

BRITS CLUELESS ABOUT OWN COUNTRY?

Survey Reveals Brits Don't Know Own Country in Ultimate Patriotic Year

- 39 per cent no clue about counties
- Scots know England better than the English
- Over 50 per cent of under 24s depend on SatNav
- 95 per cent of Londoners 'no confidence' without map

Draft: 10 July, 2012: With the World heading to the UK in matter of days for London 2012 it seems most Brits need a crash course in geography – about their own country! Despite media coverage of The Olympic Torch Relay and a continued focus on HM The Queen's Diamond Jubilee tour, an independent survey commissioned by Warwick Castle reveals that most Britons lack basic knowledge about the UK.

The findings come at a time when the government is stressing the need for a focus on facts in the national curriculum and a move away from verbal reasoning exams such as GCSEs to more knowledge-based tests like O Levels and CSEs.

The survey shows:

- Only 38 per cent of Brits can identify neighbouring counties;
- Scots know more about England than the English;
- Only 47 per cent correctly connect The River Avon with the town of Warwick;
- Almost ten per cent believe London is the nearest city to Warwick.

Focus groups held by Warwick Castle to discuss 'Where is Warwick?' revealed further flaws in Britons' geographical knowledge, including an assumption by an Essex housewife that the historic, land-locked town is located by the coast; and a belief by one man from the south west that it is part of Wales.

Just 38 per cent of Brits questioned in the independent survey could correctly identify English counties that neighboured one another, with over 10 per cent believing Yorkshire and Norfolk border Warwickshire, and almost one in five being too bamboozled to offer any answer at all. Surprisingly, almost half of those in the West Midlands couldn't correctly name a county that bordered Warwickshire – at the heart of their own region.

Scots fare better than their English neighbours: 40 per cent correctly associate the River Avon with Warwick compared to just 34 per cent of Londoners; and six per cent of capital dwellers think the Thames flows through Warwick. While 38 per cent of Scots know that the nearest city to Warwick is Coventry, only 32 per cent of Londoners do – and the capital is just 86 minutes away by train.

Worryingly, given the dearth of geographic nous, 60 per cent of Brits claim they are confident enough to navigate on a day out without either a map or a SatNav. However, those aged 18-24 are least confident with over 50 per cent relying on technology to show them the way compared with just a third of those aged over 55. Londoners prove the least confident, with just five per cent willing to trust their own navigational skills contrasted with those from the North East, 27 per cent of whom are happy to jump in their car for a day out without a map.

Tim Harrison-Jones, General Manager at Warwick Castle is astounded by the lack of knowledge: “We’re often asked ‘where is Warwick?’ and this survey shows that many people really don’t know. At a time when the whole world is looking at the United Kingdom, maybe we should swot up and be experts on our own country so that we can enjoy it ourselves and tell the world how wonderful we are! There are so many great days out to be had all over the UK so we’d encourage people to get out and explore for themselves – with or without a map!”

Warwick Castle commissioned the independent survey in response to customer feedback that demonstrated that the majority of visitors were unaware of the proximity of the site to key urban centres including Birmingham and London. In the heart of Warwick, the Castle offers ample car parking less than two miles from Junction 15 of the M40, perfect for a day out from London, the Home Counties, Oxford, Banbury and The Midlands. Warwick railway station is a short stroll from the Castle with regular Chiltern Railways service to Birmingham Moor Street (27 minutes away) and London (86 minutes away).

Ends

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Notes to Editors:

All results from independent One Poll survey of 500 UK adults in June 2012.

Warwick Castle is easily accessible from junction 15 off the M40, just 40 minutes from Birmingham and 1hour 40minutes from London.

At www.warwick-castle.com a family of 4 [2 adults & 2 children (4-11)] can visit for only £40 when booked one day in advance, additional child £7.50. Alternatively, book tickets 7 days in advance and receive 30% discount, book 48 hours in advance and guests will receive 20% discount and best ticket price is guaranteed online. Entry to the Castle for adults from £12.96, children from £9.36 and seniors £10.08. Visits with 10 or more guests receive at least 45% discount. Print your own tickets at home and beat the queue. Alternatively, advance bookings can be made by calling 0871 265 2000. Guests are advised to check opening times and the entertainment schedule in advance of their visit.

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