

# Tourism in the Nidderdale AONB

Tourism is an important economic activity in the AONB, accounting for approximately 20% of jobs and a £20.5 million annual turnover. People visit the AONB on day trips and for holidays to enjoy the landscape, to spend time in the towns and villages or to get involved in activities such as walking, cycling, riding or birdwatching. The Yorkshire Tourist Board (YTB) carried out a detailed tourism survey of Nidderdale AONB in 2000.

## How many people come to Nidderdale AONB?

The YTB study estimated the number of day and staying visitors in 1999 as:

**54,835** Staying in hotels, bed & breakfast etc.  
**12,037** Staying with friends and relatives  
**267,488** Day visits

## Visitor Origin

The majority (56%) of visitors to Nidderdale AONB are from Yorkshire; of these approximately 44% are from West Yorkshire and 37% from North Yorkshire. The second most popular places of origin were from the 'North' and 'South East' with 11% each.

## Visitor Profile

Of those questioned as part of the survey in 2000:

- 67% were day visitors with 33% holidaymakers staying in the AONB and 16% staying in accommodation outside of the AONB and making a day trip to it.
- 96% of visitors to the Nidderdale AONB travelled independently with the remaining 4% as part of an organised group of coach visit.
- 81% of the holidaymakers in the Nidderdale AONB were aged 45+ compared with 67% of day visitors.
- 36% of holidaymakers were aged 65+ and 60% of holidaymakers were aged 55+.

## Characteristics of visits

- The YTB survey showed that holiday makers in Nidderdale AONB stay for an average of 4.6 nights. 42% stayed in Pateley Bridge, 10% in Masham and the others staying in villages in the AONB area.
- 37% of holidaymakers stayed in serviced accommodation (hotels, bed and breakfasts etc) with 44% using a form of self-catering. Approximately 18% of holiday makers stayed in homes of friends and family.

- 68% were repeat visitors to the AONB. 30% said they visited Nidderdale AONB once a month with 8% for the Yorkshire Dales. Approximately 72% of day visitors to the AONB revisit within the year compared with 46% of holiday makers.

## What do visitors do in the AONB?

- The main reason for visiting the AONB for both day visitors (29%) and holidaymakers (22%) is 'to walk'. A further 20% of holidaymakers stay in the AONB to 'meet friends'.
- Fountains Abbey is the most popular attraction with both day visitors and holidaymakers - 70% and 59% respectively. Brimham Rocks had been visited by 51% of day visitors and 47% of holidaymakers on the current trip or previously.

## The impact of tourism

Tourism can have a very positive impact on an area providing jobs and bringing money to a local area. However, there can also be a number of problems created by tourism. The increased number of cars can congest narrow lanes, create parking problems and cause increased air pollution. Increased numbers of visitors to an area can cause litter problems, erode footpaths and cause tension between recreation users and landowners.

'Honey-pot' sites are places that attract a lot of visitors. In Nidderdale AONB there are a number of honey-pot sites including Fountains Abbey and Brimham Rocks. They are owned by the National Trust who work hard to make sure they strike a balance between attracting visitors and ensuring there is no damage to the sites.

## The role of the AONB

Nidderdale AONB works to promote 'sustainable tourism' in the area. Sustainable tourism aims to provide benefits for the environment, local community and businesses. The AONB plans to do this by:

- Increasing businesses and visitors understanding of why sustainable tourism is important.
- Encouraging tourism businesses to go 'greener' by recycling and energy efficiency for example.
- Increase tourism's contribution to the upkeep of the environment by organising a visitor pay back scheme.
- Increase the profile of Nidderdale AONB as a holiday destination.
- Raise standard of service so that visitors return and tell their friends.