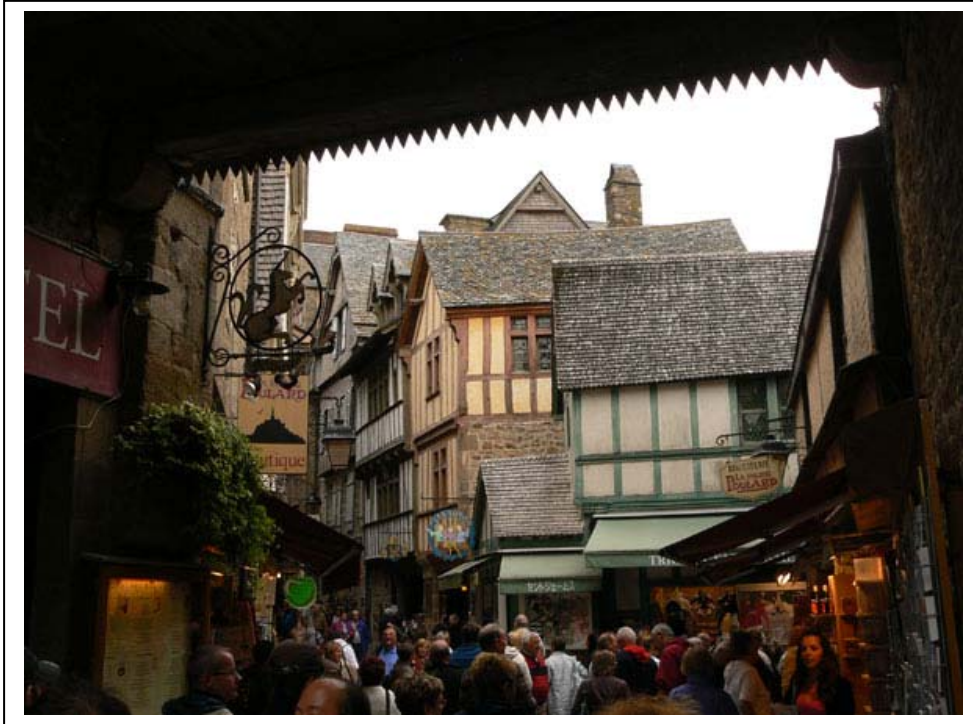


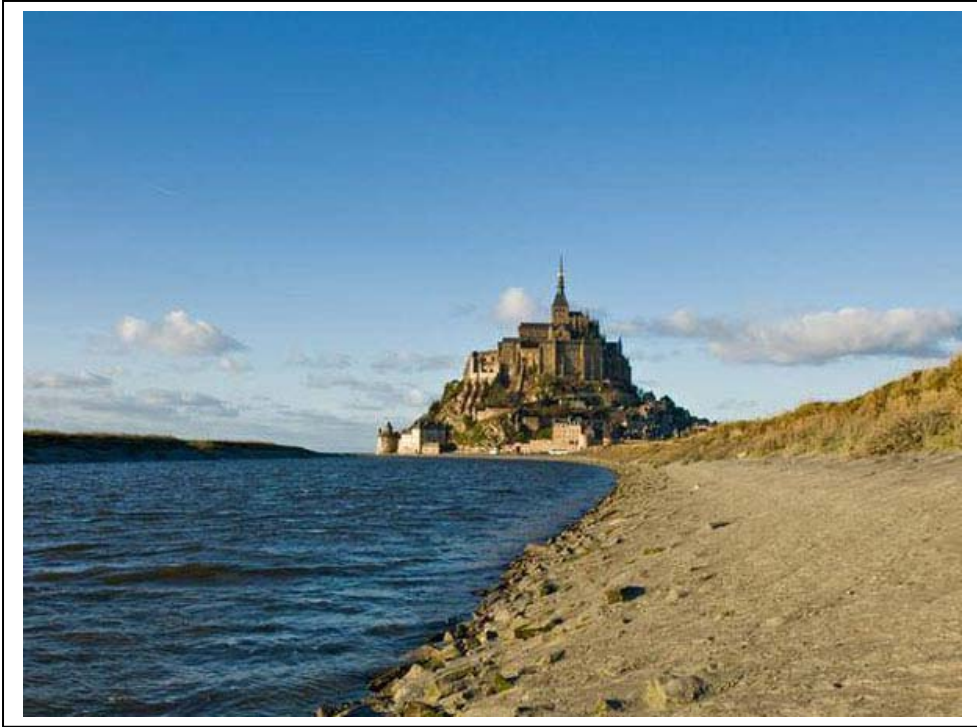
Mont St Michel

1. How does Mont St Michel appeal to tourists?
2. What are the problems facing visitors
3. What is the impact of human activity?
4. What is the way forward?

Tab 1 – How does Mont St Michel appeal to tourists?











INFORMATION -

Perched on a rocky islet in the midst of vast sandbanks exposed to powerful tides between Normandy and Brittany stand the Mont St Michel known as the 'Wonder of the West'. The island contains a Benedictine abbey dedicated to the archangel St Michael, and a village that grew up in the shadow of its great walls. Built between the 11th and 16th centuries, the abbey is a technical and artistic masterpiece, having had to adapt to the problems posed by this unique natural site. The Abbey was turned into a prison during the days of the French Revolution, and needed to be restored before the end of the 19th century. With the celebration of the 1000th anniversary of the structure, in 1966, a religious community moved back to what used to be the dwellings of the abbot. At the same time, as the abbey was developing, a village grew up from the Middle Ages. It flourished on the south-east side of the rock surrounded, by walls dated for the most part from the Hundred Years war. Shops, hotels and restaurants are still open today.

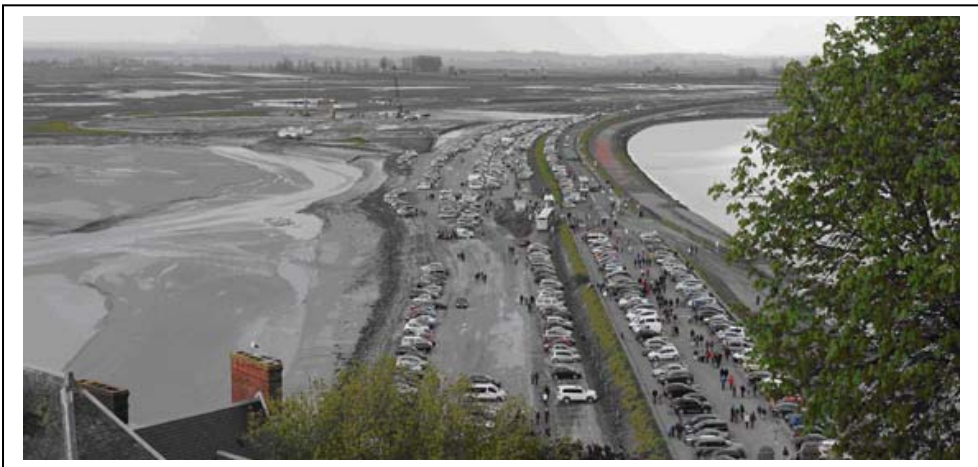
UNESCO classed the Mont Saint-Michel as a world heritage site in 1979, and this mecca of tourism welcomes nearly three million visitors a year'

About 3 million people visit Mont St Michel each year. These visitors mainly arrive by car or coach and park on a causeway linking the small island of Mont St Michel to the mainland. The causeway is not natural and was constructed about 100 years ago. Mont St Michel is a 'honeypot' destination that attracts many people, so can become very busy. Car parks become congested near the site and coaches have drop their passengers as close as they can to the monument. This means that visitor management is an issue and can mean that not everybody enjoys their visit to Mont St Michel as much as they might.



TAB 2 – What are the problems?







INFORMATION -

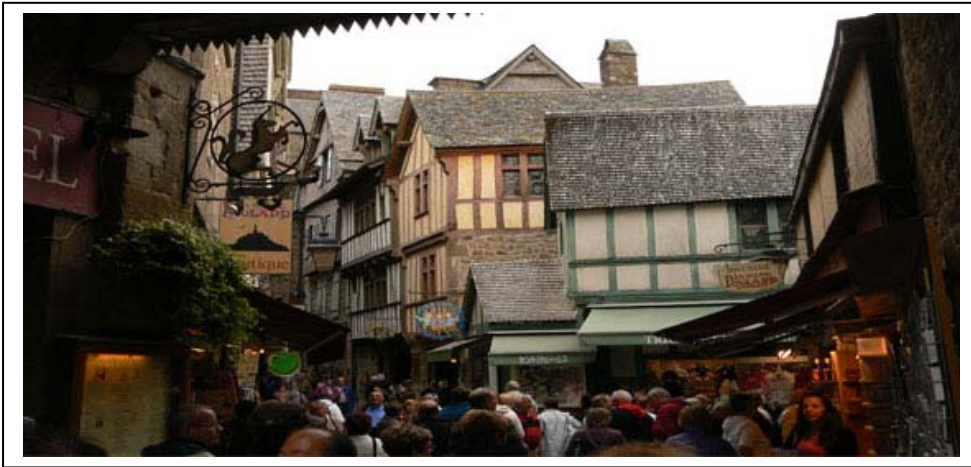
The five main problems facing Mont St Michel are:

- 1 - There are a number of issues with the visitor experience at Mont St Michel. One of these is that the car park is on a man-made causeway which is actually covered by sea water at high tide, and so the road is often covered with silt and becomes slippery.
- 2 - Very often the narrow streets around the building become very crowded. This impacts on the visitor experience.
- 3 - Another problem is that although Mont St Michel was originally a small island in a bay surrounded by open sea, the bay has gradually silted up and the island is now joined to the mainland surrounded by muddy areas at low tide.
- 4 - The buildings of Mont St Michel are over 1000 years old and so maintenance is needed to preserve them. Sights like the one below may spoil the view for the visitor, but it is really important to make sure that the buildings do not fall into decay.
- 5 - The village of Mont St Michel has become a 'tourist trap' with shops selling over-priced souvenirs that have little to do with the history of the abbey and village.

TAB 3 – What is the impact of human activity?

INFORMATION -

It is not only tourism that has had an impact on the environment of Mont St Michel. Human activity has led to sediment building up around the Mont as humans have attempted to reclaim the land. The causeway, on which the car park is now situated spoils the environment and has added to the development of mud flats around the structure. If nothing is done, it is estimated that in 30 years' time the Mont will be surrounded by salt marshes.





Tab 4 – What is the way forward?



INFORMATION -

The area around Mont St Michel is in the middle of a major project costing millions of Euros which will restore the environment of the bay to its original condition. This will involve:

- The construction of a dam over the River Couesnon that will flush water into the bay and remove THE sand and gravel which is accumulating.
- Building a new car park and visitor centre on the MAINLAND (continent)
Could all weblinks highlighted on this page open the new page up in a new tab or window so that users can jump back and fore.
- Removing the causeway on which the current car park stands
- Building a pedestrian footbridge that can carry shuttle buses to allow access to the Mont St Michel

All relevant information and news about this major project can be found at:

http://www.projetmontsaintmichel.fr/index_uk.html

A three minute video called Le Baie shows how the project will be developed.

http://www.projetmontsaintmichel.fr/en/pro_area/tourism_area.html



