UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Open Cambridge



Open Cambridge evaluation report 2012

"Great tours - lots of interesting stories. A really relaxing treat"

Open Cambridge evaluation report 2012

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Introduction

Open Cambridge is a three day event in September which coincides with the national Heritage Open Days scheme. On the Sunday of the Open Cambridge weekend, the Bridge the Gap sponsored walk takes place. Both events have again received very positive feedback this year.

Open Cambridge provides an opportunity for visitors to see into principal University, College and City buildings and grounds with accompanying information and interpretation through a number of free events and activities.

This year Open Cambridge was funded by Cambridge City Council, R G Carter Cambridge Ltd, Cambridge University Press and Mills & Reeve. We are enormously grateful for this support.

The Open Cambridge programme ran across three days. Over 2,353 visitors booked on tours and approximately 1,500 visitors visited buildings open for drop in access. Two Open Cambridge talks took place and just under 200 visitors attended. Open Cambridge also incorporated the annual Bridge the Gap charity walk, an established event which took place for the eleventh time this year, with 2,700 members of the public participating. These two events, which aim to foster and improve relations between the University and Cambridge residents, form a weekend of University engagement with the public.

Building on the important public engagement work already undertaken by the Colleges and the University, and the free admission which many Colleges currently offer to local residents, Open Cambridge and Bridge the Gap are three days of special access aimed at local residents who might not normally

visit Colleges, City institutions and the University. We were very pleased to welcome a number of new venues to the programme this year.

Aims and objectives

Our objectives are:

- to encourage local residents to visit and interact with the University, Colleges and featured City institutions
- to increase awareness of the University and Colleges within the local community
- to promote communications between local residents and University/ College staff and students

This document evaluates Open Cambridge in its fifth year. It includes feedback from visitors and Open Cambridge activity co-ordinators, and suggestions and improvements for Open Cambridge in the future.

Plans for Open Cambridge 2013

Open Cambridge was very well received by members of the public and we would like to run Open Cambridge again next year from Friday 13 – Sunday 15 September. We are seeking sponsorship to enable us to offer a programme similar to this year's, but we also intend to refresh the programme for 2013.

In 2013, we hope to expand Open Cambridge, with more Colleges, departments and University buildings taking part, as well as tours of more of the City's most significant and historic buildings. We will approach new venues where possible and review the Open Cambridge programme overall to ensure an appropriate range of events and venues. It is evident from the booking pattern for this year that we need to look at refreshing the programme and increasing the capacity for more drop-in events. We will work to incorporate further the Bridge the Gap charity walk into the Open Cambridge programme, capitalising on joint publicity and promotion.

Overview of Open Cambridge 2012

Open Cambridge took place from Friday 7 – Sunday 9 September 2012. It consisted of a number of different events and activities, outlined below.

Open Cambridge tours

The core element of the Open Cambridge programme is the series of free, pre-booked tours led by University and College staff, students and City tour leaders which open up specific areas and buildings.

In 2012, tours took place on Friday 7 and Saturday 8 September. 25 College and University venues, as well as 20 external venues took part, offering a total

of 2,453 places, of which 2,271 places (93 percent) were booked.This three percent drop from last year can be attributed to a last-minute change in the timings for several tours.

Changes for 2012

Website:
Building on the success of last year's redesigned website, which brought the layout and operation into line with the Science Festival and Festival of Ideas websites, we were able to use elements from the programme illustration online to create a consistent visual identity. We also made regular updates to the home page, highlighting different events over the course of the booking period.

The website was fed from an online Event Management System where Open Cambridge co-ordinators could enter their own event details. This helped to minimise the occurrences of inaccurate information on the website or in the printed programme. Event descriptions on the website were made more attractive by encouraging co-ordinators to include photographs. A PDF of the programme was also published on the Open Cambridge website.

Programme:
To bring the Open Cambridge programme further into line with the programmes we produce for the Cambridge Science Festival and the Festival of Ideas, a local illustrator, Sophie Wainwright, was brought in to create the front cover design. As well as including a map of most of the venues and a 'What's on at a glance' page, the illustrations were spread throughout the programme.

Bookings:
As with last year, we used Eventbrite (www.eventbrite.com) as an online booking system, in conjunction with telephone booking. Eventbrite (an external booking website) was hyperlinked to the Open Cambridge website. The online booking system proved very effective in reducing the quantity of telephone calls the Open Cambridge booking line received and in cutting the administrative time spent producing door lists. We were also able to generate email reminders to visitors who had booked online to remind them about events.

The website and booking system contained the most up-to-date, comprehensive information on Open Cambridge events, including access information, age restrictions and booking details. The increased use of the online booking system means that we cannot emphasise restrictions as we would with telephone booking and that visitors need to read all information. We also need to stress the importance of turning up on time for talks and tours in print and online communications.

The booking system allowed users to book onto multiple tours. This year, when participants received an email confirmation of their booking, the electronic ticket in the body of the email specified the event name, date and time, as well as the meeting point at the start of the tour so they wouldn't need

to refer back to their programme or the website for venue details. For accuracy of booking details, each ticket confirmation email was verified against the booking system to ensure attendees were receiving correct information.

Booking by telephone was still available for those without access to the internet. We did not restrict the number of bookings members of the public could make but this is something we are thinking about for 2013 in order to meet demand for tours and to try to reduce the number of 'no-shows'.

As a result of feedback received from tour leaders in previous years we overbooked all tours by 20 percent this year, except in one case where we were specifically requested not to. This was an attempt to reduce the number of 'no shows'. Feedback has been rather patchy as to whether this is working and we will need to review the situation with regard to over-bookings and 'no-shows' for 2013. We are currently seeking the advice of other Heritage Open Day Co-ordinators to see how we can get round this problem.

The Public Engagement team and Event Co-ordinators received a number of complaints from members of the public because of the rapidity with which tours were booked up. Although we encourage venues to offer as many events as possible we are well aware that most of the weekend's events are supported by volunteers and, in many cases, it is not possible to offer more than one or two tours. There are also capacity numbers for nearly all of the pre-book events which are beyond the control of the Public Engagement Team.

We are undertaking a review of pre-book and drop-in events for 2013 and the ways in which these are marketed.

We offered a tour advice session to all tour leaders, as in 2010. This session was led by Allan Brigham, a local Blue Badge Guide, and provided support and key tips for leading tours for members of the public. Although the take up for this session was very low the Co-ordinators who did attend felt that it had been a very worthwhile exercise.

The College, University and City venues which offered Open Cambridge tours were:

- Abbey House
- ADC Theatre
- AmeyCespa Education Centre
- Ascension Burial Ground
- Cambridge & County Folk Museum
- Cambridge American Cemetery
- Cambridge University Press Museum
- Cambridgeshire Archives, Shire Hall
- Central Library
- Central Science Library
- Christ's College

- Corpus Christi College
- Darwin College
- English Faculty Library
- Histon Road Cemetery
- Hodson's Folly
- Homerton College
- Institute of Astronomy
- Institute of Continuing Education
- Jesus College
- John Lewis
- Lucy Cavendish College
- Mill Road Cemetery
- Murray Edwards College
- Museum of Zoology
- Newnham College
- Queens' College
- Raised Faculty Building
- Robinson College
- Scott Polar Research Institute
- Scudamore's Mill Lane Punt Station
- Sidney Sussex College
- St John's College
- The Cambridge Synagogue
- The Guildhall
- The Leper Chapel, Barnwell Junction
- The Memorial Church (Cambridge Unitarian Church)
- The Pitt Building
- The Senate House
- Trinity Hall
- University Library
- Westminster College
- Whipple Museum of the History of Science

43 venues took part in this year's Open Cambridge tours. Here is a summary of how organisers and participants felt it went.

Summary of tour organiser comments:

Liked

- An interested and friendly group who appeared satisfied and pleased
- Timing of the tour was just about right. Not too long, not too short
- Weather, punctuality and common sense of people attending
- The organisation of Open Cambridge is excellent!
- Excellent organisation – the personal contact was also appreciated

Disliked / Suggestions

- Anything that would reduce the number of 'no show' visitors
- Lack of refreshments
- You need more drop in events
- Reduce the maximum numbers – the group was too large
- Some participants are not realistic about the space they need to leave between tours to get across Cambridge

Summary of public responses:

Liked

- Impressed with the knowledge of the tour and passion of the tour guide
- The tour was very interesting and made me more aware of where we live
- Inspiring, reminds me of how lucky we are to have Cambridge on our doorstep
- A good balance of facts and figures
- Would love to see more

Disliked

- Queued for 30 minutes to get into Queens' College library
- It should be three days rather than two
- Speaker needed a microphone
- Booking system filled up far too quickly
- Poor directions/maps to some tours

For a summary of feedback from the general public, please see Appendix 2.

Open Cambridge talks

Two talks took place in the Pitt Building, Trumpington Street on Saturday 8 September.

The talk programme consisted of:

- *A cuckoo in the nest? Medieval Cambridge and its University*
  Speaker: Dr Rosemary Horrox
  Dr Rosemary Horrox is a medieval historian and Director of Studies. Her most recent book, co-edited with Professor Mark Ormrod, is *A Social History of England, 1200-1500.*

- *Crime in Cambridge past and present*
  Speaker: Dr Michael Rice
  Dr Michael Rice began his academic career as a medieval linguist and turned to crime late in life.

Summary of public responses:

Liked

- Very well presented and enjoyable, an extremely interesting talk
- Highly interesting and some very fine slides

Didn't like

- Thought the Crime presentation lacked organisation
- Very hard to hear Dr Rice at the back of the room

Open Cambridge reception

A very well attended Open Cambridge Reception was held on Thursday 6 September in the Museum of Zoology. Over one hundred and fifty guests from the University, Colleges, local businesses and City institutions were represented. Rob Carter from R G Carter gave a short introduction to the Open Cambridge weekend. Professor Jeremy Sanders, Pro-Vice Chancellor for Institutional Affairs also gave a short address about Open Cambridge and the work of the Public Engagement Team.

Bridge the Gap charity walk

Since 2002, many Colleges have opened up their grounds for the sponsored Bridge the Gap charity walk, and nearly £400,000 has been raised for local charities. In 2012, nine Colleges and the University Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology were key attractions on the route, and Arthur Rank Hospice Charity and Press Relief (Cambridge News community fund) were beneficiary charities. Bridge the Gap is organised by the University of Cambridge Public Engagement team in partnership with Arthur Rank Hospice Charity, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge News/Press Relief and The Rotary Club of Cambridge. The Cambridge Building Society is the main event sponsor.

The participating Colleges were:

- Darwin College
- Emmanuel College
- Jesus College
- King's College
- Magdalene College
- Pembroke College
- Sidney Sussex College
- St John's College
- Trinity College

The University Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology served as the checkpoint.

2,700 local people took part in the five-mile walk, many commenting that they had lived in Cambridge all their lives and had never been into any College

grounds. In 2012 £46,000 has been raised through entry fees and donations and sponsorship. In 2011 £45,000 was raised in total. While the funds raised in 2012 show a small increase from recent years, the organising partners for the event have agreed the need to review income generation strategies for the event. While event registration and promotion has moved toward online communications, the need to improve communication with event participants has been identified, particularly following the event, in order to solicit more sponsorship and donations.

Traditionally, a University museum features as a checkpoint, as it provides an exciting opportunity to engage with thousands of local people that might not ordinarily access the museums. The newly reopened Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology served as the 2012 checkpoint, allowing walkers to explore the museum and also collect a checkpoint sticker before continuing on the route. Participants also had the opportunity to learn about the building, its history and its holdings from staff members and volunteer Blue Badge Guides.

Blue Badge Guides once again made a significant contribution to the walk. Twenty-three volunteer guides were stationed in colleges and at the Museum checkpoint, offering to talk to walkers about the history of the Colleges and city landmarks. Sixty-five volunteers recruited from Cambridgeshire Army Cadet Force, the Rotary Club, Parkside Sixth Form, members of the public and University staff members served as route stewards, supported by staff members from the Public Engagement team.

A prize giving ceremony will be held at the Old Schools on Wednesday 28 November, hosted by the Vice-Chancellor. Arthur Rank Hospice and Press Relief will be presented with cheques, and prizes will be awarded to walkers in the following categories:

- Top adult fundraiser
- Top child fundraiser
- Top team fundraiser
- Route quiz winner
- Top photo of the day

Aims and objectives for Bridge the Gap 2012 include a target of £50,000 in funds for charity, increasing participation to 3,000, increasing awareness of the walk's impact, and reviewing fundraising strategy to improve communications.

Marketing and publicity for Open Cambridge 2012

To fully promote Open Cambridge 2012, we had printed 15,000 full colour, 24 page A5 programmes, and 200 A4 posters. These were distributed throughout Cambridgeshire, targeting in particular local interest groups, libraries and community centres.

8,100 subscribers to What's On were amongst the first to receive information and booking details for Open Cambridge.

All promotional materials and publicity encouraged the public to visit the Open Cambridge website, which included the full programme and through which most bookings were made using the online system. Booking by phone was still available for those without access to the internet.

Open Cambridge was featured in a number of media outlets, both local and national. However, due to the high level of booking experienced in the first 48 hours of bookings opening, we deliberately did not achieve as much publicity for some of the events as we had done in previous years.
Please see below a list of articles written for the University of Cambridge's website and the Cambridge News.

http://www.cam.ac.uk/research/news/cambridge-unwrapped/
http://www.cam.ac.uk/research/news/charters-chains-and-civic-pride/
http://www.cam.ac.uk/research/features/going-with-the-slow-flow/
http://www.cam.ac.uk/research/features/remarkable-art/
http://www.cambridgenetwork.co.uk/news/discover-the-secret-history-of-books/
http://www.cam.ac.uk/research/features/discover-the-secret-life-of-books/
http://www.cambridge-news.co.uk/Cambridge/Music-and-magic-for-taste-of-medieval-fair-05092012.htm

In many ways publicity for Open Cambridge was almost a bit too successful, with interest from the public outweighing the capacity of events on offer, and we will be looking carefully at what we offer in 2013 in terms of events as well as the way the programme is formatted.

For Open Cambridge 2013 we will review promotional strategy and the booking system. In 2013, we will again incorporate Bridge the Gap information into the programme and into the website, to ensure that it is clearly an integral part of the weekend.

Conclusion

Open Cambridge in 2012 has been a huge success and we have again received encouraging and enthusiastic feedback from the general public and event co-ordinators. This evaluation has shown that the weekend is valued both by residents of Cambridgeshire and the University, College and City institutions taking part. In many ways, Open Cambridge is now almost too successful.

It is clear though that we will have to make a number of changes for 2013 due to the high number of bookings this year as soon as bookings opened, the very high numbers of 'no-shows', and the numbers at drop-in events. We are looking at ways to change the Open Cambridge programme and will probably have to introduce a new section for 2013 – Pre-book Tours with limited capacity.

Feedback on the programme, events management system and booking system was, in the main, very positive. But the Public Engagement Team shares the frustration of some members of the public with the oversubscription

of many events, and we will be taking steps to try to overcome these problems.

We will start to correspond with Open Cambridge co-ordinators in early 2013 to begin planning for the next Open Cambridge weekend, which will take place from 13–15 September 2013. It is clear that further changes will need to be made, in some cases, to the number of tours/sessions per event and to the length of tour times. It is also our intention to refresh the programme and approach new venues whilst possibly 'resting' some tours or events that have been included in the programme for the last four years.

It is clear that we will have to review our overbooking percentage, which this year was at 20%. Many Open Cambridge event co-ordinators reported very high numbers of 'no-shows' and this was particularly frustrating because so many of the tours had been fully booked for weeks prior to the weekend. It is difficult, when running a programme of free events, to guard against the risks of visitors booking events for which they do not turn up, and responses we can make include over-booking by a higher percentage as well as sending reminders.

We will try to offer more drop-in events, which were very popular this year and for many people compensated for fully booked events they had hoped to attend. We will also be reviewing the marketing programme fully as a result, to see what changes can be made to ensure that more people hear about Open Cambridge in advance of bookings opening.

In interpreting the feedback from the evaluations we need to explore the possibilities for incorporating more children, community and family events and activities into the Open Cambridge programme to promote a greater diversity.

We will be working with the Bridge the Gap team to further embed the walk within the Open Cambridge weekend.

It is vital to the work of the Public Engagement team that we encourage more people to take part in 2013 who have had no previous connections with the University and Colleges.

We would like to thank everyone who participated in Open Cambridge, with special thanks to our sponsors without whom this weekend would not be possible.

Appendix 1

Images



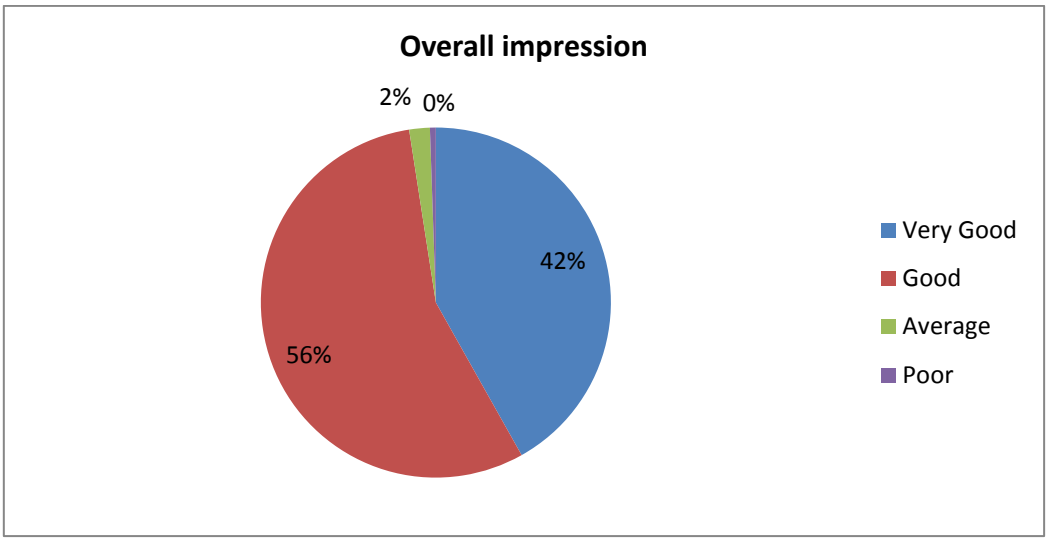
Appendix 2

Open Cambridge 2012 evaluation

For Open Cambridge 2012 we asked visitors to complete paper and online evaluation forms. This enabled us to collect a variety of information about all the events on offer.

General public comments

Feedback was obtained from participants taking part in pre-booked tours, visitors attending open talk and open libraries. We also asked Open Cambridge event co-ordinators provide feedback.



What did you like and what didn't you like?

Liked

- Excellent. I found all staff extremely helpful when I had any questions etc. and the displays superb.
- Always well organised, interesting and informative
- Most interesting, and a great chance to see inside buildings that aren't normally open to the public
- The guides were very knowledgeable and pitched the level of detail just right.
- Excellent. A valuable resource for residents and visitors.
- Great tours - lots of interesting stories. A really relaxing treat
- I loved the openness of it. Everyone was so friendly and helpful.

Could be improved

- Many events got fully booked very fast
- The university grounds could be more accessible - e.g. gardens, etc
- The speakers were a little quiet on some talks
- Could be more tours available.

- There were some problems with events starting on time.
- Event times could be better spaced out

This year we asked visitors to answer the following question when filling in the evaluation form:

Did the Open Cambridge weekend meet your expectations? What did you like and what didn't work so well?

We received a total of 185 comments from which we created the below word cloud.



The following suggestions and requests were made for places to visit in Open Cambridge 2013:

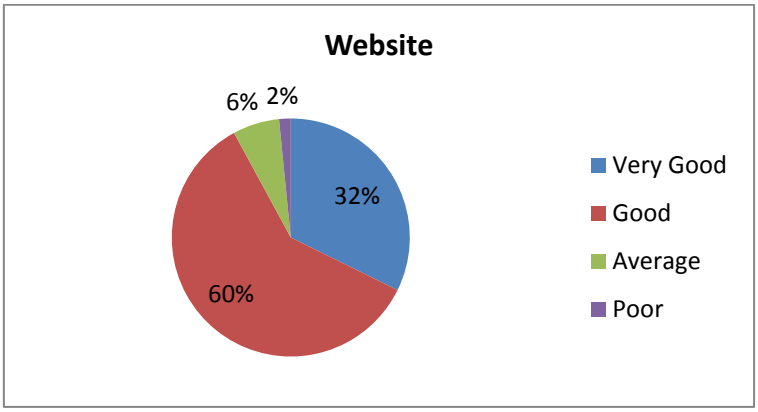
- Anglia Ruskin University
- Botanic Garden
- Cambridge Airport / Marshalls
- Cambridge Union
- Cavendish Laboratory
- Engineering Department

- Faculty of Architecture
- Faculty of Education
- Judge Business School
- King's College Chapel
- Library at Pembroke
- Old Schools
- Sidgwick Site
- St Catharine's College
- University Library Tower

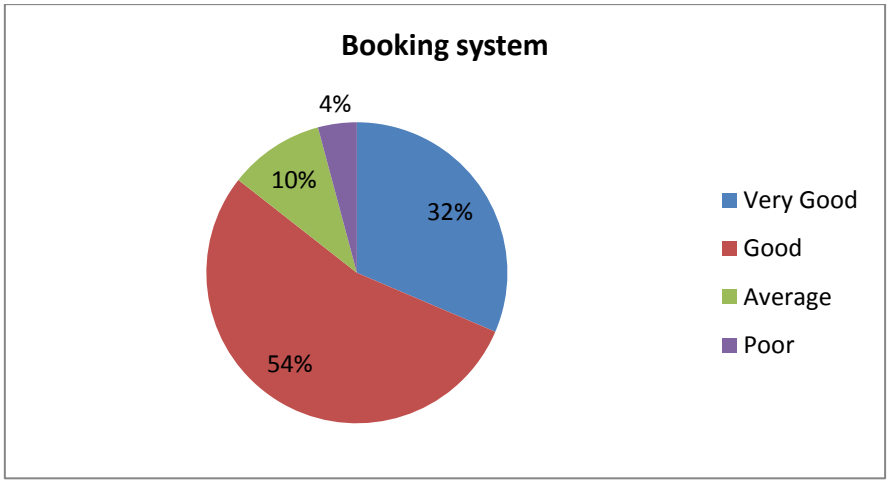
We will try to take on some of these suggestions for Open Cambridge 2013.

Website and booking system

This year we asked visitors completing evaluation forms what they thought about the website, booking system and the variety of events on offer.

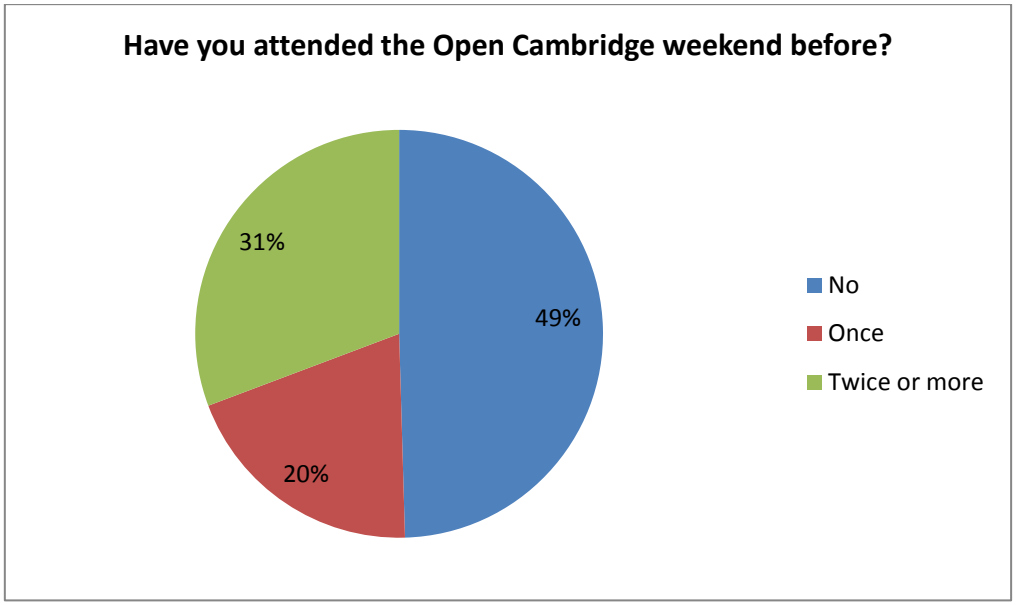


92% of visitors thought the Open Cambridge website was good or very good.

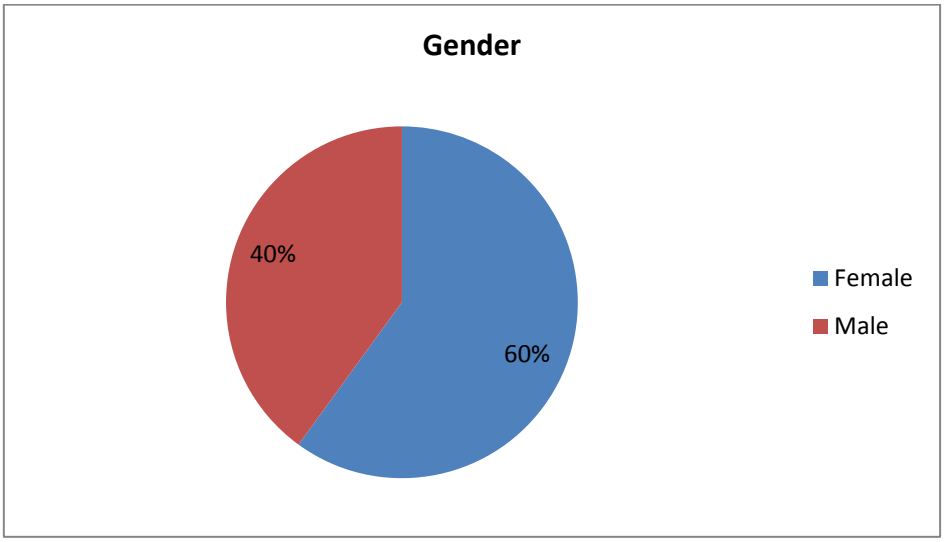


There were also positive results from visitors using the booking system. 86% felt the system was good or very good.

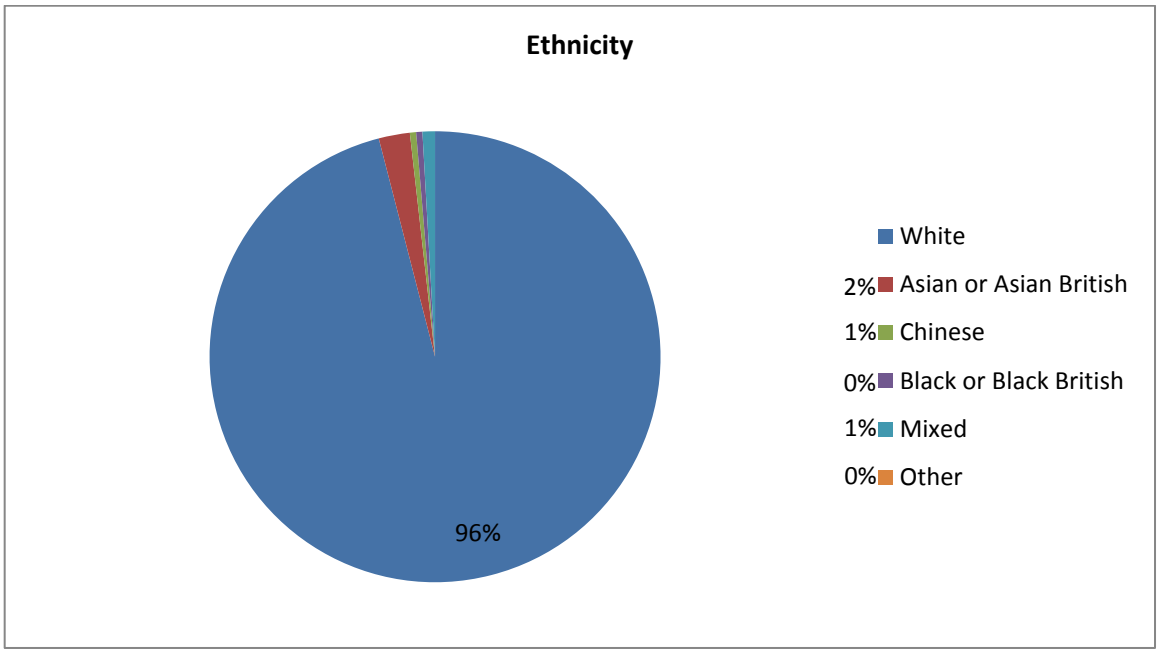
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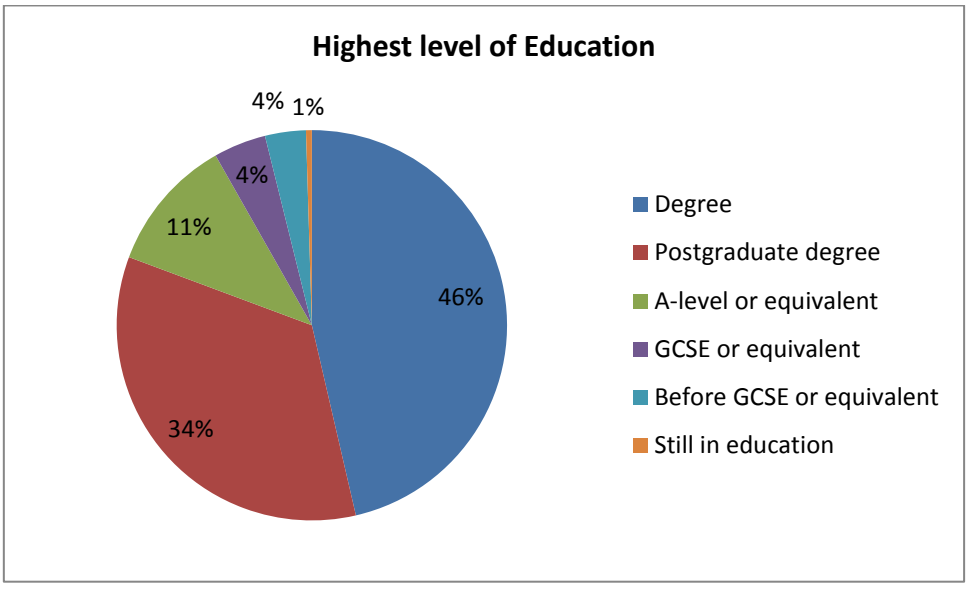
These results show that almost half of all the visitors of Open Cambridge had never been before.



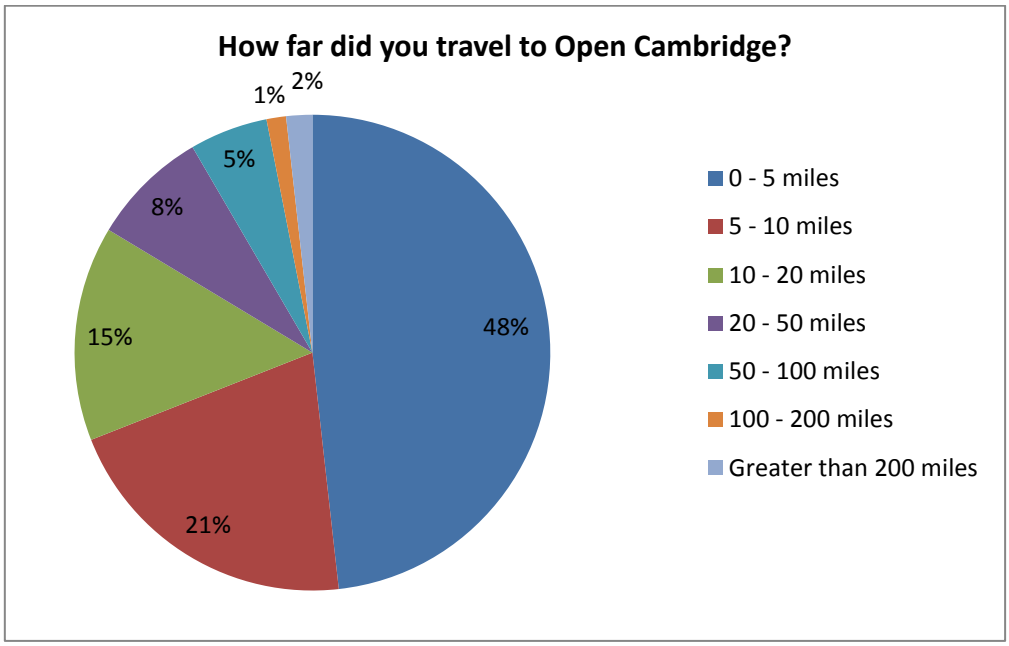
The gender divide was slightly different to 2011, where females had made up 61% of attendees and men made up 39%.



The proportion of visitors identifying themselves as White has increased this year by 1% to 96%. According to the 2001 census Cambridge demographics 91% of people identified themselves as White. We need to continue to focus our efforts on promoting and raising awareness about Open Cambridge in the future to increase diversity.

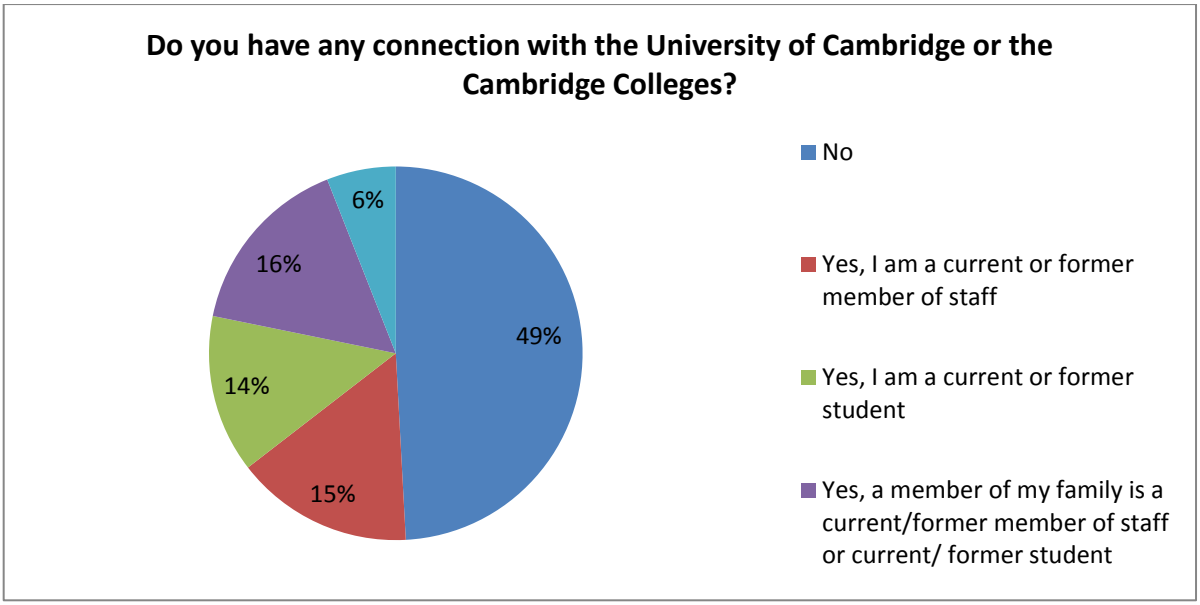


Only 20% of visitors to Open Cambridge were not graduates. This indicates the need for more targeted community projects which we will work on for Open Cambridge 2013.

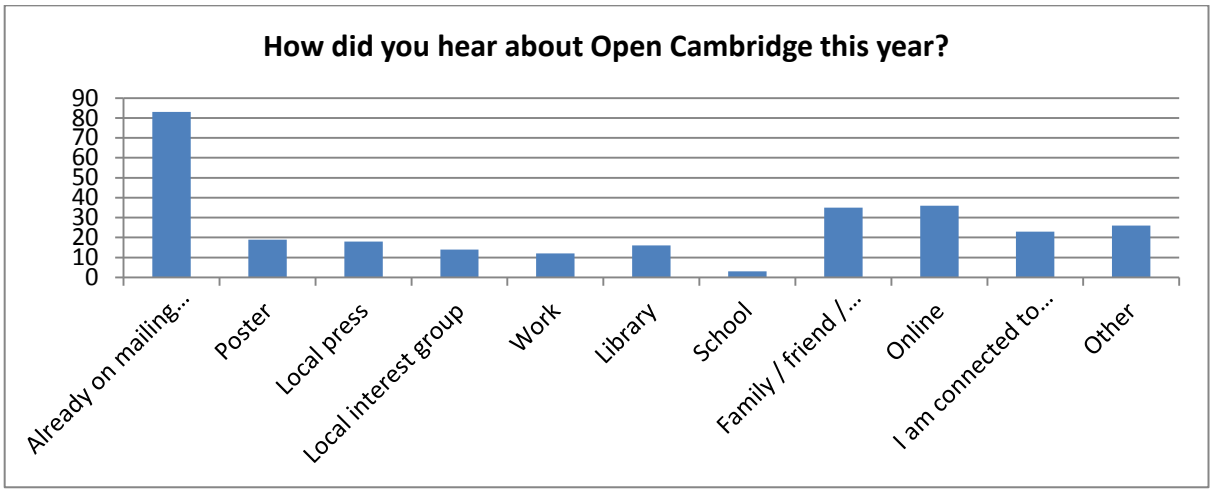


This year Open Cambridge had a slight fall in visitors from the immediate local area, however there were the following visitor increases.

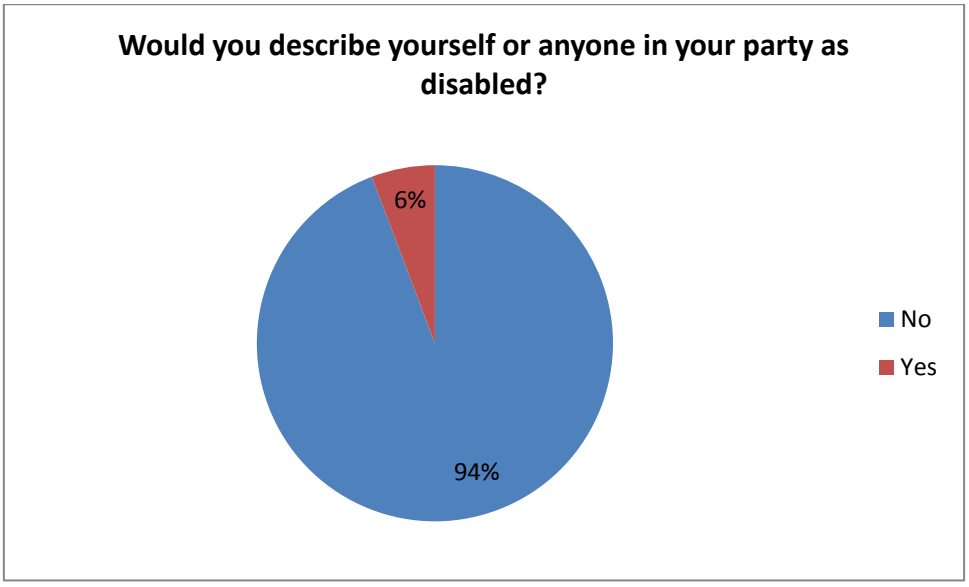
- 2% increase from visitors who travelled between 10 – 20 miles
- 3% increase from visitors who travelled 20 – 50 miles
- 3% increase from visitors who travelled 100 – 200 miles
- 2% increase from visitors who travelled greater than 200 miles



Nearly half of Open Cambridge 2012 visitors had no connection whatsoever to the University of Cambridge and 29% of visitors were either current or former members of staff/students.



Visitors were asked how they heard about Open Cambridge 2012,. While most were already on the mailing list it is clear that online, family/friends and posters all significantly helped in publicising the event.



This figure is slightly down on last year's and we will take steps to review accessibility issues in 2013.