CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

PLATES

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors would like to thank the following for their assistance in the conduct of the research and the compilation of this report :

The staff and pupils at Cannock High School; Cardinal Griffin High School; Blake High School (all Cannock); Fairoak High School and the Aelfgar Sixth Form Centre (Rugeley) and Walton High School (Stafford).

Our research assistants Elizabeth Cresser, Samantha Irons and Amy Bowdige - who undertook most of the interviewing - and Jane Williams, who helped with interviewing and undertook all the questionnaire coding and the data preparation.

Rosie Duncan - Cartographer in the Department of Geography at Staffordshire University - who prepared all the maps and diagrams.

Geoff Bridgewood - in the Print and Design Unit at Staffordshire University - who designed and produced the cover for the report and who assisted with its final production.

The research was funded by the Countryside Agency in association with the Cannock Chase Partners.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The broad aim of the Cannock Chase AONB Visitor Survey was to gather comprehensive and up-to-date factual information on usage of the AONB, together with a range of views and opinions of users on ways in which the public enjoyment of the Chase might be facilitated. Key areas of enquiry included the identification of the profile of visitors; the characteristics of their visits; their patterns of spending and the associated economic impacts; the reasons for visiting and the expectations of the visit; and the identification of problems and issues for management. In so doing, the survey aims to contribute to the production of a new AONB Management Plan.

The overall survey comprised four complementary elements : a survey of visitors contacted on the Chase itself; a survey of local residents contacted within their homes; a survey and series of focus group discussions with local secondary school children from areas adjacent to the Chase; and a small-scale occupancy survey of local tourist accommodation. On-site interviews were conducted at eleven sites within the AONB, at varying times of the week and during peak, shoulder and off-peak times of the year. In total, 1962 people were interviewed.

Basic Patterns of Visiting

On the basis of survey evidence, the AONB is estimated to receive around 1.27 million visits annually, which rises to over 1.5 million if visitors to the special attraction of Shugborough are also included. Visiting is dominated by people travelling from their homes as day- or part-day visitors and this includes a significant level of use by local people who walk onto the Chase and who may account for perhaps 360,000 visits a year.

The spatial patterns of visiting are uneven so although the aggregate figure suggests that the Chase, as a whole, is quite lightly used, local concentrations of visitors do create problems at some sites. The most popular locations are Milford Common, Marquis Drive, Birches Valley, Seven Springs, the Sherbrook Valley and Castle Ring.

The catchment areas for these sites are predominantly local or sub-regional, with 70% of visitors originating within 10 miles of their destination and visiting is characteristically frequent. Up to 60% of summer visitors use the Chase at least fortnightly and there is an unusually high level of day visiting from the urban areas that circle the AONB.

The Characteristics of the Visit

Given the landscape and topography of the Chase, it is unsurprising to find that activity patterns are dominated by popular outdoor activities : walking; cycling; games and play; picnicking; relaxing and sightseeing representing the principal activities reported within the survey. The significance of the Chase as an amenity area for walking (which includes walking with dogs) is especially striking, with over 80% of visitors citing walking as a primary activity within their visit. It is also evident that the Chase is a particularly attractive location for mountain biking and draws participants from a wide catchment area. Enjoyment of the natural environment through activities such as bird watching or nature study occurs much more selectively, but although the percentages reporting these activities are low by comparison with the walkers and cyclists, the actual numbers still translate into many thousands of visitors who come to the AONB for these activities.

The majority of visits are of a relatively short duration, with two thirds lasting less than two hours, although there are variations according to both activity and the sites visited. Local sites that are dominated by walkers tend to show the shortest visits, whereas larger sites that reveal more diverse patterns of use tend to reveal slightly longer visits. Cyclists stay longer than any other group of users and as a result, their impacts upon the area tend to be enhanced.

Journeys to the Chase are dominated by the car, with 81% arriving by this means. Around 14% of visitors arrive on foot with the remainder of journeys being made by bicycle, motor bike, private coaches or minibuses and, in a handful of instances, by horse. There is virtually no use made of public transport by visitors, with just two respondents out of more than 1550 reporting use of local buses to make their visit.

The social composition of visits shows a preponderance of family visiting and as a consequence, groups are typically small with 90% comprising five people or fewer.

Since most users are local people who make regular visits, the use of information services in planning trips to the AONB is limited although, as might be expected, staying visitors (who comprise around 8% of the total number of visitors) are more dependent upon local information services and Tourist Information Centres. However, the staying visitors make only limited use of local serviced accommodation (the majority stopping with friends and relatives), although the caravan and camping sites in the AONB are more important, with nearly a third of staying visitors using these facilities. Stays are typically brief - 60% stopping for three days or less.

<u>The Profile of Visitors.</u>

The AONB attracts users from across the age spectrum in a manner that is broadly consistent with patterns reported in national surveys of countryside visiting. People aged between 35 and 44 years are the most prominent group and those between 15 and 24 years the least prominent. There is no significant gender bias.

The socio-economic status is skewed strongly towards higher status groups (ABC1). This is an observable feature of countryside visiting in general, but is especially evident amongst visitors to Cannock Chase. This is thought to be a product of the social geography of the immediate environs, whereby significant concentrations of professional households are located close to the Chase and within the core catchment area.

The profile of participants in most activities reflects the pattern within the sample as a whole, although in some activities there are more distinct patterns. Hence, for example, cycling and running are dominated by younger, male participants whereas horse riding is more evidently a female activity.

Visitor Attitudes & Expectations

Respondents in the three main surveys indicated very clearly that the essential appeal of the Chase lay in its natural qualities and the opportunities that it provides for escape, for peace and quiet, and the enjoyment of the scenery and its wildlife. Consequently, users are generally keen to see the Chase protected from development and commercialisation, although younger users do express desires to see more provision of facilities to meet their needs and interests. Users recognise that the Chase suits a wide range of activities and its accessibility and convenience for communities in neighbouring urban places are additional factors that encourage use. The majority are satisfied with the opportunities that the AONB provides.

However, nearly 40% of users did identify problems or aspects of the AONB that they did not like, especially littering; conflicts with other users; fears over security of vehicles; car parking charges and problems with sign-posting and/or the condition of some paths. The principal areas of conflict centre on the use of the Chase by growing numbers of mountain bike riders (who create particular problems for walkers) and a smaller number of horse riders (who create problems for both walkers and cyclists). Conflicts centre especially upon concerns over personal safety as well as problems of damage to paths.

A similar number of users (40%) also suggested areas where additional facilities might usefully be provided, principally : more provision of toilets; refreshment points; litter and dog

bins; and more surfaced paths for wheelchairs and push chairs. More signage, maps, guided- and self-guided walks, and rangers were also requested.

The Economic Value of Visits to the Chase

On the basis of information gathered from the on-site and residents' surveys on aspects of visitor spending, the report estimates that the direct revenue generated by visits to the Chase is in the order of £6.55 million per annum. This figure rises to an estimated total revenue effect of £8.52 million when allowance is made for the impact of economic multipliers which attempt to take account of subsequent recirculation of initial expenditure within the local economy.

The overall and average levels of spending per head are relatively low in both absolute and comparative terms, and across all categories of expenditure. This is primarily a consequence of the high incidence of local visiting (which shows a markedly lower pattern of spending than amongst non-local visiting) and the fact that opportunities to spend money within the AONB are limited by a general absence of developed, commercial attractions. Most of the core activities - especially walking - attract minimal levels of spending, especially if visitors avoid the car parks at which a charge is levied. Thus, for example, over 70% of visitors spend nothing on food and drink during their visit to the Chase and expenditure on other local goods and services is negligible. The fact that patterns of spending according to the socio-economic group of the visitor showed no significant variation suggests that the low levels of spending are a characteristic of the visit, rather than the visitor.

Levels of spending by non-local visitors are naturally higher, especially on transport and, to a lesser extent, food and drink, but in other categories even the non-local spend is slight. The high incidence of stays with friends and relatives amongst non-local visitors reduces the economic input through accommodation, especially since the majority of the remainder stay at local caravan and camping sites which are typically low-cost forms of accommodation with a tradition in self-catering.

It is clear that the present economic impact of leisure visits to the Chase is modest given the level of visiting that the area sustains and, as such, attractions and facilities might be viewed more for their potential than their current contribution to the local or sub-regional economy. In this respect, the Shugborough estate (which constitutes a self-contained facility within the boundaries of the AONB) may well possess a potential for wider development of a more commercially-based pattern of visiting and, in so doing, help to relieve some of the pressures that are experienced within other areas of the AONB, such as Milford Common.

Teenage Schoolchildren's Activities and Perceptions

Over 400 children in local secondary schools participated in the research, completing self-administered questionnaires and contributing to focus group discussions that used photographic images of the Chase to stimulate discussion of the attractions (or otherwise) of the AONB.

Perhaps as a consequence of the close proximity between the children's homes and the Chase, a huge majority (96%) stated that they used the Chase - often travelling on foot or by bicycle with groups of friends - to visit favourite locations. These sites revealed not only a usage of recognised locations (such as Milford Common and Marquis Drive) but also a complex pattern of personalised, localised and unofficial sites that the children locate and colonise for themselves.

Activities reflected many of the patterns noted within the surveys of adults, with a significant number reporting walking, playing, cycling and picnicking as typical pursuits, although with a minority also commending the suitability of the Chase as a site for illicit forms of leisure.

The positive attractions of the Chase were largely seen to lie within its naturalness, but negative perceptions tended to be more varied and more complex. Although the numbers who used the Chase were extremely high, many (paradoxically) stated that the area was boring and there was nothing for children to do. Others complained of similar problems to those identified by adults : littering; vandalism and theft; absence of sign-posting; and a paucity of toilets.

Numerous suggestions were made for improvements with many focusing on a perceived need for more facility provision (such as adventure play areas; cycle tracks; refreshments) as well as better sign-posting and more interpretation. However, the children also recognised the tensions between development and protection of the natural qualities of the AONB and suggestions for change were often tempered with the advice that new provision should be limited to specific areas.

Management Issues & Problems

In the final sections of both the on-site visitors survey and the survey of local residents, respondents were asked to give their views on selected aspects of the present state of provision of facilities on the Chase, as well as their reactions to management proposals contained within a Draft Management Plan for the AONB.

In general, public reactions to most aspects of present provision were very positive, with users expressing high levels of satisfaction with the provision of car parking, the condition of paths, the provision of information and the cleanliness of toilets, where these are provided. Visitors were less complimentary about the condition of some car parks and less satisfied still with the sign-posting of paths and routes. The strongest criticism was reserved for provision of toilets which over 60% felt to be "poor" or "unsatisfactory".

In light of the concerns over conflict between certain user groups, it is no surprise to find high levels of support for management proposals for dedicated trails for both cyclists and horse riders, including support from cyclists and riders themselves. However, suggestions for wider provision for touring caravans were generally opposed, no doubt as a product of the widely-held opinion that the Chase should be protected from development and commercialisation.

Proposals for wider use of traffic calming measures on roads that cross the Chase also command quite high levels of public support, but motorists are much less likely to support wider use of car parking charges on Chase car parks, or the increase of charges at sites at which a parking fee is currently levied. Nearly 70% of respondents were opposed to car parking charges and opposition is especially high amongst local residents. Such opposition is perhaps symptomatic of a deep-seated expectation that access to the British countryside should be free, as a public right.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Cannock Chase AONB

Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is the smallest mainland AONB in Britain, covering just 68 sq. kms. It comprises a zone of mixed land uses, with extensive areas of commercial forestry, a significant area of lowland heath and, on the eastern and western flanks, areas of mostly pastoral farmland. The Chase contains a series of important habitats for invertebrates and several species of rare bird - including nightjars, woodlarks and goshawks. It is also home to herds of wild deer. Within its boundaries are four Sites of Special Scientific Interest which together comprise some 1371 hectares, one of which lies within Cannock Chase Country Park - at 1200 hectares one of Britain's largest. The undulating terrain, in combination with extensive tracts of woodland, creates an intimate environment that enhances its effective carrying capacity.

The situation of Cannock Chase (see Fig. 1.1) is a significant factor in determining its contemporary usage. An estimated 1.9 million people live within 30 kms. of the Chase and the AONB is immediately adjacent to the urban areas of Stafford (to the north-west), Rugeley (to the east) and Cannock and Hednesford (to the south). The villages of Brocton, Milford, Great and Little Haywood, Colwich and Cannock Wood are also immediately adjacent to the AONB boundary or within it. As a consequence, local recreation demands on the Chase are significant and the many walking trails and bridleways are used extensively by visitors for informal recreations as well as a growing range of more active pursuits.

With the exception of the Shugborough Estate in the north of the AONB, there are comparatively few developed visitor attractions within the AONB itself, although the visitor centres at Marquis Drive and Birches Valley provide focal points for general visiting and the range of commercial facilities around Milford Common help to create a honeypot site in that corner of the Chase. Elsewhere however, even the basic provision for visitors (such as public houses or cafes) is sparse. Accommodation for staying visitors is similarly limited, with only a handful of bed spaces in serviced accommodation within the AONB itself. The main provision for staying visitors is in caravan and camping sites at Wandon, Tackeroo and Silvertrees (see Fig. 1.1).

There is, however, extensive provision for informal activities, with more than twenty five car parks (most of which are currently free) and an extensive network of routes for walking, including the Staffordshire Way and the Heart of England Way, both of which traverse the Chase.

Apart from the caravan sites, commercial provision of recreational opportunities is limited, although horse riding and pony trekking stables in Brocton make use of parts of the Chase for organised rides and a private gun club is based on the northern edge of the AONB near Wolseley Bridge. Cycle hire is available at both the Marquis Drive and Birches Valley Visitor Centres, whilst golf is provided at the Beaudesert course near Hazleslade.

1.2 The Objectives of the Survey.

The Visitor Survey was organised with the primary goal of gathering comprehensive and up-to-date factual information on usage of the AONB, together with a range of views and opinions of users that would be of value in shaping the future management of key sites within the AONB. This would include informing the development of appropriate interpretation strategies and providing guidance on the provision and possible improvement of visitor facilities.

The specific research objectives were principally as follows :-

- to assess the importance of the AONB for leisure and tourism by establishing the number and seasonal pattern of visits to the area.

- to identify the profile of visitors in terms of age, gender, socio-economic characteristics and origin etc.

- to identify the characteristics of visits in terms of activity patterns, transport modes, composition of groups etc.

- to provide accurate information on local expenditure and related local economic impacts.

- to identify the main reasons for visiting the Chase and the expectations and perceptions of visitors with respect to its primary attractions.

- to assess visitor reactions to management proposals contained within the Draft Review of the Plan for Cannock Chase AONB.

1.3 Survey Elements and Organisation

The Visitor Survey comprises four survey elements, three of which are inter-connected :-

- an on-site survey of visitors using the Chase, conducted via extended face-to-face interviews at a range of different locations.

- a parallel survey of local people residing in areas immediately adjacent to the Chase, conducted via face-to-face interviews and using essentially identical questions to those deployed in the on-site survey.

- a study of the usage patterns and attitudes of local teenage children, conducted within local schools and using a combination of supervised self-completion questionnaires and recorded focus group discussions of a set of images of the Chase.

- a small-scale survey of occupancy levels in a sample of local accommodation, aimed at providing additional information on levels of visitor spending.

(Copies of the interviewing schedules for the three main surveys are contained within Appendix 9.1 - 9.3).

The locations of the eleven on-site survey points are shown in Fig. 1.2 together with the thirteen census wards within which the residential survey was conducted. The on-site surveys were located in car parks in order to maximise the chances of contact with visitors. Interviewing was arranged to cover the full range of conditions, with samples taken in peak, shoulder and off-peak times of the year between late May and December 2000. Additionally, a full range of weekday and weekend interviews was obtained, as well as coverage of morning, afternoon and - when appropriate - evening visiting. Interviewers were instructed to sample on the basis of selecting the next arrival following the completion of a previous interview. One thousand and two interviews were obtained within this element of the overall survey.

The residents survey was designed to complement the on-site survey by contacting users who might not access the Chase by car and who would therefore not figure in the surveys based in car parks. An overall target of a 1.5% sample of adults resident within the adjacent census wards was set (see Appendix 9.4) with interviewers concentrating their attentions on properties that were closest to the Chase. Properties were sampled systematically on a one-in-three basis with interviews requested from whoever answered the door, unless they were a child. Five hundred and fifty one interviews were gathered in this way, the shortfalls between the expected targets and the actual number achieved arising either through high rates of refusal in some wards or, particularly, absence from home.

The survey of teenage children involved the participation of six local schools (Walton High, Stafford; Fairoak High and the Aelfgar Sixth Form Centre, Rugeley; and Blake High, Cannock High and Cardinal Griffin High, Cannock). Children within geography classes in Years 8, 10 and 12 were given self-completion questionnaires as part of a supervised, classroom exercise and were then shown and asked to comment upon a series of photographs of typical landscapes and activities of the Chase. The ensuing discussions were tape-recorded for subsequent analysis. Although the self-completion element in the questionnaire led to a small number of forms being rejected as unreliable, 409 were eventually used within the analysis.

In total, therefore, 1962 people were interviewed as part of the overall Visitor Survey.

1.4 Other Survey Elements.

In addition to the interviewing, the on-site survey also entailed routine monitoring of the number of vehicles present on site. These were counted on the hour for the duration of each survey period and were used to highlight the diurnal patterns of visiting.

To supplement the site-based counts of vehicles, a series of mobile counts were conducted in which the numbers of vehicles parked at up to 23 car parks were sampled at approximately the same time. These mobile counts were undertaken by driving or cycling between sites and were conducted at differing times of the day, week and season. In all, some 20 mobile counts were conducted during the survey period and the data used to assist in the estimation of total visitor numbers (see Section 2.1 and Appendix 9.5).

Figure 1.1 Cannock Chase AONB - General Features

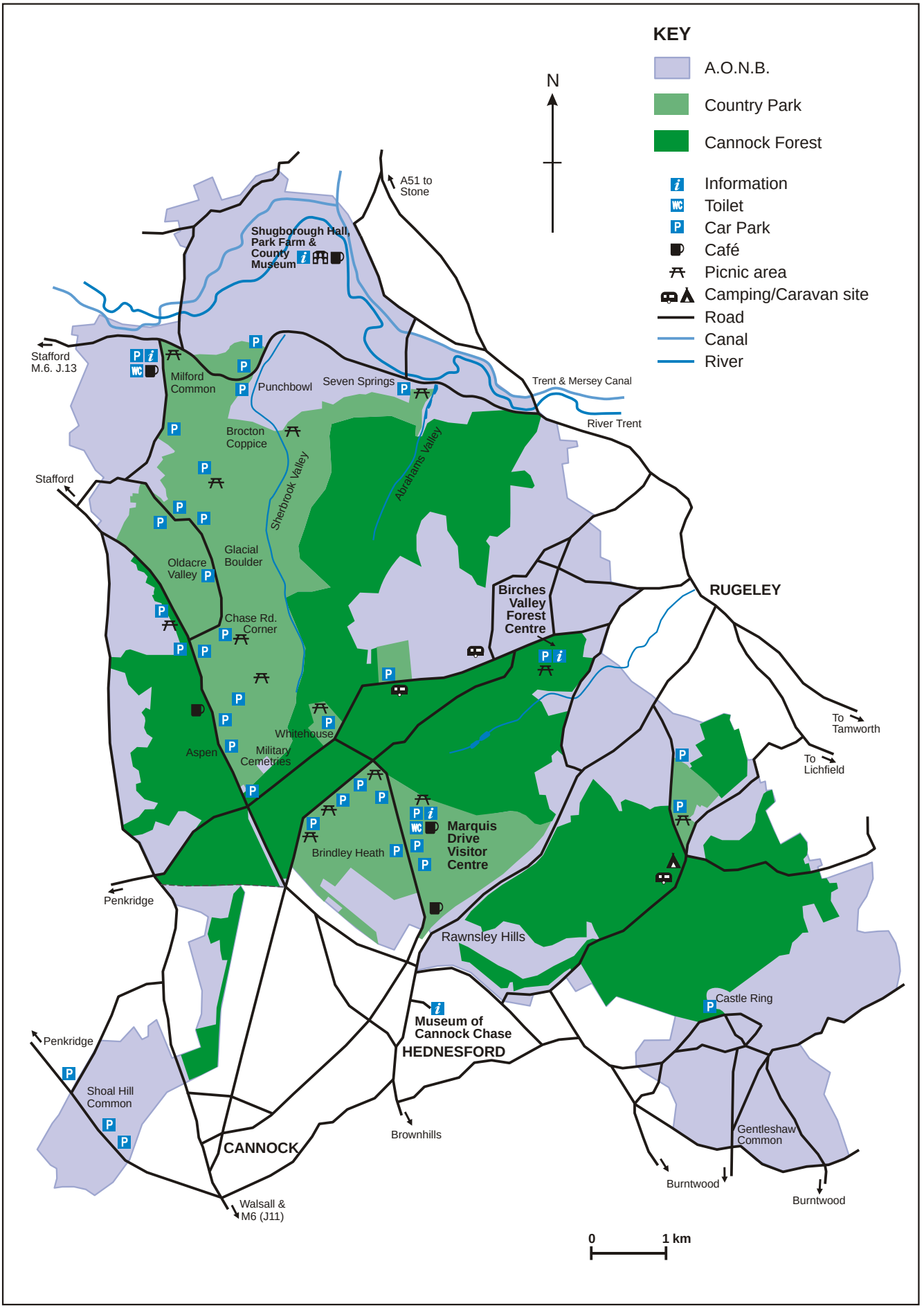
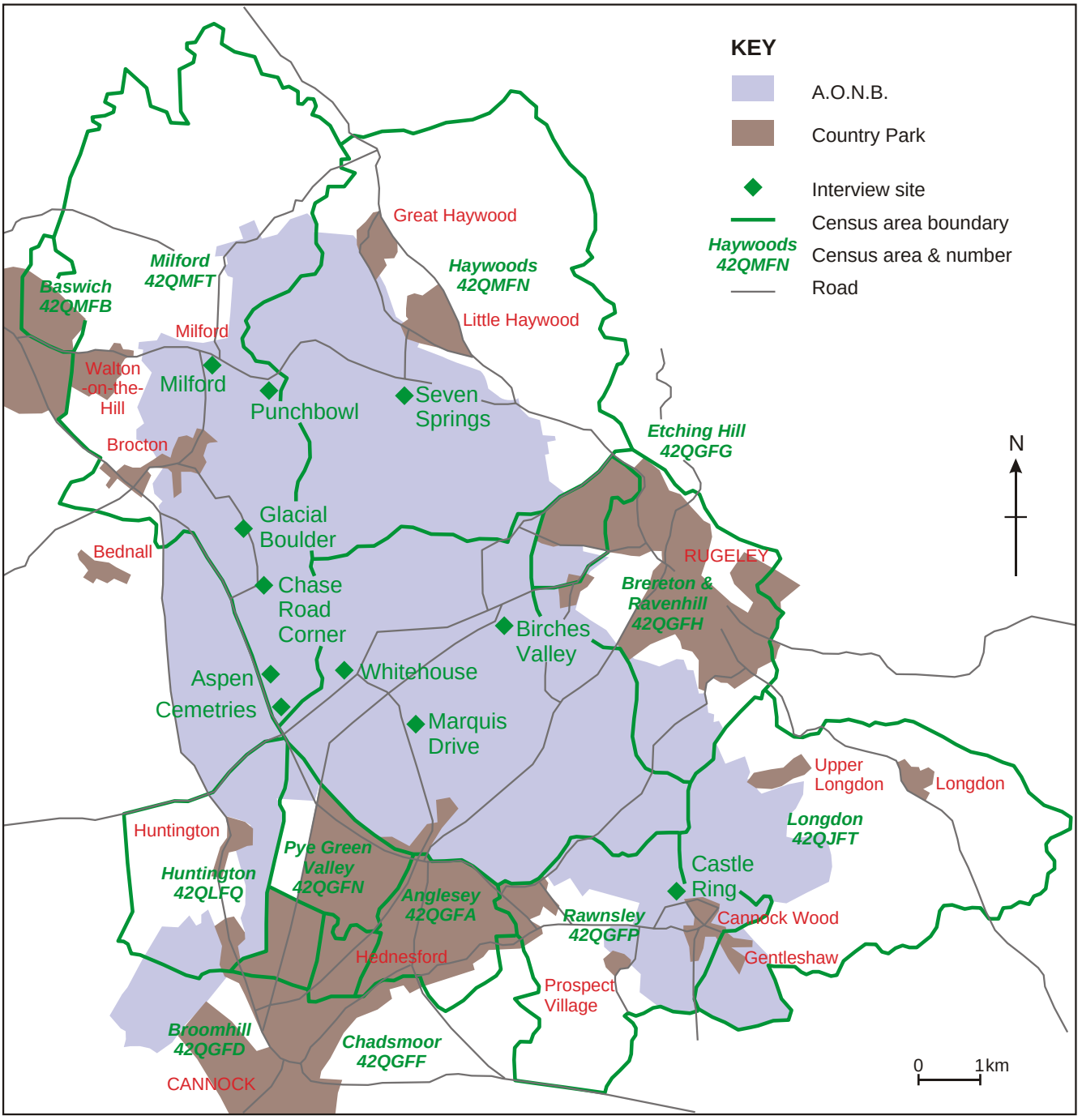


Figure 1.2 Interview sites and census areas used for the residents' survey



2. BASIC PATTERNS OF VISITING

This section of the report concentrates upon the basic patterns of visiting to Cannock Chase AONB, both in terms of the overall levels of use of the area and the spatial and temporal dynamics of visiting.

2.1 Overall Levels of Use

The estimation of overall levels of use of an amenity area as extensive as Cannock Chase AONB is fraught with difficulties and uncertainties. However, on the basis of a range of information gathered within the main survey elements and with allowance for variations within the different modes of visiting, the Chase is believed to be receiving around 1.27 million visits per annum at the present time. Of these, an estimated 830,000 arrive as car-based visitors but there is a significant (and largely unnoticed) pattern of use by local people who walk onto the Chase - many very regularly - and which account for an estimated 360,000 visits per year. (See Appendix 9.5 for details of the method used to calculate the total).

The aggregate figure takes account of all categories of visiting to the AONB (including recreational, work-related and educational trips), with the exception of visits to Shugborough Hall. Although the Shugborough estate is located within the boundaries of the AONB, it essentially constitutes a separate attraction within its own right and generates an appeal that is largely independent of its location in the AONB. This conclusion was reinforced by the fact that less than 1% of visitors who were interviewed at sites on the Chase mentioned visiting Shugborough as a part of their trip. Current estimates for visiting to Shugborough - either as general visitors to the permanent attractions present within the site or the programme of special events (such as outdoor concerts, fireworks displays and themed shows and exhibitions) suggest a figure of around 250,000 people annually. Hence if these are added to the estimate for visits to the AONB derived above, total visitor numbers rise to around 1.52 million per annum.

The overwhelming majority of visits to the AONB are generated by people travelling from home as day or part-day visitors. This group accounted for 92% of the sample of visitors interviewed on the Chase, with just 8% reporting that they were visiting the Chase whilst staying in the area.

Whilst a visitor figure of 1.27 million is indicative of the attraction of the Chase, it does not - in itself - suggest any significant degree of overuse of the AONB as a whole. With a total area of 7500 hectares, a visitor level of 1.27 million per annum converts into a daily average of less than 0.5 visitors per hectare. Of course, not all parts of the AONB are accessible to the public and the effective visitor density level will be higher, but not significantly so. Furthermore, at no point of the survey did the research team encounter sites that were near or at their effective physical capacities in respect of basic provision (such as car parking), with the occasional exceptions of Milford Common and Castle Ring. At Castle Ring, in particular, the visitors' use of a favoured location is perhaps limited by the relative small amount of space allocated for public parking, but only at the most popular times.

2.2 Spatial Patterns of Visiting - Key Sites

However, although the general levels of visiting do not, in themselves, threaten significant problems of over-use or congestion, the uneven spatial patterns of visits do lead to local concentrations of visitors, both in time and space. Some sites on the Chase - such as Milford Common and Marquis Drive - are subject to high levels of visiting at peak times and receive significant numbers of visitors on a day-to-day basis. In contrast, other places - such as the area between the Glacial Boulder and the Katyn Memorial - are lightly used, both in comparison with more popular locations and in absolute terms.

Respondents in both the residents and on-site visitor surveys were asked to identify favourite sites or locations on the Chase. Across the two surveys taken together, some 11% simply stated that they visited "all over" with no preferred locations, whilst another 7% referred only to using "the local area" and often indicated places with colloquial names that are not officially recognised. Most respondents, however, were able to mention specific places and their answers clearly identified the most popular locations as being Milford Common, Seven Springs, Marquis Drive, Birches Valley and Castle Ring (see Table 2.1).

However, the pattern set out in Table 2.1 is partially produced by the distribution of sampling for the on-site visitor survey work, which tended to inflate the importance of sites at which interviews were being conducted, at the expense of other places. A more balanced representation of public preferences for the different locations is perhaps provided by the residents' survey taken alone. Figure 2.1 presents these results in map form and whilst the attraction of Milford Common, Marquis Drive

Table 2.1
Favourite sites identified by residents and visitors

Site or Area	N	%
All over	164	11.1
Local	103	6.9
Marquis Drive	367	24.7
Birches Valley	326	21.9
Milford Common	250	16.8
Castle Ring	182	12.2
Seven Springs	165	11.1
Cemeteries	79	5.3
Punchbowl	65	4.4
Stepping Stones	60	4.0
Sherbrook Valley	54	3.6
Fairoak Pools	33	2.2
Whitehouse	32	2.2
Chase Road Corner	30	2.0
Hazelslade Reserve	20	1.3
Aspen	13	0.9

N = 1485. Percentage figures may sum to more than 100 since respondents could provide more than one answer

Valley and, particularly, Seven Springs is confirmed, the Sherbrook Valley, the Stepping Stones and the Cemeteries emerge more strongly as favourite locations for local people. In contrast, Castle Ring was mentioned less often. The prominence accorded to Seven Springs by residents is especially striking and is probably a product of the attractive environment of the site when combined with the ease of access from Stafford and Rugeley and the proximity of the Haywoods and Colwich.

In both surveys, sites such as Aspen, Chase Road Corner, the Glacial Boulder, Hazelslade Reserve and Whitehouse emerge as quieter locations by comparison.

2.3 Spatial Patterns of Activity

Not only do the different locations on Cannock Chase reveal differing levels of attraction, but also they are used variably for different activities (see also Section 3.1 below). As part of the analysis of the on-site visitor survey and the survey of local residents, data on activities were cross-tabulated with the sites that people chose to visit. This revealed that whilst the majority of sites accommodated a broad spectrum of activities (in which walking

is ubiquitous), several showed a more distinctive profile. These patterns are reflected more fully in Table 2.2, although a note of caution needs to be sounded over reading too much into some of the differences noted at smaller sites, where numbers of recorded participants are occasionally very low.

Table 2.2
Patterns of activity within different sites in Cannock Chase AONB

		Site										
Activity		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Walking	N	166	56	122	252	208	153	46	16	11	21	12
	%	58.2	72.7	76.3	59.7	51.7	77.2	70.0	61.5	73.3	72.4	85.7
Play	N	28	3	5	35	71	3	1	1	-	1	2
	%	9.8	3.9	3.1	8.3	17.7	1.5	1.5	3.9	-	3.5	14.3
Cycling	N	18	7	14	54	56	15	-	2	1	-	-
	%	6.3	9.1	8.8	12.8	13.9	7.6	-	7.7	6.7	-	-
Running	N	3	-	-	8	3	5	3	2	1	1	-
	%	1.1	-	-	1.9	0.8	2.5	4.6	7.7	6.7	3.5	-
Picnicking	N	14	4	6	23	23	9	5	1	1	-	-
	%	4.9	5.2	3.8	5.5	5.7	4.6	7.6	3.9	6.7	-	-
Relaxing	N	24	-	1	19	7	1	2	-	-	1	-
	%	8.4	-	0.6	4.5	1.7	0.5	3.0	-	-	3.5	-
Riding	N	1	-	1	-	2	1	1	-	-	1	-
	%	0.4	-	0.6	-	0.5	0.5	1.5	-	-	6.9	-
Eating out	N	12	1	-	2	5	2	1	-	1	1	-
	%	4.2	1.3	-	0.5	1.2	1.0	1.5	-	6.7	3.5	-
Educ. visit	N	-	-	-	1	7	2	-	-	-	-	-
	%	-	-	-	0.3	1.7	1.0	-	-	-	-	-
Bird/nature	N	2	4	8	3	8	4	-	2	-	1	-
watching	%	0.7	5.2	5.0	0.7	2.0	2.0	-	7.7	-	3.5	-
Sight-see/	N	17	2	3	25	12	3	7	2	-	1	-
Driving	%	6.0	2.6	1.9	5.9	3.0	1.5	10.6	7.7	-	3.5	-

% figures represent percentages within sites.
Key to sites : 1= Milford Common; 2 = The Punchbowl; 3 = Seven Springs; 4 = Marquis Drive; 5 = Birches Valley; 6 = Castle Ring; 7 = The Cemeteries; 8 = Whitehouse; 9 = Glacial Boulder; 10 = Chase Road Corner; 11 = Aspen.

Sites with distinctive profiles include, for example, Birches Valley which attracts a significant proportion of the visitors wishing to play games or to cycle, as well as drawing 70% of those on an educational visit. In contrast, Milford Common is a favoured location for

picnicking, for games, for relaxing and eating out. Marquis Drive rivals Birches Valley as a focal point for cycling, and is popular for picnicking, games and general relaxation. In all these cases, the provision of facilities is undoubtedly a key factor in determining a profile of use. Birches Valley provides cycle hire facilities, an adventure playground and welcomes school parties to the educational centre; the extensive areas of flat open space at Marquis Drive and Milford favour general relaxation, picnicking and games; and the presence of a public house, a cafe and a fast food outlet at Milford enables some visitors to this site to enjoy a meal as a part of their visit.

Where dedicated facilities are generally absent, activity patterns tend to focus upon simpler forms of recreation. For example, at Seven Springs over 75% of users were walking (often with a dog) and similar patterns were noted at the Punchbowl, Aspen, the Cemeteries, Chase Road Corner and the Glacial Boulder. Castle Ring also attracts high numbers of walkers and dog walkers, but also is a point of congregation for cyclists. Whitehouse is another location at which both walkers and cyclists congregate, together with runners and people who are sightseeing or driving.

Fig. 2.2 provides another perspective on the same theme by illustrating locations with above average concentrations of users pursuing a selection of common recreations. This suggests that the more gregarious and passive forms of activity (such as relaxing, games and play, and picnicking) tend to favour the more developed sites (such as Milford and Marquis Drive), whereas more active visitors or those who come to enjoy the natural qualities of the Chase perhaps favour quieter or less accessible places (for example, Seven Springs, Aspen and the Cemeteries, the area around the Glacial Boulder and also the Sherbrook Valley).

2.4 The Catchment Area.

The catchment area for the AONB is essentially defined by responses within the site-based visitor survey. Of these, some 925 people had travelled to the Chase from their homes on a day or part-day visit and the summary of the distances travelled is given in Table 2.2. The data confirm that for the majority of day visitors, the Chase is an attraction with a local or sub-regional catchment, with just under 70% travelling from within a 10 mile radius and only just over 12% travelling from beyond 20 miles. These data suggest a slightly more limited catchment than is typical for countryside visiting as a whole. Comparable figures from the UK Day Visits Survey for Great Britain (Countryside Recreation Network, 1996) suggest that trips of less than 10 miles account for around 63% of visits, whilst 20% travel more than 20 miles.

Table 2.3

Distances travelled to Cannock Chase AONB

	No.	%
From within 2 miles	164	17.7
Between 2.1 and 5 miles	288	31.1
Between 5.1 and 10 miles	193	20.9
Between 10.1 and 20 miles	164	17.7
Over 20 miles	116	12.5

N = 925

The aggregate pattern does, however, conceal some significant variations - in the size and nature of catchment areas generated by different sites and also according to the primary activities of the visitors.

Data on the size and nature of the catchment areas of the survey sites reveal a number of effects, including some variation according to the size and importance of the site itself, as well as the distribution of population within the various distance categories that radiate from each site. Hence, in one or two cases, sites revealed little of no use by people living within 2 miles of a site, simply because relatively few people live within that particular range. This was evident at Chase Road Corner, Whitehouse and Aspen.

The sites that revealed the highest incidence of use by people living within 2 miles were Seven Springs and Castle Ring, followed by Birches Valley. At Castle Ring, the immediate proximity of the housing area of Cannock Wood creates a great deal of regular use - especially by walkers and dog walkers - that accounts for the 31% of the sample at that location who lived close by. Although a little further removed from settlement areas, both Seven Springs and Birches Valley draw visitors from Little Haywood and Colwich (at Seven Springs), and from Slitting Mill and Etching Hill (at Birches Valley). At these sites, 29% and 23% of visitors respectively, were resident within 2 miles of the sites. At the other end of the scale, the site which revealed the greatest proportion of visitor coming from beyond 20 miles, was Marquis Drive (17%).

At most locations, however, catchment data typically emphasises the mid-range categories, rather than the extremes of either short- or longer-range trips. Milford Common, for example, attracted comparatively few of its visitors from within 2 miles and beyond 20 miles, most travelling between 10 and 20 miles to use this site. At Birches Valley, nearly a third of visitors came from between 5 and 10 miles and similar patterns were found at Whitehouse and Aspen.

Additionally, there is some evidence to suggest that different parts of the Chase draw their visitors from differing areas of the overall catchment. To illustrate this feature, the home locations of visitors interviewed at three sites (Milford Common, Marquis Drive and Castle Ring) were mapped to show the spatial patterns of origin in detail (Figs. 2.3; 2.4 and 2.5). In all cases the maps demonstrate the capacity of the Chase to attract visitors from a broad geographical region and this is best illustrated by the pattern of visits to Marquis Drive. However at all three locations, there are significant flows of visitors from closely adjacent areas and, as might be anticipated, some indication that locations towards the northern or southern extremities of the Chase draw primarily upon northern and southern parts of the catchment respectively. This is most pronounced at Castle Ring where only a handful of visitors that were interviewed originated in the northern part of the catchment, whilst large numbers came from local areas of Cannock Wood, from Rugeley and from Lichfield. At Milford the pattern is less distinct, although the attraction of this area to local populations in Stafford, Brocton and the Haywoods is evident, with smaller numbers travelling to this part of the AONB from districts such as Cannock and Hednesford.

Cross-tabulations of activities with distances travelled to the AONB revealed that whilst some activities (for example, walking and picnicking) showed no significant departure from the mean, other activities did. The graphs in Fig. 2.6 show how variation occurred across a selection of common activities. Hence, journeys to play games and, especially, to walk dogs, tended to be more localised than the average and therefore drew on a core catchment that was more limited than normal. In contrast, for the other activities illustrated, the pattern was skewed in favour of more extended journeys. This was true particularly for people who visited Cannock Chase for sightseeing (where almost 40% travelled from beyond 20 miles) and for cycling(where 30% originated beyond 20 miles). Indeed, for cycling one or two visitors had travelled from places as far afield as London.

A small proportion of the sample of visitors (approximately 8%) were people who were staying in the area rather than visiting from home. The home origins of these were classified according to the tourist board regions within which they reside rather than distance alone (see Appendix 9.6). The primary sources of staying visitors were the Heart of England (14.5%); London and the South East (14.4%); and the East Midlands (11.8%). Smaller number originated in Yorkshire & Humberside, the North West, East Anglia and the Southern region, although without a clear and

distinguishing pattern.

2.5 The Frequency and Timing of Visits

Data on the frequency of visiting was gathered in both the survey of residents and the on-site survey of visitors, with respondents being asked to identify typical patterns of visiting during the summer months and at other times of the year. The diurnal timing of visits was monitored through a routine counting of parked cars at the survey sites, with counts being taken on the hour throughout each survey period.

Typical daily patterns (as represented by the average numbers of cars parked under all conditions) were calculated for four primary sites. These are illustrated in Fig. 2.7 and reveal contrasting patterns of visiting. All four sites show a characteristic peak immediately after lunch and in the first part of the afternoon for week-day visits. In contrast, week-end patterns are more variable. In general, peak periods of visiting occur slightly later in the afternoon at Marquis Drive and Milford (i.e. between 2pm and 4pm), but at Castle Ring and Birches Valley, weekend usage shows a split pattern, with peaks occurring in both the mornings and afternoons. It is possible that this reflects the higher incidence of local use at these sites that is generated by users from neighbouring residential areas. Evening visiting at all sites is relatively low by comparison.

Data on the reported frequency of visiting is given in Table 2.4. The data make an important point concerning the frequency with which a significant proportion of visitors state that they visit the Chase, with just over 60% of the sample claiming to visit at least once a fortnight during the summer, and just over half visiting this often at other times of the year. This is an important component in generating the aggregate number of visits reported in Section 2.1 (above).

Comparison with the findings of the UK Day Visits Survey (CRN, 1996) on the frequency of trips to the countryside, reveals an almost identical proportion of the sample making trips at least once a fortnight in summer (60%). However, the Chase has a much more prominent element of daily visiting than is suggested by the national figures - the UK Day Visits Survey showing just 4% visit the countryside on a daily basis, compared with 12% on Cannock Chase. This figure underlines the value of the Chase as a local amenity area for adjacent urban communities.

It is also striking that although there is a slight shift towards a less frequent pattern of visiting outside the summer months, levels of visiting hold up remarkably well, even

Table 2.4
Frequency of visits to Cannock Chase AONB (Summer months and at other times)

	Summer		Other Times	
	N	%	N	%
Daily	174	11.9	153	10.6
Two to three times a week	225	15.4	191	13.1
Weekly	293	20.1	223	15.4
Fortnightly	193	13.2	172	11.8
Monthly	267	18.3	241	16.7
Three monthly	157	10.7	198	13.7
Six monthly	71	4.9	140	9.6
Less	81	5.5	132	9.1
N	1461		1454	

at times of the year when weather conditions are poor. This is borne out by the car parking data which revealed, for example, 24 cars parked at Castle Ring on a Sunday afternoon late in November, or 21 cars parked at Marquis Drive on a Thursday afternoon, five days later.

The pattern of visiting for both the summer and at other times (as shown in Table 2.4) does, however, suggest evidence of bi-modality. This points to the common situation whereby the aggregate is composed of some rather different behaviours. In particular, both data sets tend to define groups who either visit on at least a weekly basis, or alternatively, different groups who visit on a monthly basis or less.

Cross-tabulations of frequency of visiting with common activities revealed several distinct patterns (see Table 2.5). People who walked dogs did so very regularly, as did a much smaller group who used the Chase for running. Furthermore, the impact of the seasons was minimal for these people. For example, 73% of dog walkers turned out at least once a week in summer, a proportion that fell only to 64% at other times, whilst the numbers who ran regularly appeared to be the same throughout the year. In contrast, other recreations tended to show a less-frequent pattern of participation, although the reduction in levels of activity across the seasons remained broadly in line with the pattern noted above. The exception was in the use of the Chase for games and play, where the seasonal reduction was more marked, perhaps reflecting a greater susceptibility of younger family groups to the effects of colder weather and shorter days.

Table 2.5
Frequency of visiting by seasons and by selected activity

Activity	% visiting at least once a fortnight in summer	% visiting at least once a fortnight in winter
Dog walking	81	75
Other walking	51	40
Cycling	52	42
Running	100	100
Games and play	38	19

N is variable, reflecting the different number of visitors involved in each activity

The data were also examined to see whether the frequency of visiting was associated with the types of transport used by visitors to reach the Chase. In this case, the modal category for the frequency of visiting was identified for each type of transport, producing some very clear contrasts. Amongst people who walked to the Chase, the modal frequency was "daily" - for both summer and winter visiting, whereas car-based visitors revealed a modal frequency of "monthly" - once again consistent for both summer and winter. Visitors who travelled to the Chase by bicycle and motor cycle favoured a "weekly" pattern as their modal category in summer, but these users appear more prone to a reduction in the frequency of visits at other times. Cyclists, for example, typically reporting a frequency of "once every three months" outside the summer period. The majority of these will be road cyclists since it is evident from data presented elsewhere, that the activity of cycling involves a significant number of people who transport their bikes to the Chase by road, and then cycle. These are generally the mountain bike riders and their patterns of participation appear to be quite consistent across the year as a whole, albeit with a small reduction during the colder seasons.

2.6 Summary

The main findings in the analysis of the patterns of use are as follows :

- an estimated 1.27 million people are thought to visit Cannock Chase annually, of whom some 830,000 are car-based visitors and 360,000 are pedestrians.

- 92% of visits are generated as day- or part-day trips.

- spatial patterns of visiting are uneven with the most popular locations being Milford, Marquis Drive, Birches Valley, Seven Springs, Sherbrook Valley and Castle Ring.

- most sites accommodate a broad spectrum of activities although some show characteristic "profiles" of use - for example, the concentrations of cyclists at Marquis Drive and Birches Valley. The quieter sites are dominated by walkers.

- the catchment area is essentially local and sub-regional with 70% originating within 10 miles of their destinations. However for some activities - especially cycling - the catchment is significantly larger. Catchments also vary in size and shape between sites.

- up to 60% of users visit frequently (at least once a fortnight in summer) and these levels hold up remarkably well at other times of the year - especially amongst walkers and cyclists. The Chase has an unusually high level of daily visiting.

Figure 2.1 Popularity of main sites

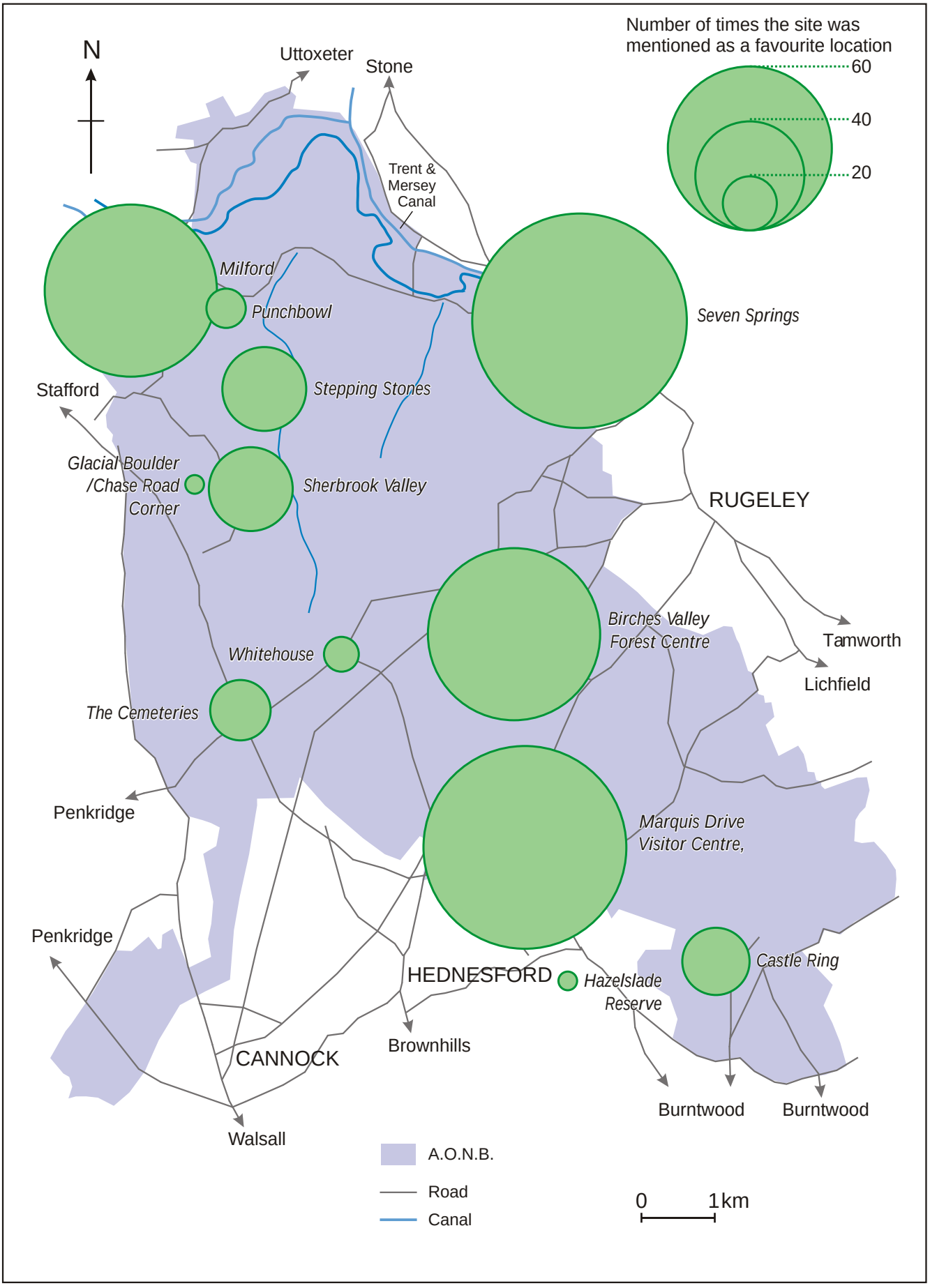


Figure 2.2 Sites showing above average use for selected activities within the AONB

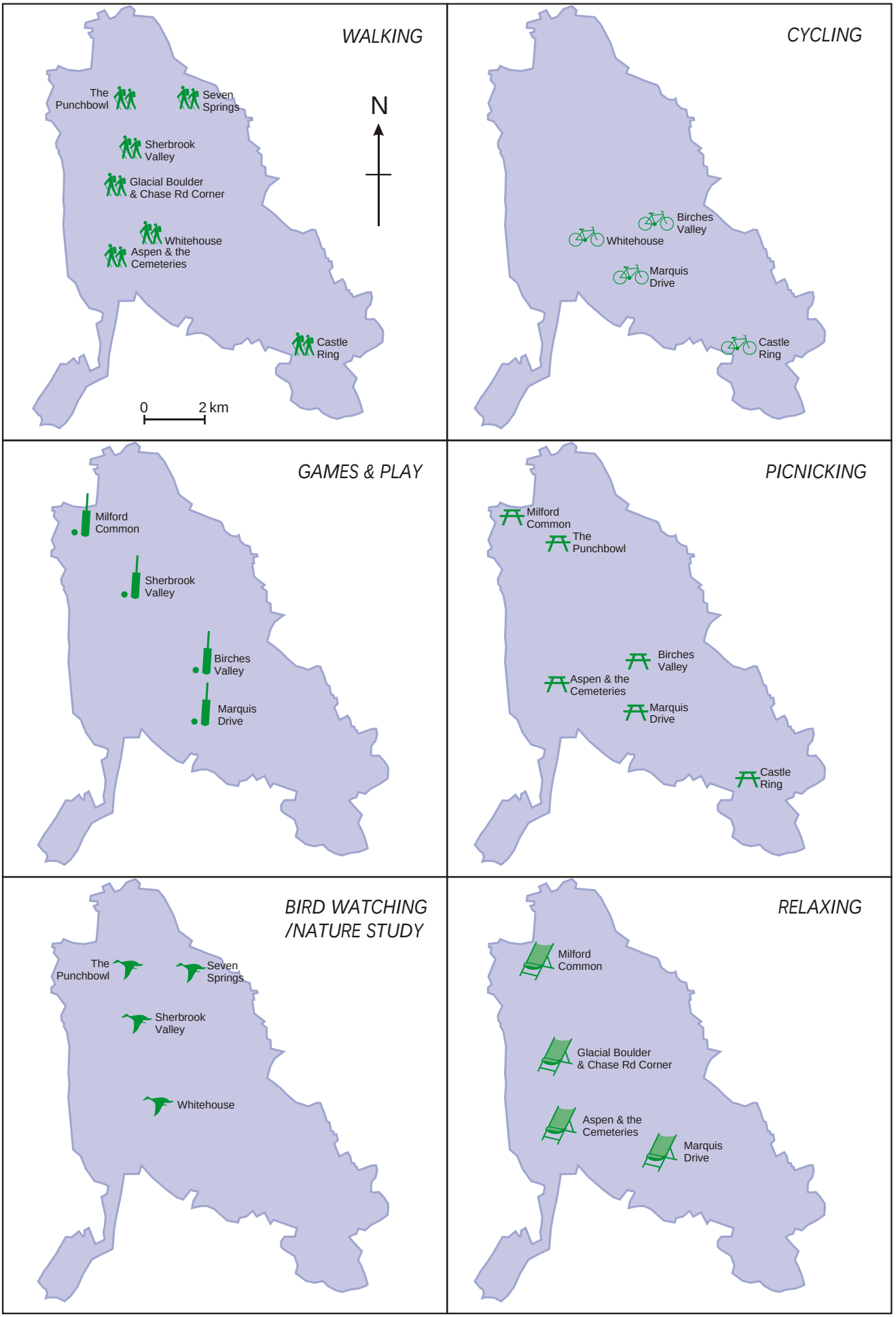


Figure 2.3 Home locations of visitors to Milford Common

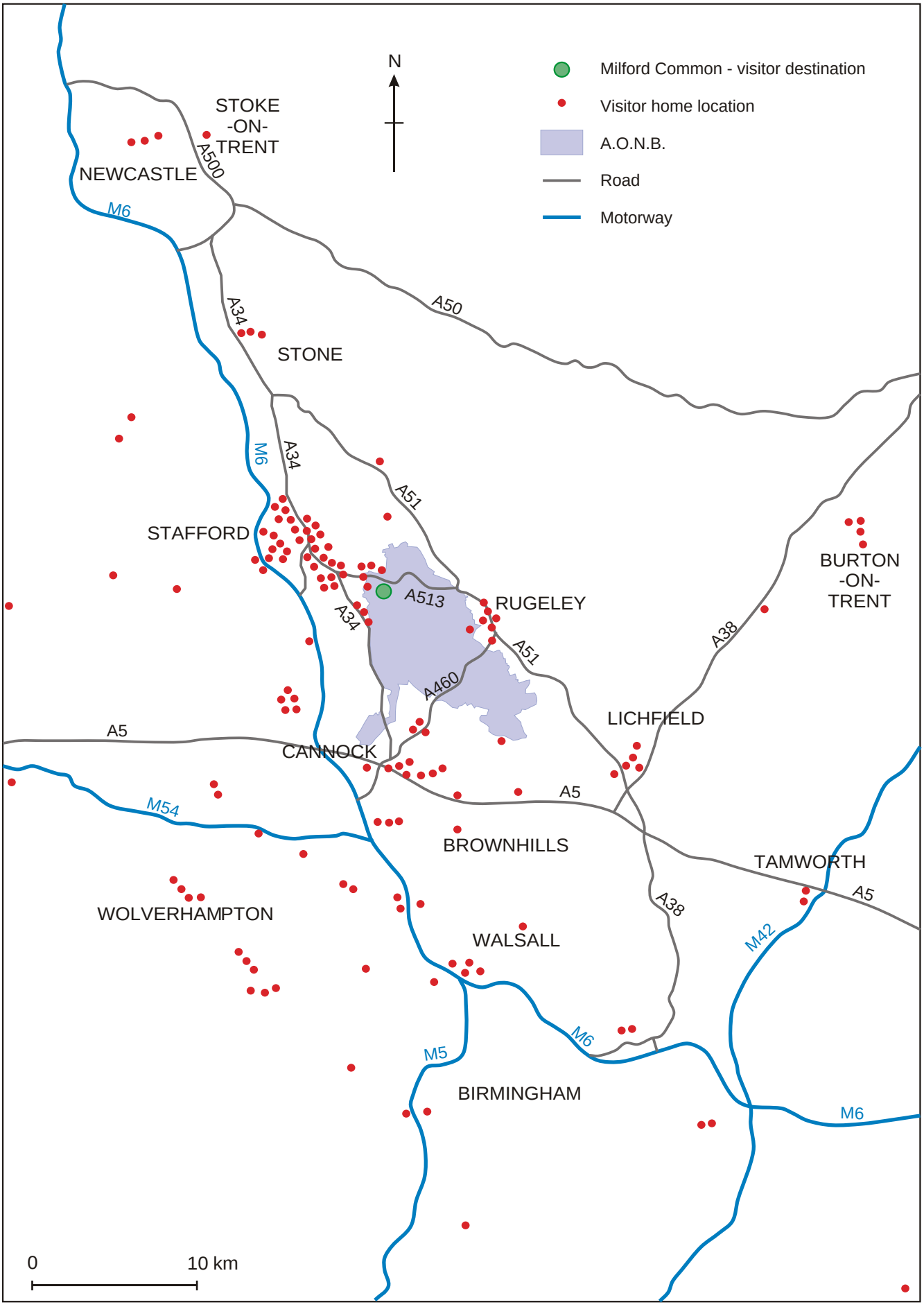


Figure 2.4 Home location of visitors to Marquis Drive

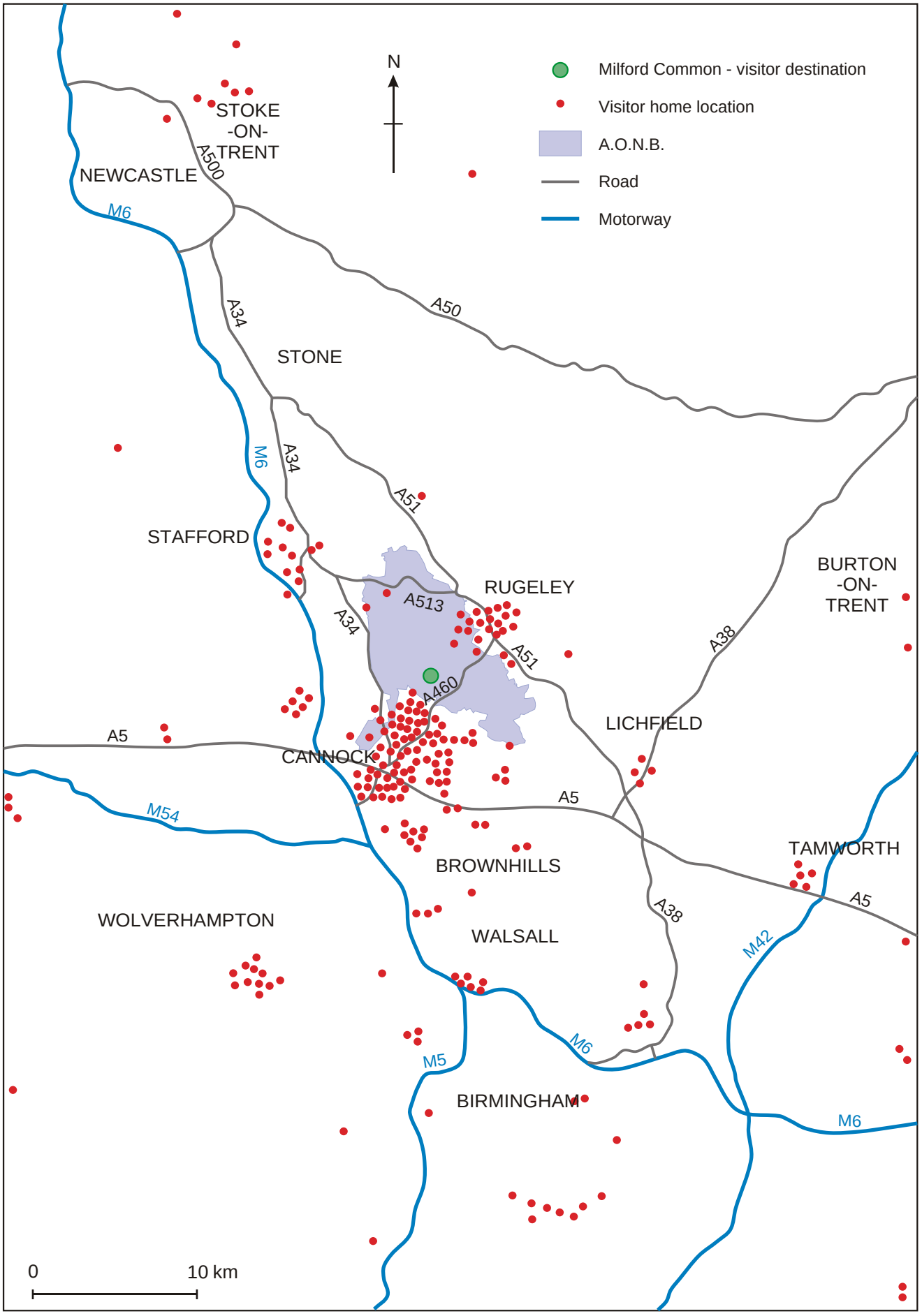


Figure 2.5 Home location of visitors to Castle Ring

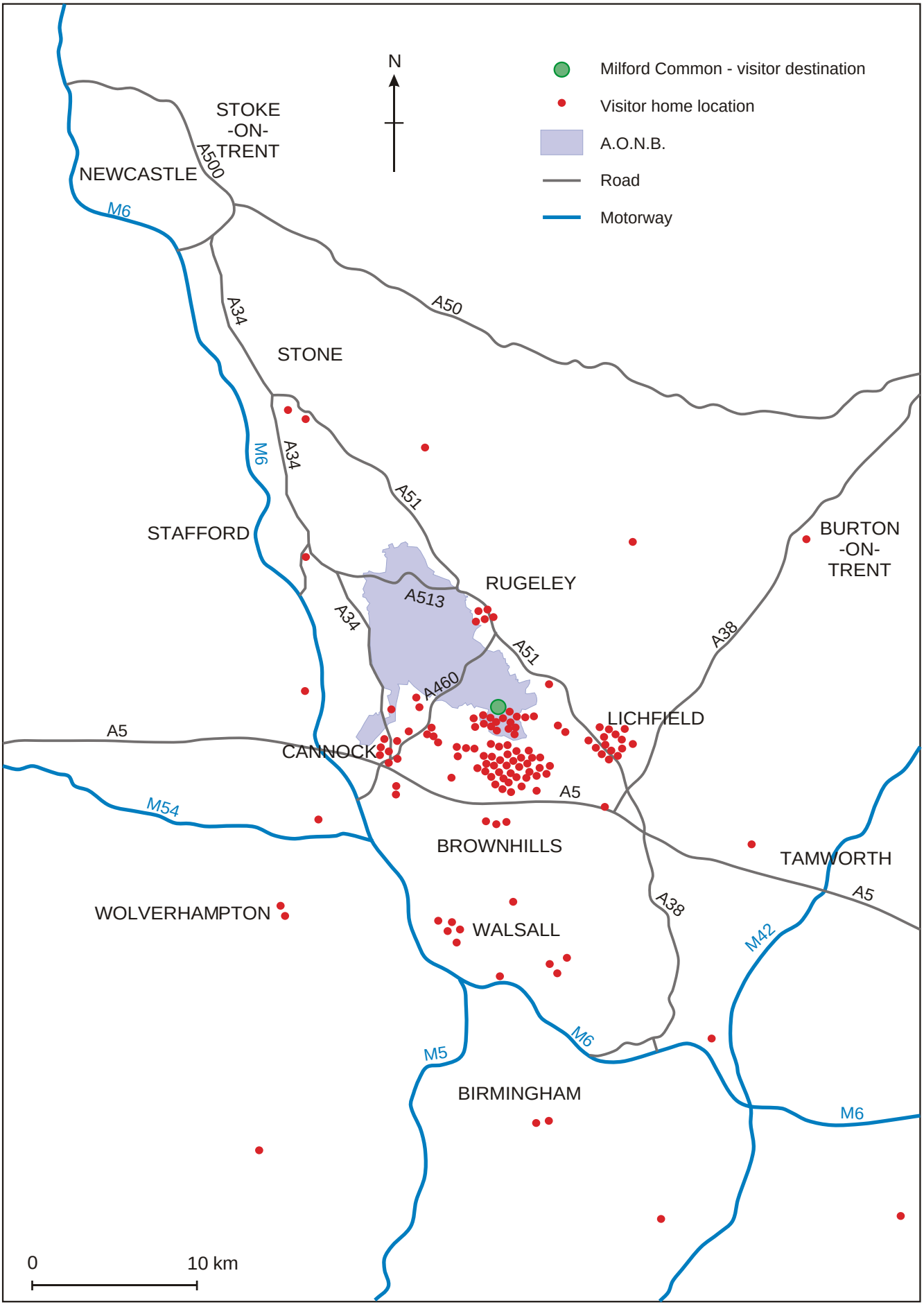


Figure 2.6 Distances travelled for selected activities

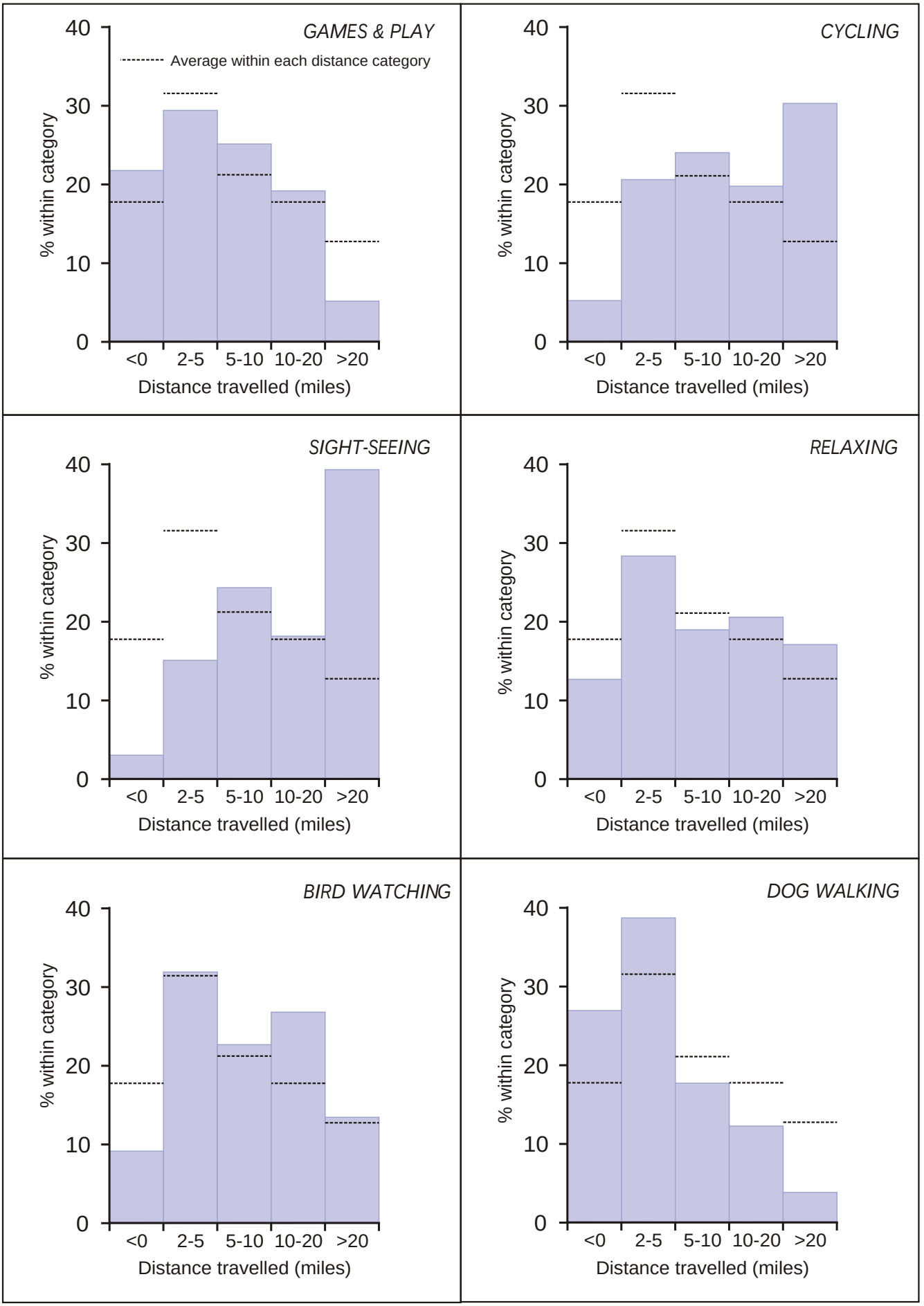
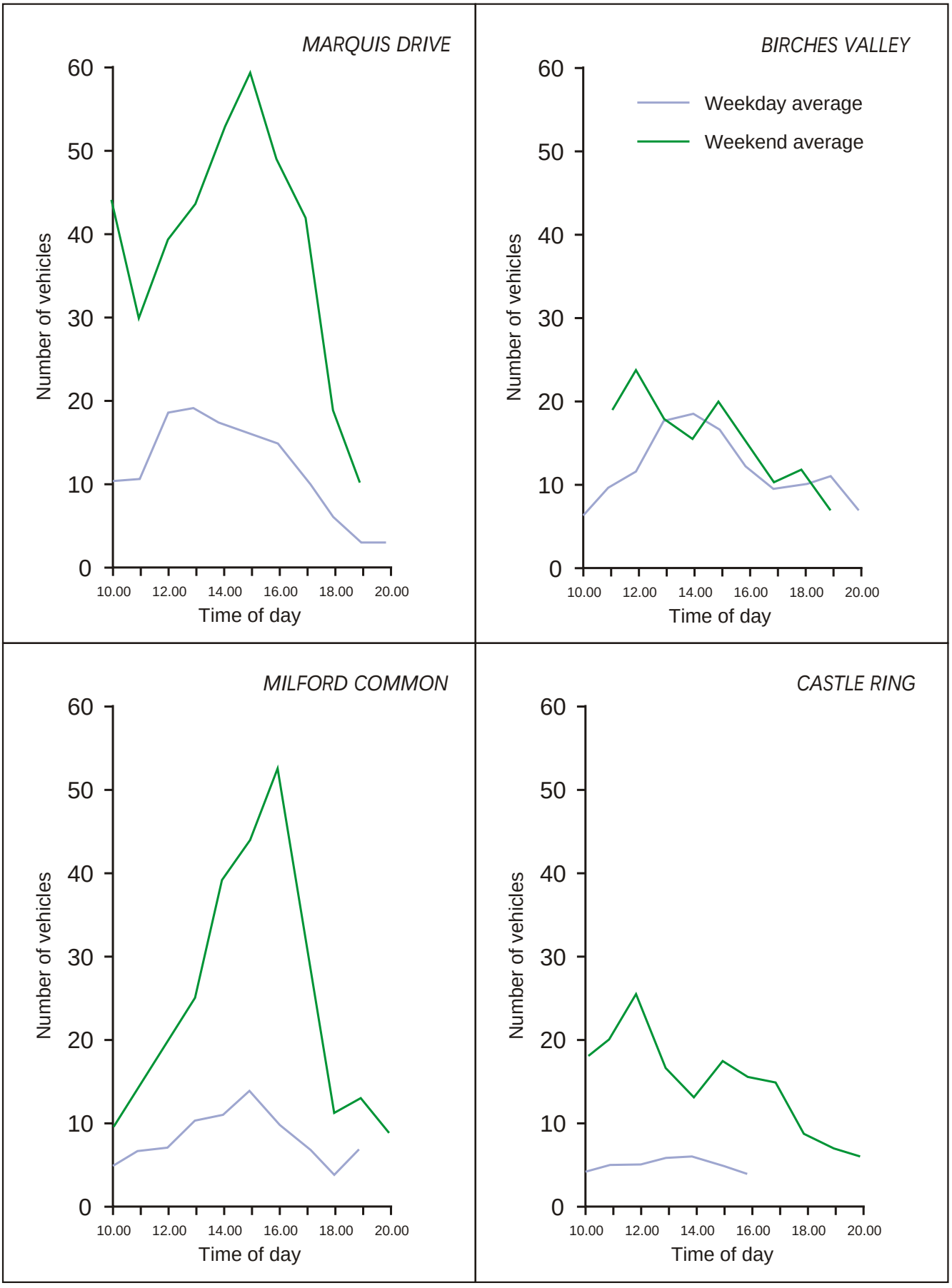


Figure 2.7 Average number of parked vehicles at selected locations



3. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE VISIT

This section outlines the key characteristics of visits to Cannock Chase AONB. These are defined by the activities on which respondents were engaged; the duration of their visit; travel modes; the composition and size of groups; the use of information services in planning the visit and - for tourists - their use of local accommodation and their length of stay.

3.1 Patterns of Activity

Some reference has already been made to typical activities pursued by users of the AONB. The spatial extent of the AONB and the diversity of environments that it contains encourages a wide range of uses, most of which are informal in character but which vary across the activity spectrum from the purely passive to the highly energetic. The fifteen activities that were mentioned most frequently in the residents and on-site visitor surveys are tabulated in rank order in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1
Principal activities reported by users of Cannock Chase AONB

	No.	%
Walking	1252	80.7
Cycling	186	12.0
Games and Children's Play	179	11.5
Picnicking	117	7.5
Relaxing / Sun-bathing	74	4.8
Sight-seeing	56	3.6
Eating out	33	2.1
Running / Orienteering	32	2.1
Bird watching	32	2.1
Educational Visit	15	1.0
Visiting local attractions	15	1.0
Nature study	12	0.8
Driving	11	0.7
Work	10	0.6
Horse riding	9	0.6
Other	47	3.0

N = 1552. Percentages sum to more than 100 since respondents could identify more than one activity.

The dominance of walking as the primary activity of visitors to the AONB needs no further emphasis, but does merit some further comment and elaboration. In comparison with both the UK Day Visits Survey (CRN, 1996) and the Countryside Commission's 1994 Survey of Visitors to National Parks (Countryside Commission, 1996), the dominance of walking is

unusually high. Within the UK Day Visits survey data on countryside visiting at the national level, only 29% identified walking or rambling as the main activity of their visit. In the survey of national park visitors, around 44% identified walking as an activity.

In part this difference may arise through the general paucity of specific attractions that Cannock Chase offers in comparison to other countryside areas (see Section 1) and which allows the simpler pleasures - such as walking - to become emphasised. The national parks, especially, attract very high numbers of sight-seers and pleasure motorists, as a natural consequence of the quality of their landscapes and the concentrations of "honey pot" locations that have developed within their boundaries. Cannock Chase does not offer comparable opportunities and as a consequence, both sight-seeing and pleasure driving are conspicuous by their absence.

Walking as a recreation takes many forms; from casual strolling, through more purposeful forms of exercise, to serious and dedicated participation by people who are well-equipped and who may walk considerable distances as a challenge. The interviewers encountered people in all these categories. Nearly 27% of the walkers (22% of the total sample) were exercising dogs. As noted in Section 2.5 above, dog walking produces quite regular and frequent patterns of visiting - some of those interviewed reporting daily use of the Chase to walk their dogs. Alongside the dog walkers there exists a much larger group - people who visit less often (although perhaps still regularly) and who come for a range of motives : exercise, fresh air or escape from urban environments being typical of the reasons cited. Most of these visitors still favour relatively short walks, often from car parks and along well-used routes such as the Sherbrook Valley, but there are others who exhibit more adventuresome tendencies and explore less well-known paths as preferred forms of activity. Finally, interviewers encountered people who come occasionally to the Chase in organised groups (for example, rambling groups, youth clubs, Women's Institutes) in order to walk extended routes, particularly along the Heart of England Way between Castle Ring and Milford. Many (though not all) of the people in this category are serious and dedicated walkers for whom the longer routes on the Chase offer not only a day out, but also a challenge. Clearly, the diversity within this key user group has important implications for management of Cannock Chase.

Cycling is a second activity that is unusually prominent on the Chase. Comparison with the two national surveys mentioned above found that amongst those interviewed for the UK Day Visits survey, only 3% of visits to the countryside were for cycling or mountain bike riding, whilst in the national parks a slightly higher value of 6% was reported. With 12% of visits to the Chase being for cycling, the importance of the AONB for this activity is firmly emphasised.

Like walking, cycling is similarly comprised of varying forms of participation although in this case, two very distinct styles may be differentiated : a smaller group of traditional road cyclists and a much larger group of people who ride off-road using mountain-bikes. The recent growth of the latter sector has been a conspicuous feature in the changing use of the AONB over the last decade and it is evident from interviews with cyclists that the varied terrain and extensive tracts of open access land on the Chase are a particular attraction. It has already been noted in Section 2 that the catchment area for cyclists visiting the Chase is appreciably more extensive than for most other recreations, and the cyclist confirm that Cannock Chase is amongst the top sites for mountain biking, at least within the southern part of England. Unsurprisingly, off-road cycling is now a major source of conflict between different activity groups (see Section 8).

The remainder of the activities listed in Table 3.1 generally point to the importance of the Chase as a location for informal and relatively passive forms of recreation (games and play, picnicking, relaxing, sunbathing and eating out occupying the next five positions in the ranked listing), although as a consequence of the dominance of walking and cycling as main activities, these other recreations feature less prominently than usual. (In the survey of national park visitors, for example, 55% stated that eating out formed a part of their visit, 36% picnicked and 29% relaxed or sunbathed (Countryside Commission, 1996)). The natural qualities of the Chase - although an important element in the general appeal of the AONB - attract comparatively few practitioners of recreations such as bird watching, at least when expressed as percentages of the total. It should be remembered, however, that in view of the estimated size of the total visitor base, even small percentages translate into appreciable actual numbers. Hence the 2.1% who stated that they watched birds might represent in excess of 25,000 visits for this purpose in a typical year.

Cannock Chase is not generally perceived as a destination area with a wealth of visitor attractions and very few people in the two main surveys identified visits to attractions as a part of their usage (1.0%). Amongst those who did, the key locations identified were the Marquis Drive and Birches Valley Visitor Centres (86%); Shugborough (80%) and the Museum of Cannock Chase (40%). Other places that were mentioned included Wolseley Park and the neighbouring garden centre. Not all of these locations are within the boundary of the AONB itself, although they are adjacent.

Table 3.1 also shows an undifferentiated category of "Other" uses. This contains a diversity of activities including fishing, photography, painting, picking bilberries, caravanning, camping and gathering wood chippings. However, some of these were mentioned only once and all

clearly constituted minority uses within the overall pattern of activities although, as mentioned above, actual numbers may still be quite appreciable.

3.2 The Duration of Visits

Visitors interviewed in the on-site survey were asked about the expected or actual duration of their visit. The responses are illustrated graphically in Fig. 3.1 which also includes, for comparison, data on length of visits to countryside destinations as recorded in the UK Day Visits Survey (CRN, 1996).

The data emphasise (especially by comparison with the UK Day Visits Survey) the importance of Cannock Chase for relatively short-duration visits. Two thirds of the visits to the Chase lasted less than 2 hours and 84% were completed within three hours (compared with 41% and 61% respectively in the UK Day Visit Survey). This temporal pattern links well with some of the spatial patterning reported in Section 2 and helps to form a picture of the AONB as an important local resource to which a significant proportion of users come regularly but for relatively short duration visits. Indeed, the modal category for visit to the Chase is "up to 1 hour" which accounted for 35% of the total sample of interviews amongst site-based visitors.

The data on the duration of visits were cross-tabulated with a range of other variables to try to illuminate this key characteristic of the visit more fully.

First, the duration of the visit was compared with the distance travelled to establish whether people journeying further stayed longer on the Chase. The data are shown in Fig. 3.2 which reveals several related patterns. Perhaps the most striking of these is the rapid decline in the graph representing the profile for the duration of visits of those living within 2 miles of the Chase. Here, almost 57% stayed for less than an hour and nearly 87% stayed no more than 2 hours, emphasising the short range / short duration characteristic of much of the very localised usage. A similar trend, although much less pronounced, was evident for people living between 2 and 5 miles from the Chase. However, for others, the cost and effort entailed in a lengthier journey does

appear to be reflected in longer periods spent in the AONB. This is revealed by a deflection of the peaks of each graph into higher distance categories (when compared with the graphs representing local visitors) and by a general flattening of gradients. This is indicative of a more varied pattern of visiting by more-distant users, and a greater likelihood of staying longer.

Second, the duration of the visit was cross-tabulated with a selection of popular activities. For ease of comparison, these figures have been converted into an estimate of the average length of the visit (in minutes) according to the main activity pursued. The results are summarised in Table 3.2, with activities ranked according to mean duration.

Table 3.2
Average duration (in minutes) of visits to Cannock Chase according to main activity

Activity	No. of Participants	Average Duration
Cycling	125	160.1
Sight-seeing	47	136.9
Picnicking	70	134.5
Walking	553	118.5
Relaxing or sun-bathing	53	102.0
Games and Play	119	95.6

Data taken from site-based visitor survey only

The data broadly confirm patterns that might be anticipated. It has already been noted that cyclists tend to travel further than most users to gain access to the Chase and they clearly stay longer (on average) than any other activity group, presumably through a desire to maximise the use of the visit having made an extra effort in travelling. The more extended visits by these users may also reflect some of the organisational characteristics associated with mountain biking. Throughout the survey period, organised parties of mountain bike riders were encountered, many of whom had driven (rather than ridden) to the Chase in parties and groups from quite distant locations, with the intention of spending a day (or even longer) riding on the Chase. The Table also shows that sight-seers tend to stay longer than most, especially if their trip entails visits to local attractions (such as Shugborough). In contrast, trips to amuse children by providing opportunities for games and play are noticeably shorter.

The duration of visits was also compared with the timing of the trip, both in terms of seasonal and diurnal patterns. However, the data revealed no linkage at all between the length of visits and the season, with the pattern of duration of both peak and off-peak visiting being almost identical. Similarly there were no meaningful differences between visits

made in the morning or the afternoon, although visits made in the evening were much shorter in length - reflecting the limitation of day light hours after 6.00pm through much of the year.

Fourthly, the duration of the visit was examined for the different sites that were surveyed. Across the 11 sites as a whole, patterns were not consistent. However, two characteristics did emerge. First, a significantly higher percentage of short visits was noted at sites with more localised catchments and/or at some of the quieter locations at which no special facilities are present. For example, at Castle Ring, 57% of visits lasted less than an hour whilst similarly high levels were found at Chase Road Corner (57%), the Cemeteries (49%), Seven Springs (45%) and the Glacial Boulder (44%). In contrast, longer visits tended to be more focused upon major sites, especially Marquis Drive and Birches Valley. For example, Marquis Drive received nearly half of all visits lasting longer than 5 hours, whilst Birches Valley received 22% of these extended stays. This may reflect the superior provision of facilities at these locations (including toilets, information, refreshments and a range of guided walking trails), but it may also be a result of the popularity of these two locations as assembly points for groups of mountain bike riders. Fig. 3.3 illustrates the pattern for a sample of seven locations.

Lastly, the data were examined to establish whether any links existed between the modes of transport used by visitors and the duration of their stay. In light of the dominance of car-based journeys (see Section 3.3 below) variations according to transport mode were difficult to detect. The only exception occurred where visitors walked to the Chase and where visits were more likely to be of a shorter duration (i.e. less than 2 hours).

3.3 Modes of Travel.

Respondents to both the resident and the on-site visitor surveys were asked how they travelled to the Chase. The results are given in Table 3.3 and emphasise very clearly the significance of the car as a means of travel (and hence, the importance of provision for and management of motor traffic), but the data also underscore observations made earlier in the report concerning the significance of highly localised use by people who walk.

The dependence upon the car is especially high, although this result may, in part, be a product of a decision to locate sampling points for the on-site visitor survey within or close to car parks. The survey of residents (when isolated from the composite summary presented in Table 3.3) shows a lower figure of 63% using the car to make visits to the Chase. But even this value is above the levels reported in the UK Day Visits Survey where 59% of general visits to the countryside, and just 47% of visits to woods and forests are made by car (CRN, 1996). However, the survey of national park visitors found 91% had

travelled by car or van (Countryside Commission, 1996), revealing that high proportions of motor-based visitors are quite possible and, indeed, likely.

Table 3.3
Modes of transport used on visits to Cannock Chase AONB

Travel mode	No.	%
Car	1262	81.3
Foot	222	14.3
Bicycle	48	3.1
Motor cycle	6	0.4
Horse	3	0.2
Bus	2	0.1
Other	10	0.6

N = 1552

There is an important comparison to be made between the proportion who use bicycles to get to the Chase (3.1%) and the proportion who identify cycling as an activity whilst visiting the Chase (12.0%). This highlights the incidence of people driving to the Chase and then cycling - either by using bicycles that they have transported using a motor vehicle, or by hiring a bicycle during their visit. Observation suggests that the former is much more commonplace than the latter.

Large-scale surveys of visiting such as the UK Day Visits Survey consistently reveal the minor role played by public transport in allowing people to gain access to the countryside and this conclusion is confirmed again in this present study. Only 2 people out of over 1500 had travelled by bus and nobody had arrived by train, even though Hednesford Station is relatively close to the main visitor facility at Marquis Drive and is connected by marked routes. Interestingly, several respondents suggested the provision of a station halt within the AONB between Hednesford and Rugeley Town, but in light of the virtual absence of train-based visitors, the costs attached to such provision would have to be carefully assessed against realistic expectations of use (see also Section 8).

The category labelled as "Other" in Table 3.3 was comprised of people who travelled by minibus or by a privately chartered coach.

3.4 The Composition and Size of Visitor Groups

In both main surveys, the social composition of the groups in which people visited the Chase was established, together with the size of groups. The group composition is summarised in Table 3.4 and the data on the size of groups is set out in Fig. 3.4.

Table 3.4
Composition of groups visiting Cannock Chase AONB

Group	No.	%
Alone	230	14.8
With family	923	59.5
With friends	204	13.1
With a mix of family and friends	163	10.5
In an organised party	31	2.0

N = 1552

The data emphasise the importance of families (which may or may not include children) as the dominant social construction of groups visiting the Chase. There are no significant differences between the other categories, except for the relatively low incidence of organised group visits. However, although low in number, organised groups are significantly larger than those encountered in the other categories. The mean size of family groups visiting the Chase is 2.90 persons; for groups of friends the value is 2.84; whereas for organised parties the average rises to 16.6 persons. The largest group encountered during the survey people comprised 45 people (a walking party from Worcestershire). The numbers of people visiting the Chase alone are low compared to other surveys - the UK Day Visits survey suggesting that in countryside visiting at a national level, up to a third of visits are made by people alone (CRN, 1996).

Cross-tabulation of group composition with locations visited suggested that people visiting alone tend to avoid the busier locations. Above average numbers of lone visitors were found at sites such as Aspen, Seven Springs, the Cemeteries and Whitehouse, whilst below average numbers were noted at Milford, Birches Valley and Marquis Drive. In contrast, organised groups were found at Marquis Drive, Milford, Birches Valley and Castle Ring and, with the exception of one party at the Punchbowl, nowhere else.

The distribution of group size broadly reflects the significance of family groups, lone visitors and small groups of friends within the overall pattern of visiting. As a consequence, the graph in Fig. 3.4 is skewed strongly towards the lower end of the scale, with almost 85% of the sample accounted for by groups of four people or less, and only 6% in groups of greater than six.

The data on the sizes of groups visiting the AONB were also analysed in relation to the activities pursued. The average sizes of group together with the maximum and minimum figures are listed for a cross section of activities in Table 3.5.

Table 3.5
Average group sizes for selected activities in Cannock Chase AONB

Activity	Average group size	Max. group size	Min. group size
Walking	3.40	45	1
Dog walking	2.10	7	1
Games and play	4.95	40	2
Picnicking	3.90	14	1
Cycling	2.82	14	1
Horse riding	3.60	7	1
Bird watching	1.88	7	1

N is variable, reflecting the differing numbers of participants within activities

The generally gregarious nature of family-based activities such as picnicking and play are reflected in a higher average size of group than for the other activities listed. In contrast, dog walking, bird watching and cycling is more typically conducted by smaller groups, couples and people visiting alone - as is also the case with horse riding. Most horse riders who were interviewed were alone, but small groups of pony trekkers were also encountered and the inclusion of an interview with a member of one of these parties inflates the average figure. The average figure for general walking is raised somewhat by the inclusion of a small number of large groups. The typical pattern is for the majority of walkers to be in groups of less than six.

3.5 Planning the Visit

People interviewed in both main surveys were asked about their use of guides, information material and Tourist Information Centres in planning their visit. Given that the majority of visitors were relatively local to the Chase and most of those interviewed on-site (91%) were repeat visitors, the levels of use of information services were expected to be relatively modest.

This expectation was duly confirmed with 83% of the combined sample stating that they made no use of any information resources in planning their visit and 88% stating that they had not used Tourist Information Centres (TICs). (Unfortunately, the latter figure cannot be taken as entirely reliable since a large number of respondents confused TICs with the main visitor centres - which were widely used - although not for the normal services that TICs provide. In coding the survey responses, therefore, allowance had to be made for misunderstanding of this question, by excluding responses that identified services not normally provided by TICs).

Data were cross-tabulated with information on whether the respondents were making a first visit to the Chase to establish whether new users made more use of information services and TICs. This analysis showed that a significantly greater proportion of first-time visitors did make use of information sources and TICs in planning their visit. Fifty three percent of first-time visitors used guides and other published sources (compared to just 14% of those who had visited the AONB before), whilst 29% used a TIC (compared with 7% of those who had been before).

Amongst those who had used information services to plan their visit, the commonest resources identified were maps of the Chase (59%); guides and leaflets on walking and cycling routes (24%); and books about the area (8%). Other sources that were mentioned more selectively included local newspapers, mountain bike magazines, leaflets relating to specific events, RSPB guides and internet sites. Uses of TICs were similarly focused upon acquiring local information on attractions in the area; the purchase of maps and information on walking and cycling. Other possible TIC uses (including information on accommodation or booking services) were not mentioned at all.

3.6 Use of Accommodation by Tourists.

The low level of use of TIC services is essentially a reflection of the relative insignificance of tourism (as distinct from recreational day visits) associated with Cannock Chase. As noted earlier, only 8% of the on-site visitor sample was composed of people who were visiting the Chase whilst staying in the area, although this does translate into an estimate total figure of around 100,000 people per annum. (For discussion of the economic impact of these visitors, see Section 6).

Table 3.6 lists the main accommodation categories used by staying visitors and emphasises the importance of staying with friends and relatives. Serviced accommodation (in the hotel, guest house or bed and breakfast sectors) which generates the largest economic impact is

used by only just over 10% of tourists, whilst the caravan and camping sites at Silvertrees, Tackeroo and Wandon account for the balance.

Table 3.6
Use of accommodation by staying visitors

Accommodation Type	No.	% of staying visitors
Hotels / motels / guest houses	5	6.5
Bed & Breakfast	3	3.9
Caravan or camping sites	24	31.2
Staying with friends / relatives	42	54.5

N = 77

3.7 Length of Stay of Tourists

The length of stay of tourists using Cannock Chase is characteristically of a short duration with just under 60% stopping for 3 days or less. In many cases this represented a weekend break - often with friends or relatives - and it broadly corresponds with a pattern of short-break forms of tourism that is becoming increasingly prominent with UK domestic tourism markets. However, longer visits were also reported, with 13% staying for more than 7 days.

3.8 Summary

The main findings on the characteristics of the visit are :

- activity patterns are dominated to an unusual degree by walking and, to a lesser extent, by cycling.

- informal and passive forms of recreation are under-represented by comparison with national surveys, but still constitute a significant use of the area.

- the majority of visits are of a short duration (66% are less than 2 hours and 84% are less than 3 hours) and people who travel across the shortest distances generally stay for the shortest length of time.

- the length of visit shows some evidence of variation according to activity, but does not vary significantly according to the time of year. The length of visit also varies from site to site, with local sites tending to reveal the shortest visits.

- the car is the principal means of access to the Chase (81%) although there is a significant (and much less visible) presence of people who walk. Public transport plays virtually no role in helping people reach the Chase.

- family groups dominate the social composition of visits to the Chase whilst visits alone are low compared to some survey findings.

- group sizes are typically small with 90% of groups comprising five people or less.

- the majority of visitors do not use information services or TICs in planning their visits, unless they are first-time visitors. Maps and leaflets on walks and rides are the commonest information sought.

- staying visitors make only limited use of local, serviced accommodation, with 55% stopping with friends or relatives and 31% using caravan and camping sites. Sixty percent of staying visitors remain in the area for 3 days or less.

Figure 3.1 Duration of visits to Cannock Chase AONB

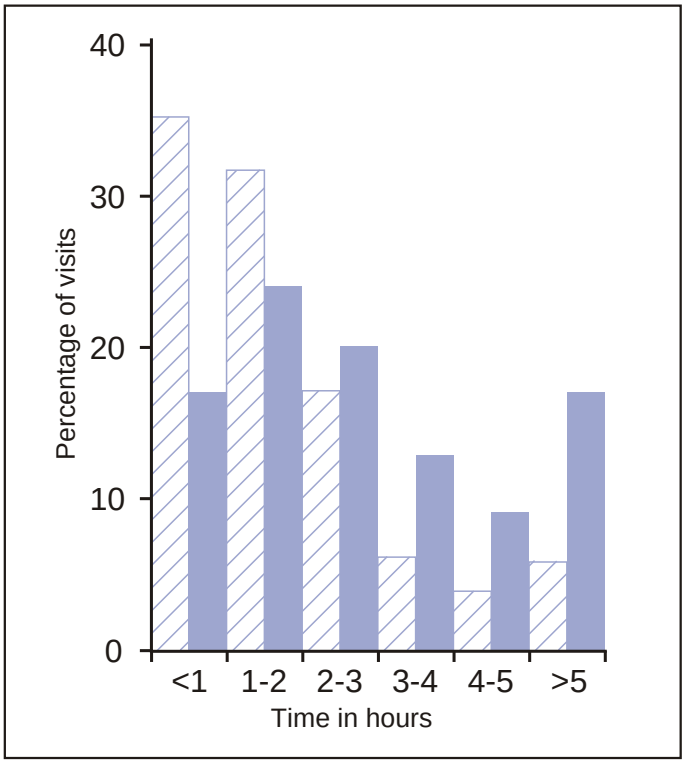


Figure 3.2 Duration of visits according to distance travelled

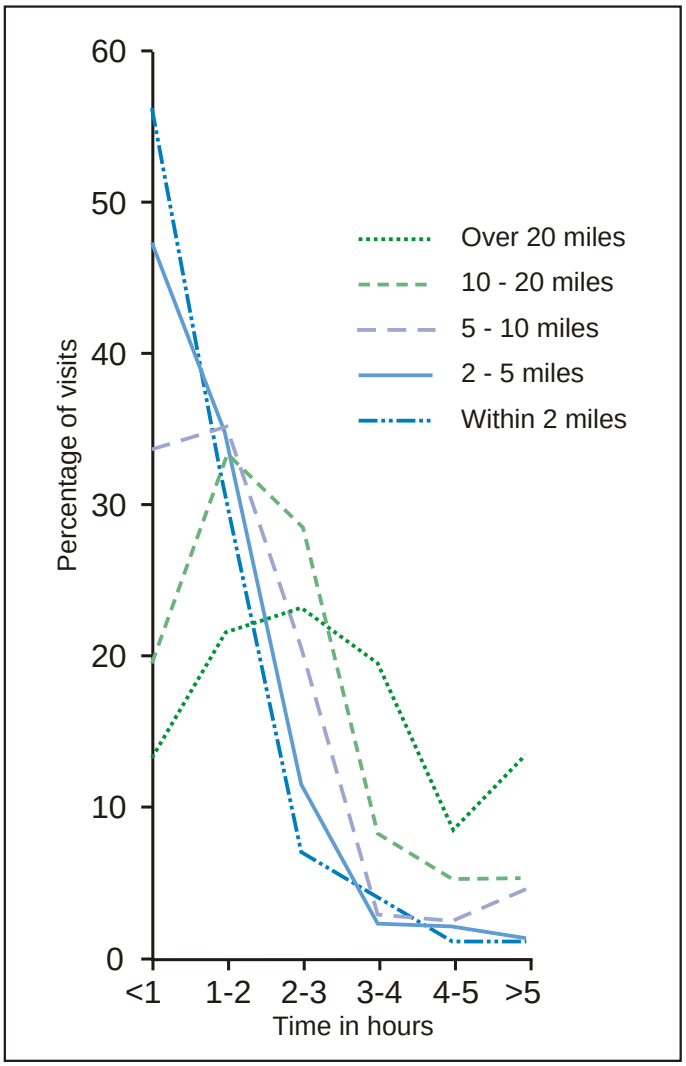


Figure 3.3 Length of visits to principal sites in Cannock Chase AONB

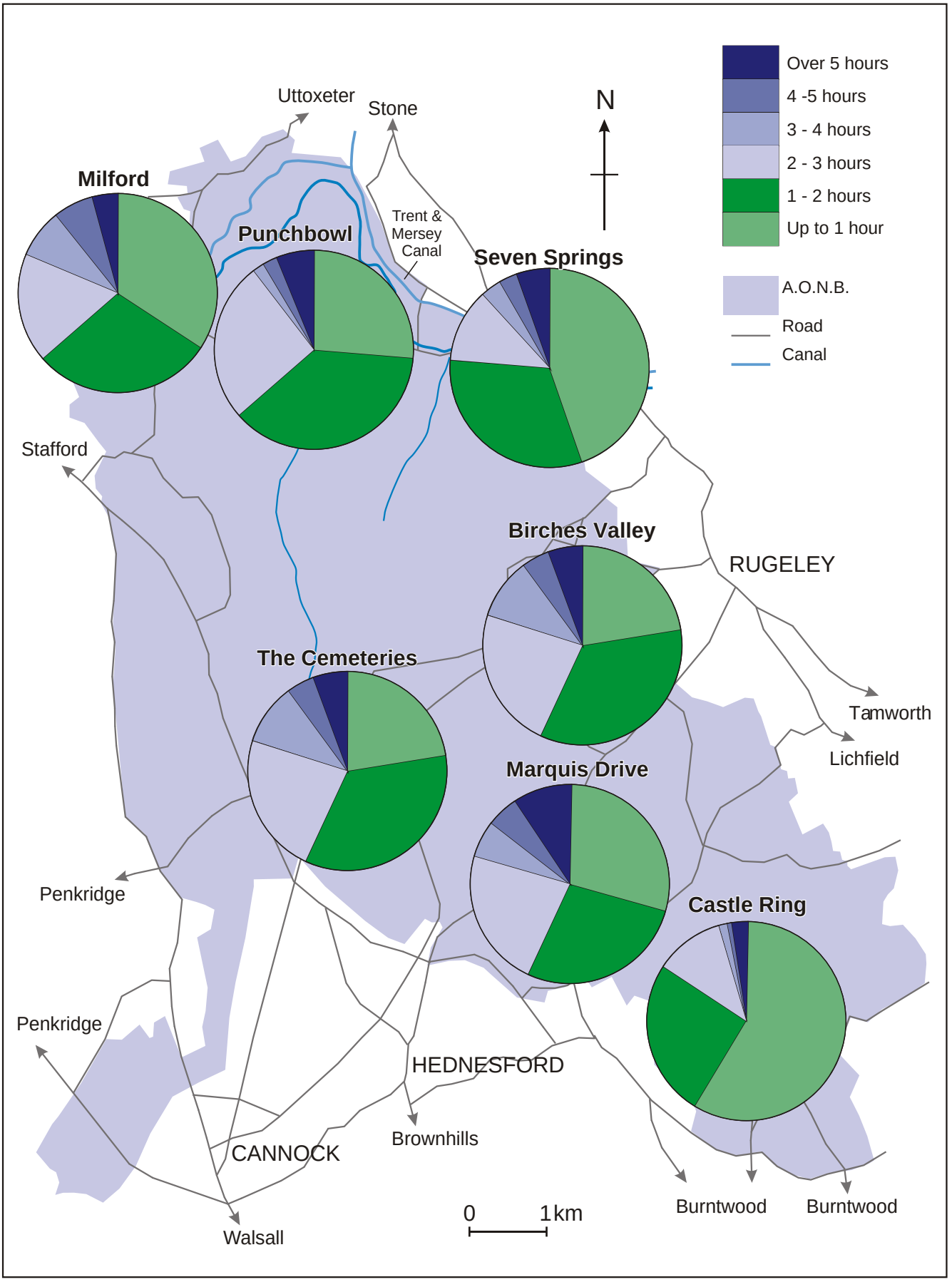
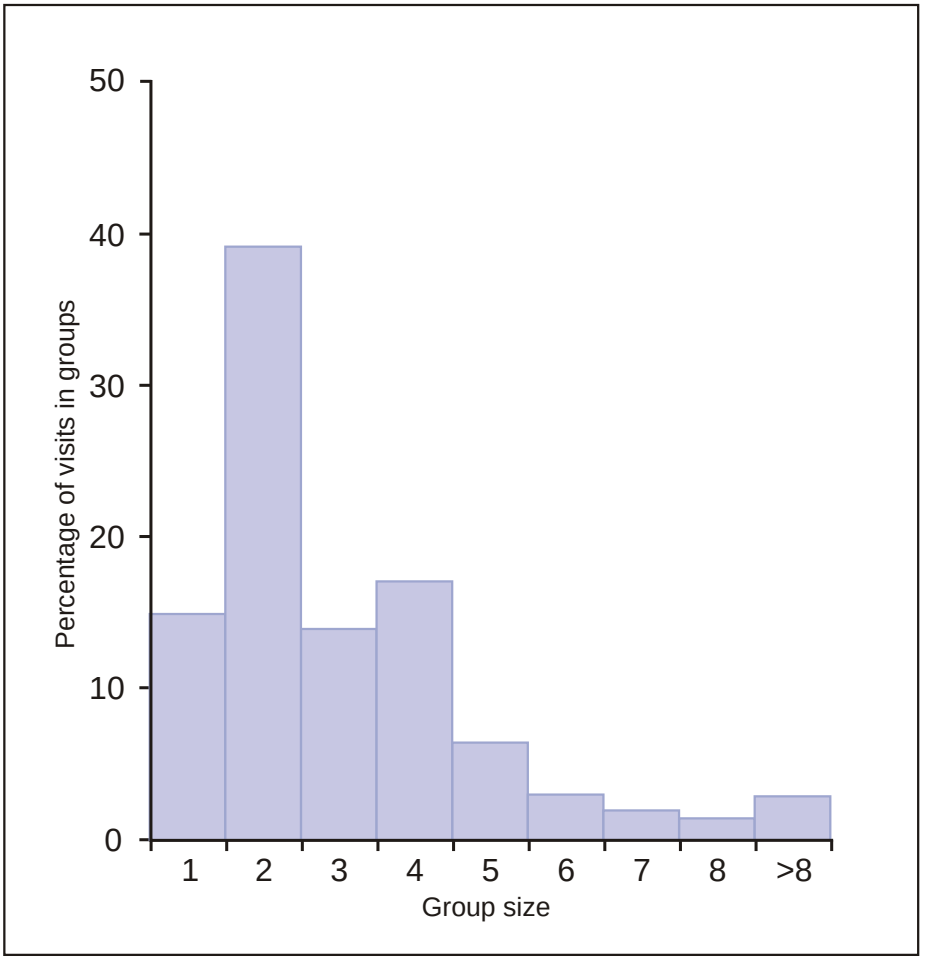


Figure 3.4 Size of groups on visits to Cannock Chase AONB



4. THE PROFILE OF VISITORS

This section of the report examines the profile characteristics of the main user groups on Cannock Chase in respect of age, gender, employment and socio-economic status and explores the extent to which contrasting profiles of users may be linked with different activities within the AONB.

4.1 The Age Profile of Visitors

The profile of visitors to the Chase according to age is given in Fig. 4.1 which also includes (for comparison) data for visits to the countryside at a national level, as identified in the UK Day Visits Survey (Countryside Recreation Network, 1996). This reveals that in most respects, the age profile of visitors to Cannock Chase (as defined by both the residents' and on-site visitor surveys) is broadly consistent with the patterns identified within the larger, national survey and the differences that are revealed are not significant.

The only clear point of departure between the two data sets is in respect of young adult users, where the proportion of the sample that make visits to the Chase is at a lower level than the national pattern might lead one to expect. It is generally understood that the countryside tends to exert a more limited attraction to teenagers and younger adults and in the specific context of this study, the presentation of the work carried out with secondary school children throws further light on both the reasons and perceptions that underlie this pattern (see Section 7). The tendency is also confirmed by the findings of the UK Day Visits Survey which also shows this age group as the least likely to visit countryside areas. The difference between the two surveys is not easily explainable and may, in fact, be no more than a consequence of sampling procedures - especially within the residents' survey where much of the work was conducted during day-time periods when many young people are elsewhere.

The remaining data in Fig. 4.1 show a remarkable degree of consistency. For Cannock Chase the modal age category is people between 35 and 44 years, which correlates both with visual impressions and (more persuasively) the summary data on group compositions (Table 3.4) which emphasises the attraction that the area has for family groups. Otherwise, the data point to a simple conclusion that Cannock Chase exerts an appeal that draws visitors from across the age spectrum and with nor particular emphasis upon any one group.

4.2 The Gender Profile of Visitors

The gender profile of visitors to the AONB (derived from the combined residents' and on-site visitor surveys) is given in Table 4.1 - also with comparative figures from the UK Day Visits Survey.

Table 4.1
Gender profile of visitors to Cannock Chase AONB and for countryside visits at a national level.

Gender	Cannock Chase N	Cannock Chase %	GB %
Male	827	53.5	50.0
Female	720	46.5	50.0

The data show a small bias within the Cannock survey in favour of male users, but the differences are, once again, not significant. As a subsequent part of this Section will show, some of the activities that the Chase hosts draw a disproportionate number of male participants. However, within an overall profile of activity on the Chase that is characterised by a diversity of pursuits - but with an emphasis upon the informal and the gently active - there is no reason to expect anything other than a parity (or near-parity) of use by men and women.

4.3 The Employment Status of Visitors

Respondents in both the residents' surveys and the on-site visitor surveys were asked to define their employment status, using categories that would permit comparison with the UK Day Visits survey. These results are presented graphically in Fig. 4.2.

The data reveal a comparable pattern between the two surveys, with the clear exception of use by people in retirement, where there is a significant difference. The level of countryside visiting reported in the UK Day Visits survey is close to the proportion of the UK population that is of retirement age. In contrast, the interviews with users of the Chase identified a much higher level of use by people who stated they were retired, even though the age profile of users is not skewed towards older people (see Section 4.1 above).

The growing incidence of early retirement is, of course, one factor that will produce higher rates of retirement within populations that are not necessarily elderly and the data presented above will reflect this trend to a degree. It is also possible that the proportion of the sample

that was retired was inflated by the sampling procedures used in the on-site visitor surveys where, inevitably, more interviews were conducted on weekdays than at weekends. A cross-tabulation of employment status and the period of the week in which people were interviewed did show a higher proportion of weekday visitors as being retired. Of the 289 retired people who were interviewed during the on-site survey, 63% were weekday rather than weekend visitor and it was not uncommon to find older people expressing a preference for visiting the AONB in the week, when it was generally quieter. But even with allowance for some variation due to sampling, the data still point to a particular attraction that the Chase exerts for local people who have retired from work.

In the remaining employment categories, there are no significant departures between the information gathered on users of the Chase and the national pattern for countryside visits. In light of the nature and size of the catchments on which the Chase draws, some general accordance between local use and the national pattern is to be expected.

4.4 The Socio-economic Status of Visitors

In addition to establishing employment status, respondents in both the main surveys were asked to state their occupations, as a guide to establishing their likely socio-economic status. People in retirement or who were not working were asked what their former or usual occupations were, as appropriate, whilst housewives or husbands were asked to identify the occupations of their partners.

For comparability with the UK Day Visits Survey, respondents were assigned to one of the six standard social categories as defined by the Institute of Practitioners in Advertising (IPA) (see Appendix 9. 7). However, owing to the difficulty of assigning respondents to categories in cases where their descriptions of occupation were not always precise, the survey data have here been amalgamated to differentiate only between the managerial, professional, clerical and supervisory classes (categories A/B/C1) and the skilled, semi- and unskilled manual categories and those on state pensions or working only casually and in the lowest grades (C2/D/E). The result, with comparable figures from the UK Day Visits Survey for visitor to the countryside at the national level, are summarised in Table 4.2.

The data confirm a well-established and well-known aspect of countryside visiting in which the higher social groups are over-represented in relation to national averages. This reflects clear advantages that these groups possess, in particular wider access to private transport and a higher disposable income to meet the costs that trips to country areas from (largely) urban places of origin generally entail.

Table 4.2
Socio-economic status of visitors to Cannock Chase AONB and for countryside visits at a national level.

Categories	% in categories Cannock Chase	Great Britain
A / B/ C1	62.3	54.0
C2 / D / E	37.7	46.0

For Cannock Chase Survey, N = 1257

However, as Table 4.2 reveals, the use of Cannock Chase is even more strongly skewed towards the higher social groups than is normal, with more than 62% of the aggregate sample being in either the A, B or C1 social groups. The dominance of these social groups in this survey owes much to the social geography of the locations that surround the Chase and which comprise its core catchment. In particular, there are significant concentrations of ABC1 households on the northern fringes of the Chase (for example: in Baswich, Weeping Cross, Walton, Milford, the Haywoods, Colwich, parts of Etching Hill and Slitting Mill), as well as more localised concentrations on other boundaries (for example: in Gentleshaw, Cannock Wood and parts of Huntingdon and Pye Green Valley). With such a close proximity between the Chase and these neighbourhoods, (and given the proportions of visitors who travel only locally to the Chase - i.e. from within 5 miles), the social profile is perhaps unsurprising. This point is emphasised by considering the data from the residents' survey alone, where the proportion of respondents in the ABC1 categories rose to over 65%, as compared with 61% in the on-site survey.

However, whatever the explanation, the survey result is clear and unequivocal in pointing to a social profile of users of the Chase that is strongly skewed towards the more affluent, mobile, white-collar sections of the community.

4.5 Visitor Profiles and Activity.

The profile data within the surveys has been variously used throughout the analysis to try to cast light on individual patterns and relationships. To conclude this section, the opportunity is taken to examine whether any of these variables reveal distinctive associations with activities that visitors pursue within the AONB.

First, the patterns of participation in a cross-section of activities according to age were isolated. For convenience, these are shown comparatively by the graphs grouped in Fig. 4.3.

Three types of profile are evident within the activities illustrated. The first is associated with essentially informal and unstructured forms of recreation : walking (including walking with a dog), picnicking and play. In each case, the graphs reveal the largest age group within the activity as being coincident with the 35-44 year age band, whilst the smallest is represented by the young adult groups. Additionally, each graph displays a reduced level of participation by people in middle age (45-54) before some restoration of levels amongst people over 55 years.

The pattern for walkers matches closely the age distribution of the sample as a whole - which is not unexpected given the prominence of walking as an activity within that sample. In the case of play, younger groups (i.e. below the age of 45) are over-represented in comparison to older groups, no doubt reflecting the demand for play opportunities that will be created from the younger family groups that will be clustered within this age range. The pattern amongst picnickers is bi-modal, with a second peak of activity evident in people over the age of 65 years. Explanation for this pattern is not immediately apparent, beyond perhaps emphasising the enduring and broad appeal of the simple pleasures of picnicking in the countryside.

The second profile to be seen in Fig. 4.3 is confined to cycling and reflects the more demanding physical regime associated with this pursuit as an active recreation. As a result there is a clear dominance by younger participants, with nearly half of the cyclists being under the age of 35 and 79% being under the age of 45. This is a familiar pattern that is repeated for a wide range of sports and physical recreations.

Lastly, a third profile is evident amongst those who visit the Chase simply to relax, and those who go to watch birds. Here the data reveal a progressive increase in participation across the age spectrum from young to elderly with, in both cases, the modal category coinciding with people over the age of 65 years. The appeal to older people of visits to the Chase to relax requires no elaboration but the bias amongst bird watchers towards domination by older participants is more interesting. There is a growing body of evidence that suggests that traditional hobbies and interests (such as bird watching) now appeal to younger people on a far more selective basis than formerly. As a consequence traditional interests tend to reveal an ageing profile as newer forms of recreation (with a younger clientele) emerge as parallel or replacement activities. The pattern illustrated here for bird watching in the AONB is typical of this process.

A second set of cross-tabulations were created to match activities against gender. These are shown for a range of activities in Table 4.3, ranked according to their degree of departure from the mean distribution for the sample as a whole.

Table 4.3
Relationships between gender and activity amongst visitors to Cannock Chase AONB

Activity	% of male participants	% of female participants
Bird watching	84.0	16.0
Cycling	83.1	16.9
Running / Orienteering	80.0	20.0
Sight-seeing	67.4	32.6
Visiting attractions	60.0	40.0
Relaxing	58.0	42.0
Walking	56.7	43.3
Eating out	56.3	43.7
Picnicking	53.9	46.1
Playing games	37.5	62.5
Educational visit	14.3	85.7
Horse riding	0.0	100.0
Proportions within sample	53.5	46.5

N is variable reflecting the different numbers of participants in each activity

In the centre of the range is located a group of activities that show no significant differences in the levels of participation when compared to the mean for the sample as a whole. Typical examples include picnicking, eating out, walking, relaxing and (possibly) visiting attractions. Outside this middle range in the table lie activities that are dominated by either men of women. Thus, bird watchers, cyclists and runners are more normally male, whereas people involved in games and play, educational trips and horse riding are typically female. Educational visits were usually parties of junior school children accompanied by (female) teachers, whilst every horse rider who was interviewed was female. Trips for purposes of games and play (which would be mostly family-based) appear to involve mothers rather than fathers, probably reflecting the role of women as carers for the family, especially during school holidays. The dominance of males in sport-based activity such as cycling and running reflects broader patterns that are well-established in society at large and in which female participation is only exceptionally on a par with that of males.

The data confirm a well-established and well-known aspect of countryside visiting in which the higher social groups are over-represented in relation to national averages. This reflects clear advantages that these groups possess, in particular wider access to private transport

and a higher disposable income to meet the costs that trips to country areas from (largely) urban places of origin generally entail.

Finally, activity patterns were cross-tabulated with the socio-economic grouping of respondents. The results showed significantly higher levels of participation by the ABC1 groups in running and cycling (where over 75% of participants belonged to these groups) and above average participation in bird watching (where 66% were in the AB or C1 category). Once again, walking - by virtue of its numerical frequency, showed a pattern that was close to the mean but most of the remainder showed a higher incidence of participation for visitors from the C2DE cluster. Eating out, relaxing and the use of the Chase for games and play were particularly prominent as activities with higher than average levels of participation by the lower social categories.

4.6 Summary.

The key findings in this section of the report are as follows :

- the age profile of users of Cannock Chase AONB is broadly in line with national surveys of countryside visitors and shows that the Chase attracts usage from across the age spectrum in a consistent fashion.

- the most prominent age category is people between 35 and 44 years.

- the least prominent age category is young adults between 15 and 24 years.

- the gender profile of users of the Chase reveals a slight, though not significant, tendency towards more male than female visitors.

- the employment status of visitors is in line with patterns shown in comparable national surveys of countryside visitors. However, levels of use by retired people are more significant than would be anticipated from the age distribution of visitors and the results of other surveys. This may be an accident of sampling procedures.

- the socio-economic status of visitors is skewed strongly in favour of the higher (ABC1) social groupings, even with allowance for the popularity of countryside recreation with these groups at a national level. This is believed to be partly a consequence of the social geography of the adjacent areas that form the main catchment.

- whilst the principal activity of walking exhibits patterns that broadly reflect the sample as a whole, other activities exhibit contrasting patterns of participation according to age, gender and the socio-economic status of the visitors.

Figure 4.1 Age profile of visitors to Cannock Chase AONB compared with countryside visitors in the UK

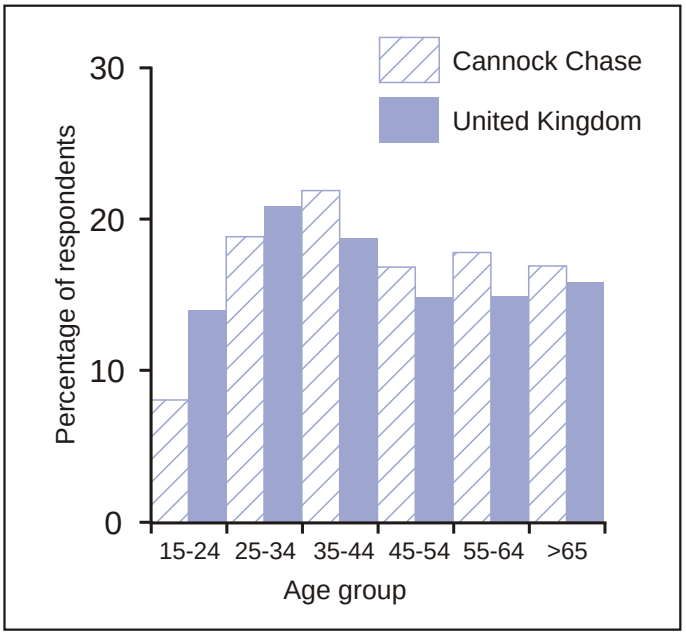


Figure 4.2 Employment status of visitors to Cannock Chase AONB compared with countryside visitors in the UK

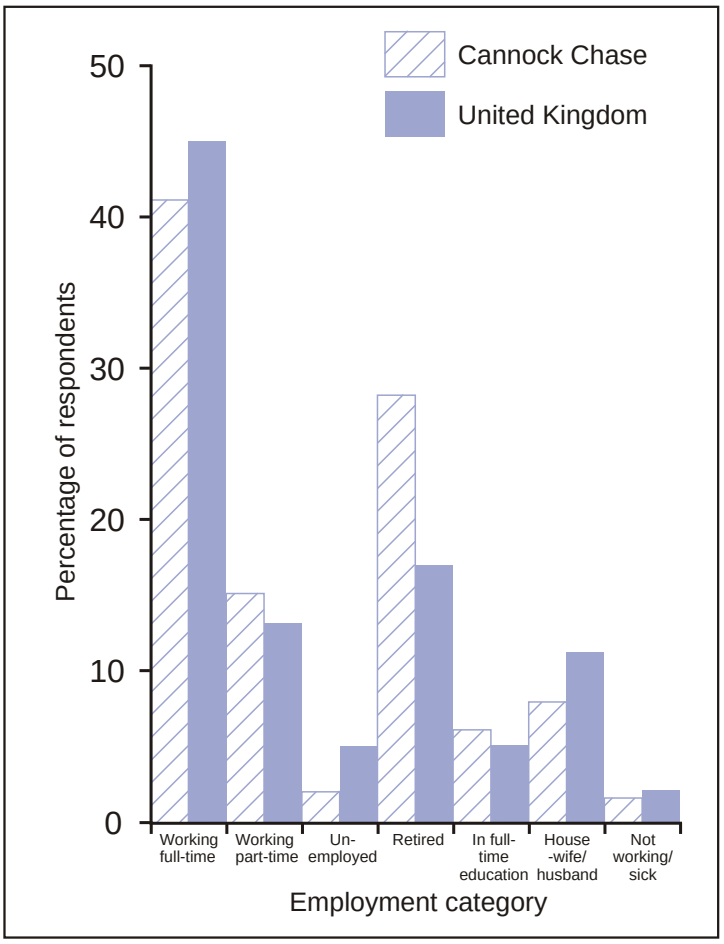
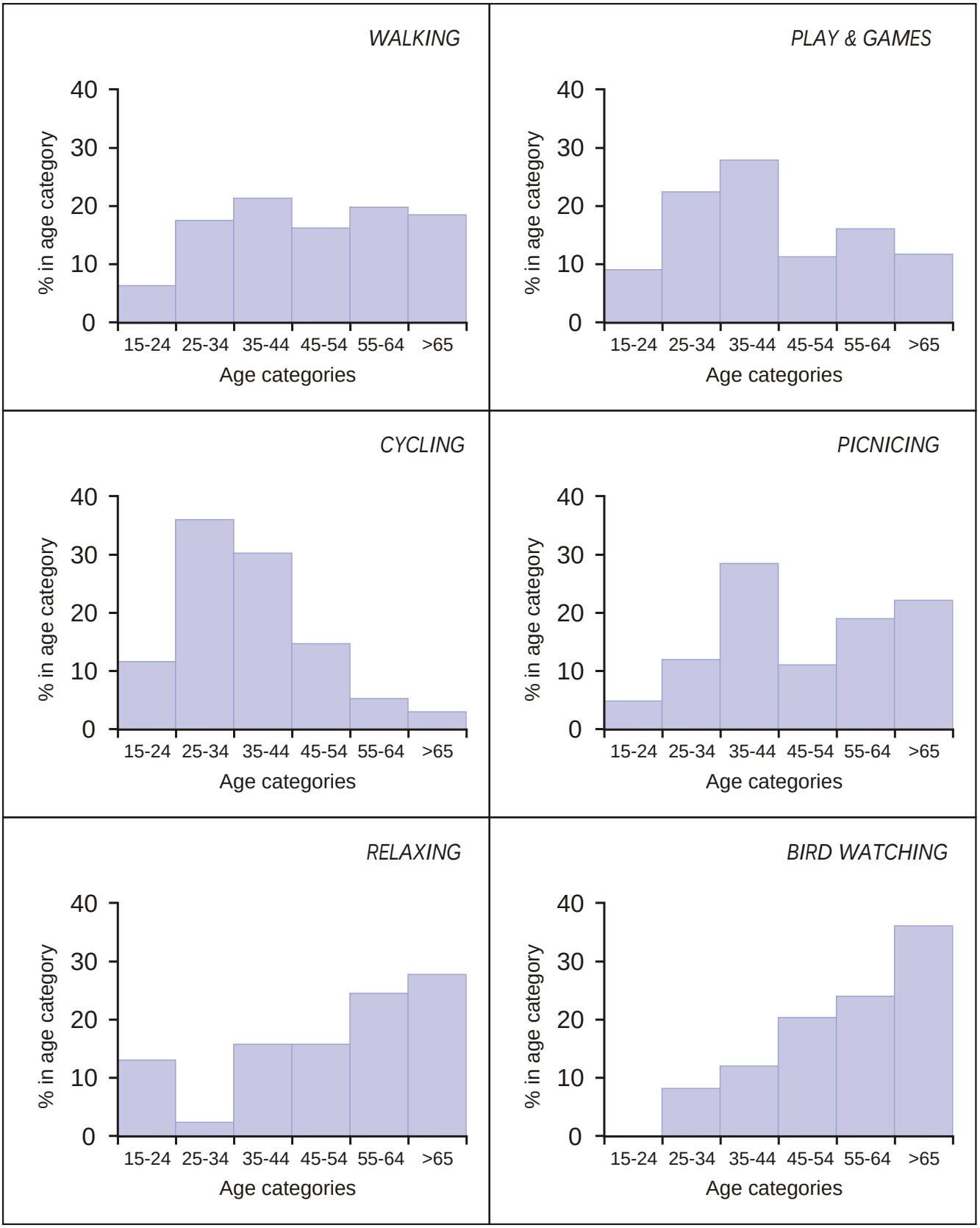


Figure 4.3 Relationships between respondent age and selected activities in Cannock Chase AONB



5. VISITOR ATTITUDES & EXPECTATIONS

An important component in all three main survey elements within the study was the investigation of the attitudes and expectations of users. Several questions were deployed within each of the interviewing schedules to elicit a range of views and opinions and which focused upon the appeal of the AONB; problems that were encountered during its usage; and suggestions for additional facilities or other improvements that would enhance the visitors' experience.

5.1 The Attraction of Cannock Chase

In the residents and on-site visitors surveys, the attraction of the AONB was identified through the relatively simple approach of asking respondents whether there were aspects of the Chase that they particularly liked and, if so, what they were. Eighty two percent of the combined sample stated that there were particular things that they liked, and they proceeded to generate an extensive list of qualities, characteristics and resources that formed the basis to the appeal of the area. The principal responses are summarised in diagrammatic form in Fig. 5.1.

The diagram suggests that the appeal of the Chase is essentially represented by three groups of factors. First, and most importantly, people both perceive and value the qualities of the natural environment. Appreciation of the beauty of the scenery, the opportunities that the AONB provides for peace and quiet, and the enjoyment of nature and wildlife dominate the responses of the adults who were interviewed in their homes and on the Chase itself. (For the views of the younger users, please see Section 7). Open space and fresh air are additional natural qualities that seem to commend themselves to the largely urban population that comprises the majority of users. These are, therefore, essential attributes that future management strategies for the AONB must seek to preserve and even enhance.

As an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, this response is to be expected. The Countryside Commission's survey of visitors to national parks found a comparable response (Countryside Commission, 1996). The national park visitors identified the scenery and landscape, fresh air, and peace and quiet as the three factors that contributed most to their enjoyment of the parks.

Secondly, Cannock Chase attracts users because it is perceived as providing good quality opportunities for specific recreations or activities. A significant number of

respondents spoke about how the Chase suited their chosen pursuits (which included walking, mountain biking, orienteering, games and bird watching), whilst others made specific reference to the quality of paths and cycle trails, as well as the opportunities for children's play.

Thirdly, users identified a range of factors that broadly reflected accessibility and convenience. Proximity to a number of different urban centres, the ease of access to most parts of the Chase, its relative safety (especially for children and animals) and the comparative absence of road traffic were all acknowledged as positive attractions.

Data were inspected to see whether the identification of features that were liked revealed any variation according to the age, gender or socio-economic status of respondents. Resulting patterns were not especially conclusive (partly because of the high incidence of favourable comment within the sample as a whole). Young adults were the least likely to identify features of the Chase that they positively liked, whilst people between 35 and 44 were most inclined to do so. With regard to gender there was no difference between the responses of men and women, but the analysis of social class showed that respondents in the upper (A/B/C1) categories were more likely to articulate the positive attractions that they felt the Chase offered than visitors from the C2/D/E categories.

5.2 Problems associated with usage

The positive perceptions of the AONB were also mirrored in the responses to questions concerning aspects of the Chase that users disliked or felt constituted problems that needed to be addressed. Hence, only 39% of respondents felt there were aspects of the Chase that they disliked, whilst only 32% stated that their enjoyment of the area was sometimes affected by the activities of other users.

The principal dislikes are illustrated graphically in Fig. 5.2. In contrast to the relatively concise articulation of the positive attractions of the Chase, the invitation to identify dislikes produced a far more diverse response. From the tabulated information it is evident that the basis to most people's discontent centres on the activities or impacts of others. This is evident in the complaints about littering; about the impacts of cyclists, dogs and horses; inconsiderate motorists; as well as fears of theft or vandalism against property (especially parked cars). Additionally, there is some evidence of public dissatisfaction with aspects of management - people expressing discontent with parking charges; sign posting of both roads and paths; and, especially, the activities of the Forestry Commission. In the latter case, felling of trees - especially clear felling of larger blocks of woodland such as has occurred in recent years alongside Penkridge Bank, tends to arouse public opposition.

Although most people commended the quality of the paths, a smaller number felt that the condition of some paths was not always as good as it could be. (These issues are discussed more fully in Section 8). Somewhat perversely also - given the appreciation of the natural qualities of the Chase discussed in Section 5.1 - a small number of respondents expressed a dislike for natural features that were perceived as nuisances, especially flies, snakes and bracken.

Once again, the survey of visitors to the national parks provides some comparative data, although negative comment within this survey was noticeably lower than in the present study of Cannock Chase. National park visitors identified traffic, dirty facilities, lack of sign posting, litter, damage to paths and overcrowding as the main aspects that spoiled their enjoyment of the parks.

The diagram shows a substantial portion of responses categorised as "Other". In all cases, these recorded comments amounted to a maximum of 5 answers (less than 1%) and often presented idiosyncratic or conflicting opinions. They have not therefore been presented in the main discussion, but for information they are listed in Appendix 9.8.

In both the tabulated information and the listing in the Appendix, it is clear that the basis to many of the dislikes and the associated problems that respondents identified was rooted in relations between different user groups. As noted above, nearly a third of the sample said their enjoyment of the Chase was affected by others, with the principal problem groups being identified as shown in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1
Groups identified as affecting personal enjoyment of Cannock Chase AONB

Problem group	No.	%
Cyclists	295	62.0
Motor cyclists	51	10.7
Dog walkers	47	9.9
Horse riders	34	7.1
Youths in groups	32	6.7
"Litter louts"	18	3.8
Children	9	1.9
Vandals	8	1.7
Others	46	9.7

N = 476 Data may sum to more than 100 as respondents could give more than one answer

Whilst a diversity of potential conflicts is evident from Table 5.1, the particular problems posed by the use of the Chase by cyclists is outstanding, although that observation needs to

be qualified by the fact that those who complained usually emphasised that the problems lay with an inconsiderate or careless minority, rather than the cyclists as a group. This probably applies with equal force to other groups listed above.

Once again, answers were cross-tabulated with basic profile variables (age, gender and socio-economic status) to try to establish whether particular groups were especially sensitive to the actions of others. No significant differences emerged according to gender, but there was a much clearer pattern in the case of the age of respondents whereby older users were much more likely to state that their enjoyment was affected by others than were younger people. For example, only 16% of people aged between 15 and 24 complained over the activities of other visitors, but for people aged over 55 the comparable figure was 40%. Cross-tabulations with socio-economic status showed that the higher status groups were more likely to complain.

Enquiries concerning the nature of problems created by others produced a surprisingly concise list of core concerns. These are summarised in Table 5.2

Table 5.2
Problems created by selected user groups in Cannock Chase AONB

Problem	No.	%
Risk of accident or concern over safety	228	58.6
Inconsiderate nature of other users	98	25.2
Noise	56	14.4
Damage to paths	52	13.4
Dog fouling	18	4.6
Littering	16	4.1
Fear of crime or assault	7	1.8
Other	15	3.9

N = 389

The primary concerns centred around personal safety and fears of accidents that might be precipitated by other users. These were also linked to perceptions that a significant minority of users were inconsiderate, either by acting carelessly when others were around or by displaying rude, aggressive or intolerant attitudes. This was described by respondents in a number of behaviours including : a failure to slow one's rate of progress to allow for others; a failure to take appropriate avoiding actions when meeting other groups on paths or bridleways; disregard for regulations intended to govern activity in particular areas; and anti-social activity such as the use of loud, obscene or abusive language, playing of music loudly in parked cars and the use of mobile phones.

To try to illuminate the relationships between users and perceived problems, the reported problems were cross-tabulated with the groups identified as being their source. The broad problem of "inconsiderate behaviour" was attached to most of the groups listed in Table 5.1 and with no particular pattern. However, other problems were perceived to be created clearly by particular groups or combinations of groups. Hence :

- cyclists were felt to be principally creating problems associated with accidents and personal safety. Walkers, in particular, complained that cyclists tended to approach at relatively high speeds but without much sound. This caused difficulties when walkers found themselves being unexpectedly over-taken by cyclists. Some damage to paths was also attributed to cyclists.

- dog walkers (or more correctly their animals) were seen as a secondary source of danger, especially when dogs were not on leads. Problems of dog fouling, self-evidently, were entirely attributed to this group.

- horse riders were seen as a major source of damage to paths (alongside the cyclists) and some people perceived a safety problem when horses encountered other users.

- motor cyclists were also perceived as damaging paths (when riding off-road) and creating noise. Although not listed as a major problem in Table 5.2, some respondents voiced disquiet about the use of Chase roads by motor cyclists riding high-performance machines. This is a particular feature of week-end usage and although anecdotal, there is ample evidence to suggest quite widespread disregard of speed limits by some riders. However, the numbers of motor cyclists who use the Chase are comparatively low and problems of speeding and risks to safety on the roads are predominantly created by motorists and commercial traffic that uses the roads on the Chase for routine journeys.

- youths in groups were seen as the major perpetrators of noise disturbance and the most likely source of crime and vandalism.

5.3 Suggestions for Additional Facilities and Improvements.

Having given their perceptions of some of the problems and deficiencies of the Chase, respondents were then asked to identify improvements or additional facilities that they felt should be considered.

Forty percent of the combined sample of residents and on-site visitors felt that additional facilities were needed and a slightly lower number (35%) made suggestions for other improvements that were not necessarily facility-based. Perhaps inevitably, the lists were long and very diverse - especially suggestions for changes and improvements. It is also noticeable that suggestions offered did not always correspond with negative aspects mentioned earlier in the interview.

Fig. 5.3 illustrates the principal suggestions for additional facilities and immediately highlights one of the disparities between answers to different questions. Less than 2% of respondents identified an absence of toilets as one of the aspects of the Chase that they disliked, yet over 45% of those who suggested additional facilities felt that more toilets were needed. Similarly, a lack of refreshments was barely mentioned when respondents were discussing their dislikes, yet a significant number chose to emphasise the need for additional provision. Notwithstanding the inconsistencies between different questions, the weight of opinion in favour of wider provision of both toilets and refreshments, suggests that these are facilities that should be given some consideration.

The respondents did, though, connect the identification of littering as a problem with a clear request for additional litter and/or dog bins.

Other suggestions for facilities emphasised a need to consider wider designation of special routes - including not only routes for cycling and horse riding, but also for wheelchairs and, especially, pushchairs. Given the significance of the Chase as a destination for family groups, recognition has to be given to the particular needs of young families with small children. Some people also made requests for more provision of facilities for older children, including more play areas and zones for adventure play, together with increased provision of picnic sites with tables.

The full listing of suggested improvements ran to more than 60 differing ideas. Fig. 5.4 summarises and illustrates graphically the first twenty suggestions in order of the frequency with which they were voiced. These accounted for over 85% of the

answers, but for information, the Appendix (9.9) lists ideas that are not tabulated in the diagram, but which were mentioned more than once.

Many of the users who were interviewed were anxious to convey the sentiment that the Chase should be kept very much as it is and although it is not an "improvement" in a technical sense, the notion that the AONB managers must retain the natural beauty of the environment was mentioned frequently. This sentiment may be linked with a desire to limit commercial development and also, perhaps, to limit some of the visual and aural impacts of Forestry Commission work.

The bulk of the suggestions broadly relate to ways in which usage and enjoyment may be facilitated and promoted. There are a number of issues related to vehicular access (including the question of car parking charges, concerns over the physical condition of some car parks and of vehicle security). Otherwise, most of the suggestions focus on ways in which actual usage may be helped. Better sign posting, wider use of maps on the Chase itself, more self-guided trails and guided walks, and a more conspicuous presence of rangers and wardens were all seen as helping people to enjoy the AONB. Additionally, wider dissemination of information through centres, more information boards and promotional material relating to special events (for example, as leaflets or advertisements in free papers) were suggested by a number of people.

It should, of course, be re-emphasised that these views do represent the opinions of a minority of the users of the AONB and the full range of issues identified do not necessarily define an agenda for management to address in full. However, there are some significant areas of concern that were voiced with sufficient frequency to warrant further consideration. The discussion of management problems and issues in Section 8 will, therefore, return to some of the ideas presented above and attempt to place them into the broader context of the Draft Review of the Plan for Cannock Chase.

5.4 Summary.

The main findings with respect to the attitudes and expectations of the visitors are :

- visitors perceive and value the qualities of the natural environment as a primary attraction of the AONB and are keen to see this maintained and protected from development and commercialisation.

- the suitability of the area for particular recreations and its accessibility and convenience are important secondary issues affecting usage.

- only 39% identified aspects of the Chase that they did not like - principally : littering; conflicts with other users; inconsiderate motorists and fears over security of parked vehicles. Secondary issues included car park charges; lack of signposts; and the condition of some paths and trails.

- conflicts centre upon relationships between walkers, equestrians and cyclists - with the latter group held to be the main source of difficulty by 62% of those who answered. Youths in groups are also perceived negatively.

- principal concerns are over safety; inconsiderate behaviour; noise, damage to paths; and dog fouling.

- 40% of visitors suggested additional facilities or improvements. The main facilities requested were additional toilets; refreshments; litter/dog bins; and special trails, including surfaced paths for wheelchairs and, especially, push chairs. Other improvements included better sign posting; more maps on the Chase; more guided and self-guided walks; and a more conspicuous presence by wardens and rangers.

Figure 5.1 The Attraction of Cannock Chase AONB

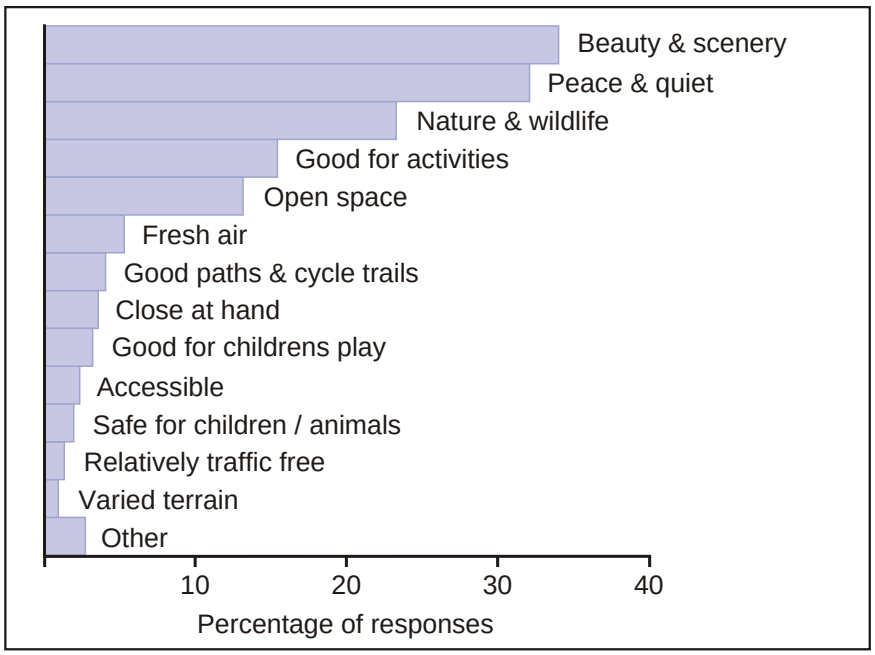


Figure 5.2 Aspects of Cannock Chase AONB that are disliked

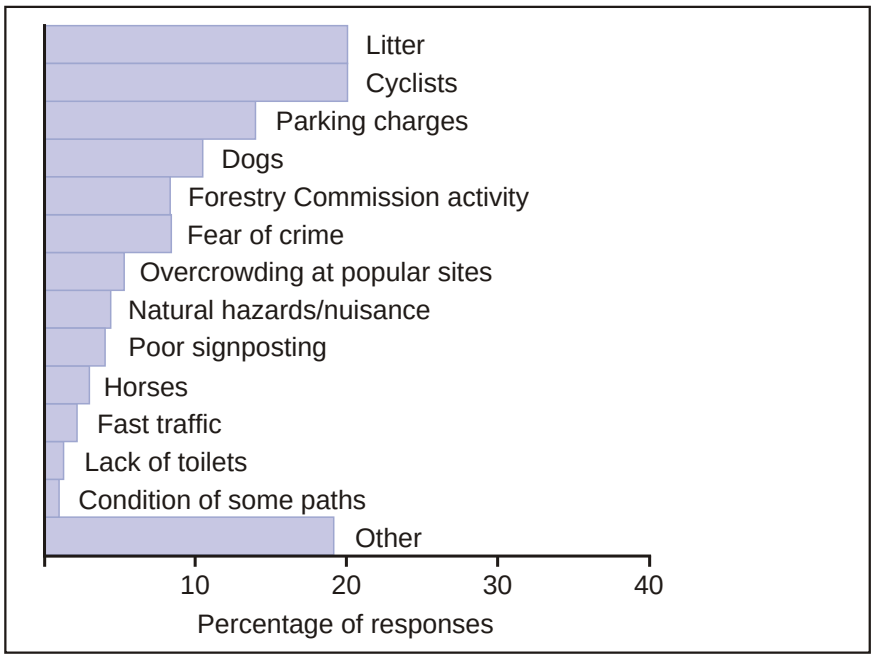


Figure 5.3 Suggestions for additional facilities in Cannock Chase AONB

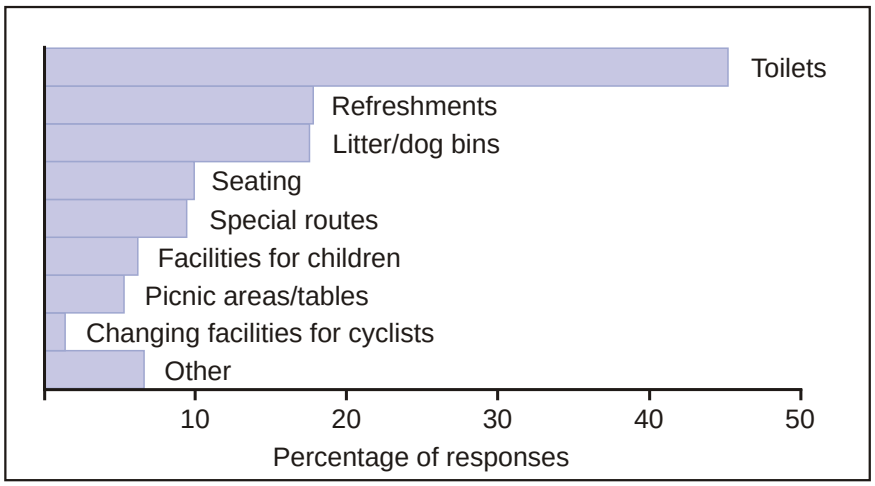
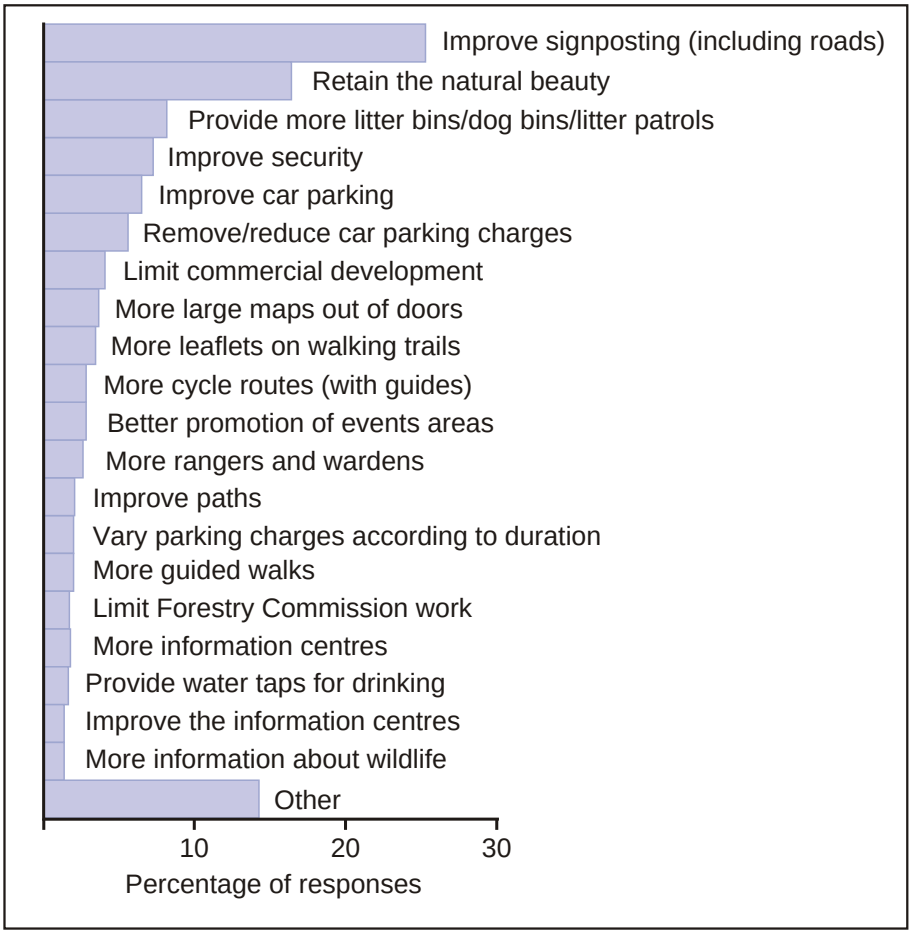


Figure 5.4 Suggested improvements to Cannock Chase AONB



6. THE ECONOMIC VALUE OF VISITS TO THE CHASE

This section presents the research findings on the economic value of recorded visits to the Chase over the survey period. It describes and discusses the basic spend profiles and develops some ideas around visit characteristics. The results are compared with data from a number of other sources, including the UK Day Visitors Survey, recent publications from the British Tourist Authority and the English Tourism Council, and earlier work conducted by the Countryside Commission.

6.1 Information needs

The level and quality of information on the economic impact of countryside leisure and recreation is limited. This is important as strategic and planning decisions about developments on and around the AONB have to be made on the basis of largely unknown economic effects. In this respect, the AONB survey provides an opportunity to assess the economic value of visits to the area. This offers a rather more accurate and reliable picture than scaled-down national or regional data based on research that is not embedded in the local community and economy.

Debates about the economic effects of Chase visits relate to a number of considerations. These are primarily the type and level of expenditure, and the opportunities for enhanced expenditure. The Survey schedule focused on seven aspects of potential spend on the Chase. These were as follows:

- Travel spend, such as that incurred in travelling to the site by car or by public transport
- Parking costs incurred during the visit
- Spending incurred in gaining admission to local attractions during the visit
- Purchases of food and drink from local establishments
- Other expenditure on items from local shops or service outlets such as souvenirs, newspapers or cigarettes
- Expenditure on the hire of equipment
- The costs of accommodation where non-local visitors were recorded as staying overnight in the area

In combination, these aspects allow us to gauge the economic value of the visitor base in effective detail, and to draw some implications from the ensuing effects.

The estimation of economic effects requires a subtle exploration and interpretation of the survey data. For example, whilst the above are the essential elements of the expenditure profile of visitors, with the exception of expenditure on travel costs, this spend is focused on local sources in the survey. Resources did not allow a full detailing of the spend locations in travel costs such as fuel and the effects of this element are not estimable. However, in any case, with non-local originating visits over relatively short distances the travel spend accruing to the local economy will be small, mainly benefiting areas outside of the immediate Chase area.

6.2 Characteristics of Spend Behaviour

Perhaps the most significant measure to emerge from the Survey concerns the basic levels of aggregate expenditure by Chase visitors. These are shown in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1
Expenditure by day visit origins

Origins	Average total expenditure (£)
Non-local visitors	6.43
Local visitors	1.95
All visitors	4.85

N = 1552

Overall spend provides an important benchmark against which to assess and compare the economic impact of Chase visitors. As shown in Table 6.1, the overall spend per head was £4.85, with an expected contrast between locals (£1.95) and non-locals (£6.43), and, as we will see below, with a large proportion of the difference linked to travel expenditure.

These average spend figures contrast greatly with the figures derived by other survey research. For example, average day visitor spend figures in 1998 have been estimated as £24.80 for all leisure day visits, with around £15.00 for those with 'rural' destinations (British Tourist Authority, 2000). Clearly, the AONB spend is much lower than the average for comparable areas. This reflects the absence of spend opportunities such as paid attractions, entertainments or shops, the nature of the Chase as an unspoilt leisure 'attraction', and, above all, the characteristics of the visitor population (see Section 3 of the Report).

The figures are even lower than those revealed by the 1994 Countryside Commission report on visitors to National Parks which found a day visitor spend of £6.90 (using conversion ratios recommended by the English Tourism Council, 2000, this equates to around £8.00 at 2000 prices). The closest comparison is the lowest figure - that recorded for Northumberland National Park - with a £3.80 average spend in 1994, translating into around £4.40 at 2000 prices (Countryside Commission, 1995).

The data can be further manipulated to reveal the average spend per spending visitor, and, by use of the proportion of surveyed visitors actually spending, also to calculate an overall average spend per visitor. As shown in Tables 6.2 and 6.3, these can be analysed by the categories set out in Section 6.2.

First, we consider the spend behaviour of non-local visitors (Table 6.2). Most apparent here are the relatively low spend levels in all categories except transport and, to a lesser extent, food and drink. For those actually spending on a particular category, the spend levels range from £1.03 for parking costs, to £69.44 for accommodation. Clearly, the average spend per survey respondent is much lower, depending upon the proportion of spenders in a particular category. Most non-local visits were made by car and thus 91.7% of visits incurred expenditure on this category. However, in contrast, only fourteen respondents were found to be staying in local accommodation and so the average spend was only £0.97 per survey respondent. These are important figures that reveal the expectedly low expenditure amongst visitors to the Chase. That said, with regard to some categories of spend - such as accommodation - the number of respondents is very small and the figures should thus be treated with caution as they are unlikely to be representative.

Table 6.2
Expenditure levels of non-local visitors

Spend categories	Average spend of spenders (£)	Average spend of all visitors (£)	Proportion of visitors spending (%)
Travel	3.12	2.86	91.7
Parking	1.03	0.36	35.2
Food and drink	6.53	1.96	30.0
Other spend	4.03	0.18	4.4
Hire spend	7.60	0.04	0.5
Admissions	7.11	0.06	0.9
Accommodation	69.44	0.97	1.4

The spend characteristics of the locally-based Chase users who were surveyed are understandably much lower in value (Table 6.3). Local origins mean lower levels of transport costs for visits, a larger proportion of walking or cycling-based trips, less likelihood of spend on food and drink, and, arguably, less likelihood of visiting other

attractions. These expectations are borne out by the survey findings. Both the average spend of spenders and the aggregate is much lower than for non-local visits.

Table 6.3
Expenditure levels of local visitors

Spend categories	Average spend of spenders (£)	Average spend of all visitors (£)	Proportion of visitors spending (%)
Travel	1.37	0.87	63.3
Parking	1.00	0.19	18.6
Food and drink	3.94	0.76	19.3
Other spend	3.52	0.12	3.5
Hire spend	-	-	0
Admissions	3.75	0.01	0.4

N = 550

Low levels of spending on visits to attractions, hire of equipment, shopping and other local services, reflects the fact that, unlike many tourists, visitors to the Chase do not usually engage in these activities during the Chase visit. As such, the recorded spend is low in these areas. In a sense that under-emphasises the economic value of visitors in general, although it does accurately reflect the revenue impact of the Chase user group.

Elsewhere in the urban vicinity of the AONB, for example, in Cannock town centre - it has been estimated that retail spend from non-local sources at Cannock Shopping Centre alone amounts to around £8.0 million (data extracted from the unpublished Cannock Chase Tourism Strategy Appraisal, December 2000). Of course, there is no evidence to assume that this figure is in any way related to the Chase visitor base.

6.3 Exploring Spend Behaviour

The economic benefits of Chase visits are aspects of potential rather than actual impact. That said, it is useful to explore some aspects of spend behaviour in order to understand more fully the emergent patterns, and to plan for a future enhancement (or perhaps minimisation) of economic effects. This section investigates two main aspects. First, it disaggregates spend by amount. Second, it focuses on food and drink spending as this is a relatively flexible and sizeable category, more prone to differences in spend behaviour than spending on, say, parking costs.

6.3.1 The Distribution of Spending

Whilst it is essential to chart the levels of spend on individual categories, there is value in extending the analysis to discuss the amounts involved. For example, in Table 6.4 the distribution of expenditure levels for food and drink purchases is set out. This shows that 70% of visitors spent nothing, whilst modest amounts were spent by all but a small minority of the remainder. Only 7.6% of visitors spent more than £5.00 on food and drink.

Table 6.4
Non-local visitor expenditure on food and drink

Amount of expenditure per visitor (£)	Number of visitors	Cumulative percentage
No purchases	701	70.0
1.00 or less	21	72.1
1.01-2.00	79	80.0
2.01-3.00	43	84.3
3.01-4.00	22	86.5
4.01-5.00	59	92.4
5.01-10.00	37	96.0
More than 10.00	40	100.0

N = 1002

Table 6.5
Non-local visitor expenditure on items from local shops and services

Amount of expenditure per visitor (£)	Number of visitors	Cumulative percentage
No purchases	958	95.6
1.00 or less	8	96.4
1.01-2.00	16	98.0
2.01-3.00	3	98.3
3.01-4.00	2	98.5
4.01-5.00	7	99.2
5.01-10.00	6	99.8
More than 10.00	2	100.0

N = 1002

Although the number of visitors making purchases is very low (see Tables 6.2 and 6.3), similar calculations can be made for other expenditure categories. For example, Table 6.5 shows that over 95% of non-local visitors spent nothing on other items from local shops and service establishments, whilst less than 1% spent over £5.00. These are really very small economic benefits.

The same pattern is repeated for other aspects of spend, although the small numbers making purchases, or the captive nature of the spend category (in the case of travel costs and parking) mean that detailed analysis is unnecessary.

6.3.2 Visitor Characteristics and Visit Expenditure

It is possible to conduct an analysis of each category of expenditure. However, the small number of instances with regard to categories such as admissions to attractions, or hire costs, means that detailed analysis of these and related aspects is of limited value. As such, given the extent of engagement in spending on food and drink - some 30.0% of non-locals, and 19.3% of locals, and the limited value of exploring spend categories that are necessities, such as travel and parking costs, this is chosen for the more in-depth analysis.

The investigation here is based on a series of expectations about influences on visitor expenditure. In this regard, it is hypothesised that spending will be influenced by the time of the visit; the principal activity involved; the distance from trip origin; the group type, duration and frequency of visit; whether the visit was planned using local brochures or other literature; and the social status of the visitor. In this regard, it is expected that spend will be greater in the middle part of the day; where it involves leisure visits rather than active pursuits; from less local visitors; from those recording longer duration and less frequent use of the Chase; and, from those pre-planning the visit. Socio-economic status is also investigated, although, given the small amounts emerging, this is thought unlikely to correlate with spend variations. The results of the investigation are as follows.

There were no significant differences in the proportions of spending visitors according to time of visit, although afternoon visitors tend to spend slightly larger amounts. This is understandable, as where a spend occurs later in the day it is more likely to involve lunch or dinner, rather than snacks.

The principal visit motive - dominated by walking or dog walking as 75% of the main activity, inevitably tends to be associated with low spend Chase users. Those more likely to purchase food and drink tend to be engaged in playing games or even cycling. That said, over 30% of those citing ‘walking’ did make some purchases.

Expenditure characteristics according to distance from the origin of trip where it was home-based are set out in Table 6.6. Again, unsurprisingly, non-local visitors travelling from greater distances tend to spend more on food and drink, a finding that directly relates to trip duration and the need to take rest periods. The implication here is that spend may be

increased by encouraging more non-local visits. In parallel with the other findings, it is also clear from Table 6.6 that non-locals spend larger amounts on food and drink.

The type of visit group also shows differences in the tendency to purchase food and drink. Thus, those visiting alone are much less likely to spend (14%) than those visiting in groups (33%).

Table 6.6
Non-local visitor expenditure on food and drink related to distance travelled

Distance travelled (miles)	Percentage of spending visitors	Percentage of visitors spending over £5.00
< 2.0	15.2	20.0
2.0-5.0	24.0	19.0
5.1-10.0	31.1	18.0
10.1-20.0	39.0	23.4
>20.0	43.2	39.8
All	30.1	25.6

N = 1002

As expected in terms of the duration of visit, the longer the duration, the more likelihood of expenditure on food and drink. Some 24% of those staying for three hours or less made purchases, whereas the equivalent figure for those staying for more than three hours was 43%. The implications for any effort to increase economic impact would be to retain visitors.

Other investigations show that spending on food and drink increases with infrequency of visit - over 40% of those visiting occasionally incurred expenditure, whereas only around 20% of frequent visitors (several visits per week) and 35% of those visiting every few weeks purchase food and drink.

Interestingly, where a visit had been planned through the use of local information or brochures, there was a higher spend (40% spend as against 29% of those whose visit was unplanned).

Finally, the range of spend by Socio-Economic Group (SEG) was between 27.3% and 31.9%, thus reflecting little variation. There was also little variation in the range of spend levels by SEG. This leads to the clear conclusion that the low level of spend is a visit characteristic rather than a visitor characteristic.

To conclude this section we make some observations on the overnight stayers who were interviewed within the Survey. Given the huge proportion of visits emanating from a local or non-local home-base, the economic effects of non-local overnight stays is more a matter of future potential rather than actual, current effect.

The average expenditure incurred in purchasing food and drink during the visit is shown in Table 6.7. This sets out the average for all staying visitors (thus including non-spenders), and the average spend where expenditure occurred.

Table 6.7
Overnight stayers expenditure on food and drink during the Chase visit

Accommodation type	Average spend of all visitors/spenders (£)	
	Food and drink	Local shops and services
Hotels, Guest Houses, B & B	8.13/13.00	4.75/13.67
Camping or caravan sites	0.33/2.00	0.25/1.99
Staying with friends and relatives	0.32/13.52	0.43/6.00
All visitors	1.96/6.53	0.18/4.03
Number of staying visitors with recorded expenditure	28	9
Percentage of staying visitors with recorded expenditure	36.8	11.8

N=1002

The data reveals that expenditure levels of staying visitors in serviced accommodation are much higher than the average for all visitors (Table 6.2). This simply reflects the fact that there is a tendency to engage in spending whilst away from home on a leisure trip. There are wide differences between serviced accommodation and those staying with friends and relatives (VFR visitors) who record a low average spend per visitor. As would be expected, spending levels amongst those staying on camping and caravanning sites are low. Such visitors tend to be more attuned to self-catering. Where VFR visitors do purchase food and drink, the spending level is relatively high. Of course, in general, there is a need to read these figures carefully as they are based on very small numbers of visitors. That itself reflects the small numbers staying overnight and the small proportions engaging in expenditure.

6.4 The Overall Economic Effect of Chase Visitors

The preceding data provides a major insight into the economic impact of what essentially emerges as Chase leisure day visits. On the basis of this data set, we are able to estimate the overall economic effects in terms of revenues generated as follows.

The estimated aggregate visitor level amounts to 1.27 million visits per annum, of which 0.91 million are non-local from outside of the AONB area, and 0.36 million are locals who mainly reside within walking distance of the area (see Section 2 of the Report). Their aggregate revenue effects are as follows:

Table 6.8
Estimated economic returns from Chase visit expenditure

Number of users	Average expenditure £	Average expenditure excluding travel	Minimum first round effect (£)
Visitors (non-local)			
0.91 million	6.43		5,851,300
		3.57	(3,248,700)
Locals			
0.36 million	1.95		702,000
Total estimated first round effect (£)			6,553,300
Total estimated first round effect (£) excluding travel expenditure by outside visitors			3,950,700

From these data it is possible to draw some inferences on local benefits. For example, in terms of local effects, it is assumed that all of the travel spending by local visitors will accrue to the local economy, whereas little or none will be derived from those visiting from outside the area. As such, it is appropriate to estimate a first round revenue effect that excludes these elements. Such a calculation produces a minimum aggregate spend of £3.95 million as a result of the AONB visitor activity.

Clearly, in order to estimate the overall economic value of the visitor base, it is necessary to estimate the knock-on or multiplier effects since the full economic effects of tourism activity in the local area extend beyond direct expenditure. The gross direct impact - as measured in the AONB survey - covers 'front-line' effects (DCMS, 1998) from visitor expenditure.

The net direct impact on the area needs to take into account the value of goods and services imported into the area in order to supply visitor needs.

Indirect effects arise from the generation of economic activity by subsequent rounds of expenditure (for example, as local businesses purchase from suppliers). Some of these effects will 'leak' out of the area as not all suppliers are locally-based.

Induced effects largely derive from the spending of income accruing to local residents who work in the visitor industry.

When using multiplier estimates, it is usual to define a Type I multiplier (direct and indirect effects) and a Type II multiplier (direct, indirect and induced effects).

The non-availability of detailed data can be overcome by applying an empirically derived multiplier developed to estimate the effects of tourism activity in rural regions. This allows us to apportion spend to a number of categories and, through the application of input-output coefficients, to estimate overall effects.

The AONB survey data was subjected to similar assumptions to those made by the rural versions of the widely-available Michigan (MITEIM) model. On this basis it is assumed that there are major leakages after the direct (first round) effect. A simple version of the model, itself based on sophisticated estimates of input-output coefficients across economic sectors, predicts an output/sales multiplier of 1.3 for AONB day leisure visitors. This compares with empirically derived multiplier effects for other regions using alternative models. For example, Ceredigion Tourism uses a combination of the Scottish Tourism Multipliers Study (STM) and the Cambridge Model. These models, although subject to criticism given their general assumptions that are often not based on actual local data, do confirm the expected multipliers. Business turnover output for Ceredigion tourism day visitors assumes an indirect effect of around 23.2% of direct spend, and an induced effect of around 3.5%. This would generate a multiplier of 1.27. Applying the 1.3 multiplier to the AONB estimates generates an overall economic impact of £8.52 million.

6.5 Reflections

The visitor or tourism product of any area, and hence the economic effects - includes attractions and facilities. On the basis of the AONB survey, it is clear that the present economic impact of Chase leisure visits is negligible. As such, attractions and facilities might

be viewed more for their potential - as spend opportunities - than for their current contributions.

The attractions of the AONB area and its vicinity are numerous, if not large-scale. In terms of visitors to the AONB, it is the Chase landscape, and the various attractions within it, that predominate. Many of these are widely recognised - others are not. For example, work completed in support of a Heritage Lottery Fund bid for the development of a Chase Heritage Trail, and in conjunction with local community interests, has generated a series of heritage nodes that are not generally recognised as potential small-scale attractions (see Staffordshire University, 2000).

Within the forest arena there are major commercial activities attuned to leisure visits. For example, Forest Enterprise at Birches Valley attracts over 100,000 visitors per annum.

In the near vicinity of the AONB, there are attractions - such as Shugborough - that might be suitable for further development as a focus of visitor attention, perhaps deflecting visitor pressure away from the natural landscape of the Chase; the Shugborough estate attracts around 250,000 visitors per annum.

It is perhaps also important to note that not all AONB users are day or part-day leisure visitors. There are overnight stayers visiting the Chase, although these are relatively small in number. Clearly, it is difficult for a survey spread over a full array of seasons to pick up details of such users. However, it is possible to supplement the survey data with other information. For example, work on the monitoring of the Cannock Chase Tourism Strategy can be used to show that some of the Summer season overnight stayers tend to use the Chase as a base for touring - visiting attractions such as Alton Towers, the Black County Museum, and the Potteries locations.

Another area of the visitor product concerns facilities. This includes shops, restaurants and other food and drink vendors, accommodation establishments, features that have been addressed in the research.

Accommodation establishments - as revealed by the survey findings, are sites of economic potential rather than actual economic effect in any scale. Few surveyed visitors were staying in local accommodation, reflecting the local nature of the AONB attraction. In previous reports, we have referred to the Chase as the ‘back garden’ of the area twenty miles or so around it, and the survey confirms that label.

There is potential for more overnight stayers to be subsumed within the existing infrastructure. Occupancy analysis suggests that whilst the budget hotels that fringe the Chase are working at near full capacity, there is capacity in many of the smaller hotels and guest houses, as well as at the local caravan parks. A typical caravan site occupancy array for the 2000 season reflects this feeling.

Table 6.9
Occupancy levels at a typical Chase caravan site over the March to October, 2000 season

Month	Percentage Occupancy
March	15.8
April	37.1
May	43.8
June	52.0
July	63.2
August	63.0
September	44.9
October	28.3

Elsewhere within the fringe area of the Chase, accommodation establishments recorded spare capacity at various degrees over the 1999 season. The establishments contacted as part of this present enquiry and those being monitored as part of the ongoing appraisal of the Cannock Chase Tourism Strategy, reported a range of occupancy rates from 46.5% for a sample small guest house establishment to around 72% for a larger hotel .

Within the vicinity of the Chase there are a variety of accommodation establishments, although few are located within the designated area. In Cannock and Rugeley alone, there are 232 bedspaces, with a number of outstanding planning approvals for new hotel development that could deliver an additional 222 bedspaces. In addition, Wandon, Tackeroo and Silvertrees caravan sites have over 180 emplacements, and there are a number of accommodation establishments on the fringes of the AONB in Stafford Borough.

6.6 Summary

On the basis of the analysis in this section, we are able to summarise the economic value of visits to the Chase as follows.

In general:

- on the basis of spend data, the estimated aggregate visitor numbers set out in Section 2 would indicate a direct revenue of £6.55 million from the Chase visitor base; if

expenditure on travel is excluded, a minimum of around £3.95 million is estimated as accruing directly to the local economy.

- if a simple, empirically derived, multiplier estimate is added to this first round estimate, the total revenue effect sums to a minimum aggregate effect of just over £8.52 million.

- against that figure must be levelled the various costs of maintaining the Chase environment, a consideration that is outside of the scope of the research but a necessary inclusion in any future development proposals.

- the overall spend per head was £4.85, with an expected contrast between locals (£1.95) and visitors (non-locals) (£6.43).

- average spend figures contrast greatly with the figures derived by other survey research, and the AONB spend is much lower than the average for many comparable areas.

- the spend behaviour of non-local visitors reveals relatively low spend levels in all categories except transport and, to a lesser extent, food and drink.

- both the average spend of local spenders and the aggregate is much lower than for non-local visits.

- low levels of spending on visits to attractions, hire of equipment, shopping and other local services, reflects the fact that, unlike many tourists, visitors to the Chase do not usually engage in these activities during the Chase visit.

- some 70% of visitors spent nothing on food and drink, whilst modest amounts were spent by all but a small minority of the remainder; only 7.6% of visitors spent more £5.00 on this category.

- over 95% of non-local visitors spent nothing on other items from local shops and service establishments, whilst less than 1% spent over £5.00.

In terms of spending on food and drink as a focus category, the research shows that there are;

- no significant differences in the proportions of spending visitors according to time of visit.

- the principal visit motives - dominated by walking or dog walking as 75% of the main activity, inevitably tend to be associated with low spend Chase users.

- non-local visitors travelling from greater distances tend to spend more on food and drink, a finding that directly relates to trip duration and the need to take rest periods.

- those visiting alone are much less likely to spend than those visiting in groups.

- the longer the duration, the more likelihood of expenditure on food and drink.

- spend on food and drink increases with infrequency of visit.

- where a visit had been planned through the use of local information or brochures, there was a higher spend.

- the range of spend by Socio-Economic Group (SEG) was small, leading to the clear conclusion that the low level of spend is a visit characteristic rather than a visitor characteristic.

- purchases of other local goods and services by Chase visitors are negligible.

- the average expenditure of overnight stayers incurred in purchasing food and drink during the visit reveals that expenditure levels of staying visitors in serviced accommodation are much higher than the average for all visitors.

- there are wide differences between serviced accommodation and VFR visitors who record a low average spend per visitor; where VFR visitors do purchase food and drink, the spend level is relatively high.

- spend levels amongst those staying on camping and caravanning sites are low; such visitors tend to be more attuned to self-catering.

In terms of the full economic effects of visitor activity in the local area;

- the gross direct impact of £6.55 million - as measured in the AONB survey - covers 'front-line' effects from visitor expenditure; the net direct impact on the area needs to take into account the value of goods and services imported into the area in order to supply visitor needs.

- indirect effects arise from the generation of economic activity by subsequent rounds of expenditure (for example, as local businesses purchase from suppliers); some of these effects will 'leak' out of the area as not all suppliers are locally-based.

- induced effects largely derive from the spending of income accruing to local residents who work in the visitor industry.

- a simple multiplier estimate based on standard input-output coefficients across economic sectors, predicts an output/sales multiplier of 1.3 for AONB day leisure visitors; this compares with empirically derived multiplier effects for other regions using alternative models

- applying the 1.3 output/sales multiplier to the AONB estimates generates an overall economic impact of £8.52 million.

General reflections

- it is clear that the present economic impact of Chase leisure visits is negligible; as such, attractions and facilities might be viewed more for their potential - as spend opportunities - than for their current contributions.

- the attractions of the AONB area and its vicinity are numerous, if not large-scale; in terms of visitors to the AONB, it is the Chase landscape, and the various attractions within it, that predominate; many of these are widely recognised - others are not.

- within the forest arena there are some commercial activities attuned to leisure visits, but relatively few local businesses are apparent.

- in the near vicinity of the AONB, there are attractions - such as Shugborough - that might be suitable for further development as a focus of visitor attention, perhaps deflecting visitor pressure away from the natural landscape of the Chase.

- not all AONB users are day or part-day leisure visitors; there are overnight stayers visiting the Chase, although these are very small in number.

- small numbers of overnight stayers tend to use the Chase as a base for touring - visiting attractions such as Alton Towers, the Black County Museum, and the Potteries locations.

- another area of the visitor product concerns facilities; this includes shops, restaurants and other food and drink vendors, as well as accommodation establishments, features that have been addressed in the research; these are relatively limited in and around the immediate AONB.

- accommodation establishments - as revealed by the survey findings, are sites of economic potential rather than actual economic effect in any scale.

- few surveyed visitors were staying in local accommodation, reflecting the local nature of the AONB attraction; in previous reports, we have referred to the Chase as the 'back garden' of the area twenty miles or so around it, and the survey confirms that label.

- there is potential for more overnight stayers to be subsumed within the existing infrastructure.

- in essence, the economic value of visits to the Chase is small compared to other types of visitor attraction.

7. TEENAGE SCHOOLCHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES AND PERCEPTIONS.

This section of the report concerns the findings from the survey of teenagers in years 8, 10 and 12 at six local secondary schools. (See Section 1.3 and Appendix 9.1 - 9.3 for an outline of data collection procedures). Sections 7.1, 7.2 and 7.3 outline the main findings from the questionnaire survey. Where appropriate, information from the taped classroom discussions is included in order to aid interpretation of some of the data. Sections 7.4 and 7.5 report key information from the evaluation exercise of 10 photographic images of the Chase and also the accompanying class-based discussions.

7.1 Profile of Teenage Schoolchildren and Basic Patterns of Visiting.

This section reports on relevant profile data of the teenagers surveyed, reflecting age, gender, school attended, place of residence and occupation of parents. Basic patterns of visiting the Chase are then described, specifically defined by visits cross-tabulated with gender and age, frequency and timing of visits and the spatial distribution of activity.

Given the paucity of published information concerning the nature of recreational behaviour amongst teenagers in a countryside setting, a central aim of the questionnaire survey was to find out how teenagers of different age and gender would make use of the Chase. As they filled in the questionnaire, it was stressed that they should be as honest and accurate as possible in listing all types of activity. In some cases, this resulted in unusual responses, some of which included teenage slang terms which had to be interpreted during classroom discussions.

7.1.1 Profile Characteristics of Teenage Schoolchildren.

Of the 409 schoolchildren whose responses were used in the survey, 54.5% were male and 45.5% were female. This slight gender imbalance probably reflects the fact that the survey was conducted in geography classes, where there was a tendency for boys to outnumber girls. Table 7.1 shows the year-group breakdown of children in the survey.

These numbers again reflect the mechanics of subject choice in schools, where proportionately fewer children proceed with a given subject into the sixth-form. The significance of gender and age of respondents in relation to variables such as activity and likes/dislikes is considered later in this section.

Table 7.1
Year/age group profile of teenage respondents

Year / Age Group	N	%
Year 8 (12-13 years)	187	45.7
Year 10 (14-15 years)	121	29.6
Year 12 (16-17 years)	101	24.7

N = 409

Table 7.2 shows the proportion of children attending each of the 5 schools that took part in the survey.

Table 7.2
Schools attended by teenage respondents

School	N	%
Fair Oak (Years 8 & 10)	125	30.6
Aelfgar Sixth Form Centre	46	11.2
Walton High School	66	16.1
Blake High	59	14.4
Cardinal Griffin RC	58	14.2
Cannock High	55	13.4

N = 409

Given the proximity to Cannock Chase of the schools selected for the survey, it is not surprising that 52% of schoolchildren surveyed lived within a 3 mile radius of the Chase and 92% lived within a 5 mile radius. The remaining 8%, living more than 5 miles from the Chase, consisted largely of children at schools with extended catchments, notably Cardinal Griffin RC High School.

Table 7.3 shows the socio-economic status of the children's parents. This information was derived from the responses to question 5 which asked: "What do your parents do for a living?" Much consideration had been given to whether it was appropriate to ask for this information, as it might have caused embarrassment or indeed offence to some children. However, it was felt that it might yield some useful insights into patterns of use. Children were told that they need not answer this question if they didn't wish to and 20 of the 409 chose not to do so. It transpired that a bigger problem was that quite a few children weren't exactly sure what their parents did for a living. Where possible, teachers helped them to sort this out, so that an appropriate response could be given. Nevertheless, some caution must be applied in interpreting this data.

Table 7.3
Socio-economic status of parents.*

Categories	N	%
A	14	3.4
B	39	9.5
C1	198	48.4
C2	79	19.3
D	54	13.2
E	5	1.2
Missing	20	4.9

N = 409. * Step-parents included in category.

Just over 61% of parents were in either the A, B or C1 social groups (managerial, professional, clerical and supervisory classes), which is slightly lower than the 65% of residents surveyed who were in these groups (see Section 4.4). This may reflect the nature of the catchment areas for the schools in the survey. Nevertheless, the data supports the notion that the core catchment surrounding the Chase has significant concentrations of ABC1 households, especially in its northern and western fringes.

7.1.2 Overall Levels of Use.

One of the most significant findings of this section of the report is that of the 409 children in the survey, 391 (95.6%) did visit Cannock Chase. In some ways, due to their proximity to the Chase this may not be surprising. However, when all the survey information is analysed, it shows that by far the majority of teenagers asked did use the Chase frequently, at most times of year, with friends and family and for a variety of purposes. This perhaps challenges a common notion that most teenagers have very low physical activity levels. It also challenges a conventional view that AONBs like Cannock Chase are almost exclusively the preserve of middle-aged, middle-class walkers. Such high levels of teenage usage could have implications for future management of the Chase.

Of the 18 children who said that they had not visited the Chase, the most frequently cited reason was that it had “no appeal” (10 responses). Other reasons given were “no time” (5), “unable to get there” (2) and “new to the area” (1). Secondary reasons cited included “too far” (2), “easy to get lost” (1) and “don’t like forests” (1).

7.1.3 Teenage User Profiles and Activity.

In order to examine the influence of teenage user profile characteristics on patterns of activity on the Chase, gender and year group of respondents were each cross-tabulated with favourite activities listed. The relationship between gender and activity is shown in Figure 7.1. This shows that for most activities, there is a clear variation in activity participation between teenage boys and girls. Some comparisons can usefully be made with Table 4.3, which shows activity by gender for all respondent age groups using the Chase. Some similarities are notable, especially the fact that walking and dog-walking show little significant difference in levels of participation between males and females.

In contrast to these similarities, other activities are favoured by either teenage boys (cycling, running/orienteering and playing – mostly football and cricket), or teenage girls (relaxing and horse-riding). The differences are not so marked as those of the general visitor survey, which suggests that gender bias in certain outdoor activities becomes more pronounced with age. In the case of "playing" a gender reversal is evident, which is probably explained by the significance of football and cricket mentioned by teenage boys, as opposed to the dominance of the role of mothers in play activities cited in the general visitor survey (see section 4.5). Overall, it is clear that, of the school children surveyed, boys dominate sport-based activity on the Chase.

An examination of types of recreation undertaken by different year groups on the Chase indicates that, in virtually every type of active recreation, participation decreases with age (see Figure 7.2). Although the age of respondents only ranged from 12 to 17 years, it is significant that activities such as walking and cycling are least frequent amongst the year 12 teenagers, in addition to the more predictable decline in playing. Some explanation for this trend may be found in increased pressures of schoolwork and other interests amongst the older teenagers. Running/orienteering was the only type of active recreation that the three year groups undertook in approximately equal numbers. This may be explained by continued membership of running teams and orienteering clubs. The fact that overall there is some variation in types of activity undertaken by different age groups on the Chase reinforces the idea that there are life-cycle patterns from childhood to old-age which influence outdoor recreation trends and demands.

7.1.4 Frequency and Timing of Visits.

When asked how often they visited the Chase in the summer months, the schoolchildren reported relatively high levels of frequent use, with 57% claiming to visit at least once a fortnight (see Figure 7.3). Classroom discussions indicated that usage was highest in the school summer holidays and after school/early evening in the summer term. Significantly,

this frequency of use is only slightly less than the 60% reported by the UK Day Visits Survey (CRN, 1996) and the 60.6% of other Chase users reported in Section 2.5. Teenagers seemingly use the Chase as frequently as other groups during the summer months. The prominence of daily visiting in summer by teenagers (6.4%) is only just over half that reported by other Chase users (11.9%), but is higher than the 4% recorded in the UK Day Visits Survey. Group discussions indicated that activities such as bike-riding, dog-walking and informal games dominated daily usage by teenagers in the summer.

Frequency of use at other times of year is generally much lower than that in the summer and is also lower amongst teenagers than the Chase's other user groups. For instance, daily use is reported only by 3.4% of teenagers as opposed to 10.6% reported by other user groups (see Table 2.4). 68% of teenagers reported visiting the Chase only once a month or less at times other than the summer. Undoubtedly, a major explanation for this marked seasonal reduction in use is concern about the safety and welfare of children during shorter daylight hours and also inclement weather conditions.

7.1.5 Spatial Distribution of Activity.

The responses to question 11: "Which parts of the Chase do you particularly like to visit?", generated data that gives a fascinating picture of teenagers' "mental map" of the Chase and also reveals a spatial pattern of use that is partially unofficial, secret and hidden. Certainly, popular honey-pots such as Milford Common, Marquis Drive and Stepping Stones were frequently visited. However, as can be seen in Table 7.4, the most frequently cited favourite places were in the categories "other" and "local" (31% of responses).

Of the 45 children who gave no written response to this question (but who did visit the Chase), the majority said in discussion that they didn't know where they went on the Chase or didn't know the names of the places they visited. In some cases, with reference to maps in the classroom discussion, other places could be identified (though not named by the children) as Chase Road Corner, Brocton Pool nature reserve, White House, Aspen, the Cemeteries, Glacial Boulder and the Katyn Memorial.

Overall, though, the story that emerges is of significant numbers of teenagers who use parts of the Chase, often close to their home and/or school, which are important and familiar to them, but which are not explicit or easily identifiable on official maps of the Chase. Often, these places had colloquial/slang names such as "the woods, the den, the bushy, the base, the dips, the scrubs and the pools".

Table 7.4
Favourite sites visited by teenage schoolchildren

Site or Area	N of children visiting each site	%
Local or Other	106	30.6
All over	31	8.9
Milford Common	93	26.9
Marquis Drive	82	23.7
Stepping Stones	73	21.1
Birches Valley	62	17.9
Seven Springs	49	14.2
Shugborough	41	11.8
Sherbrook Valley	31	8.9
Fair Oak Pools	24	6.9
Castle Ring	19	5.5
Punchbowl	13	3.8

N = 346. Percentage figures sum to more than 100 since respondents could provide more than one answer.

Cross-tabulation of distance lived from the Chase and favourite site visited (first listed) revealed that certain named locations were visited with greater frequency by children living within three miles of them than by those living further away. These sites, favoured by local teenagers, were Marquis Drive, Fair Oak Pools, Seven Springs, Birches Valley and Stepping Stones. Discussions with the children revealed that these locations were often visited by bike and/or with friends. This shows a rather different pattern of usage from sites such as Milford Common and Shugborough, which tended to be visited with family members and by car.

7.1.6 Spatial Patterns and Types of Activity.

In order to establish whether certain locations on the Chase tend to be used for particular types of activity, data on favourite sites visited was cross-tabulated with activities listed (See Section 7.2.1). What emerged was a complicated and not especially clear pattern, not least because many sites were not formally named and also because some teenagers listed many different sorts of activity. More definite findings emerged as a result of the classroom discussions reported in Section 7.5.

7.2 The Characteristics of the Visit.

This section explains the key characteristics of recreational visits made by teenagers to Cannock Chase. These are defined by the activities which respondents reported that they engaged in on Cannock Chase, the duration of their visit, modes of travel and group composition.

7.2.1 Patterns of Activity.

The fifteen activities that were mentioned most frequently are tabulated by rank order in Table 7.5.

Table 7.5
Principal activities reported by teenage users of Cannock Chase AONB.

Activity	N	%
Walking	306	78.3
Playing	154	39.4
Cycling	142	36.3
Picnicking	106	27.2
Relaxing	78	19.9
Running/Orienteering	74	18.9
Educational Visit	70	17.9
Eating Out	65	16.6
Visiting Attractions	49	12.5
Sight–seeing	43	11.0
Dog–walking	33	8.4
Horse–riding	31	7.9
Nature Study	17	4.3
Bird–watching	12	3.1
Driving	2	0.5
Other	14	3.6

N = 391. Percentages sum to more than 100 since respondents could identify more than one activity.

The dominance of walking as the primary activity of teenage users of the Chase (78.3%) is in some ways predictable, in other ways, surprising. When combined with dog-walking (listed separately by some teenagers, some of whom apparently saw this as a special activity, others as a chore), it accounted for a very high proportion of activity. Indeed, the significance of walking amongst teenagers almost matches that reported by residents and on-site visitors questioned in the other two surveys of this report (80.7%, see Table 3.1). These high levels of popularity contrast markedly with the UK Day Visits Survey (CRN, 1996), where only 29% identified walking as the main purpose of their visit.

As discussed in Section 3.1, the dominance of walking may well reflect both positive and negative attributes of the Chase and this was highlighted in some classroom discussions. Cannock Chase was seen by many teenage respondents to offer little else by way of

specific attractions, so that walking was "the only thing to do there." This was especially the case when teenagers accompanied family members on their visits. In addition, teenagers may in some respects be seen as under-privileged in terms of their access to transport and general ability/freedom to utilise the Chase in ways other than by walking.

On a more positive note, however, walking was seen as a means of escape, asserting independence and "chilling out" with friends (see Section 7.5). Pupils in years 10 and 12 saw walking as a way of relaxing, and being able to experience peace and quiet was an apparently genuine motive given for walking on the Chase. It also often had a particular purpose, which sometimes involved other activities, such as smoking or being with particular boyfriends/girlfriends.

The significance of walking amongst teenage users of the Chase in some ways runs counter to current concerns about a youth culture of inactivity. Distances walked were usually not great and often walking was only a means to an end. Nevertheless, when considered with other data, such as the predominance of very localised patterns of usage (see Section 7.1.5), it is clear that a large number of local teenagers do use the Chase for walking, especially close to their homes.

In view of the age group of respondents, the dominance of playing games and cycling as the second and third most popular activities on the Chase is not surprising. This data emphasises the special role that the Chase fulfils in the recreational lives of local teenagers, giving them a fairly convenient and attractive informal outdoor play arena. In contrast to urban parks and playgrounds, the Chase was seen, especially by Year 8 and to a lesser extent by Year 10, as a more exciting "natural" place to play chasing games such as Tag and Tig or versions of Hide and Seek and even more formal games such as football. Some activities, such as building dens, climbing trees, fishing, paddling or swimming in pools were clearly seen to be more exciting because they were being undertaken on the Chase (often away from adults).

Cycling is significantly very prominent amongst teenagers on the Chase. 36% of respondents cited cycling as one of their activities, as opposed to only 12% of users surveyed in the main report (see Table 3.1) and just 3% of visits in the UK Day Visits Survey (CRN, 1996). It was important for all three year-groups, but especially Year 8, more so for males than females and it mostly consisted of mountain bike use. From classroom discussions, cycling activity appeared to be of two main types. Firstly, local trips close to school and/or home, which were usually undertaken after school and secondly, trips further afield into the Chase, taken at weekends and in school holidays.

As noted elsewhere in this report (see Section 3.1), the AONB offers excellent opportunity for off-road cycling, with its varied terrain, attractive landscapes and large areas of open access land. Growth in the popularity of mountain-biking over the last 10-15 years is a significant factor in the changing use of Cannock Chase. According to this survey of teenagers, it is a very important form of recreational use of the AONB and one about which they have some strong views (see Section 7.5). This suggests that there some equally important implications for management of the Chase, in terms of track and route management, sign-posting, facility provision, etc.

Of the other active forms of recreation, running/orienteering and horse-riding were (respectively) 6th and 12th in the ranked listing, with 18.9% and 7.9% of respondents citing these as activities. These figures are again higher than those found in the main survey, where just 2.1% listed running/orienteering and 0.6% horse-riding. Horse-riding (mostly undertaken by females) was often done with friends and was linked with helping out at local stables. Running and orienteering were mostly linked with school, club or team activity. Again, some respondents had firm views about the provision for these activities on the Chase (see Section 7.5).

The remainder of the activities in Table 7.5 generally relate to passive forms of recreation and are mostly associated with family visits to the Chase, or educational visits with school or youth groups such as Scouts or Guides.

7.2.2 Duration of Visits.

When asked how long their visits to the Chase normally lasted, almost half, (46.3%), said less than 2 hours (see Table 7.6). Although this is a lower proportion than that reported by other visitors to the Chase, (66%, see Figure 3.1), it still reinforces the notion that much local usage of the AONB comprises relatively short-duration visits.

Table 7.6
Normal length of visit to Cannock Chase AONB by teenagers.

Length of Visit	% of Visits
Up to 1 hour	14.8
1 – 2 hours	31.5
2 – 3 hours	29.4
3 – 4 hours	12.5
4 – 5 hours	5.1
Over 5 hours	6.6

N = 391.

When this temporal pattern of usage by teenagers is combined with the spatial patterns discussed in Section 7.1.5, what emerges is a picture of highly localised, short duration visits, which are especially concentrated in the summer months.

The relatively high proportion of medium-length visits, lasting between 2-4 hours (41.9%) is a more surprising finding, given the supposed inactivity levels amongst teenagers. In order to try to achieve some explanation of this trend, duration of visit was cross-tabulated with selected types of activity (see Figure 7.4).

Direct comparisons were complicated, since respondents could tick more than one response for activity type and sometimes also did so for duration of visit. Hence, corroboration of data was pursued via reference to taped classroom discussions. What emerged was that cycling, dog-walking and running/orienteering frequently lasted 2-3 hours, again indicating a significant proportion of active recreation amongst teenagers. In addition, more passive pursuits, such as sight-seeing and visiting typically lasted 3-4 hours. Visits over 4 hours, although small in number (11.7% of total), again largely consisted of walking, playing and cycling.

7.2.3 Modes of Travel

Given the limited access that teenagers have to certain types of transport, notably cars, it was expected that teenage modes of travel to the Chase might vary from those of the visitor population as a whole. Interestingly, when asked how they normally travelled to the Chase, teenage respondents often ticked more than one box. Results therefore have to be interpreted carefully (see Table 7.7).

Table 7.7.
Modes of travel used by teenage school-children and residents/on-site users on visits to Cannock Chase AONB

Travel Mode	% Responses of Schoolchildren*	% Responses of Residents and On-site Users**
Car	68.9	81.3
Foot	36.6	14.3
Bicycle	34.1	3.1
Horse	6.9	0.2
Motor bike	2.3	0.4
Bus	1.5	0.1

* N = 390. Percentages sum to more than 100 since respondents sometimes identified more than one mode of travel. ** N = 1552. (See Table 3.3)

What emerges clearly from Table 7.7 is the fact that teenagers travel to the Chase by a much greater variety of means, notably via foot and on bicycles, than do visitors in general. In this sense it could be said that teenagers are "eco-friendly" users of the Chase and are setting a good example to other Chase users. Visits made by teenagers by car would mostly be with family members, or in some cases, with older friends. In a few cases, there were indications that teenagers sometimes illegally drove cars onto and around the Chase. Minimal use of public transport is consistent with most other surveys of recreational visits to the countryside. The apparent and/or real lack of public transport was commented on quite a few times in classroom discussions.

7.2.4. Composition of Visitor Groups

A similar type of bi-modal distribution is evident when examining responses to the question: "When you visit the Chase, who do you normally go with?". (see Table 7.8)

Table 7.8
Composition of groups in which school-children and residents/on-site users visit Cannock Chase AONB

Group Composition	% Responses of schoolchildren *	% Responses of Residents and On-site Users **
With friends	56.0	13.1
With family	51.6	59.5
Family and friends	24.8	10.5
Alone	8.9	14.8
Organised party	4.8	2.0

*N = 391. Percentages sum to more than 100 since respondents sometimes identified more than one group type.
** N = 1552 (See Table 3.4)

Although comparison between the responses of school-children and those of residents and on-site users needs to be done with some caution for reasons explained in Table 7.8, some interesting points can still be made. The most common type of group composition cited by the school-children is "with friends" (56.0%). This is in stark contrast to other Chase users, where only just over 13% of people visited solely with friends. An apparent contrast exists therefore between the conventional picture of family visits to the countryside and the importance of friendship group visits amongst teenagers. However, family groups and family+friends still form a highly significant group pattern for teenagers, whereas solitary visiting is a minority activity for them.

Cross-tabulation of group composition with activity type revealed a fairly predictable pattern whereby walking, playing, cycling and running/orienteering were most commonly done in friendship groups. Walking, playing, picnicking and visiting were also frequently done with family and family+friends.

7.3 Teenage Schoolchildren's Attitudes Towards and Expectations of the Chase

In common with the other two main survey elements of this study, teenage schoolchildren were asked about what they particularly liked and disliked about Cannock Chase AONB. They were also asked to make suggestions for ways in which the Chase might be made more attractive for young people. Both these sets of responses were elaborated upon in the evaluation of images of the Chase and associated classroom discussions. Hence, this section presents data from the questionnaire, which is then further discussed in sections 7.4 and 7.5.

7.3.1 The Attraction of Cannock Chase for Teenagers.

Of the 391 children who responded to the question, 249 (63.7%) said that there were things about Cannock Chase that they particularly liked. 24% said that they didn't know and only 10.8% said that there were not things that they specifically liked about the Chase. There was some variation across the three year-groups concerning their positive image of the Chase, with the most likes being expressed by Y12 (68% of year group) and Y8 (67% of year group) and fewer likes expressed by Y10 (56% of year group). The list of positive characteristics, qualities, features and facilities was quite an extensive one, with 13 specific items listed, as well as "other". The main likes are summarised in diagrammatic form in Figure 7.5.

Interestingly, the two most frequently cited likes are in almost complete contradiction to each other: "Peace and quiet" (31.3%) and "Good for activities" (30.9%). Coming as a response from teenage schoolchildren, the attraction of the Chase in offering peace and quiet, nature and beauty/scenery (respectively, the first, third and fourth most liked) is quite surprising. These responses closely echo those from the largely adult resident and on-site visitor responses (see Section 5.1), and again possibly dispel or at least call into question the notion that such countryside resources as Cannock Chase AONB are not valued by teenagers.

More predictably, there appears to be an inherent contradiction in the fact that qualities such as peace and quiet and nature rank highly alongside the Chase being valued as "good for activity" and "fun." At one level, this could be interpreted as teenagers

valuing the opportunity to walk, play, cycle, etc in beautiful and natural surroundings. This was indeed borne out to some extent in classroom discussions.

However, there is another interpretation, (partially supported by the "dislike" evidence and suggestions for improvements), which highlights a classic dilemma inherent in the management of such AONBs as Cannock Chase. On the one hand, visitors (including teenage schoolchildren) clearly value the peace and quiet, beautiful scenery and nature on offer. But on the other hand, they see the area as a glorified outdoor playground and bemoan the lack of suitable facilities. Specific provision, such as the adventure playground and visitor facilities at Birches Valley and the visitor centre at Marquis Drive were clearly popular and some children wanted more of this type of thing (see Section 7.3.3).

7.3.2 Negative Qualities of and Problems Associated with Usage of Cannock Chase

In response to the question asking whether there were things about Cannock Chase that they disliked, 168 (43%) of the 391 children who responded said that there were things that they disliked, 20.5% said that they didn't know and 34% said that there was nothing they disliked. Willingness to voice opinions about what they disliked appeared to be somewhat stronger amongst teenagers than their adult counterparts (see Section 5.2). The main responses from teenagers are shown in Table 7.9.

Table 7.9
Main dislikes of teenage users concerning Cannock Chase AONB

Main Dislikes	N	%
Litter	43	25.5
Vandalism, theft and drugs	21	12.5
Forestry Commission activity	14	8.3
Dog fouling	11	6.5
Poor signs	11	6.5
Other	106	63.0

N = 168. Percentages sum to more than 100 since respondents could list more than one dislike.

Conventional and predictable dislikes such as litter and vandalism are, not surprisingly, at the top of the list. Perhaps the most striking feature of Table 7.9 is the high proportion (63%) of "other" responses. In fact, 40 other reasons were given for disliking the Chase, ranging from lack of toilets, litter bins and refreshments to the presence of snakes, flies and bracken. The most significant "other" reason (9.5%) was "not enough to do". The full list of dislikes

is given in Appendix 9.10. Although many of these responses are idiosyncratic, it is possible to identify two interesting trends.

Firstly, teenage users generally seem to be much more tolerant of other users than vice versa. It could be argued that some teenagers are in fact the cause of nuisance to other users. But classroom discussions tended to indicate a fairly democratic view that the Chase could and should be used by all in a variety of ways.

Secondly, the dislikes cited seem to reinforce the contradictory nature of attitudes to the Chase already discussed (see Section 7.3.1). Lack of toilets, car parks and other facilities are cited as dislikes, alongside commercialisation and too many roads.

7.3.3 Teenage Schoolchildren's Suggestions for Improvements to the Chase for Young People

The final part of the questionnaire asked for any suggestions for ways in which the Chase might be made more attractive to young people. Of the 409 children who responded, 66.7% did suggest a great variety of improvements, 12% reported that they did not think that the Chase needed any improvements and 21.3% "didn't know."

A total of 59 suggested improvements was recorded, indicating that the teenagers had no lack of ideas for ways in which the Chase could be made more attractive for young people to use. Although a proportion of the ideas was only suggested by one or two respondents (see Appendix 9.11 for a list of these) and some of these were perhaps a bit unrealistic, when taken together, they provide a valuable and informative insight into a "teenage image" of what they think the Chase should offer for their generation. Table 7.10 lists the first 15 suggestions in order of the frequency with which they occurred.

A key point to note from Table 7.10 is that by far the majority of the suggestions involve specific facility provision – much of it for play purposes, such as sports grounds and a swimming-pool. This type of suggested development/commercialisation of the Chase, turning it virtually into an outdoor playground, is in almost direct contradiction to the stated likes concerning the Chase expressed in Section 7.3.1, which strongly favoured the peace and quiet, beautiful scenery and "nature" that it offers.

This paradox could well be ascribed to the relative immaturity/naivety/inexperience of the respondents. It is worth noting, however, that a similar disparity/mis-match of responses to questions concerning likes, dislikes and suggested improvements was also present amongst adult respondents in the other two surveys of this report (see Section 5.3).

Table 7.10
Suggested improvements to Cannock Chase AONB made by and for young people.

Improvements	%
Adventure activity areas	36.2
Cycle tracks	19.7
Sports grounds	14.2
Refreshments	9.9
Swimming pool	9.9
Better signposting	8.0
Shops/Visitor centres	7.8
Litter bins	7.8
More footpaths	7.3
Benches/picnic sites	6.6
Keep it natural	5.1
Separate tracks for bikes	4.7
Organised walking/running groups	4.4
Skate park	4.4
Toilets/drinking water	4.0

N = 273. Percentages sum to more than 100 since respondents could put more than one suggestion.

Nevertheless, it has to be accepted that in many cases, (although it must be confessed clearly not in all cases), the list of suggestions was made in good faith by most of the children asked. An alternative interpretation of the paradox could be that it is not a paradox at all, but represents a genuine image (amongst teenagers) of the Chase as part attractive scenic area for peace and quiet, enjoying nature, etc and part outdoor play arena.

On closer inspection, analysis of the list of suggested improvement supports this multi-faceted image of the Chase as a multi-purpose resource. As already noted, the most common suggestions involve facility provision for specific activities (adventure activity areas, sports grounds, refreshments, shops/visitor centres, toilets, etc). Some of these suggestions also feature on the "adult" list (see Figure 5.3), indicating that there does seem to be a genuine demand for increased access to refreshments and toilets at least. Understandably, requests for additional play areas are more strongly voiced by teenagers, although again, this is also a feature of adults' suggestions, especially families with young children. It should be noted that no consideration of cost was mentioned at this stage, so as not to inhibit suggestions.

A second grouping of suggestions can be identified as those which involve improvement and/or addition to existing features/facilities. These include more dedicated and/or separate cycling and horse-riding tracks, separate paths for walkers, better sign-posting, improved path maintenance and more paths suitable for pushchairs/disabled people. More provision

of benches, picnic sites and litter bins can also be included in this category. Generally, the feeling here seemed to be that such existing facilities were appreciated but that either there weren't enough of them or that they were needed in additional parts of the Chase.

A third grouping of suggestions is much more in keeping with the stated "likes" referring to the beautiful landscape of the Chase. These ideas included "keep it natural", plant more deciduous trees/wild flowers, cut down bracken, have more wilderness areas and provide information about trees and wildlife alongside paths. Again, many of these responses seemed to come from a genuine interest expressed by some of the children in the ecosystems of the Chase. In some cases this interest had probably been fuelled by school field trips to and/or geography projects conducted on the Chase.

It has to be emphasised that these suggestions came from a limited group of teenagers who were asked to formulate ideas in a relatively limited timespan. However, they do present an interesting and potentially useful insight into how one user-group views the Chase. Some of the issues raised again echo those highlighted by the other two surveys of this report and these are discussed in Section 8.

7.4 Evaluation of Ten Selected Images of Cannock Chase AONB

In addition to the questionnaire survey, most of the classes surveyed were asked to evaluate ten slide photographs of different parts of Cannock Chase. (For logistical reasons, some of the classes at Fair Oak School, totalling 96 children, completed the questionnaire but did not undertake the image evaluation.) A total of 313 children took part in the image evaluation. The photographic images used are shown in Plates 1-10.

There were two main reasons behind the decision to ask children to evaluate photographs. Firstly, it was felt that some children, especially younger ones and those who might not have very high academic reading and writing abilities, might struggle to express their ideas and opinions fully via the questionnaire. Research suggests that children often respond more readily to visual stimuli such as pictures or photographs than to words.

Secondly, it had been decided that, in addition to the questionnaire responses, which in some cases might be rather limited, it would be desirable to have class-based open discussions about the Chase. Children would thus be given more of a free rein in expressing their ideas and opinions. In order to stimulate discussion and to give some structure to comments, it was felt that use of photographs would be most helpful. This procedure and the fact that the discussions would be taped, was checked with teachers beforehand.

After completing their questionnaires, the children were shown ten slides of Cannock Chase. They were asked to rank these on a simple scale of 1 (least liked) to 10 (most liked) according to how much they liked each photograph. The scores were written on the back of the questionnaire. They were also asked to jot down any reasons for their preferences. The children were not told where the photographs were of (as this may have biased responses) and they were asked not to call out or tell friends if they did recognise the places shown.

After scoring had taken place, the slides were shown again and children were asked to which slides they had allocated high or low scores and why. This acted as a stimulus for class discussion, which was taped. Generally, the children responded well to the evaluation exercise although some experienced difficulties in allocating scores to all the photos, especially since no two slides could be given the same score. The overall ranking of the ten slides is shown in Table 7.11.

Table 7.11
Schoolchildren's ranking of ten images of Cannock Chase AONB

Photo	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
G	8.02	2.07
C	7.07	2.71
J	5.81	2.87
B	5.73	2.54
D	5.72	2.48
I	5.58	2.77
H	5.46	2.33
A	5.00	2.59
F	4.10	2.26
E	2.51	2.26

N.B. Scoring : 10 = most liked ; 1 = least liked.

The ranked scores shown in Table 7.11 reveal some interesting patterns, several of which reflect and confirm findings from the questionnaire survey. Photo G (showing some deer) emerges as the clear favourite, supporting the notion that teenagers do indeed value the wildlife and nature appeal of the Chase. Many children said that they had seen deer on the Chase and that this had definitely contributed to their enjoyment. Comments included: "It's great to be able to see them in the wild/in their natural home" or "It's better than seeing them in a zoo." Children who had not seen deer on the Chase expressed some disappointment and said that it would be great to be able to see them.

The second most popular slide was Photo C (the adventure playground at Forestry Commission HQ in Birches Valley), and comments such as: "It's good fun, it's great for

younger kids, it gives you something to do" were indicative of the children's reactions. Many said that they had played there when they were younger and appeared to have pleasant memories of it. Some were apparently unaware of its existence, but still scored it highly. Others commented that it was a good idea that it was made of natural materials and blended well into the forest.

The top two photos seem to emphasise the paradox (alluded to in Section 7.3) which surrounds teenagers' views of the Chase. On the one hand they see it as an area of natural beauty and value its wildlife, peace and scenery and on the other hand they perceive it as an extended outdoor playground. Photograph C seems to encapsulate this notion.

This "split personality" phenomenon is echoed in the two photos which were least liked by the teenagers: photos E (a group of mountain bikers) and F (open heathland). Comments surrounding photo E referred to the fact that it didn't match their image of the Chase, it looked unattractive, it seemed unnatural because of the grey tarmac path and the weather was dull. The last point possibly indicates an acknowledged drawback of the technique, which is that the quality of the picture, weather conditions etc can influence scoring. These might indeed have affected the low score, but additional comments concerning the fact that such a group of mountain bikers might spoil the peace and quiet of the Chase were also of relevance.

Opinions about slide F mostly indicated that the open heathland was boring and unattractive and that there seemed to be nothing to do there. This, of course, tends to contradict earlier positive feelings towards the naturalness and wilderness of the Chase. Could it be that teenagers have already acquired a sort of societal preference for certain types of natural or idealised British landscape? Hence, brown, fairly flat, featureless expanses of heathland/bracken are unpopular, whereas verdant, lush areas of deciduous trees, with some grassland, some water, varied topography and good views are favoured.

The ranked scores in Table 7.11 certainly tend to support this view, at least in part. Hence, photos J, B and D (respectively ranked third, fourth and fifth), are all of the verdant, natural-looking variety, containing trees, lush vegetation, some water and views over varied topography. However, detailed analysis of the scoring shows that interpretation has to be done with care.

It can be seen from Table 7.12 that, for image B, (woodland surrounding a small algae-covered pond), almost as many children gave it a score of 1 as gave it a score of 10. Subsequent discussion revealed that whilst some teenagers reacted quite positively to this verdant, natural scene, others were put off either because the water looked stagnant and

might smell, or because the scene looked boring. The situation with image J (open vista over the Chase), was clearer, with almost twice as many children giving it a score of 10 as gave it a score of 1.

Table 7.12.
Percentage of schoolchildren who allocated scores of 10 and 1 to the photographs.

Photograph	% Scoring 10	% Scoring 1
A	6.7	6.4
B	5.4	5.8
C	27.8	1.6
D	5.8	4.8
E	1.0	53.4
F	1.3	12.5
G	30.0	0.3
H	2.2	3.2
I	7.0	5.1
J	12.8	7.0

N = 313.

With both the very popular (images G and C) and also the very unpopular (images E and F) scenes, the scoring was much more clear-cut. The schoolchildren seemed quite clear about which photos they liked and which they disliked. In many ways, these opinions tend to back up findings from the questionnaire and help to clarify understanding of the ways in which teenagers perceive and value Cannock Chase.

7.5 Class–based Discussions about Teenage Schoolchildren's Perceptions of and Attitudes towards Cannock Chase AONB

As already explained, the majority (313) of the children surveyed contributed to class-based discussions after they had filled in the questionnaire and scored the ten photographs. These discussions, which were taped, were initially based around structured comments concerning the children's allocation of scores to particular photos. In most cases (as class time permitted), the discussion was then allowed to expand to allow the children to express wider views and/or specific opinions about Cannock Chase.

Generally, Y8 were most vociferous, outspoken and positive in their comments, Y10 tended to be more cautious and/or non-committal in their views and Y12 seemed to have a greater awareness of the complexities surrounding management of the Chase, so were guarded in their comments, but put forward some thoughtful and sensible ideas.

7.5.1 Perceptions of and Attitudes towards the Chase.

Probably the most important (and in some ways surprising) finding to come out of the discussions in all six schools was the extent to which local schoolchildren value Cannock Chase. The majority of them apparently use it on a fairly regular basis and referred to it in familiar, mostly quite positive terms as "the Chase", so that it definitely seemed to be a part of their lives.

Significantly, there was little detectable variation across all the classes involved, in terms of their willingness to talk about the Chase and their awareness and use of it. It emerged that children from all sorts of backgrounds, some of them evidently from poorer homes, where one or both parents were out of work, and in a few cases did not have regular access to a car, still visited the Chase. Equally, children from more affluent backgrounds, who in a couple of cases owned horses, were also users of the Chase.

Another dominant theme to emerge from general discussion was the extent to which teenagers visited the Chase with friends rather than just family. Although some of this may have been over-emphasised in the classroom setting, anecdotes of trips to the Chase much more frequently involved being there with friends. Family trips were more often referred to as memories of when they were younger children and the majority of these comments reflected pleasant occasions such as picnics or paddling in streams.

Undoubtedly, some children didn't rate the Chase much at all and said that they weren't especially concerned about how it was looked after – but these children were in a minority. When asked if it would matter whether Cannock Chase still existed in its present form 25-30 years from now, not one child replied in a negative fashion. Some just assumed that it would always be there. Some were aware that it did need to be looked after, although were unclear about how this was done or by whom. Amongst several of the Y12 groups, a common theme to emerge from the discussions was a feeling that, even if they didn't make regular use of the Chase at the moment, they felt it was important that it be preserved for the future. Quite a few of this age-group were aware of the need for conservation of rare habitats and species on the Chase.

An interesting factor to emerge both as a result of teenagers filling in the questionnaire and studying the Cannock Chase maps provided, was that many of them, whilst being familiar with their "corner" of the Chase, were often fairly ignorant about the geography of the Chase as a whole. Many had to ask where places were and what they were officially called. Quite a few comments concerned the lack of signs and public information boards. Some children expressed a fear of getting lost in the wooded areas and others reported that they and/or their parents would only use certain regular routes on their outings. A couple of

children recounted actually getting lost when out with friends "exploring" and in one case a whole family had taken several hours to find their way back to the car.

7.5.2 Evaluation of what the Chase has to Offer.

Appreciation of what the Chase has to offer was generally quite positive. Many children talked about a great variety of activities that they enjoyed on their visits there. The bulk of these were predictable, such as walking, cycling and playing. Some groups did talk about illicit activities, while others said that it was quite a boring place for children.

More often than not, as discussions developed, a type of polarisation emerged in the class, partly triggered by response to the photographs. One group would be appreciative of the landscapes and "naturalness" of the Chase, whilst another would want more facilities for active recreation. Extremes of these debates involved either banning cars from parts of the Chase and setting up nature reserves for the deer, or providing skateboarding parks and special cycle tracks.

Reactions to some facilities on the Chase were fairly consistent and positive. The adventure playground at Birches Valley, Marquis Drive information centre and the existence of cycle tracks were generally well-liked. The attractive scenery, in particular areas of mixed woodland and heathland, with some water in the form of pools and streams was also quite popular, as was the chance to see deer and other wildlife.

Negative comments tended to focus mostly on the non-existence or poor quality of facilities. The lack of play areas has already been referred to, although interestingly, a few children across all three year-groups said they realised why these weren't provided on the Chase. A significant number of remarks were made about the poor state of footpaths, cycle tracks and bridle-ways – both in terms of surfaces and lack of sign-posting. Usually, these comments were from children involved in cycling or horse-riding, some of whom felt quite strongly that separate paths should be provided for different user groups. Some children said that they thought nowhere was sign-posted and it was easy to get lost.

The other main source of negative comment, albeit not expressed in such a clear way, concerned certain types of landscape which were not liked. These tended to be areas of coniferous forest plantation (although some bikers and horse-riders said that these were good areas to ride in) or extensive areas of open heathland and bracken-covered slopes. Such areas were seen as boring and ugly.

7.5.3 Ideas about the Future of the Chase

As already mentioned, many of the teenagers were not backwards in coming forwards about their ideas for the future of the Chase. It has to be said that many of their suggestions were not especially realistic or appropriate for an AONB. Indeed, within some of the groups, children themselves would dismiss the suggestions of their friends as being silly or "not the sort of thing to have on the Chase."

However, some of their ideas were quite sensible and very similar to those suggested by adults surveyed as part of this study. For instance, comments concerning the need to improve path and route management, sign-posting and provision of information/interpretation facilities and, to a lesser extent, toilet and refreshment availability, seem in keeping with possible plans for the future management of the Chase.

In a few of the classes, where more detailed discussion was possible, aided by reference to maps, some quite sophisticated ideas arose, which really amounted to versions of spatial zoning of activity on the Chase. Hence, as part of their ideas for greater provision of play areas, suggestions were made to the effect that these should be just in certain places (such as around Milford Common or "have more things to do around Marquis Drive, as there are already some things there").

Overall, a challenging picture emerges of a younger generation who value the Chase in many different ways. Any management plans should aim to carefully balance the conservation of the Chase environment itself against the demands and expectations of existing and future users.

7.6 Summary

- 409 teenage schoolchildren in years 8, 10 and 12 at six local high schools in Cannock, Rugeley and Stafford took part in the survey. They filled in a self-completion questionnaire, and most of them evaluated ten photographic images of Cannock Chase and took part in subsequent classroom discussions.

- The vast majority (96%) of teenagers questioned did visit Cannock Chase on a regular basis. A significant percentage of visits were made on foot or by bike, especially when with friends. A wide range of activities was reported, with walking, playing, cycling and picnicking being the most popular.

- Analysis of where teenagers go on the Chase revealed a fascinating and complex pattern of visits to "personalised/localised/unofficial" sites, many of which had local/slang names. Popularity of other official/recognised sites such as Milford Common and Marquis Drive was also high.

- There was considerable agreement over what teenagers liked about the Chase, with 3 of the 4 most frequent responses referring to its "naturalness/attractiveness". However, there was quite a strong contradictory element between those who valued these qualities in their own right and those who just saw the area as a nice setting for a variety of outdoor recreation activities.

- Reasons for not liking the Chase were much more varied. These tended to focus either on the opinion that it was boring with nothing to do there; or that there were perceived problems such as litter and vandalism/theft; or that what was there was not very well maintained and sign-posted; or that there was a lack of certain facilities such as play areas and toilets.

- Numerous suggestions (over 50), were given for improving the Chase. A significant majority of these involved specific facility provision of things such as adventure play areas, more cycle tracks and refreshments. There was a feeling that these should be confined to certain parts of the Chase.

- Suggestions more in keeping with the "adult surveys" reported elsewhere in this study included better sign-posting of paths, having more routes for different sorts of user and having more information/interpretation provision. Some teenagers also felt that the Chase should be "kept natural" or at least that any developments should only be in certain restricted areas.

- The majority of teenage schoolchildren surveyed felt that Cannock Chase is:-
  - an important local amenity/recreation resource for them and the future;
  - an environment which is valued and used by them both for its own intrinsic qualities and also as a setting for a variety of recreational activities;
  - an area which they feel could be improved in many ways.

Figure 7.1 Relationship between gender and recreational activity of teenagers using Cannock Chase AONB

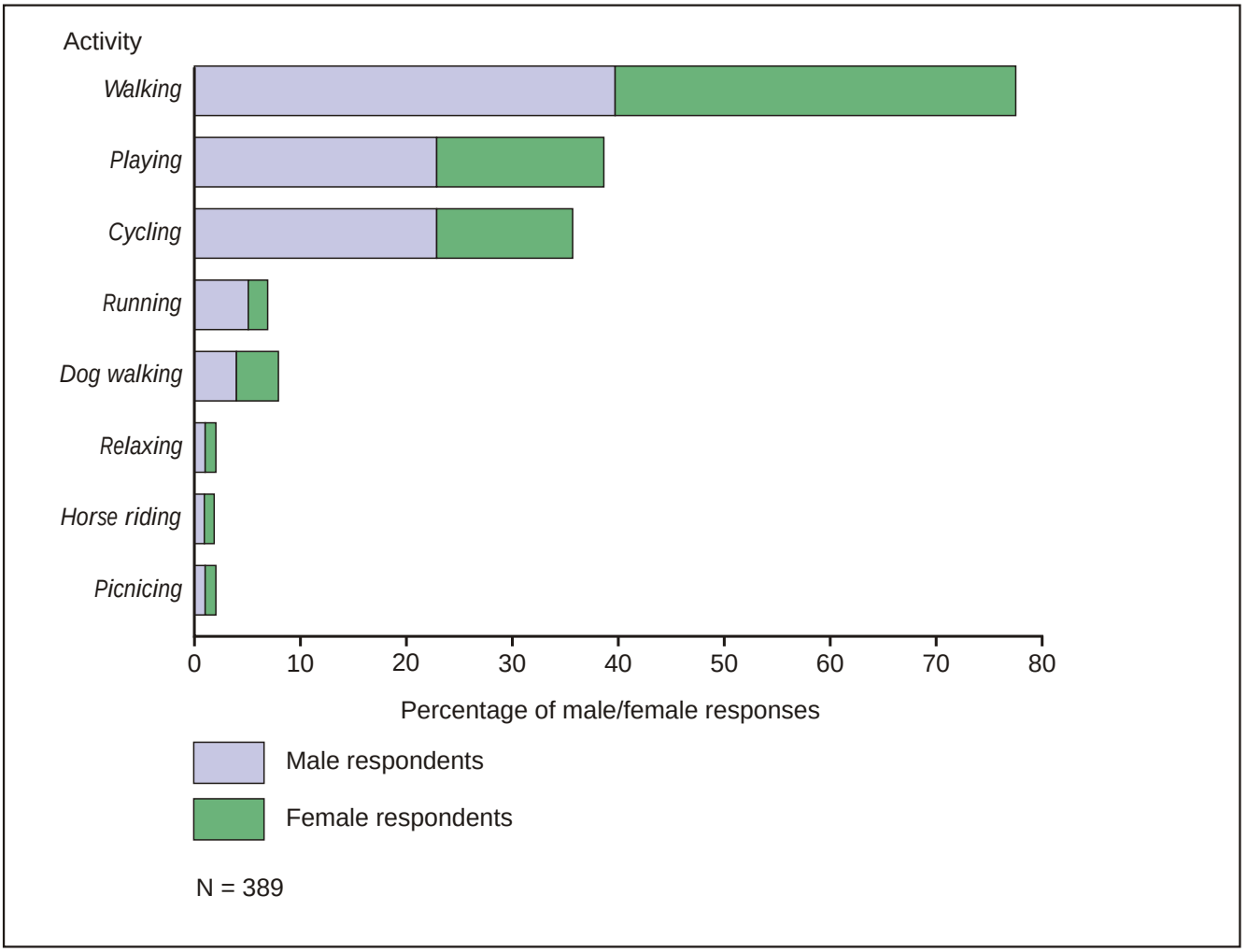


Figure 7.2 Recreational activity on Cannock Chase AONB of different school year groups

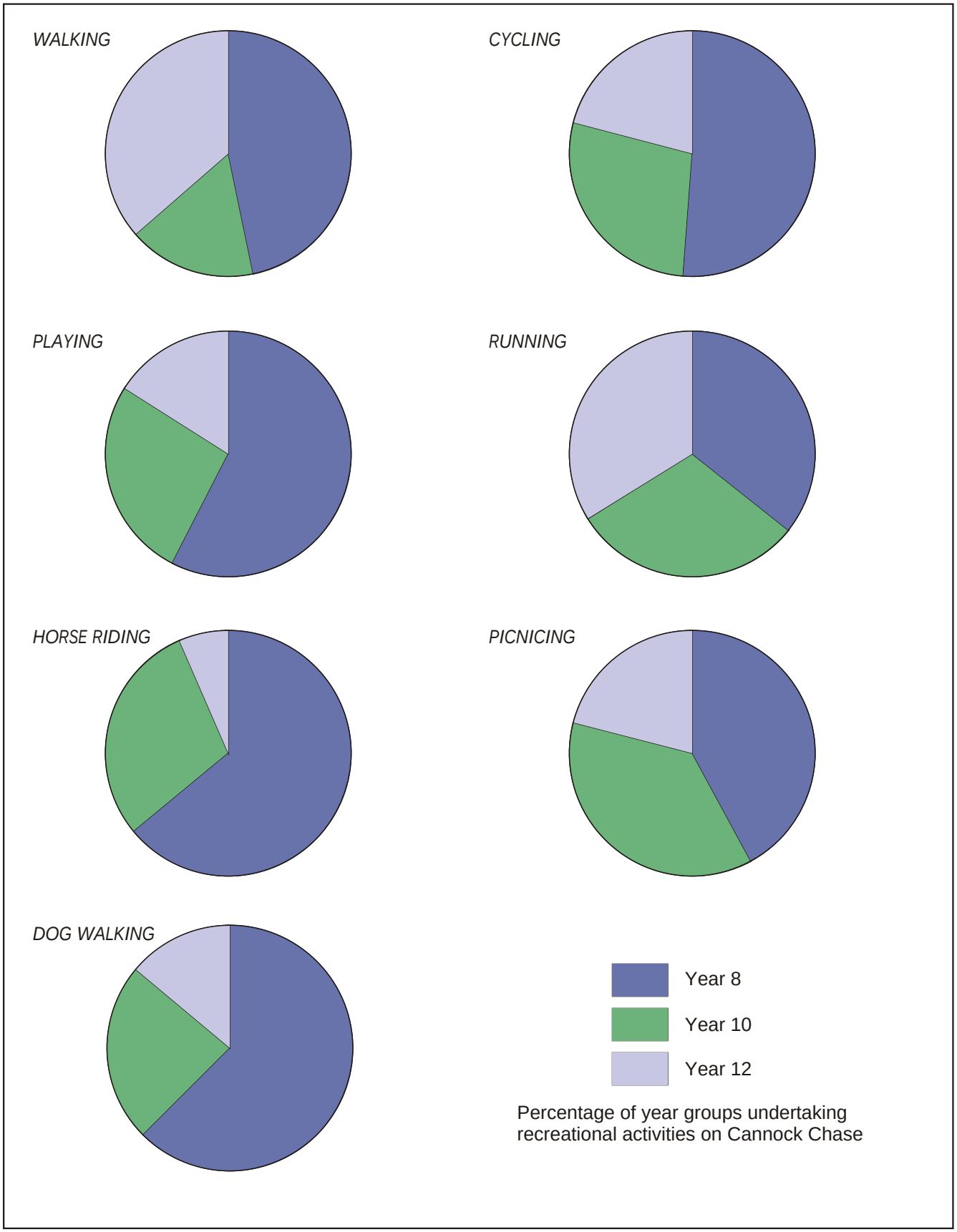


Figure 7.3 Frequency of visits made by teenagers to Cannock Chase AONB during the summer and at other times of year

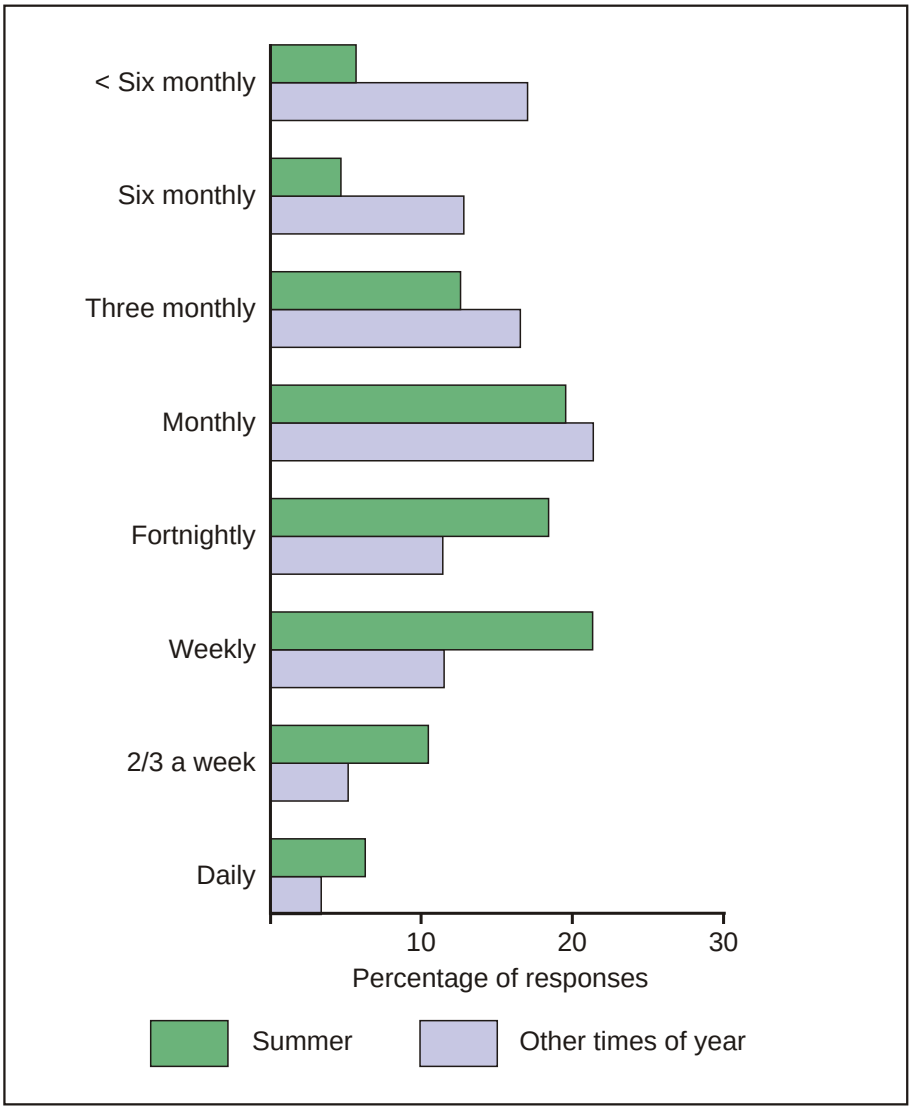


Figure 7.4 Relationship between duration of visit to and recreational activities* of teenage visitors to Cannock Chase AONB

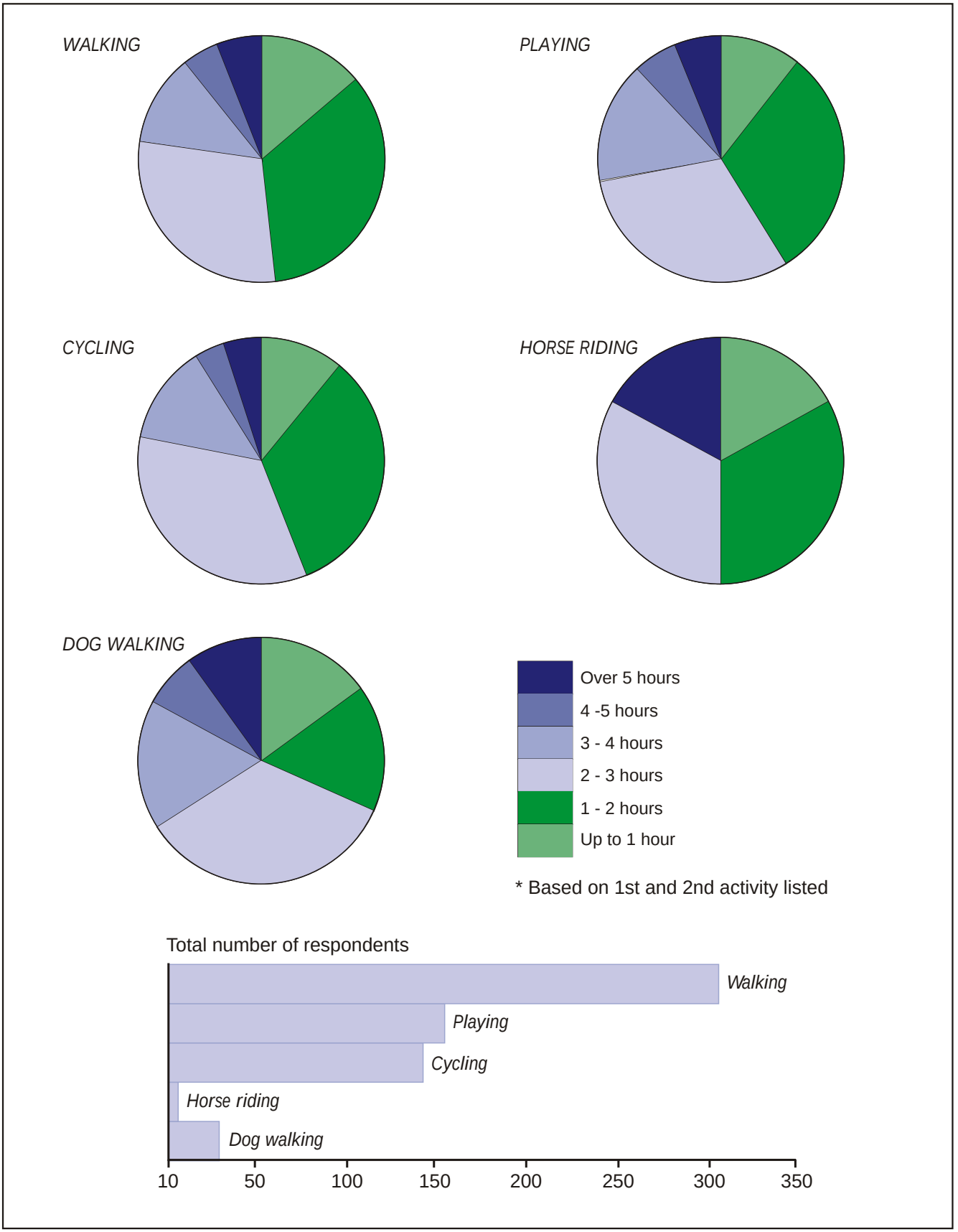
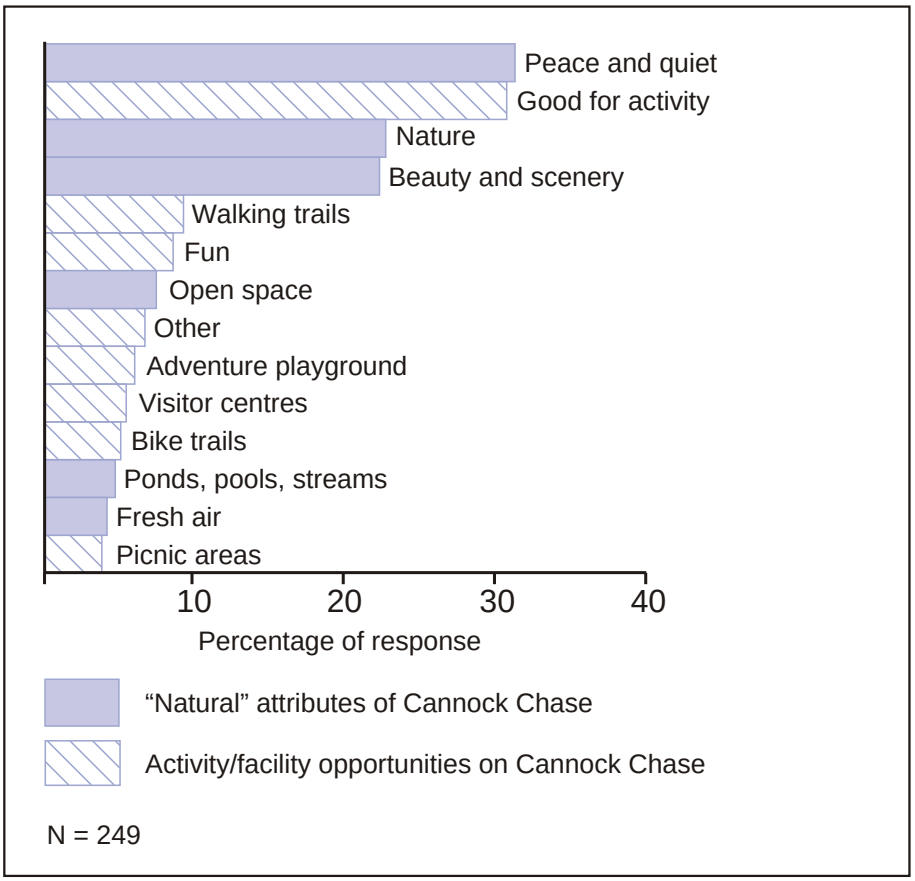


Figure 7.5 Main “likes” of teenagers concerning Cannock Chase AONB



Photograph A

Photograph B

Photograph C

Photograph D

Photograph E

Photograph F

Photograph G

Photograph H

Photograph I

Photograph J

8. MANAGEMENT ISSUES & PROBLEMS

In this final section, the report focuses upon the visitors' evaluations of key aspects of current provision within Cannock Chase AONB and examines the public reactions to a series of ideas and proposals that are contained within the Draft Review of the Plan for Cannock Chase AONB. In so doing, it is intended that the report will provide guidance on a range of management issues and associated problems and the latter parts of this section will attempt to draw together the central findings of the visitor survey as they relate to the discussions contained within the Draft Review.

8.1 Visitors' Evaluation of Basic Facilities on the Chase.

For an amenity area such as Cannock Chase AONB - in which the overwhelming weight of participation is within informal, loosely structured, and passive or only gently active recreations - facility requirements are comparatively straightforward. The majority will require places to leave motor vehicles in locations that are : convenient to the sites that they wish to visit; are of an appropriate physical condition; and are relatively secure. Secondly, users require access, either to areas of land and/or - more typically (given the emphasis within the AONB on recreational walking and cycling) - to paths and tracks. These routes need to be adequately signed (considering that the majority of the population cannot read maps reliably) and they need to be maintained in a condition that matches the uses for which they are intended. Thirdly, most users (although not all) carry some expectation of finding basic services such as toilets and perhaps opportunities to buy food and drink, and for a minority - especially visitors with disabilities - there may be particular requirements that need to be met if they are to enjoy effective access. Fourthly, most users require some level of provision of information - both for purposes of guidance and, more selectively, interpretation of the AONB. For repeat and regular users, the information needs are often minimal, but for those who use the area less often or who are first-time visitors, information provision is a common expectation.

Respondents in both the residents and on-site visitor surveys were asked to give their assessment of the provision and quality of a range of these basic facilities. The question used a Likert scale in which specific facilities (or attribute of facilities) was allocated a score by each respondent to indicate their personal assessment of the facility in question. Hence, a score of "1" indicated that the respondent viewed the facility or attribute as "unsatisfactory; "3" represented a view that provision was average or adequate; whilst a top score of "5" indicated excellence. Intermediate scores of "2" and "4" represented ratings of "poor" and "good" respectively. Provision was also made for people who did not know or who were

unable to answer. Eight aspects of provision were tested and the combined results of the opinions of residents and on-site visitors for each aspect are set out in Fig. 8.1.

a. *Provision and Condition of Car Parking*. Visitors are mostly positive in their evaluation of current provision and condition of car parking areas on the Chase. They are especially positive on provision, where 74% of those who answered felt it was either "good" or "excellent". Only 5% of the sample felt provision was "poor" or "unsatisfactory".

From additional comments received, the positive response reflects the relative frequency with which car parks are provided across the Chase and the fact that they offer a wide choice from a range of contrasting places from which to base a visit. Some (for example Milford or Marquis Drive are quite busy and are developed with other facilities, others are much quieter and more secluded). It is also the case that individual car parks seldom reach their capacity, so visitors are rarely confronted with problems of having to find spaces to leave their vehicles, except perhaps at busy times at places such as Milford.

Visitors were, however, less complimentary on the condition of car parks. A majority (53%) still felt car park conditions were "good" or "excellent", but the remainder were less impressed and 13% felt conditions were "poor" or worse. Older visitors, in particular, were more likely to be critical of conditions within car parks, possibly because for some of these users, the car park is more central to the visit. Throughout the survey period (and at a cross-section of sites), older people were routinely observed sitting in, or close to, parked cars. Typically they would be reading or simply taking in the view.

From inspection of all the car parks conducted as a routine part of the research programme, it is evident that the physical condition of the car parks does vary substantially. In some cases (for example at Marquis Drive and the Cemeteries), both the approach roads and the main parking areas are of a metalled surface which can provide few grounds for complaint. Elsewhere, car parks are accessed by tracks that are occasionally rough and potted (for example at a number of sites on Anson's Bank and at some of the smaller sites accessed off Chase Road). Although the ground conditions generally benefit from the free-draining qualities of the Chase as a whole, some car parks do suffer from wet ground from time to time. The main car park at Birches Valley, for example, is often quite muddy.

b. *Signposting and Condition of Paths*. Earlier sections of this report have emphasised the value of the Chase as a place for recreational walking and the signing and condition of paths is therefore a significant concern. Here, the visiting public is rather less appreciative of current provision and more than half felt that the signposting of paths was, at best, "average". More significantly, just over 21% felt the signposting to be "poor" or "unsatisfactory". Criticism was especially marked amongst respondents in the middle aged categories (between 35 and 54 years) and amongst the higher (AB) social groups.

The primary problems that appear to underpin the dissatisfaction relate to a range of issues, including : an absence of signs at selected locations; problems of identifying signs within the landscape; and occasionally, their interpretation. In general, the AONB management has favoured a system of discrete signposting, using wooden posts with small, colour-coded directional arrows, sometimes with a route name or destination. In keeping with the over-riding objective of maintaining the natural beauty of the AONB, this approach is generally appropriate although, as a means of public guidance, it is also vulnerable. Posts are easily removed, broken or turned by vandals, whilst directional arrows can quickly become discoloured and hard to detect. Posts are occasionally hard to detect against the natural background. Some are ambiguous, especially where a marked route changes direction or divides and the post simply shows two identical arrows pointing in opposing directions. People who join a trail at such points may easily become disoriented.

The navigational problems that visitors report are not always helped by the level of information provided on many of the leaflets that support the system of self-guided walks. Many visitors will bring with them a poorly-developed sense of direction and minimal skills as map readers, but paradoxically, the simplified and generalised maps that countryside agencies commonly issue for use on self-guided trails are actually amongst the hardest form of map to read with precision. Under these circumstances, good signing is essential to help visitors follow their chosen routes.

In contrast to the slightly negative perceptions of signposting, visitors recognise and appreciate the quality of the paths themselves. Over much of the Chase, the free-draining qualities of the ground ensures that paths are typically dry and firm. Only 8% of the respondents felt path conditions were "poor" or "unsatisfactory", whilst 57% rated them as "good" or "excellent".

Where path conditions are less satisfactory, it is typically the activities of some visitors that deepens the problem. In some popular areas (for example around Milford) there is quite significant erosion of the ground through heavy use by walkers, whilst elsewhere the

activities of mountain bikers and people riding horses creates more substantial, but localised damage (see Section 5.2 above). Ironically, one of the attributes that attracts mountain bike riders to use Cannock Chase is the quality of the ground and a number of cyclists that were interviewed stated that the good condition of the paths was an important consideration in their decision to use the AONB. However, whilst there are undoubtedly management problems that surround the use (and abuse) of paths by cyclists and horse-riders, together with local pressures from walkers, the overall perception of users is that paths are very good.

c. *Availability and Condition of Toilets.* Whilst most users had a view on the provision and condition of car parking and the signposting and condition of paths, there were a smaller number who expressed views on provision of toilet facilities and their cleanliness. In fact, with respect to perceptions of the cleanliness of toilets, more than half the people interviewed (53%) stated that they "didn't know" - indicating that toilets were not used by these visitors. A smaller proportion - nearly 17% - offered no opinion on the availability of toilets. Non-use can, of course, be a measure of non-provision and as Section 5.3 (above) has identified, provision of toilets emerged at the top of the list of additional facilities generated by those users who identified a need for more provision.

This is reflected in the results under analysis here, for amongst those who answered (85% of the sample), 62% felt existing provision was either "poor" or "unsatisfactory" and only 16% said it was "good" or "excellent". Given that nearly two thirds of the site-based interviews were conducted at locations where toilets are provided (Milford, Marquis Drive and Birches Valley) this suggests that there are issues here that need to be addressed. Dissatisfaction was especially marked amongst younger people (aged 34 or under) and this may well reflect the particular concerns over access to toilets amongst family groups with young children. This is reinforced by the fact that dissatisfaction was high amongst users whose principal activity was playing games - a typical family activity. Rather surprisingly, men were more critical of toilet provision than women, although the differences were slight and not statistically significant.

More positively, amongst the (large) minority who do use the toilets and who commented upon the cleanliness of the facilities, perceptions are very positive. Here, 65% stated that the cleanliness was either "good" or "excellent" and only 16% feeling they were "poor" or "unsatisfactory". Toilet facilities at Birches Valley were seen by respondents to be especially good. There were no significant differences in the response to this question according to any of the variables with which it was cross-tabulated.

d. *Information Services*. It has already been noted (Section 3.5) that the use of information services by people visiting the Chase is often limited in extent and probably only occasional in nature. Consequently, just over 30% of the respondents were unable to answer this part of the question. Amongst those who did, perceptions were positive with more than half of the users of the services rating them as "good" or "excellent" and only 15% as "poor" or "unsatisfactory". Younger visitors were more likely to be critical, perhaps due lower levels of knowledge of the Chase that they may possess in comparison to older people who may have been visiting for a greater number of years and have acquired a more complete knowledge of the AONB as a result.

Areas of improvement within the information services that were mentioned by respondents during interviews included : the extension of the opening times of the main information centres at Marquis Drive and Birches Valley; wider use of guided walks; more information on self-guided walks or rides; wider provision of information boards and maps at sites on the Chase (for example in car parks); and better provision of information on wildlife and where to see it. There were also complaints about the extended closure of the Marquis Drive Visitor Centre during redevelopment (although equally widespread appreciation of the new facility when it did reopen) and negative comment about the seemingly permanent closure of the small centre at Milford and its progressive physical decay. The absence of any information at Castle Ring (either directional or interpretive) also drew negative comment.

e. *Facilities for the Disabled*. Because disability touches only a minority of users of the countryside, most respondents (69%) were unable to comment on provision for the disabled. Amongst those who did, perceptions were balanced more towards the positive end of the scale than the negative, but not significantly so. Thirty nine percent felt provision was "good" or "excellent", but 34% disagreed, rating provision as "poor" or "unsatisfactory". There were no clear patterns within the overall response, although women were rather more critical than men. This may reflect a greater level of awareness of the issue amongst women, through the wider role than women tend to play as carers for people with disabilities.

Part of the problem in providing countryside access for people with disabilities is that the nature of disability varies considerably and the requirements of different disabled users can be very specific. However, interviewers did gather opinions from a small number of disabled visitors and from these discussions several basic needs were identified. These included : good vehicular access onto level, surfaced parking areas, with wide, marked bays for disabled users; disabled toilets; and paths and associated facilities (such as picnic areas or viewpoints) that are surfaced to a standard that is suited to use by people in wheelchairs or with visual- and/or mobility-based disabilities, i.e. firm and even.

The preceding discussion and the associated illustration of results contained in Fig. 8.1 will provide a broad view of public responses. To help summarise this part of the discussion, Table 8.1 lists each attribute that was rated according to the mean "score" assigned by respondents. This is intended to provide an indication of comparative levels of satisfaction and perhaps assist in identifying areas of greater or lesser concern.

Table 8.1
Mean "scores" assigned to basic facilities by visitors to Cannock Chase AONB

Facility or Attribute	Mean Score*
Provision of car parking	4.10
Condition of car parking	3.59
Sign-posting of paths	3.39
Condition of paths	3.70
Availability of toilets	2.51
Cleanliness of toilets	3.92
Information services	3.60
Facilities for the disabled	3.12

* against a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 = unsatisfactory and 5 = excellent
N is variable in all cases

8.2 Visitors' Reactions to Possible Changes in the Management of the Chase

Alongside the assessment of existing facilities, respondents were also asked to indicate their support or opposition to a cross-section of ideas and proposals that are mooted in the Draft Review of the Plan for Cannock Chase AONB. Six proposals were offered for consideration and the summary of the overall patterns of response to each is given in Fig. 8.2.

a. *Provision of Special Routes for Horses and Cyclists.* Issues of conflict between walkers (as the dominant recreational user group on the Chase), cyclists and equestrian users have been identified at several points in the earlier sections of the report. In particular, concerns over safety when these different users come into contact were widely aired and lesser problems of damage to paths were also evident. These are not the sole areas of conflict (both actual or potential) but they are the most conspicuous and widely reported.

Segregation of incompatible users is a well-tried management technique within countryside recreation and respondents in both the resident and on-site visitor surveys were asked about their likely support for special routes for equestrian users and cyclists. The levels of support were, in both cases, extremely high - with 70% expressing "support" or "strong

support" for special routes for horses and over 81% expressing the same for routes for cyclists. Only 9% opposed routes for horses and 8% opposed routes for cyclists, sometimes on the grounds that these users should be excluded altogether. Only a small number of horse riders were interviewed as part of the main surveys and all were supportive, in varying degrees, of the idea of special routes, as were 80% of cyclists. There was, however, a small minority of cyclists (around 10%) who objected to the notion of special routes. This is likely to be a reflection of a view that is widely held within the cycling fraternity. The Chase is seen as offering particularly fine opportunities for challenging, off-road cycling and some cyclists fear that designated routes may produce only a tamed, restricted and ultimately familiar set of riding conditions.

b. *Provision for touring caravans*. The Draft Review promises to consider the provision for tourist caravans at Marquis Drive, as an addition to existing sites at Silver Trees, Tackeroo and Wandon. Public opinion is generally unsupportive of the proposal with 28% expressing support and nearly 49% expressing opposition. Opposition probably arises because changes of this nature tend to be seen as a form of development and as reported in Section 5, many respondents expressed the sentiment that they didn't want to see the Chase changed and/or fall prey to further commercialisation. Caravan sites tend to be seen as a form of commercialisation and there are also problems attached to visual intrusion of vans in the landscape, unless carefully managed.

Unsurprisingly, perhaps, opposition to provision for caravans was stronger amongst the local residents who were interviewed in their homes than amongst the wider cohort of visitors interviewed on the Chase itself. More than half (51%) of the local residents objected to the proposal to provide for more caravans, whereas on-site respondents were marginally more tolerant. However, neither set of respondents was positively disposed towards the idea.

c. *Traffic calming on main roads*. Support for this proposal is strong, with 60% in the combined sample expressing agreement in principle and only 14% being "strongly opposed". Opposition amongst local residents (who perhaps use the Chase roads more routinely for non-recreational purposes) was slightly higher than amongst people sampled in the on-site surveys - 23% compared with 21%, but this is not a significant difference. Older people were more supportive of traffic calming than younger ones, as were people in the higher social groups compared with the lower ones. There were no significant differences between levels of support amongst men and women, nor according to the main activities that were being pursued, apart from strong support for calming from horse riders - all of whom were in favour of the proposal.

d. *Extension or increases to car parking charges*. Payment for parking on the Chase is an emotive issue that tends to draw a rather polarised response, although the overwhelming weight of opinion is towards non-payment. Hence, whilst nearly 20% of visitors were supportive of an extension of charges, two thirds were opposed, including 59% of the sample who were "strongly opposed". Such high levels of opposition tends to reflect a deep-seated culture of non-payment for access to the countryside - a perception that has developed widely since the introduction of AONBs in the 1949 Act and which sees the countryside and its visual amenity as a public good to which citizens ought to have unfettered rights of access.

Some differences in attitudes were evident within different constituent groups in the sample. Support for the extension of car parking charges is strongest amongst middle-aged and elderly users of the Chase and most firmly opposed by younger groups. Within the different socio-economic groups, support is - rather curiously - most forthcoming from the lower (and less affluent) categories and most firmly opposed by people in the professional A and B groups, even though the latter two presumably have a greater ability to pay. This tends to reinforce the observation made above that opposition is a culturally-grounded phenomenon rather than an economic one. There were no significant differences according to the gender of respondents or the activities on which visitors to the AONB were engaged.

Opposition is stronger amongst local residents than general visitors, probably reflecting differences in the patterns of visiting that are generated by people who live on the doorstep of the Chase.

Attitudes to payment for parking did reveal a shift towards a more positive position when the proposition that was put to respondents talked of using proceeds from (raised) parking charges to benefit the management of the Chase. Under these conditions, support within the combined survey results rose to almost one third and opposition fell to 51%. Local residents, in particular, showed a greater willingness to support the principle of payment for parking as a means of supporting the Chase (32% being supportive compared with just 14% who were supportive of a simple extension of charges across all car parks). Younger groups of users also expressed a higher level of support than previously, but the top social groups remained firmly opposed to the principle. As before, there were no significant differences in the attitudes of men and women towards the question.

The manner in which users did appear to alter their patterns of opposition to the question of payment for use of parking on the Chase suggests that any extension or alteration to the requirements to pay requires careful presentation and justification, but that if presented in particular ways, wider levels of public support are possible.

8.3 The Draft Review in the Context of the Findings of the Survey

To conclude this report, the closing paragraphs offer a brief and, hopefully, objective commentary on some of the main proposals in the Draft Review, in the light of the general findings of the Visitor Survey.

At the outset, the Draft Review quite properly reasserts the primary purpose of the AONB as the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty and that provision for recreation needs to be consistent with this over-riding objective and the associated needs of agriculture, forestry and other uses (DR para.1.3). The overwhelming majority of visitors to the Chase endorse this view and most are concerned that physical development or encroachment should be resisted and change kept to a minimum that is consistent with proper management. This is not to say that all developments will necessarily draw opposition and indeed, many of the suggested improvements that visitors themselves have voiced in Section 5 of this report necessitate development of one kind or another (for example, wider provision of toilets). But it does suggest that the scale and extent of development or associated changes needs to be carefully managed in order to win public support or acceptance. Hence, for example, the simple proposal to consider the development of new provision for touring caravans at Marquis Drive (DR para.3.3/M9) does not command public support on the evidence of this survey.

The evidence from the survey suggests that management issues need to be clearly explained in order for people to understand and appreciate the requirements of proper management of the different habitats and environments of the Chase. Forestry work, in particular, is quite widely perceived to be a destructive and undesirable facet of the management of the AONB when it entails felling and movement of timber in large quantities, and it is clear that the needs of modern silviculture have to be more clearly explained and more widely disseminated to allay public concerns.

The Draft Review identifies an escalation in conflicts, both between different users and between usage and the wider objectives of conservation as a key concern (DR para.1.14 et seq.) The Visitor Survey confirms this view to be correct and identifies conflicts between walkers, cyclists and, to a lesser extent, equestrian users, as lying at the core of the problem surrounding user groups.

The survey revealed that Cannock Chase is one of the premier areas for mountain bike riding in southern England and it is widely promoted as such within the mountain biking press and amongst clubs. Growth in demand for access to the Chase for this sport will

inevitably increase in the short-to-medium term and the Management Plan will need to address this issue. It is evident that this activity requires closer regulation if it is to be harmonised with other uses and objectives of the AONB, but effective implementation of any regulation requires the support of the participants themselves. Although there is strong support in principle from the cyclists for special trails, the specific needs and aspirations of this user group should be established with a greater level of precision and understanding than has been possible within this present study. The partners may wish, therefore, to give some consideration to ways of eliciting the views of this group through a further and more detailed study of mountain biking and/or a process of consultation with cyclists and cycling groups.

Horse riders are relatively few in number (by comparison) although in some areas - for example, the Oldacre Valley - the activities of commercial riding stables and pony trekking centres produces significant local concentrations of riders. The Visitor Survey shows that both general users and most horse riders are supportive of special provision for horse riding and the authors of this report commend the proposal (DR para.3.3/M8) for an Access Group to explore the viability of a limited number of surfaced bridleways. However, as part of this process the views of users - and especially commercial users - need to be established and considered. In particular, the acceptability of limiting use to a comparatively small number of trails needs to be established. Experience from elsewhere (in particular Wales) shows that pony trekking centres habitually use a comparatively small number of routes and it is therefore possible that riding centres on the fringes of the Chase may be similarly willing to limit the range of their usage. However, the same cannot be said for independent riders, some of whom will perceive the Chase as an area to be explored at will and which they wish to access through a wide range of locations.

In terms of damage to the AONB, the Visitor Survey reveals public concerns to be focused upon a relatively narrow range of issues. Across the survey as a whole, there is growing public recognition that areas of the AONB are suffering physical damage - especially from horses and mountain bikes - and there is particular concern about the increasing incidence of littering throughout the area. Users are quite consistent in identifying wider provision of litter and dog bins as a desirable improvement. Some explained that they dislike taking refuse and (especially) dog waste home in their cars, whilst many felt that provision of bins would help to reduce incidental littering. There are, of course, significant implications for maintenance of wider provision of litter bins which must be emptied on a regular basis, but the strength of public opinion suggests that this issue should at least be considered.

The Draft Review identifies improved interpretation, visitor management, access and traffic calming as key elements within a proposed HLF bid under the title "The Changing Chase"

(DR para.1.18). The need to focus management attention onto each of these issues is widely supported by people interviewed in the present study, albeit with some variation in the levels of enthusiasm.

Interpretation material is at present uneven in its development and provision and it is evident that many visitors would welcome wider provision of information at most sites on the Chase. On the basis of the evidence gathered in this survey, maps, information boards and guidance on local walks, the landscape and its wildlife should be considered for all the principal car parking locations and respondents were often critical of the evident lack of such provision. Castle Ring is a typical case where there is no information available either to guide visitors on where to walk from the car park or how to interpret the archaeological remains. Visitors were also critical of the lack of provision at Milford Common and several suggested that a new visitor centre should be built at this site (see DR para.3.3/M24).

The survey also reveals a strong feeling that provision for visitors should extend to wider availability of public toilets. Once again, the view that the larger car parks would be appropriate venues for additional toilets was quite commonly voiced. Constraints in terms of close access to water supply and sewage systems are clearly a limitation and there are additional problems of maintenance and its cost, but as with the issue of litter, the strength of public opinion suggests that this is a concern that needs to be considered. Castle Ring and the Cemeteries offer two locations at which provision of public toilets might well be appropriate.

Visitor management and access issues should also address the problems of signage. This is discussed in the Draft Review (para. 3.3/M15) in the context of resolving problems of illegal use of paths and forging of new routes on the open heath, but the Visitor Survey highlights a more basic need for better signposting across the AONB as a whole.

The issue of car parking charges (DR para.3.3/M14) is contentious amongst the visitors and users interviewed for this study. Earlier parts of this section of the report have revealed the strength of public opposition to the use of charges and it is evident that any firm proposals to either increase or extend charges will need careful presentation and justification. Otherwise, there are risks that wider imposition of charges will lead to a much greater incidence of fly-parking which (field observation suggests) is presently not a problem across the AONB as a whole.

Many of the local people who were interviewed and who went regularly to the Chase expressed opinions that charges could be used much more flexibly. This might be through wider use of concessionary (or free) parking for residents and/or the introduction of flexible

payments for different lengths of stay, rather than fixed rate day-tickets. The day ticket is seen as penalising people who visit often but for a short duration - perhaps to walk a dog - and encourages evasion. Users also complained that information on season tickets for the car parks was not displayed with sufficient prominence and was out-of-date in the information that was provided.

Visitors who were supportive of charges were often of the opinion that proceeds should be used to improve the provision of the parking facilities themselves. Better security (especially through the use of security cameras at the larger sites) was suggested, as were improvements to surfacing at some sites. In developing the Management Plan, consideration therefore needs to be given to the feasibility of linking any increase in revenues from car parking to visible enhancement of the services provided at these locations.

In seeking to develop an appropriate management plan for Cannock Chase AONB, it is evident that a fine balance needs to be drawn between the protection of the essential qualities of the Chase (that are widely valued by users) and the selective development of additional facilities and services (that users also profess to needing). The Draft Review speculates on the need to reduce visitor pressures (DR para.3.1) and elsewhere argues for a containment of use within existing patterns and parameters. Hence, active promotion of the AONB as a visitor area and provision for new uses are explicitly and implicitly rejected throughout much of the discussion.

The practicalities of sustaining this approach may, however, prove problematic. The evidence of the Visitor Survey shows very clearly the role that the Chase fulfils in meeting demands for amenity space amongst local and sub-regional populations. These visitors who - for the most part - are habitual users of the Chase, are fully cognisant of what the AONB has to offer and are expressing patterns of demand that are not easily deflected to other amenity areas. Additionally, whilst the AONB management may be resolute in its determination to avoid promotion of the area to a wider market, it is unable to influence the actions of others in the same way. The growing reputation of the Chase amongst the mountain-bike fraternity is an excellent case in point. Thus, whilst the reduction of visitor pressure might be a desirable objective that may even be attainable at a very local level, the Management Plan will be more effective if it addresses the issues of dispersal or containment as a key to the effective integration of conservation and use.

8.4 Summary

The key findings in this part of the survey are as follows :

a. Satisfaction with Facilities

- Visitors are very satisfied with the provision for car parking
- They recognise that toilets (where provided) are well-kept
- The condition of paths and trails together with information services is also perceived to be generally good.
- Visitors are less satisfied with the condition of car parks, although this varies from site to site.
- There are more widespread concerns about the quality of sign-posting of paths.
- Most visitors had no view on facilities for the disabled, but amongst those who did, the feeling was that these could be improved.
- Over 60% felt provision of toilets in the AONB was "poor" or "unsatisfactory".

b. Support for Management Proposals

- Visitors are strongly supportive of ideas for wider use of special routes for horses and, especially, cyclists (where 80% support the idea).
- In contrast, only 27% support provision for touring caravans and over 49% are clearly opposed.
- Visitors generally support the idea of wider use of traffic calming measures on main roads (60%) although nearly a quarter are opposed.
- There is only limited support for the extension of car parking charges to all areas (19%) with 68% opposed. Opposition is particularly strong amongst local residents, younger users, and people in the upper social categories.
- Visitors are more inclined to support increases in existing car park charges if proceeds are used to support the AONB, but a majority remain opposed.

Figure 8.1 Visitor opinions on selected facilities or attributes of Cannock Chase AONB (excludes “don’t knows”)

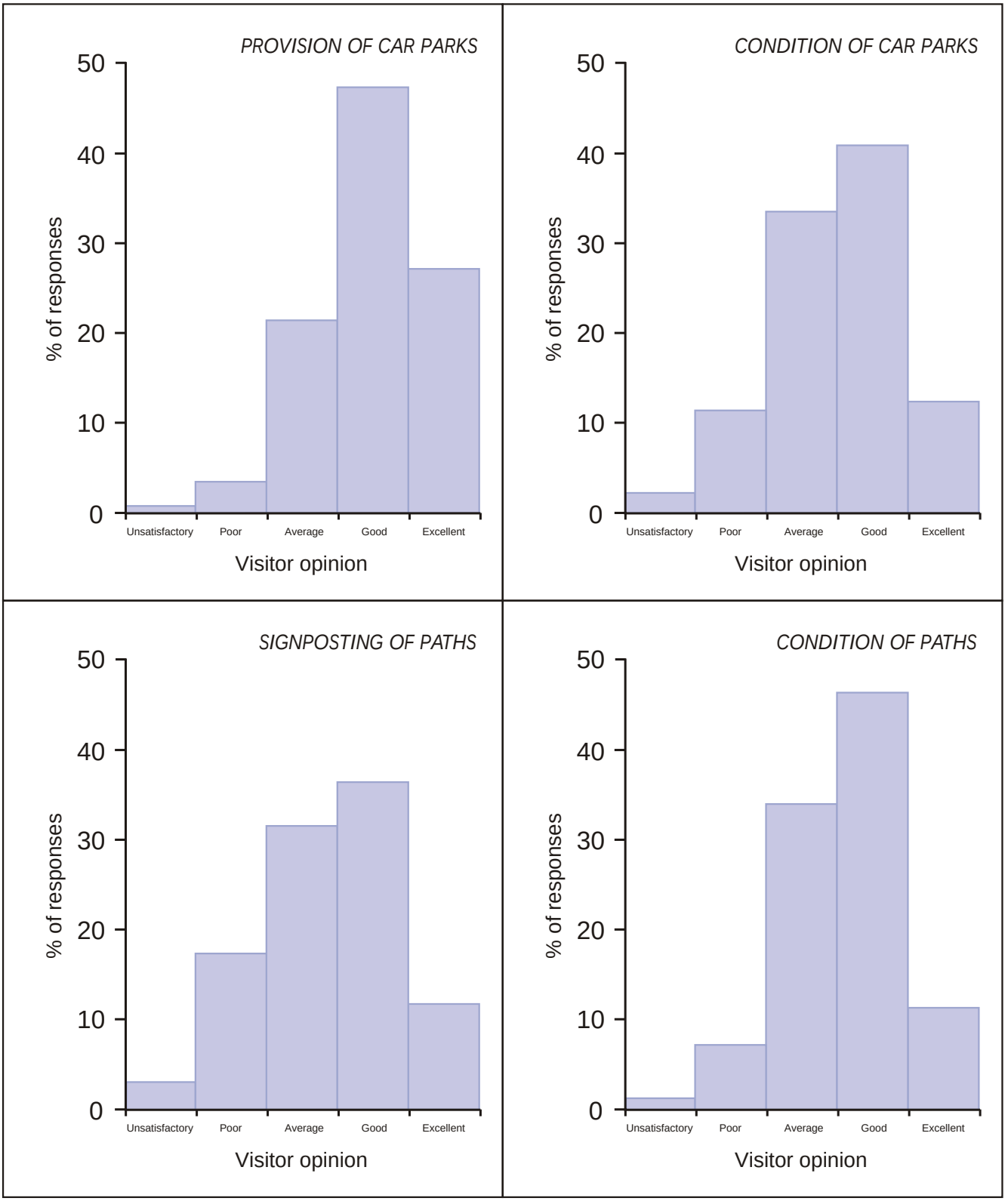


Figure 8.1 (continued) Visitor opinions on selected facilities or attributes of Cannock Chase AONB (excludes “don’t knows”)

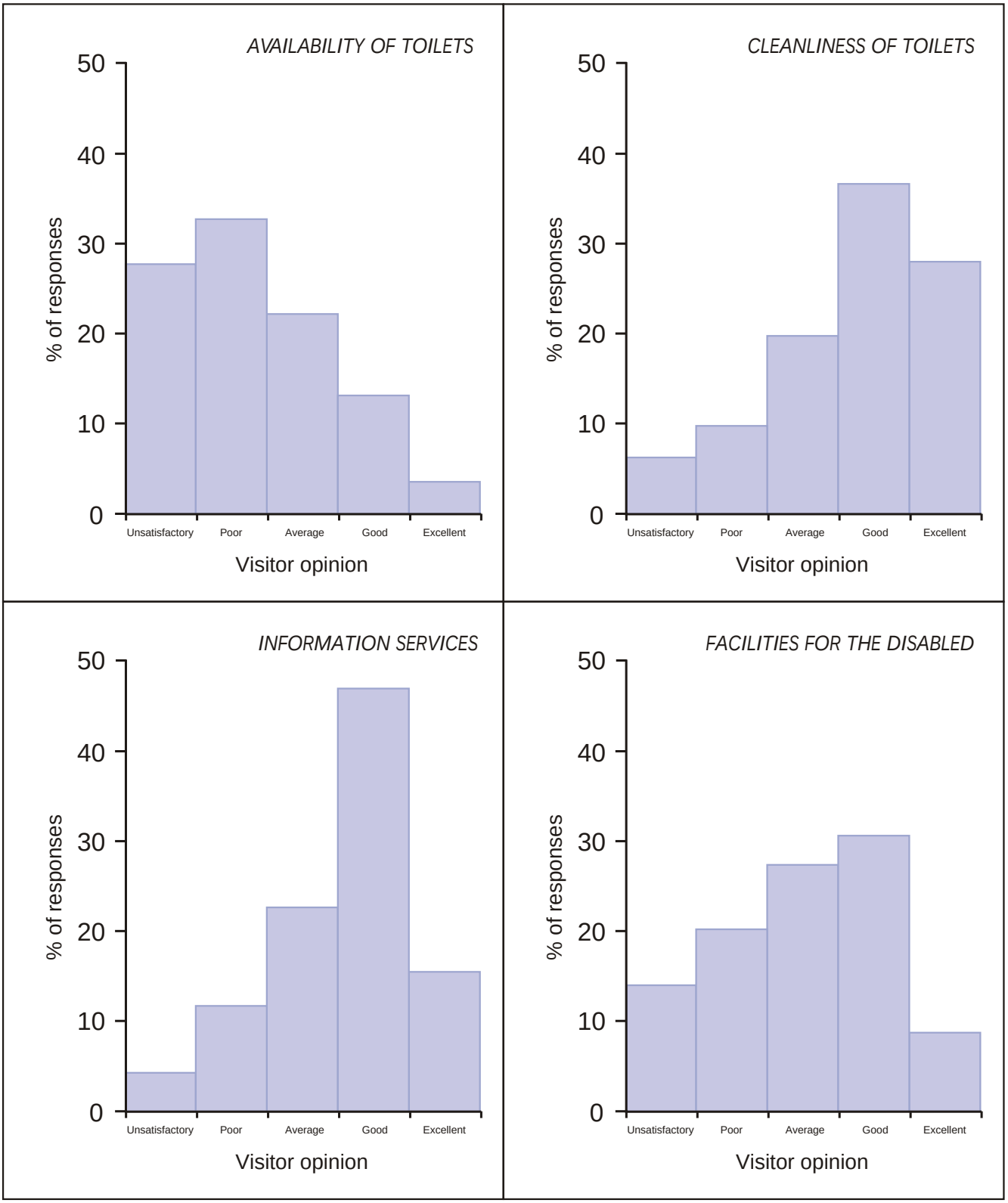
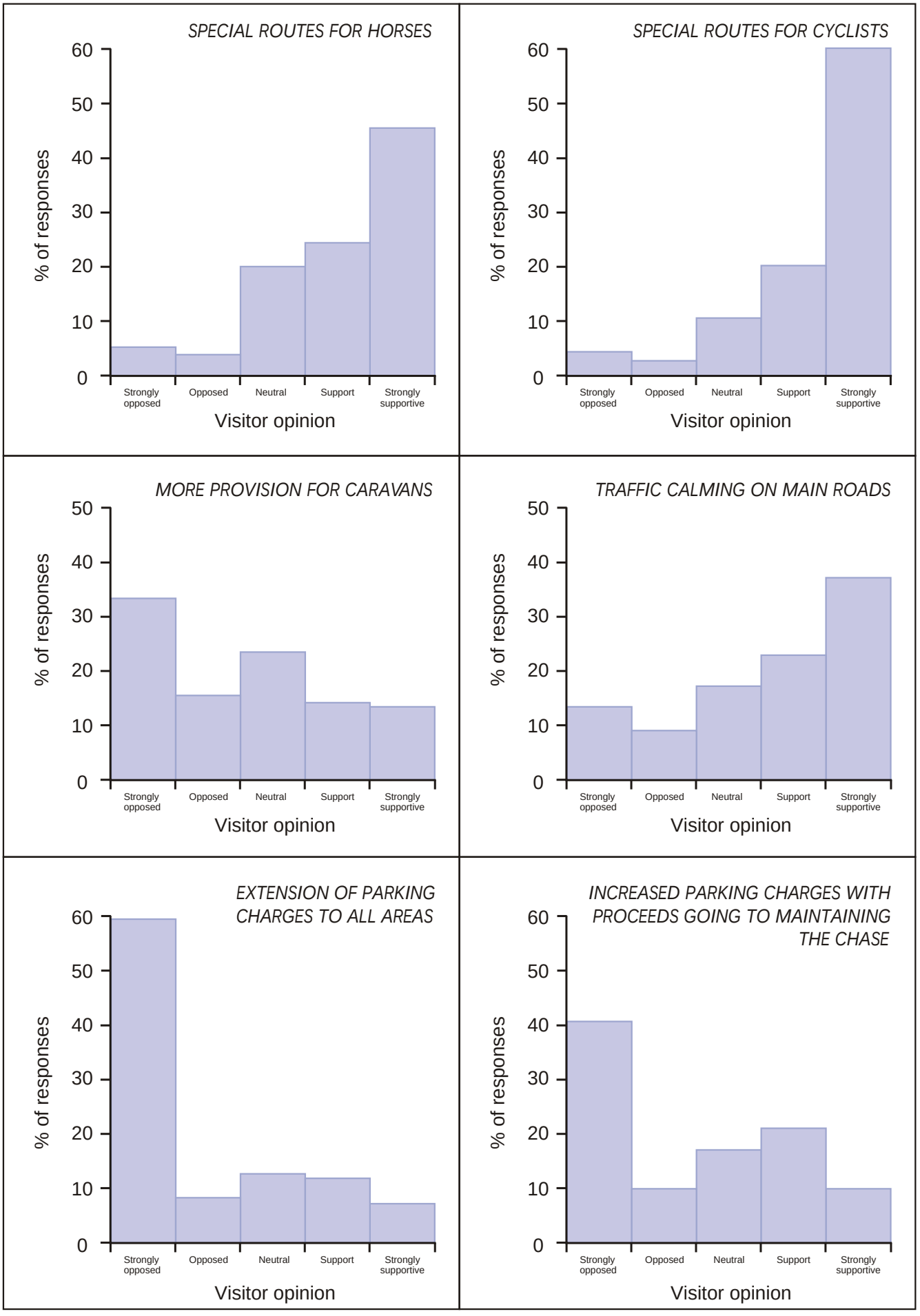


Figure 8.2 Visitors reactions to proposed changes to Cannock Chase AONB (excludes “don’t knows”)



VISITOR

CANNOCK CHASE PARTNERS / STAFFORDSHIRE UNIVERSITY

CANNOCK CHASE AONB VISITOR SURVEY 2000

Date..…….……. Day…….....…….. Time.....

Location……...……...…….. Weather.....

---

1. Are you visiting Cannock Chase today (a) from your home ? [ ]
or (b) as a visitor staying in the area [ ]

Ask staying visitors only

la. Where are you staying ?.....
(Name of town/village and/or facility)

1b. What type of accommodation are you using ?

Hotel, motel or guest house	[ ]
Bed and Breakfast establishment	[ ]
Caravan or camp site	[ ]
Staying with friends or relatives	[ ]

lc. How long will you be staying in the area ?

Day	[ ]
Between 2 and 3 days	[ ]
Between 4 and 7 days	[ ]
More than 7 days	[ ]

Ask all respondents

2. In which city, town or village do you normally reside ?.....
(Country, if not UK).....

3. What is/are the main activity(ies) that you expect to do during your visit today ?

Walking	[ ]	Sight-seeing	[ ]	Relaxing/S' bathing	[ ]
Playing games	[ ]	Picnicing	[ ]	Horse riding	[ ]
Cycling	[ ]	Nature study	[ ]	Bird watching	[ ]
Running/o'teer	[ ]	Eat out	[ ]	Visit attractions	[ ]
Educational visit	[ ]				

Other (please specify).....

If the respondent is visiting attractions ask

3a. Which attractions are you intending to visit or have visited ? (Write in names)

.....

.....

4. How long do you expect your visit to Cannock Chase today to last ?

Up to 1 hour	[ ]	Over 1 / up to 2 hrs	[ ]	Over 2 / up to 3 hrs	[ ]
Over 3 / up to 4	[ ]	Over 4 / up to 5 hrs	[ ]	Over 5 hrs	[ ]

5. How have you travelled to Cannock Chase today ?

Car/van	[ ]	Public transport (bus)	[ ]
Motor cycle	[ ]	Public transport (train)	[ ]
On foot	[ ]	Bicycle	[ ]
On horseback	[ ]	Other (please specify)	[ ]
		.....	

6. Are you visiting the Chase today

Alone	[ ]	With family	[ ]
With friends	[ ]	With a mix of family and friends	[ ]
In an organised party	[ ]		

If respondent is NOT alone. ask

6a. How many people are there in your group today ? Write in number [ ]

7. Which parts of the Chase do you intend to visit (or have you already visited) today ?

.....

.....

.....

8. In relation to today's visit, can you state approximately how much you have spent (or expect to spend) on the following :-

	Write in amount in £s
Travel (i.e. petrol costs or fares)	[.....]
Parking	[.....]
Admission to local attractions	[.....]
Purchase of food or drink from local establishments	[.....]
Other items purchased from local shops or services (e.g. souvenirs)	[.....]
Hire of equipment	[.....]
Accommodation **(staying visitors only)**	[.....]

9. In planning your visit, did you use any particular sources of information, for example local guide books or leaflets ? YES/NO

9a. **If YES,** can you state which guides or leaflets you used ?
.....

10. Did you (or will you) make any use of Tourist Information Centre services as part of your visit ? YES/NO

l0a. **If YES,** for what purposes?.....
.....

11. Is this your first visit to Cannock Chase, or have you been before ? Ist/BEFORE
<u>If a first time visitor GO TO question 18. If a previous visitor continue with Question 12.</u>

12. How often (roughly) do you visit Cannock Chase ?

	<u>a. in Summer</u>	<u>b. at other times of the year</u>
Daily	[ ]	[ ]
2/3 times a week	[ ]	[ ]
About once a week	[ ]	[ ]
About once a fortnight	[ ]	[ ]
About once a month	[ ]	[ ]
About once in 3 months	[ ]	[ ]
About once in 6 months	[ ]	[ ]
Less than once in 6 months	[ ]	[ ]

13. Are there things about Cannock Chase that you particularly like, and if so what are they ? Y/N/DK
.....
.....

14. Are there things about Cannock Chase that you dislike, and if so, what are they ? Y/N/DK
.....
.....

15. Are there facilities that you feel are needed on the Chase but which are not currently provided, and if so, what do you feel is needed ? Y/N/DK
.....
.....

16. Do you have any other suggestions for ways in which the Chase might be improved for visitors, and if so, what are they ? Y/N/DK

.....

.....

17. Is your enjoyment of the Chase ever affected by the activities of others ? Y/N/DK

If YES

17a. What kinds of activities or groups most affect your enjoyment ?

.....

17b. What kinds of problem do you encounter ?

.....

.....

GO TO QUESTION 19

18. Ask first time visitors only,, what attracted you to visit Cannock Chase today ?

.....

.....

.....

Continue with Question 19

19. On a scale of 1 - 5 (where 1 = unsatisfactory; 2 = poor; 3 = average; 4 = good and 5 = excellent), how would you rate the following on the Chase ? (You should not answer if you don't know or do not hold an opnion)

Provision for car parking	1	2	3	4	5	Don't know
The condition of car parks	1	2	3	4	5	Don't know
Sign posting of paths	1	2	3	4	5	Don't know
The condition of paths	1	2	3	4	5	Don't know
Availability of toilets	1	2	3	4	5	Don't know
Cleanliness of toilets	1	2	3	4	5	Don't know
Information services	1	2	3	4	5	Don't know
Facilities for disabled	1	2	3	4	5	Don't know

20. Again, on a scale from 1 to 5, how supportive would you be of the following changes if they were to be introduced on the Chase ? (1 = strongly opposed; 2 = opposed; 3 = neutral; 4 = supportive; 5 = strongly supportive) (Again, you need not answer if you are unsure or do not hold an opinion)

Provision of special routes for horses	1	2	3	4	5	D/K
Provision of special routes for cyclists	1	2	3	4	5	D/K
Provision for touring caravans	1	2	3	4	5	D/K
Traffic calming on main roads	1	2	3	4	5	D/K
Use of car park charges in all areas	1	2	3	4	5	D/K
Increases in car parking charges if proceeds were used to help maintain the Chase	1	2	3	4	5	D/K

Finally. it will help our analysis of the survey if I can record some basic information about yourself. The survey is entirely anonymous and this information is used solely for analysis.

21. **Show card A** In which of these age categories do you fall ?

15 - 24 [ ] 25 - 34 [ ] 35 - 44 [ ] 45 - 54 [ ] 55 - 64 [ ] 65+ [ ]

22. Which of these categories describes your employment status ?

Working full time	[ ]
Working part time	[ ]
Unemployed	[ ]
Retired	[ ]
Student in full time education	[ ]
Housewife/husband not working outside the home	[ ]
Not normally working due to sickness or disability	[ ]

For those who are working ask

22a. What work do you do ?.....

For those who are retired ask

22b. What work did you do ?.....

For those who are unemployed ask

22c. What kind of work do you do when you are in employment ?.....

For those who are a housewife or husband ask

22d. What work does your partner do ?.....

23. Record gender by observation Male [ ] Female [ ]

<u>Thank respondent for their time and assistance. Complete record section at head of the survey form.</u>

SCHOOL

CANNOCK CHASE PARTNERS / STAFFORDSHIRE UNIVERSITY

CANNOCK CHASE AONB VISITOR SURVEY 2000

---

1. What is the name of your school ?.....

2. Which year are you in ? (Please tick the box)

Year 8	[ ]
Year 10	[ ]
Year 12	[ ]

3. Are you male [ ] or female [ ] ? (Please tick the box)

4. Where do you live ? (Please write in the district of the town or your village)

.....

5. What do your parents do for a living ? Father .....

Mother .....

---

6. Do you ever visit Cannock Chase ? (underline your answer) YES / NO
IF YOU HAVE ANSWERED "NO". YOU SHOULD GO TO QU15

7. When you visit the Chase, what are the main activities that you like to do ?
(Place a tick against things that vou do. and write in other things that we may have missed out)

Walking	[ ]	Sight-seeing	[ ]	Relaxing/S' bathing	[ ]
Playing games	[ ]	Picnicing	[ ]	Horse riding	[ ]
Cycling	[ ]	Nature study	[ ]	Bird watching	[ ]
Running/o'teer	[ ]	Eat out	[ ]	Educational visit	[ ]
Visit attractions	[ ]				

Other activities.....
.....

8. How long do your visits to Cannock Chase normally last ? (Please tick the box)

Up to 1 hour	[ ]	Over 1 / up to 2 hrs	[ ]	Over 2 / up to 3 hrs	[ ]
Over 3 / up to 4	[ ]	Over 4 / up to 5 hrs	[ ]	Over 5 hrs	[ ]

9. How do you normally travel to Cannock Chase ? (Please tick the box)

Car/van	[ ]	Public transport (bus)	[ ]
Motor cycle	[ ]	Public transport (train)	[ ]
On foot	[ ]	Bicycle	[ ]
On horseback	[ ]		

10. When you visit the Chase, who do you normally go with ? (Please tick the box)

Alone	[ ]	With family	[ ]
With friends	[ ]	With a mix of family and friends	[ ]
In an organised party	[ ]		

11. Which parts of the Chase do you particularly like to visit ? (Please write in the names of favourite places, if you know them)

.....
.....
.....

12. How often (roughly) do you visit Cannock Chase ? (Please tick the box)

	a. in Summer	b. at other times of the year
Daily	[ ]	[ ]
2/3 times a week	[ ]	[ ]
About once a week	[ ]	[ ]
About once a fortnight	[ ]	[ ]
About once a month	[ ]	[ ]
About once in 3 months	[ ]	[ ]
About once in 6 months	[ ]	[ ]
Less than once in 6 months	[ ]	

13. Are there things about Cannock Chase that you particularly like, and if so what are they ? YES / NO / DON'T KNOW
(Please underline your answer and write in anything you like in the space below)

.....
.....
.....

14. Are there things about Cannock Chase that you dislike, and if so, what are they ? YES / NO / DON'T KNOW
(Please underline our answer and write in anything you dislike in the space below)

.....

.....
.....

NOW GO TO QUESTION 16

15. You should only answer this Question if you do NOT use the Chase

Can you explain why you don't use the Chase ?

.....
.....
.....
.....

16. Do you have any suggestions for ways in which the Chase might be made more attractive to young people, and if so, what are they ?

YES / NO / DON'T KNOW

(Please underline your answer and write in your suggestion)

.....
.....
.....
.....

RESIDENT

CANNOCK CHASE PARTNERS / STAFFORDSHIRE UNIVERSITY

CANNOCK CHASE AONB VISITOR SURVEY 2000

Date..……..……. Day…….....…….. Time.....

Survey Area .....

What is/are the main activity(ies) that you normally do when visiting Cannock Chase?

Walking	[ ]	Sight-seeing	[ ]	Relaxing/S' bathing	[ ]
Playing games	[ ]	Picnicing	[ ]	Horse riding	[ ]
Cycling	[ ]	Nature study	[ ]	Bird watching	[ ]
Running/o'teer	[ ]	Eat out	[ ]	Visit attractions	[ ]
Educational visit	[ ]				

Other (please specify).....

If the respondent visits attraction. ask

la. Which attractions do you like to visit ? (Write in names)
.....
.....

2. How often (roughly) do you visit Cannock Chase ?

	a. in Summer	b. at other times of the year
Daily	[ ]	[ ]
2/3 times a week	[ ]	[ ]
About once a week	[ ]	[ ]
About once a fortnight	[ ]	[ ]
About once a month	[ ]	[ ]
About once in 3 months	[ ]	[ ]
About once in 6 months	[ ]	[ ]
Less than once in 6 months	[ ]	[ ]

3. How long do your visits to Cannock Chase normally last ?

	a. in summer	b. at other times of the year
Up to 1 hour	[ ]	[ ]
Over 1 / up to 2 hrs	[ ]	[ ]
Over 2 / up to 3 hrs	[ ]	[ ]
Over 3 / up to 4 hrs	[ ]	[ ]
Over 4 / up to 5 hrs	[ ]	[ ]
Over 5 hrs	[ ]	[ ]

4. How would you normally travel to Cannock Chase ?

Car/van	[ ]	Public transport (bus)	[ ]
Motor cycle	[ ]	Public transport (train)	[ ]
On foot	[ ]	Bicycle	[ ]
On horseback	[ ]	Other (please specify)	[ ]

5. Would you normally visit the Chase

Alone	[ ]	With family	[ ]
With friends	[ ]	With a mix of family and friends	[ ]
In an organised party	[ ]		

If respondent does NOT visit alone, ask

5a. How many people typically make up your group ? Write in number [ ]

6. Which parts of the Chase do you particularly like to visit ? Write in names
.....
.....
.....

7. Can you estimate approximately how much you spend on a typical visit to the Chase on the following :-

	Write in amount in £s
Travel (i.e. petrol costs or fares)	[ ]
Parking	[ ]
Admission to local attractions	[ ]
Purchase of food or drink from local establishments	[ ]
Other items purchased from local shops or services (e.g. souvenirs)	[ ]
Hire of equipment	[ ]

8. In planning your visits, do you use any particular sources of information, for example local guide-books or leaflets ? YES/NO

8a. **If YES,** can you state which guides or leaflets you use ?

.....

9. Do you ever make any use of Tourist Information Centre services as part of a visit to the Chase ? YES/NO

9a. **If YES,** for what purposes ?.....
.....

10. Are there things about Cannock Chase that you particularly like, and if so what are they ? Y / N
.....
.....

11. Are there things about Cannock Chase that you particularly dislike, and if so, what are they ? Y / N
.....
.....

12. Are there facilities that you feel are needed on the Chase but which are not currently provided, and if so, what do you feel is needed ? Y / N
.....
.....

13. Do you have any other suggestions for ways in which the Chase might be improved for visitors, and if so, what are they ? Y / N
.....
.....

14. Is your enjoyment of the Chase ever affected by the activities of others ? Y / N
.....
.....

If YES

14a. What kinds of activities or groups most affect your enjoyment ?
.....

14b. What kinds of problem do you encounter ?
.....
.....

15. On a scale of 1 - 5 (where 1 = unsatisfactory; 2 = poor; 3 = average; 4 = good and 5 = excellent), how would you rate the following on the Chase ? (:You should not answer if you don't know or do not hold an opinion)

Provision for car parking	1	2	3	4	5	Don't know
The condition of car parks	1	2	3	4	5	Don't know
Sign-posting of paths	1	2	3	4	5	Don't know

The condition of paths	1	2	3	4	5	Don't know
Availability of toilets	1	2	3	4	5	Don't know
Cleanliness of toilets	1	2	3	4	5	Don't know
Information services	1	2	3	4	5	Don't know
Facilities for disabled	1	2	3	4	5	Don't know

16. Again, on a scale from 1 to 5, how supportive would you be of the following changes if they were to be introduced on the Chase ? (1 = strongly opposed; 2 = opposed; 3 = neutral; 4 = supportive; 5 = strongly supportive) (You need not answer if you are unsure or do not hold an opinion)

Provision of special routes for horses	1	2	3	4	5	D/K
Provision of special routes for cyclists	1	2	3	4	5	D/K
Provision for touring caravans	1	2	3	4	5	D/K
Traffic calming on main roads	1	2	3	4	5	D/K
Use of car park charges in all areas	1	2	3	4	5	D/K
Increases in car parking charges if proceeds were used to help maintain the Chase	1	2	3	4	5	D/K

Finally .it will help! our analysis of the survey if I can record some basic information about yourself. The survey is entirely anonymous and this information is used solely for analysis.

17. **Show card A** In which of these age categories do you fall ?

15 - 24 [ ] 25 - 34 [ ] 35 - 44 [ ] 45 - 54 [ ] 55 - 64 [ ] 65+ [ ]

18. Which of these categories describes your employment status ?

Working full time	[ ]
Working part time	[ ]
Unemployed	[ ]
Retired	[ ]
Student in full time education	[ ]
Housewife/husband not working outside the home	[ ]
Not normally working due to sickness or disability	[ ]

For those who are working ask

18a. What work do you do ? .....

For those who are retired ask

18b. What work did you do ? .....

For those who are unemployed ask

18c. What kind of work do you do when you are in employment ?

.....

For those who are a housewife or husband ask

18d. What work does your partner do ? .....

19. **Record gender by observation** Male [ ] Female [ ]

Thank respondent for their time and assistance. Complete record section at head of the survey form after leaving premises.

Appendix 9.4

Sampling Framework for the Residents Survey

Census Ward Number	Ward Name	Target (1.5% sample)	Interviews completed
42QGFA	Anglesey	90	26
42QGFB	Brereton & Ravenhill	70	63
42QGFD	Broomhill	70	23
42QGFF	Chadsmoor	70	49
42QGFG	Etching Hill	80	80
42QGFH	Hagley	50	36
42QGFN	Pye Green Valley	90	46
42QGFP	Rawnsley	50	48
42QJFT	Longdon	20	20
42QLFQ	Huntington	30	30
42QMFB	Baswich	40	40
42QMFN	Haywoods	50	50
42QMFT	Milford	40	40

Appendix 9.5

Calculation of Total Visitor Numbers.

The calculation of the total visitor number is based initially upon monitored levels of car parking. During the course of the main survey period, car parking levels were sampled at 23 car parks distributed across the AONB under a range of conditions, with additional counts made of vehicles parked away from designated sites.

Monthly figures for cars parked at the Pay & Display park at Birches Valley were obtained from the Forest Enterprise for the 12 month period ending September 2000. These figures were adjusted upwards by 10% to allow for a proportion of visitors that may have evaded payment, but were moderated to exclude the specific impact of Christmas tree sales at this location and which inflate visitor levels at this site by some 15,000.

By using the known levels of parking at Birches Valley as a benchmark, estimates of total numbers of vehicles parked at the remainder of the car park locations were derived by calculating the average numbers of cars at each site and expressing this figure as a ratio of the average number observed at Birches Valley. The calculated ratios were used to multiply known levels of parking at Birches Valley to produce estimated levels of parking elsewhere.

On the basis of this calculation, a 12 month total figure of approximately 330,000 car trips to the Chase was derived. This was multiplied by the average size of groups travelling by car to provide an estimate of 815,850 car-based visitors.

Data from the residents and site visitor surveys indicated that 81.3% of trips to the Chase were made by car. On this basis, the proportions of the sample who walked (14.3%), cycled (3.1%) or travelled by other means (for example, motor cycle, horse or minibus/coach) (1.3%) were used to calculate an interim estimate of trips by these other modes. These figures were then adjusted to allow for the average size of groups travelling by these modes and then further weighted to reflect the different frequencies with which these groups visit the Chase when compared with car-based visitors. The relevant figures are shown in the summary Table below.

Table 9.1

Calculation of Visitor Numbers

Travel Mode	Initial Estimate (Trips)	Average Size of Group	Sub-total	Frequency of visit weighting	Final Estimate (Visitors)
Car	333,000	2.45	815,850	0.00	815,850
Walk	58,570	2.35	137,640	2.62	360,616
Cycle	12,700	2.15	27,305	1.13	30,854
Other	5,330	10.80	57,564	0.80	46,051
				TOTAL	**1,253,371**

Additionally, some 15,000 visitors attended the Christmas Tree sales at Birches Valley which raises the final estimate to 1, 268,000. Visitors to Shugborough Hall and its special events are not included in this figure but if these are added (estimate for 2000 is circa 250,000 according to the Estate Manager) then the total for the AONB just exceeds 1.5 million.

Appendix 9.6

Classification of Tourist Regions

Tourist Board Region	Constituent Counties
Cumbria	Cumbria
Northumbria	Northumberland; Durham; Tyne & Wear; Cleveland
North West	Lancashire; Merseyside; Greater Manchester; Cheshire
Yorkshire & Humberside	North Yorkshire; West Yorkshire; South Yorkshire; Humberside
Heart of England	Staffordshire; Shropshire; West Midlands; Warwickshire; Hereford and Worcester; Gloucestershire
East Midlands	Lincolnshire; Nottinghamshire; Derbyshire; Leicestershire; Northamptonshire
East Anglia	Norfolk; Suffolk; Cambridgeshire; Essex; Hertfordshire; Bedfordshire
London	Greater London
Southern	Hampshire; Isle of Wight; Dorset East; Oxfordshire; Berkshire; Buckinghamshire
South East	Kent; Surrey; East Sussex; West Sussex
West Country	Cornwall and the Scillies; Devon; Somerset; Wiltshire; Avon; Dorset West
North Wales	Clywd; North Gwynedd
Mid Wales	South Gwynedd; North Dyfed; North Powys
South Wales	South Dyfed; South Powys; Gwent; West Glamorgan; Mid Glamorgan; South Glamorgan
Scotland	All Regions

Appendix 9.7

Institute of Practitioners in Advertising Definitions of Social Groups

IPA Group	Description
A	Higher managerial, administrative or professional
B	Intermediate managerial, administrative or professional
C1	Supervisory or clerical, and junior managerial, administrative or professional
C2	Skilled manual workers
D	Semi- and unskilled manual workers
E	State pensioners, casual or lowest grade workers, long-term unemployed (no other earners)

Appendix 9.8

Listing of reported "dislikes" summarised as "Others" in Fig. 5.3

(all values less than 1% of total)

- Noise
- Cars parked outside designated areas
- Lack of horse riding paths
- Lack of facilities for the disabled
- Lack of routes for driving
- Areas closed to cars
- Lack of car parks at good viewpoints
- Lack of refreshments / cafes
- Becoming too commercialised
- Not enough rangers to enforce management
- Limited opening times of visitor centres
- Failure to empty litter bins
- Failure to cut grass
- Over managed
- Burnt out cars
- Too many paths
- Poor condition of roads
- Shooting range
- Building on the Chase
- Gypsies
- Badly controlled children
- Walkers off tracks
- Caravan sites
- Metal picnic tables
- Ambiguous policy on permits
- Dumping
- Quarrying
- Speed bumps
- Deer on roads

Appendix 9.9

Listing of suggestions for improvement summarised as "Other" in Fig. 5.4

(all values less than 1% of total)

- Reduced rate parking for local residents
- CCTV in larger car parks
- Extend access to new areas
- Open more paths
- More information for bird watchers
- Reduce bracken
- Provide better warning of snakes
- Levy charges on cyclists to pay for path repair
- Designate areas for dogs to exercise
- Provide better viewpoints for people sitting in cars
- Provide more educational facilities
- Clean pools and improve fishing
- Provide better facilities at Castle Ring
- Provide emergency telephone points
- Enforce the keeping of dogs on leads
- Ban motor cycles
- Ban mountain bikes

Appendix 9.10

Listing of reported "dislikes" by children summarised as "Other" in Table 7.9

(all values less than 2 % of total)

- Horse muck
- Pollution
- Lack of litter bins
- Joy riders / car racers
- Lack of toilets
- Snakes
- Mud
- Too crowded
- Traffic
- Flies
- Horses wandering off bridleways
- Inconsiderate cyclists
- Commercialisation of area
- Not enough benches
- Paths too stony (especially for bikes)
- Lack of refreshments
- Bracken
- Some dangerous paths
- Dogs
- Poor bike tracks
- Walkers
- Motor-bikes
- Too many roads
- Not enough car parks
- Unsafe (personal safety)
- Burnt and ugly in parts
- Too overgrown
- Not enough wildlife
- Noise from Milford Common
- Erosion of footpaths (from cycling)
- Too big (fear of getting lost)
- Open spaces of heathland
- Open car parks (not shielded by trees)

Appendix 9.11.

Listing of suggestions from children for improvements not included in Table 7.10

(all values less than 2% of total)

- Organised fun and games
- More places to visit
- Plant more trees
- Plant wild flowers
- Paint balling
- More horse-riding tracks
- More special events
- Improve maintenance to paths
- Separate paths for walkers
- Camping sites for youth groups
- More car parks
- Water features
- Rock climbing wall
- More flat open land
- Plant more deciduous trees
- Entertainment at visitor centres
- Cut down bracken
- Make it safer
- More short walking routes
- Shelters
- More wilderness
- Information about trees and wildlife on paths
- More fishing pools
- Motor-bike track
- Special paths for disabled
- Better mountain bike facilities
- Places to relax
- Golf course
- Dogs on lead
- Emergency phones
- Better publicity
- Rent out equipment for activities
- Better access

- Better landscaping at key sites
- Separate people from areas reserved for conservation
- Mow grass shorter on Milford Common for ball games
- Limit number visiting Chase at peak times
- Go-cart track
- Young people involved in running Chase
- Fairground
- Horse-riding lessons
- Slow traffic down more on Chase

- Poor parking facilities at Marquis Drive
- Parking charges
- Stuffed animals in Forestry Commission Centre
- Quarry
- BT Tower
- Too many car parks
- Too few drinking taps

REFERENCES

The references cited in the report are as follows :

British Tourist Authority (2000) *Making the Most of Tourism's Contribution to Regional Economic Development*, BTA, London, July.

Countryside Commission (1995) *Visitors to National Parks*, Technical Report, The Commission, Cheltenham.

Countryside Recreation Network (1996) *UK Day Visits Survey 1994*, CRN, Cardifff

Departure for Culture, Media And Sport (1998) *Measuring the Local Impact of Tourism*, DCMS, London.

English Tourism Council (2000) *Perspectives on English Tourism*, ETC, London.

Staffordshire University (2000) *Chase Heritage Trail: Preparatory Data Collection and Development Recommendations*, Local Economy Research, Stoke-on-Trent, July.