

Evaluation

Settle Stories Festival 2016



PREPARED BY



REMIX



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**ARTS COUNCIL
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A huge thank you to all the funders, sponsors, supporters, volunteers and audiences for making the Settle Stories Festival possible, including:

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INTRODUCTION

With over 50 events for adults and families, the 2016 Settle Stories Festival was the most ambitious to date. With a record breaking number of sell-out events and the largest audience numbers to date, the Festival has demonstrated its pulling power for audiences both locally and across the UK.

In terms of programming, the Festival was more diverse than ever before, but retained a clear unifying element of Story running through all activities. The festival incorporated events for traditional oral storytelling, comedy, music, ceilidhs, craft, ceramics, enamelling, walking or politics, and included more social activism events than in previous years.

Events were held across 11 venues, with the Friends Meeting House and Victoria Hall operating as the core hub for much of the Festival.

METHODOLOGY

Attendees were invited to complete a survey during the festival or afterwards online. We received 138 responses to the survey, of which 26 were completed online, and used postcode data to de-duplicate responses from different members of the same family or group. On this basis, the 122 unique responses to the survey represent a total sample of 240 adults and 88 children.

When asked to define their gender, 61% of respondents said they were female, 26% male and 13% did not answer this question.

The household composition of the majority of respondents was a couple without dependents (41%). 22% were a couple with dependents, 13% were single living alone, 7% lived with parents and 3% were single with dependents.

In addition to the survey, Festival staff provided their thoughts through a one-day workshop. Volunteers, local businesses, artists and attendees were each approached for additional qualitative feedback on a one-to-one basis throughout the festival and at either side of it.

Attendance and Satisfaction

“The Settle Stories Festival is now one of the top storytelling festivals in the UK. This being our first visit, it has truly exceeded our expectations.”

- audience member



ATTENDANCE

Festival attendees are drawn from areas across the UK. 64% (78) of survey respondents said that they lived in Craven District (e.g. Settle, Giggleswick, Long Preston, Skipton, Ingleton, etc.). The remaining 36% (44) came from a diverse range of locations in the North West and beyond.

55.8% of respondents said that Settle Stories was the main reason for their visit to Settle. 32.6% spent at least one night in Settle as part of their visit and 29.0% were there on a day trip.

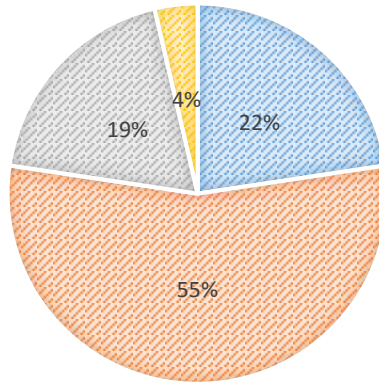
12.3% spent at least one extra night in Settle than originally planned in order to attend the festival, equating to a cumulative total of 62 nights between 30 adults.

Of those staying over, 45.2% stayed with a friend or relative, 26.1% were in a campsite or caravan park and 19.0% in a B&B or hotel.



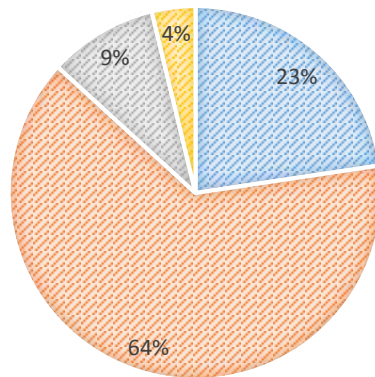
FREQUENCY OF ART VISITS

■ Annually ■ Monthly ■ Weekly ■ Unknown



FREQUENCY OF ART VISITS (LOCALS)

■ Annually ■ Monthly ■ Weekly ■ Unknown



ARTS ENGAGEMENT

The majority of respondents engage relatively infrequently with arts events. When asked how often they attend arts events, 55% replied monthly, 22% annually and 19% weekly. Taking just the local sample of Craven District attendees, 64% replied monthly, 23% annually and 9% weekly.

Experience of storytelling was mixed. 21.1% strongly agreed that the artistic experience at the festival was completely new to them, and a further 20.3% agreed with this. 18.8% were neither agreed nor disagreed, 21.8% disagreed and 18.0% strongly disagreed.

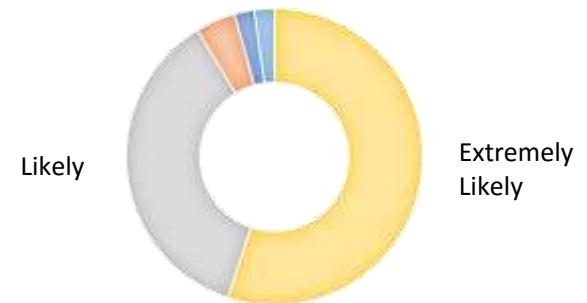
One quarter (25%) of survey respondents say they had previously attended Settle Stories Festival.

LIKELIHOOD OF REPEAT ATTENDANCE

91% of survey respondents said that they were extremely likely (55%) or likely (36%) to attend the festival in future. 4% were neutral, 2% unknown and a further 2% extremely unlikely.

61.8% strongly agreed and 34.6% agreed with the statement that they would encourage their friends and family to attend, a combined total of 96.3%. 2.9% were neutral and 1.7% strongly disagreed.

LIKELIHOOD OF REPEAT ATTENDANCE



COMMUNITY OUTREACH

This year for the first time Settle Stories programmed an event in the local care home which was free to residents. This had an attendance of 22. As part of this initiative, a story tree was created which residents contributed to, as well as the storyteller leading the event.

Settle Stories also gave free tickets to students on Pupil Premium in the North Craven area and their families, the local youth club and girls group. In total 54 tickets were provided to these groups.

The festival had 14 free events over the weekend. These included an Art Tent, Word Tent and Wonderland Tent in the market square. These events in non-theatre environments ensured maximum audience engagement particularly with non-arts attenders.

Local schools and organisations were involved with creating site-specific installations for the festival.

“I'm going to be a storyteller when I grow up and tell epic stories from across the universe.”

- child attending the festival



TICKET TYPES

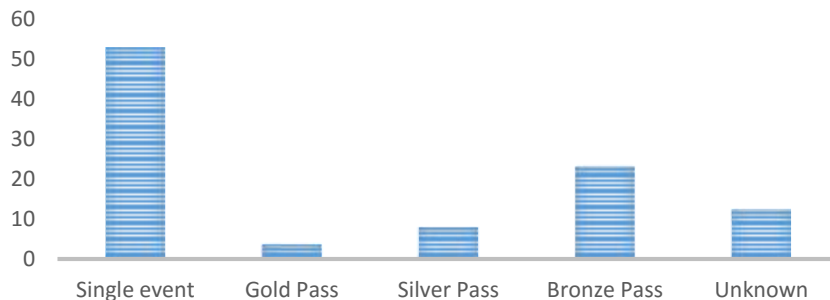
For the first time, the Festival introduced multi-event passes for attendees this year. Gold passes at £50 (adult) / £30 (under 18) / £120 (family) provided entry to ten events, Silver Passes at £40/£25/£95 to seven, and Bronze Passes at £24/£16/£60 to four. Attendees were alternatively able to purchase tickets to individual events, priced between £6 and £20 for adults where a fee was charged.

Bookings across the 50 events averaged 87% capacity, with 19 of them selling out including: Enamelling Workshop, The Magic Carpet, Storytelling for Change, 24 Hour Comic Book Stories, Comic Book Stories for Kids, Food Foraging, Robin Hood, Animation Workshop, 38 Degrees, Two Parts Mischief, Finger Puppet Workshop, Chopping Chillies, Arabian Nights, Ghost Walk, Myth Making Masterclass, Storytelling Walk, Tales of the Dales, Charlotte Brontë and The Litvinenko Project.

Over half of the survey respondents (53%) had purchased single event tickets, with 4% Gold, 8% Silver and 23% Bronze passes.

Respondents on average attended 4 events each. Of those surveyed, 45.2% had visited the festival for one day, 24.8% for two days and 29.9% for all three days.

TICKET TYPE (RESPONDENTS)

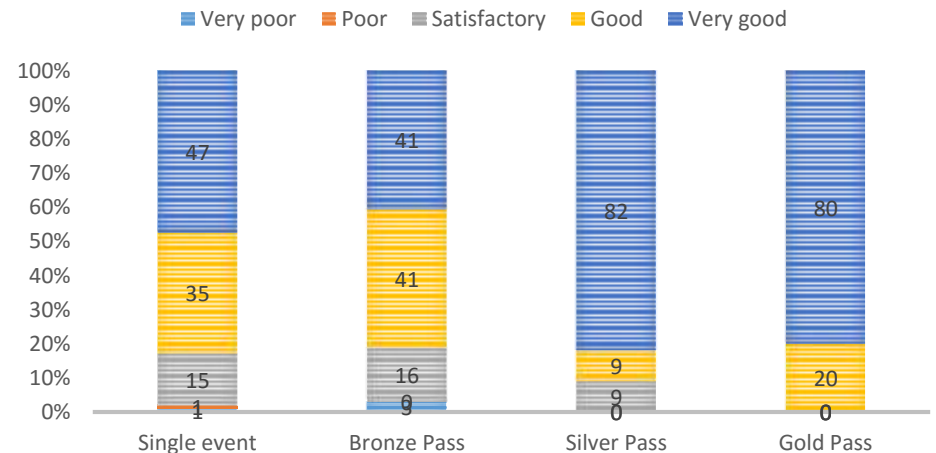


VALUE FOR MONEY

When asked how they would rate the value for money of their tickets, 47% of respondents that had bought single event tickets rated them very good, 35% good, 15% satisfactory, 1% poor and 1% very poor.

Respondents who purchased Bronze Passes rated their value for money as: 41% very good, 41% good, 16% satisfactory and 3% very poor. Of those who purchased Silver Passes, 82% rated them as very good value, 9% as good value and 9% as satisfactory. Of those who purchased Gold Passes, 80% rated them as very good value and 20% as good value.

VALUE FOR MONEY



STAR RATING (OUT OF 5)



STAR RATING

When asked to rate the event out of 5 stars for tomorrow's papers, 60.3% gave it 5 stars, with a further 36.6% giving it 4 stars. 1.5% gave it 3 stars and 1.5% gave it 2 stars.

SATISFACTION

54.5% strongly agreed that the festival met their expectations, with a further 38.1% agreeing with this statement. 4.5% neither agreed nor disagreed, 2.2% disagreed and 0.7% strongly disagreed.

40.7% strongly agreed that they were totally absorbed, and 47.4% agreed with this. 10.3% were neutral, whilst 0.7% disagreed and 0.7% strongly disagreed.

EXPECTATIONS IN ADVANCE

We asked respondents what were their expectations of the festival before they arrived. In order of the most common responses:

- 32.4% expected an emotional or uplifting experience
- 32.4% expected a theatrical experience
- 28.1% had no expectations or didn't know what to expect
- 27.3% expected entertainment for children
- 23.7% expected to have a completely immersive experience and escape from the everyday
- 23.0% expected a collection of talks

When limited to respondents from Craven District, the most popular expectations were entertainment for children (33.3%) and a collection of talks (33.3%). 31.5% expected an emotional or uplifting experience, 31.5% didn't know or had no expectations, 29.6% expected a theatrical experience and 18.5% expected an immersive experience and escape from the everyday.

The majority of repeat visitors expected a theatrical experience (58.8%), followed by entertainment for children (50.0%) and an emotional or uplifting experience (50.0%). 35.3% expected an immersive experience and escape from the everyday, and the same number expected a collection of talks.

In addition, free text responses to other expectations included:

- an educational experience for constructing personal histories;
- CPD for a creative career plus learning and inspiration from professional storytellers;
- providing a focus to their visit to Settle;
- high quality performers and a good selection of storytellers, including those we'd never heard before;
- to meet and network with other storytellers;
- Raising awareness of issues affecting us and how to activate change

DESCRIBE SETTLE STORIES FESTIVAL IN ONE WORD

124 responses



Strengths and Opportunities

"We've loved Settle Stories since it started in 2010, it's been fantastic watching it grow and I'm excited about it's next move."

- audience member

PROGRAMMING

When asked to rate their experience at the festival, 72.5% rated it as very good and 26% as good. 1.5% rated it as satisfactory.

The strength and diversity of the festival programme was reflected in the free text answers from respondents asked to comment on the best part of the festival. Nearly all events were mentioned by at least one response, with Chopping Chillies (10 responses), Martin Shaw (6) and the Animation Workshops (5) the top three.

African Beats (4), Dave Tonge (4), Romance and Ragamuffins (3), the Magic Carpet (3), Naked Stun (3) and Ursula Golden Hill (3) were all popular, whilst 38 Degrees, the talk on Bronte, David Babbs, Down the Rabbit Hole, Litvinenko Project, Hunt the Storyteller, Master Mythteller, the Alice in Wonderland trail and Potter's Story were mentioned twice.

Bedtime Stories, Enamelling workshop, Barbarella's Bang Bang, Virpi Kitty, Foraging, Terrible Tudors, Stories for Change, Alfie Moore and the Storytelling walk were each mentioned as a highlight at least once.

The **range and diversity of the programme** on offer was highlighted as the best bit of the festival by a significant number of respondents (15), with one commenting on the fact that it seemed to have a wider remit than previous years.

One suggestion from respondents was to better balance events over the three days, as Day 2 was longer than the others. On a related theme, two respondents suggested repeating some events because of clashes.

Others commented on the fact that the **programme exposed them to thought-provoking and challenging ideas, social and political activism and new experiences** (12). The **quality of performances** was also highlighted by a number of respondents as a key strength (6), as were the **opportunities for audience participation** (2).

When asked to suggest improvements, nine implored the organisers to keep going and continue in their efforts to build such a unique arts festival. One of the most popular responses was to suggest **holding the event later in the year**, with a better chance of good weather (8).





HUB & ATMOSPHERE

The **community spirit, friendly atmosphere and generosity of volunteers and organisers** was identified as the best bit of the festival by the most number of respondents (12), followed closely by the general **buzz and festival atmosphere around Settle** (10). Several also highlighted the **celebration of diversity** (5).

One particularly strong element, mentioned by 13 respondents, was the **need for a more obvious festival hub** in the town square. It was very unfortunate that a camper van, expected to fulfil this function, cancelled at very short notice, but even with this in mind, there is potentially further that could be done to create a sociable meeting space in the heart of the town.

Many respondents wanted a **place to meet other festival attendees**. Whilst the Gingerbread House Café enabled this to some extent, it was too small and hidden from the main centre of the town. One respondent described it as a lot of, “wandering around ‘purposefully waiting’ for the next event so it felt like the festival goers were disparate rather than together as a community.” Festival chai tea tents were suggested as one model for a space to chill and meet others.

Others suggested that the organisers focus on improving the festival atmosphere throughout the whole town of Settle. **Live music in the town square** was recommended by at least three respondents as an important missing element for atmosphere, whilst **in-costume story characters and food stalls** with warm (Indian/African) snacks were also suggested.

LOCAL ATTITUDES

When we filtered the survey responses to just local respondents, 54.7% strongly agreed that Settle Stories helped to make Settle a better place to live, with a further 22.6% agreeing and 11.3% neutral.

56.6% of local respondents strongly agreed that Settle Stories made them proud to live in or around Settle, and a further 22.6% agreed with this statement. 9.4% were neutral and 1.9% disagreed.

60.3% strongly agreed and 24.5% agreed that Settle Stories enhanced Settle's reputation as a place to go for high quality visitor experiences. 3.8% were neutral and 1.9% disagreed.

47.1% strongly agreed and 39.6% agreed that Settle Stories created a buzz around the town. 1.9% were neutral and 1.9% disagreed.

When asked if Settle Stories had a negative impact upon residents in the town, for example through congestion or noise, 17.0% were neutral, 15.1% disagreed and 58.5% strongly disagreed.

When asked if Settle Stories was a popular event and positively embraced by the local population, 20.8% of respondents strongly agreed and 50.9% agreed. 17.0% were neutral and 1.9% disagreed.





IMPACT ON LOCAL ECONOMY

We asked respondents that did not live in Craven District to list the money that they and their party spent during their trip to Settle, taking into account all cash, cards and cheque payments.

A grand total of £9,475 was reported across 67 respondents, equalling an average contribution to the Settle economy of £141 each. This spending was distributed as follows:

VISITOR SPENDING



Whilst difficult to get an accurate total, respondents living locally also confirmed that they spent extra locally during the festival on food and drink than they would normally.

Marketing and Awareness

“I have to say, it's been truly outstanding!”

- professional storyteller

MARKETING

The festival was extensively marketed, with 15,000 brochures distributed regionally, as opposed to 10,000 in previous years. These were distributed to all the tourist information centres and cultural organisations within an hour and a half radius of Settle.

The festival was also included in a season event guide, which had a distribution of 10,000 more than in previous years. Also, the season guide was distributed through the community news to 3,000 readers.

Settle Stories also had a door-to-door drop of the brochures in Settle as well as in targeted villages and towns. Banners were placed at the side of major roads, and totalled four times as many as previous years.

The success of the festival led to some respondents recommending that it could be **promoted further afield** within the Craven District (4). For example, although Settle Stories had posters in shops, cafes and Tourist Information Centre in Skipton, and school children were given leaflets, some local residents said it could have been more prominent. This highlights the real difficulties faced marketing events in areas with limited digital penetration, and provides an opportunity for even more targeted digital promotion to local communities (building on the success of online outreach, as outlined below).

On a related theme, some respondents also suggested that the website could be strengthened, and in particular pointed to the perceived complexity of its booking system. Four respondents asked for the **website to be simplified**, noting that the saver pass system was overly complex.

In the month before the last festival in 2014 the website received 4,000 unique visits. This year the website received over 9,000 unique visits.



MEDIA COVERAGE

Settle Stories Festival 2016 saw significantly more press coverage than in previous years across national, regional and local channels. At the last festival there were 40 pieces of press coverage, but this year the coverage was much greater as the following list highlights. Many of these articles can be viewed online at <http://settlestories.org.uk/node/559>

NATIONAL PRESS

- Abracadabra Radio, Storytime Magazine and Settle Stories collaborated on a competition to win free tickets for festival - Festival featured in Storytime Magazine
- Radio 4 - Midweek - Festival Director, Sita Brand featured on the show
- Juno, Parenting Magazine - Festival feature
- Green Christian - Review of 'Fair Tax Town'
- Contrary Life - Feature on the more 'quirky' elements of festival

REGIONAL PRESS

- BBC RADIO LEEDS - one to one (one hour show) with Sita Brand
- BBC RADIO LEEDS - one to one (one hour show) with Festival artist Alfie Moore
- BBC RADIO LEEDS - one to one (one hour show) with Festival artist Ursula Holden Gill
- The State of the Arts - 2 x previews of Festival
- The State of the Arts - reviews of festival events inc 1 on 'Master Myhtteller', 1 on 'Bronte Story', 1 on 'Litvinenko Project'
- Arts Feature in 'Northern Echo'
- Yorkshire Tots - piece on festival

- Big Issue in the North - Full page Arts Feature on the festival featuring Alia Alzougbi.
- Big Issue in the North -Double page spread on 'David Babbs' and the festival
- (both big issue pieces we're also online and sent out in their mailing list)
- Yorkshire Times - Piece on festival artist Alfie Moore
- Yorkshire Times - Piece on festival artist Matthew Wilcock
- Yorkshire Times - Piece on festival artist Sita Brand (about her new show)
- Yorkshire Times - general preview on the festival

LOCAL PRESS

- Bradford Community Broadcasting - 'Top 10' - 1 hour show with Settle Stories staff Charles Tyrer and Natalie Dalkiran talking about the festival
- Bradford Community Broadcasting - 15 min interview with festival artist Ursula Holden Gill
- Bradford Community Broadcasting - 15 min interview with festival artist Alfie Moore
- Bradford Community Broadcasting - 2 15 min interviews with Sita Brand about the festival
- Dry Stone Radio - featured 15 minute interviews with 9 different Festival artists
- Dales Radio - Present at festival recording shows and interviewing artists. Pre festival we had 9 free adverts for various shows at the festival
- Dales Radio - 15 min interview with Sita Brand regarding the Festival
- Stray FM - 15 min interview with Sita Brand
- Esk Valley Magazine - Double page spread on W.R. Mitchell Archive events at the festival
- Clitheroe Local - 2 short (150 words) pieces on festival
- Aspire Magazine - full page piece on Festival

Craven Herald (local paper):

- Double page spread following festival success
 - 1 full page of reviews on festival
 - Double page feature pre festival
 - Competition in partnership with Craven Herald - Free festival ticket giveaway
 - Smaller Festival preview - announcing ticket sales
 - Feature on W.R.M events at festival
-
- North Yorkshire Festivals - Piece on Fair Tax Town
 - All About - Feature on festival
 - All About - Family Feature on festival
 - All About - Feature on festival again
 - Clitheroe Advertiser - feature on festival
 - Westmorland Gazette - feature on festival
 - Westmorland Gazette - feature on W.R.M events at festival

COMMUNITY / PARISH MAGAZINES

- Settle Community News - double page spread on festival (our event guide was in every copy of the magazine)
- Settle Community News - mention in magazine welcome in April Edition
- Long Preston Parish Magazine (6 pages over 3 months (3 editions) about festival)
- Tosside News - piece on festival
- Austwick Parish Magazine - piece on festival

- Chatburn Parish Magazine - piece on festival
- Burton in Lonsdale Parish Mag - piece on festival
- Hornby village magazine - piece on festival
- Kirkby Stephen Parish Mag - piece on fest
- Slaidburn village mag - piece on fest
- Village websites also listed festival on their news pages

EVENT LISTINGS IN PRINT

- Yorkshire Life - Listing for Festival in piece about festival
- Yorkshire Living - Listing for festival in events diary
- Primary Times - Listing for festival
- Craven Events - Listing for festival
- Dalesman Visitor Guide - Listing for festival
- VISIT SETTLE GUIDE - festival featured on front cover

MISCELLANEOUS PR & COMMUNITY OUTREACH

- Specific events e.g. 'Potters Story' promoted by ceramic centres
- The Village Storytelling Center who also run a storytelling fest did an interview with Sita about Festival as a Blog on their website
- Destinations UK - did a news piece about festival on their website
- Tourism websites about Settle or Yorkshire features e.g. 'Vibrant Settle' and 'Welcome to Yorkshire' and 'Dales Discoveries'
- Event listings for festival placed on 40 targeted websites
- Promotion by communities including Beyond the Border, Lancaster Lit Fest, Yorkshire Tote, Family Arts Festival, Welcome to Yorkshire, Sting in the tail, Just so Festival, Bronte Parsonage Museum, Ilkley Lit Festival



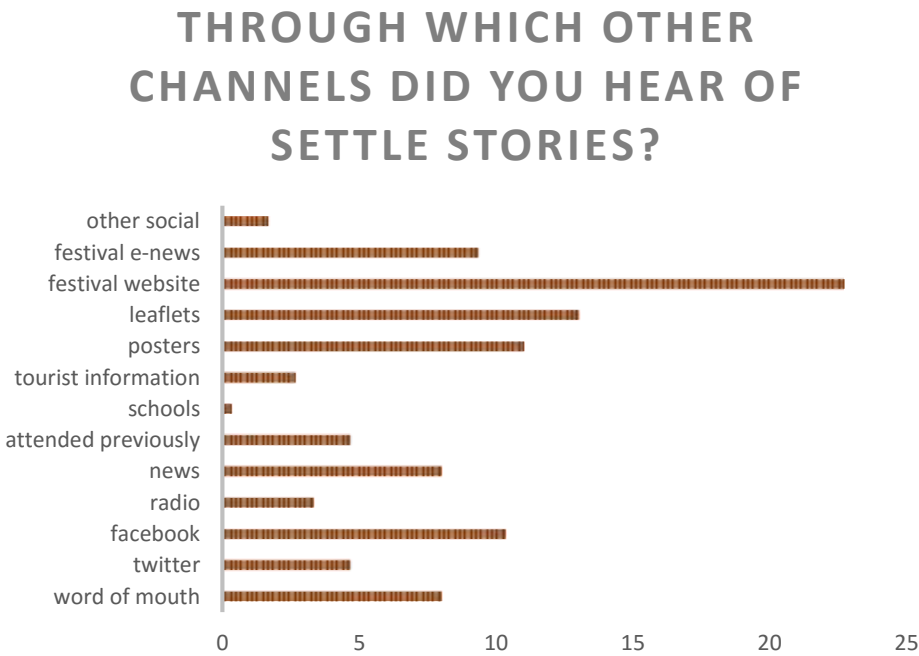
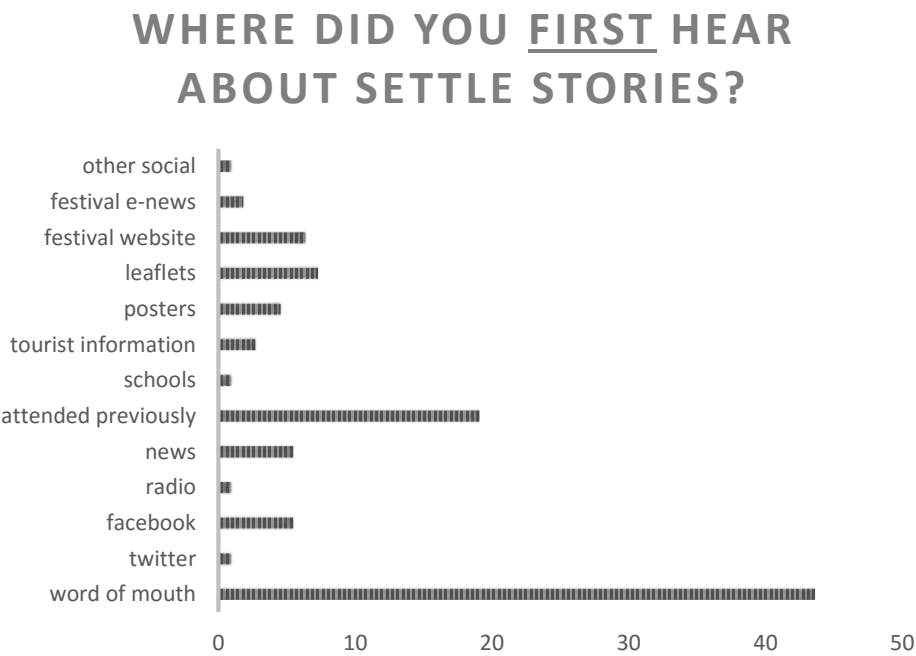
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Events galore at stories festival



MARKETING

We asked respondents about their exposure to the festival marketing channels, both for initial contact and subsequent reinforcement:



Several other respondents discovered Settle Stories through searching online for events on in Yorkshire that weekend or storytelling festivals.

SOCIAL MEDIA

TWITTER

During the three days of the festival (1-3 April), the festival hashtag #Storyfest2016 received 209 tweets and 731,242 timeline deliveries from 49 contributors with a reach of 69,216.

The most popular second hashtag, used by 13 of the 209 tweets, was #settle.

60 of the 209 tweets included links, with the most popular links related to dalesradio.co. 103 of the 209 tweets included media, showing individual performances, story beans or the general festival atmosphere.

When considered more broadly from 16 March to 21 April, total tweets were 479 with timeline deliveries reaching 2,399,055 from 106 contributors with a reach of 149,598.

Contributors with the most reached included the Yorkshire Times (20,083), Planet Forward (14,285) and Settle Stories (14,078).

FACEBOOK

The Settle Stories Facebook page has 1,848 fans, of which 39 were added since 21 March and new likes are added at an average of three per day. Daily engaged users average at 74 for the period 21 March to 3 April, and 28-day engaged users averages at 1,240.

In 2014, the Facebook total reach was 10,000 in the month prior to the festival, which is considerably higher than any other storytelling organisation in the UK. This year, the reach peaked at 20,774 for the month prior to the festival.

INSTAGRAM

As an emerging platform for the festival, Settle Stories has 237 followers and saw a total of 20 posts pertaining to the festival. These posts were 'liked' by 437 people.





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