

EFFECTS OF TOURISM: ENVIRONMENTAL

The concentration of so many people has had a physical effect on the environment. Areas are suffering from the wear and tear of millions of walkers feet. In the popular Three Peaks area 68 km of paths were surveyed for damage by trampling in 1987. The average trampled width was 11.4m and the average bare width was 2.7m. While much of this damage in the Three peaks area is well under control, the problems are now more widespread and require increasing levels of resources.

The impact of car-borne visitors to the park is changing the quiet rural character of the Dales, through congestion of the narrow lanes, damage to road-side verges, village greens and old road surfaces, as well as air pollution and problems of car parking space. Conflict between recreational users and those trying to work and manage the land has also increased, through for example, damage to grazing and interference with farming activities.

As more people visit the area to enjoy outdoor recreation it is increasingly important that they learn to appreciate and understand the countryside, and so play an active part in the sustainable management of the National Park.

MANAGING TOURISM

The National Park Authority has a difficult role in balancing its two legal duties of conserving the special qualities of the area and promoting opportunities for understanding and enjoyment. The Authority realises how important the tourist industry is for the local economy, but is also aware that the natural beauty of the area is being increasingly threatened, by the growth in visitor numbers and the accompanying commercial development. It does not promote the area as a tourist destination and will only support activities which fit the management aims for the area.

Some areas attract a lot of people, these "honeypot" sites need to be carefully managed to minimise pressure and control damage. The Authority does not believe that any area should be abandoned to visitor and tourism pressure. Neither is it policy to encourage spreading the load by persuading people to visit other areas instead. This would simply increase problems in those areas as well.

The Authority has a key role in reducing the potential for conflict between the growth of tourism and the conservation of the countryside. The "Traffic and Visitor Management Strategy" (1996), identifies many of the ways in which this may be achieved, these include aiming to:

- maintain traffic flows at the 1994 level
- increase the proportion of staying visitors
- manage recreational routes and sites within environmental carrying capacities
- protect the quieter and more fragile areas of the park
- promote appropriate routes for coaches, caravans, 4-wheel drives, etc.
- encourage park and ride schemes
- implement traffic calming schemes
- encourage the use of alternatives to the car for travel around and into the area

The aims of the strategy are achievable by a variety of means, ranging from improving signs for public paths and controlling car parking, through to influencing the promotional activities of tourist boards and other organisations.

The National Park Authority maintains that it is in the interests of all involved, that any developments for visitors should respect the character of the area and proceed only if the expected level of use can be absorbed without harm.

DOES TOURISM BENEFIT THE DALES?

The value of the tourism industry to the area must be clearly acknowledged, as must the value of the area to the tourism industry. While the benefits of tourism to the area are obvious, unchecked growth in visitor numbers could place the special character of the Dales at risk, and destroy those things that make it such a desirable place to spend time.



Hawes traffic



Picnic at Ribbleshead



Wharfedale - signs!

For further information please contact:
The Education Service
Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority
Colvend, Hebden Road, Grassington
Skipton, North Yorkshire BD23 5LB

Telephone 0300 456 0030
Fax 01756 751699
Email: education@yorkshiredales.org.uk
Download your copy free from our website:
www.yorkshiredales.org.uk

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Education File

Information for students and
group leaders



YORKSHIRE DALES
National Park Authority

Tourism

a balancing act

TOURISM NATIONALLY

The UK Day Visits Survey (1996) estimated that nearly 6 billion leisure day visits were made from home during 1996, involving a total expenditure of around £52 billion. 26% of these visits were made to the countryside. The two most popular activities, visiting relatives or friends and going out for a meal or a drink accounted for 18% each of all visits. Walking, including hill walking and rambling, accounted for 15% of all visits. Tourism is clearly a major countryside issue, and one which is of crucial interest to National Parks in relation to every aspect of the purposes for which they were created.

National Park Authorities were created to conserve and enhance natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage and promote opportunities for their understanding and enjoyment by the public, whilst seeking to foster the social and economic well being of local communities. In 1994, 76 million recreational visitor days were made to the National Parks of England and Wales.

THE GROWTH OF TOURISM IN THE DALES

The Yorkshire Dales National Park was established in 1954. It covers 1769 square kilometres of outstanding scenic landscape, mainly Pennine uplands in the counties of North Yorkshire and Cumbria.

Visitors have been attracted to the Dales since long before it became a National Park. The dramatic landscapes of the area were sought out by writers and artists in the 18th century, during which time interest in recreational activities was growing. By 1781 there was already a tour guide to the caves in the Ingleborough and Settle area, and Weathercote Cave could be visited for one shilling with a guide. A Reverend W MacRitchie was one of the early adventurers into Catknowle Hole, "a subterranean expedition through rocks and deep water, sometimes carried on the back of one of my guides ... The vast variety of astounding objects that occurred as we advanced completely alleviated our fatigue and as completely overcame every idea of danger."

As transport improved so the number of visitors started to rise. Aysgarth was a staging post for coach travellers who would likely have wandered down to view the falls whilst waiting for their horses to be changed.

By the late 19th century new railways had been built across the Dales, the most famous being the Settle to Carlisle line, providing a link between the eastern midlands and Scotland. Rail passenger traffic reached its peak during 1900 -1914. Railway guides recommended local beauty spots accessible from the railway stations. City dwellers were able to get to the Dales easily and cheaply and see the countryside as a dramatic contrast to their heavily industrialised home towns.

The real boom in tourism has taken place this century with the rise in ownership of cars (130,000 in 1914, 2 million in 1950, 20 million in 1990 and a projected 30 million by 2025. Source: DETR 1997). Leisure interests have expanded as people have found both the time and the money to travel and enjoy recreational activities.

GATHERING DATA ON TOURISM

Much of the information used in the text is based on the findings of the 1994 All Parks Visitor Survey. The survey involved both site and roadside interviews, self completion questionnaires and other methods including automatic traffic counts and data on the use of public transport. As with all surveys of this type its limitations must be recognised and care should be taken when using the information provided.

HOW MANY PEOPLE COME TO THE YDNP?

An estimated 5.5 million people (1991) have easy day access to the park. Visitor surveys have estimated 6.1 million visitor days in 1991, increasing to 8.3 million in 1994. The numbers of visitor days vary throughout the year (Table 1).

Table 1. Monthly Visitors (1991/2)

Month	% of total
April (1991)	5.2
May	12.2
June	10.9
July	14.8
August	19.6
September	13.9
October	7.5
November	2.8
December	2.3
January (1992)	1.9
February	3.7
March	5.3

Total does not add up to 100% due to rounding.
Source: Yorkshire Dales Visitor Study 1991

WHY DO PEOPLE VISIT THE YDNP?

Visitors identified their most important reasons for visiting as:

74%	scenery and landscape;
36%	peace and quiet;
32%	enjoyment of a previous visit;
19%	taking part in an outdoor activity;
13%	visiting a specific place, attraction or event.

A study of aspects of the Dales enjoyed by visitors revealed

"scenery/landscape" was most popular (rated very important by 89% of visitors), followed by "fresh clean air" (69%), "peace and quiet" (60%) and "not too crowded" (59%).

But what do people actually do when they come here? We can divide their activities into three main types: general recreation activities; visits to tourist attractions; other sports and hobbies. These are detailed in Table 2.

Of the active pursuits most people come to the Dales to walk, taking advantage of a network of around 2000km of public rights of way including the long distance paths of the Pennine, Dales and Ribble Ways.

Table 2. Activities undertaken during visit (figures are percentage of respondents)

	Day trip	Holiday	All visitors
General recreation activities			
General sightseeing - driving around	63	81	75
General sightseeing - on foot	56	71	65
Picnicking	26	43	37
Walking/strolling - less than 1 hour	32	46	41
Walking - 1-4 hours	38	63	54
Hill or fell walking, or walking for more than 4 hours	17	31	26
Guided walk	1	1	1
Watching wildlife, following nature trail	17	31	26
Playing children's games	6	5	5
Sunbathing/relaxing/sitting in or near car	26	23	24
Watching boats/water/people	8	17	14
Having a drink, meal or snack (not a picnic)	56	74	67
Shopping for gifts and souvenirs	36	48	44
Visits to tourist attractions			
Visiting an information or visitor centre	23	58	45
Visiting a castle or historic site	18	44	35
Visiting a leisure park, fete/fair or amusements	1	9	6
Other sports/hobbies			
Cycling/mountain biking	4	7	6
Climbing	*	*	*
Riding pony trekking	1	2	2
Caving	1	3	2
Hang/para-gliding/ballooning	*	*	*
Motor sports	*	*	*
Orienteering/fell running	1	1	1
Other outdoor sports	1	3	2
Bird watching	11	19	16
Angling	1	1	1
Canoeing	1	*	*

Note: figures sum to over 100 per cent due to multiple responses * less than 1 per cent
Source: 1994 All Parks Visitor Survey: Yorkshire Dales Site and Roadside Self-completion questionnaires

WHERE DO VISITORS COME FROM?

Visitors to the Park divide into two groups: day visitors from home and holidaymakers either staying in or just outside the Park. The home origin of these two groups differs since holidaymakers are prepared to travel further for a trip of several days than day visitors who return home at night (Table 3).

Table 3. Origins of visitors to the YDNP

Zone	Day trip visitors (% annual total)	Zone	Holiday visitors (% annual total)
Richmondshire	2	Scotland	2
Harrogate	3	North	7
Hambleton	1	Northern Ireland	1
Craven	2	Yorkshire / Humberside	24
North Yorkshire (rest of)	16	North West	11
Leeds	6	Wales	1
Bradford	6	West Midlands	6
West Yorkshire (rest of)	23	East Midlands	7
Cumbria	3	South West	6
Other areas	39	Greater London / South East	25
		Overseas	8

Source: 1994 All Parks Visitor Survey: Yorkshire Dales.

WHERE DO VISITORS GO IN THE DALES?

The Park can be divided into zones usually linked to a particular dale or site to illustrate visitor destinations. Visitor numbers are different in each zone, depending on its particular attractions, the ease of access or closeness to major conurbations, especially for day trippers (see Table 4).

The top ten visitor attractions are listed in Table 5.

Table 5. Selected attractions/places visited in the National Park (figures are percentage of respondents)

	Day trip	Holiday	All-visitors		Day trip	Holiday	All-visitors
Aysgarth Falls	21	54	43	Stump Cross Caverns	1	11	7
Malham Cove/				Kilnsey Trout Farm	5	8	7
Gordale Scar	7	32	23	White Scar Caves	2	5	4
Bolton Abbey	11	21	18	Ingleborough Cave	2	3	3
Dales Countryside				Ingleton Waterfalls	2	16	11
Museum	2	23	16	None of these	58	26	37
Bolton Castle	4	18	13				

Note: 1 figures sum to over 100 per cent due to multiple responses.
Source: 1994 All Parks Visitor Survey: Yorkshire Dales Site and Roadside Self-completion questionnaires.

HOW DO PEOPLE TRAVEL TO THE DALES?

The 1994 survey indicated that of those visiting the Park by car (see Table 6): 29% were day visitors, mainly from nearby towns and cities; 54% were holidaymakers staying in the Park; 17% were visiting the Dales from holiday accommodation outside the Park. Holidaymakers travel from around the country and a small percentage from abroad.

Table 6. Mode of transport (figures are percentage of respondents)

	Day trip	Holiday	Total		Day trip	Holiday	Total
Private				Public			
Car/van	89	91	90	Bus (service)	1	1	1
Landrover/				Train	1	1	1
4 wheel drive	1	2	1	Mini-bus	1	2	2
Camper van	*	1	1	Coach	4	1	2
Motorcycle	2	*	1	(private/tour)			
Bicycle	2	1	1	Taxi	0	1	*
Total private	94	95	94	Total public	7	6	6
Walked	1	1	1				

Note: 1 figures do not sum to 100 per cent due to rounding * less than 1 per cent
Source: 1994 All Parks Visitor Survey: Yorkshire Dales Site Survey.

Table 7. Average daily expenditure in and around the National Park

	Day trip	Holiday staying in	Holiday staying outside	All visitors	% of total spend
Transport	1.72	3.47	1.96	2.46	23
Leisure & Recreation	0.55	0.51	0.66	0.55	5
Food & Drink	2.71	4.89	4.34	3.87	36
Shopping	1.57	5.70	4.58	3.77	35
Total	6.60	14.60	11.50	10.70	
Accommodation in the Park	0.00	17.16	0.00	6.52	
Total inc accommodation	6.60	31.80	11.50	17.20	

Source: 1994 All Parks Visitor Survey: Yorkshire Dales site and roadside self-completion questionnaires.

Table 4. Areas visited (%)

Zone	Day visit	Holiday visit
1 Swaledale	16	46
2 Upper Wensleydale	20	61
3 Dentdale	15	34
4 Ribblesdale	19	35
5 Malham	9	29
6 Wharfedale	53	64
7 Lower Wensleydale	27	60

Note: figures sum up to over 100% due to multiple responses.
Source: 1994 All Parks Visitor Survey: Yorkshire Dales.

EFFECTS OF TOURISM: ECONOMIC & SOCIAL

The growing number of visitors to the area every year is partly due to:

- the growth in the popularity of recreational activities generally;
- increased tourism promotion;
- factors such as television coverage, e.g. Emmerdale.

With the growth in visitors has come a rise in the tourist industry and related employment. It was estimated that tourists spent about £46 million in and around the park during 1991. In 1994 this estimate had risen to £89 million. (Table 7).

1991 figures suggest that the tourist industry supported the equivalent of 1000 full-time jobs in the park and perhaps another 250 outside (Table 8). The money also has a knock on effect, generating income from materials and services which are bought by local tourist businesses.

Table 8. Tourism generated jobs

Food shops	50
Specialist shops	239
Cafes/pubs	446
Attractions	32
Garages	80
Public transport	2
Parking	37
Serviced accommodation	400
Self-catering	452
Hostels/bars	60

Includes full and part time jobs.
Source: Yorkshire Dales Visitor Study 1991

Employment in the tourist industry however, tends to be part-time, seasonal and relatively low paid with few career prospects. Although some local services may benefit by increased trade, other shops have changed to selling gifts for example, rather than catering for the needs of the local population.

Tourism has created social pressure within the Dales communities. The popularity of the area has increased the demand for holiday accommodation and second homes. In 1991 over 20% of the total houses in the Dales were used as holiday and second homes. Local people often cannot compete for the properties which come up for sale at inflated prices. It also increases the pressure to build more houses in the national park. Many people complain that commercialisation is causing disruption and a change for the worse in the local community.