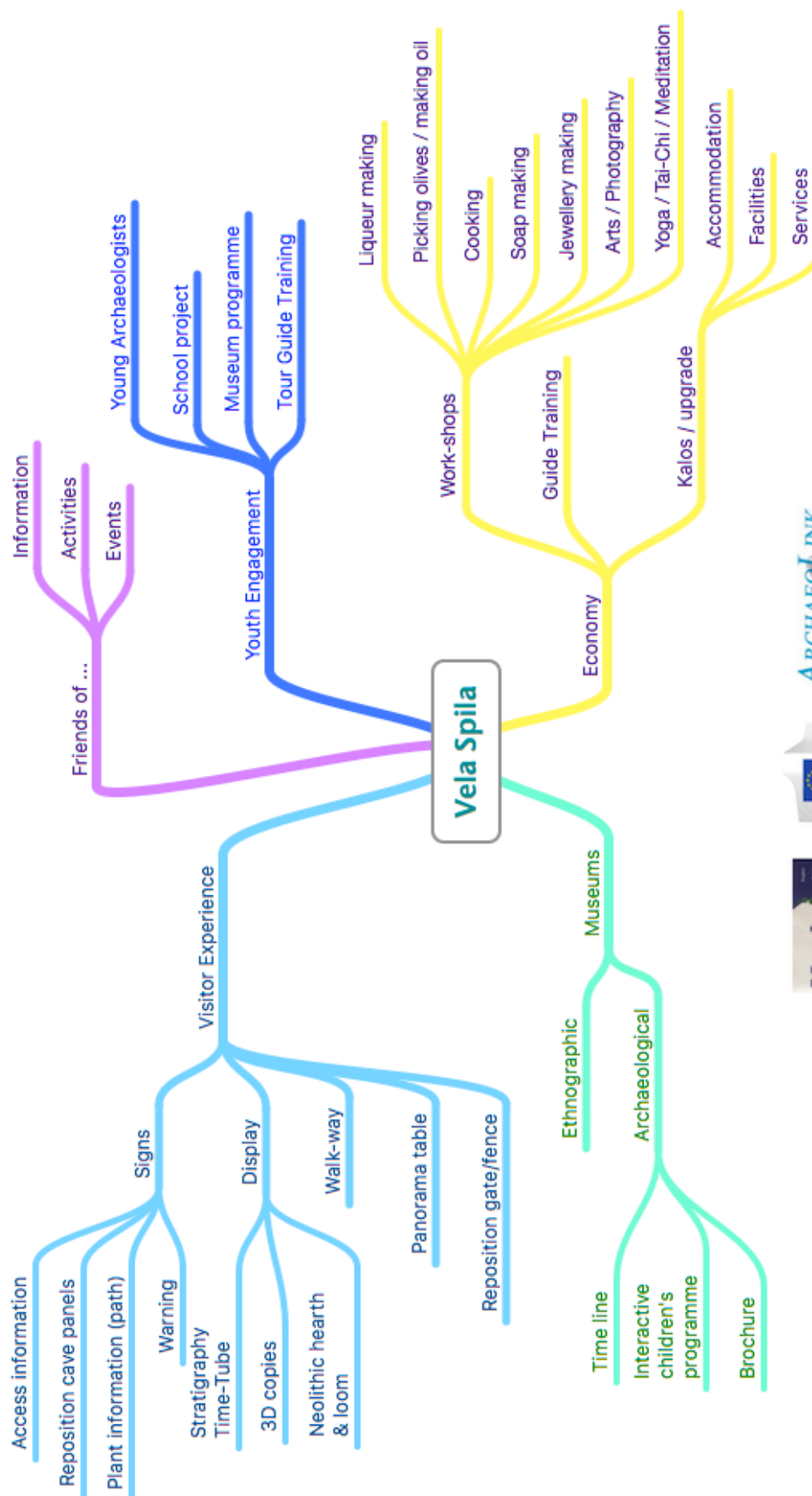




3. Access for all - Difficulties for the aged and infirmed could be eased by a (paid) shuttle/bus service from Vela Luka to the cave.

The last two suggestions might be the subject of an EU grant.







Concluding Remarks

ArchaeoLink's 'bottom-up' approach includes facilitating knowledge exchange, updating information, making information more widely and more easily available and understood, and encouraging the community to own their archaeology and cultural heritage.

It was noted that the more senior generations in Vela Luka, probably because of their experiences maturing under a different regime, were reluctant to embrace this philosophy. Perhaps this was one of the barriers to the formation of a supporting "Friends of Vela Spila" or "Friends of Vela Luka" group.





Sustainable tourism - development of local implementation strategy (MS43)

It is important to identify and understand all the issues relevant to both tourism and heritage that might affect what happens in the future. Therefore it is essential to consider the experience of visitors to the archaeological site and surrounding area: how tourism can contribute to the community and infrastructure issues.

It is essential to analyse priority issues so that outcomes for a development plan can be identified. In this way a succinct summary of outcomes for the development of an archaeological site into a valuable resource for sustainable tourism can be determined. There are many analytical methods that may be used in strategic planning of this sort.

The development plan requires all stakeholders, although they will have different but equally legitimate priorities, to focus on mutual interests that can link tourism, heritage conservation and communities.

Methodology

Every archaeological site or historical landscape is unique so our methods are tailored to each particular location, site and objectives. However, *ArchaeoLink* frames its work as follows:

- A thorough understanding of the research as well as its importance or relevance in a wider context is gained.
- The location is visited to make a detailed assessment of the opportunities available to the community and the possible challenges to achievement. During this process, we speak to as many people as possible, from all facets of the community and we discuss their goals and aspirations.
- This qualitative data is used, together with numerical data, to establish a baseline to measure progress.
- From the assessment we draw up a list of recommendations which are presented and discussed with the sponsors and stakeholders. These recommendations usually fall into three phases, short term, low cost actions that can be implemented quickly and easily, medium term actions that would require some cost and





organisation and longer term recommendations that would require bigger commitments in time, cost and people.

- *ArchaeoLink* then supports the decision-making process and any part of the implementation that needs our specialist input. Challenges occur when stakeholders are not in accord with each other, or have conflicting opinions, with the goals expressed. *ArchaeoLink* tries to mediate such situations, trying to find the positive in all positions.
- *ArchaeoLink* facilitates and monitors progress, interacting freely with the stakeholders at their own pace.
- We provide specialist/technical assistance when necessary. Such as site-specific education programmes for teachers and students and self-directed children or family trails around sites or museums. When necessary, we write information brochures and promotional flyers; we train guides; or help establish volunteer groups and archaeology clubs for youngsters.

What *ArchaeoLink* does, in practical terms, depends very much on the resources and skills already available within the community. We encourage the community to involve themselves as much as possible in a project. We prefer to look for local skills wherever possible – sustainability is more easily maintained when the community are invested.

Case Study: Vela Spila

The local community of Vela Luka is small with a current year-round population of approximately 4071 people. Seasonal trends in unemployment related to tourism have contributed to depopulation of the town since 2001. In 2017, tourism in the Eastern Adriatic, particularly around Dubrovnik, led to UNESCO expressing concern about the impact of over-tourism on sites of significant interest. As an emerging tourist destination with sites of significant archaeological interest such as Vila Spila, and Kopila, combined with increasing visitor numbers, Vela Luka is uniquely positioned to initiate preventative measures in the form of community-driven preservation and site management.





ArchaeoLink analysed the patterns in flow of visitors to Vela Spila and Vela Luka and determined that the Summer season was more popular for visitors. *ArchaeoLink* also determined the average length of stay of visitors both in Vela Spila and Vela Luka; and considered whether the heritage values were interpreted and communicated effectively. For example, it was concluded that there was inadequate communication in Vela Spila for the range of visitors and therefore new text and images were designed and produced for display panels, cave trails for visiting children were designed and printed, an interactive display of animal bones was created and a clear plastic tube to show the stratigraphy of the cave was provided.

In addition, Vela Spila guides were given specialist guide training and audio tours were provided in several languages that could be downloaded on to visitors' mobile devices. The museum in Vela Luka was also provided with new interpretative display boards and discussions were held with museum specialists as how best to present the museum display items.

ArchaeoLink also considered how the community of Vela Luka could be involved in tourism product development and looked at ways that this tourism could contribute to the community. It was determined that the tourist season could be extended by encouraging foreign tour companies to include Vela Spila on cultural tour itineraries and that agro-tourism was an area that Vela Luka and the island of Korčula could exploit due to the unique and high quality cheeses, liqueurs, soaps and oils produced by the people of the area.

ArchaeoLink also analysed the infrastructure issues and determined, for example, that the existing infrastructure of Vela Luka could cope with the desired amount of tourism. However, it concluded that signage to Vela Spila could be improved, that one-way vehicular access could be introduced and that access for less mobile people needed to be considered. The visitor facilities, such as toilets and access to drinking water were also deemed to be less than desirable and recommendations regarding dissemination of information about the region were drawn up for the local tourist information office.





ArchaeoLink analysed how visitors could find out about Vela Spila (from the local tourist information office) and looked at how marketing could be more effective. For example, it was noted that on the ferry from Split to Korčula island the TV adverts that ran continuously throughout the journey featured Korčula Town, but not Vela Spila.

ArchaeoLink also suggested tourism products that could be developed and provided information to all the stakeholders on formal training and accreditation programmes that were available. *ArchaeoLink* developed actions to implement the development of Vela Spila into a valuable and sustainable tourism resource for the community of Vela Luka and the surrounding area. These actions could then be used by the stakeholders to draw up a development plan.

One of the main foci of *ArchaeoLink* was to take archaeology and knowledge of Vela Spila into the classrooms of the schools in Vela Luka and later (following their requests) to schools in other towns in the area. The pupils, both from the elementary and high schools, were visited by *ArchaeoLink* team members who gave presentations on Vela Spila and archaeology in general in their own schools.

The pupils were also given talks at Vela Spila from the archaeologists working there, tours of the palaeobotany lab and talks from palaeobotanists, tours of the finds room and the opportunity to carry out wet sieving of finds with members of the archaeology team. The pupils were also given the opportunity of learning excavation and recording skills by attending 'dig-ins' organised and run by *ArchaeoLink*. These 'dig-ins' involved the pupils excavating 1 metre square test pits and recording all finds. These were very successful and many pupils attended numerous 'dig-ins' at various locations in the Vela Luka area.

In addition, the archaeology of Vela Spila was brought into the classrooms of the schools of Vela Luka by the production of a series of lessons and activities (with all worksheets and necessary teacher information provided). In this way the knowledge of the archaeologists was shared with the pupils so that the pupils could understand the importance of Vela Spila.

ArchaeoLink also tailored curriculum suggestions and resources to fit the elementary and high school requirements and produced a series of reading comprehensions and





grammar activities using the archaeology of Vela Spila as a theme. These reading comprehensions and grammar activities could easily be adapted for other archaeological sites. In this way the needs of the busy classroom teachers were directly met since many did not have the time themselves (nor the archaeological expertise) to create approaches that incorporate archaeology into the curriculum.





Visits and Objectives

Visit: 9 - 15 March 2016 [#1]

This initial visit was largely a fact-finding exercise during which most key stakeholders were met, and ideas, goals and aspirations discussed.

Our initial work showed:

- important, not the reason teams of international archaeologists worked there;
- many expressed a desire to know more about Vela Spila;
- many people were aware the museum was closed and felt that visitors expected it open;
- it was clear that lengthening the tourist season was a crucial goal to the economic health of Vela Luka.

Intermediate Periods

We maintain contact with community stakeholders by email, Skype and What's App to provide appropriate support and to obtain necessary information while preparing for each forthcoming visit.

Visit: 30 August – 21 September 2016 [#2]

The objectives were to:

- make an assessment of Vela Luka in the high season;
- introduce the archaeo-education programme in the Elementary School;
- discuss further the introduction of Vela Spila related information into the Secondary School;
- advance the Young Archaeologists Club [YAC];
- introduce the concept of leisure workshops to attract off-season visitors;
- assist with guide training.

ArchaeoLink's Project Director was accompanied by two additional *ArchaeoLink* team members, specialising in education and impact.





It was at this time that the archaeological team was working in the cave and in the labs and we took the opportunity to update ourselves with latest information and methods used.

Visit: 19– 29 March 2017 [#3]

The objectives of this visit were to:

- move ahead with promotional material such as brochures and flyers;
- encourage the re-opening of the museum;
- discuss displays and facilities at the cave;
- review the education programmes; to obtain volunteers for the YAC.

Accompanying *ArchaeoLink's* Project Director was a heritage student and an archaeology student.

ArchaeoLink's museum specialist joined us for the final 3 days of our visit.

Visit: 29 April - 6 May 2017 [#4]

The objectives of this visit were to:

- plan & prepare the children's & family trail for Vela Spila;
- visit schools to monitor progress of programme & to promote cave reward sticker competition;
- assist with preparation of displays for the re-opening of the museum;
- take photographic material, labels and texts for display in the museum;
- visit Blato Ethno-house;
- donate A4 DeskDiary to encourage keeping of full records of visitors to Vela Spila.

ArchaeoLink's Education Specialist was accompanied by an education student.

Visit: 30th August - 22nd September 2017 [#5]

The objectives of this visit were to:

- provide support for the education project;
- further arrangements for the school exchange;
- organise a 3rd *Dig-In* workshop for youngsters;
- begin data collection from Cave Feedback forms;





- review the visitor experience in the Museum;
- review the visitor experience in Vela Spila;
- expand the education programme to other schools on Korčula.

ArchaeoLink's Project Director was accompanied by the Education Specialist

Visit: 2 - 11 April 2018

[#6]

The objectives of this visit were to:

- run Dig-Ins 2 day programmes at 6 schools;
- familiarise two volunteers in running the Dig-In programmes;
- to collect feedback from teachers regarding the education resources;
- to collect feedback from teachers regarding the Dig-in programmes;

ArchaeoLink's Project Director and Education Specialist assisted two Korcula residents who planned to continue offering the Dig-In programmes to schools on Korcula island.

Visit: 6 - 12 May 2018

[#7]

The objectives of this visit were to:

- photograph significant finds selected by DCC
- collect data from finds for the eventual creation of 3D printed copies.

ArchaeoLink provided a specialist in 3D data collection.





Tasks and Achievements [#] denotes visit number

Assessing Resident and Visitor Perspectives – Data Collection

[#1] Our pre-prepared survey questions were adapted and translated with the assistance of the Director of the Cultural Centre [DCC]. The survey was uploaded to the *ArchaeoLink* site in both Croatian and English. Cards, with the URL and a QR code, inviting participation were distributed widely to residents, shops, hotels, travel agencies and the tourist office.

Discussions, comments and results of the Survey provide qualitative data; visitor numbers to Vela Luka and to Vela Spila provide quantitative data; both establish a benchmark for the measuring of impact.

[#2] Visitor numbers: these are counted according to ticket sales only. As no tickets are sold to children, students and residents, a record of these visitors was requested to be kept also.

26 responses had been made online to the survey. To obtain more qualitative data we interviewed a number of people from various segments of society.

Qualitative and quantitative data collected during the visit was analysed and processed (cf:M44).

[#3] We designed and produced a 2 sided 1/3 of A4, printer-ready, tick-box, visitor questionnaire for the cave. Approved by DCC & Director of the Tourist Office [DTO] they have been printed by the Tourist Office and are being distributed and collected by the cave guardian. *ArchaeoLink* would evaluate the responses on the following visit.

Information & Marketing

To achieve serious economic gains, from the lengthening of the tourist season, a longer term and bigger marketing strategy is needed for Vela Luka. Current policy is directed from the Dubrovnik Nevertva County.

ArchaeoLink's 'bottom-up' approach includes the updating of information, making information more widely and more easily available and understood, and encouraging the community to own their archaeology and heritage.

[#1] One triple-fold A4 brochure serves both for marketing and information purposes. 10,000 are printed annually and are available at the Tourist Office, Cultural Centre,





the cave and distributed to all hotels. Relevant when first created, it was no longer current.

The DTO requested that *ArchaeoLink* up-date this key piece of marketing. He agreed to the more cost efficient suggestion that a 1/3 A4 flyer be produced for marketing purposes with the triple-fold A4 brochure reserved for informational purposes only. *ArchaeoLink* re-wrote the brochure, adding new images, formulated the flyer, and sent them for editing to the *Mend the Gap* [MtG] project directors and the DCC. On approval, received only from MtG directors, PDFs were sent to the Tourist Office for printing and distributing (April 2016). Copies were sent to the DCC, the Mayor's office & the owner of *Mediterrano Travel Agency* [MTA].

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/h9tlzmkv4sy5cr/aCavePromoFlyer.pdf?dl=0>

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/y1d63cgdd1k7pa7/bCaveInfoBrochure.pdf?dl=0>

It transpired that the DCC reproduced the original brochure, substituting only one paragraph with the new text.

[#2] The DTO complimented *ArchaeoLink* on the designs of the brochure and flyer we'd produced; but advised that he'd been told to use the original brochure.

[#3] The DCC produced a draft brochure in which he had incorporated all the new text given to him 12 months previously. However, the older photographs and style were retained.

[#3] The DTO asked that we produce a printer-ready marketing/promotional flyer, similar to that previously produced, to include a map showing the route to Vela Spila. The printer-ready marketing flyer, to the DTO's specifications, was produced and sent to the DTO.

Vela Spila – the Experience

Practice regarding **access** in 2016 was to open the cave only during the traditional tourist season of July and August. Thus, visitors frequently arrive at the locked cave, often having walked up the hill, to find a notice advising the key is available at the Korkyra Hotel or at the Tourist Office.





[#1] Recommendations on appropriate opening times, **signage** regarding opening times as well as safety within the cave were discussed with stakeholders and made in our report.

[#2] A **guide** had been appointed and had learnt a good amount of information. She worked on an almost daily basis, with APD, to improve her **engagement skills**, update her information, and to construct an interpretive walk down the hill. As a larger group (40+) of visitors had been booked by the Korkyra hotel, discussion also took place on how these should be handled.

The popularity of the cave is such that a second guide was clearly needed to deal with the numbers and to give necessary breaks from guiding.

A 2m tall clear perspex tube **visual aid** was sourced and ordered from a Croatian company. It will be filled with layers of sediment together with some artefacts and displayed in the entrance of the cave. This will enable visitors to more easily see and understand the significance of stratigraphic layers.

The planned glass case with a permanent display at the cave of **3D copies** of the most important finds is awaiting decisions as to which items should be copied, together with information as to their locations, so the *ArchaeoLink* team member can travel to Croatia to produce the necessary data.

A **Guide's Folder** was produced to include a number of visual aids:

- a map showing the location of Vela Spila and animal passages in the ice age;
- two sheets of realistic sketches of a Paleolithic hunter and the animals hunted;
- images of two of the UPL fired clay figurine fragments and a sketch of someone making one by a fire;
- colour-washed sketches of life as it may have been in the Neolithic;





- 3 land profile diagrams of sea-level 20,000YA, 11,000 YA and current day sea level.

[#3] A laser pointer, guide's folder and page-a-day diary for cave records were given to the DCC for use in the cave upon re-opening. The 2m plexiglass tube for displaying strata was delivered and awaits filling by the archaeologists.

The **cave panels** were re-written to update the information; in preparation for approval, translation & printing.



The DCC approved a single stand **poster displayer** for the cave entrance.

Arrangements were made for community member to create a **display table** for the animal bones in the cave.

The original guide had become State-certified and was focussing on day-tour guiding around Korčula, necessitating a search for a replacement. Discussions took place with two potential guides; particularly regarding the idea of their being self-employed. An **audio tour** and a self-directed cave trail for families and children was discussed with various stakeholders and it was agreed that both would make valuable additions. Information on the visit of an internet and **wifi** specialist to assist in establishing line of sight signals out of Vela Luka, was discussed with the DCC. A repeater placed on the roof of the Cultural Centre would give an internet signal at the cave for downloading the audio tour and other information.

The audio tour was written and sent for approval. It was uploaded, in 11 clips, for general use in July, 2017. <http://www.archaeolink.org/projects/VelaSpila/AudioTour/>

[#5] Promotional material, advertising the audio tour was distributed.

The text of the audio tour was translated to Croatian and German and uploaded for general use with the text in English in August, 2017.

An **illustrated tour of Vela Spila**, as the Mayor's request, was produced in English and uploaded in early 2018 and Illustrated tours of Vela Spila were produced in Croatian and in German by the end of 2018.

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/2g0rhf8gmbvz8yp/AAAJmgcQu9jMhROEeivJ8lrBa?dl=0>





Education – Informing the Community

[#1] *Archaeolink* believes in educating adults principally through their children, thus were encouraged when the Headmistress of the **Elementary School** requested we provide them with a site specific archaeo-educational programme within moments of our first meeting. The teaching of English is a high priority so we were asked that our worksheets be in appropriate language so the pupils might exercise their English while engaged in learning about their history.

[#1] The headmistress also asked if *ArchaeoLink's* Project Director would spend some time talking to some of the classes in English to broaden their experiences.

Discourses were prepared and APD spent time in each of four classes on the following day, speaking in English about Vela Spila and encouraging the pupils to respond.

The curriculum for the **High School** is less flexible than that of the Elementary School, however, my suggestion to provide them with **English comprehension texts themed on Vela Spila** was enthusiastically received.

A group of school leavers work with some teachers to produce an annual *Guide to Korčula Island*, gaining experience in the associated skills, asked us to edit the English.

At the headmistress' request, and in collaboration with one of the teachers *ArchaeoLink* prepared and wrote an **Archaeo-Education Programme** of 118 pages for 9 – 11 year old pupils on Prehistory through the lens of Vela Spila. We ensured that teacher's notes give sufficient information for someone with no previous knowledge. As the school wished to use our material in the teaching of English, the children's worksheets were written in appropriate English, only the teacher's notes and lesson plans were translated into Croatian.

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/s9je5fzingn6pgz/AAAR4jnM6kPMySeWnayAawBGa?dl=0>

ArchaeoLink prepared a dozen comprehension exercises based on Vela Spila, which could easily be inserted into their curriculum, for the high school.

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/i80cizyp5f70nr2/AABVhcOU7eaybs_YvM0oqdB7a?dl=0

[#2] The Archaeo-Education Programme had been sent to the school for comment prior to *ArchaeoLink's* second trip, when it was expected that some edits would be requested. However, *ArchaeoLink's* Education Specialist was assured that it was exactly what they had hoped for; using teaching methods familiar to themselves.





The Elementary school initiated a discussion into the possibility of “**Twinning**” with an **English school**. The headmaster of Wisbech Grammar School was contacted and gave outline approval. His enthusiasm for an exchange with a school in an eastern European country matched the enthusiasm of the school for an exchange with a British school.

As part of the twinning programme, **Wisbech Grammar established an archaeology club** and ran a project on Vela Spila with the schools exchanging information and photographs.

[#2] The High school teachers were pleased with the comprehension exercises. In discussions regarding how to further integrate knowledge of Vela Spila, it was agreed that, with our assistance, they would work on the production of a **Guide Training Manual**. *ArchaeoLink* would assist in the delivery of information which they would structure into a manual and include a number of open ended questions. A distillation of the publications on Vela Spila and appropriate slides from the PI were sent to the High school teachers for their work on the production of the manual.

We learned that the teacher who was responsible for the teaching of the education programme had been taken seriously ill shortly after the school year began. In dealing with the problem, the school decided to use our material in an archaeology club; and those sessions began in the Spring term.

[#3] The **images** produced for the Guide's Folder were given to both the Elementary and the High schools. A small group were working with the Archaeo-Education Pack. Impressed by school children's art work on display at the Cultural Centre, APD talked to the art teacher about the children producing Vela Spila themed artwork, perhaps even for use in displays and publications.

An **oral history programme**, *Vela Luka Memories*, was launched whereby youngsters would talk to senior relatives using their smart phones to record their conversations. The interviews would include at least 6 suggested questions, and be uploaded to the *ArchaeoLink* website archive. The recordings could be used in a number of ways from the creation of a book of memories, to audio experiences in an ethnographic museum or a display on Vela Spila.

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/u6h5r199ed5wa0c/AABJYKzy_lpv_UQIDk-QbvF0a?dl=0





A blog is being created to which will be uploaded children's work from both Vela Luka and Wisbech schools. This has taken longer to establish than foreseen, due to various regulations designed to maintain security of minors.

Community Group - Friends of ...

[#1] One innovation introduced by ArchaeoLink, that has had huge success elsewhere, is that of forming a **society from amongst local people and groups**. The aims would be the promotion of interest in, and knowledge of, Vela Spila within Vela Luka, Korčula island and perhaps beyond. Members would form the base from which volunteers could be drawn to implement appropriate projects. This suggestion was discussed with some stakeholders and some residents (especially those who had experience of other such social groups) thought the idea had potential; however it was commented that it would only proceed with the DCC's support.

[#3] As the DCC stated he had no interest in managing the cave, nor in having involvement with visitors, and wished to continue his archaeological goals, the suggestion of forming a *Friends of ...* group to support these responsibilities was re-visited. A couple of community spirited residents to whom the idea had been proposed 12 months previously, asked for developments and commented such a society would be an asset for Vela Luka.

Young Archaeologists Club

[#1] The idea of a club was enthusiastically received. A young mother offered to co-ordinate the club and produced an impressive list of activities she would offer. A second resident volunteered to assist.

The activities would introduce the concept of a "Dig the Garden" test-pit programme and week-end practical work-shop, mirroring the ILAFS programme in Cambridge, when *ArchaeoLink* returned in September.

It was left that they would liaise with the DCC in its formation and the use of space in the Cultural Centre for meetings.

We maintained contact with the volunteers, speaking or emailing on average every 3 weeks. Difficulties with space availability and registration of the club arose and were not resolved before the summer. Posters were made to advertise the club, but remained unused. One of the volunteers became busy with other matters and the remaining one felt she needed the support of another locally.



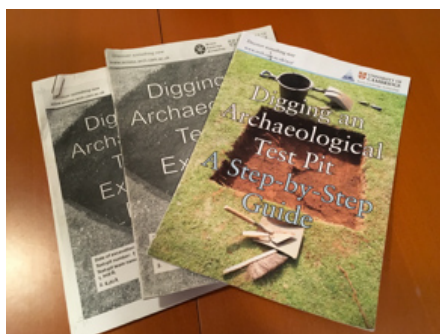


[#2] To launch the Young Archaeologists' Club [YAC] week-end workshop, we visited all classes for the age ranges 10 – 14 in both schools. Together with a brief slide presentation, we talked about the YAC and the week-end workshop of fun activities where pupils would be able to learn what archaeologists did and to dig themselves. 24 students signed up to participate. We prepared all materials and tools, and arranged for local assistance in making sieves and for transportation.



18 students arrived for the Weekend Workshop programme (10-12/9/2016) which consisted of:

- Day 1 - a game to identify and sort tools; a game to practice setting out a test-pit accurately; instructions on recording the dig; visits to the archaeo-botany and the bio-archaeology lab; visit to the wet-sieving and floatation area; visit to the archaeologists in Vela Spila; plotting test-pits at Star site.
- Day 2 – on site – all pupils tried each of the various tasks: digging; sieving; washing finds; recording and bagging finds; recording and photographing; talking to the 40+ passers by eager to know what was happening.



- Day 3 – at the Cultural Centre to examine finds and discuss possible conclusions. Presentation of certificates.

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/ard1gqp3fid0pxo/AABH4P6bRmEkYTd6cal9Et-ga?dl=0>





Following an appeal for volunteers to assist, a retired teacher came forward who agreed to help with the YAC. She was introduced to the original volunteer and the guide who volunteered to do their publicity.

The Artistic Curator at the Cultural Centre was contacted to book time in March 2017, for a **photographic exhibition** of the week-end workshop held in September. The photographs were printed and work begun on the labels.



<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/w049q3ponzadvct/AAAs8cQ3hAm6ohrkbJ94HdGda?dl=0>

[#3] Following visits to the schools, a Weekend Workshop (25-27/03/17) was held with a similar programme to that of September, 2016. As only one lab was open, more time was spent digging the test-pits. On the second day we moved to a new site and found a roman pot (in pieces). 12 youngsters participated; more expressed a desire to attend, but were committed to a major sporting event.

Photographs from the September week-end workshop with explanatory captions was mounted and two tables of selected labelled and bagged finds formed the exhibition. A reception was held and attended by some 40 community members. Participants of the recent work-shop received their certificates.

We arranged for the exhibitions of photographs to be redisplayed in the Elementary school.

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/w049q3ponzadvct/AAAs8cQ3hAm6ohrkbJ94HdGda?dl=0>

[#5] A *Dig-In* workshop was organised with the addition of a drawing activity.

Furthermore archaeologists suggested pupils from the schools could help investigate





sediment from augers. Classroom visits to invite the children resulted in 28 arriving at the cave to assist. Those interested were given an introduction to auguring by archaeologists and many sieved the sediment to discover bone and flints which were allowed to be taken to school for *Show and Tell* before being returned to the archaeologists.



Extending the Tourist Season

[#1] Discussions took place with administrators of the Hotel Korkyra on the possibility of providing work-shops (eg cookery) for encouraging off-season tourism. The hotel implemented **Croatian Cookery Classes** for groups of Asian visitors within a few months. This was also discussed with the DTO.

[#2] With assistance from the municipality who widely promoted the event on the radio and website, *ArchaeoLink* held a meeting, with a slide presentation, to explain the possibility of offering leisure work-shops to encourage off season visitors to Vela Luka. 20 people attended. Work-shops offering classes in yoga, cookery, photography etc. are popular in other parts of Europe.

It was explained that Vela Luka had a variety of products which were unique to the area: a number of home made liquors, sweets and biscuits, soaps, face creams and lotions. Demonstrations and classes on their preparation would provide original offerings to attract visitors in the Spring and Autumn. 6 people said they would be interested in holding such classes. After some positive discussion it was agreed to meet again. A form for completion to assist in planning the workshops was circulated. At the second meeting the young Vela Lucan who had proposed himself as a co-ordinator gave a short presentation. The class plans received were discussed. It was decided he would contact those interested, and assist in constructing each programme and agree pricing; then make a website for promotion of the packages which would include afternoon activities and a visit to Vela Spila.





After having made a promising start, the co-ordinator of the Vela Luka Workshops left the area and was no longer available. The position of co-ordinator was taken over by the owner of Vela Luka Travel agency. She contacted all interested parties and helped them formulate their workshops.

[#3] Following a 3rd talk to the community about using off-season workshops to extending the tourist season, we held 3 individual sessions with the co-ordinator and each of three individuals offering workshops in local traditional cookery and crafts. Details of pricing and descriptions were agreed. The co-ordinator immediately mounted all details on her website. <http://www.velalukatravel.com/workshops-3/> A 4th workshop was added to the offer. The organisation was done with very little input from *ArchaeoLink*, demonstrating that this scheme has the possibility of being sustainable.

Contact with the various airlines servicing Split and Dubrovnik together with contact with tour operators and special interest groups is being made to promote the workshops together with visits to Vela Spila.

Other Points of Interest

[#1] The DCC generously took *ArchaeoLink*'s Project Director [APD] to several other sites in the historic landscape surrounding Vela Luka. These are detailed in the report. He discussed the formation of an ethnographic museum using material loaned by residents. This would be a valuable addition to points of interest available to visitors. He confirmed he would have the archaeological **museum**, housed in the Cultural Centre and currently closed, re-opened for the tourist season in July, 2016. Further to our suggestion that the *Kalos Rehabilitation Centre* be upgraded to current day standards as a **Thermal Spa and Hydro-Therapy** facility, we contacted Neda Telišman Košuta, responsible for the development of sustainable health tourism at the Institute of Tourism, Zagreb. The *Mend the Gap* project was explained as was *ArchaeoLink*'s role and she was asked if Kalos was being considered for upgrade. She responded (5.7.16) supporting our work. She advised that being state owned, tourism services are limited. She anticipates a change in status in the future for Kalos and other such establishments, which would eventually allow their upgrading to current standards.





Kampagnija **sword and chain dancing** displays are regularly performed during high season, however no information appears to be available on the stories they represent.

[#3] The DCC had discussed the 2018 anniversary event and was enthusiastic about a suggested **Virtual Reality experience**. As he was confident in raising the necessary Euro 50-100,000, *ArchaeoLink* contacted and liaised with BDH who produced a proposal and a sample 3D experience.

[#4] The Blato Ethno-House showing rooms furnished as they would have been 100 - 200 years ago and clothing from those times, provides a good model for an **Ethnographic museum** to be introduced to Vela Luca.

The Museum

[#1] The museum, situated in a spacious room on the first floor of the Cultural Centre had been closed since 2015. Discussions took place with the DCC regarding its re-opening.

[#2] The museum was still closed and appeared untouched since the visit in March, with materials, boxes, exhibits in disorder. *ArchaeoLink's* Project Director offered to provide an *ArchaeoLink* team member to assist whenever requested.

The DCC was shown some coloured sketches of Neolithic scenes of activity obtained from the Natural History Museum in Vienna, and agreed they were a “good idea”. He was given the contact details of an artist in Vela Luka who could replicate them for scenes appropriate to life in Vela Spila.





[#3] The DCC requested our assistance with re-opening the museum. It was arranged for *ArchaeoLinks*'s museum specialist, whose publications include "*The Engaging Museum*", to arrive towards the end of our stay. Over 3 days he discussed the re-displaying of the museum with the DCC to properly understand the DCC's vision.

Further to a draft sent to the DCC for approval or changes and edits, the **Proposal for Re-Displaying the Museum** was produced and sent to the DCC, the Mayor and the *Mend the Gap* principals.



<https://www.dropbox.com/s/88gx2vybcg4d1w5/MuseumProposal.pdf?dl=0>

Preparations were made to send an *ArchaeoLink* team member with a student to work with the DCC in re-displaying the museum with a view to its opening for the tourist season.

Following the layouts described in the Proposal, *ArchaeoLink* arranged for 26 professionally mounted images were produced by a Croatian company; captions and associated panels were prepared, translated, formatted and printed.

[#4] One of *ArchaeoLink*'s Education Specialists accompanied by an education student travelled to Vela Luka to work exclusively on the museum. They were permitted to thoroughly clean it, to remove wooden boats, amphorae and other superfluous material and to place photographs in appropriate locations according to *Proposal for Re-Displaying the Museum*. The museum re-opened in August 2018.

[#6] Site-specific **Activity sheets** for families and children to use in the museum, were presented to the DCC. He appeared pleased with them and stated he would also use them with his classes at school.

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/pzhhb74sxs7jg33g/AACcPHmTUHRrBbzzljS7xRISa?dl=0>

[#7] Some of the most interesting finds from Vela Spila are not on general display. *ArchaeoLink* provided a specialist in capturing and processing 3D data so that the museum would be easily able to print **3D copies** for use in a display at the cave and also for items not able to be displayed in the Museum.





<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/dyhbbgwc9ub289v/AAC3AaaDoCYHygcOclkyYTOoa?dl=0>

Local Government Liaison

[#1] Initial recommendations were discussed at a meeting with the Mayor. A councillor, the DTO, the DCC and a teacher were present. The Mayor was pleased to support *ArchaeoLink's* work, and would like to see more recognition of Vela Spila as a valuable archaeological locality to enrich the tourist offer of Vela Luka as a unique destination.

[#2] Progress on the Archaeo-Educational Resource, the Young Archaeologists Club, the Workshops for extending the tourist season and the Guides Manual were reported to the Mayor. We were assured me of his continued support.

[#3] A report on our work was made at a meeting with a senior officer of the Municipality [SOM]. Various matters were discussed, including our suggestion, in order to encourage residents to beautify their town, of the establishment of a Garden / Green Certificate to be awarded monthly (perhaps with a small prize) to those whose gardens were maintained, or who added pots of flowers to their terraces, doorways of windows.

At SOM's request APD produced a letter to be given to the next Mayor together with a copy of our assessment and recommendations report.

[#4] Regular updates on progress were made to the SOM and Mayor together with discussions regarding priorities.

[#5] The Mayor visited Vela Spila to gain further understanding of the archaeology and the visitor experience. She requested that the audio text be accompanied by illustrations to make a guide to the cave. The Mayor was presented with a list of further recommendations, achievable by June 2018 (cf:M11).





Concluding Remarks

While much was achieved, it is felt that the formation of a homogeneous community group, whose focus was to support Vela Spila and to carry out community based initiatives, would have ensured more progress would have been accomplished.

Engaging the local community in the site management, conservation and preservation of their archaeological resources in the face of local development challenges (such as: mediating the interests of multiple stakeholders, mitigating tourism pressures) brings enormous benefits.

Such a model of a community's involvement in their heritage preservation can contribute to: improving visitor experience and services at local archaeological sites at a pace appropriate for the community; the social justice of community inclusion in heritage development; raising the profile of academic research through creation of local, regional and national legacy impact in communities; the sustainable development and management of local archaeological resources.

This could further lead to:

	improved local economy		greater opportunity for local employment
	improved well-being		community identity and inclusion
	development of sustainable tourism, and protection of archaeological resources for future research		initiation of collaborative partnerships, rather than top-down initiatives





Sustainable tourism - raising awareness (MS44)

ArchaeoLink specialises in assessing the potential of archaeological sites and in developing site-specific strategies for the implementation of sustainable tourism in the local community. Achieving sustainable tourism requires motivation, determination and a systematic approach. *ArchaeoLink* has developed such an approach which has been tried and tested in various locations including Vela Spila. This systematic approach, with priority action areas, can be extended to other Eastern Adriatic archaeological sites with a view to turning them into valuable resources for sustainable tourism.

- Six priority action areas are identified: Identification of stakeholders;
- Determination of heritage assets and values;
- Identification and understanding of key issues affecting the archaeological site and region;
- Analysis of issues;
- Construction of a development plan;
- Checking and reporting on progress.

Raising awareness of the value and tourism potential of any area, regionally, nationally and internationally requires the dedication of the local community and the bodies operating within it. Again, *ArchaeoLink* advocates a more bottom-up approach where local tourist offices, boards and agencies co-operate in identifying and informing regional, national and even international bodies of their unique and special qualities.

Case Study: Vela Spila

Vela Luka's Tourism Board comprises a number of the Mayor, a number of Council members, the Director of the Cultural Centre and the Director of the Tourism Office who meet regularly to discuss progress and plan events to draw visitors.

ArchaeoLink's role was to broaden the scope and reach, suggesting new areas where promotion was possible and where awareness could be raised.





An increasing number of Tourist Agencies have opened in Vela Luka, primarily for the purpose of providing rental accommodation to visitors. In 2016 only one promoted Vela Spila, however by 2018 three agencies were actively promoting tours of Vela Spila, boat trips and the new leisure workshops.

Tasks and Achievements: Promotion of Vela

Website

In early 2016, *ArchaeoLink* initiated a website specifically for Vela Spila and their work with the community of Vela Luka: <http://www.archaeolink.org/projects/VelaSpila/> This is regularly visited, enjoying several hundred hits per year. The site has been frequently updated throughout the project and currently has 35 pages of news, a summary of recommendations, images, reports and information.

Presentations - Lectures

Four Presentations have been given locally about *ArchaeoLink*'s work in the community.

In September 2016, *ArchaeoLink, turning archaeology into heritage*, given at the Cultural Centre, Vela Luka, Croatia to 35 people. The purpose was to introduce *ArchaeoLink*'s findings and recommendations.

In September 2016, *ArchaeoLink, Extending the Tourist Season*, given at the Municipality, Vela Luka, Croatia to 22 people. The purpose was to introduce Off-Season Leisure Workshops to the community.

In September 2017, *ArchaeoLink, update on our work*, given at the Municipality, Vela Luka, Croatia. The Project Director gave a presentation to the newly elected Mayor of Vela Luka, Councillors and members of the Tourist Board focussing on what had been achieved to date and what was to be achieved.

Six Presentation / Lectures have been given at various institutions, internationally, featuring Vela Spilja as a case study. These include:

In June 2016, *Achieving Impact, benefits to be gained by both archaeologists and the communities in whose landscape they work*, given at the Archaeology & Landscape conference in Fano, Italy, to an audience of 100+ at which we won the prize for the "Best Presentation".





In May 2017, *Communicating Heritage*, given at the McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, Cambridge, U.K., to an audience of 42 people.

In November 2017, *Making Archaeology Meaningful to the Community of Vela Luka*, given to the Cambridge Archaeological Field Club, U.K., to an audience of 38 people.

In March 2017, *ArchaeoLink, turning archaeology into heritage*, given at the Royal Society of Arts, U.K. to 53 people.

In February, 2018, *Archaeology and ArchaeoLink*, given at Wisbech Grammar School, U.K. to 62 pupils 2 teachers. With the aid of a power point, the Project Director led a lively discussion on what is archaeology, when it begin, how archaeological sites are located, *ArchaeoLink's* work with communities and the forthcoming visit by school-children from Vela Luka.

In March 2018, *Making Archaeology Meaningful to the Community*, given at the Cambridge Union Society, U.K.

An example is here:

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/03g3ywfhd9u8fre/AADcJZ_cynMKoINwzX8fuliZa?dl=0

Further Promotion of Vela Spila – Informing the Wider World

In early 2016 research began to identify possible tour operators, special interest groups and cruise ship visits, with the DTO and Mediterano Travel. A list was given to the DTO for contact. Issues of a lack of local guides for the cave and a co-ordinator of land arrangements were identified as problematical, to be addressed.

An *ArchaeoLink* team member attending an *Interpret Europe* conference met various **Heritage** related persons from Croatia. Consequently they were contacted (8.6.16) by email, given details of our project and invited to visit.

In July, 2016 the Project Director attended the *Landscape and Archaeology Conference* Fano, Italy and gave a **paper** on *ArchaeoLink's* work, focussing on Vela Luka as the case study; and won a certificate for the best presentation.

The Project Director met tour leaders of a couple **inbound groups** and obtained head office contact details to update them with how facilities were being improved. Following our contact, Marko Ruvakina, Faculty Architecture, of Zagreb, *PHeritage Urbanism*(2015-18) HERU working with Petric, Min. Cultur, Dept. Zagreb Direction for Cultural Heritage Protection, both **visited** Vela Luka to discuss collaboration with the DCC.

In September, 2016 *ArchaeoLink* gave a **presentation** at the archaeological summer school on the importance of sharing research with the non-specialist and the





methods by which this can be achieved using various strategies being developed in Vela Luka.

A director of *Andante Travel* was contacted to discuss possible **interest**.

Photographs were sent with information on Vela Spila and the *Korkyra* hotel.

At the request of Vela Luka Travel, we provided **text** for a website description of Vela Spila to encourage visitors. <http://www.velalukatravel.com/workshops/the-big-cave-vela-spila/>

At a Heritage function the Project Director met the **Secretary General** of *Europe Nosta*, Sneška Q-Mihailović. *ArchaeoLink*'s Vela Spila was discussed and, as she has a summer house in Hvar, she was invited to visit the project in the summer of 2017.

In May, 2017, a heritage student who accompanied us, made a film about her visit which has been widely circulated to her family and friends in Korea:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1D99kXQ_mDOykfGD365i9oVOQnHwh7GxF/view

In June 2017 to further promote Vela Spila and to spread awareness of the improved visitor experience including the availability of the audio tour, **contact** was made by email with followup interaction with:

- Maris International operator of a Croatia Cruise;
- President of Tourist Board of Dubrovnik-Neretva County;
- The Vela Luka Dance ensemble in USA;
- The Embassy for Croatia in London;
- The Tourism Office for Croatia in London;
- Interaction with VLT and list of Tour Operators.

Examples are here:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/5jsbcz4ijs18eew/AABXomU1V8hPQ97ClvP5vp1ha?dl=0>

Vela Spila featured in several newspapers and websites:

<http://www.archaeolink.org/news/>

In August 2017 the updated promotional Flyer was sent to the DTO with the suggestion it and other promotional material be used at the “**Islands' information point**” at the ferry-port in Split.





In September 2017, **a notice** inviting the community and visitors to visit Vela Spila while the archaeologists were visiting was displayed in several locations throughout the town.

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/5jsbcz4ijs18eew/AABXomU1V8hPQ97ClvP5vp1ha?dl=0>

In September 2017, **an article** destined for *Current World Archaeology* was completed and sent for approval. *Vela Spila, the Millennia-Long Story of a Croatian Cave* was published in CWA089 in June 2018:

http://www.info.archaeolink.org/VelaSpila/CWA089_VS.pdf

also here:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/vhn828ms101io10/AAC6l0TN5y5k0FI9uau1HMFQa?dl=0>

In November 2018, as a result from a meeting with the Project Director, *ACE Travel* expressed an interest in incorporating a visit to Vela Spila in a tour scheduled to begin in 2020, discussions are on-going.

Education - Informing the Communities further afield.

In September 2017, visits were undertaken to 5 schools : Blato Elementary, Blato High, Lombarda Elementary, Korcula Elementary and Korcula High.

The purpose was to gauge interest among the teachers in using *ArchaeoLink's* site specific education programmes and if they would like *ArchaeoLink* to organise the Dig-In workshops at their locations.

As the english teacher at Lumbarda visits from Korcula Elementary twice weekly, further liaison directly with Lumbarda was unnecessary.

Each of the schools, without exception were extremely welcoming and took copies of the programmes offered.

These, all focus on Vela Spila and archaeology and include:

- the project "Discovering how early humans interacted with their Environment" of 15 topics;

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/80f6exopcdfs91/AADHWIAMIQON5QRfsJVSecPza?dl=0>

- 14 comprehension texts with questions and grammar exercise for Elementary school;





<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/r964mx2ijudfvm0/AABqYF9yRQSTGJs6x6nmNpv1a?dl=0>

- 10 comprehension texts with questions for High school.

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/vv1e119z54ahzpw/AAD2KkEd5f7Oclj-1GE4aAGaa?dl=0>

The images are here:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/sj3qzhg2m2xps2c/AABD4jmRv1SJNKwQu5Z9KFUXa?dl=0>

All include background information and teachers' notes, lesson plans and answers. Each school was also given the links to the Audio Tour Clips online which they identified as being another resource for the teaching of English.

<http://www.archaeolink.org/projects/VelaSpila/AudioTour/>

The *Dig-In* workshops were discussed in each school and it was agreed the teachers would interest their students in participating during the Easter vacation. They took copies of the *Dig-In* power-point presentation and the associated questions

The Project Director was invited to speak directly to classes in the high schools to give them a chance to interact with a native English speaker. She talked about Vela Spila, archaeology and their chance to try archaeological excavation in the *Dig-In* workshops.

Dig-Ins - further afield

These, 2 day workshops, were planned to take place immediately after Easter, 2018, at four schools: Blato Elementary, Blato High, Korcula Elementary and Korcula High. Some youngsters from Vela Luka High School had volunteered to assist *ArchaeoLink's* Education Specialist. She was accompanied by the two local volunteers who planned to continue the programme after the *Mend the Gap* project was concluded. Unfortunately the weather in Korcula produced such extreme rain-storms, that the programme had to be abandoned.





Teachers and pupils from both Blato schools were extremely enthusiastic. The elementary pupils even decided to forego lunch so they could continue digging on both days. They were there early both days and wanted to do more. They brought their own equipment and the local community showed an interest in what they were doing by visiting their test-pits and engaging with the pupils.



The principal of the school was keen and very proud of his school and encouraged the Project Director and the Education Specialist to have a good look around. The High School pupils were no less enthusiastic than the elementary school.

Through pupils' enthusiastic, questioning, collaborative skills developed. They all gave presentations as to what they had discovered and said what they thought this showed them, the importance of each find and what it indicated about the past use of the area. This further contributed to the development of their critical thinking skills. All was conducted in English; a rare and welcome opportunity to practice English. The presentations were filmed and the Head teacher and others attended.

The Dig-In programmes, examples of excavation and finds' records are here:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/arcl4mp78i1yhq9/AABlq0dHJtKGFBilq7vD66Xa?dl=0>

images are here: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/wg4LTJ0SjUORGBT22>

Film clips are here: <http://www.archaeolink.org/projects/VelaSpila/Clips/>

School “Twinning”

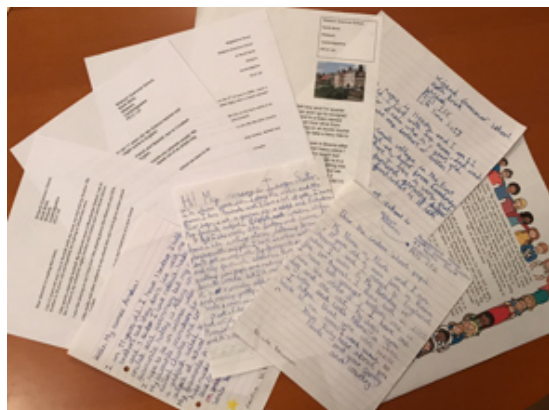
An interesting and unforeseen result of introducing site specific educational resources to the schools was the establishment of a Twinning programme between both the high and the elementary schools in Vela Luka and a school in the UK.

The Elementary school initiated a discussion into the possibility of “Twinning” with an English school. The headmaster of Wisbech Grammar School was contacted and gave outline approval. His enthusiasm for an exchange with a school in an eastern





European country matched the enthusiasm of the school for an exchange with a British school.



Consequently Wisbech Grammar school initiated an archaeology club and ran a project on Vela Spila with the schools exchanging information and photographs. Classes swapped results of their test-pits and then, letters. An exchange visit was carefully planned and a groups of pupils visited England in April 2018.

The Croatian students followed a carefully planned schedule of visits including a visit to Peterborough to visit the tomb of Katharine of Aragon as well as to see a British shopping centre and city; a visit to a typical sea-side town (Hunstanton); a visit to Sandringham House (the Queen's residence); a visit to Cambridge with a tour of an osteology laboratory in the Department of Archaeology, University of Cambridge, where finds from Vela Spila were being analysed; and a self led tour around the historical landmarks of London. All these visits consolidated what they had been learning about British culture and also about archaeology and heritage. The students also spent one day attending lessons of their choice at Wisbech Grammar School and ate lunch in the school refectory. The students had an archery lesson which was a new experience for all of them and they delivered a talk to a group of English students. Some of the students attended a Science lesson for pupils who were 4 years younger, however, they enjoyed it but were surprised by the amount of practical work the pupils in England carry out.

Described as a highly successful trip, it gave good opportunities to exchange ideas. The teachers were also able to attend lessons of their choice, to help with their own professional development. The teachers were especially grateful for the time they spent with the SENCO (special needs coordinator) since inclusive education and making the curriculum accessible to all is something with which they find they require support.

The trip provided experiences of schooling and living in the UK as the students from Vela Luka High School stayed with English families for the week. Many have stayed





in close contact with their new English friends, with some of the English families already planning visits to Vela Luka too.

The programme, pupils' information, visits booklet, register, lessons attended, London information booklet, London Walking Tour, feed-back are available here:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/rnkimx8jdqdrprr/AACwD-jQUNin8Hw6W18jWPV3a?dl=0>

Concluding Remarks

ArchaeoLink recognises that every archaeological site and local community has different key issues affecting the archaeological site and region and that the heritage assets and values differ. This necessitates a flexible framework. However, *ArchaeoLink* has a tried and tested systematic approach which identifies the stakeholders and leads to a development plan and the monitoring of progress.

A key action area is facilitating all the stakeholders to develop a mutual understanding of the heritage involved so that they can develop goals and objectives together with the assistance of *ArchaeoLink*. This results in different outcomes for different archaeological sites and local regions. For example, *ArchaeoLink* favours the formation of heritage groups for archaeological sites (such as *Friends of Elefsina*, Greece) as these can produce some very positive outcomes. However, such heritage groups can only be formed by mutual agreement of stakeholders and therefore the *Friends of Vela Spila* heritage group to support a variety of initiatives, was never formed.

ArchaeoLink's systematic approach to developing site-specific strategies for the implementation of sustainable tourism in the local community can be used for any Eastern Adriatic archaeological site, but the development plan for each site will be unique.





Sustainable tourism - quantification of impact (MS45)

In order to keep a development plan relevant it needs to be constantly checked and progress needs to be reported. Keeping track of progress means that efforts can be redirected and management continually adapted to suit changing circumstances.

Case Study: Vela Spila

ArchaeoLink used performance indicators to monitor progress of the development plan of Vela Spila as a sustainable tourism resource. In this way *ArchaeoLink* could demonstrate where the programme was meeting its objectives as well as identify where performance could be improved. *ArchaeoLink* also had planned key points at which progress of the development plan was checked and formal progress reports were provided to those with both tourism and heritage interests. In this way attention was kept on what had been achieved and what still needed to be done. In addition *ArchaeoLink* conducted various evaluations and reviews and this led to changes in the development plan.

In March, 2016, an online survey was established and cards distributed throughout Vela Luka encouraging residents to take part. The results were not statistically significant, but indicated that more should be done to make information about Vela Spila more accessible. Qualitative methods of obtaining survey results largely resulted in indicating that while most people knew Vela Spila was important, very few were able to identify points of interest or know why archaeologists from Zagreb, Italy or the U.K. were at work there.

In April, 2017, while initiatives to improve the visitor experience were being undertaken, a feedback form was designed and given to the DCC for distribution to visitors to the cave.

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/3inzrmuzk0ivjwe/AAB-sMtkXRb19cWOx8LPJJU0a?dl=0>

Purpose of visitor management results: This feedback explores issues of both soft and hard visitor experience. The responses offer the *Mend the Gap* project an idea of what is currently working well with the site, as well as identifying short, medium and longer-term approaches to improving visitor management and experience





Feedback Strategy

Feedback forms were collected from site visitors between 1st June and 23rd September, 2017. Forms were only available from the cave site location and were not more widely available for completion at the Tourist Information Centre. The sales desk in the cave ran out of forms in July and they were not replenished until 24 August. This evaluation was conducted on the 386 surveys received between June and September. Each form has been assigned a number for recording and reference which correlates with the form data spreadsheet.

Accuracy of feedback

It is uncertain to what extent this sample represents the total number of visitors to Vela Spila as sales figures for tickets have not yet been released to *ArchaeoLink*. The ticket sale data is key to understanding the wider context of evaluating feedback as, without the data, the statistical confidence against which this sample of responses reflects the views of everyone who visited is not known.

It is important to know the level of reliability of any survey. Select Statistical Services <https://select-statistics.co.uk/calculators/sample-size-calculator-population-proportion/> computes the number of responses required to obtain reliable population estimates.

The confidence level, or reliability, ideally should be 95%, anything less than 90% significantly increase the chance that the margin of error does not contain the true population values i.e.gives a greater risk of error or misinterpretation.

At a give confidence level we can estimate the margin of error of our estimates. Larger confidence levels (less risk) entails larger margins of error (lower precision in the estimate), whilst smaller confidence levels (higher risk) will lead to smaller margins of error (higher precision in the estimate).

The computation to discover the number of feedback forms needed to provide a reliable result involves a margin of error: the lower the percentage, the more accurate the result.

As an estimate, if there are 10,000 visitors over the year, then, the responses from the 386 feedback forms will yield a margin of error of +/-5% for a confidence level of 95%. Thus, for example, an 18% response reflects that of between 13% and 23% of





the population and one of 62% reflects that of between 57% and 67% of the population.

It is important in reviewing all feedback to remember inaccuracies occurring due to some 'ticking' of boxes without thinking; issues with interpreting questions from English to native language; general errors; all which can be observed on the forms in this sample. This error should always be accounted for and recognised in evaluations. Despite the small number of responses, the insights obtained from the visitor feedback recorded over these 10 weeks remains valuable and should not be underestimated, nor neglected as it is statistically significant.

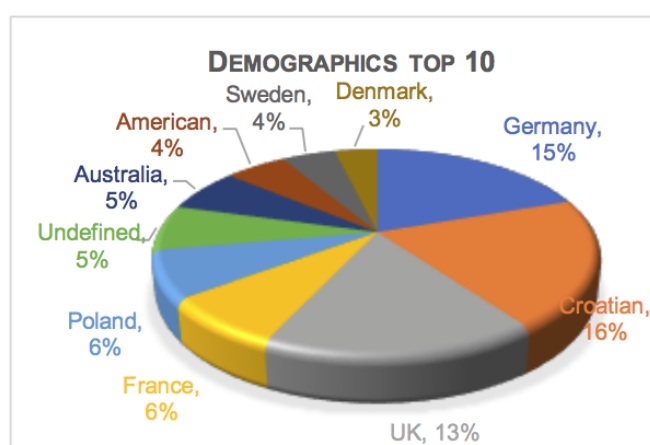
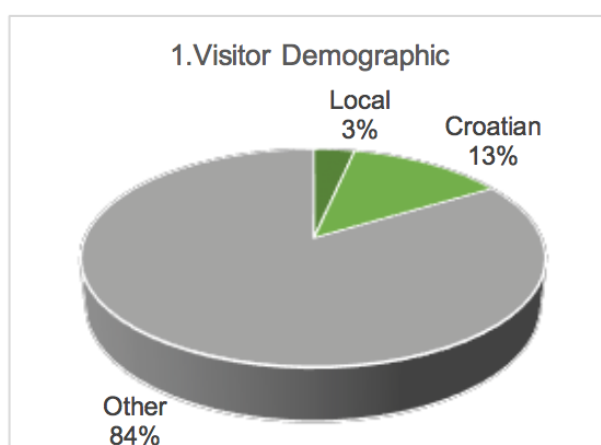
Application of feedback results

For the purposes of this feedback, the continued objective should be to improve those areas rated as 'poor' to either 'average' or 'good'.

Feedback Evaluation

1. About the Visitor

1.1 Demographics: to identify the number of visitors to Vela Spila who were local from the Korcula Island region, or from wider Croatia, or who were international. The top ten visitor countries are shown below. Across the 385 forms only 5% did not have a nationality noted. The following two charts show that in the sample 16% were from Croatia.



1.2. Site tourist information: this question was set to identify where tourists were accessing information about the cave site so we could maximise the information

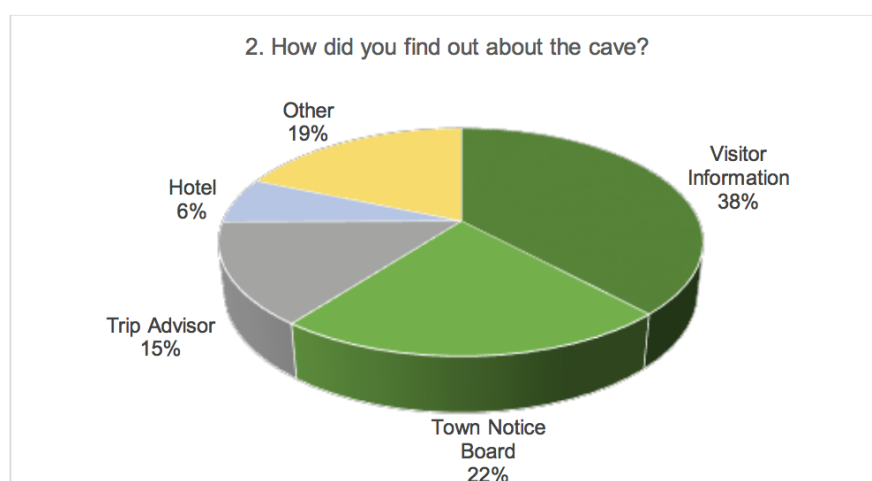




available to them. This was a direct question and most responders chose only one option. This can therefore be interpreted to mean that those who found the cave via the town notice board, did not find out about it at the tourist information centre. Those that found out about it at the tourist centre may have seen it on a town notice board.

On 21st August, 2017, the tourist office manager reported that supplies of cave brochures for tourists had been expended since the last week of July and not replaced.

Therefore, the use of the Town Notice Boards to provide information detailing cave opening times, when archaeologists are excavating and availability of audio-tours, in such a case, and also for those tourists who do not go to the tourist Information office, is invaluable. “Other” was suggestions from friends, sailing tours, or guide books.



2. Cave Experience

2.1 Opening times: the 2016 feedback identified the cave was often closed when visitors arrived. Whilst this data appears to show the issue has been corrected, the result is likely because the feedback form was only made available at the cave site when the site was open. One response recorded the site not being open. The visitor returned the next day and noted his first attempt on the feedback form hence it was identified. It is possible there may be more people with similar experiences and an attempt should be made to capture this information. In addition to being available at the cave, it is suggested the feedback form also be made readily available to visitors





at the tourist information office and at the museum. This may capture those who visited but did not gain access to the cave so we can discover why this was and make improvements.



2.2 Cave information Guide: As a guide had been appointed for visitors guide in 2016, when the feedback form was created it was assumed this would continue for 2017. Upon returning in August it was discovered there was no longer a guide. The responses below are therefore curious as 15% responded they used a guide. Some causes for this discrepancy:

a) some of these responders commented directly about Reni, the cave guardian, and how “lovely” and “knowledgeable” he was, therefore some likely interpreted those who sell the cave tickets at the site, as the guide.

b) some of the responders were with a cruise (mostly Sunsail) with their own guide and the responses referred to this person. 6 of the forms identified they were with a cruise.

c) some responders said they used the cave guide, but as they found the cave on *Trip Advisor*, the town notice board or were staying in Blato with friends, it is unknown to which guide they referred.

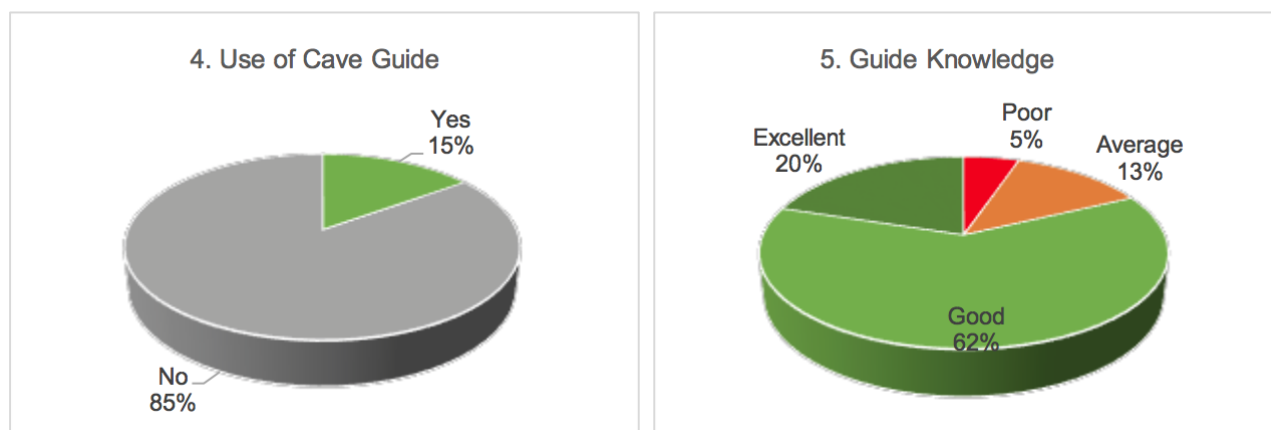
d) it could be misinterpretation: everyone who replied saying they used the cave guide, also completed the next question on the quality of the guide. They could have been referring to paper guide, the audio tours or online information.

Regardless of how the 15% received their information it has rated well, although 18% rated it below ‘Good’ of which 5% rated the experience as ‘Poor’. Anonymous guides





raise the issue of the inability to control the kind and quality of information that is being disseminating to visitors. A knowledgeable guide provides continuity in the kind of information being communicated and ensures, as far as possible, that all visitors have a similar visitor experience to the site. Importantly, the guide is responsible for communicating the mission of the *Mend the Gap* project to all visitors, raising the profile of the site and the wider aims of the project in Croatia. Further information is



detailed in section 3, Visitor recommendations.

2.3. Site Information Panels: The data collected for this question suggests that as they are, 80% of visitors rated the current panel information for Vela Spila as either good or excellent. However, 58% also noted in section 3 Visitor Recommendations that the panels required improvement. This suggests that the panels contribute immensely to interpretation of the site which might be detracting from the overall enjoyment and site interpretation for visitors.

Form 42: commented that sea-levels on the panel were not clear or easily understood;

Form 101: suggested more information on what the excavated areas were showing;

Form 147: requested information on why the excavations were not finished;

Form 155: suggested more descriptions, renderings and information about people who lived here saying it was hard to conceptualise what or who was here;

Form 271: said panels are in the wrong places and should be nearer excavation areas. Another suggestion was to identify and explain the local geology that formed the caves.

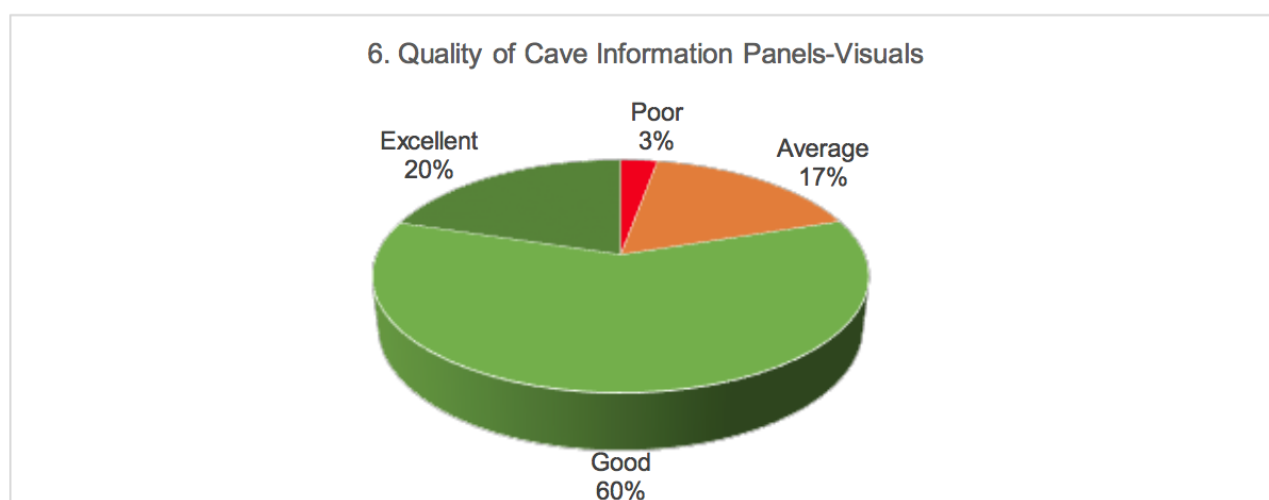
2.4. Experience with Archaeologists present: Observing an archaeologist working in situ is rare, yet this is something visitors to Vela Spila can experience. This





question was to explore the opportunity these visitors were given to discuss the site with the archaeologists who are excavating (when available). In 2017, the excavation began on 29 August but forms ran out prior to this. Thus, these forms should not capture engagement with archaeologists. The data however shows 7% of visitors recorded responses that inferred one was present.

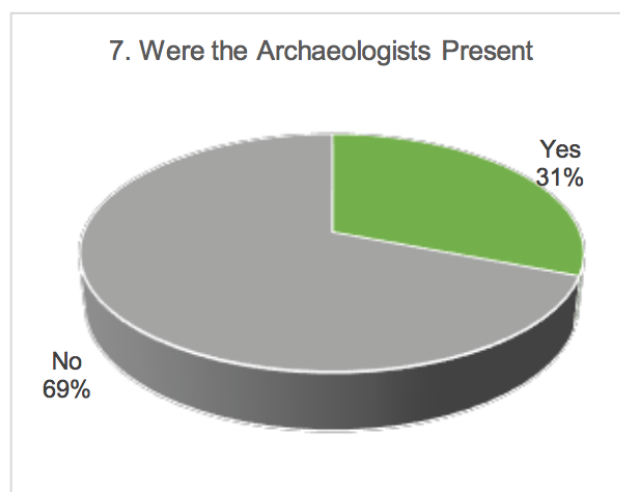
- a) This may be errors linked to interpretation of the question;
- b) there may have been an archaeologist present related to their tour;
- c) visitors perhaps thought Reni was the archaeologist as there were several comments saying how helpful he was.



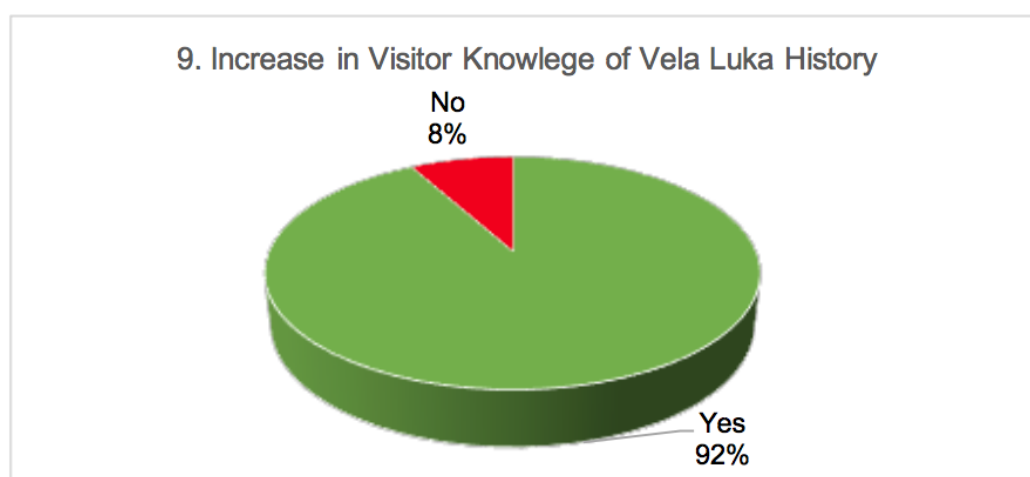
75% of visitors considered their engagement with the archaeologist to be either good or excellent, with 25% rating it as either poor or average.

Forms 167 and 121 suggested information about when the archaeologists were excavating be posted in the town centre.





2.5. Knowledge gained during visit experience: Assessing the visitor experience of the cave shows that an overwhelming 92% of visitor left the site having gained a greater awareness of Vela Luka and Croatian prehistory. Of the 8% that did not have their knowledge increased, half were locals who may already have had a general knowledge of the site an area. Form 193 comments that the cave information required more visible connection to the museum in town and vice-versa. This could be rectified by noting the cave price includes free entrance to the museum, and all cave notices also including information about the museum.





2.6. Expectation vs Experience: This question was asked to gauge the visitors anticipated experience compared to what they actually had. 77% rated this question as either above average or excellent and 23% rated it as being average and poor. Looking at the responses to previous questions, as well as the visitor recommendations in section 3, suggest the lower scores are related to the kind of information being imparted: i.e. whilst the panels relate the history, more information is needed directly linking the excavations, what has been found and where (past and present) to that history. 88% of visitors noted in their recommendations (section 3) that they would like to see excavated material in the cave, or to have something tangible to view and hold.

Form 74: requested, “Please do something with the display of animal bones on the ground”

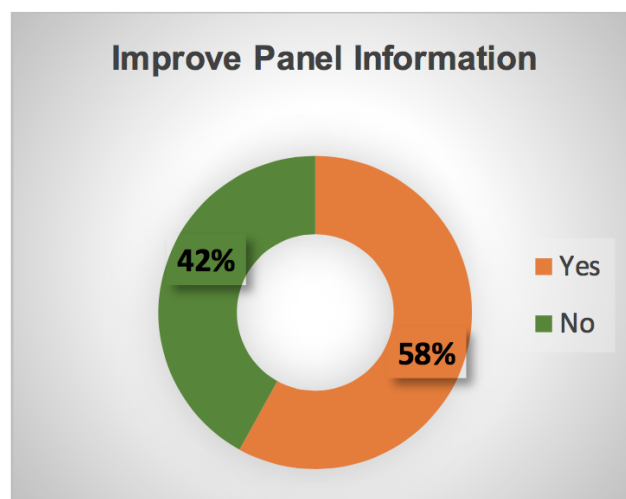
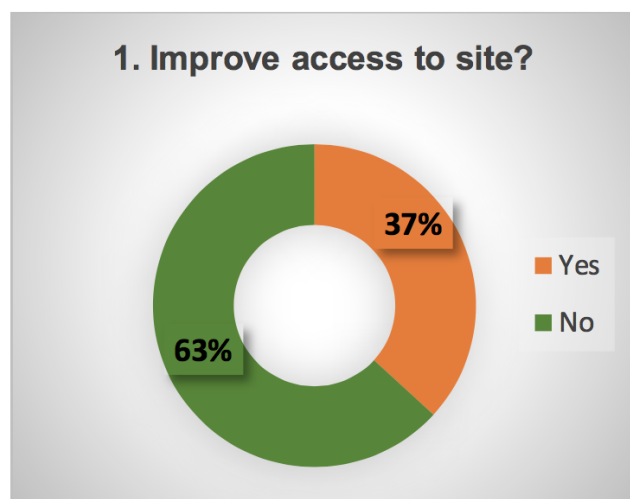
Form 145: a lover of archaeology, suggested we “provide an area for tourists to excavate”

Form 306: suggested marking stratigraphy on the cave walls somehow so visitors have a direct visual which links to the panel information.

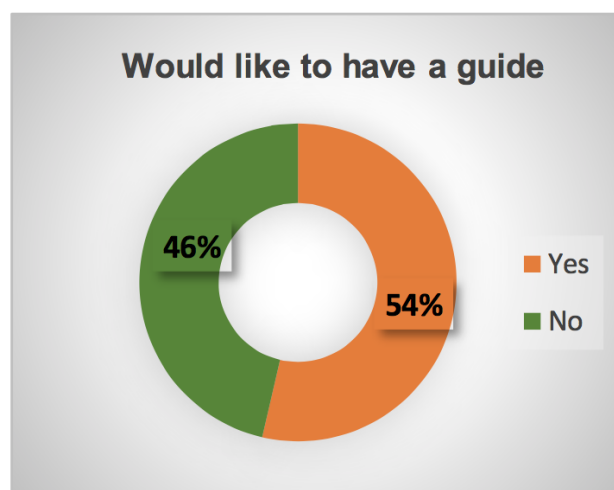
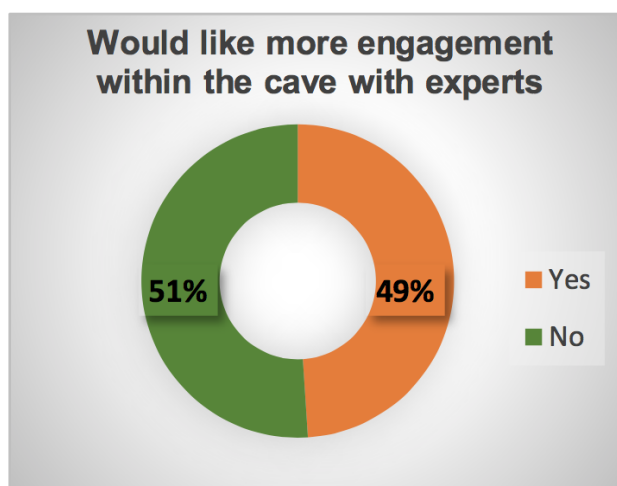
3. Visitor Recommendations

Because of their combined range of experiences visiting different heritage and archaeological sites, tourist recommendations offer valuable insights for sites in developmental phases. Currently, access to the site is either by personal transport, or by walking. A number of responders commented on the town signs for the cave, saying the sign for the start of the path is small, easily missed and the small blue cave symbols are either on the ground, or on a wall and are also easily missed. Those on the ground are also quite worn. The ‘distance left’ markers further up the path are also worn away. As more people are using google or GPS maps the path would benefit from being added to those programmes. In the longer term, visitors might benefit from a small open bus that runs from the town to the cave a couple times per day during high season. This could be a paid service that includes ticket for cave and museum. This would also provide access to the site for those who are less abled.

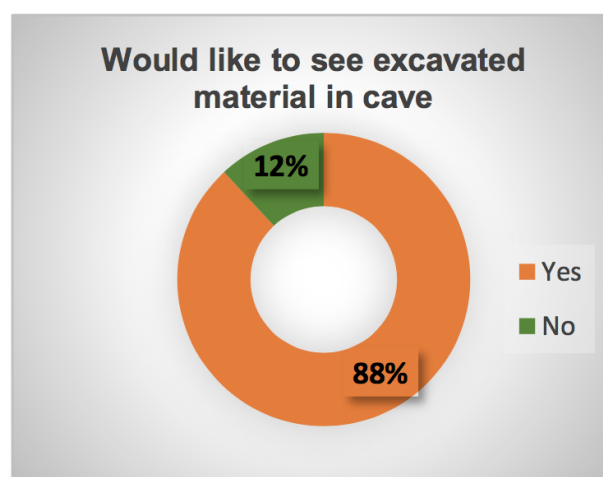




Comments: This feedback shows there are many positives about Vela Spila. As per question 10, 77% of responders rated their experience as above average or excellent. 80% rated the information panels as excellent or good and 92% of people



leave the site having increased their knowledge about the site and region.





Next, the feedback should be considered and put into context with the visitor recommendations. Upon doing so, these visitor management results reveal important and continuing improvements for Vela Spila:

This limited sample of visitor monitoring identifies weaknesses in visitor experiences related to hard and soft visitor management practices:

- 58% of visitors request improved visual display of the site;
- 88% request the availability of tangible material to touch or see in situ;
- 54% request softer practices such as a cave guide for interpretive purposes and engagement.

The visitor recommendations noted above are identified in order to permit the local heritage managers to develop and prioritise their visitor management strategy as they see appropriate.

Impact

While it is too early to have a definitive view of the impact of various initiatives, some conclusions might be drawn.

Visitor numbers to Vela Luka and to Vela Spila

	2015	2016	2017	2018
Visitors to Vela Luka	163220	180825	187370	189943
Visitors to Vela Spila*	5000	8000	10000	15000
% of Vela Luka visitors who go to the cave	30%	44%	53%	79%

*It should be noted that while every method was used to obtain them, *ArchaeoLink* was never able to confirm the number of visitors to the cave for any given year: thus have to rely on unofficial numbers,

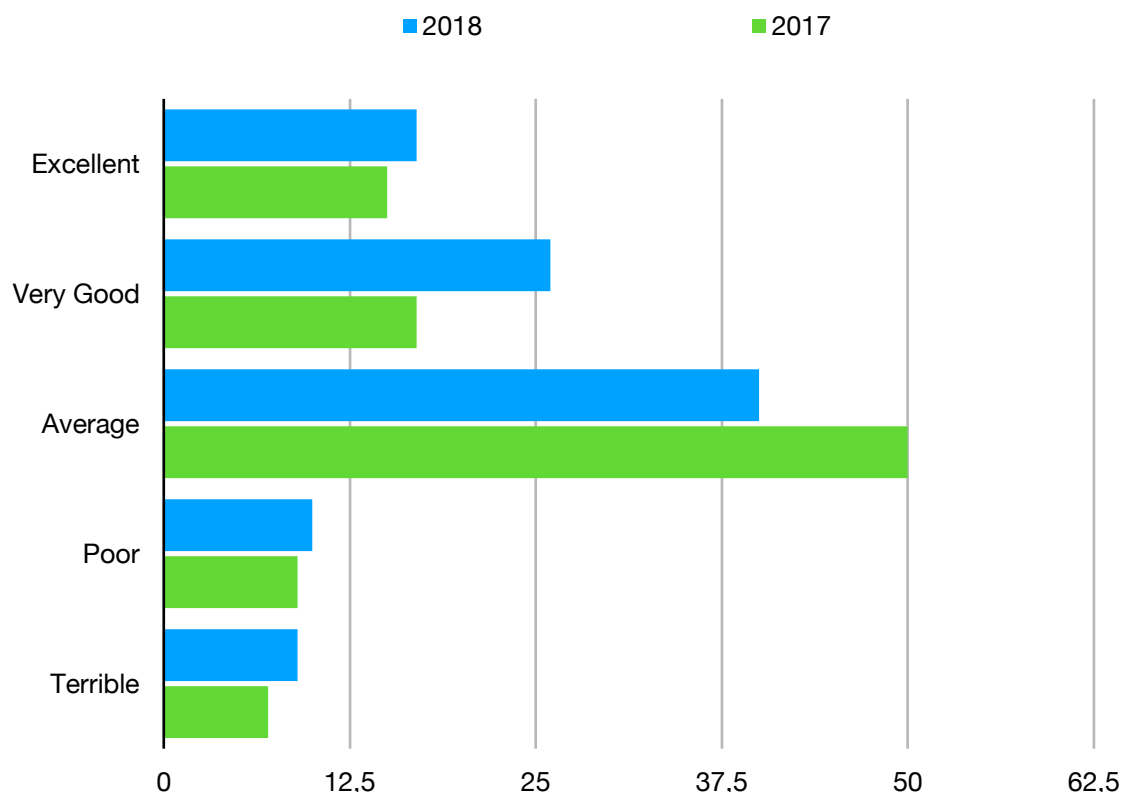
The visitor numbers to Vela Luka are provided by the Tourist Office.

In 2015 approximately 30% of visitors to Vela Luka visited Vela Spila. *ArchaeoLink* commenced their initiatives in Spring of 2016 and a guide was trained for that season. Figures show a continued and marked increase in the percentage of visitors





to Vela Luka who visited the cave: from 30%, pre-interventions to 79% in *ArchaeoLink's* third year.



***Trip Advisor* comment scores in percentages**

Overall visitor satisfaction could only be gauged by a further survey, however, comments on *Trip Advisor*, generally more positive than those in 2015, show a marginal improvement. <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/3inzrmuzk0ivjwe/AAB-sMtkXRb19cWOx8LPJJU0a?dl=0>

Vela Spila's *Trip Advisor* rating has risen from 3 in early 2017 to 3.5 by late 2018.

Concluding Remarks

The visitor requests as highlighted in the comments section above can easily be addressed with *ArchaeoLink's* recommendations and would lead to improved comments and ratings in social media and sites such as *Trip Advisor*. Promotion and increased awareness of any particular heritage or archaeological site will attract and encourage increased tourism, thus it is important that visitor experience is of that the highest quality and that their expectations are met and even exceeded.





**Mend
The
Gap**

Smart Integration of Genetics with
Sciences of the Past in Croatia:
Minding and Mending the Gap
Horizon 2020 . Twinning of research institutions

Patricia Hart

Project Director - *ArchaeoLink*

WP 5 Leader: *Davorka Radovčić*

WP 5 Deputy Leader: *Dinko Radić*

