

Public Transport Users Survey 2004

Introduction

Following on from the 2002 and 2003 surveys, a bus user survey was conducted on Sundays and the Bank Holiday Monday during August. Passengers travelling into the Yorkshire Dales National Park were asked to complete a questionnaire, which used the same questions as in 2003. Beck Hall in Malham supplied the prize of an overnight stay as an incentive for people to take part.

Distribution of the survey forms was less effective this year, resulting in 220 responses compared to 493 from the 2003 survey. Volunteers from YDPTUG gave out questionnaires on the long distance routes into the Park, but distribution elsewhere relied on passengers picking up the questionnaires from the bus driver as they boarded and was less effective.

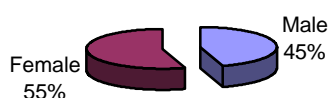
However there were a sufficient number of responses to enable certain conclusions on user profile and the economic benefit to the Yorkshire Dales from bus passengers to be drawn.

Key findings

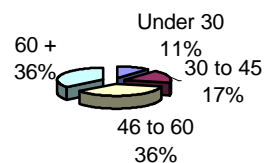
Profile of respondents

Bus users were fairly evenly split in terms of gender but 72% are aged 45 and above (74% in 2003).

Gender of respondents



Age groups of respondents



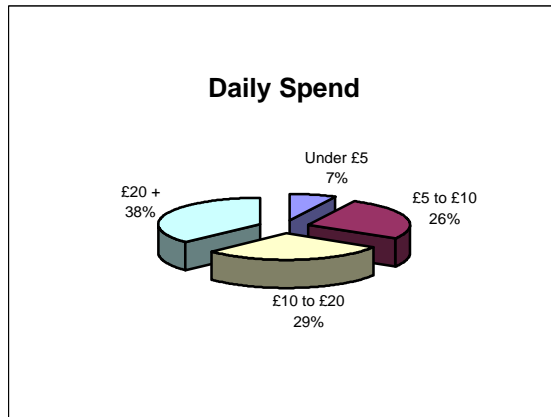
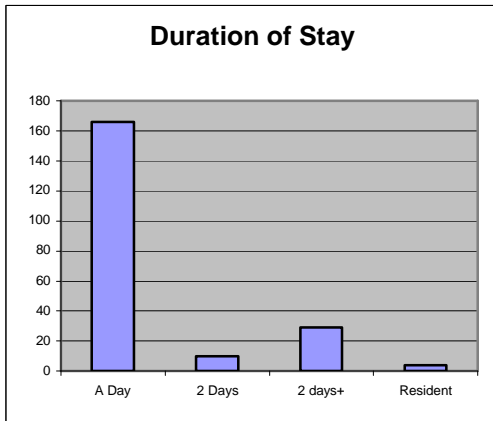
An open question was posed asking people what they considered their ethnic origin to be. 85% replied British/English. Although less than a third of these specified they were white British, it is very likely that the vast majority are of white origin. However many other ethnic groups were also represented.

Ethnic Origin	Number of responses	Ethnic Origin	Number of responses
English	55	German	1
White English	6	Irish	2
British	73	Latino	1
White British	54	Mixed English	1
Total English/British	188	Polish	1
Asian	2	South African	3
European	4	Taiwanese	2
Australian	2	No response	9
Chinese	4		

In response to the question "Do you have use of a car?", 37% replied yes, 55% no and 8% did not reply. This indicates two key factors. Firstly that the 55% would not otherwise have been able to access the Yorkshire Dales and secondly that the 37% have made the choice to travel by public transport.

Economic benefit

The survey shows that 74% of bus passengers were visiting the area as day visitors and that over 65% of users spent more than £10.00 per day.



Taking into account the number of passengers who travelled on leisure bus services in the Yorkshire Dales in 2004 (10563 passengers), an estimate of the spend by bus users during the year can be obtained. This gives a figure of £139,960 spent in the Yorkshire Dales by bus passengers during 2004.

If the 37% of bus passengers who had access to a car are removed from the above calculation, then an estimate of £88,175 is reached. It is reasonable to assume that this money would not have been spent in the Yorkshire Dales if the Dales bus network was not in place, since these people would have been unable to travel to the area by other means.

Comparison to 2003 survey

Given the fewer responses to the 2004 survey, it is reassuring to find that the results of both surveys are very similar. The following points are worth noting:

- Although the percentage of users classing themselves as British fell from 90% in 2003 to 85% in 2004, this does not necessarily mean that there was a 5% increase in users from other ethnic backgrounds since 4% of people chose not to reply to this question.
- The male/female split has swung back in favour of women (opposite to 2003).
- 2003 saw a reduction of the number of people in the 60+ age group and this trend has continued in 2004. Especially encouraging is the slight increases seen in the under 30 and 30 to 45 age group ranges.
- Spend has dropped slightly from 2003, but is still considerably above £10 per person on average. Total spend in the Dales rose due to an increase in overall passenger numbers.