

I have been looking at the Station Usage statistics on the ORR website, and have extracted the figures for the 14 intermediate stations on the Tyne Valley Line:

Station Name	06/07 Entries & Exits	05/06 Entries & Exits	04/05 Entries & Exits	2003/04
Bardon Mill	4,127	3,848	4,362	4,801
Blaydon	5,768	4,166	3,881	2,510
Brampton (Cumbria)	9,083	9,700	9,197	7,004
Corbridge	65,421	68,143	65,665	48,925
Dunston	1,887	131	82	103
Haltwhistle	67,395	63,062	54,693	48,890
Haydon Bridge	16,564	16,987	15,513	16,055
Hexham	351,376	357,878	339,283	306,191
MetroCentre	373,071	375,509	375,943	343,026
Prudhoe	142,670	149,146	143,803	111,450
Riding Mill	33,839	32,323	29,890	25,177
Stocksfield	62,479	65,362	62,557	50,476
Wetheral	11,862	11,448	9,993	8,243
Wylam	93,693	90,532	88,449	79,516
TOTALS	1,239,235	1,248,235	1,203,311	1,052,367

I thought you might like to share this with our members.

My comments on the figures:

1. The ORR issues a report alongside the figures, which basically advises of the changes in methodology in collecting the data each year.
2. The figures represent total entries and exits through the stations in each financial year.
3. There appears to have been a slight decline in 2006/2007, when compared to 05/06. But the figures are still well ahead of 04/05 and 03/04.
4. I think that the figure for Dunston may be suspect! I know that the station has had the benefit of extra morning/evening peak trains, but I find it hard to believe that it suddenly had nearly 2,000 passengers through it, compared to 131 in the previous year! Looking more closely at the figures, 1,620 journeys by Season Ticket holders have been included, when in the previous year this figure was zero! Which suggests the real figure for Dunston is more likely to be 267.
5. Although there was a decline of more than 6,000 at Hexham, nearly 3,000 at Corbridge and 3,000 at Stocksfield. Wylam showed an increase of nearly 3,000, and there were modest increases at Bardon Mill and Wetheral.
6. Although Prudhoe was disappointing with a decline of about 7,000, the figures only go up to April 07. The new interchange opened in May 07, so we should anticipate some improvement in next 07/08's figures.
7. I find the continuing increase at Blaydon quite fascinating. Over four years, usage of the station has more than doubled. The station has in recent years had the benefit of an extra Newcastle-bound peak train. I think a very good case could be made for some extra stopping trains here. For example, there are two trains calling at Blaydon towards Hexham in the morning, but only one in the opposite direction in the evening. If the 1644 and 1742 services ex Hexham called at Blaydon, this could provide two useful extra trains to Blaydon from Hexham, and also return commuting facilities between Blaydon and Sunderland.
8. Of course, the figures are provided by the ORR without any attempt at explaining WHY the figures have changed. But we know that some stations will have had some change to the level of service (Dunston and Blaydon), and there will have been other external factors (such as changing employment patterns, long-term roadworks giving rail a short-term advantage, falling numbers of schoolchildren using rail, to suggest but three).
9. Finally, does anyone have any predictions for the year 07/08 (figures for which we probably won't see until May 09)? My guesses would be that Prudhoe will see significant growth, thanks to the interchange and additional stopping trains; that Blaydon will record further growth; and that Brampton and Haydon Bridge will start to grow again. And for the current year? Expect another big jump upwards, as the credit crunch and fuel prices cause people to leave the car at home!

Regards Tom Dodds