network
ARTISTS IN NORTHUMBERLAND

THE ART TOUR 2010

ARTIST AND VISITOR EVALUATION

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the art tour
a network open studios event

CONTENTS

ART TOUR EVALUATION - 2010 - SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- In 2010, 88 artists participated in 57 venues in the Art Tour - close to the 2005 record (90/58 respectively). For the second year in succession an Artists' Return was eventually received from 100% of participants, although not all were fully completed.

Visits

- At 14021 there were only 4% less visitors overall than last year and open day visits rose by 8% to 13153. Removing the untypical influence of Alnwick Garden, open day visits rose by 3% from 9965 in 2009 to 10234.
- The total number of visits (open days + others) prompted by the Art Tour has tended to increase with the number of participants at an average over the years of about 240 visits per venue, peaking in 2009 at 330 per venue. Because the number of venues increased in 2010 the total visitor rate fell by 26% per venue to 246 visits. On open days the rate fell by 16% to 231 visits (or by 21% to 183 excluding Alnwick Garden). (Total visits per artist were 160 or 145 without Alnwick)
- The 402 venue openings gave rise to 19 visits per opening for single occupancy and 68 for shared, averaging at 33, the lowest since 2000. (Without Alnwick Garden the shared rate is 45 and the average 26).
- Alnwick Garden hosted the most visitors over the whole Art Tour period, at over one fifth of the total, and helped ensure that half the visits were confined to five most popular venues. Similar rankings were observed for visits per open day, but the ranking order changed more amongst venues having fewer visitors.
- Examining geographical distribution without Alnwick Garden, Central Tynedale had most visits per opening, followed by North and Coast. North Pennines had least.
- The number of visits on open days was roughly in step with the number of venues open, of which there were slightly more on Sundays. The visitor rate changed little from day to day, fluctuating around the average of 33 visits per venue, but fell off on the final day, which coincided with notable sporting fixtures.
- Indicators for the different geographical sectors indicate both similarities and differences. North and Coast (without Alnwick Garden), West and East Tyne contribute a similar and higher number of venues and openings than elsewhere, whilst all areas held about 7 openings per venue. North and Coast had most visitors and Central Tynedale had the most visitors per venue. The accessibility of North Pennines probably reflects on its rates for all indicators.

Sales

- The uncertain economic future has constrained spending this year, but there are positive signs too, which suggest a future recovery to previous levels of achievement.
- Total sales recovered this year by 5% to about £110,000, resuming the upward trend of earlier years.
- The average turnover per artist is £1250, a 17% fall compared with last year. Hypothetically, this may be a due to buyers sharing their purchasing power between the greater number of artists taking part.
- One third of artists earned over £1000 and one third less than £200. This represents a negative shift of about 11.5% on both proportions.
- Half the participants earned over £470 (£63 per open day), whilst 2/3rds earned between £104 and £1647 (£16 and £216 per day).
- Single occupancy continues to attract more sales at an average of £1923, compared with shared venues at £660 per artist. Respective rates per opening are £290 and £90.
- Sales tended to be greater on Saturdays than Sundays, and inexplicably were inversely proportional to the number of openings, which were marginally greater on Sundays. Purchases per visit give a less clear picture, but non the less support the value of openings on both weekend days.
- Even though average earnings fell between last year and this, there is continued support for the general historic implication that larger the number of participants in the Art Tour, the larger their average income.
- Visitors spent an average of £7.83 this year, an increase over last year's £7.16 per visit. Excluding Alnwick Garden, there was a rise of 8% from £.9.69 to £10.42.

Visitor Survey

The visitor survey feedback is based on about 300 Visitor Questionnaires (2% of the visiting public). This is significantly less than in previous years, probably because visitors were asked to return forms at their convenience, rather than complete them on a venue visit.

- In keeping with many Art Tours, roughly one third of visitors were attending for the first time.
- The Brochure attracted almost half of the respondents, and word of mouth about one fifth. Signage and press advertising accounted for about 10% each.
- Three quarters of returning visitors get the Brochure through the post. Three quarters of first time visitors hear about it from a friend. Nearly 4% downloaded the brochure, making this another worthwhile option.
- Art Tour studios and Tourist Information Centres were the most popular places for picking up a Brochure, whilst returning visitors also looked in libraries.
- Significant numbers of visitors are on holiday.
- Opinion is split roughly in two, as to whether all studios should be open together, and whether they should be open in school holidays.
- Two fifths of visitors expressed some interest in taking part in associated workshops
- Venue location got most votes in attracting visitors, followed by personal taste. The type of medium has some effect as does the closeness of venues grouped in the same locality.
- 75% - 80% of visitors show their interest in art by visiting galleries relatively frequently.

Artists' Online Survey

The artists' online survey was conducted to gather their feelings about this year's Art Tour and is based on the feedback of 48 artists who responded.

- Artists tended to be moderately pleased or moderately disappointed with the number of visitors they had.
- They felt the same about sales.
- Two fifths felt they had made a modest profit and 10% felt they had done very well. The remainder were not so positive.
- The thing participants liked most about the Art Tour was meeting visitors. The thing they like least was how few there were.
- Most respondents liked the Brochure. The lack of space for artists' description attracted most criticism. It was felt that distribution needed to be improved.
- Many felt the publicity was good, but an equal proportion had less favourable comments.
- Most liked the plan of weekend openings over a month. Some needed more time for themselves at weekends and some felt that Sunday openings only were more successful.
- About half thought the entry fee for participation was about right, and the other half thought it was too high.
- The organisation was ranked from good to excellent.
- The majority felt that the Art Tour gave good value for money.
- June and July are the preferred months for the Art Tour.
- The majority vote was for Saturday and Sunday openings, although half were in favour of Sundays only too.
- Two fifths of respondents plan to take part next year, but nearly half are waiting to see the plan before deciding.
- Over half the respondents thought that organisational responsibilities should be shared out more, giving more ownership, but there were concerns about coordinating such an approach.

RECOMMENDATIONS – 2010 ART TOUR

These recommendations arising from the 2010 Art Tour are based on the three forms of feedback received

1 The Artists' Returns (AR)
2 The Visitors Questionnaire(VQ)
3 The subsequent online survey of participants, using Surveymonkey (SM)

The above abbreviations are used for cross referencing where valid.

It is recognised that the Art Tour Steering Group has no obligation to heed these recommendations, and may need to take other considerations (eg. Resource) into account.

Recommendations –

Promotion

- Continue to promote the Art Tour, emphasising its value to visitors and participants, but be aware that all projects have a lifetime, so opportunities for invigoration should be suitably exploited.
- Encourage as many artists as possible to take part, as this appears to increase average artist income. (Ref.: AR 2.7)
- Encourage sharing in the organisation so long as it remains manageable. (Ref.: SM 10)
- Try to retain the current Entry fee. (Ref.: SM 5)
- Needless to say, the ATSG will continue to strike a balance between the various forms of media advertising and cost. The number of holidaymakers visiting may be relevant. (Ref.: VQ 2; VQ 5; SM5)
- Retain current brochure size, but increase artist space if possible, and print more for distribution. (Ref.: SM 5)
- Continue to have the Brochure available for download. (Ref.: VQ 3)
- Make it as easy as possible for visitors to find venues, through the Brochure and with superlative signage. (Ref.: VQ 2)
- Workshops connected with the Art Tour are worth pursuing. (Ref.: VQ 9)
- Continue to encourage sellers to accept credit card payment. (Ref.: VQ 10)
- Continue to promote the availability of the Evaluation to all Network members via the website, to maintain awareness of the work of the Steering Group, the resource required for organisation, and to provide objective analysis of the value of participating. (Ref.: SM 10)

Timing

- Saturdays and Sundays both bring significant numbers of visitors and sales so continue optional openings on both days (Ref.: AR 1.6; AR 2.6; SM 5; SM 8)
- Continue to open in June/July (Ref.: SM 7)
- Allow participants to open on different days or partially in school holidays if timely – these do not appear to be big issues. (Ref.: VQ 7; VQ 8)
- As far as possible, in arranging opening dates, be aware of (school) holidays and sporting events, as these may have some effect on visitors (Ref.: AR 1.6)

Feedback

- Emphasise the need for participants to make a fully completed Artists' Return as soon as possible after the Art Tour ends (Ref.: AR intro; AR 2.6)
- Ensure visitors complete and leave their questionnaires at a venue, as this appears to increase responses and enables checking for completeness. (Ref.: VQ intro.)
- Visitor Questionnaire design: Record where visitors originate, to assess value of promoting outside Northumberland. Allow space to record party size as this better enables estimation of behaviours amongst the total visitor base. It may be useful to clarify whether the questions only refer to the person completing the questionnaire or the whole party (eg. who bought art work?). Make it very evident that there are two sides to complete (if there are). (Ref.: VQ intro)
- It may be valuable for the Visitor Questionnaire include questions about the Brochure, especially if the design has changed – was it informative enough, is it a convenient size, are the maps and participant lists in the most convenient place? (Ref.: SM5)
- Record all Visitor Questionnaires individually in a spreadsheet for more in depth and accurate analysis. (Ref.: VQ terminal note)
- Rely on artists' feedback to gauge how many made a profit – models developed for this purpose could be contradictory. (Ref: AR 2.3; SM 3)

BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

First established in 1996, the *Art Tour* is an open studio project organised by members of Network Artists in Northumberland. The organisers are the Art Tour Steering Group (ATSG), and their achievements this year are outlined in Appendix 2. This is the fifteenth year of the event, which is advertised primarily via a Brochure, by mail-outs and in local media.

The project was originally set up with the aim of developing an audience for professional artists in the absence of sufficient exhibiting spaces in rural Northumberland, and to create opportunities for these artists to sell their work direct to the public.

From 1996–1998 the vast majority of venues were located within the district of Tynedale (West Northumberland). In 1999 the event expanded geographically encompassing venues located in North Northumberland, and around Alston in East Cumbria and 2008 saw the introduction of Ryton, technically within Gateshead however very close to the Tynedale border. These perimeter variations continue from year to year, and depend primarily on whether venues can be located on publicity maps. All these areas were encompassed in 2010.

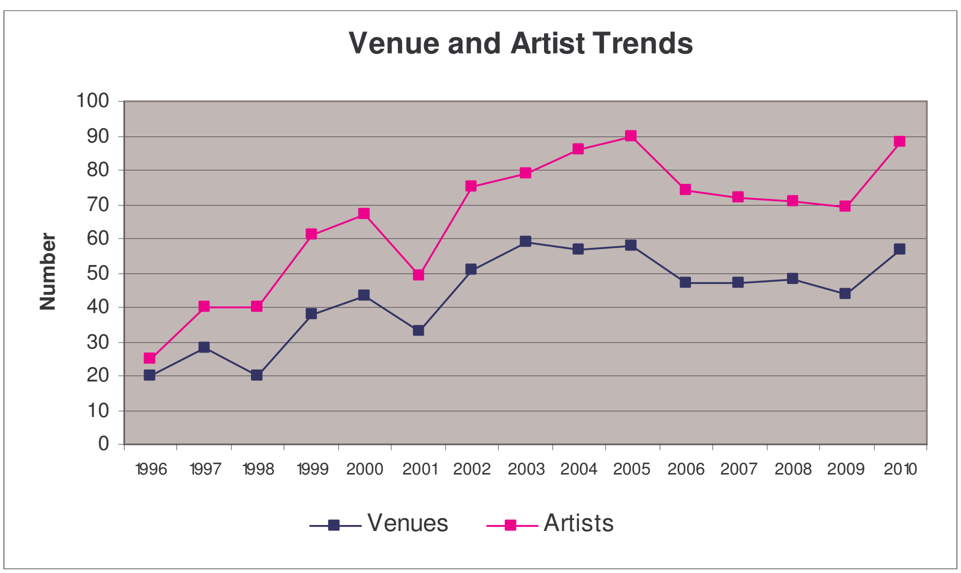
The table below shows the numbers of venues and artists participating each year.

Table 1

Year	**1996**	**1997**	**1998**	**1999**	**2000**	**2001**	**2002**	**2003**	**2004**	**2005**	**2006**	**2007**	**2008**	**2009**	**2010**
Venues	20	28	20	38	43	33	51	59	57	58	47	47	48	44	57
Artists	25	40	40	61	67	49	75	79	86	90	74	72	71	69	88

When the event first started in 1996, six open days spread over three weekends in June. From 1997 – 2001 the open days were extended to cover six consecutive Sundays. In 2008 and 2009 artists were again given an opportunity to trial Saturday openings, and in 2010 the event was confined to opening options over the four weekends in June, with a strong recommendation to

Fig 1.



participate in three. About 30% more artists and venues participated than last year with 88 artists exhibiting in 57 venues. Table 1 and Figure 1 show this as a near record in spite of the economic downturn. (The Brochure lists venues up to number 58, but there was no number 44.)

The purpose of this Evaluation is to help: -

- the organisers to identify opportunities for improving and developing Art Tour in the light of changing circumstances,
- participants explore ways of developing their own relationships with the visiting public,
- convey information to current and potential funders and sponsors about the effectiveness of the project.

The major sources of information are

1. Artists' Returns, one of which is expected to be completed by each participant. These provide information about numbers of visitors and sales.
2. Visitor Feedback, provided by questionnaires placed at each venue. These provide comments on various aspects of the Art Tour, and may change from year to year.
3. An on-line survey of participants, to gather views after this year's Art Tour.

The table below shows the number of artist and venues which filed an Artists' Return for

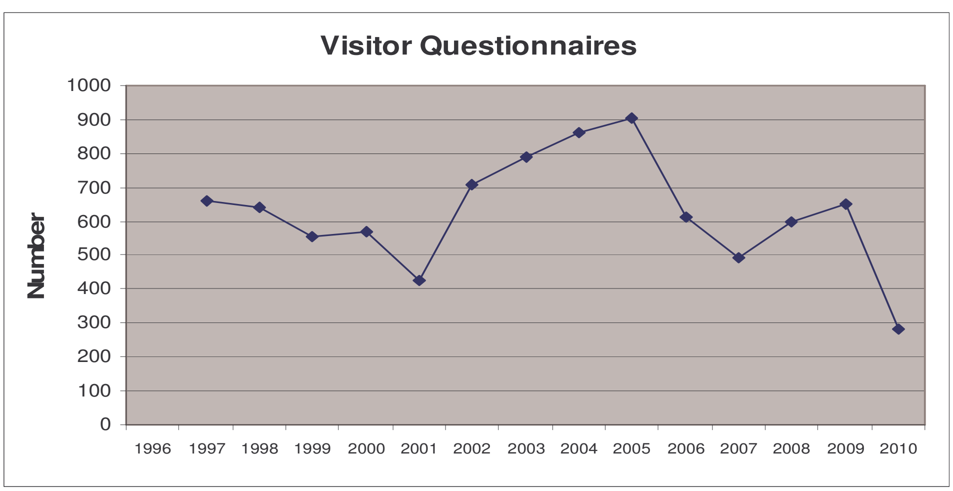
Table 2

Year	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Venues	20	28	20	38	43	33	51	59	57	58	47	47	48	44	57
(that reported)							**48**	**59**	**54**	**54**	**44**	**45**	**46**	**44**	**57**
Artists	25	40	40	61	67	49	75	79	86	90	74	72	71	69	88
(that reported)							**75**	**79**	**70**	**82**	**70**	**70**	**69**	**69**	**86**

each year. As in 2009, feedback for 2010 was eventually obtained from all participants, although not always not complete in every detail. This is nonetheless a notable achievement, which contributes to the integrity of this report.

Figure 2 trends the number of Visitor Questionnaires returned.

Fig 2



For purposes of organisation, and helping the public plan their Art Tour visits, venues this year were grouped into six geographical “sectors” – North and Coast, North Tyne, West Tyne, North Pennines, Central Tynedale and East Tyne.

1. ARTISTS RETURNS

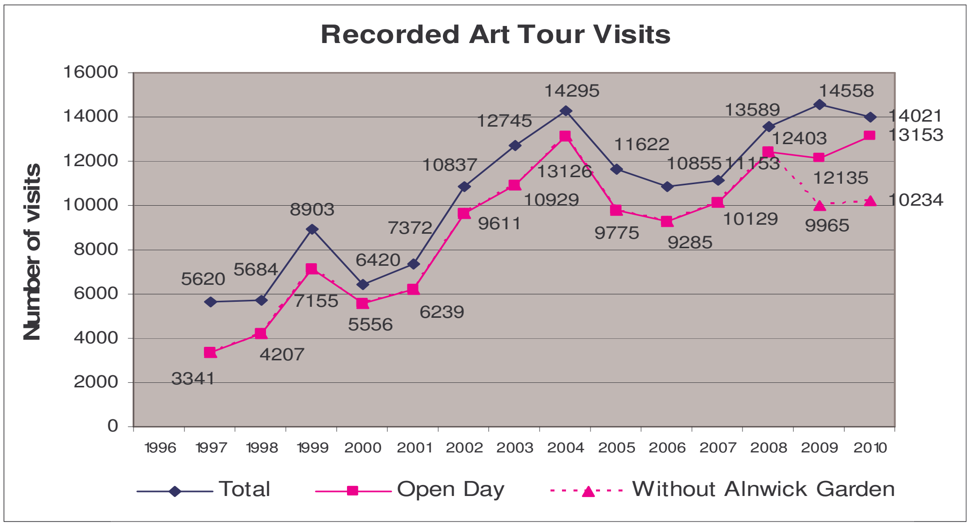
This section is based on the 88 artists who made a return, and

- Identifies trends
- Highlights the value in financial terms of participating in the event

AR 1. VISITS

AR 1.1. In summer of 2010, 13153 visits were recorded during the open days advertised in the Art Tour Brochure, which when added to exhibitions, workshops, mid-week and private view visits (previews) totalled 14201. This represents an 8% increase over 2009 on open days and a

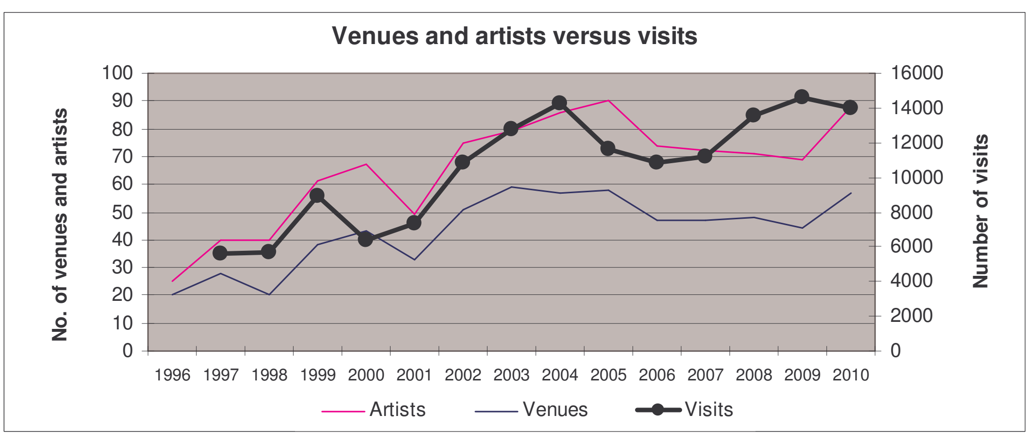
Fig 3



4% fall overall. Alnwick Garden, however, is an untypical venue which attracts many visitors who may not attend primarily for the Art Tour, but whose visits have a major impact on Art Tour visit figures, as can be seen later. Omitting this venue reduces open day visits to 10234, compared with 9965 in 2009, an increase of 3%. These results are very comparable with those of previous years, indicating the continued buoyancy of the Art Tour, although it may be noted that there were 30% more venues than last year to attract interest.

AR 1.2. Figure 4 combines Figures 1 and 3 to show how the number of visits has been related

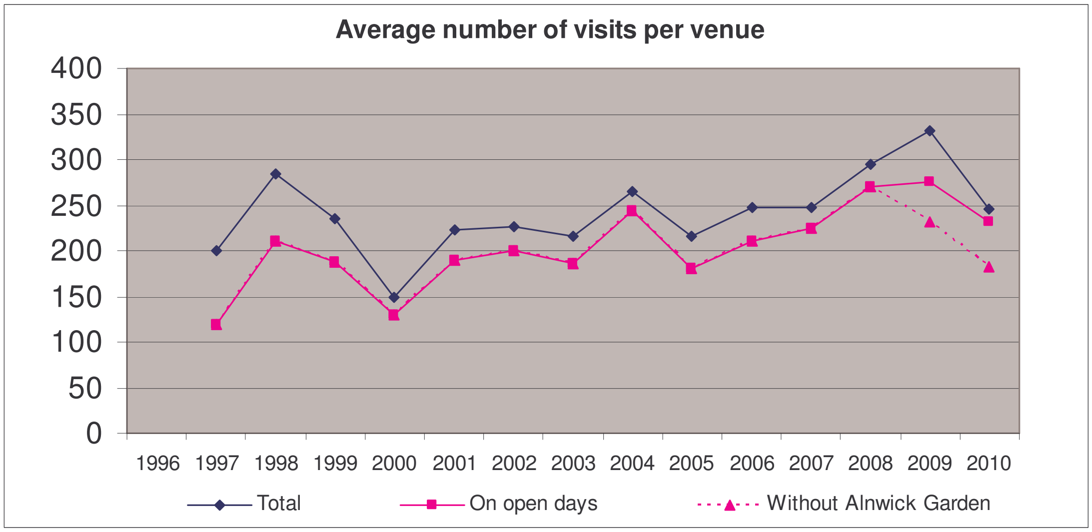
Fig 4



to the number of participants over the years. Broadly, the number of visits has been in step with both the number of artists and venues, indicating the value of the Art Tour as a public leisure activity.

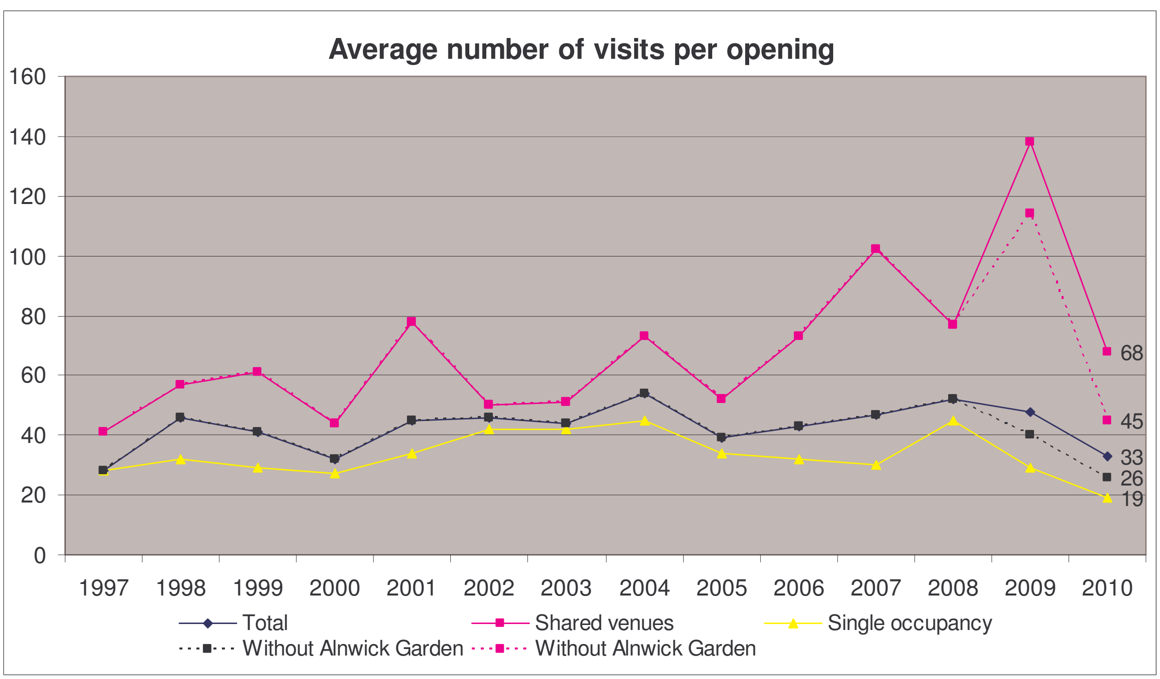
AR 1.3. Unfortunately, this year has seen a reversal in this trend as Figure 5 demonstrates. Because the number of visitors was comparable with earlier years whilst the number of venues went up, visits per venue decreased by 26% overall, and 16% on open days, the latter of which becomes 21% by the exclusion of the atypical Alwick Garden. These percentages translate to 246 visits per venue overall, 231 on open days and 183 excluding Alnwick Garden. (Overall visits per artist are 160, or 145 without Alnwick))

Fig 5



AR 1.4. The 57 venues opened a total of 402 times, between four and eight times each during the Art Tour period, and typically seven occasions, whether shared or not. This resulted in an

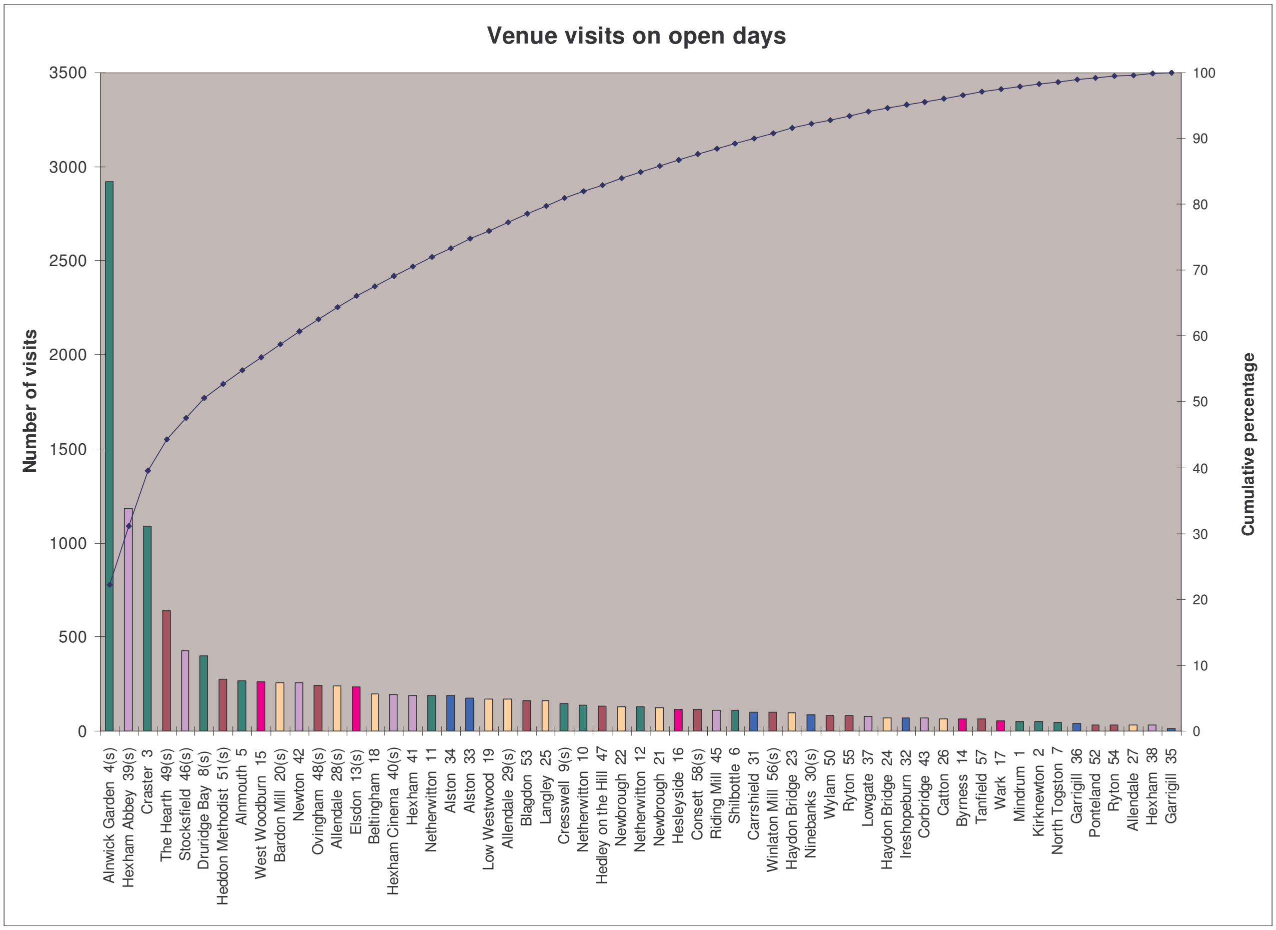
Fig 6



average of 33 visits per opening, the lowest since 2000. Shared venues have always prompted more visits than those with single occupancy but after the two moved apart last year, the disparity is now much less, especially without the influence of Alwick Garden.

AR 1.5. In Figure 7 venues are ranked according to number of visitors they received on open days over the whole Art Tour period. It is very evident that The Alnwick Garden (Venue 4) attracted the highest number of visitors by far. Its 2919 visitors represents 22% of all visitors and

Fig 7



Key :

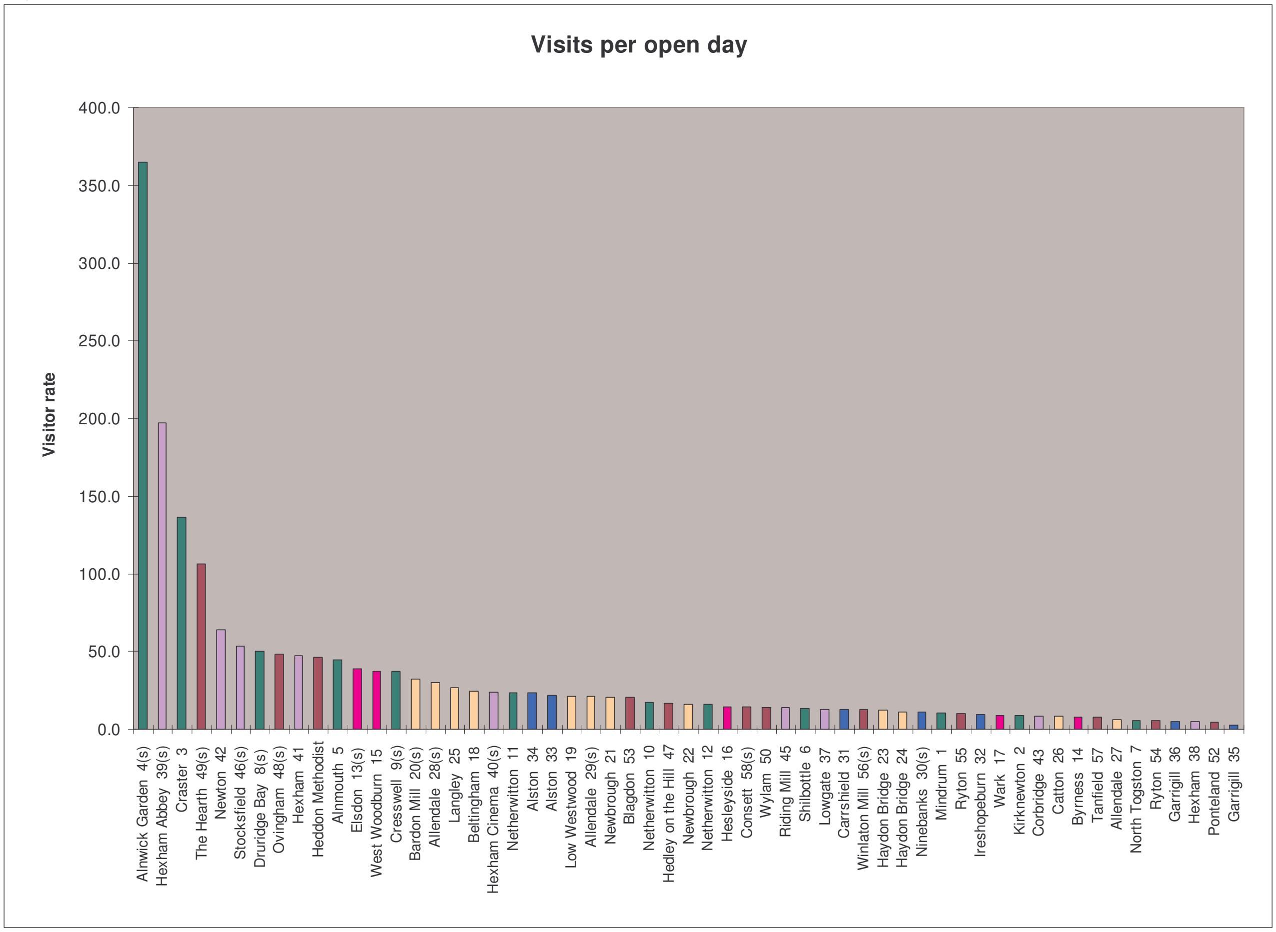
	North and Coast	North Pennines
	North Tyne	Central Tynedale
s = Shared	West Tyne	East Tyne

more than twice as many as the next most popular venue (Hexham Abbey). The popularity of Alnwick as a tourist attraction clearly influences the number of visitors for reasons outside the Art Tour and helps to ensure that half the total visits occurred in five most-visited venues this year, all except one of which were shared. The other 50% of visits were shared between the remaining 52 venues.

Each venue in Figure 7 is represented by the colour it was given when it was assigned to a geographical area defined in the Art Tour brochure (see the key). Inspection may reveal some

perceived areal differences (eg Central Tynedale appears to be clustered towards the left of the chart, implying more visits in that area) but these are more easily seen in Figure 9 below.
As in previous years, the public feel it more “cost effective” to visit more than one artist at a time in shared venues. This can be seen by the clustering of shared venues (s) towards the left of

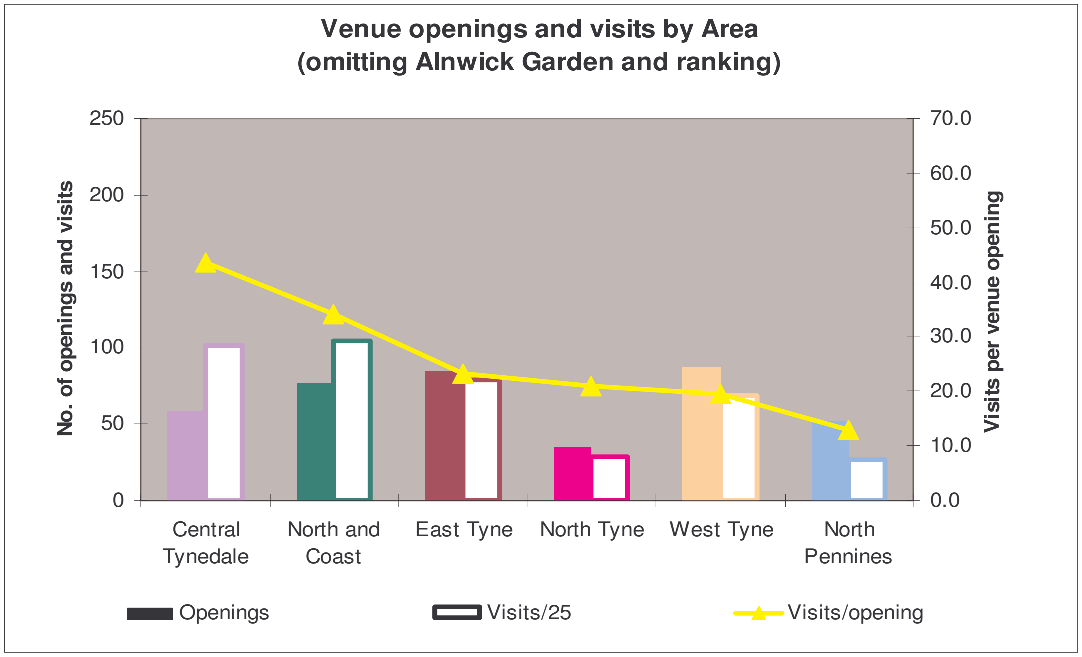
Fig 8



the chart. Figure 7 is a straight total of number of visitors per venue, and takes no account of the number of days they opened, which varied between four and eight times. This is addressed in Figure 8, which compares number of visits per opening and does change the rankings, but less so amongst the more popular venues.

Again it may subjectively be supposed that there are differences between the geographical subdivisions. This is addressed more objectively in Figure 9, in which the number of visits to each area takes account of the number of open days. (Visits are divided by 25 to fit them on the chart.) Having such an untypical influence, Alnwick Garden is omitted, and the areas are ranked in terms of popularity, to reveal statistically significant differences between them. With 2536 visits to 58 openings, the highest rate of 44 visits per opening is clearly in Central Tynedale, where access is easiest for the greatest section of the population. Conversely, the North Pennines is lowest. Although the North Tyne had the lowest number of openings, the number of visits was high enough to give a mid-range visitor rate.

Fig 9



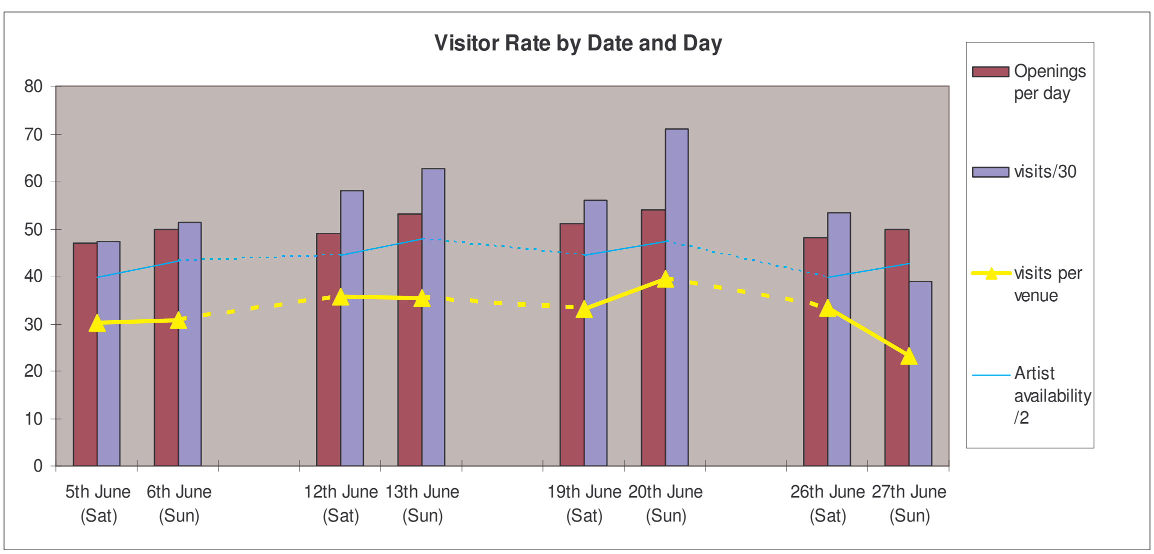
AR 1.6. Table 3 and Figure 10 compare number of visits with openings by date and day for all

Table 3

	5th June (Sat)	6th June (Sun)	12th June (Sat)	13th June (Sun)	19th June (Sat)	20th June (Sun)	26th June (Sat)	27th June (Sun)	Totals
Venue openings per day	47	50	49	53	51	54	48	50	402
Visits on open days	1415	1541	1743	1878	1678	2129	1603	1166	13153
Visits on open days/30	47.2	51.4	58.1	62.6	55.9	71.0	53.4	38.9	
Visits/venue	30.1	30.8	35.6	35.4	32.9	39.4	33.4	23.3	32.7
Artist availabilty (% out of 88)	80	86	89	95	89	94	80	85	

venues combined, visitor numbers being reported per day throughout, giving the overall average of 33 visits per opening. The number of openings is fairly steady over the four

Fig 10



weekends, with slightly more on Sundays. The visitor rate is relatively steady over the whole Art

Tour period, very much in line with the number of venues open, as in previous years, and shows no clear differences between Saturdays and Sundays. There was no discernable dependence on weather, which varied from cool days with rain to warm and sunny, but there was a possible tailing off during the final Sunday, which coincided with a number of notable sporting fixtures.

The number of artists available, as a percentage of the total of 88, is also superimposed on Figure 10 (divided by 2, to make it fit). Not surprisingly, the proportion relates very closely to the number of venues open.

AR 1.7. Table 4 compares open-day indicators for the different geographical areas for 2010. These are based on the full 402 openings, since they do not need to be date-specific. Disregarding the enormous influence of Alnwick Garden, a number of observations can be drawn from this table by inspection. North and Coast, West Tyne and East Tyne contribute similar number of venues and openings, with East Tyne having the greatest number of artists.

Table 4

2010	Venues	Openings	Artists	Visits on open days	Openings / venue	Visits / venue	Visits / open day	Visits / artist
North and Coast *	12(11)	85(77)	19(13)	5540(2621)	7.1(7)	461.7(238.2)	65.2(34.0)	291.6(201.6)
North Tyne	5	35	6	728	7.0	145.6	20.8	121.3
West Tyne	12	87	15	1707	7.3	142.3	19.6	113.8
North Pennines	7	52	8	675	7.4	96.4	13.0	84.4
Central Tynedale	9	58	18	2536	6.4	281.8	43.7	140.9
East Tyne	12	85	22	1967	7.1	163.9	23.1	89.4
All areas *	57(56)	402(394)	88(82)	13153(10274)	7.1(7.0)	230.8(183.5)	32.7(26.1)	149.5(125.3)

* Results omitting Alnwick Garden are shown in brackets

The number of openings per venue is very similar everywhere. North and Coast attracted the highest number of visitors (primarily on the Art Tour) but with its easy access for a large section of the population, Central Tynedale had the highest number of visits per venue over the full month of June. This is reflected in the number of visits per open day, whilst North and coast has the greatest number of visits per artist. The accessibility of North Pennines probably has an impact on all the indicators in spite of its offering a typical rate of venue openings.

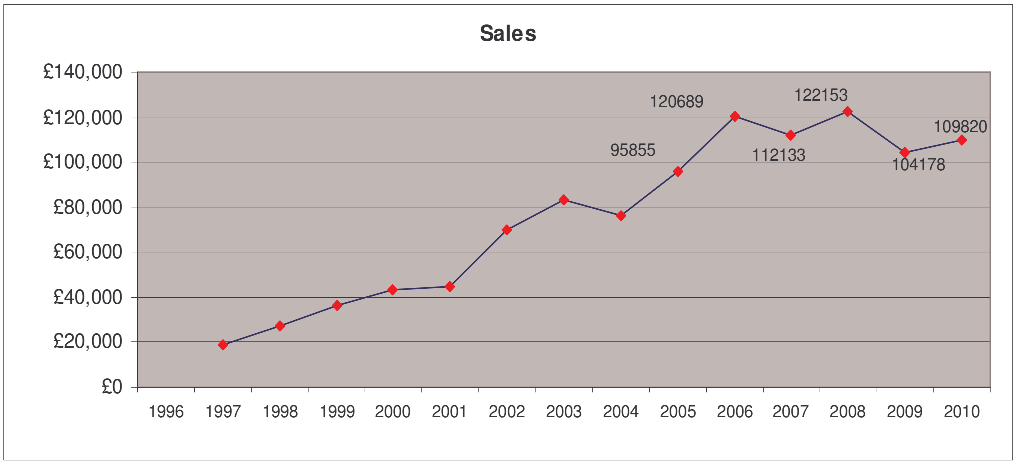
AR 2. SALES

The declared spirit of the Art Tour is to show the visiting public how artists develop their ideas and carry out their work, as well as to provide them with opportunities for their work to become more widely known and to generate income. The basis for analysis has been the number of participants, whether or not they had successful sales.

Although the economic downturn still appears to be causing nervousness potential buyers, sales during the Art Tour increased over last year to nearly £110,000, maintaining a run of five years in which sales exceeded £100,000.

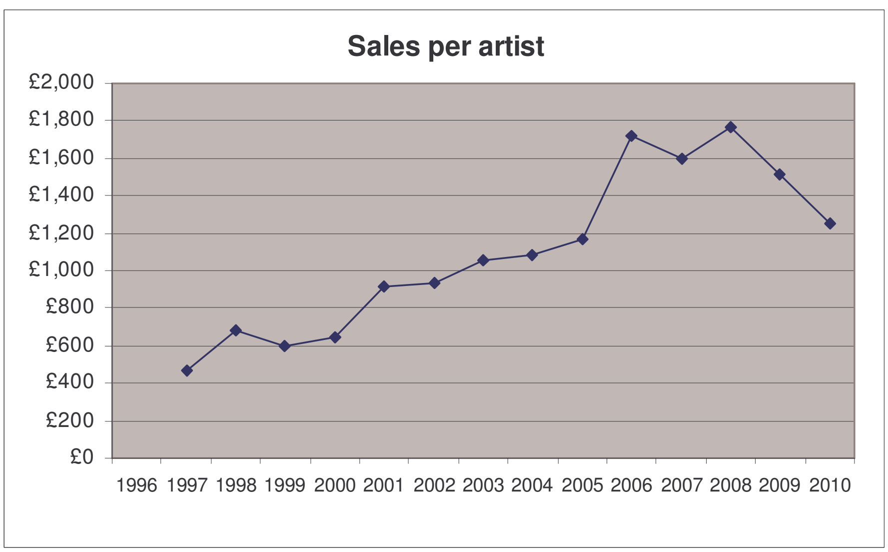
AR 2.1. Total sales rose by 5% to £109820, hopefully resuming the upward trend of earlier years, as shown by Figure 11.

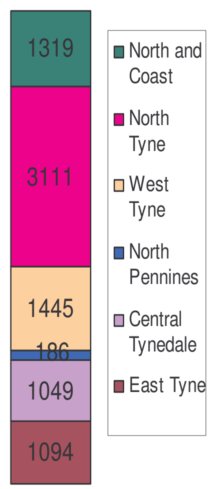
Fig 11



AR 2.2. It may be recalled, however, that the number of participants also rose this year by nearly 30%, resulting in a smaller share of sales amongst individual artists. The contrast is seen in Figure 12 where average turnover fell from £1510 in 2009 by about 17% to £1248 this year. Hypothetically, buyers could be sharing out their "pool of cash" between increased participants.

Fig 12

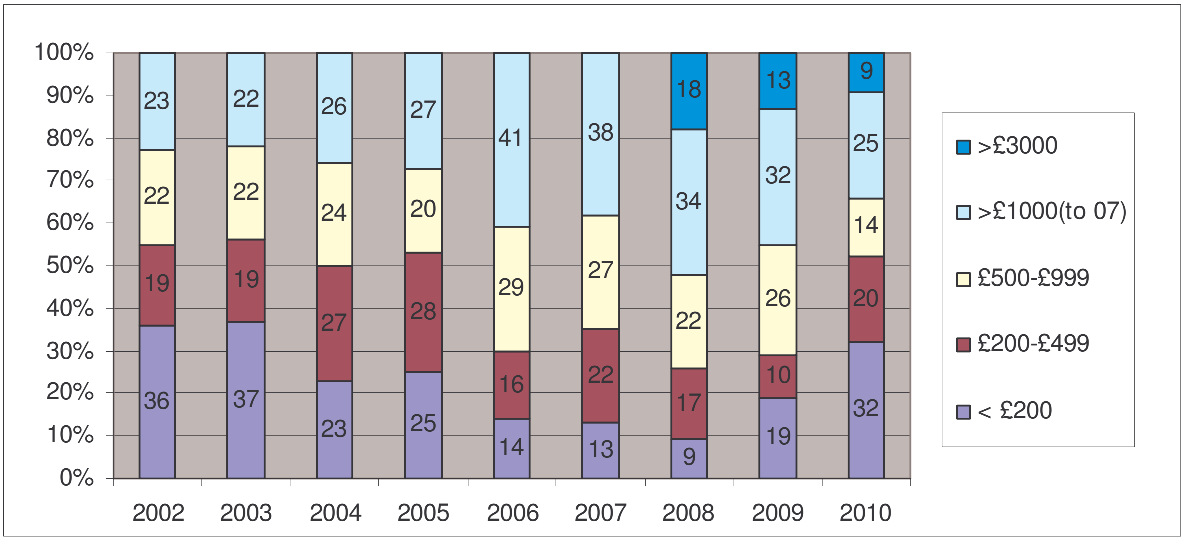




The right hand side of Figure 12 shows how average sales per artist compared for the different geograghical sectors. North Tyne clearly does best, West Tyne is similar to North and Coast, as are Central Tynedale and East Tyne, whilst the North Pennines is least fortunate.

AR 2.3. Figure 13 partitions turnover into percentage groups. The number of artists earning over £1000 is down to 34%, having been just over half two years ago. The percentage earning less

Fig 13



than £200 has risen, further reflecting economic situation. Extended partitioning might address whether an artist made a profit, but any model could either repeat artists' own conclusions (see section SM 3 below) or contradict them, which may not be seen as constructive!

AR 2.4. The average turnover per artist was £1248, compared with £1510 in 2009, and the average per open day was £179 (£267 last year and £370 the year before that). Sales figures are very skewed, only just over a fifth of artists earning "above average" in 2010. More

Fig 14a)

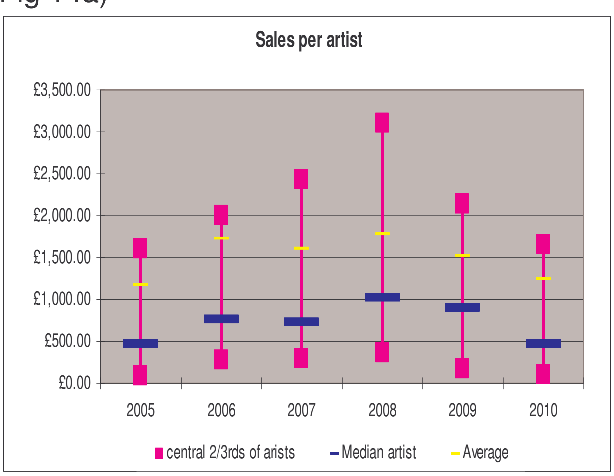
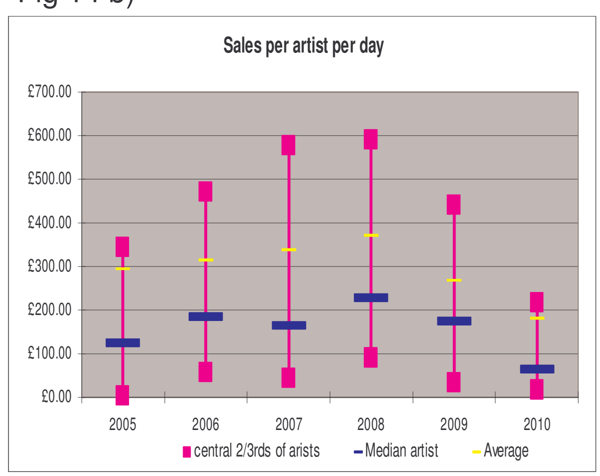


Fig 14 b)



informatively, Figure 14 shows that half the participants earned over £470 (£63 per day) - the median figure - whilst 2/3rds earned between £104 and £1647 (£16 and £216 per day). All these measures have decreased over the last three years, after rising previously.

AR 2.5. Analysis of previous years has shown that shared venues tend to have more visitors (see Figure 6), but that although this increases exposure, it does not increase sales for an individual artist. Figure 15 confirms this view.

Fig 15a)

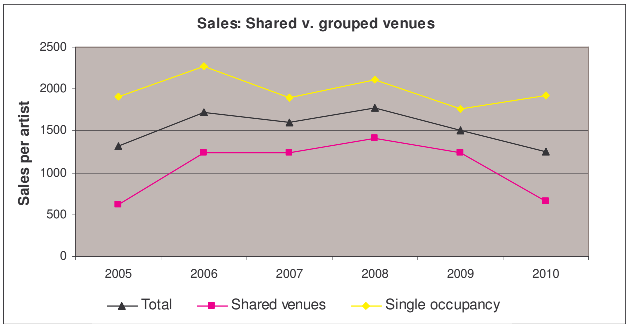


Fig 15b)

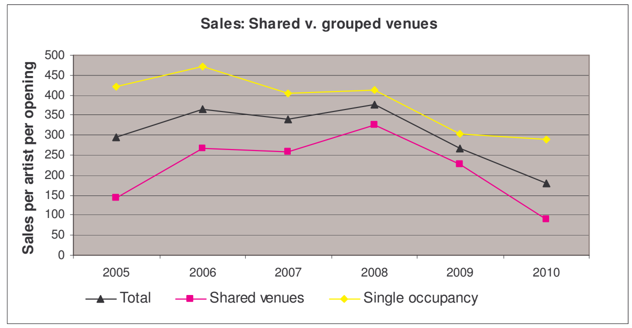


Figure a) compares sales of single occupancy venues with those that are shared. The average participants' sales (per Art Tour) have always been greater for those in single occupancy than for those that share, a pattern accentuated this year. The average artist's earnings of about £1250 partitions out into £1923 for single occupancy and £658 for shared. Taking into account the varying number of open days each artist exhibits, the trends are shown again in Figure b), as sales per artist per open day, with the same conclusion – single artists earn £290 and sharers earn £90 on average "per opening". (Total sales are used throughout, including those arising from previews, chance visits or workshops etc, as it is assumed that these have all been stimulated as a result of holding open days in the first place.)

AR 2.6. Table 5 and Figures 16 show sales by day and particularly examine the difference between those on Saturdays and Sundays. It is seems pertinent to relate sales to the number of

Table 5

	5th June (Sat)	6th June (Sun)	12th June (Sat)	13th June (Sun)	19th June (Sat)	20th June (Sun)	26th June (Sat)	27th June (Sun)	Overall
Total venue openings per day	47	50	49	53	51	54	48	50	402
Artists supplying sales figures	63	69	70	75	69	74	65	70	555
Artist sales by open day	8384.13	9143.95	13140.60	10754.55	14311.75	11894.41	11660.90	9062.10	88352.39
Sales/100	83.84	91.44	131.41	107.55	143.12	118.94	116.61	90.62	883.52
Sales/opening	178.39	182.88	268.18	202.92	280.62	220.27	242.94	181.24	219.78
Sales per artist	133.08	132.52	187.72	143.39	207.42	160.74	179.40	129.46	159.19

Fig 16a)

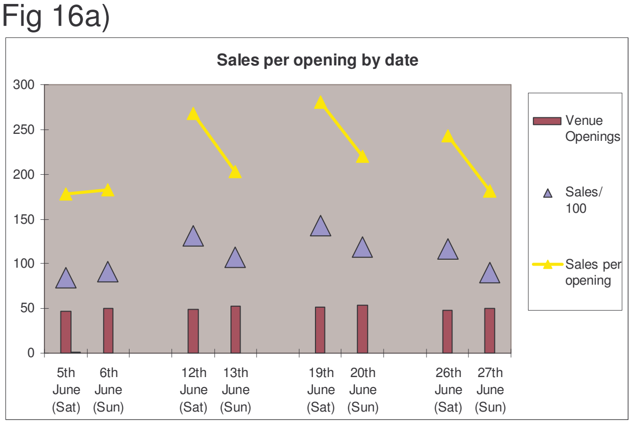
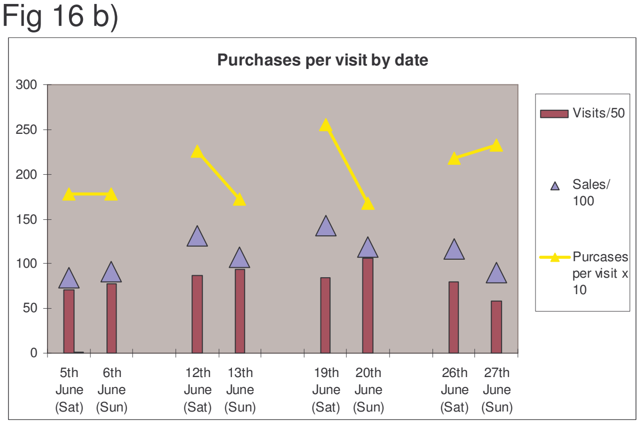


Fig 16 b)



openings, since they are what provide the opportunity to buy, and Figure 16a) shows the relationship. Daily sales totals have been divided by 100 to allow them all to fit on the chart. The number of openings is only slightly greater on Sundays than Saturdays, but Saturdays generally show higher sales, resulting in a considerable Saturday-Sunday difference in the sales rate. It may be noted that nine artists did not report date specific sales so the sales per opening result is an underestimate, although it does not change the inference. Sales per artist, however, can be calculated correctly, by adjusting for non-contributors, and gives an almost identical pattern of higher sales rates on Saturdays (so the chart is not presented here). Nevertheless, it would be unwise to suggest that Saturdays would normally be more remunerative on the basis of four weekends only.

It also seems reasonable to examine whether date or day affect purchases per visit and Figure 16b) shows these trends (suitably adjusted to fit on the chart). Here there is more randomness between weekend patterns, Saturdays less obviously having higher sales rates. The conclusion from Figure 16 is that Saturday and Sundays have comparable sales and implies that retaining Saturday openings is decidedly worthwhile from the artists' point of view.

AR 2.7. Figures 17 show how the number of Art Tour affects their income. Figure 17a) shows how both have grown over the years, but not consistently in step. Without including any annual

Fig 17a

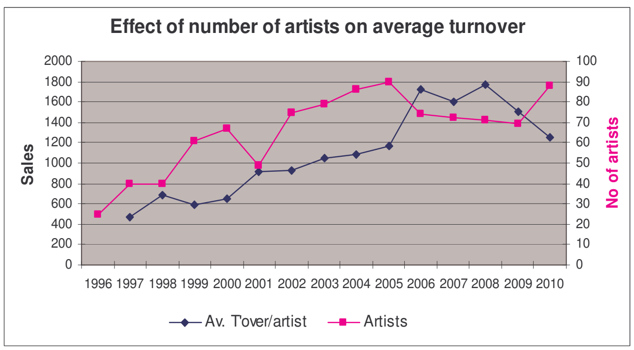
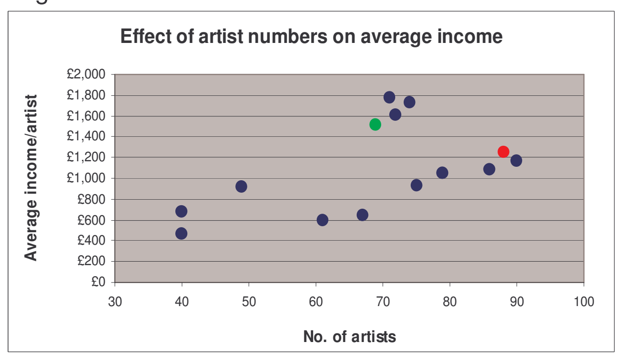


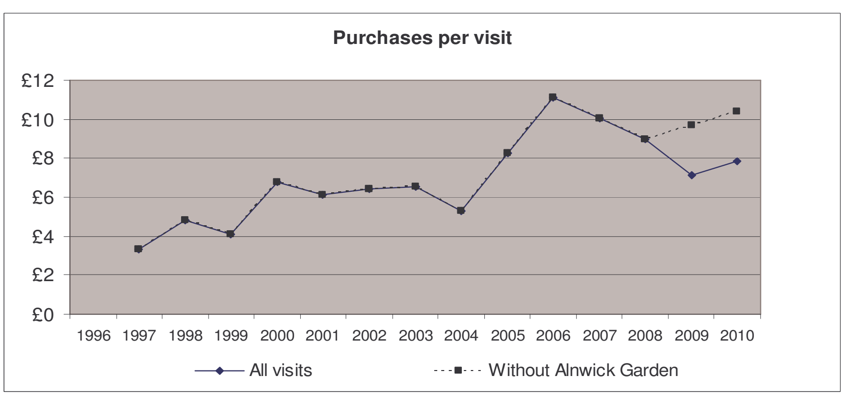
Fig 1b



effects, figure 17b) simply demonstrates a significant correlation between participant numbers and their average earnings. The red spot marks 2010. Although (Paragraph AR2.2 above indicates that) the average income per artist fell *compared with last year* (the green spot), it still complies with the general historic pattern that income is enhanced when more artists take part. The relationship could also be related to visitor numbers or economic circumstances, but the message still implies the benefit of taking part.

AR 2.8. A clear positive sign is that purchases per visit increased this year. Figure 18 shows

Fig 18



spending trends per visit, with and without Alnwick Garden. Overall, visitors spent £7.83 per visit this year compared with £7.16 last, but removing the effect of the large number of visitors to Alnwick Garden, this year's figure is £10.42 compared with £9.69 last.

2. VISITOR SURVEY

This visitor survey forms a substantial input into the evaluation of the Art Tour, and further supports the overall aim of improving its future organisation and management. The data in this part of the report was captured using a self-completion questionnaire placed at participating venues. Visitors are encouraged to complete the form once during their art tour visits although many choose to decline.

In previous years visitors have been asked to fill out the questionnaire on their first visit and leave the venue occupier to return it to the Steering Group. This year they were given the option of taking the form away and handing it in on a subsequent visit or to post it. This significant change may have resulted in the large drop in the number of completed questionnaires received, as shown in Table 6, which indicates the size of the survey sample (i.e. the number of completed questionnaires) collected each year.

Year	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Q'aires		662	640	554	569	427	708	789	860	904	614	493	596	650	283

SAMPLE BASE

Via the Artists Returns, it was reported that 14,000 visitors attended the Art Tour in 2010, which gave rise to 283 completed questionnaires. This is about 2% of the visiting public, and there is no indication of how representative such a group might be of the whole. Further breakdown results in even smaller numbers, which could call into question the credibility of some of the conclusions. Nevertheless, 300 responses is not an insignificant number, which at least makes the feedback worth considering.

Some single choice questions resulted in almost 300 responses, so there may be slight contradictions in the totals. This is not crucial, as it is more the relationship between responses that gives the best guide on future actions. It is also helpful to have space on the questionnaire to record group size, to better project preferences onto the whole visiting population – this was not available this year. It may also be useful to record where visitors originate, to establish the value of promoting the Art Tour outside Northumberland. Some respondents filled in only some the questions, and clearly only the data that is available can be used.

Appendix 1 shows copy of the questionnaire, which this year concentrated on -

- Responses to advertising
- How the Art Tour brochure was obtained
- How many visitors were on holiday or primarily on the Art Tour
- Opening dates
- Opportunities for workshops
- Preferred methods of paying for art work, and
- The attractions of particular venues.

for both first time and returning visitors.

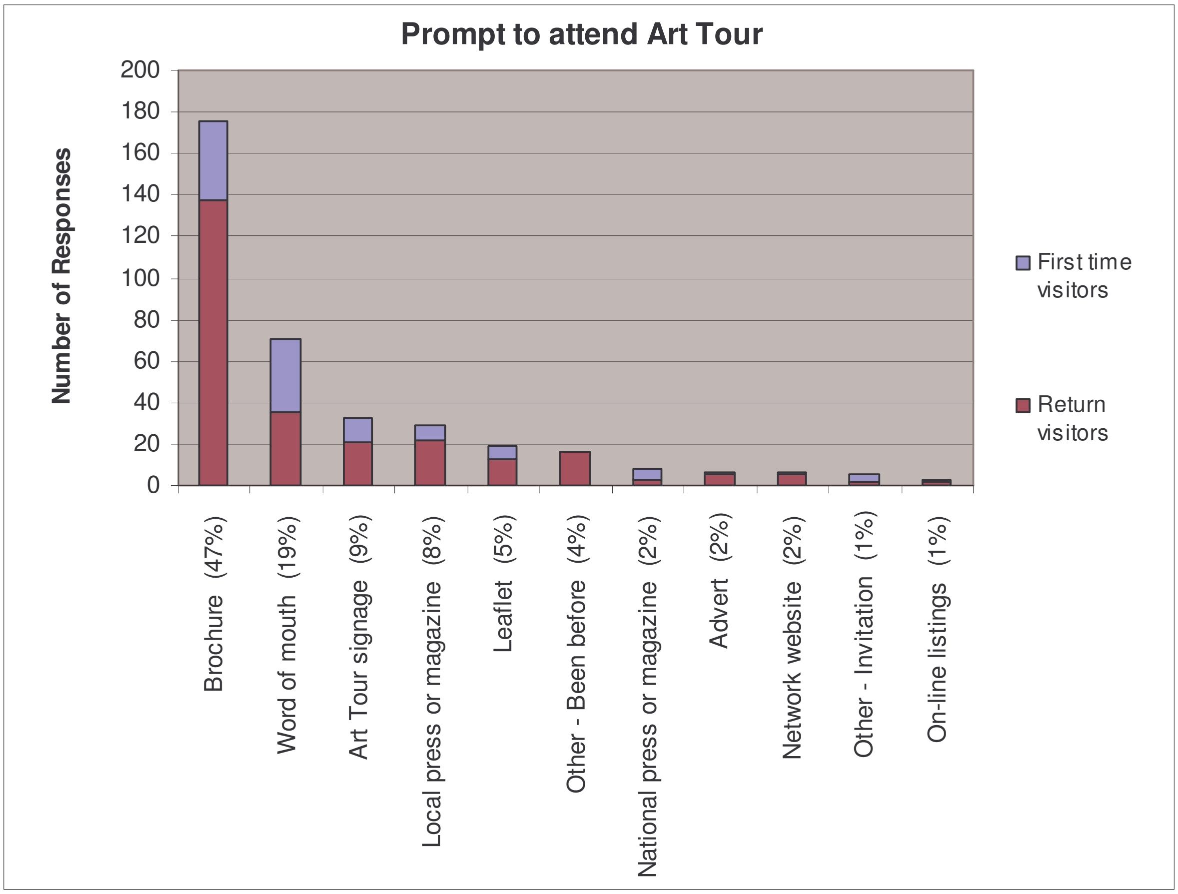
This report follows the order of the questions on the questionnaire.

VQ 1. Have you attended the Art Tour prior to 2010?

In keeping with many Art Tours, roughly one third of visitors were attending for the first time, whilst the remainder had visited before. This analysis splits the results into these two groups, examining the similarity and differences.

VQ 2. What prompted you to attend the Art Tour?

There were 372 responses to this question, implying that many visitors listed several sources of information which prompted them to attend. As always, the Brochure was the most powerful form of advertisement and attracted 47% of visitors. Clearly this is more effective for returning



visitors, who are much more likely to receive one automatically through the post. Word of mouth was proportionally more effective in attracting new visitors. In general, and as far as one can tell from the small numbers responding, the remaining forms of advertising were equally effective regardless of familiarity with the Art Tour, bearing in mind that there were about twice as many returning visitors. The first three categories of dissemination attract 75% of visitors, and emphasises the value of word of mouth and signage. Signage in particular is worth participants thinking carefully about, as it is a feature often commented on by visitors, especially when it is good (or bad). The low rankings may start to call into question the value of some of the other methods, eg National press or magazine, which prompted eight (2%) respondents in total. On the other hand, if the response rates were scaled up to the total visitors (14021), 300 could have been expected to be attracted this way.

It may be worth considering whether this should be a single response question.

VQ 3. How did you obtain the Art Tour brochure?

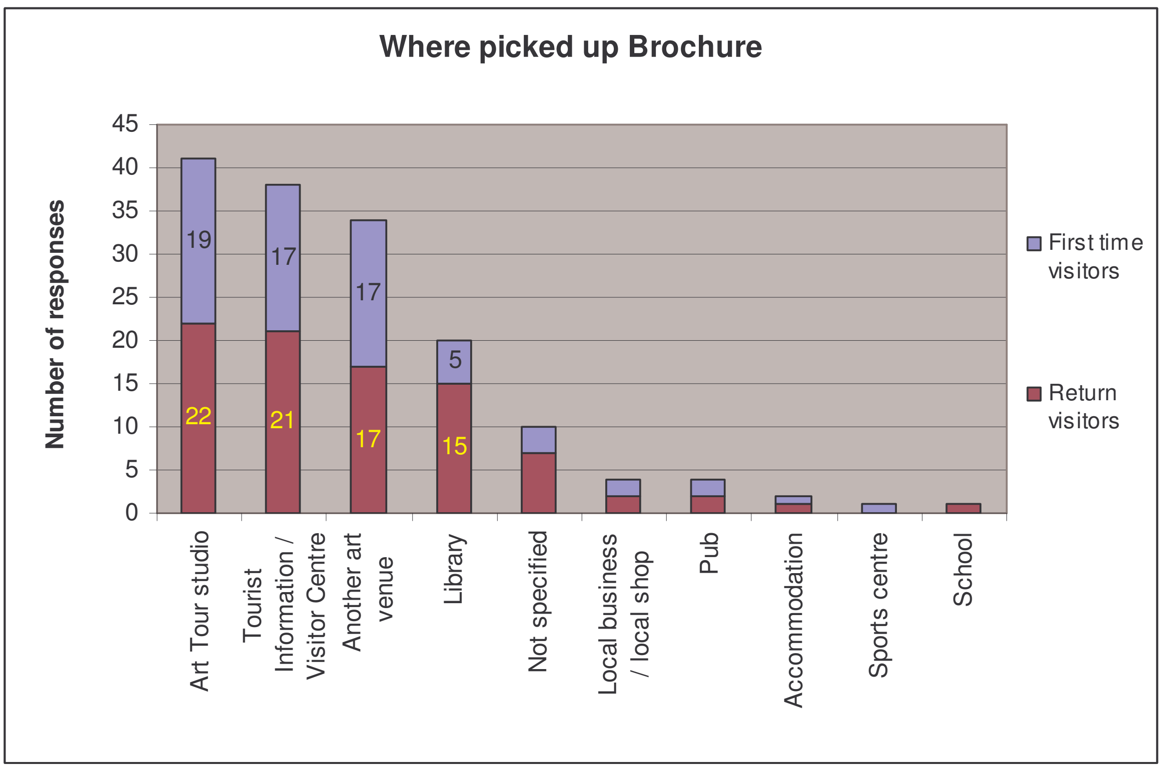
Amongst the options listed in this question, three quarters of returning visitors received the Brochure in the post, implying that the remaining quarter had not asked to be on the mailing list.

	First time visitors	%	Returning visitors	%	Both	%
In post	4	16.7	84	75.7	88	65.2
From a friend	18	75.0	24	21.6	42	31.1
Downloaded	2	8.3	3	2.7	5	3.7
	24		111		135	100

Not surprisingly, the proportion was much less amongst first timers, who were a lot more likely to have got it from a friend. On average, 3.7% downloaded the Brochure. The higher proportion being amongst newcomers. If this proportion was the same amongst the total 14021 visitors, then 520 people used the downloading method, making it a very worthwhile option.

VQ 4. Where did you pick up the Brochure?

The most popular places for picking up the Brochure were Art Tour venues themselves, newcomers and return visitors taking them in almost equal numbers. Tourist information centres



were also a useful source, where 38 were picked up, whilst return visitors appeared to be more used to finding them in libraries. Further Brochures were picked up at local businesses or shops(4), pubs(4), accommodation providers(2), sports centres and schools(1 each).

VQ 5. How many members of your party are on holiday in the area?

There were 297 responses to this question, revealing that holidaymakers were more prevalent

Group size	First time visitors	On holiday	Returning visitors	On holiday	Both	%
0	32	0	99	0	131	44
1	6	6	11	11	17	6
2	21	42	11	22	32	11
3	4	12	1	3	5	2
4	5	20	4	16	9	3
> 4	0	0	0	0	0	0
No answer	24		79			
Total		80		52	297	

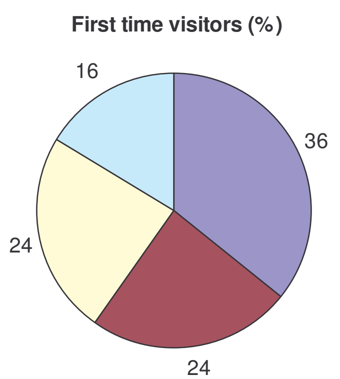
amongst first time visitors. Knowledge of the group size may be of limited value, but they were most likely to come as twos and no more than fours. No answer was given by 103 respondents who presumably found the question irrelevant and 131 indicated that they had no holidaymakers in their group. From this data it is not possible to calculate the proportion of visitors who were on holiday, as there is no indication of the total group size (for those who contained no holidaymakers, for example). However, it is clear that a significant number of visitors are on holiday, and that this should not be forgotten in future planning.

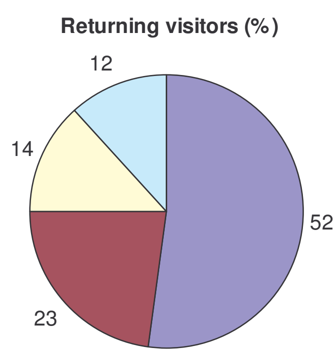
VQ 6. How many members are visiting the area mainly to attend the Art Tour?

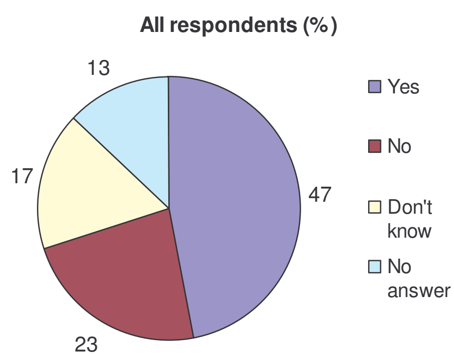
To some extent it seems that this question has been assumed to be addressed to holidaymakers, as 105 respondents out of 286 say the Art Tour is not the priority for members of their group. However, it is also possible that people not on holiday have assumed it applies to them. The Art Tour is stated the main purpose for 198 visitors, 85 first time visitors and 113 returning, but this is amongst an unknown total number of visitors represented by the questionnaire.

VQ 7. Would you prefer all artists to open on the same dates, making it easier to go to from one studio to another?

Nearly half the total respondents indicate that they would like artists to open on the same dates



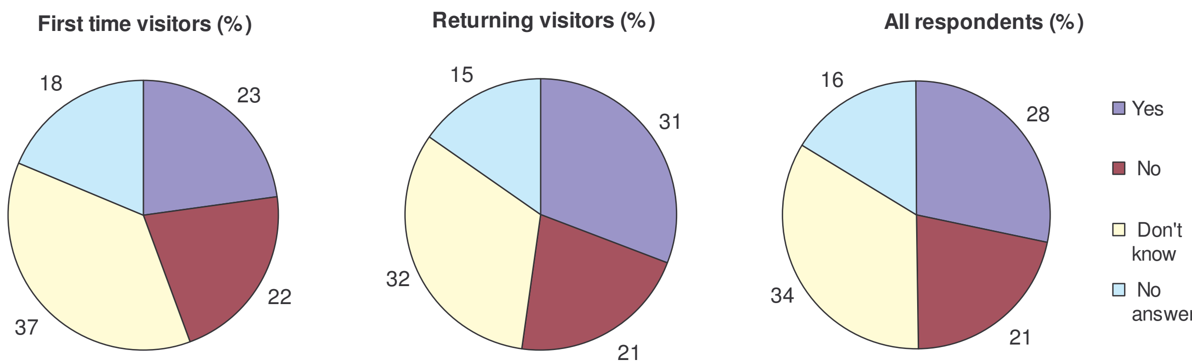




everywhere and presumably based on their experience, this is more strongly felt amongst returning artists than newcomers. However, a quarter do not, which taken together with those that aren't sure, implies that such a change would not be top priority. It may be noted in general, that from the proportion of uncertain replies (Don't know or No answer), it appears that the more experienced group can give more definitive answers.

VQ 8. Would you prefer the Art Tour to open partly in the school summer holidays, so that more people can visit?

Again, returning visitors seem more certain about this, nearly one third saying "Yes". However,



about one half give no clear answer, and a fifth a definite "no", implying that such a change should not be given much attention.

VQ 9. If there were more artists offering half / one day workshops associated with (but not on the same dates as) the Art Tour, how likely is it that you might wish to participate if they were held on other summer weekends or weekdays?

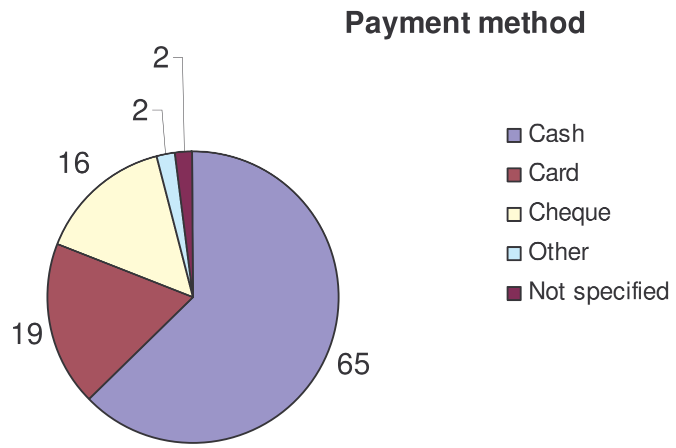
The interest in participating in workshops was very similar for both weekday and weekend proposals, regardless of experience of Art Touring. Although approximately 60% of respondents

	weekends				weekdays			
	First time visitors	Returning visitors	Both	%	First time visitors	Returning visitors	Both	%
Very likely	13	30	43	15	8	21	29	10
Likely	25	69	94	32	32	57	89	31
Unlikely	38	60	98	34	36	67	103	36
No answer	16	39	55	19	16	52	68	24
Total	92	198	290		92	197	289	

showed no particular interest, the remaining 40% would be likely to participate at any time, of which over 10% would be very keen to take part. This could involve around 4000 people if these proportions represented the inclinations of the 14000 who attended the Art Tour!

VQ 10. **Have you purchased any items of art work in the Art Tour 2010, excluding small items such as cards?**

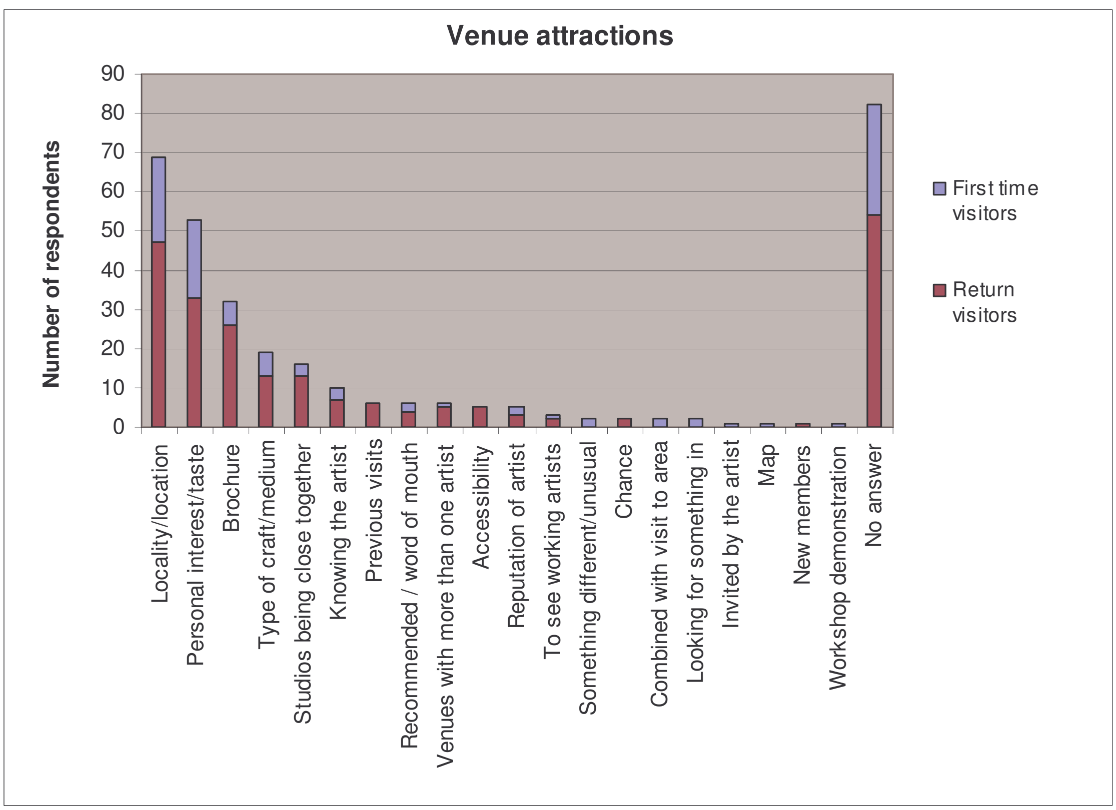
Of 257 respondents who answered this question, 153 made no purchases. Whilst the preferred



method of payment for the remaining 104 is clearly cash, cheque payment should not be dismissed.. 18% paid by card however, showing the success of the introduction of this method and perhaps encouraging others to take it up.

VQ 11. What major factors influence your choice of studios to visit?

The relative attractiveness of studios is very similar to first timers and returning visitors alike,

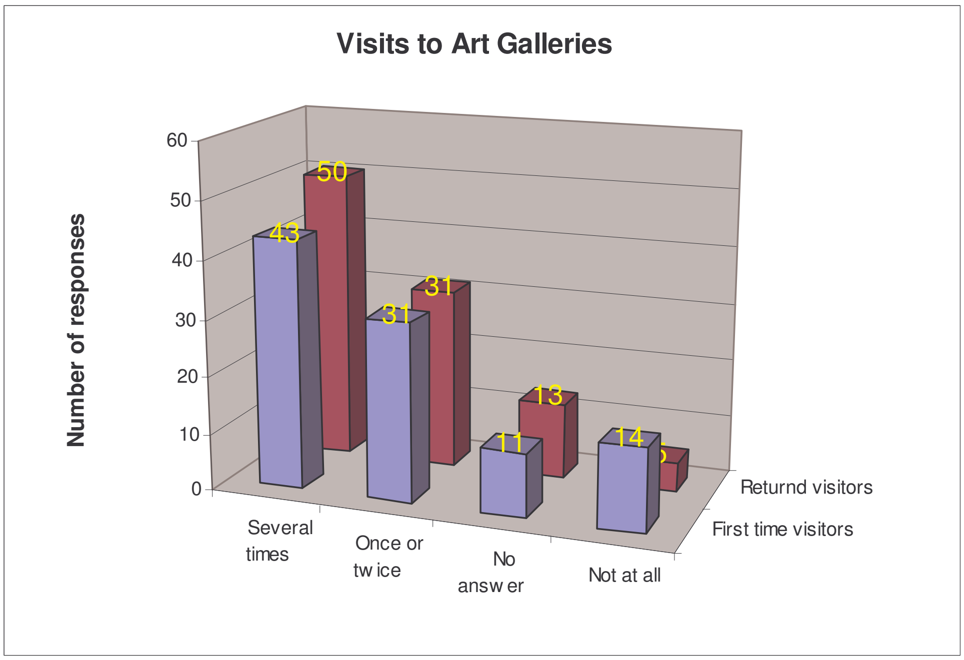


except that the latter is more influenced by the Brochure as they are likely to receive it through the post beforehand. Locality and personal interest are the most important considerations, followed after the Brochure by the type of medium and proximity of venues in the same locality. There is little to choose between the remaining reasons for visiting a venue.

A deeper investigation split this analysis by individual venues, but in most cases the smallness of numbers precluded any meaningful deductions and may to some extent create confidentiality issues.

VQ 12. How many times have you visited an art gallery in the last 6 months?

Very similar patterns were seen in art gallery visits, regardless of visitors' familiarity with the Art



Tour. Of 287 respondents, the majority had visited a gallery once or more, indicating a general art interest amongst followers of open studio events.

Note - Relating to the Visitor Questionnaire:

The results from the visitor questionnaire were counted manually and presented for analysis as totals, eg the totals who were attracted by national press or magazine articles or the totals who made purchases. It would not have been possible from this form of input to discover how many of the former did the latter, had it been important. Similarly, it would not be possible to make any other links, except to make comparisons between first time and returning visitors.

An alternative approach (adopted at some time during previous years) would be to abbreviate questions as column titles in a spreadsheet, with one column for each box on the questionnaire. Each returned questionnaire then occupies one line on the spreadsheet, and each column (box) is filled with a "0 = no or blank" or "1 = yes or tick" or occasionally another number as relevant. Responses can then be totalled or linked electronically, making the task more accurate and less arduous.

3. ONLINE SURVEY OF PARTICIPATING ARTISTS

Following the Art Tour a survey of artists was undertaken, to gather their views on its success, using an online survey package called Surveymonkey. Of the 88 Art Tour participants 48 responded and almost all answered all of the questions. This section presents a synopsis of the results. Most of the questions included an opportunity for respondents to make additional comments, which have been subjectively grouped and summarised. There were ten questions and they are designated SM, followed by the question number.

SM1. How do you feel about: The number of visitors you received on open days and preview days?

The responses were grouped into categories: Very pleased; Fairly pleased; Neutral; Disappointed; Very disappointed.

Relatively few were at the extremes or neutral. Most participants were (bimodally) either moderately pleased or disappointed, about one third being in each group, although the balance shifted somewhat towards being pleased with preview days. Artists' comments were very disparate, many only saying that they had a poor attendance, although some were pleased enough. Other than mentioning sporting distractions, most other comments were one-offs.

SM2. How do you feel about: The value of sales you made on open days and preview days?

In a similar way, a bimodal spread was seen, with more positive results on preview days. This tends to be backed up by artists comments, almost all of which are different ways of saying "We did OK" or "We were disappointed"

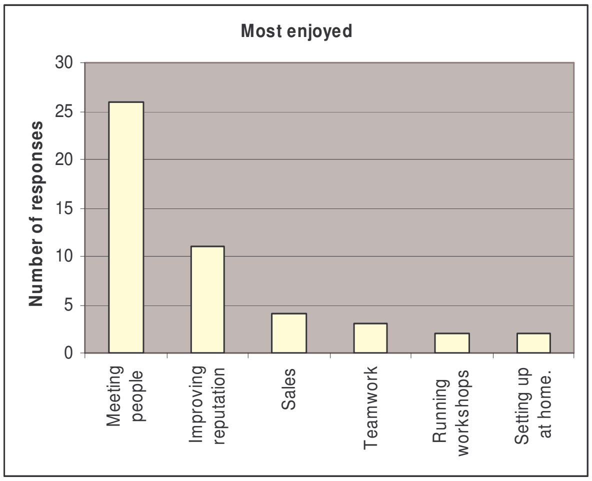
SM3. Taking into account the costs of joining the Art Tour, obtaining display equipment, hiring a venue, obtaining insurance cover, etc, do you think that you made a substantial/modest profit; broke even; made a substantial/modest loss?

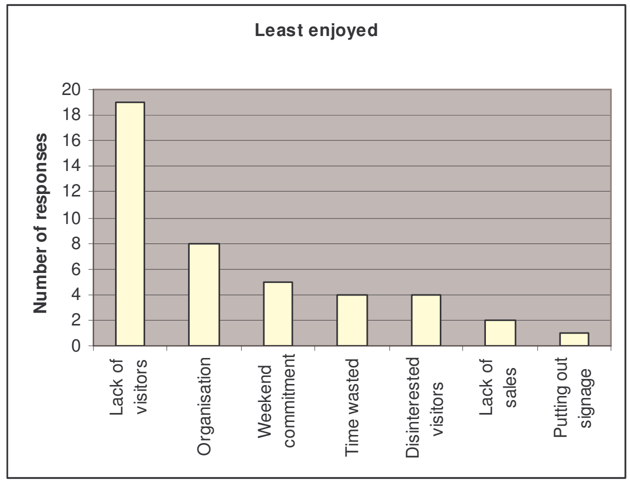
Two fifths of respondents felt they made a modest profit and nearly 10% felt they had done very well. One fifth each felt they had made a modest or substantial loss, whilst one in ten said they had broken even. There were no further comments on this question.

SM4. Regarding your experience of the Art Tour 2010, briefly what did you most/least enjoy?

45 respondents commented on their enjoyment of the Art Tour, the vast majority reporting how much they liked meeting people and getting their feedback. A small number only mentioned sales. Perhaps surprisingly, only three mentioned the teamwork aspect of doing the Art Tour – this may have been to do with how the question was asked or may be a reflection on participants' preferred independence.

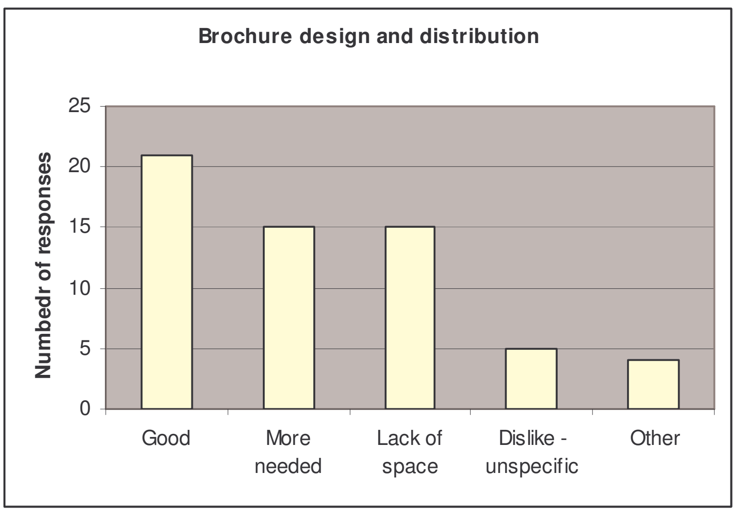
41 respondents commented on their least enjoyable aspects, the main one being their perceived lack of visitors, and the implied time wasted. Eight made a range of less favourable comments about the organisation. (This rather contradicts part of SM5 below.) A number mentioned the weekend commitment and disinterested visitors.





SM5. Briefly, please give feedback about the following topics.

Brochure Design and Distribution: The majority of respondents liked the Brochure in general, and the main adverse comment was the lack of space for descriptions of individual artists' work. The other concern was about the number of Brochures available for distribution.

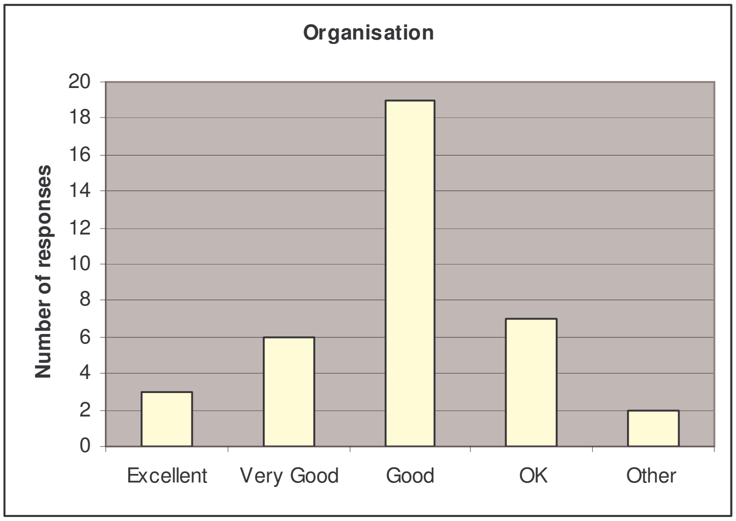


Advertising and publicity: Many felt the publicity was good, but an equal proportion had less favourable comments, namely that it wasn't so effective as in previous years and that it should reach a wider audience, perhaps using other media. Some hadn't seen any publicity and others felt that the new dates hadn't been emphasised enough.

Opening dates: In general the days and dates were felt to be OK, with some comments in favour of the compact approach, and some wanting even more concentration. The main complaints were a dislike of committing the whole weekend or preferring Sundays only.

Entry fee: The feedback on this was evenly split between those who felt the participant fee was fair and those who felt it was too high. (A few people thought the question was about visitor entry fees.)

Overall organisation: There was virtually no negative feedback about the organisation, and that which was given was trivial. The remainder comprised different categories of good, from OK to excellent.



Anything else? There were 14 responses to this question, and few new ones, some being repeats of points made elsewhere.

SM6. Overall, to what degree do you think that the Art Tour represents value for (your) money?

Two fifths of respondents felt that the Art Tour provided "a lot" of value for money, and 30% a little. Eight per cent were neutral and the rest were negative. This seems to contradict somewhat the reactions to Entry Fees in SM5!

SM7. In future, when would you prefer the Art Tour to take place (Months from May to September)?

June and July nearly gets a 50% vote, 33% support for June only. July and September each get a 25% vote, whilst May and August are be least popular. The reasons supporting artists' choices are many and varied, none in particular standing out.

SM8. In future, when (which days) would you prefer the Art Tour to take place?

The majority vote (57%) was for Saturday and Sunday opening, though some of those wanted fewer weekends. Sundays only brought in a 50% vote, reasons being that it was felt that Sundays brought in more visitors historically, or artists wanted some time for other things at weekends. A 13% vote for weekdays was halved for Saturdays only, even though it has been shown that Saturdays bring in most sales.

SM9. Are you likely to participate in next year's Art Tour?

Two fifths of respondents expect to take part in next year's Art Tour, almost exclusively for business reasons and to enhance their reputation. Those who are undecided (the majority at 45%) are waiting to hear about timing and format, and those who have decided against (15%) have done so mainly on economic grounds

SM10. "Do you think it reasonable for all participants to help undertake specific tasks?"

The majority of 55% feel this is reasonable, but 11% do not and the remainder are undecided. The comments added were not linked in any particular way with preferences, but many respondents felt that sharing the load would be fair, help bring about ownership and help keep costs down, although the administration could be challenging. There were concerns about the competence of helpers, but this is always a concern that can be overcome.

Appendix 1 – Visitor Questionnaire

network ARTISTS IN NORTHUMBERLAND

Enter the prize draw and win an original piece of art work!

We hope you are enjoying the art tour and meeting the artists and would be very grateful for feedback. The questions should only take a few minutes, as as an incentive there is a **Prize Draw** as a present to one of you!

When completed, please hand in to the last venue you visit today - or if you forget, post it to the address below. Thankyou.

Name ....

Address ....

....

Postcode ....

Tel ....

Email ....

☐ Would you like to be sent the Art Tour Brochure free each year?

Data Protection

☐ Please tick if you do not want your contact details to be held on a database for future Art Tour events.
(All other information will be held anonymously and not held with your contact details)

the art tour

a network open studios event

Visitors' Questionnaire 2010

1 Have you attended the Art Tour prior to 2010?

☐ Yes ☐ No

2 Please tick what prompted you to attend the Art Tour:

☐ Brochure ☐ Leaflet
☐ National press or magazine article
☐ Local press or magazine article
☐ Advert ☐ Online listings
☐ Network website
☐ Art Tour signage
☐ Word of mouth
☐ Other ....

3 How did you obtain the Art Tour Brochure?

☐ In post ☐ From a friend
☐ Picked it up ☐ Downloaded

4 If you picked the brochure up, where from?

☐ Art Tour studio ☐ Another Art Venue
☐ Library ☐ Tourist Information or Visitor Centre

If different type of venue, please state which

....

Network Artists, c/o Kim Pearson
Coach House, Heddon House Lane, Heddon on the Wall, Northumberland NE15 0JR

PTO

5 How many members of your party are on holiday in the area? ☐

6 How many members are visiting the area mainly to attend the Art Tour? ☐

7 Would you prefer all artists to open on the same dates, making it easier go to from one studio to another? Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know ☐

8 Would you prefer the Art Tour to open partly in the school summer holidays, so that more people can visit? Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know ☐

9 If there were more artists offering half / one day workshops associated with (but not on the same dates as) the Art Tour, how likely is it that you might wish to participate if they were held:

On other summer weekends: Very likely ☐ Likely ☐ Unlikely ☐

On summer weekdays: Very likely ☐ Likely ☐ Unlikely ☐

10 Have you purchased any items of art work in the Art Tour 2010, excluding small items such as cards?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If Yes, how did you pay for it / them? Cash ☐ Cheque ☐ Card ☐ Other ☐

Did you find the method of payment convenient? Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know ☐

If No, how could it be made more convenient? ....

11 A: What major factors influence your choice of studios to visit? ....

....

B: Which studio did you particularly enjoy, and, briefly, why? ....

....

12 Roughly how many times have you visited an art gallery in the last six months?

Not at all ☐ Once or twice ☐ Several times ☐

Many thanks for completing this questionnaire ...

When completed, please hand in to the last venue you visit today - or if you forget, post it to the address overleaf.

Appendix 2 – Visitor Questionnaire

The Art Tour 2010 : What the Steering Group did

1. Conducted a brainstorming session on the Art Tour to generate lots of ideas to help guide future thinking.
2. Sent a representative to the Open Studios Network Conference in Coventry.
3. Simplified Art Tour opening dates (to weekends in June), following consultation with members.
4. Began to assess the differing value to participants of the Art Tour in terms of sales.
5. Brought forward the schedule to enable earlier printing of the brochure (see 19).
6. Held the Art Tour Launch at Heddon, advertised in the Hexham Courant and The Journal.
7. Managed an increase in participants from 69 to 88.
8. Modified the cluster structure and found cluster representatives to help coordinate work locally.
9. Changed the format of the brochure to one third A4 to fit leaflet display stands, DL size envelopes and people's pockets.
10. Included a Newcomers' section in the brochure, and a single, central map.
11. Increased revenue from advertising in the brochure from £2028 to £3050.
12. Redesigned the flier and amended the Artists' Guide and Visitor Questionnaire.
13. Helped run Training events for newcomers (with help from others).
14. Posted Art Tour details on the desti.ne database, which feeds directly into several tourism web sites.
15. Attended Tourism Fairs at Berwick, Alnwick, Tyne & Wear, Hadrian's Wall, and Alston and posted brochures to interested accommodation providers.
16. Submitted a proposal to the Arts Sponsors' 'Dragons' Den' that proceeded to the final but, regrettably, had to be withdrawn due to lack of time for preparing our presentation.
17. Discussed an initial paper on Sponsorship.
18. Sent press releases to 26 national magazines, The Northumbrian, Northumberland Gazette, Morpeth Herald, The Journal, Culture, Radio Newcastle, Accent, and Hexham Courant.
19. Contracted Northern Print Distribution to deliver 20,000 brochures to largely new outlets in Northumberland, Durham, the Borders, East Cumbria, Teesdale and North Yorkshire.
20. Amended the Network mailing list to avoid overlap with NPD's delivery points, and to update addresses, etc.
21. Updated our web site (through Lazy Grace).
22. Placed advertisements with Culture magazine, The Crack, Tynedale Visitor, Hexham Courant, Living North, Accent.
23. Mounted a stand at the County Show near Corbridge, using a new Art Tour pop-up.