

TYREBAGGER 2001

A visitor survey

**Carried out for Forestry Commission
by Johanna Joensalo (MA Hons)**

16 August, 2001

TYREBAGGER 2001 VISITOR SURVEY

1. INTRODUCTION

A standard Forestry Commission visitor survey was carried out in the car park of Tyrebagger Wood near Aberdeen in 27.7. – 6.8.2001. The survey work was divided into two slots, namely 27. – 30.7. (Monday to Friday) and 3. – 6.8. (Monday to Friday). At each of these days, six hours of surveying was carried out between 12pm and 7pm. The method used was direct face-to-face interviews based on a standard questionnaire, aiming to interview every group of general public encountered during the survey hours. The questionnaire consisted mainly of closed-end questions, and the emphasis of the questionnaire was in finding out forest users' perceptions about the sculptures in Tyrebagger Wood.

2. FINDINGS

2.1 GENERAL DATA

In total, 164 interviews were completed, 94 during the slot 1 and 70 during the slot 2 (Table 1). In average, 3.4 interviews were completed per hour; however there was quite significant difference between the two slots. During the slot 1 the average was as high as 3.9 interviews per hour, while the average for slot 2 was only 2.9. This difference was probably due to weather conditions, which were much better during the slot 1.

The groups interviewed consisted of 432 individuals; 219 (51%) of these were males and 213 (49%) females. Most respondents (51%) were adults aged between 25 and 59 years; senior citizens (over 60 years) formed 16% of the individuals involved, young adults (16-24 years) 4%, and 29% of the group members were children (Table 2). A great majority of the respondents (99%) were predominantly white; only 1% were of Asian origin (Table 3).

The site was popular amongst dog walkers; 66 (40%) out of the 164 groups were accompanied by a dog or dogs; in total 88 canines were included in the groups encountered. However, cyclists were not commonly encountered in Tyrebagger; only three groups had bicycle(s), and the total number of bicycles encountered totalled only four.

2.2 QUESTIONNAIRE DATA - THE BACKGROUND

Great majority (93%) of the respondents had travelled to Tyrebagger from home (Table 4). Out of the 7% that had not, most (55%) had stayed with friends or relatives, while 36% were camping or staying in a caravan and 9% had stayed in hotel (Table 5).

In average, the distance travelled to get to the site was relatively short; 61% of the respondents were locals (travelled up to 5 miles) and 35% had travelled 6-15 miles. Only 2% had travelled 16-25 miles, 1% had travelled 26-50 miles and another 1% more than 50 miles (Table 6). An

overwhelming majority (98%) of the respondents had used a car or a van to get to Tyrebagger; only 1% travelled in a minibus or coach, and 1% on foot (Table 7).

Most respondents (84%) had been to Tyrebagger before, while only 16% were first-time visitors (Table 8). Out of those who had been before, many were frequent or fairly frequent visitors: 8% said they visit most days, 26% visit 1-3 times a week and 29% visit 1-3 times a month. A total of 31% said they visit 1-3 times a year, while only 6% claimed to visit less often (Table 9). In average, the respondents stayed in the site for 1.5 hours, and walking was by far the most common reason for the visit: 37% stated "other walking" as their main purpose for visiting, and for a further 32% the main purpose was dog walking. Fresh air or exercise was the priority for 15% of the respondents, while 7% came mainly to relax or picnic, 5% to pick berries and 1% came because of a special event. Only 4% of the respondents had come to Tyrebagger specifically to look at the sculptures (Table 10).

However, many respondents had incorporated the sculptures with other activities in the forest; as many as 66% of the respondents had looked at the sculptures on the day they were interviewed (Table 11), and out of the 34% who had not, as many as 87% had seen them before (Table 12).

2.3 QUESTIONNAIRE DATA – THE SCULPTURES

Most respondents had a positive attitude towards the sculptures; 21% and 48% found them very interesting or interesting respectively. One quarter (25%) of the respondents thought the sculptures were OK. Only 3% thought the sculptures were uninteresting and another 3% found them very uninteresting (Table 13).

Almost a quarter (23%) of the respondents had found out about the sculptures because they lived locally and had always known about them. Road signs had guided 19% to the site, and 14% had heard about the sculptures from a friend or a relation. Leaflet was the source of information for 7% of the respondents, and 8% had heard about the sculptures through newspaper, TV or radio. Only 1% of the respondents had originally found the site using a local guidebook or a map (Table 14). As many as 28% of the respondents stated "Other reason" for this question, and out of those a great majority (93%) had simply come across the sculptures while walking in the forest.

Most people seemed to think the sculptures were easy to find once they had arrived to the site; 62% thought all were easy, and a further 23% thought some of them were easy to find¹ (Table 15). Only 15% thought the sculptures were difficult to find, and a few respondents in this group added that they thought that was a good thing.

The Bison was the most popular of the sculptures; 42% of the respondents liked it most. Segmented Sitka, Cloud Chamber and Beacon were generally well liked as well; 19%, 14% and 10% of the respondents stated them as their favourites, respectively. Grid point gathered 3% of the votes, Vong Phaephani's wooden poles 2%, and Modern Nature 4%. The Seating and the Bridge both got 1% of the votes, while 3% of the respondents stated they didn't like any of the sculptures (Table 16). Generally, many respondents added that they like those sculptures that use

¹ Several respondents of the latter group specifically mentioned having had difficulties finding the Bison.

natural materials and blend in to the forest well, but dislike the ones that obviously stand out from the natural landscape.

The text beside the sculptures was considered interesting by 63% of the respondents, while 1% thought it was very interesting. Only 8% found the text uninteresting and a further 5% very uninteresting. Several respondents (14%) said they hadn't read the text at all, and another 8% had no opinion on the text (Table 17).

Most respondents (74%) thought there should not be any interpretation of the sculptures (Table 18). Out of the 26% who were in favour of interpretation, 70% wanted to see an interpretative panel, 3% would opt for audio, 25% preferred a leaflet available in car park and a further 3% would like to see leaflets beside the sculptures themselves (Table 19). Out of those who thought there should not be interpretation, 49% thought it was preferable for each individual to make up their own mind; 30% thought the sculptures with existing panels were OK as they are, 3% said the sculptures speak for themselves and 7% stated there was no need for interpretation (Table 20).

When asked whether they would like to see more sculptures at this site, only a slight majority (59%) answered "yes", while 41% of the respondents thought there was enough sculptures in Tyrebagger already (Table 21). A great majority of people (90%) were not interested in the prospect of becoming involved with the Sculpture project; out of the 10% who were interested, most respondents (64%) wanted to be sent general information, and 21% wanted a newsletter circulated to them (Table 22).

For most respondents, walking and the forest itself was the main thing although sculptures may add interest to the walk; 46% said they would not come specifically to see the sculptures again. However, 44% of respondents said they would do so, while 10% stated they might come to see the sculptures again (Table 23).

2.4 QUESTIONNAIRE DATA -- IMPROVEMENTS

Finally, asked which would be the one single thing they would improve at the site, 23% of the respondents thought the place was fine as it is. The most sought after improvement (11% of the respondents) was the provision of facilities, namely toilets. Clearer waymarking was a priority for 9% of the respondents and improvement of the footpaths gained the vote of a further 9%. Provision of litter bins was sought after by 7% of the respondents and 5% wanted the dog fouling solved; 4% said they would like to see the forest tidied up after the felling of trees, and 2% wanted the road at the car park improved (Table 24). A variety of other suggestions were made; in Table 25, those suggestions made by just one or two respondents are included in "other" category (29%), and a full list of these suggestions can be seen in Appendix 1. Additional comments that some respondents made during or after the interviews are listed in Appendix 2.

CONCLUSIONS

Tyrebagger Wood is mainly enjoyed by regular walkers and dog walkers who have travelled relatively short distances to get there, and the overall attitude towards the sculptures is positive. Although most people perceive walking and the forest itself as the most important reason for visiting the site, many do think that sculptures add interest, especially for children. However, the minority that is against the sculptures does feel very strongly about it.

Thus, given that only a very slight majority of respondents wanted to see more sculptures at Tyrebagger, introducing new sculptures to this site might be a potentially very controversial issue. According to this survey, the sculptures that universally please the forest visitors best are those that blend into the forest and use natural materials. For example, the prospect of sculptures that "fit to the forest", such as animal figures, seem to be generally accepted even amongst some of those who are not overly keen on the Sculpture project. Accordingly, large obscure sculptures that stand out from the environment and are visible from a considerable distance are often frowned upon even by people who in general have a very positive attitude towards the sculptures.

In conclusion, it is suggested that main recreation management emphasis of Tyrebagger Wood should be in maintaining and improving the facilities for walkers rather than developing the site further. Any future additions to the Sculptures should be designed to be of low impact and low profile with minimum effect to the natural landscape.

TABLES

Table 1. Completed interviews.

TYREBAGGER 2001			
SLOT 1	27. - 30.7.		
	No. of interviews	Weather	Average no. interviews/hour
Friday	27	Good	4.5
Saturday	16	Good	2.7
Sunday	31	Very good	5.2
Monday	20	Good	3.3
<i>Subtotal</i>	94		3.9
SLOT 2	3. - 6.8.		
Friday	11	Moderate	1.8
Saturday	26	Moderate	4.3
Sunday	22	Poor	3.7
Monday	11	Moderate	1.8
<i>Subtotal</i>	70		2.9
TOTAL	164		3.4

Table 2. Age groups of interviewed individuals.

AGE GROUPS		Number	Percent
MALES	Senior citizens (60+)	38	9%
	Other adults (25-59)	100	23%
	Young adult (16-24)	10	2%
	Children (Under 16)	71	16%
	<i>Subtotal</i>	219	51%
FEMALES	Senior citizens (60+)	32	7%
	Other adults (25-59)	119	28%
	Young adult (16-24)	7	2%
	Children (Under 16)	55	13%
	<i>Subtotal</i>	213	49%
TOTAL		432	100%

Table 3. Ethnicity of interviewed individuals.

ETHNICITY	Number	Percent
MALES		
White	215	50%
Asian	3	1%
Afro-Caribbean	1	0%
Subtotal	219	51%
FEMALES		
White	212	49%
Asian	1	0%
Afro-Caribbean	0	0%
Subtotal	213	49%
TOTAL	432	100%

Table 4. Have you travelled from home?

Question 1. Have you travelled from home?	No. of respondents	% of respondents
Yes	153	93%
No	11	7%
TOTAL	164	100%

Table 5. Type of accommodation.

Question 1a. What type of accommodation did you stay in last night?	No. of respondents	% of respondents
BB/Guest house	0	0%
Hotel	1	9%
Camping/caravan	4	36%
Friends/relatives	6	55%
Youth hostel	0	0%
Self catering	0	0%
Other	0	0%
TOTAL	11	100%

Table 6. The distance travelled.

Question 2. How far have you travelled to get here?		
	No. of respondents	% of respondents
Up to 5 miles	100	61%
6-15 miles	57	35%
16-25 miles	4	2%
26-50 miles	2	1%
Over 50 miles	1	1%
TOTAL	164	100%

Table 7. Type of transport.

Question 3. What was the main type of transport you used to get here?		
	No. of respondents	% of respondents
Car/van	161	98%
Minibus/coach	1	1%
Public transport	0	0%
Bicycle	0	0%
On foot	2	1%
Other	0	0%
TOTAL	164	100%

Table 8. Have you been here before?

Question 4. Have you been here before?		
	No. of respondents	% of respondents
Yes	137	84%
No	27	16%
TOTAL	164	100%

Table 9. Frequency of visits.

Question 4a. How often do you come here?		
	No. of respondents	% of respondents
Most days	11	8%
1-3 times a week	36	26%
1-3 times a month	40	29%
1-3 times a year	42	31%
Less often	8	6%
TOTAL	137	100%

Table 10. The purpose of visit.

Question 5. What is the main purpose of your visit today?		
	No. of respondents	% of respondents
Sculptures	6	4%
Dog walking	52	32%
Other walking	60	37%
Fresh air/exercise	25	15%
Watch wildlife/birds	0	0%
Relax/picnic	11	7%
Special event	1	1%
Other	9	5%
TOTAL	164	100%

Question 6a. If other, specify.		
	No. of respondents	% of respondents
Berry picking	9	100%
TOTAL	9	100%

Table 11. Did you look at the sculptures today?

Question 7. Did you look at the sculptures during your visit today?		
	No. of respondents	% of respondents
Yes	108	66%
No	56	34%
TOTAL	164	100%

Table 12. Have you looked at the sculptures before?

Question 7a. (If "no" to previous question) Have you looked at them before?		
	No. of respondents	% of respondents
Yes	48	87%
No	7	13%
TOTAL	55	100%

Table 13. Attitude towards the sculptures.

Question 8. What is your opinion of the sculptures?		
	No. of respondents	% of respondents
Very interesting	32	21%
Interesting	75	48%
OK	39	25%
Uninteresting	4	3%
Very uninteresting	5	3%
TOTAL	155	100%

Table 14. How did you find out about the sculptures?

Question 9. How did you find out about the sculptures?		
	No. of respondents	% of respondents
Always known/live locally	36	23%
Friend/relation	22	14%
Road signs	30	19%
Leaflet	11	7%
Local guidebook/map	1	1%
Tourist information centre	0	0%
Newspaper/TV/Radio	12	8%
Website	0	0%
Other	44	28%
TOTAL	156	100%

Question 9a. If other, specify.		
	No. of respondents	% of respondents
Came across	41	93%
Involved with the sculpture project	2	5%
Seen from other hills	1	2%
TOTAL	44	100%

Table 15. Easy or difficult to find?

Question 10. Were they easy to find once you arrived at the site?		
	No. of respondents	% of respondents
Yes	96	62%
No	23	15%
Some were, others were not	35	23%
TOTAL	154	100%

Table 16. Which sculpture did you like most?

Question 11. Which sculpture did you like most?		
	No. of respondents	% of respondents
Bison	62	42%
Beacon	15	10%
Cloud chamber	21	14%
Fallen Angel	0	0%
Grid point	5	3%
Segmented silka	28	19%
Bridge	1	1%
John Aiken - black & white granite	0	0%
Vong Phaephantit - wooden poles	3	2%
Seating	1	1%
Modern nature	6	4%
Didn't like any	5	3%
TOTAL	147	100%

Table 17. Attitude towards the text beside the sculptures.

Question 12. What did you think of the text beside the sculptures?			
	No. of respondents		% of respondents
Very interesting		2	1%
Interesting		98	63%
No opinion		13	8%
Uninteresting		13	8%
Very uninteresting		8	5%
Didn't read text		21	14%
TOTAL		155	100%

Table 18. Attitude towards interpretation.

Question 13. Do you think there should be interpretation of the sculptures?			
	No. of respondents		% of respondents
Yes		39	26%
No		113	74%
TOTAL		152	100%

Table 19. Preferred style of interpretation.

Question 14. What style of interpretation would you like to see?			
	No. of respondents		% of respondents
Interpretative panel		28	70%
Audio		1	3%
Text		0	0%
Leaflet available in car park		10	25%
Leaflet beside sculptures		1	3%
Other		0	0%
TOTAL		40	100%

Table 20. Why not interpretation?

Question 15. Why do you not think there should be any interpretation?		
	No. of respondents	% of respondents
Make up own mind	55	49%
OK as it is	34	30%
Sculptures speak for themselves	3	3%
No need	8	7%
Would be too much	1	1%
Text should be made easier to understand instead	1	1%
Don't like reading long text	1	1%
Like it short & sweet	1	1%
No opinion	9	8%
TOTAL	113	100%

Table 21. More sculptures?

Question 16. Would you like to see more sculptures at this site?		
	No. of respondents	% of respondents
Yes	85	59%
No	59	41%
TOTAL	144	100%

Table 22. Involved with the project?

Question 17. Would you like to become more involved with the Sculpture project?		
	No. of respondents	% of respondents
Yes	14	10%
No	146	90%
TOTAL	160	100%

Question 17a. If so, how would you like to be involved?		
	No. of respondents	% of respondents
Circulated a newsletter	3	21%
Sent general information	9	64%
Attend meetings	1	7%
Other	1	7%
TOTAL	14	100%

Table 23. See sculptures again?

Question 18. Will you come specifically to see the sculptures again?		
	No. of respondents	% of respondents
Yes	72	44%
No	76	46%
Perhaps	16	10%
TOTAL	164	100%

Table 24. What would you like to improve?

Question 19. If there was one thing you could improve here, what would that be?		
	No. of respondents	% of respondents
Fine as it is	37	23%
Clearer waymarking	14	9%
Improve footpaths	15	9%
Tidy up after felling trees	7	4%
Provide toilets	17	11%
Provide litter bins	11	7%
Solve dog fouling/Provide dog bins	8	5%
Improve the road at car park	3	2%
Other	46	29%
TOTAL	158	100%

APPENDIX 1

Other suggestions for improvements:

SUGGESTION	No. of times mentioned
Clearer signs for sculptures	2
Provide more benches	2
Provide picnic tables at car park	2
Provide wheelchair access	2
Get rid of the sculptures	2
Better advertising for sculptures	2
Better maps	2
Provide leaflets on site	2
Provide water point	2
More walking paths	1
Decrease tree felling	1
Solve litter dumping	1
Sort out vandalism	1
Stop felling trees	1
Bigger car park	1
Separate car park for dog owners	1
Provide more picnic tables	1
Provide picnic tables in the forest	1
Provide picnic tables on Elrick Hill	1
Move picnic table from the bridge half way up the hill	1
More cycle tracks	1
Ban bicycles	1
More deciduous trees	1
More security for cars e.g. A visitor centre	1
Take away the Modern Nature	1
More sculptures	1
More animal sculptures, less obscure figures	1
Make sure sculptures can't be seen from the road	1
More things designed for children, e.g. Ranger led activities	1
Bracken cleared in the hill	1
Clear up narrow paths	1
Provide maps to take along	1
Memorial to Highlanders	1
Take away the new paths	1
Don't churn up paths when clearfelling	1
Don't overdevelop the forest	1
Signs to forest on the main road	1

APPENDIX 2

Other comments made:

- Doesn't like those sculptures that do not fit in to the forest, e.g. Vang Phoephanit
- Annoyed because couldn't find the sculptures
- Would like the picnic tables being marked on the maps
- Very messy where the trees have been cut!
- Would like bicycles and walkers on separate routes
- Would like more sculptures but such that are easy to find
- Paths tend to get muddy at wintertime
- Think the sculptures are terrible, real eyesore and waste of money
- Should take more care when harvesting, the place is a mess after last year's felling & the short walk is ruined because of it
- Thinks the sculptures are out of place
- Would like to see more sculptures up in the moor
- Think the bison is difficult to find
- Would rather have something interactive than sculptures; walk is the main thing but look at sculptures since they are there
- Sculptures not natural; prefer to see the forest as it is
- Like to come here because of easy walking; nice to have something to look at, esp. if kids, gives them something to do
- Forest is the main thing but sculptures "added bonus"; more sculptures OK provided they fit in to the natural environment; would like to see some water features
- Mainly come for the walk but nice extra to have the sculptures
- Would like the paths being linked up with other routes
- Likes some sculptures but thinks others are waste of time; more sculptures OK but only if practical ones such as the bridge
- The walk is the main thing but sculptures add interest
- Would like to be able to buy a drink for the kids
- Thinks the waymarking is not very clear
- The path between car parks gets muddy in the winter
- Litter bins by picnic tables should be covered
- Likes sculptures but the walk itself is the main thing
- Walk is the main thing!
- Walk & the nature itself are the main things
- Don't like the new path surfaces; thinks the picnic table at the bridge is in a wrong place, should be up the hill
- Erosion on the path in the hill; comes in because of the forest, not the sculptures!
- Sculptures OK as a part of the walk but forest the main thing
- Paths get muddy in the winter; the uneven path surface difficult for disabled, esp. When it's wet
- New path surface very hard for the limbs
- Fresh air/walk the main thing but sculptures add interest, esp. For kids
- Walk is the main thing but sculptures make it a bit different
- Nice to have the combination of walk & sculptures
- Wouldn't like to see sculptures in other forests, one is interesting but enough
- Walk is the main thing!
- Thinks way too much money being spent on sculptures; old ones OK but doesn't like the new ones
- Thinks the steps are too difficult with a buggy; walk & fresh air main thing but sculptures add interest

- Walking the dog the main thing but like the sculptures as an added bonus
- Likes the natural sculptures but not the others
- Doesn't mind the sculptures but comes here because of the forest, to walk; new sculptures ok if they blend in to the natural environment
- Interpretation should be in Braille for unsighted people; a few new sculptures fine but small ones designed for children
- Walk is the main thing, not the sculptures; thinks the path gets muddy at times
- Signposts for sculptures would help finding them
- Doesn't like Vang Phoephanit or Modern nature; comes here mainly for the walk
- Likes the natural looking sculptures
- Walk is the main thing
- Walk is the main reason for coming here
- Would also like to see wheelchair access
- Walk is the main thing
- Walk is the main thing
- Thinks dog bins should be provided at the site as well
- Walk is the main thing but thinks that sculptures add interest
- Walk is the main thing but thinks that sculptures add interest
- Walk is the main thing
- Sculptures total waste of money; also thinks that paths get a bit muddy esp. In winter
- Walk is the main thing
- Also thinks that dog bins should be provided
- Likes the sculptures but walking the dog is the main thing
- Walk and the wood are interesting, that's the main reason for coming here
- Apart from the bison thinks the sculptures are awful, waste of time and money; esp. Vang Phoephanit an eyesore
- Walk is the main reason for coming here
- Likes the natural looking little paths, not the new ones; also thinks should tidy up branches from the woods after felling
- Walk is the main thing
- Would like to see some activities for children; also thinks overhanging branches of the trees should be cleared
- Likes those sculptures that blend in to the forest but not those that stick out e.g. The ones on the hill
- Prefer the forest to stay a natural place; would like interactive sculptures that kids can get involved with; the less signs etc. in the forest the better