Visitors to the Wall

History of public interest

5.1 In this chapter we describe:
the history of public interest in the Roman monuments
the efforts which have been made to publicise and interpret the monuments
the recent trends and present pattern of public visiting
the impact of that visiting upon the Wall region
the prospects for the future.

History of public interest

5.2 Although Hadrian’s Wall is mentioned by Bede and other early historians and in military surveys of the ‘Marches’ conducted for Henry VIII in 1542 and 1550 by Sir Robert Bowes, the practice of visiting the monument can be said to have begun in the later sixteenth century when the great antiquaries such as Leland and Camden inspected the remains and recorded their impressions and theories. In his book ‘Britannia’ (1599), Camden described Hadrian’s Wall among the many monuments and places of archaeological interest which he visited in his travels round England. Fear of the ‘Incourses of Thes’ (Sir Robert Bowes) prevented Camden from actually visiting the central section but he recorded that ‘I have observ’d the tracks of it running wonderfully up the mountain and down again’. Camden propounded a detailed explanation of the history and function of the Wall and its associated works, which became the authoritative treatise on the subject until 1839 when Hodgson showed that the Wall had been built by Hadrian and not Severus as previously supposed.

5.3 In the later eighteenth century, revised edition of the ‘Britannia’ incorporated fresh accounts of the state of the Wall at the time. This period witnessed the growth of touring as a pursuit whether for academic interest in antiquities or for the sake of the participant’s health. It is interesting to note that a spring near Lanercost was, in the summer time, much frequented both by the Scotch and English, and early forerunner of the spa at Gilsland. Both the Lakes and the Roman Wall received their share of visitors during what Birley has described as the age of Tourists and the interests of such travellers were not confined to Roman antiquities. Nevertheless, the eighteenth century saw the publication of a number of important treatises on the Wall and its history; John Horsley’s learned ‘Britannia Romana’ (1732), still held in respect by present-day archaeologists; William Stukely’s ‘Iter Boreale’ (1776), an account of a journey made in style of Camden; and John Brand’s description of 1789. ‘During my residence at Newcastle upon Tyne, prompted by an ardour of curiosity bordering on enthusiasm, I occasionally made several excursions to examine the still remaining vestiges of those stupendous works, raised here by a people who were justly styled the conquerors of the world, for the great purpose of protecting in their possessions their civilised subjects, and to ward off the attacks of the more northern and unconquered barbarians’ (Brand). In addition the first pocket companion for ‘such learned travellers and others whose curiosity may lead them to visit the superb remains of the famous Picts Wall’, a quarto size book with map and illustrations, was produced in 1853 by Warburton.

5.4 At the beginning of the nineteenth century, a precedent was set for what was to become a popular method of visiting the Wall. In 1801, William Hutton, aged 78, ‘procured for myself the privilege of walking, which of all the modes of travelling I prefer (Hutton). He travelled from
5.6 The Victorian period saw an upsurge of interest in archaeology, and the Roman Wall was the subject of the untiring efforts of people like John Collingwood Bruce and John Clayton. Bruce was the instigator of the Wall ‘pilgrimage’. The first excursion in 1849 arose because the audience at some of Bruce’s lectures in the Roman Wall thought that he was describing the structure in too glowing terms’ (Bruce) whereupon Bruce invited them to traverse it from end to end the following summer ‘forming a pilgrimage like that described by Chaucer, consisting of both ladies and gentlemen’. The excursion was, to quote Birley, ‘a sociable gossiping affair’ whose participants travelling mostly on foot, were interested in the appearance of the Roman remains and the surrounding countryside rather than their archaeological significance. At many points along the Wall local people joined the pilgrims and Bruce gave many impromptu lectures on the Roman ruins. A second pilgrimage was organised by the two local archaeological societies in 1866, but in this instance the emphasis was on archaeology. Further excursions took place in 1896, 1906, 1920, 1930, 1949 and 1959 and the pilgrimages evolved into archaeological field conferences.

5.7 Excavations on the Wall had been enthusiastically pursued throughout the 1800’s but the turn of the century saw a fresh upsurge of research and excavation. As a result many parts of the monument and its associated structures became exposed to view and this, together with the establishment of museums such as Chesters (1890), provided an attraction to visitors. As in the previous century, the interests of tourists were not confined to Roman antiquities and the first edition of Bruce’s ‘Hand book to the Roman Wall’ (1863) describes many other features worth visiting, such as Willimontwick Castle, Lanercost Priory and Carlisle Cathedral.

5.8 In the twentieth century the Ancient Monuments Department (now part of the Department of the Environment) took many of the monuments into their custody and they now maintain these sites and open them to the public on a formal basis. Some privately managed sites are also open to visitors. Public interest in the Wall, other Roman remains in the area and non-Roman features such as Hexham Abbey has grown throughout the century and visiting has increased. In recent years, perhaps partly in response to Hunter Davies’ book ‘A Walk along the Wall’, more and more people are following the example of William Hutton and walking the Wall, thus refuting his gloomy prophecy; ‘Perhaps, I am the first man that ever travelled the whole length of this Wall, and probably the last that ever will attempt it. Who then will say he has, like me, travelled it twice?’

Publicity, information and interpretation

5.9 The growth of public interest in the Wall region has been prompted by, and has itself encouraged, a considerable (but, as we shall see, fragmented) volume of publicity, information and interpretation related to the Wall. This includes:

- guidebooks, leaflets, maps and other literature
- museums
- local publicity and information
- tourist publicity
- signposting
- on-site interpretation

We briefly describe below the present scope of each.
5.10 Guidebooks and other literature. A wide range of guidebooks, leaflets, maps and other literature is now available to assist the visitor to the Wall. Collingwood Bruce’s ‘Handbook to the Roman Wall’, now in its 12th edition, remains the most comprehensive guidebook available among a range which includes official guides produced by the Department of the Environment, the excellent ‘two-inch’ map produced by the Ordnance Survey, a series of booklets on various aspects of Roman history produced by a Newcastle publishing firm and much else. The National trust and the Vindolanda Trust have produced illustrated booklets; and the Department of the Environment also produces posters, postcards and inexpensive information leaflets.

5.11 Museums. A total of seven museums in the Wall region now maintain public displays relating to the Romans and the monuments and remains they left behind them. Two of these, at Newcastle and Carlisle, are fully equipped museums: the other five may be better described as field or site museums, their emphasis being on the exhibit and interpretation of finds as distinct from research. The seven museums are each under distinct ownership and management, with (at present) no formal links between them. Responsibility is vested in the following bodies:

- a. South Shields (site museum) - Tyne and Wear County Council
- b. Newcastle Museum of Antiquities - Newcastle University and the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne
- c. Corbridge (site museum, plus modest storage and research facilities) - Trustees of Corbridge Excavation Fund and the Department of the Environment
- d. Chesters (site museum) - Trustees of the Clayton Collection and the Department of the Environment
- e. Housesteads (site museum) - National Trust and the Department of the Environment
- f. Vindolanda (site museum, with some storage and research facilities) - Vindolanda Trust
- g. Carlisle (Tullie House Museum, including two substantial rooms of Roman material) - Carlisle District Council.

* The possibility of securing formal links between these three site museums, including the appointment of a joint curator, is currently under discussion between the three Trusts concerned and the Department of the Environment.

The extent of display of the Roman ‘story’ varies between the seven museums, the collections at Carlisle and Newcastle (a museum not easily found by the general public) being the most impressive.

5.12 Local publicity and information. Local publicity is considerably diversified and includes a series of leaflets produced by The National Park and Countryside Committee of Northumberland County Council. The National Park handbook has a section on the Roman Wall; and the Roman Wall Bus Service is publicised by posters, leaflets, bus-stop signs and souvenir tickets. Distribution of leaflets is largely effected through Tourist Information Centres such as those operated by Tynedale District Council at Hexham, Corbridge and Haltwhistle and through the National Park Information Centre at Once Brewed. Tynedale District Council are active in the publicity field, producing a range of inexpensive leaflets and a small illustrated map of the Wall. At their information centre in Hexham, a short slide show on the Wall is available to visitors. Other local organisations, such as Haltwhistle Chamber of Trade, produce leaflets featuring the Wall. Local bus and coach tour operators publicize the Wall in their brochures and timetables. Many of the hotels and public houses in the Wall area display large mounted photographs or an illuminated slide, others have a copy of the Ordnance Survey map on show.

5.13 Tourist publicity. Hadrian’s Wall figures largely in the tourist publicity produced by the official Tourist Boards. British Tourist Authority refers to the Wall in its overseas publicity aimed at the American, European and other markets.
English Tourist Board includes the Wall not only in its general promotion of holidays in England, but heavily in its new campaign (January 1976) to publicise ‘England’s Northcountry’. The publicity for this refers to the Wall as ‘Britain’s most spectacular Roman relic’ running across the ‘frontier country’ from coast to coast; and advertises ‘activity holidays’ whereby visitors may be introduced to the archaeology of the Wall region while staying at an hotel, a farmhouse or a Durham college. The Board is able to assist, by grants and loans, appropriate tourist development in the Wall region (since this falls within the official Development Area); and has given such assistance to a number of projects connected with the Wall or which can serve visitors to it, including the work of the Vindolanda Trust and some local hotels and information centres.

Northumbria Tourist Board feature the Wall in much of their advertising material; and their main Guide, with a distribution of 50,000 copies, always has an article on the Wall. Because of the pressures they feel places like Housesteads suffer, they tend not to mention such sites specifically, naming only Vindolanda if any. The Board also produce films, posters and leaflets which feature the Wall; and promote ‘holiday packages’, which include tours of the Roman Wall in addition to other historic sites in Northumbria. The Board encourage occasional publicity stunts, such as the Wall Chariot Run during the 1975 Spring Bank Holiday weekend.

Cumbria Tourist Board feature the Wall in their regional Guide and other promotional activity, though to a lesser extent than the Northumbria Board. They wish to promote the northern part of their area, which includes the Solway Firth, Carlisle and the Roman Wall, as a counter-weight to the Lake District. With assistance from the English Tourist Board, they are encouraging the development of Maryport - a significant Roman fort and port - as a tourist centre.

Tourist publicity for the Wall is also promoted by national newspapers and other media. For example, new discoveries at Vindolanda and more recently on the west coast received publicity in the national media; travel writers give quite frequent coverage of the Wall area; and nationwide publicity was achieved by Hunter Davies’ ‘Walk along the Wall’.

5.14 Signposting. At present, signposting with explicit reference to the Roman Wall is largely confined to a quite narrow corridor along the Wall itself, mainly in the central section. For example, the Northumberland National Park and Countryside Committee have erected advance warning signs on the Military Road, on the approach from both sides to Carrawbrough, Housesteads, Steel Rigg and Cawfields, also on the minor road approach to Vindolanda - all to a unified design. But the visitor is given no impression that he is within a unified ‘Wall region’.

5.15 On-site interpretation on the Roman sites which are open to the public is, in general, quite limited as compared with (say) some other sites owned by the Department of the Environment or the National Trust. The Department’s guardianship or ownership sites contain metal plaques with the site name, only Housesteads, Chesters and Corbridge having further cryptic labels on the individual features to be seen, plus the additional interpretation within the site museum. The Vindolanda Trust provides an increasing amount of on-site interpretation, including imaginative reconstructions of a timber milecastle gateway, a stone turret and stretches of both stone and turf walls.

Facilities offered to visitors
5.16 Before describing the trends and pattern of public visiting, we should describe briefly the sites which are open to the public and the facilities available. The sites are shown on Map 12; and Table 2 (also starting on the next page) shows:

a. the main features to be seen;
b. the supporting facilities - site museum, toilets, refreshments etc;
c. the means of access available - availability of car park, railway and bus services (with walking distances to site).

The letter code for sites (A,B,C etc) in Map 12 and Table 2 is that used in Table 1, Chapter 4.
Map 2. Roman Sites Open to Visitors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Features now visible</th>
<th>Supporting facilities</th>
<th>Means of Access</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. South Shields</td>
<td>One-third of complete fort.</td>
<td>Site museum</td>
<td>Local street system: car parking in street. Bus and rail services within 1/3 mile.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Benwell Temple</td>
<td>Temple, vallum with crossing</td>
<td></td>
<td>Local streets with parking space. Buses within 1/4 mile.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Denton to Heddon</td>
<td>Stretches of Wall, turret</td>
<td></td>
<td>Parking (dangerous) on main road. Buses along main road.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. Planetrees</td>
<td>Stretch of Wall</td>
<td></td>
<td>Parking (dangerous) alongside main road.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. Brunton/Chesters Bridge</td>
<td>Turret, Wall, bridge abutment.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Parking in lay-by on main road.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site (see descriptions in Table 1 Chapter 4)</td>
<td>Features now visible</td>
<td>Supporting facilities</td>
<td>Means of Access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. Corbridge</td>
<td>Fort</td>
<td>Site museum, sales counter, toilets</td>
<td>Small car park. Buses pass the site or within ½ mile, railway station 1 mile.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. Chesters</td>
<td>Fort, bath-house, bridge abutment, ford</td>
<td>Site museum, sales counter, toilets, refreshments.</td>
<td>Car park. Roman Wall Tourist Buses and (within ½ mile) scheduled buses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I – J. Chesters to Carrawbrough</td>
<td>Stretches of Wall</td>
<td></td>
<td>Car parking on minor road at Black Carts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Carrawbrough</td>
<td>Mithraeum</td>
<td></td>
<td>Car park. Roman Wall Tourist Bus Service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K. Housesteads</td>
<td>Fort, Wall, milecastle</td>
<td>Site museum: sales information kiosk, toilets and travelling refreshments (all sited at car park).</td>
<td>Car park beside main road (½ mile from fort). Tourist and Midi-bus services stop at car park.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M. Cawfields</td>
<td>Wall, milecastle 42</td>
<td>Picnic area (in ex-quarry).</td>
<td>Car park. Roman Wall Tourist Buses within ¼ mile.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O. Birdoswald</td>
<td>Fort, Wall, Turf Wall, milecastle, turret.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Car park in farmyard and beside road.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O – P Birdoswald to Castlesteads</td>
<td>Stretches of Wall, turrets</td>
<td></td>
<td>Car parking beside road, including one formal lay-by.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P. Carlisle Museum</td>
<td>Roman exhibits</td>
<td>Toilets (other substantial services in the City).</td>
<td>Restricted car parking in nearby streets. Bus and railway stations within ½ mile.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Visitors to the Wall

Recent trends, and present patterns, of public visiting

5.17 It will be seen from the Map and Table that the public now has access to:

- Six major forts - South Shields, Corbridge, Chesters, Housesteads, Vindolanda and Birdoswald.
- Two minor specific sites - the temples at Benwell and Carrawbrough.
- Many stretches or sequences of Wall, with associated features, including turrets, milecastles and bridge abutments.
- Two major museums relating to (but not sited upon) the Wall.

Recent trends, and present patterns, of public visiting

5.18 In the next few pages, we describe the recent trends, and present patterns, of public visiting. The information relates mainly to:

- a. the trends in total visitor numbers over the last decade
- b. the main types of visitor (day-trippers, holiday-makers etc) with their origin and means of transport
- c. the seasonal pattern of visiting, with the weekly and daily pattern within the season
- d. those factors - hourly pattern of arrivals, and length of stay, by visitors at specific sites; numbers of people present at one time; ratios between people and vehicles - which are of importance when (in Chapter 6) we come to compare the present usage of the Wall with its capacity.

5.19 This information is drawn from a wide range of sources, including:

- records of attendance kept by the owners or managers of certain major sites
- questionnaire surveys undertaken in 1973 to 1975 by Northumberland County Council and in 1975 by Cumbria County Council among visitors to major sites*
- traffic surveys and observations in 1975 by Northumberland County Council and by DART and their associated consultants.

Appendix II contains the technical details and statistics upon which the Diagrams in this chapter are based.

Diagram 1. Annual totals of visitors to four major sites 1965 to 1975.
5.20 Trends in total visitor numbers. Diagram 1 shows the trends in numbers of total visitors recorded at four of the major sites for the period 1965 to 1975. In general, this period has seen considerable and fairly steady growth in visitor numbers, though minor fluctuations have occurred where a monument has been closed for part of a year. Peak figures were reached at Housesteads, Chesters and Corbridge in 1973 and numbers have declined since then. Vindolanda has shown continuous but fluctuating growth since its opening in 1970. No records have been kept at the other Roman sites, but the tenant farmers at Birdoswald and Willowford claim a steady growth in numbers of visitors over the last few years.

* Housesteads, Chesters, Corbridge, Vindolanda, Steel Rigg, Cawfields and Once Brewed Information Centre in Northumberland; Birdoswald, Willowford, Banks Turret and Poltross Burn Milecastle (Gilsland) in Cumbria.

5.21 Total visitors in 1975. Map 13 shows the estimated total number of visitors at each of the Roman sites, those shown with blank columns being simply 'guestimates' in the absence of any information. It will be seen that visiting is concentrated in the central section of the Wall between Corbridge and Cawfields, with the highest figures at Housesteads.

5.22 The figures summarised in Map 13 - plus a margin of 10% added to the total shown there to account for (mainly minor) sites for which information is not available - provide a crude estimate that a cumulative total of some 960,000 visits were made to Roman Wall sites in 1975. How many separate visitors this represents, we cannot tell, since we do not know how often people visit the Wall each year. We do, however, have some indication of the number of Roman sites visited on average in the course of each visitor's trip to the

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Map 13: Estimated Total Number of Visitors at Roman Sites, 1975.
Visitors to the Wall

In 1974 the Northumberland National Park survey showed that the respondents visited an average of 1.3 sites each on the day of interview. A similar figure emerged in the roadside interviews conducted by Northumberland County Council in 1975. We may thus make a crude estimate that the total number of person-trips to Hadrian's Wall in 1975 was about 740,000 (= 960,000 + 1.3).

5.23 Types of visitors. Visitors to the Roman Wall sites can be classified into four broad categories:

a. Educational groups from schools, colleges etc. both within the northern Regions and much further afield;

b. Day trippers i.e. people other than education al groups visiting the Wall area on a day-trip from their homes;

c. Holidaymakers staying in Northumbria or Cumbria Tourist Board regions;

d. Tourists in transit to other areas (and not staying overnight in these regions);

5.24 The table below, based on the information available to us, shows the apparent division among these categories of visitors to the main Wall sites:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Educational groups</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Chesters 14%, Housesteads 20%, Corbridge 49%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day trippers</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holidaymakers</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourists</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.25 Thus, more than half the total are holidaymakers or tourists, and four out of five of them stay at least one night in the northern Tourist Regions. A quarter of all visitors are in education-

5.26 Origin of visitors. We have no information on the origin of educational groups visiting the Wall. Information on the origin of day visitors and of holidaymakers/tourists was gathered in the Northumberand and Cumbria surveys described in 5.19(b) above.

5.27 Origin of day-trippers. About one-fifth of the visitors to the Wall monuments (see 5.24 above) - perhaps 150,000 visitors per year - are day-trippers visiting the Wall direct from their homes. Diagram 3 below shows the origin of these visitors, based on the evidence of the Northumberland and Cumbria surveys. Almost half the day trippers came from the Tyne-Wear conurbation, and significant numbers also from Northumberland, Durham, Cumbria and Yorkshire - most of this area falling within the 50-mile radius from the centre of the Wall shown in Chapter 2. Small proportions came from further afield. As might be expected, the ratios differed somewhat between the Cumbrian and Northumbrian sites, with the former attracting rather larger proportions of people from Lancashire, Scotland and Cumbria itself.

5.28 Origin of holidaymakers. Diagram 4 below shows the origin of holidaymakers (including tourists in transit through the regions), based on the evidence of the Northumberland and Cumbria
surveys. The high proportion of visitors from overseas demonstrates the international significance of the Wall. The significant areas of origin in Britain are, in order of importance, the South-East (22 percent), the North-West (13 percent), and Yorkshire (11 percent), but all the English regions are represented. The Northumbrian and Cumbrian sites showed similar broad patterns of origin of holidaymakers, although some slight variations occurred: thus the Northumbrian sites received a higher proportion of visitors from Yorkshire and the South-East, and a lesser proportion from Scotland and the North-West.

of the Roman Wall visitors than they do of total holidaymakers in Northumbria (38 percent) and Cumbria (20 percent). This suggests either a relatively low interest among northerners in their own Roman heritage and/or that they regard the Wall as a matter for day outings from home rather than holiday visits.

5.30 Seasonal pattern of visiting. Diagram 5 shows

the seasonal pattern of visiting at Housesteads, Chesters, Corbridge and Vindolanda shown by monthly totals as percentages of the annual figure. The impression from all the sites is of a strong peak around the main summer holidays, with July and August together accounting for nearly half the annual total of visits; fairly strong ‘shoulders’ to the season in April-June and September; and low figures in the rest of the year.


5.29 A significant comparison may be made between the proportion of British holidaymakers who visit Northumbria and Cumbria as a whole, and those who visit the Wall. This shows that residents of the two northern regions - Northumbria and Cumbria - form a far lower proportion (6 percent)
5.31 Such a heavily 'peaked' pattern tallies, of course, with the fact that over half the visitors to the Wall are on holiday at the time of their visit. The strong 'shoulders' to the season, notably April to June, are to a significant degree caused by educational groups, as is shown by the seasonal pattern of visitors at Housesteads in 1974 revealed in Diagram 6 (right) (educational groups, as noted earlier, form a large part of the visitors recorded under 'passes, vouchers and free admissions').

5.32 Detailed seasonal pattern. Diagram 7 shows the daily totals of visitors to Housesteads throughout 1975. In addition to the seasonal peaking already emphasised, this shows three significant features:

- a. the strong weekend pattern in the low season roughly mid-September to Easter - when day visitors from Tyneside and other nearby areas make day trips to the Wall: in this season, Saturday is often more popular than Sunday;
- b. the very even spread between days of the week throughout the 'high season' - from Easter to mid-September - with Saturday (the day when many holidaymakers start or finish their holidays) as the least popular day for Wall visits;
- c. the peaks of activity on the Easter and Spring Bank Holiday weekends - the Monday of the
latter weekend having the highest daily figure in the year - succeeded by numerous lesser peaks between mid-June and late August.

We shall show later (Chapter 6) that the 'normal peak load' is a critical factor in considering the place of sites within a strategy for the Wall. To assist the later analysis, we have shown on Diagram 7 the 'normal peak day' for Housesteads in 1975.

5.33 Pattern of arrivals. Diagram 8 below shows the pattern of arrivals at sites on the Wall, during a typical summer day, based on the average of 14 sites at which surveys were undertaken. The arrivals are well spaced out during the day, with a fairly constant inward flow from mid-morning to about 5 p.m. and a peak (not particularly marked) in the early afternoon. There was some evidence that the more eastern sites (near to Tyneside and to the A68 and A69 approaches) had a more pronounced morning peak than the sites further west. This tallies with the finding by Northumberland County Council in 1973 that about two-thirds of the visitor traffic approaching the central section of the Wall came from the east.

5.34 Length of stay. Diagram 9 below shows the length of stay by visitors at sites on the Wall during a typical summer day, again based on the average of fourteen sites at which surveys were undertaken. A marked feature is the relatively short stay at many sites, with almost a quarter of visitors staying less than 15 minutes, a further third staying less than one hour, and less than 15% staying more than two hours.

\[
\begin{array}{|c|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
\text{Duration} & 0 & 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 6+ \\
\hline
\text{Percent} & 0 & 15 & 20 & 25 & 20 & 5 \\
\hline
\end{array}
\]

Diagram 9. Average length of stay by visitors at fourteen wall sites, 3rd August 1975.

5.35 Average lengths of stay, however, vary considerably (as might be expected) between small, roadside sites such as Banks Turret and major forts such as Housesteads or Chesters. Diagram 10 (right) shows the mean length of stay of visitors at these fourteen sites covered in the one-day survey from which the material for the two previous diagrams was drawn. It will be seen that minor sites (such as Banks Turret, Carrawburgh and Poltross Burn) may occupy people for half-an-hour or so; while major sites (such as Housesteads or Vindolanda) may keep them happy for one and a half hours or more. It is notable that the highest figures include two sites - Steel Rigg and Cawfields - which are essentially car parks on the line of the Wall, from which people may walk some distance or near which they may stay for some time. For example using the picnic site at Cawfields.

\[
\begin{array}{|c|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
\text{Site} & \text{Length} & \text{Percent} \\
\hline
\text{Banks Turret} & \text{half an hour} & 10 \\
\text{Cawfields} & \text{1 hour} & 15 \\
\text{Housesteads} & \text{2 hour} & 20 \\
\text{Vindolanda E} & \text{3 hour} & 25 \\
\text{Steel Rigg} & \text{4 hour} & 20 \\
\text{Vindolanda W} & \text{6+ hour} & 5 \\
\hline
\end{array}
\]

Diagram 10. Average length of stay by visitors at fourteen wall sites, 3rd. August 1975.

5.36 Visitors present at one time. The number of visitors present at one time on a site (which, as we show later, is a crucial factor in assessing the present usage of Wall sites in relation to their capacity) is a direct product of the two matters - the pattern of arrivals and the length of stay - which we have just described. If all the visitors to a site on a
particular day arrived at the same time and stayed the same length of time, then the visitors present at one time would equal the daily total; whereas if their arrivals were well spaced out during the day, and they each stayed only a short time, the number present at one time might be (say) only one-tenth of the daily total.

5.37 Diagram 11 below shows the peak number of visitors present at one time on a typical summer day at each of the fourteen sites mentioned above, as a proportion of the daily total for that day. It will be seen that the proportion varies from roughly one-eighth for the small short-stay sites to about one-third for the large or long-stay sites.

5.38 Means of transport used. The table below shows that about 90 per cent of summer visitors to Roman Wall sites arrive at the sites by private transport; a further five per cent arrive by coach; and the remainder by other means, including bus, train, cycle and walking.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Means of transport used to reach site</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Private transport</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(88% car, 1½% motor caravans, ½% other)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coach</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bus</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2% Tourist Buses, ¼% scheduled buses)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walk or cycle</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(including some who use train or bus for part of the journey)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: site surveys, 3 August 1975

The proportions vary, of course, from site to site: for example, Housesteads has 8 per cent arriving by coach, and the arrivals by Tourist Bus services are obviously confined to the sites which these buses serve. Moreover, the proportion of coaches (including mini-buses) can be expected to be materially larger than shown above at those sites and seasons (notably May/June) at which educational groups are visiting the Wall.

5.39 Vehicle occupancy. With cars so dominant among the means of transport used, the key element in the ratio between visitors and vehicles (which is of crucial importance in assessing vehicle parking needs) is car occupancy i.e. how many people tend to come together in one car when visiting the Wall. Surveys at fourteen sites on a typical summer day produce a variation in daily averages between 2.75 and 3.75 people per car, with an overall average of 3.4 people per car. Other vehicles of course, have a greater or lesser occupancy e.g. 1.38 people per motor-cycle, c.30 people per coach, using averages from the surveys mentioned above. Taking these into account, together with those visitors (e.g. walkers) who bring no vehicle with them, the observed ratio of visitors to vehicles, on the day and sites covered in the surveys mentioned above, was 3.6 people per car or equivalent.

5.40 Traffic volumes. The volumes of traffic generated by visitors are a direct product of two matters - vehicle occupancy and the pattern of arrivals which we have described earlier. Diagram 12 below shows the peak hourly flows of vehicles arriving at each of the fourteen sites mentioned earlier, as a proportion of the total number of...
Visitors to the Wall

Impact of visitors on the Wall region

Vehicle arriving at the site during that day. It will be seen that the proportions vary between 15 and 28 per cent.

Impact of visitors on the Wall region

5.41 The effects caused by visitors to the Roman Wall area can be separated into three categories:

- Economic impact e.g. through spending by visitors on accommodation and other commodities
- Social impact on the lives and work of the local people
- Environmental impact on the sites, the monuments, footpaths etc.

5.42 Economic impact. Visitors to the Wall bring benefits to the Wall region (as defined in paragraph 3.1*) by their expenditure in the course of their visits. The only direct information we have on expenditure in the Wall region by visitors to Roman sites comes from a survey (conducted by Industrial Market Research Ltd. for the English Tourist Board) among visitors to Housesteads, Hexham and Vindolanda in July/August 1975. Complementing this with other ‘indirect’ information, we can gain the following impression of total spending in the Wall region by visitors to the Wall.

5.43 The table below contains a crude estimate of the annual totals of visitor-trips to the Wall (from paragraphs 5.21 and 5.22) and the probable order of magnitude of spending in the Wall region per trip.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crude estimate of annual total of visitor-trips by:</th>
<th>Expenditure in the Wall region per head per trip</th>
<th>Total Expenditure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Educational groups 185,000</td>
<td>£1.41</td>
<td>£261,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day trippers 148,000</td>
<td>£1.25</td>
<td>185,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holidaymakers 325,600</td>
<td>£4.00</td>
<td>1,302,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourists 81,400</td>
<td>£1.50</td>
<td>122,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total 740,000</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>1,870,800</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.44 These calculations imply that visitors to the Wall spend towards £2 million in the Wall region during the days (including overnight accommodation) that they actually visit the Wall. The evidence from Northumberland and Cumbria surveys (see paragraph 5.19b.) and IMR surveys (see 5.42) suggests that a visit to the Wall was the main reason for their day-trip for about 60 per cent of the Wall visitors, so that one cannot fairly attribute much more than half of this total to the presence of the Wall.

5.45 Incidence of this spending. Evidence from the IMR surveys and from the Northumberland and Cumbria surveys, in relation to the tourist accommodation used by visitors, permits a crude breakdown of this total expenditure into the broad headings shown below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expenditure by Educational Groups</th>
<th>Day Trippers</th>
<th>Holidaymakers</th>
<th>Tourists</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation</td>
<td>16,700</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>425,000</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food from shops</td>
<td>42,200</td>
<td>9,200</td>
<td>166,600</td>
<td>12,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eating &amp; drinking out</td>
<td>36,200</td>
<td>24,700</td>
<td>204,400</td>
<td>22,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport</td>
<td>71,000</td>
<td>61,700</td>
<td>237,000</td>
<td>33,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gifts &amp; Souvenirs</td>
<td>31,100</td>
<td>24,700</td>
<td>105,400</td>
<td>16,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admission fees</td>
<td>30,700</td>
<td>37,000</td>
<td>67,700</td>
<td>15,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>33,400</td>
<td>27,700</td>
<td>96,300</td>
<td>21,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>261,300</td>
<td>185,000</td>
<td>1,302,400</td>
<td>122,100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The Wall region is crudely defined as the belt of country between South Shields and Bowness-on-Solway, 70 miles long and 10 or more miles wide, which contains the Wall, its associated Roman forts and the modern transport system which gives access to them.
5.46 Thus the gross expenditure by visitors to the Wall, notably that by holidaymakers who come from beyond the Wall region, benefits several sectors of the economy in that region, including tourist accommodation enterprises, traders and shopkeepers, restaurateurs, petrol filling stations and garages, bus services - and the owners/managers of the Roman sites themselves, to whom the admission fees (some £150,000 a year) and souvenir/refreshment sales etc represent finance towards the costs of maintaining, managing and improving the sites. The local income derived is of course only a proportion of this gross expenditure, the proportion varying with the broad types of spending described above: for example, a quite high proportion of the spending on accommodation and on eating and drinking out may be expected to bring income to the Wall region, but a much lower proportion of spending on food from shops, gifts and souvenirs and transport. IMR results indicate that derived local income amounted to about 40% expenditure by visitors, which implies that visitors to the Wall may currently generate about £750,000 per year in local income i.e. about £1 per person-trip on average.

5.47 The information available gives some indication of how this income is distributed in season and in place. Diagram 5 in paragraph 5.30 above shows the seasonal pattern of visits to sites, and one may assume that the pattern of gross expenditure by visitors is similarly ‘peaked’ in the summer. This implies that the flow of income from this source into the local economy may best be seen as a complement to (not a substitute for) the year-round activities of agriculture, industry and the like. This point is reinforced by the fact that over two-thirds of the gross expenditure is by holidaymakers, who tend to be particularly peaked in the summer. Surveys by Northumberland and Cumbria County Councils among visitors to the Wall show that these holidaymakers used a variety of types of accommodation, including many smaller units of serviced accommodation (e.g. farmhouses, bed-and-breakfast) which can gain worthwhile income from the visitors’ spending; and that much of the accommodation used by them was in Tynedale and in rural parts of Cumbria. This finding tallies with the pattern of tourist accommodation shown in Chapter 3; and shows that visitors to the Wall can bring benefit to the economy of parts of the official Development Area. A very low proportion of holidaymakers, however, were staying within the immediate vicinity of the central section of the Wall: thus the area which experiences the most severe pressure of visitors gains relatively little of the benefit from visitors’ expenditure.

5.48 Social impact. The impact of visitors upon the lives and work of the people in the Wall area was assessed by talking to 25 farmers and landowners in the area and from consultation with local organizations. In general, the presence of the Roman Wall and the consequent influxes of visitors were accepted by the farmers: a number of them expressed complaints about visitor behaviour, but only one was seriously distressed by the presence of visitors. The majority of complaints involved lack of stiles and of way-marking on footpaths, particularly the Pennine Way; trespass onto farmland by visitors; traffic, including coaches and caravans, on narrow lanes; cars parked in farm gateways; leaving of litter, particularly bottles which get broken and tins which can injure livestock; disturbance of stock by dogs; misbehaviour of school parties; and occasional wilful damage to property (see photograph). A few of the farmers would like to see a system of compensatory payments for the disturbance and damage caused to them. An NFU spokesman saw the clear need for a long-distance footpath along the Wall (‘to fence off the path from the farmland is the best thing that could happen, including its complete signposting’); for discreetly-screened camping sites for people walking along the Wall; and for caravan sites on the approaches to the Wall, where motorists can leave their vans and proceed with cars only. A number of farmers benefit directly from visitors to the Wall by providing bed and breakfast or refreshment or (as at Willowford and Birdoswald) by charging admission to Roman sites. Visitors frequently ask farmers to allow them to camp, but most farmers are unwilling to do this on any systematic basis.

5.49 Consultation with local organizations highlighted problems of parking, as at Chollerford and
Heddon; and of unauthorised camping and picnicking on the village green in Wall and by the North Tyne between Chesters bridge abutment and Chollerford bridge. Disturbance to fishermen on Crag Lough by school children on the Crags was also reported. Parking of vehicles was formerly a problem on the B6318 at peak times: but the creation of clearway regulations on this stretch of the road and the Northumberland National Park's policy of advising the use of Once Brewed car park when Housesteads car park is full, together with their 'park and ride scheme', have alleviated this problem. The Birdoswald/Gilsland area suffers from lack of parking facilities, which causes inconvenience to farmers and village people, but plans are afoot to provide a car park in Gilsland.

5.50 Environmental impact relates partly to traffic and partly to the effect of visitors themselves upon the sites they visit and upon wildlife.

5.51 Traffic places three main types of impact on the environment - resulting in accidents, traffic congestion and unsightliness. Analysis of Northumberland County Council accident data indicates that between 1st January 1970 and 30th September 1975 there were 224 'injury accidents' on the Military Road between Greenhead and Heddon (i.e. about 0.8 injury/accidents per million vehicle/miles): half of these occurred during the summer (April - September) and included one fatality and 33 serious injury accidents. A handful of slight injury accidents occurred at or near the entrances to Chesters, Housesteads and Once Brewed car parks: but overall the tourist function of the road appears to have had no distinct effect on the accident record.

5.52 Northumberland CC (within their 'Strategy' report, see paragraph 1.3 above) record that, at the peak periods in the summer of 1973, 'parked cars overflowed from the official car parks at Chesters, Housesteads and Vindolanda for much of the day, seven days a week ... danger is created for moving traffic and for the parked cars ... there is visual intrusion into the landscape by parked cars ... at Vindolanda there is inconvenience to farming operations and also for local residents ...' Our observations during 1975, when visitor numbers were somewhat lower than 1973, indicate that traffic congestion on roads in the area was not then a substantial problem. There were occasional hold-ups at Chollerford bridge (where one-way working was instituted for much of the year following damage to a bridge parapet). At Wall sites or associated car parks there were occasional problems due to car parks being filled and 'overflow' parking occurring on verges or roads nearby: this occurred most often at Chesters, Housesteads, Steel Rigg and Cawfields. Problems also arose on the narrow approach road to Vindolanda, and in a number of settlements on or adjacent to the Wall e.g. Gilsland, Brampton. Coaches form a particular problem on some of the narrow roads.

5.53 The extent of unsightliness of motor vehicles is difficult to define. At Chesters, for example, the car park is well screened. The most obtrusive car park, due partly to location and partly to size, is Housesteads, where (despite the distance between car park and Wall) the bright colouring of some vehicles, the flash of sunlight on chrome and wind-screens and the visual intrusion of the car park fixture itself, are obvious to visitors to the site and along nearby sections of Wall.

5.54 Perhaps a more serious environmental impact results from the physical effects of visitors walking round the sites and along the Wall. At present the effects at the various main sites is minimal and can be controlled by careful maintenance and management techniques such as the re-seeding recently practised at Housesteads. Sites with a tendency to wetness such as Carrawbrough and Vindolanda require special care. The presence of cattle as at Birdoswald, Chesters and Carrawbrough also disturbs the ground at these sites. Of greater concern however are the effects on the Wall itself and the ground immediately beside it.

5.55 In places where the Wall has been consolidated by the Department of the Environment, as at Birdoswald, Walltown and Cawfields, the structure is solid and can stand up to being walked upon. In the Housesteads - Steel Rigg section, where the Wall was rebuilt by Clayton with a rubble core and turf top, and maintained thus by the landowners, the National Trust, problems arise from the pressures of people walking on top of the Wall. This erodes the turf top down to the filling and even occasionally causes the Wall to bulge outwards and collapse.
The National Trust are attempting to alleviate this by ‘closing’ sections of the Wall for repair work and re-seeding and they invite people to walk alongside such stretches. They are also trying to evolve a satisfactory policy of management to prevent wear and tear reaching such extreme levels.

5.56 Walking beside the Wall also causes problems in this central section, where slopes are steep and soil cover is thin. Surveys conducted by the Nature Conservancy Council at DART’s request show a marked reduction in diversity of plant species in these stretches, as a result of trampling. Considerable erosion was in evidence during 1975 but the unusually hot dry weather aggravated the situation. The many steep dips between crag sections suffered most, particularly the slopes facing west where the vegetation looked considerably scorched. Similar problems occur on the slope beside the Wall between the farm and bridge abutment at Willowford.

5.57 Apart from this localised damage by trampling, the presence of visitors is not considered to have serious effects on wildlife in the Roman Wall area at the present time. The important areas of ornithological interest are the Northumberland Loughs, lying north of the central section of the Wall, but access to these, with the exception of Crag Lough, is difficult. Their value lies in their use as wintering grounds for considerable numbers of wildfowl, including some rare species, but visitors presence is of course low at this time. More vulnerable sites which are of importance as breeding grounds as well as wintering grounds, are Grindon Lough (lying between the B6318 and the Stanegate) and the Solway marshes: human disturbance at these sites is at an acceptable level at present but increased visitor pressure could have serious effects.

5.58 The buildings associated with visitors to the Wall are not in the main obtrusive in the landscape. Some of them are older buildings converted from other uses: some are of recent construction, with their siting and design subject to strict planning control.

5.59 A final significant aspect of impact is the reaction of visitors to the Roman sites and to the other visitors. The Northumberland and Cumbria surveys, the IMR survey and our own soundings among visitors all suggest a fairly high degree of satisfaction among visitors with the general experience of visiting the Wall - and very rarely any sense of crowding (a significant point to which we return in Chapter 6). The most significant adverse comments made by visitors were related to:

- inadequacy of signposting to Wall sites on the road system
- inadequacy of on-site information and interpretation
- lack of car parking, particularly in the Military Road clearway/Housesteads area
- lack of a fuller system of cheap and comprehensive guidebooks and leaflets
- lack of continuity and signposting in footpaths, to and along the Wall
- lack of camping and caravan sites near the Wall.

The IMR survey showed that visitors to Vindolanda particularly appreciated the museum; the reconstructed sections of Wall, milecastle and turret; and the ability to see excavations actually in progress.

Prospects for visiting in the future

5.60 In 5.19 above, we showed the recent trend of visitor numbers at major sites on the Wall - quite steady growth to 1973, followed by stasis in 1974 and an overall 5 per cent drop (taking the four sites together) in 1975. A similar pattern is shown by visitor numbers to a number of other (non-Roman) monuments in Northumberland and Cumbria, though significantly the Cumbrian monuments have seen continued modest growth over the last two years, while those in Northumbria have seen decline in visitor numbers. This slight fall in visitor numbers also tallies with general evidence of a drop of about 5 per cent in recreational car travel in 1973-1974, with a continued but lesser fall in the first half of 1975.*

5.61 There is evidence that the increase in petrol prices and general motoring costs, which was the prime cause of the decrease in pleasure motoring, has now worked its way through the behaviour of day visitors into the countryside, they now making somewhat fewer and shorter trips than they did in 1973.† (The shorter trips may help to explain the sharper effect on trends in visitor numbers in 1973-74 at Housesteads and Vindolanda than at Chesters and Corbridge which are nearer Tyneside). Thus barring another severe shock to the economy - the downward trend in pleasure motoring to such places as the Roman Wall may now be largely behind us.

5.62 But the pace at which growth in visitor numbers is resumed will very much depend upon the economy and the future trends in those factors.

which impelled the growth up to 1973. The factors include:

a. **growth in personal disposable incomes**: the Government has made clear† that a large part of the expected growth (by between 2.4 and 3.8 per cent per year) in gross domestic product over the next few years must go to restoring the balance of payments, encouraging industrial production and funding public expenditure. Thus growth in personal disposable income may be only about 0.5 per cent per year - a far slower rate than the average over the last 20 years. Growth in incomes beyond the next few years will depend greatly on the success of Government efforts to restore the economy.

b. **growth in car ownership** - official forecasts by the Department of the Environment** cover a range of forecasts (depending on the state of the economy and the possible changes in petrol prices) for growth in car numbers, varying from 3.4 per cent to 4.2 per cent a year over the next 15 years.

c. **national growth in tourism** - over the next 5 or more years, the Tourist Boards expect modest growth (between ½ per cent and 4 per cent a year) in the volume of home tourism - and particularly of short, off-season 'second' holidays - within Britain as a whole; and maintenance of Britain's share of world tourism, which is expected to grow by between 4 per cent and 10 per cent a year.

d. **regional growth in tourism** - the Government’s guidelines on tourism policy, published in November 1973, placed emphasis on assistance to regions in economic need, including suitable parts of the northern Development Area within which the Wall region lies. This emphasis is reflected in the English Tourist Board's campaign to publicise 'England's Northcountry' (see 5.13 above): they and the two Regional Boards are keen to develop tourism in Cumbria and Northumbria in general and the Wall area in particular.

e. **Publicity for, and improved access to, the Wall.** The leap in number of visitors (from 19,000 in 1971 to 88,000 in 1973) attracted to Vindolanda following the major publicity of its earlier finds is a clear indication that specific publicity can attract visitors to the Wall and particularly to a place where people can gain some vivid impression of the life of the Romans nor can Vindolanda be regarded as easily accessible: a similar venture nearer to Newcastle and the main road system might well have attracted many more visitors.

5.64 Our impression, in reviewing the factors outlined above, is that the revival of the national economy is unlikely to be so rapid, or so reflected in growth of personal incomes or car ownership, as to lead to more than modest growth in numbers of visitors to the Wall over the next 10 to 15 years. If these were the only factors, one might look to a virtual standstill or at most to growth in numbers by one or two per cent a year, cumulatively significant but not dramatic in the short term.

If, on the other hand, substantial effort were made by the Tourist Boards and others to attract more holidaymakers (who now constitute half of the Wall's visitors) into the northern Regions and onto the Wall, numbers could grow very rapidly. Local publicity, coupled with improved access, could also encourage considerable growth in day visitors.

We believe it is fully conceivable that visitor numbers - which (at the four main sites described in para. 5.20) trebled between 1966 and 1973 - could at the very least double over the next 10 to 15 years if the Tourist Boards and others chose to encourage them to do so.

5.63 It is worth remarking that the present visitor numbers to the Wall represent quite a small proportion of even the most obvious of the potential 'markets' for visitors, as the table below shows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possible catchment</th>
<th>Total visitor-trips</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(see para. 2.9/2.10)</td>
<td>(see para. 5.22/5.24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a)</td>
<td>(b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2½ million (residents within 50 miles)</td>
<td>148,000 (day trippers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 million (holidaymakers in Cumbria/Northumbria)</td>
<td>325,600 (holidaymakers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5 million (tourists moving across England-Scotland border)</td>
<td>81,400 (tourists)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

† TRRL surveys in the Lake District
† 'Public Expenditure to 1979-80' (cmd 6393, HMSO 1976).
** DoE Technical Memorandum H3/75.
The problem and the opportunity

The 'problem'

6.1 In this chapter, we summarise the problems and opportunities which seem to be posed, and the crucial aspects which must be taken into account in preparing a strategy.

The 'problem'

6.2 Preceding chapters permit us to bring into sharper focus the diagnosis which prompted the Countryside Commission to sponsor this study. The picture that emerges has five key elements, which we briefly summarise below.

6.3 First, a splendid heritage of Roman monuments and artefacts, which we have a responsibility to protect for future generations but also (within constraints) the opportunity to display in our own era. The lesser, though substantial, portion of these remains are so encumbered (mainly within Tyneside and Carlisle) as to be incapable of display for generations to come; but the larger part lie in rural areas and are more or less capable of display if the will, the skill and the money were there.

6.4 Second, in these rural areas, a fine landscape setting, which is itself a significant but vulnerable heritage and attraction. Sound decisions need to be made - not merely by the Department of the Environment, but by an array of land owners and public bodies - as to the location, the pace and the precautions with which remains not now displayed should be excavated, disengaged, consolidated and displayed to the public; and as to the protection of the landscape setting.

6.5 Third, an ad hoc amalgam of publicity, information and interpretation relating to the Romans and their monuments, artefacts and way of life. The efforts of many public and private bodies in this field combined to attract visitors to the Wall region and are calculated to bring more. But they contain little conscious effort, and certainly no agreed purpose, towards 'management' of the flow of visitors, in the sense of steering that flow in ways that might benefit the visitors or the Wall region. Moreover, they fall far short of comprehensiveness or perfection in giving basic information about the Wall, never mind telling the fascinating story of the Romans, their heritage and their successors over a span of 1,500 years.

6.6 Fourth, a visitor pattern which has grown dramatically over the last decade (except the last two years); which extends throughout the year and through much of the Wall region; but which is heavily 'peaked' both in season and in locality, with the strongest pressure in the summer and in the central part of the region between Chesters and Cawfields. Visitors to the Wall bring clear economic benefit to the Wall region; but also cause social and environmental impacts which, while not yet critical, are both growing (e.g. car-parking problems, trespass) and cumulative (e.g. trampling of turf beside certain stretches of Wall).

6.7 Fifth, prospects for further growth in visitor numbers which could be either quite modest, if allowed to depend primarily on growth in the national economy and related factors; or very rapid, to the extent of (say) doubling the number of visitors to the Wall region within 15 years, if impelled by vigorous publicity of kinds which are already being launched. Sound decisions will need to be made about whether or not to promote growth in visitor numbers; and, if so, how to steer the growth in ways that may benefit the visitors and the Wall region.
The Problem and the opportunity

The need for a strategy

6.7 These four elements confirm the need for (to quote our brief)

'a broad planning strategy for the conservation of the Wall and its setting ... the management of traffic, visitors and the resources they come to see and ... interpretation and publicity related to the Wall'.

In particular, they raise crucial questions relating to:

Quantity and geographical pattern How many visitors, in what seasonal and physical pattern, should be planned for?

Quality and impact What quality of experience do its visitors seek, and can we provide it?

How do we strike a balance between preserving the monument and displaying it to the visitor?

How do we ensure that visitor flows have beneficial, not adverse, effects upon the Wall region?

6.9 In order to clarify these questions, and to set the scene for Chapters 7 to 12 which attempt to answer them, we summarise over the next 6 pages three crucial aspects of the 'mix' between visitors and the features which might attract and serve them along the Wall. These are:

a. the 'attracting power' of the present and potential resources

b. the 'capacity' of these resources to carry flows of visitors

c. the present pattern of visitor flows, expressed in terms which compare directly with the resource capacity.

Attracting power of resources

6.10 In paragraphs 4.26 to 4.34 (plus Table 2) above, we described the qualities of the Roman remains which gave them potential to attract and interest the public now and in the future, namely:

the extent, and intrinsic interest, of surviving remains

the feasibility of revealing these remains to the public

the landscape setting.

6.11 In order to highlight the relative attracting power of the different sites along the Wall, and in particular where the emphasis lies within the East-West 'corridor', we present in Diagram 13 a graphic indication of comparative values in the form of a long section through the Wall sub-divided into Milecastle sections. The diagram shows two measures of value - archaeological interest and landscape appeal.

6.12 The assessment of archaeological interest of the monuments takes into account the extent, and intrinsic interest, of surviving remains, the extent to which these remains are now revealed to the public, and the realistic feasibility of revealing them further to the public. From these, we have 'marked' each site or stretch of Wall (in the light of the character summarised in Table 2) against a 'norm' of 100 for the present displayed state of Housesteads. For the potential display value we have allowed ourselves to foresee at each site a time when full excavation has been accomplished and the exposure and consolidation of all significant remains for public view is completed. The exercise in this chapter is not restrained by the controls of the strategy set out in later chapters, nor by the probability that many sites will remain undisturbed for years either because their owners would not wish them to be excavated or because the resources of money and expertise necessary for excavation and consolidation will not be available: we have, however shown distinctly the potential which might arise, on certain stretches between Heddon and Housesteads, if removal of the Military Road from the Wall proved to be possible.

6.13 From this 'marking', the archaeological interest of the monuments is presented as a column showing, in the shaded lower portion, the present displayed state and interest, and in the upper portion our estimation of its further potential for display. Where a major site (e.g. Chesters) occurs, the section of Wall between the two neighbouring milecastles is simply absorbed into the value for the site. The main Roman sites which lie apart from the Wall (e.g. Corbridge, Bewcastle) are shown as independent columns roughly related to the nearest section of Wall.

6.14 Also in Diagram 13, we have attempted to give a crude graphic value of the appeal of the landscape along the Wall. This takes the form of a curve based upon an assumed value of 150 units of landscape appeal in the section west of Housesteads and reaching its lowest level in the unlovely urban environment of eastern Newcastle. The markings at each section reflect the site by site assessments of landscape setting contained in Table 2.

6.15 In addition, we show on the diagram the relative location of the main features of non-Roman interest (as described in paragraphs 4.35 to 4.55 and shown on Map 11), excluding those - such as the Solway coast - which are already subsumed in the assessment of landscape appeal. We include these
in the diagram for the reason that their attraction may reinforce or complement that of the Roman sites in significant ways.

6.16 This diagram has a measure of crudity which we readily admit. But it does strikingly show the strong variations in attracting power along the length of the Wall corridor, and the marked coincidence of peak and trough between the archaeological interest of the monument and its landscape setting. With the exception of South Shields in the East and the isolated Roman sites in Cumbria, the central section between Corbridge and Brampton contains all the highlights of the archaeological system both in the main sites and also in visible lengths of the Wall itself. The same central section has continuously high landscape appeal, this appeal falling to low points in the urban areas but rising again at the coastal extremities at the Solway and South Shields.

6.17 This emphasis upon the central section of the Wall is particularly strong if one looks at the marking for present archaeological interest (dark columns). Except for South Shields, the present attractions fall wholly between milecastles 23 and 53, with a noticeable eastward bias even within that stretch of the Wall. Such a central emphasis and eastward bias could be reinforced - but could also, to an extent, be 'corrected' - by bringing into play the potential interest (open columns) of various sites. All the

Diagram 13. ATTRACTING POWER OF ROMAN REMAINS IN TERMS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTEREST AND LANDSCAPE APPEAL.
unencumbered major sites have potential attraction beyond - in some cases, far beyond - their present displayed state, though the ease of realising this further potential varies greatly, as was made clear in Table 2. Some of such potential lies outside the central section, e.g. at South Shields, Rudchester and (most markedly) the isolated Roman sites in Cumbria.

6.18 However, these potential 'counterweights' to the central section lie mainly at the eastern and western extremes, coinciding with the fringes of landscape quality: the 'troughs' around Tyneside and Carlisle remain. In this context, the non-Roman features - which happen to be concentrated in or near these troughs - could have significance. Particularly marked are the features within or near Tyneside (Tynemouth, Jarrow, Newcastle, Beamish, Durham) and those towards the western end (Carlisle itself, Burgh-by-Sands and Abbey Town to the west, Brampton, Lanercost and Gilsland to the east), any of which could be brought into greater play as visitor attractions to complement the Wall monuments.

6.19 The ability of a place to attract people (as described on the previous page) is not the same thing as its ability to cope with those people. In thinking about the quantity of resources available, and the issues of quality involved (quality of visitors' experience, protection of monuments, avoidance of adverse impacts), a crucial measure is the recreational capacity of sites.

6.20 Recreational capacity, for this purpose, can be defined roughly as 'that level of public use which a site can take, in the state to which it is developed and managed, without unacceptable deterioration in either the site or the quality of visitors experience'. This definition thus takes into account:

a. the resilience of the site.

b. the reaction of visitors to crowding, bearing in mind the nature of the site.

c. the ability of the management regime and of the supporting access system (car parks, approach roads) to cope with visitor pressures and vehicle numbers.

6.21 The need is to find a measure of capacity which can be directly compared with usage. In paragraphs 5.36/5.37 above, we gave figures for 'visitors present at one time' for a number of Roman sites, expressed as proportions of daily totals: these daily totals in turn can be expressed as proportion of yearly totals. Thus an assessment of 'at-one-time capacity' will permit capacity to be directly compared with usage - and a key assumption will then be that 'normal peak visitor presence' should not exceed 'at-one-time capacity' (we enlarge on this assumption in paragraphs 6.31 to 6.33 below).

6.22 There are no well-tried formulae for assessing at-one-time capacity. We approach it through a 'feel' for the impact on the site and on the visitor of present normal peak visitor presence on typical Wall sites, notably our 'touchstone' site of Housesteads, plus a commonsense statement of how many people might comfortably together use small sites or buildings. The normal peak visitor presence on the 10-acre site at Housesteads is about 400, i.e. about 40 per acre. Barring a bit of localised wear on the ground (which marginal changes to management could cope with), the site can quite easily cope with this sort of density and the visitors appear to be happy with it: we believe, indeed, that the numbers could be increased to about 60 per acre without damage to either site or visitors. But a site less 'exposed' (i.e. excavated and displayed) and less modified and managed to take people, e.g. Birdoswald, could not cope with such numbers per acre: while a site more fully exposed and 'hardened' to take visitors, e.g. Corbridge, could cope with materially more. Added capacity is provided by site museums, for which we reckon a crude 'design load' of 1 visitor per 50 sq. ft. of internal floor space, including exhibits: the same figure can be used for the main museums at Carlisle and Newcastle.

6.23 This thinking leads to the following capacity norms:

- a. Sites (open ground with Roman features)
  - Unexposed (i.e. with few exposed features of interest) or 'Soft' (i.e. with few physical works or little management to cope with visitors) - 20 visitors per acre
  - Medium in state of exposure or works/ management to cope with visitors - 60 visitors per acre
  - Fully exposed (i.e. rich in exposed features of interest) and 'Hard' (i.e. fully designed and managed to cope with visitors) - 100 visitors per acre

(If the 'state of exposure' and the 'state of works/management' are not in balance, then the capacity is fixed by the lesser state, e.g. a site fully exposed but only medium in works and management to cope with visitors would have only medium effective capacity).

b. Museums/site museums - 1 visitor per 50 sq. ft. internal floor space.

6.24 We may now work out the capacity of the
Wall sites:

a. as they now are (including existing museums and site museums)

b. as they might be, if fully exposed and managed for visitors - assuming, at this stage, no change in the museums or site museums.

(a) is then the 'present capacity',
(b) is the potential capacity.

It should be emphasised that we are not at this stage making judgments about whether the sites should be fully exposed and managed, merely showing what their capacity could be if they were so. Nor are we assessing, at this stage, whether the supporting access system - car parks and approach roads, - has, or could acceptably be given, the capacity to cope with the vehicle loads which would be implied by usage at the levels of the assessed site capacity. The purpose is simply, at this stage, to show the present and potential 'size' (in terms of possible visitor numbers) of the various sites on a comparable basis, in order to show up the crude 'options' for meeting future growth in demand.

6.25 Diagram 14 shows the assessed present and potential capacity of the Wall sites, taking into account the same constraints on future display of sites as are implicit in Diagram 13 on the previous page. Appendix II contains the calculations.

6.26 Diagram 14 shows a striking emphasis, in present capacity of sites, upon the central section, notably the four major sites of (in descending order of present capacity) Chesters, Vindolanda, Housesteads and Corbridge. The figures for potential capacity, as with potential attracting power (see 6.17 above), show weight within the central section, with a total of eight major sites presenting potential capacity between Corbridge and Birdoswald - but also at the two extremities (South Shields and the isolated Roman sites in Cumbria), and significantly at Rudchester and Halton Chesters in the stretch west of Newcastle. The two 'troughs', west of Newcastle and around Carlisle, are also somewhat less marked on this than on the previous Diagram 13, because of the capacity which even isolated stretches of Wall can have.

6.27 Two major reservations apply to these estimates of at-one-time capacity. First, by focusing on capacity at one time, they leave implicit (rather than make explicit) the relation which at-one-time figures may have to annual carrying capacity. As we shall show in paragraph 6.31 below, there is a crudely calculable relationship (among the sites on the Roman Wall) between 'normal peak load' and annual visitor numbers, varying in ratio according to the seasonal visitor pattern and average length of stay at sites. Thus, the 'at-one-time capacity' of a site can be used to calculate the annual number of visitors it can take on present patterns of visiting. Moreover, the real impact which the site is taking during the year is mostly fairly expressed not in total visitor numbers but in the total visitor-hours of stay on the site, which also vary according to average length of stay; and the size of the site will also affect the impact. Comparison of two dissimilar sites makes this point very clear (see table below):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Annual Visitors 1975</th>
<th>Average length of stay</th>
<th>Annual total visitor-hours</th>
<th>Total visitor-hours per acre</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Housesteads (10 acres)</td>
<td>157,672</td>
<td>1.32 hrs.</td>
<td>208,127</td>
<td>20,813</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corbridge (4 acres)</td>
<td>53,393</td>
<td>.74 hrs.</td>
<td>39,511</td>
<td>9,878</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Diagram 14. CAPACITY OF ROMAN SITES

Potential Present Capacity

*Long Term Major Potential for Display of Township Site
Usage

6.29 We may now compare the present usage of sites with the foregoing assessment of capacity. To do this, we need to convert the annual totals of visitors to each site - summarised in Map 13 (see paragraph 5.21) - into 'normal peak visitor presence' or 'normal peak load'. By this we mean 'the maximum number of visitors present at one time on a normal peak day'.

6.30 Normal peak load, thus defined, is the crucial factor for two reasons:

a. the capacity of a site, and of its supporting services (including car parks and access roads), is most severely tested when the maximum number of people is present at one time.

b. the 'normal peak day' is used (rather than an abnormal day such as Spring Bank Holiday when exceptionally high numbers of visitors are present) since it is normal practice to design facilities (whether roads or recreational services) to cope with the normal rather than the abnormal peak.

6.31 The annual totals of visitors may be converted into normal peak load by applying two factors - the ratios between annual totals and normal peak day totals (see paragraph 5.32), and between these peak day totals and the peak load during the day (see paragraph 5.37). As shown in those paragraphs, these ratios vary somewhat from site to site, according to the seasonal pattern of visiting and the patterns of arrivals/lengths of stay. The table below compares two dissimilar sites for which we have quite full information:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Annual total of visitors (a)</th>
<th>Normal peak day as proportion of (a) = (b)</th>
<th>Peak load as % of daily total (c)</th>
<th>Normal peak load (a x b x c)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Housesteads</td>
<td>157,672</td>
<td>1/125</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>403</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corbridge</td>
<td>53,393</td>
<td>1/150</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.32 Diagram 15 shows the normal peak load for each of the sites open to the public, calculated from the known or estimated annual totals (Map 13), using ratios known or estimated for the factors mentioned above. The figures for usage are superimposed upon, and to the same scale as, the capacity figures from the previous page in order to permit direct comparison. (Details in App.II)

6.33 Diagram 15 shows that usage - in terms of normal peak load - is concentrated in the central section of the Wall between Corbridge and Cawfields, with a significant minor peak at Birdoswald and Banks. The real significance, though, lies in the relation between usage and capacity, in that:

a. Present usage is less than present capacity at every site except Carrawbrough, where usage just exceeds capacity. Of the six major forts open to the public, present usage absorbs on average less than one-third of present capacity, the proportion varying as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Present usage as % of present capacity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South Shields</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corbridge</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chesters</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vindolanda</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housesteads</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birdoswald</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

b. If usage doubled, on the same distribution between sites as now, the present capacity of sites would still suffice except at Carrawbrough, Housesteads, Cawfields and Steel Rigg.

6.34 These conclusions are based on fairly crude figures for usage (except at the four major central sites) and on crude, but cautious, assessments of site capacity only (i.e. not taking into account the effect on road systems, car parks etc.). Moreover, they are based on 1975 figures, which (as shown in Chapter 5) are somewhat lower than the peak year of 1973. But they 'ring true' to those people familiar with these sites to whom we have talked. They put into clear perspective the issues of supply and demand to which the strategy is in part addressed.
Diagram 15. PRESENT USAGE OF ROMAN SITES

- Old Pauwth
- Carlisle
- Meryport
- Bowness
- Carlisle Museum
- Bewcastle
- Birdoswald
- Carvoran
- Great Chesters
- Sawfields
- Vindolanda
- Steel Rigg
- Housesteads
- Carrcarrubh
- Black Cart
- Chesters
- Burnt
- Pannier
- Corbridge
- Halton Chesters
- Hudson
- Berwell
- Newcastle Museum
- Welling
- South Shields

Potential: Present
Capacity: Present usage

* Long Term Major Potential for Display of Township Site