

# Recreation and Tourism

## Dartmoor Factsheet



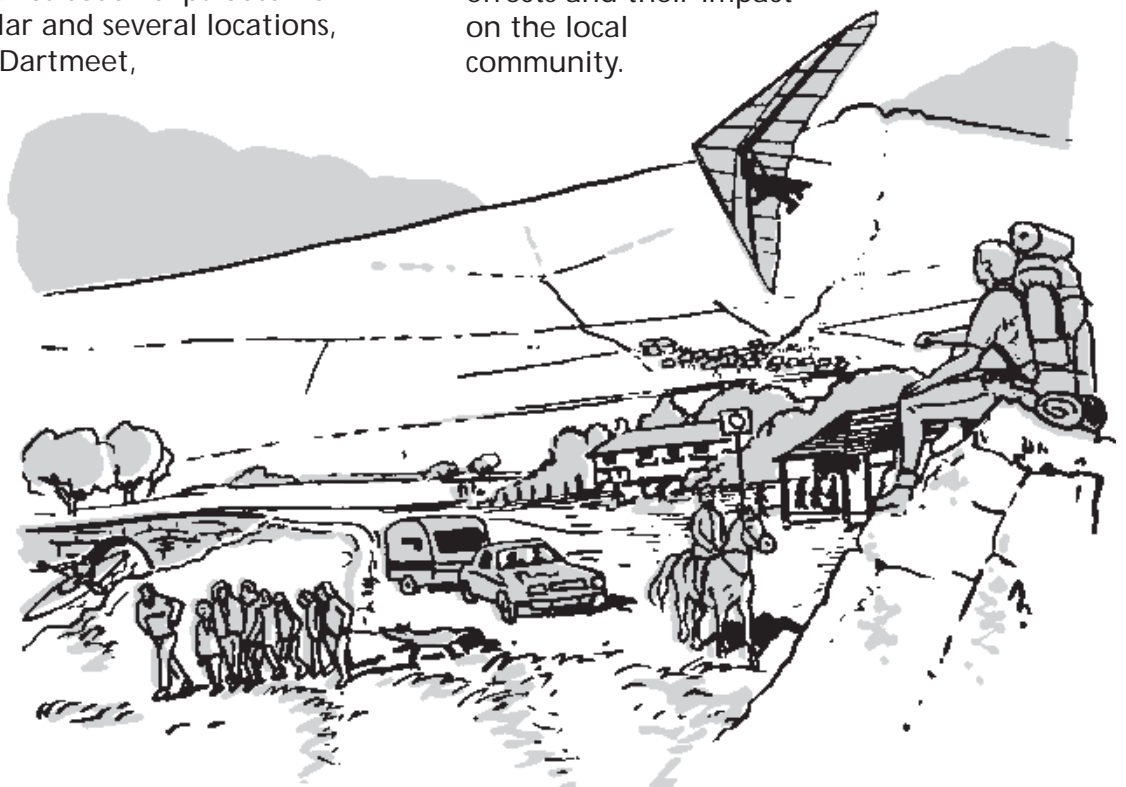
Swirling mists, granite tors, wide open spaces, attractive towns and villages, deep bogs, ponies, a grim-looking prison, Sherlock Holmes - many images come to mind when thinking of Dartmoor. Today, the distinctive qualities of Dartmoor attract many millions of day visits each year. However, Dartmoor has not always been so popular. Two hundred and fifty years ago it was regarded as a wild, savage and even uninteresting place. An early traveller on Dartmoor, the Rev J Swete, wrote at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century that it was 'a wild waste where the eye found not a point to rest on. There was nothing picturesque nor, though wild and rugged, was there anything romantic'. However, by 1842 Samuel Rowe was describing Dartmoor as 'a scene of unsurpassing loveliness'.

By the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century visiting the moor had become a popular pastime. Hotels and guest houses were built in Chagford, Yelverton and elsewhere. From about the 1920s coach trips became increasingly popular and several locations, including Haytor, Dartmeet, Becky Falls and Lydford Gorge, became established destination points for visitors. Since the 1950s the motor car has enabled many more people to explore the National Park.

The 1949 *National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act* paved the way for the creation of National Parks in England and Wales. Dartmoor - the largest open space in southern England and containing a wealth of antiquities - became a National Park in 1951. The 1995 *Environment Act* defines the purposes of such designation as:-

- *to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Parks;*
- *to promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities (of the Parks) by the public.*

The 1995 Act also places on the National Park Authorities a duty to seek to foster the economic and social well-being of their local communities. All recreation and tourism developments have to be considered and measured up against their environmental effects and their impact on the local community.



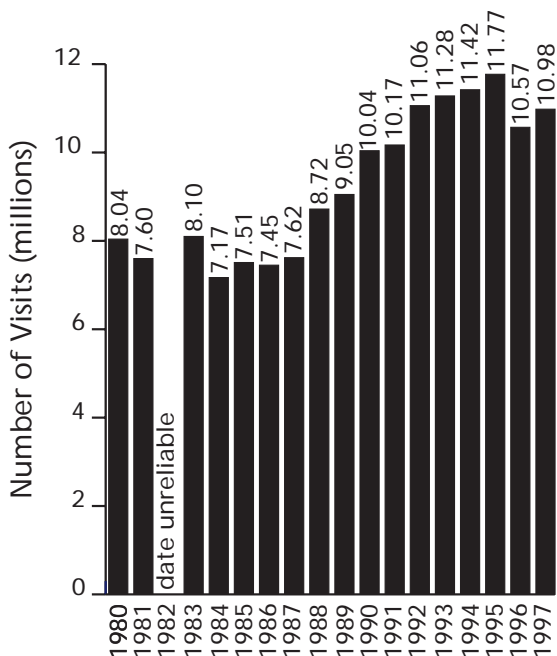
Recreation and tourism play an important part in the life of the National Parks of England, Wales and Scotland. Visitors help the rural economy through their spending and many jobs are provided in a range of services. Visitors also help to maintain some services in many National Park communities. Yet, recreation and tourism activities can bring problems such as erosion and traffic congestion. Therefore, recreation and tourism in the National Parks have to be managed to sustain the high quality of the natural and cultural environment whilst allowing visitors to enjoy and appreciate these qualities.

The Dartmoor National Park Authority helps to promote sustainable use of the National Park in a number of ways:-

## Ranger Service

The Rangers are the eyes and ears of the National Park Authority. They try to ensure visitors' enjoyment and monitor the effects of recreation on the landscape and the local community. They deal with open access land and public rights of way and can use the appropriate laws and byelaws to support their work.

### Annual Number of Recreational Visits to Dartmoor National Park 1980 - 1998



### How many people visit Dartmoor National Park each year?

These figures are rough estimates based on traffic counters placed on main roads. They show a trend rather than an accurate picture. It is very difficult to know exactly what happens over Dartmoor's 368 sq miles (953 sq km) for the 365 days of the year.

## Information Service

Much effort is put into researching and providing a high standard of information and interpretation for all visitors. The more the public understand and appreciate the area, the more likely they are to behave in a sensitive way and to support National Park purposes. An information network provides the main basis of this service and includes Information Centres, Village Information Points and signboards. This promotion, in places, is carried out in partnership with local councils and the community.

Information Centres (see middle pages) are carefully located in and around the National Park. Four of these are operated by the National Park Authority. These sell a variety of publications as well as answering many enquiries. The High Moorland Visitor Centre, Princetown, opens all year round; the other Centres are open from April to the end of October (minimum period).

There is an extensive guided walks programme for those that want more local knowledge and who may lack confidence with their own map reading. In 2002/3, the National Park Authority organised 386 walks. These were attended by 2,995 walkers.

*The Dartmoor Visitor*, a free newspaper produced by Dartmoor National Park Authority, provides the visitor with all the information they need to know to enjoy their stay.

## Visitor Management

This involves many aspects of National Park work. Planners, for example, help to control any new tourism developments as well as making plans to cope with present and future recreational pressures. Strategies for recreation and traffic management help guide day to day decisions and long term planning. A 40 mile per hour speed limit on moorland roads has been imposed for the safety of grazing livestock and ponies on Dartmoor and for the safety of other road users as cyclists and horse riders.

Crucial work is carried out by talking with recreational interest groups such as the ramblers or horseriders, or more specialist groups such as the British Canoe Union or the South Devon Hang Gliding Club. In this way any possible conflicts can be sorted out before problems arise. Various codes of conduct/guidance for recreational activities have been produced by the National Park Authority and others.

Different parts of Dartmoor are exposed to different visitor pressures. Considerable National Park Authority effort and resources go into managing heavily used sites and areas. It is important that the Authority maintains the visitor capacity of these areas without spoiling their character. This is done through carefully designed physical works, such as riverside work, banking along roads and car parks, building toilet blocks, waymarking public rights of way, and maintaining paths, etc.

In recent years the effect of increasing visitor numbers to Dartmoor has become evident. Scars developed across open moorland, riverbanks were crumbling and archaeological sites were being damaged. The National Park Authority addressed these problems through the Moor Care Campaign. This approach provides the basis for repairs to damaged areas, as well as promoting appropriate messages to users of Dartmoor in order to help them maximise their enjoyment and minimise their impact on the environment. Visitors are being encouraged to leave the car behind and travel to Dartmoor by public transport. Once here, they can explore the area by foot, bicycle or bus.



## Dartmoor Charter for Sustainable Tourism

### What is Sustainable Tourism?

Sustainable tourism, in simple terms, is about meeting the needs of visitors, the tourism industry and communities, whilst safeguarding, conserving and enhancing the special qualities of an area now and in the future.

Millions of people visit Dartmoor every year, attracted by the area's natural beauty, wildlife, cultural heritage and tranquillity. Many visit because of Dartmoor's status as a National Park.

Successfully managing the impacts of tourism will help to maintain the special qualities of Dartmoor which people come to enjoy. Sustainable tourism will not only benefit the environment, it will also encourage harmony with local communities, and be a positive benefit to all of the businesses that depend on Dartmoor as a tourism resource.

Both visitors and businesses are increasingly aware of environmental good practice.

With this in mind, many people when choosing their holiday, look for well managed environments and businesses that can demonstrate "green credentials" whilst supporting local communities, wildlife and cultural heritage.

### What is the Dartmoor Charter for Sustainable Tourism?

The Dartmoor Charter for Sustainable Tourism is a green tourism scheme, set up by the Dartmoor National Park Authority and developed within the framework of the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas.

The Charter acts as a good practice guide for businesses with an interest in tourism and encourages them to make changes to certain aspects of their business.

Examples of typical changes:

- buying locally produced food
- using environmentally friendly and recycled products
- encouraging the wise use of energy and water resources
- displaying public transport information
- composting kitchen waste
- promoting local festivals and events



The Dartmoor Charter for Sustainable Tourism is co-ordinated by Dartmoor National Park Authority on behalf of the Dartmoor Partnership.




### The Dartmoor Partnership

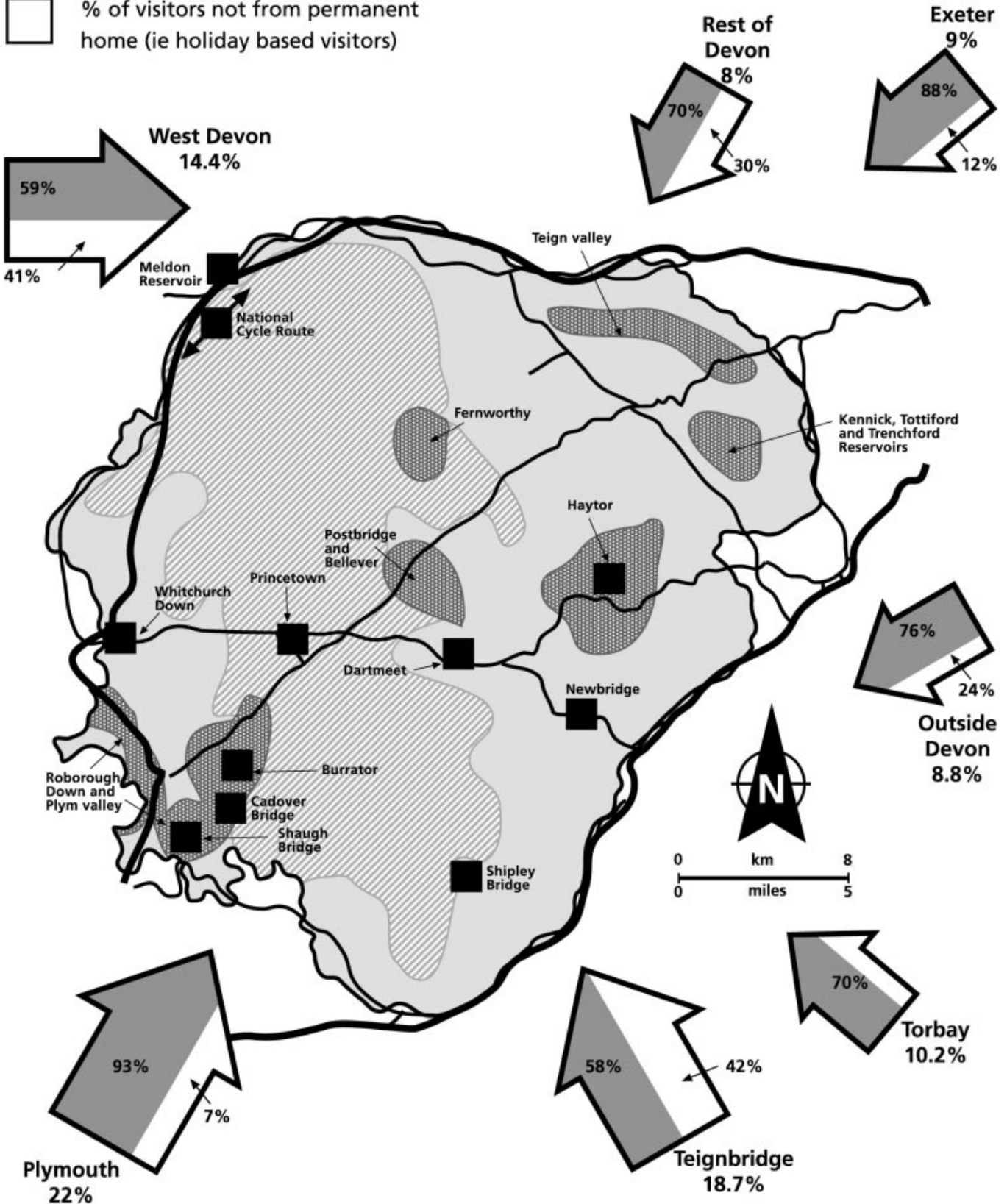
The Dartmoor Partnership was set up in 1998 as a public/private sector forum for tourism. The Partnership provides a cross-boundary network and co-ordination function for organisations working towards the sustainable development of tourism across the Dartmoor area. The Dartmoor Partnership is composed of public, private and charity organisations.

# Where do visitors come from and where do they go?

Origin of visitors 1991: the arrows relate to the starting point on the day of the visit. The arrow also show

 % of visitors from permanent home  
 % of visitors not from permanent home (ie holiday based visitors)

 Areas managed to accommodate heavy use  
 Specific sites managed to accommodate heavy use  
 Areas with low recreational capacity



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## Dartmoor is part of a “family” of UK National Parks.

### National Parks

Our National Parks include some of the most remote and dramatic landscapes of England, Wales and Scotland. They contain a mixture of rich landscapes, including sweeping heather moorlands, dramatic coastlines and breathtaking upland areas.

Originally National Parks in England and Wales were designated under the *National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, 1949* and will soon be joined by the new designations of the New Forest and South Downs. In Scotland Loch Lomond and the Trossachs became part of the family in July 2002 and were recently joined by the Cairngorms in September 2003.

An important role for National Parks in the UK has been the provision of open space for recreation. The first National Parks were situated so that urban populations from nearby cities could get to them easily.



# Some Statistics

## Where do visitors come from?

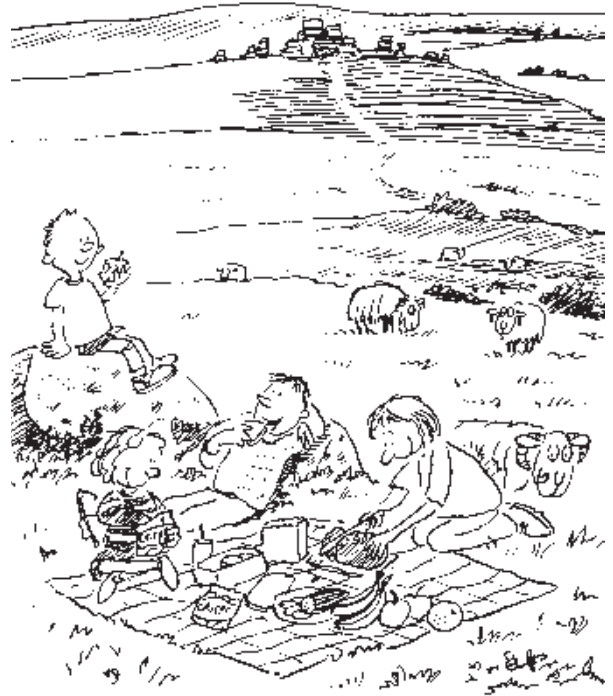
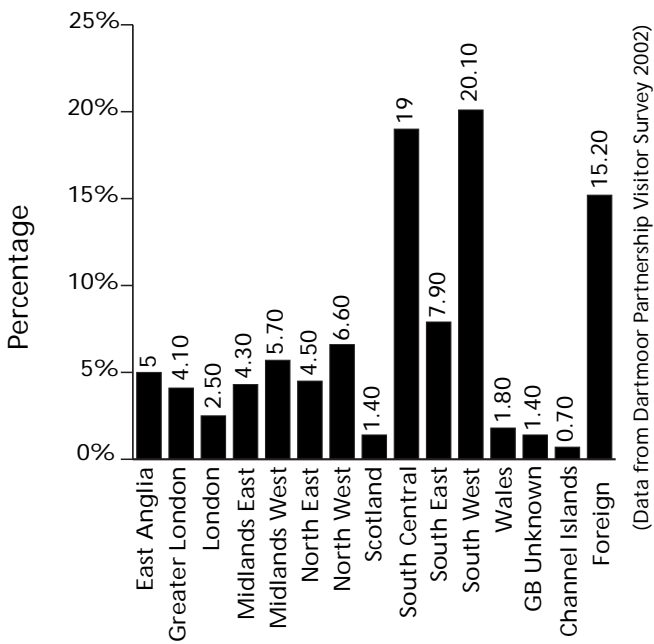


Illustration © Marcus Byron

## Where do overnight visitors stay?

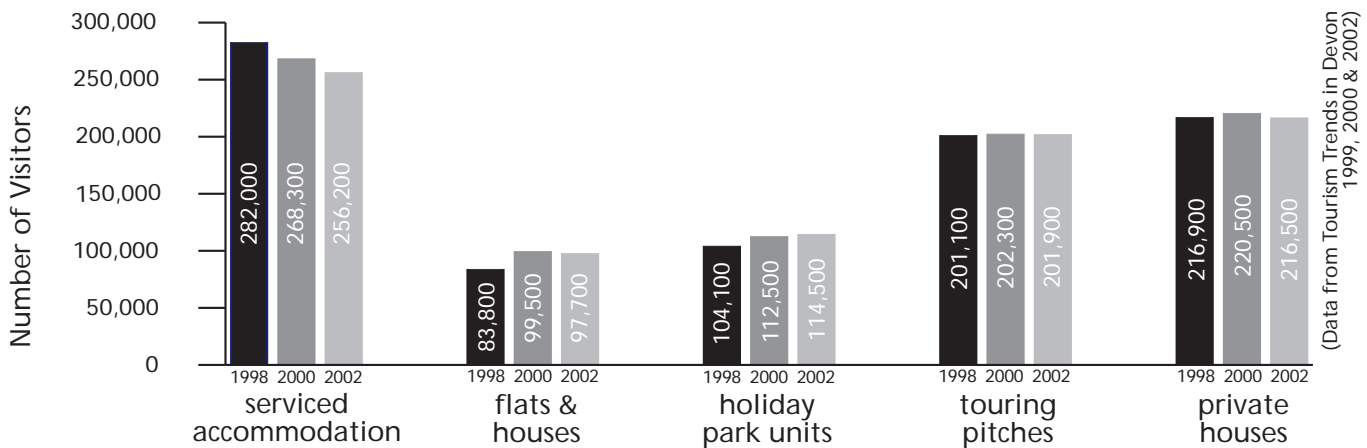
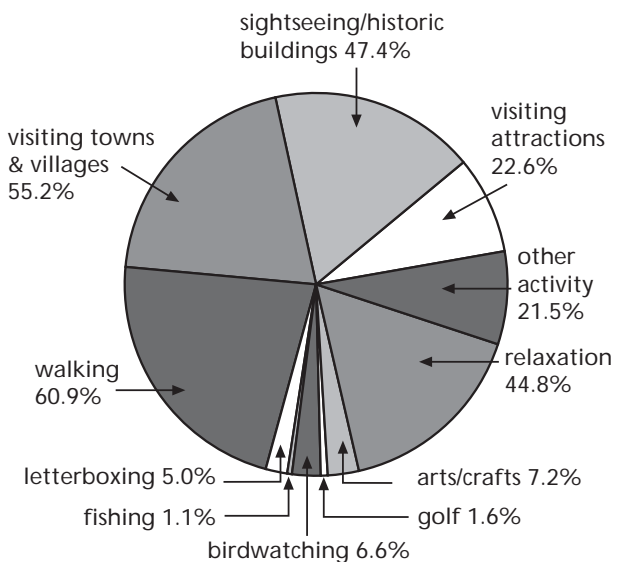


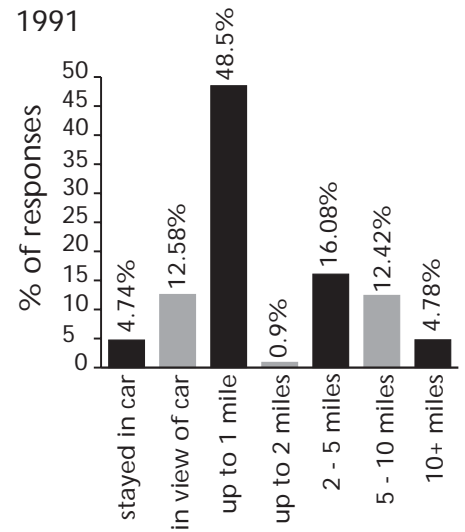
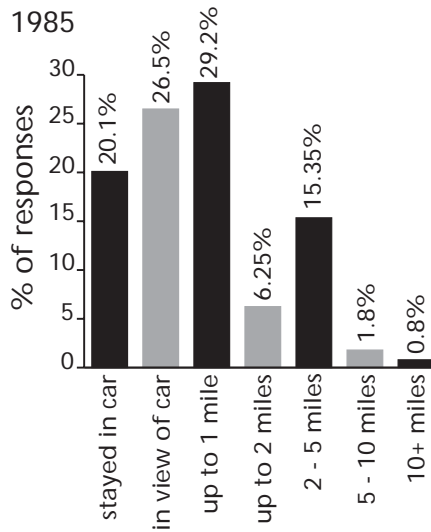
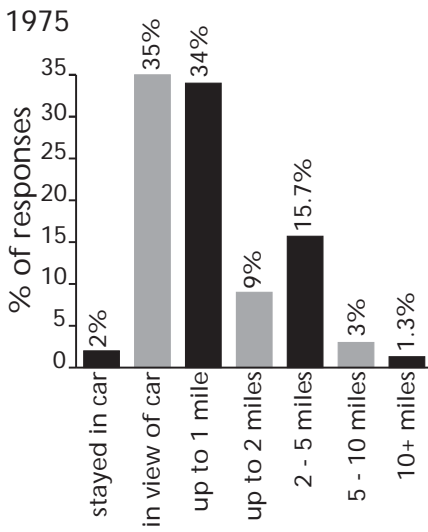
Illustration © Marcus Byron

## What do visitors do?

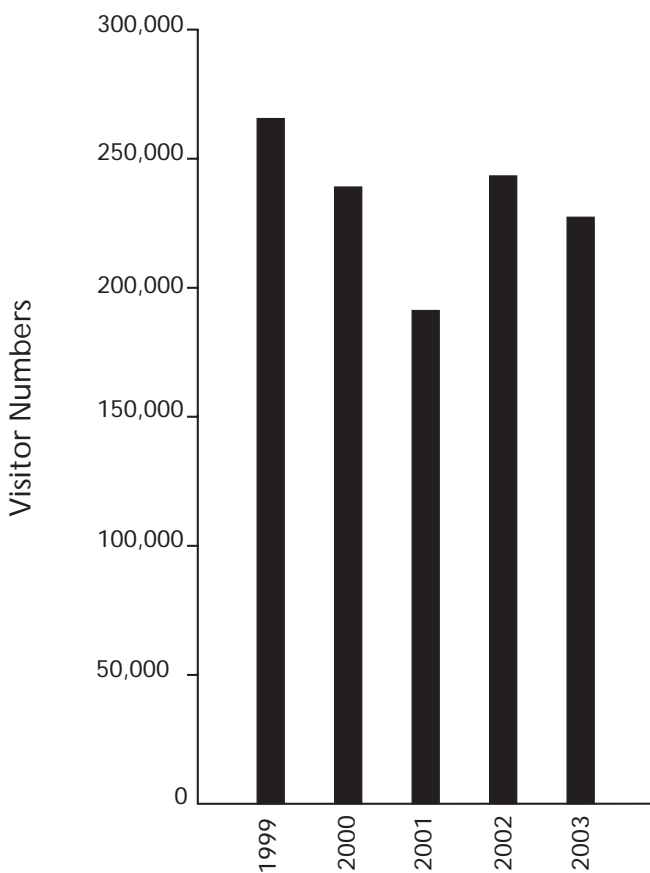


# Some Recent Trends

## Visitor Activity



**Total visitor numbers in DNPA Information Centres 1999 - 2003**



**Number of Visitors to Major Fee Paying Attractions 1996 - 2003**

	1996	1997	1998	2003
River Dart				
Country Park	41,300*	38,000*	37,000*	50,000
Buckfast Abbey	440,000*	378,537*	363,016*	390,000
Castle Drogo	108,100	106,893	102,170	115,123
Lydford Gorge	78,753	70,280	66,916	72,274

estimated\*



**Dartmoor National Park Authority's High Moorland Visitor Centre** at Princetown opened in 1993. Some 165 - 170,000 visits are made to the Centre each year. There is no entry charge.

**PLEASE NOTE**

Most of the previous figures shown in this Fact Sheet are based on Visitor Surveys carried out on peak days in the months of May, August and November. Several factors can affect the reliability of these figures including:

- most people do not reply to the survey
- some questions may have been misunderstood
- a day of rain may affect the numbers of visitors and consequently effect the validity of the results
- the number of vehicles counted/surveyed are only a proportion of the total number of visitors/volume of through traffic.

# National Park Visitor Survey 1994

The 1994 National Parks Visitor Survey was the first co-ordinated survey of visitors to each of the English and Welsh National Parks. The same survey methods were used in all the National Parks to obtain comparable estimates of the number and nature of recreational visits and the characteristics and attitudes of visitors across the National Parks. The Survey was commissioned by the Countryside Commission (now the Countryside Agency) and the Countryside Council for Wales, with the support of the National Park Authorities, the Broads Authority and the New Forest Committee and other organisations.

## Key findings for the Dartmoor National Park (DNPA)\*

- **Estimated total of visitor days: 3.8 million**  
89% entered with private motor vehicle from outside  
8% with public transport • 3% with residents
- **Average group size:**  
45% are groups of 2 people  
group composition: 70% are families
- **Type of visitor:**  
*(surveyed in July and August during the school summer holidays)*  
54% holiday based • 46% day trips home based
- **Origin of holiday visitors: 620 total sample (54%)**  
Southwest 15% • Southeast 39% • East Midlands 9%  
N Ireland 1% • West Midlands 7% • North West 3%  
East Anglia 4% • North 2% • Scotland 3% • Wales 2%
- **Day trip: 760 total sample (46%)**  
Plymouth 28% • Teignbridge 16% • Torbay 13%  
Exeter 10% • South Hams 8% • Mid Devon 3%  
East Devon 7% • West Devon 4% • Cornwall 6%  
Somerset 2% • Dorset 1%
- **Type of accommodation used:** Serviced 32%  
Self-catering 56% *(including 28% camping)*
- **Information used for visit:**  
55% of day trippers used information to plan trip  
77% of holiday makers used information to plan trip
- **Reasons for visiting:** *(most people gave more than one reason)*  
97% were aware of being in a National Park  
Scenery and landscape 65% • Peace and quiet 34%  
Enjoyed previous visit 34% • A specific attraction 19%  
Easy to get to 16% • Take part in an outdoor activity 19%  
Never been before 12% • Come every year 10%  
Because it is a National Park 14%

### Useful web links for further information:

- **Other factsheets:**
  - Recreation Activities  
<http://www.dartmoor-npa.gov.uk/dnp/factfile/homepage.html>
- **Other information:**  
<http://www.dartmoor-npa.gov.uk/moorcare>
- **Other tourism websites:**
  - Dartmoor Tourism Association  
<http://www.discoverdartmoor.com>
  - Devon County Council (Tourism)  
<http://www.discoverdevon.co.uk>
  - South West Tourism  
<http://www.visitsouthwest.co.uk>

- **Of the day trippers:**
  - 37% went for a short stroll
  - 15% for a long walk *(over 2hrs)*
  - 13% driving around sightseeing
  - 11% relaxing
  - 6% visiting a specific attraction
  - 6% pursuing a special interest
  - 5% taking part in an outdoor sport
- **Of the holiday makers:**
  - 11% stayed in one place most of the time
  - 41% drove around visiting places
  - 31% had a moderately active visit
  - 3% pursuing a special interest
- **Activities undertaken:**
  - 40% of all visitors visited an Information Centre
  - 21% of day trippers and 57% of holiday makers
- **Specialist pursuits:**
  - 6% went cycling or mountain biking • 14% angling
  - 3% pony trekking or riding • 10% bird watching
  - 2% running and 4% had been on a guided walk

Places Visited	Day Trip	Holiday
Princetown	33%	49%
Widcombe-in-the-Moor	19%	53%
Dartmeet	17%	33%
Becky Falls	7%	23%
River Dart		
Country Park	6%	20%
Bellever Forest	6%	12
Castle Drogo	5%	10%
Lydford Gorge	6%	9%
Canonteign Falls	4%	9%
Lustleigh	4%	9%
Fernworthy	6%	6%
Miniature Pony Centre	2%	3%
Okehampton Castle	2%	2%
Finch Foundry		
Museum	1%	1%
None of these	45%	11%

### \*PLEASE NOTE

The consultants have used the data to estimate the annual number of visitor days spent in each National Park. For Dartmoor the figure is calculated at 3.8 million. For comparison with any future surveys undertaken on the same basis this figure has a baseline value. However, this figure should not be relied upon as an accurate assessment of total visits. On Dartmoor, only 4 cordon points were used and these were located well inside the National Park boundary. Direct comparison with the long-running series of recreation visit figures produced locally is not possible. The local figures (producing a total of 11.2 million for 1994) were based upon a very much more comprehensive exercise with 29 cordon points, winter as well as summer surveys, and annual updating using Automatic Traffic Counter data. The base survey was, however, in 1971 and the split between recreation and non-recreation trip purposes may have changed significantly since then.

For further information, and a list of other Fact Sheets available, contact the:

**Education Service,  
Dartmoor National Park Authority,  
Parke, Bovey Tracey, Newton Abbot,  
Devon TQ13 9JQ  
Tel: (01626) 832093  
E-mail: [education@dartmoor-npa.gov.uk](mailto:education@dartmoor-npa.gov.uk)  
Website: [www.dartmoor-npa.gov.uk](http://www.dartmoor-npa.gov.uk)**

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