



Forestry Commission

PUBLIC OPINION OF FORESTRY 1999

**Report on the 1999 Survey of Public Opinion of Forestry,
carried out on behalf of the Forestry Commission.**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Public Opinion of Forestry 1999 Survey was carried out for the Forestry Commission in March 1999, following similar surveys in 1997, 1995 and 1993. It asked questions about a wide range of topics related to British forestry, to a representative sample of around 2000 adults.

Most respondents had seen or read about British woods or forests during the previous year. When shown a list of possible benefits of forestry, most said that several of them were good reasons to support forestry with public money, almost all picking at least one. Forest management in Britain was mostly rated as middling or good, and was rated most highly for providing wildlife habitats and public access.

Despite the actual increase in both conifer and broadleaf woodland, more than half of the respondents thought that the area of broadleaves had decreased in the last 20 years, and about a third thought that the area of conifers had decreased. Most wanted more woodland in their part of the country; about a quarter said “about twice as much”, a further quarter wanted to see the area increase by half and most of the rest wanted “a little more”. New mixed woodland was favoured by most; few wanted just conifers. Almost all wanted to preserve ancient and native woodlands, but around half accepted that some parts may have to be lost for developments.

About half of all respondents said that they would be more likely to buy a product labelled as coming from “soundly managed” forests, and around a third would be more likely to buy a product that indicated that it used British timber.

Most respondents had heard of the Forestry Commission, a higher level of recognition than most countryside agencies; very few had heard of the name Forest Enterprise for the agency that manages state forests. Of those who had heard of the Forestry Commission, most knew that it is a government department or agency and correctly identified most of the Commission’s activities from a list. Its performance was rated more highly for managing FC woodlands than for its activities to encourage the private sector.

Two-thirds of all respondents said that they had visited forests or woodlands in the last few years; but only half of those without a car had visited. The majority of visitors said that they visited at least once a month in the summer. About half the visitors said that they had visited Forestry Commission woodlands in the last few years, more than had visited woodlands owned by voluntary bodies or local authorities. Woodlands owned by Forestry Commission and voluntary bodies received the highest ratings as places to visit. For information about woodlands to visit, most would look in Tourist Information Centres or in guide books or maps, or would ask friends and relatives. When visiting woodlands, most would like to see some facilities there, particularly toilets, car parks, and signposted walks suitable for all abilities.

INTRODUCTION

The Report

This report presents the results from a survey of Public Opinion of Forestry carried out in March 1999. The survey was undertaken for the Forestry Commission (FC) by Research Surveys of Great Britain (RSGB) as part of an Omnibus Survey (as described below and in Appendix 3). Additional analysis and interpretation of the data were prepared by the Forestry Commission HQ Economics & Statistics staff.

This paper reports and analyses the responses to each question. All responses are shown in percentage terms. Additional analyses were carried out where there were marked differences in responses between parts of the country (see Appendix 2), age groups, social classes (see Appendix 3), or other groupings of respondents. These breakdowns are only shown where differences are statistically significant.

This report includes comparisons with the results of similar surveys carried out by RSGB for the FC in 1995 and 1997. For most questions, the wording was the same in the three years 1999, 1997 and 1995. Comments are only added if the change is thought to have been significant. Topics that only appeared in the earlier surveys (1997 and/or 1995) are not included in this report; results for these topics can be found in the earlier report. This report does not include comparisons with the first Public Opinion of Forestry survey in 1993, because the percentages in 1993 were not directly comparable, as most questions were not asked to the 10% of respondents who indicated at the first question that they did not care about the countryside; some results from 1993 were shown in reports on the 1995 and 1997 surveys.

In some cases there were (significant) differences in the results obtained when the Scottish and Welsh data were considered separately. The main results for England, Scotland and Wales are given in Appendix 1.

The Sample

The survey used a random location method of quota sampling to interview 1,970 adults (aged 16 or over) at around 130 sample points throughout Britain. The sampling scheme is described in more detail in Appendix 3. Minor deviations from quotas were corrected by weighting during data analysis by RSGB.

All results are subject to the effects of chance in sampling, so a range of uncertainty (confidence interval) should be associated with any result from the survey. The confidence intervals for this design of sample should not be very different from those for a simple random sample. For questions asked to the whole sample, the range of uncertainty around any figure should be little more than $\pm 2\%$ at worst, which implies that any differences of more than 3% are statistically significant.

The results for any specific grouping of respondents (for example, different parts of the country, age groups, social classes) are subject to wider ranges of uncertainty. There were only 190 respondents in Scotland and 98 in Wales, so the range of uncertainty equivalent to $\pm 2\%$ for GB would be about $\pm 7\%$ for Scotland and about $\pm 10\%$ for Wales, implying that differences of 11% and 15% respectively are statistically significant.

MEDIA

British Forests in the Media

About two-thirds of all respondents were aware of some media stories about British woods or forests during the previous 12 months, a slightly lower level than in previous surveys. Most had again seen coverage of several topics. The numbers who had remembered about woodland wildlife dropped to about a third in 1999. About a third mentioned woodland protests about roads or other developments, a new category in the 1999 survey, which in previous surveys may have been reported as stories about loss of ancient or native woodland. Again, about a third had seen coverage of public access issues.

Q1. You may have seen or read about British forests, woods or trees on the television, radio or in the newspapers. From this list, can you please tell me which of these topics you have seen or read anything about in the last 12 months?

Question 1	1999	1997	1995
Protests in woodlands about roads or other developments	37	--	--
Wildlife in woodlands (animals or birds)	33	44	45
Public rights of access to woodlands	32	31	33
Tree planting	31	28	38
Loss of ancient or native woodlands	23	34	35
Forest as places to visit [walks or visitor centres]	20	25	19
Restoration of ancient and native woodland	17	--	--
Tree pests and diseases	14	11	14
Forest fires in Britain	14	12	13
Community woodlands / new local woodlands	13	12	12
Privatisation/selling of public woodlands	12	19	20
Wood for fuel / short rotation coppice	7	6	11
Sawmills / wood processing	5	5	6
Labelling / certification of wood products	5	4	--
Sustainable forestry / Certification of wood products	--	--	12
None seen / don't know	36	29	27

FOREST MANAGEMENT

Benefits of Forestry

Respondents were asked about reasons for supporting forestry with public money. Almost all (89%) said that at least one of the suggested benefits was a good reason for public support of forestry. The greatest support was for providing good wildlife habitats and preventing global warming. Around half of all respondents agreed with supporting forestry to improve the countryside landscape, bring jobs to rural areas, help make the air healthier and provide good places to visit. There was little backing for providing public money to support forestry to produce timber or wood as a fuel.

The level of agreement with public support for forestry was consistently higher among those who had visited woodland, mostly at least 10 percentage points higher than among those who had not visited. It was also consistently higher among social classes ABC1 than among C2DE, typically by 5-10 percentage points. Although visiting woodland and social class were correlated, statistical analysis showed that both attributes contributed to the higher support for forestry in many of the categories.

Q2. In Britain, government grants are given to support forestry, the planting and management of all types and sizes of forests and woods, because it is believed to be of benefit to the public. From this list, please tell me which of the following reasons are good reasons to support forestry with public money?

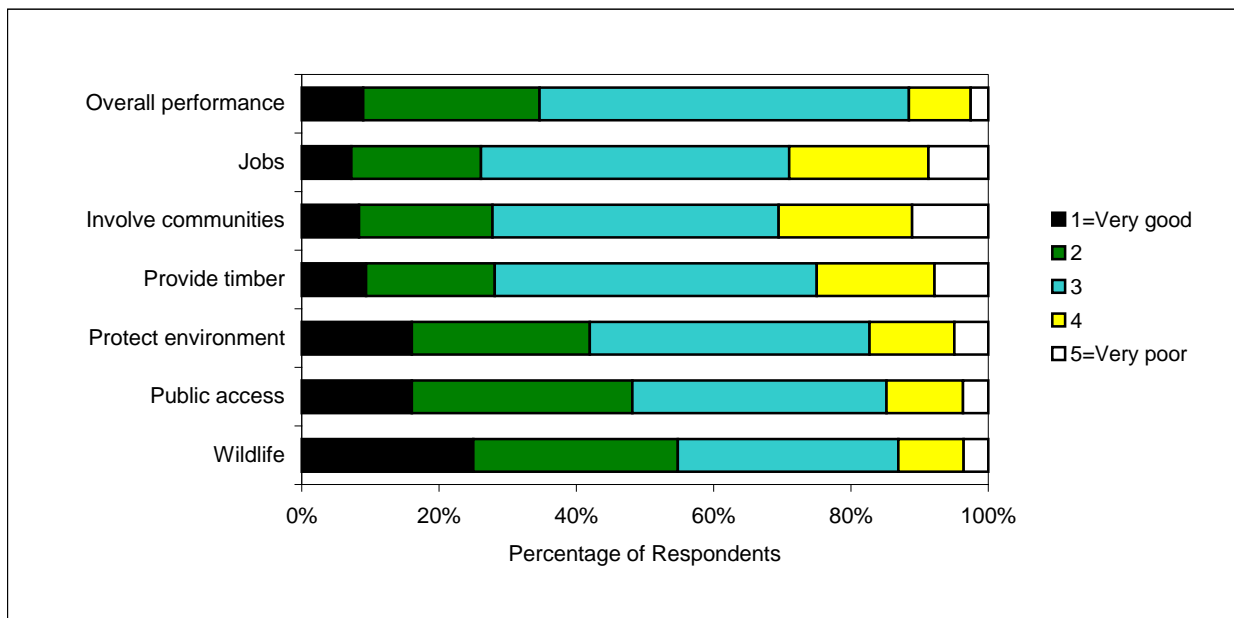
Question 2	1999	1997	1995
To provide good places for wildlife to live	66	75	72
To help prevent the greenhouse effect and global warming	57	60	61
To improve the countryside landscape	55	48	48
To bring jobs to rural areas	52	48	52
To help make the air healthier	50	--	--
To provide good places to visit	49	47	47
To create pleasant settings for developments around towns	37	--	--
To restore former industrial land	34	--	--
So that Britain needs less wood, pulp and paper from abroad	29	34	32
To provide timber for sawmills and wood processing	21	24	20
To provide wood as a renewable fuel for power stations	20	--	--
(None / don't know)	11	4	4

How Good is British Forestry?

This question shows how particular aspects of British Forestry were rated for providing benefits to the public and local communities. Britain’s forest management was rated as being best at providing homes for wildlife and providing public access, with views more evenly balanced on protecting the environment. For the other aspects, slightly fewer respondents were willing to offer a view, but roughly equal numbers offered “good” ratings and “poor” ratings.

These results can be compared with the views in Q2, that asked which benefits are good reasons to support forestry with public money. Forestry was seen as most successful in delivering the most important public benefit, wildlife. However it was seen as less successful at providing jobs, which had also been said by around half of respondents to be a good reason for spending public money on forestry.

Chart 1: How Good is British Forestry at...



Note: The respondents were asked to rate the aspects of British Forestry on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is very good and 5 is very poor.

Q3a. On a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is very good and 5 is very poor, how good do you think British forestry is at ...

- **Providing public access to woods and forests**
- **Protecting the countryside environment**
- **Providing Britain's timber, board and paper needs**
- **Providing homes for birds, animals and other wildlife**
- **Involving local communities**
- **Providing jobs**

b. ... and on the same scale, how would you rate the overall performance of British forestry?

Question 3	Very good					Very poor	Don't know	Ave score 1999	%VG or G 1999	%VG or G 1997
	1	2	3	4	5			(Exc don't know)		
Wildlife	21	25	27	8	3	16	2.4	54	48	
Public access	13	26	30	9	3	18	2.6	48	45	
Protect environment	13	21	33	10	4	18	2.7	42	34	
Provide timber	6	12	30	11	5	36	2.9	29	26	
Involve communities	6	14	30	14	8	28	3.0	28	23	
Jobs	5	13	31	14	6	31	3.0	27	17	
Overall performance	7	20	42	7	2	22	2.7	35	34	

AMOUNT OF WOODLAND

Perceptions of Amount of Woodland

As in 1997, more than half of all respondents thought that the amount of broadleaved woodland had been decreasing. A substantial minority also thought that the area of conifers had been falling.

(After introduction describing conifers and broadleaves)

Q4. In the last 20 years, do you think the amount of conifer woodland in Britain has been increasing or decreasing? [1997 asked “in the last 10 years or so”]

Question 4	1999	1997	1995
Increasing	39	36	40
Decreasing	32	32	37
Staying about the same	13	19	7
Don't know	17	12	16

Q5 ... And broadleaved woodland?

Question 5	1999	1997	1995
Increasing	12	12	11
Decreasing	53	52	63
Staying about the same	18	23	9
Don't know	17	13	17

These perceptions can be compared with the actual trends in woodland area. The total area of woodland in Great Britain has steadily increased in the last 80 years. In the last 10-15 years, the area of broadleaved woodland has been increasing more rapidly than conifers. The perception of decreasing broadleaved areas may be because the relatively small amounts of woodland lost for roads or other developments have received more publicity than new planting. It could also be that newly planted woodlands have not grown enough for many people to notice.

Amount of Woodland Wanted

Most respondents wanted to have more woodland in their part of the country. About half wanted a substantial increase (at least 50%) and a further third wanted a little more. We think that the options offered in the 1999 survey best express this desire. The 1997 survey offered no possible response between doubling the area (the target in the 1995 English Rural White Paper) and “a little more”, so may have excessively polarised the views.

Q6. Would you like to have more or less woodland in this part of the country?

Question 6	1999	1997	1995
About twice as much	28	34	--
Increase the area by half	25	--	--
Much more	--	--	49
<hr/>			
A little more	30	48	29
Neither more nor less	12	15	16
Less	1	1	1
Don't know	4	2	4

Note: Above the broken line the responses for the three years differed.

Preferred Type of New Woodland

About two-thirds of all those who wanted more woodland would like it to be mixed woodland, with most of the rest favouring broadleaved woodland. Few want just conifers.

Q7. Would you prefer the new woodland to be conifer or broadleaved, or a mixture of the two?

(Results are given as a percentage of those who want more woodland in Q6).

Question 7	1999	1997	1995
Conifer	2	2	2
Broadleaved	28	25	27
Mixed	64	69	67
Makes no difference	5	3	3
Don't know	1	0	0

Ancient and Native Woodlands

Almost all respondents wanted to preserve ancient and native woodland, but around half accepted that occasionally some parts may have to be lost for developments. The words “and native” were added to the question for 1997 (the question in 1995 just asked about ancient woodland); responses in all years were similar. This question was asked without any preliminary guidance on what was meant by “ancient and native woodlands”, so the views expressed may be applicable to a wider range of woodland than would be covered by a formal definition.

Q8. Over the years, some areas of ancient and native woodlands have been lost when the land was used for roads or other developments. Which one of these statements is closest to your point of view?

Question 8	1999	1997	1995
It is important to preserve all remaining ancient and native woodlands.	45	39	41
We should try to preserve ancient and native woodlands, but occasionally some parts may have to be lost for developments.	48	56	52
If the land is wanted for roads or other developments, then areas of ancient and native woodlands should be felled.	3	3	3
Don't know / no opinion	4	2	4

WOOD PRODUCTS

Labelling of Wood Products

These questions were designed to see what effect labelling may have on public attitudes to timber and wood products. In recent years, governments, the timber trade and non-government organisations such as the Forest Stewardship Council have been considering possible schemes for certification and the identification of products as coming from sustainably managed forests, aiming to devise schemes that provide assurance without imposing an excessive burden on forest owners. The UK Woodland Assurance Scheme is being introduced in 1999.

The results were similar in all three years. One-third of the respondents said they would be more likely to buy products using wood labelled as coming from “British” forests. More than half said that they would be more likely to buy if the label were to indicate that the wood came from “soundly managed” forests.

Q9. If a label indicated that something was produced using wood products from British timber, would you be more or less likely to buy it than another similar product?

Q10. If the label indicated that it came from “soundly managed” forests, would you be more or less likely to buy it than another similar product?

Q9: British				Q10: Soundly managed		
1999	1997	1995		1999	1997	1995
31	30	33	Tend to be more likely to buy	49	51	51
48	52	45	Would make no difference	36	36	31
6	9	8	Tend to be less likely to buy	3	4	4
5	3	6	Depends on product	3	2	4
3	3	5	Don't know	3	4	5
6	3	5	Don't buy any such products	6	3	5

FORESTRY COMMISSION AND OTHER ORGANISATIONS

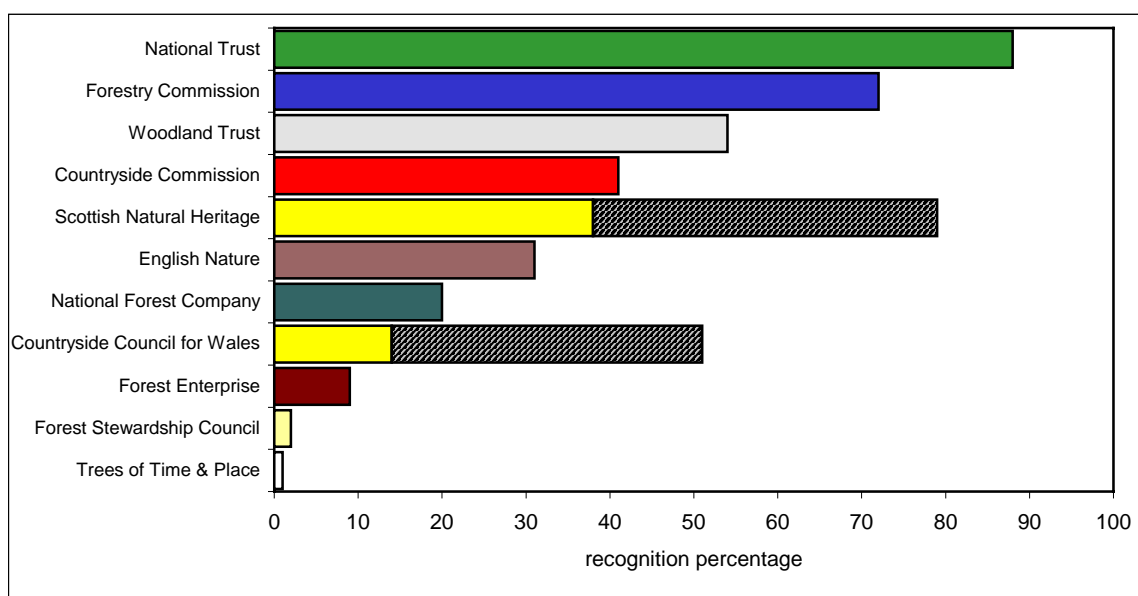
Organisations

The Forestry Commission scored second highest (72%), after the National Trust (88%), in respondents' recognition of a list of organisations. More than half recognised the name Woodland Trust. Forest Enterprise, the arm of the Forestry Commission that was formally created in 1992 to manage state woodlands, was again only recognised by around 10%.

National Forest Company (included for the first time in 1997) was claimed to be recognised by 20%. This showed surprisingly little geographical variation (we would have expected more recognition near the National Forest in the Midlands), suggesting that some respondents may just have thought that it was a plausible name, or confused it with something else. The two organisations added to the list for 1999 were recognised by very few: the Forest Stewardship Council promotes timber certification, and Trees of Time & Place is an initiative funded by Esso to encourage people to plant their own tree for the future.

Recognition of most organisations was several percentage points higher by people in classes ABC1 than by people in classes C2DE. Recognition levels were also substantially higher amongst those who said they had visited woodland (Q14a). There was some evidence of an overlap in the woodland visits and social class but statistical analysis showed that both contributed to recognition levels. There was not much variation between countries or regions in the levels of recognition, except for Scottish Natural Heritage (79% in Scotland) and Countryside Council for Wales (51% in Wales).

Chart 2: Awareness of Organisations



Note: The bars with extended striped areas indicate the level of recognition in Scotland (SNH) and Wales (CCW).

Q11. Which of these organisations have you heard of?

Question 11	1999	1997	1995
National Trust	88	93	92
Forestry Commission	72	77	76
Woodland Trust	54	56	48
Scottish Natural Heritage	38	42	40
Countryside Commission	41	40	40
English Nature	31	28	22
National Forest Company	20	20	--
Countryside Council for Wales	14	15	14
Forest Enterprise	9	8	10
Forest Stewardship Council	2	--	--
Trees of Time & Place	1	--	--
(None)	4	3	2

Forestry Commission

This section (questions 12-13) was only asked to the respondents who said in Question 11 that they had heard of the Forestry Commission. Percentages quoted in this section use this smaller base as 100%.

Around 60% of these respondents correctly said that the Forestry Commission is a Government Department or Agency; the lower level in 1995 could have been due to the alternative wording “part of the government”.

Most respondents throughout GB were aware that the Forestry Commission worked in England. Scottish (86%) and Welsh (82%) respondents were aware that the Forestry Commission worked in their countries, but only about half of the English respondents thought that it operated outside England. A substantial minority also thought that the Forestry Commission’s work extended to Northern Ireland, where forestry is actually the responsibility of the Forest Service of the Department of Agriculture for Northern Ireland.

Q12a. Thinking about the Forestry Commission, do you think that it is a government department or agency, an independent body, a body representing private woodland owners, or a private company?

Question 12a	1999	1997	1995
Government	62	61	47
Independent	21	20	34
Woodland owners	3	7	7
Private company	3	--	--
Don't know	11	12	12

Q12b Which parts of the United Kingdom do you think the Forestry Commission works in?

Question 12b	1999
England	83
Scotland	61
Wales	59
Northern Ireland	39
Don't know	10

Forestry Commission Activities

Most respondents showed a fairly good awareness of the range of the Forestry Commission's activities. When shown a list of 12 activities related to forestry trees or timber, most respondents correctly identified at least 7 of the 11 that were Forestry Commission activities. This may overstate the level of awareness slightly, as some respondents said "yes" to every activity listed, including operation of wood processing industries, which is not an FC activity. Responses for each activity total 100% when "don't know" is added.

There are some regional differences, particularly in Wales. The number of "no" responses to the "Lets the public walk in its woods and forests" question is twice as high in Wales compared with the rest of the country. Similarly the Welsh "no" response to the "Improves woodland habitats for wildlife" question were three times higher. 87% of Welsh respondents stated that the Commission sold Christmas trees. (See also Appendix 1)

Q13a. I am now going to read out a number of forestry activities. For each, I would like you to say whether you think it is something done by the Forestry Commission.

Question 13a	1999		1997		1995	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Lets the public walk in its woods and forests	85	6	87	7	86	7
Monitors the environmental effects of forestry	83	4	84	8	80	7
Improves woodland habitats for wildlife	83	6	--	--	--	--
Provides trails for cycling and horse-riding	80	7	--	--	--	--
Sells Christmas trees	60	22	59	27	62	23
Gives grants to private woodland owners for environmental improvements and wildlife management	54	14	54	22	51	19
Inspects wood imports for pests and diseases	54	19	--	--	--	--
Gives grants to landowners for new woodlands	51	16	58	21	54	18
Runs cabins and campsites for forest holidays	50	24	48	32	49	27
Gives authorisation for felling of trees by private woodland owners	47	22	49	30	45	34
Gives grants to private woodland owners to improve access for the public	46	21	45	30	38	29
Operates sawmills and other wood processing industries (not FC activity)	50	24	48	34	47	30

Forestry Commission Performance

This new question showed that more than half of respondents who were aware of the Forestry Commission rated it as “very good” or “good” at managing its own woodlands, but less than half gave it these high ratings for its work with private landowners, perhaps because fewer people were aware of this FC role.

Q13b. On a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is very good and 5 is very poor, how would you rate the Forestry Commission’s overall performance for the activities that it carries out in....

- **Managing and protecting Forestry Commission woodlands**
- **Encouraging other landowners to protect and expand Britain’s woodlands**

Question 13b	Very good					Very poor	Don’t know	Ave score	%VG or G
	1	2	3	4	5		(exc don’t know)		
FC woodlands	20	32	28	4	1	15	2.2	62	
Other landowners	10	24	32	8	2	24	2.6	45	

VISITS TO WOODLAND

Woodland Visits in Last Few Years

Around 70% of respondents said that they had visited woodlands for walks, picnics or other recreation in the last few years. The proportion who had visited was larger for social classes ABC1 than for C2DE. The woodland area density did not seem to be a factor in influencing whether people visited woodlands. Persons living in East Anglia or the East Midlands were more likely to have visited woodland than respondents in Scotland or Wales. The woodland density in Scotland is three times that in the East Midlands. Although all persons indicated (Q6) that they would prefer more woodland/forests, respondents in East Anglia and the East Midlands were particularly keen.

Q14a. In the last few years, have you visited forests or woodlands for walks, picnics or other recreation?

Question 14a	1999	1997	1995
Yes	67	75	71
No / Not Stated	33	25	29

In the 1999 and 1995 surveys, those who had not visited were asked about the main reason for not visiting. These are shown below, as percentages of all respondents.

Q14b. What is the main reason that you did not visit?

Question 14b	1999	1995
Not interested in going	6	6
Don't have a car	4	5
Other personal mobility/illness	6	4
Woods are too far away	3	6
Other	10	8
Total	31	29

The "don't have a car" responses in Q14b do not show the full importance of access to a car. The survey asked a separate question about car ownership, from which the responses can be cross-tabled against the responses to Q14a. This shows that car ownership has a highly significant effect on visits to forests and woodlands. Those without access to a car were less likely to have visited forests and woodlands compared with those who had a car.

Q21. Do you own or have the use of a car at all?

Q21:	With car			Without car		
	1999	1997	1995	1999	1997	1995
Q14a : Visit woodland?						
Yes	75	79	78	48	53	54
No / Not Stated	25	21	22	52	47	46

Those who had visited woodland were asked a series of questions (Q15-Q18) about woodland visits. This smaller base is shown in the following tables as 100%.

Frequency of Woodland Visits

The majority of visitors said that in the summer they visited once a month or more often. About a quarter said that they visited at least once a month in the winter. Taking “several times” to mean an average of between 2 and 3, these responses would imply a total of around 320 million visits in the summer and around 150 million in the winter. These totals are comparable with the 1996 and 1998 UK Day Visits Surveys, which report around 350 million leisure day trips a year from home, but exclude trips from holiday bases.

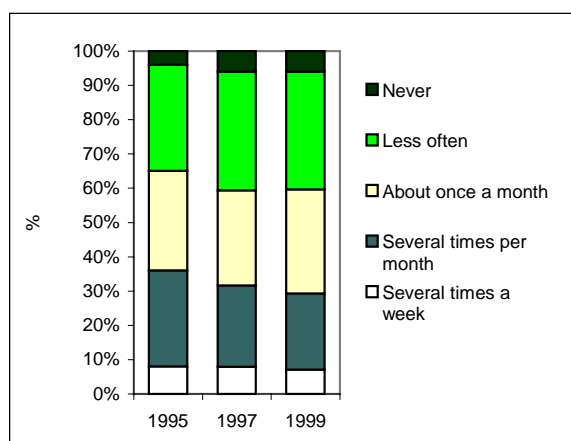
Q15. How frequently did you visit forests and woodlands last summer (April to September)?

Q16 ... And how often this winter, i.e. since October?

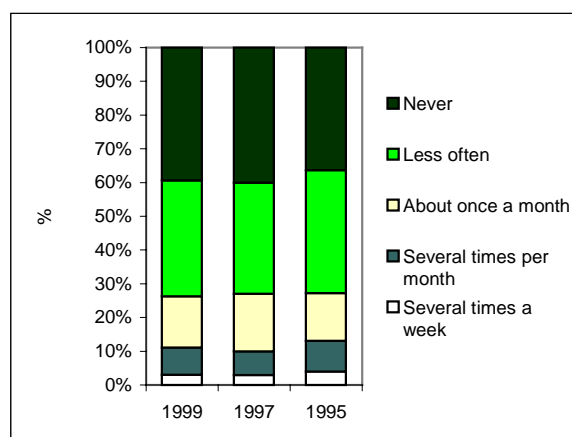
Q15: Summer				Q16: Winter		
1999	1997	1995		1999	1997	1995
7	8	8	Several times a week	3	3	4
22	24	28	Several times per month	8	7	9
30	28	29	About once a month	15	17	14
34	35	31	Less often	34	33	36
6	6	4	Never	39	40	36

Chart 3: Frequency of Visits to Woodland

Summer



Winter



Owners of Woodlands Visited

Woods and forests owned by the Forestry Commission and by voluntary bodies (e.g. National Trust, Woodland Trust) were visited by the largest numbers. This can be compared with the UK Day Visits Surveys, which found that in total more visits were to local authority woodlands, but the less frequent visitors tended to go more to Forestry Commission woodlands.

Q17. Which of these types of woodland owners do you think owns any of the forests or woodlands you have visited in the last few years?

Question 17	1999	1997
Forestry Commission / Forest Enterprise	46	51
Voluntary bodies (e.g. National Trust, Woodland Trust)	39	45
Local authorities	36	34
Private owners	18	17
None / Don't know	11	9

Ratings of Woodlands Visited

Woodlands owned by the Forestry Commission and voluntary bodies received the best ratings as places to visit, with over 70% rating them as good or very good. All categories received better ratings than in 1997.

Q18. On a scale where 1 is very good and 5 is very poor, how would you rate these woodlands as a place to visit?

Question 18	Very good					Very poor	Don't know	Ave score 1999	%VG or G 1999	%VG or G 1997
	1	2	3	4	5					
Forestry Commission	34	39	21	3	0	3	1.9	75	71	
Voluntary bodies	31	33	25	1	0	10	2.0	71	68	
Local authorities	22	33	34	6	3	2	2.3	57	53	
Private owners	22	26	30	9	4	10	2.4	53	38	

Information about Woodlands to Visit

The sources of information mentioned by the largest numbers were Tourist Information Centres, guide books or maps, and friends or relatives. Less than one-fifth said “Forestry Commission”.

In 1999 this question was asked to all respondents, in 1997 only to those who had visited woodlands in the last few years. This explains the increased number saying “no interest in visiting” and the decreases in most other categories.

Q19a. If you were thinking about visiting forests or woodlands that you had not visited before, which of the following would you be your main source of information about them?

...b. And which of these other sources of information would you use?

	1999 (all)			1997 (visitors)		
	Main	Other	Total	Main	Other	Total
Tourist Information Centre	31	23	54	33	27	60
Guide book or map	17	28	45	23	28	51
Ask friends / relatives	18	20	39	22	23	45
Library or Sports Centre	7	11	18	8	13	21
Forestry Commission	6	12	17	7	11	18
Internet	3	5	8	1	2	3
Other	1	2	3	1	1	2
No interest in visiting	13	--	13	2	--	2
None / Don't know	4	--	4	4	--	4

The numbers mentioning “Internet” as a source of information more than doubled since 1997, but still amounted to less than one-tenth of all respondents, and just over a third of all those who said in response to Q22 that they use the Internet as a source of information.

Q22. Do you use the Internet as a source of information?

Question 22	1999
Yes	22
No	78

Woodland Recreation Facilities

When visiting woodlands for a day out, the majority of respondents wanted toilets, a car park, picnic areas, signposted walks suitable for all abilities, and nature trails. As expected, there was less demand for facilities at local woods visited regularly.

This question was asked to everyone, apart from those who said at Q19 that they had no interest in visiting. This question had not been asked in previous surveys; the closest was a question asking about possible improvements, for which the most requested improvements were more signposted walks, information about places to go, and nature trails.

Q20a. If you were going to a woodland for a day out, which of these facilities would you like to see there?

Q20b. And if you were to visit a local wood regularly to walk, which of these facilities would you like to see there?

Question 20	a) Day out	b) Regular
Toilets	73	64
Signposted walks suitable for all abilities	63	55
Car park	62	52
Picnic areas	58	42
Nature trails	56	47
Information about the woodland	51	39
Children's play area	38	31
Cafe / restaurant / kiosk	37	28
Minimum facilities to ensure peace and quiet	28	27
Longer walks	21	21
Accessible local staff	21	17
Shop with gifts and souvenirs	15	12
.....
(None / don't know)	4	7

Main 1999 Results for England, Scotland and Wales

The results for Scotland and Wales are subject to wider ranges of uncertainty. There were only 190 respondents in Scotland and 98 in Wales, so the range of uncertainty equivalent to $\pm 2\%$ for GB would be about $\pm 7\%$ for Scotland and about $\pm 10\%$ for Wales, implying that differences of 11% and 15% respectively are statistically significant. Only a few of the differences between countries are of strong statistical significance. Some of the results with small bases have been omitted here as they gave sample sizes which were too small for any meaningful comparisons to be made.

Q2. In Britain, government grants are given to support forestry, the planting and management of all types and sizes of forests and woods, because it is believed to be of benefit to the public. From this list, please tell me which of the following reasons are good reasons to support forestry with public money?

Question 2	England	Scotland	Wales
To provide good places for wildlife to live	67	53	60
To help prevent the greenhouse effect and global warming	58	46	52
To improve the countryside landscape	57	41	51
To bring jobs to rural areas	51	50	62
To help make the air healthier	51	41	52
To provide good places to visit	50	38	49
To create pleasant settings for developments around towns	38	28	29
To restore former industrial land	35	32	38
So that Britain needs less wood, pulp and paper from abroad	30	24	31
To provide timber for sawmills and wood processing	21	19	17
To provide wood as a renewable fuel for power stations	20	13	27
(None / don't know)	10	16	9

Q3a. On a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is very good and 5 is very poor, how good do you think British forestry is at ...

- **Providing public access to woods and forests**
- **Protecting the countryside environment**
- **Providing Britain's timber, board and paper needs**
- **Providing homes for birds, animals and other wildlife**
- **Involving local communities**
- **Providing jobs**

b ... and on the same scale, how would you rate the overall performance of British forestry?

% of all respondents (excluding don't know) rating aspect as very good or good

Question 3	England	Scotland	Wales
Wildlife	55	50	57
Public access	48	44	47
Protect environment	42	41	37
Provide timber	29	32	30
Involve communities	28	28	24
Jobs	26	30	26
Overall performance	35	35	32

Q6. Would you like to have more or less woodland in this part of the country?

Question 6	England	Scotland	Wales
About twice as much	30	17	19
Increase the area by half	25	19	23
A little more	28	41	37
Neither more nor less	12	12	12
Less	1	3	3
Don't know	4	8	7

Q7. Would you prefer the new woodland to be conifer or broadleaved, or a mixture of the two?

(Results are given as a percentage of those who want more woodland in Q6).

Question 7	England	Scotland	Wales
Conifer	2	3	0
Broadleaved	28	21	42
Mixed	64	72	56
Makes no difference	6	4	2
Don't know	1	0	0

Q8. Over the years, some areas of ancient and native woodlands have been lost when the land was used for roads or other developments. Which one of these statements is closest to your point of view?

Question 8	England	Scotland	Wales
It is important to preserve all remaining ancient and native woodlands.	45	42	50
We should try to preserve ancient and native woodlands, but occasionally some parts may have to be lost for developments.	49	51	41
If the land is wanted for roads or other developments, then areas of ancient and native woodlands should be felled.	3	5	3
Don't know / no opinion	4	3	6

Q11. Which of these organisations have you heard of?

Question 11	England	Scotland	Wales
National Trust	89	83	80
Forestry Commission	72	78	73
Woodland Trust	55	49	49
Scottish Natural Heritage	34	79	37
Countryside Commission	42	38	45
English Nature	33	13	18
National Forest Company	20	18	23
Countryside Council for Wales	12	7	51
Forest Enterprise	8	12	20
Forest Stewardship Council	2	1	4
Trees of Time & Place	1	1	1
(None)	4	2	9

Q13a. I am now going to read out a number of forestry activities. For each, I would like you to say whether you think it is something done by the Forestry Commission.

Question 13a	England		Scotland		Wales	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Lets the public walk in its woods and forests	86	6	85	8	72	14
Monitors the environmental effects of forestry	83	4	84	6	80	4
Improves woodland habitats for wildlife	84	5	84	7	64	19
Provides trails for cycling and horse-riding	80	7	81	6	67	13
Sells Christmas trees	59	22	55	25	87	8
Gives grants to private woodland owners for environmental improvements and wildlife management	54	14	64	10	38	23
Inspects wood imports for pests and diseases	64	18	48	23	43	20
Gives grants to landowners for new woodlands	61	16	64	14	41	17
Runs cabins and campsites for forest holidays	49	25	58	22	44	24
Gives authorisation for felling of trees by private woodland owners	47	22	51	23	41	17
Gives grants to private woodland owners to improve access for the public	51	16	64	14	41	17
Operates sawmills and other wood processing industries (not FC activity)	48	24	58	27	56	18

Q14a. In the last few years, have you visited forests or woodlands for walks, picnics or other recreation?

Question 14a	England	Scotland	Wales
Yes	68	60	63
No / Not Stated	30	37	28

Note: Q14b. asks, “what is the main reason why you have not visited forests or woodlands for walks, picnics or other recreation? “ Although there are regional differences in the figures collected the base for this question is so small we cannot draw any meaningful conclusions.

Q15. How frequently did you visit forests and woodlands last summer (April to September)?

Q16 ... And how often this winter, i.e. since October?

Q15: Summer				Q16: Winter		
England	Scotland	Wales		England	Scotland	Wales
8	4	8	Several times a week	3	2	4
22	21	27	Several times per month	9	6	5
31	34	41	About once a month	15	17	25
34	36	18	Less often	34	31	37
6	5	6	Never	39	44	28

Note: Base equals all adults who have visited forests or woodlands in the last few years.

Q17. Which of these types of woodland owners do you think owns any of the forests or woodlands you have visited in the last few years?

Question 17	England	Scotland	Wales
Forestry Commission / Forest Enterprise	43	59	67
Voluntary bodies (e.g. National Trust, Woodland Trust)	40	29	27
Local authorities	37	33	24
Private owners	17	29	20
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None / Don't know	11	10	8

Note: Base equals all adults who have visited forests or woodlands in the last few years.

Q20a. If you were going to a woodland for a day out, which of these facilities would you like to see there?

Question 20a	England	Scotland	Wales
Toilets	74	78	54
Signposted walks suitable for all abilities	64	62	46
Car park	63	61	43
Picnic areas	59	56	51
Nature trails	57	56	40
Information about the woodland	52	44	42
Children's play area	38	34	37
Cafe / restaurant / kiosk	38	36	25
Minimum facilities to ensure peace and quiet	29	20	24
Longer walks	22	15	17
Accessible local staff	22	23	6
Shop with gifts and souvenirs	16	19	3
(None / don't know)	4	3	18

Q20b. And if you were to visit a local wood regularly to walk, which of these facilities would you like to see there?

Question 20b	England	Scotland	Wales
Toilets	65	68	51
Signposted walks suitable for all abilities	56	51	43
Car park	54	47	35
Picnic areas	50	42	34
Nature trails	48	48	36
Information about the woodland	39	35	36
Children's play area	31	26	32
Cafe / restaurant / kiosk	29	29	17
Minimum facilities to ensure peace and quiet	28	21	24
Longer walks	22	16	19
Accessible local staff	18	18	4
Shop with gifts and souvenirs	12	11	7
(None / don't know)	6	6	22

PUBLIC OPINION OF FORESTRY 1999 - Questionnaire

Q1.	<p>You may have seen or read about British forests, woods or trees on the television, radio or in the newspapers. From this list, can you please tell me which of these topics you have seen or read anything about in the last 12 months?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(Multi choice)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wildlife in woodlands (animals and birds) • Forests as places to visit • Community woodlands / new local woodlands • Tree planting • Tree pests and diseases • Wood for fuel / short rotation coppice • Loss of ancient or native woodland • Restoration of ancient or native woodland • Forest fires in Britain • Privatisation / selling public woodlands • Public rights of access to woodlands • Protests in woodlands about roads or other developments • Labelling/certification of wood products • Sawmills / wood processing • None of these
Q2.	<p>In Britain, government grants are given to support forestry, the planting and management of all types and sizes of forests and woods, because it is believed to be of benefit to the public. From this list, please tell me which of the following reasons are good reasons to support forestry with public money?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(Multi choice)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To bring jobs to rural areas • To provide timber for sawmills and wood processing • To provide wood as a renewable fuel for power stations • So that Britain can buy less wood products from abroad • To help make the air healthier • To help prevent the “greenhouse effect” and global warming • To provide good places for wildlife to live • To provide good places to visit • To improve the countryside landscape • To create pleasant settings for developments around towns • To restore former industrial land • None • Don't know
Q3.	<p>On a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is very good and 5 is very poor, how good do you think British forestry is at ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing public access to woods and forests • Protecting the environment • Providing Britain's timber, board and paper needs • Providing homes for birds, animals and other wildlife • Involving local communities • Providing jobs <p>..and on the same scale, how would you rate the overall performance of British forestry?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall rating

	<p>I would now like you to think about the two main types of trees - conifers and broadleaves. Conifers are trees that have needles and cones. Most of them are evergreen, like pine, fir and spruce. Broadleaves are trees like oak, birch and sycamore that have leaves, not needles, and lose them in the winter.</p>
Q4.	<p>In the last 20 years, do you think the amount of conifer woodland in Britain has been increasing or decreasing?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing • Decreasing • Staying about the same • Don't know
Q5.	<p>And broadleaved woodlands?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing • Decreasing • Staying about the same • Don't know
Q6.	<p>Would you like to have more or less woodland in this part of the country?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • About twice as much • Increase area by half (50%) • A little more • Neither more nor less <i>(skip to Q8)</i> • Less <i>(skip to Q8)</i> • Don't know <i>(skip to Q8)</i>
Q7.	<p>Would you prefer the new woodland to be conifer or broadleaved, or a mixture of the two?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conifer • Broadleaved • Mixed • Makes no difference • Don't know
Q8.	<p>Over the years, some areas of ancient and native woodland have been lost when the land was used for roads or other developments. Which one of the statements is closest to your own point of view?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is important to protect all remaining ancient and native woodlands • We should try to protect ancient and native woodlands, but occasionally some parts may have to be lost for development • If the land is wanted for roads or other developments, then areas of ancient and native woodlands should be felled • Don't know

<p>Q9.</p>	<p>If a label indicated that something was produced using wood products from British timber, would you be more or less likely to buy it than another similar product?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tend to be more likely to buy • Would make no difference • Tend to be less likely to buy • Depends on product • Don't buy any such products <i>(Skip to Q11)</i> • Don't know
<p>Q10.</p>	<p>If the label indicated that the wood came from “soundly managed” forests, would you be more or less likely to buy it than another similar product that does not have this on the label?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tend to be more likely to buy • Would make no difference • Tend to be less likely to buy • Depends on the product • Don't know
<p>Q11.</p>	<p>Which of these organisations have you heard of? (Multi choice)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Countryside Commission • English Nature • Forestry Commission <i>- if not, then skip to Q14</i> • Forest Enterprise • National Trust • Scottish Natural Heritage • Countryside Council for Wales • Woodland Trust • Trees of Time and Place • Forest Stewardship Council • National Forest Company • None • Don't know
<p>Q12.</p>	<p>Thinking about the Forestry Commission,</p> <p>do you think that it is ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A government department or agency • An independent body • A body representing private woodland owners • A private company • Don't know <p>.. and which part or parts of the United Kingdom do you think that it works in? (Multi choice)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • England • Scotland • Wales • Northern Ireland

<p>Q13.</p>	<p>I am now going to read out a number of forestry activities and for each one I would like you to say whether you think it is something done by the Forestry Commission. So do you think the Forestry Commission ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lets the public walk in its woods and forests • Provides trails for cycling and horse-riding • Improves woodland habitats for wildlife • Operates sawmills and other wood processing industries • Runs cabins and campsites for forest holidays • Sells Christmas trees • Gives grants to landowners for new woodlands • Gives grants to private woodland owners for environmental improvements and wildlife management • Gives grants to private woodland owners to improve access for the public • Gives authorisation for felling of trees by private woodland owners • Monitors the environmental effects of forestry • Inspects wood imports for pests and diseases <p>On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is very good and 5 is very poor, how would you rate the Forestry Commission's overall performance for the activities that it carries out in..</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing and protecting Forestry Commission woodlands • Encouraging other landowners to protect and expand Britain's woodlands
<p>Q14.</p>	<p>a. In the last few years, have you visited forests or woodlands for walks, picnics or other recreation?</p> <p>YES/NO</p> <p><i>- if NO, then ask Q14b and then skip to Q19</i></p> <p>b. What was the main reason that you did not visit?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not interested in going <i>(If this response, skip to Q21 instead of Q19)</i> • Don't have a car • Other personal mobility reasons (difficulty in walking, unwell, etc.) • Woods are too far away • Lack of facilities (play areas, picnic areas, etc.) • Lack of information about woods to visit • Prefer other areas of countryside • Concerns that woods are not safe • Other (specify)

<p>Q15.</p>	<p>How frequently did you visit forests and woodlands last summer, i.e. between April and September 1998?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several times per week • Several times per month • About once a month • Less often • Never • Don't know
<p>Q16.</p>	<p>And how often this winter, i.e. since October 1998?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several times per week • Several times per month • About once a month • Less often • Never • Don't know
<p>Q17.</p>	<p>Which of these types of woodland owners do you think owns any of the forests or woodlands you have visited in the last few years?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(Multi choice)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local authorities • Voluntary bodies (e.g. National Trust, Woodland Trust) • Forestry Commission/Forest Enterprise • Private owners • None • Don't know
<p>Q18.</p>	<p>On a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 means very good and 5 means very poor, how would you rate woodlands as a place to visit?</p> <p>a) .. Local authority.. (if visited LA) b) .. voluntary body .. (if visited voluntary) c) .. Forestry Commission / Forest Enterprise .. (if visited FC/FE) d) .. private .. (if visited private)</p>

<p>Q19.</p>	<p>If you were thinking about visiting forests or woodlands that you had not visited before, which of the following would be your main source of information about them?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask friends/relatives • Guide book or map • Forestry Commission • Tourist Information Centre • Internet • Library or Sports Centre • Other (specify) • No interest in visiting - <i>Skip to Q21</i> • Don't know- <i>Skip to Q20</i> <p>And which of these other sources of information would you use?</p> <p><i>(same list except for last two - multi choice)</i></p>
<p>Q20.</p>	<p>If you were going to a woodland for a day out, which of these facilities would you like to see there? (Multi choice)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signposted walks suitable for all abilities • Longer walks • Car park • Information about the woodland • Minimum facilities to ensure peace and quiet • Nature trails • Picnic areas • Children's play area • Toilets • Cafe or restaurant or kiosk • Shop with gifts and souvenirs • Accessible local staff • None of these • Don't know <p>..and if you were to visit a local wood regularly to walk, which of these facilities would you like to see there?</p> <p><i>(same list)</i></p>
<p>Q21.</p>	<p>Do you own or have the use of a car at all? YES/NO</p>
<p>Q22.</p>	<p>Do you use the Internet as a source of information? YES/NO</p>

RSGB Random Location Sampling Method

A unique sampling system has been developed by Taylor Nelson Sofres for its own use. Utilising 1991 UK Census small area statistics and the Post Office Address File (PAF), the eligible area of the country has been divided into 600 areas of equal population. The areas within each Standard Region were stratified into population density bands, and within band in descending order by percentage of population in socio-economic groups I and II.

To maximise the statistical accuracy of Omnibus sampling sequential waves of fieldwork are allocated systematically across the sampling frame so as to ensure maximum geographical dispersion. The 600 primary sampling units are allocated to 25 sub-samples of 24 points each, with each sub-sample in itself being a representative drawing from the frame. For each wave of Omnibus fieldwork, a set of sub-samples is selected so as to provide the number of sample points required (typically c. 130 for 2000 interviews). Across sequential waves of fieldwork all sub-samples are systematically worked, thereby reducing the clustering effects on questionnaires asked for two or more consecutive weeks.

Each primary sampling unit is divided into two geographically distinct segments each containing as far as possible equal populations. The segments comprise aggregations of complete postcode sectors. Within each half (known as the A and B halves) postcode sectors have been sorted by the percentage of the population in socio-economic groups I and II. One postcode sector from each primary sampling unit is selected for each Omnibus, alternating on successive selections between the A and B halves of the primary sampling unit again to reduce clustering effects. For each wave of interviewing each interviewer is supplied with two blocks of 100 addresses drawn from different parts of the sector. Addresses are contacted systematically with three doors being left after each successful interview.

Interviewing is restricted to after 2 p.m. on weekdays or all day at the weekend. To ensure a balanced sample of adults within effective contacted addresses a quota is set by (male, female housewife, female non-housewife); within female housewife, by presence of children and working status; and within men, by working status.

Social Class Categories and Socio-Economic Groups

Results of the survey can be analysed by Social Class, broken down between ABC1 and C2DE

- A** Higher Managerial Administrative or Professional
- B** Intermediate Managerial Administrative or Professional
- C1** Supervisory or Clerical and Junior Managerial Administrative or Professional
- C2** Skilled Manual
- D** Semi and Unskilled Manual Worker
- E** State Pensioners or Widows. Casual or lowest grade workers or long-term unemployed.

The sampling method uses socio-economic groups, a slightly different categorization based on employment status, as used in the 1991 Population Census.