

# Tourism in the Peak District National Park

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# Tourism in the Peak District National Park

In 1951 the Peak District National Park [PDNP Fact Sheet] became the first National Park in Britain. It covers 1,438 square kilometres (555 square miles) of beautiful countryside from dark gritstone crags and sweeping moors of the Dark Peak to the rolling limestone hills and steep, wooded, flower-rich dales of the White Peak. As well as its natural scenery the Peak District is famous for its cultural and industrial heritage – well dressings, stone circles, hill forts, medieval castles, mills, drystone walls and lead mines.

Supporting thousands of jobs and businesses, tourism is one of the main industries in the Peak District National Park.

The Peak District National Park is one of the most popular National Parks in the world. Millions of people visit every year to enjoy the scenery and tranquillity, the wide range of outdoor activities, and the many places of historical and cultural interest. The Peak District has something for everyone.

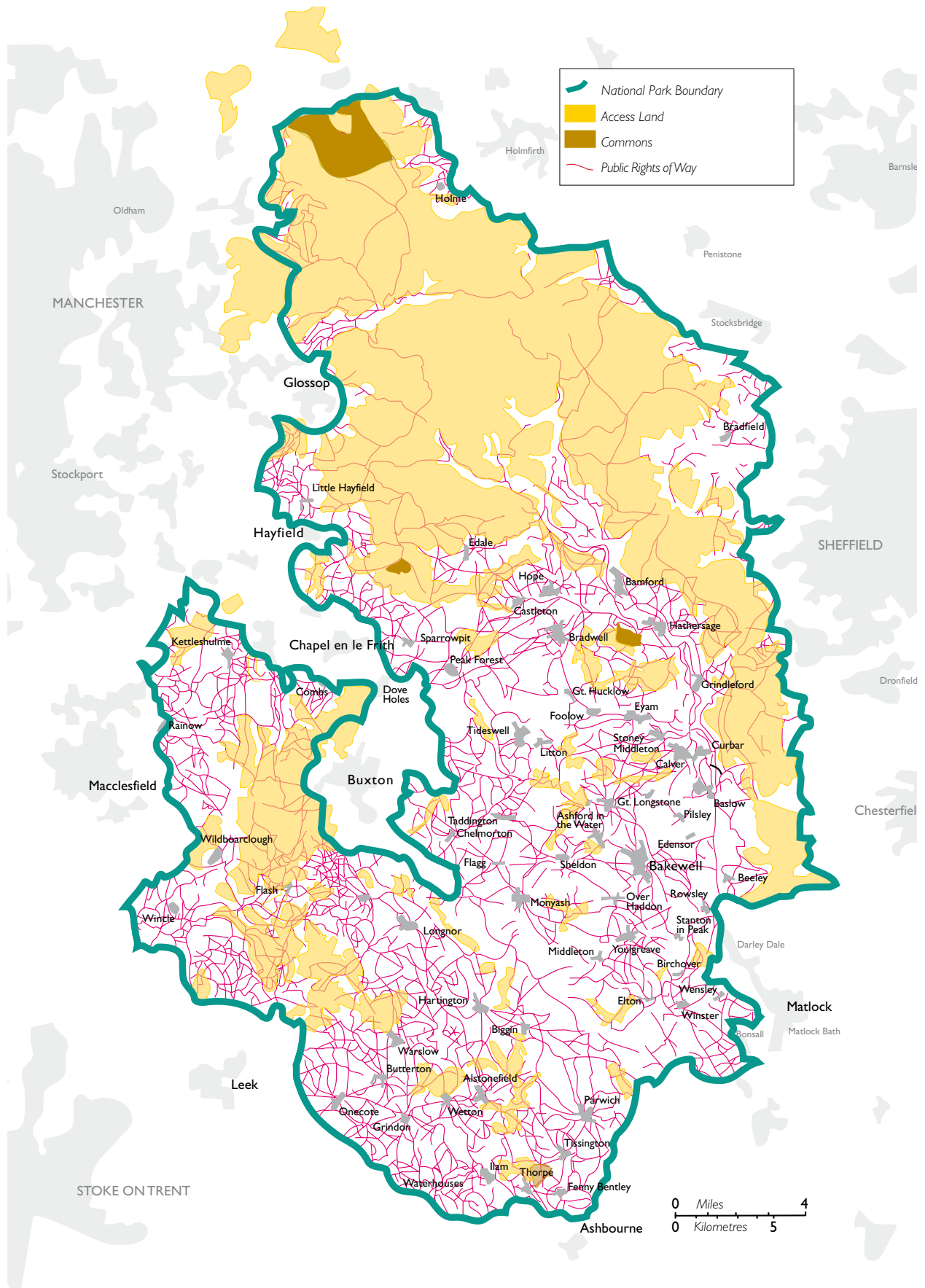
The Peak District is famous for its **outdoor recreation opportunities**. It has:

- 202 square miles (524 square kilometres) of access land;
- 58 miles (93 kilometres) of dedicated off-road cycling trails based on former railway lines; and
- 1,867 miles (3,005 kilometres) of public rights of way for walking, cycling and horse-riding.

The Peak District National Park Authority, which is responsible for the overall management of the National Park, works to improve the quality of visitor facilities and services, and to develop and promote local culture, products and events by the tourism sector. It has produced a **Recreation Strategy** and a **Sustainable Tourism Strategy** for the area.



# Access and rights of way



# Who Visits the Peak District National Park?

The Peak District National Park has 10.1 million visitors from England every year and is one of the UK's top rural tourism destinations. The majority of visitors (85%) travel to the Peak District by car.

Surrounded by the cities of Sheffield, Manchester, Leeds, Nottingham, Derby and Stoke-on-Trent the Peak District National Park is easily accessible to more than 16 million people who live within an hour's drive of the boundary.

Most visitors come from the cities surrounding the Peak District National Park, with people from Sheffield accounting for the highest proportion of visitors (25%), followed by Stockport (14%), Derby (9%) and Nottingham (6%).



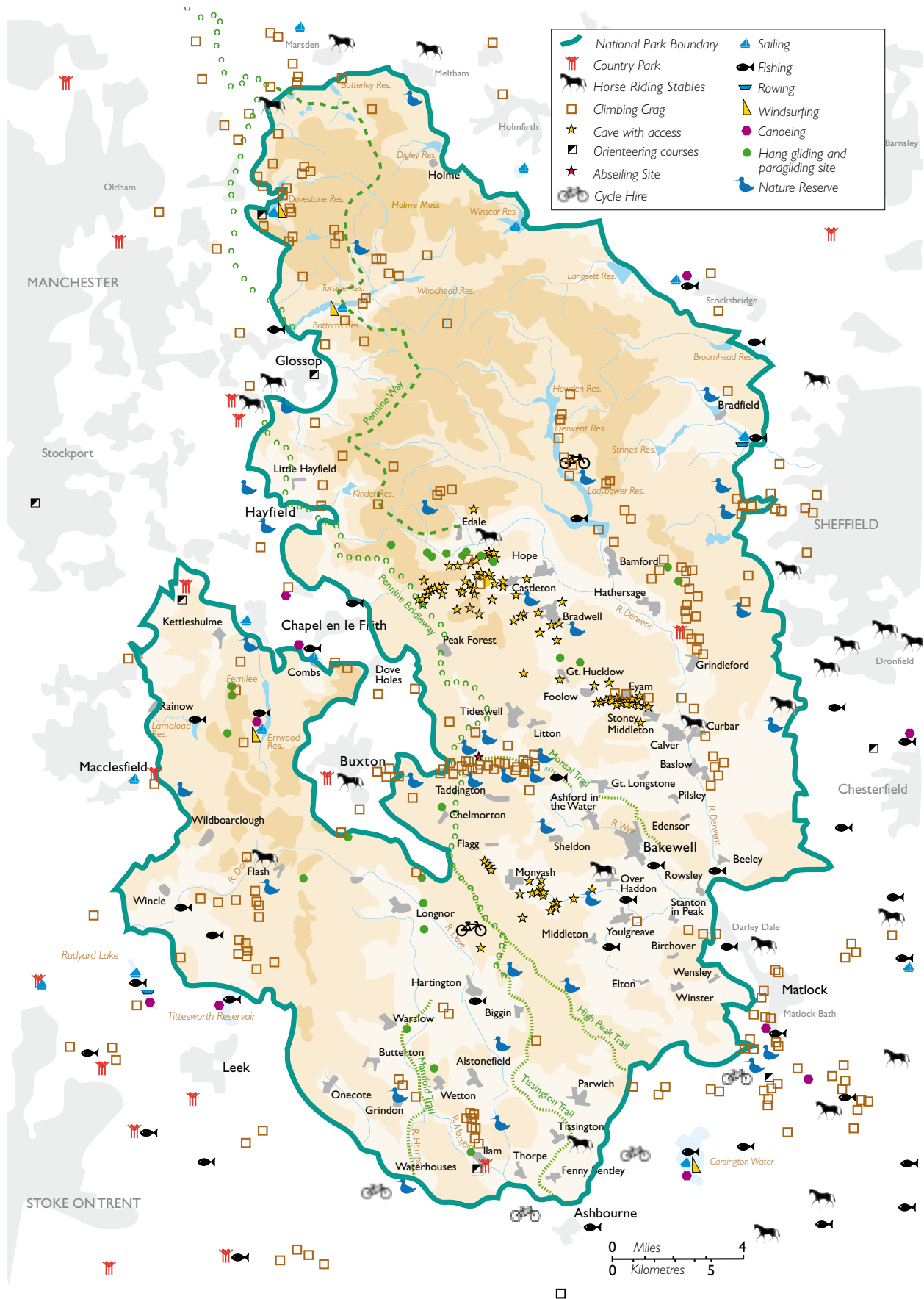
# Why do people visit?

The chance to enjoy outdoor activities surrounded by beautiful scenery in a peaceful and tranquil setting are the main reasons why people visit the Peak District National Park.

REASONS FOR VISITING THE PEAK DISTRICT	%*
SCENERY	85
TRANQUILLITY	55
ENJOYED PREVIOUS VISIT	54
QUIET AND PEACEFUL	47
EASY TO GET TO	39
REMOTENESS AND ISOLATION	17
BECAUSE IT'S A NATIONAL PARK	16
SOMEWHERE NEW TO VISIT	15
VISITING A FEATURE	5
CLIMBING	4
NATURE WATCHING	3
EXERCISING NEW ACCESS RIGHTS	3

\* Percentages do not add up to 100% as some people gave more than one reason for visiting.  
Source: Peak District National Park Visitor Survey 2005.

# Recreation provision



# When do people visit?

Most visitors (90%) have been before, with 43% of people visiting at least once a month and 67% at least four times a year. Although people visit throughout the year, there are generally fewer visitors in the winter. Weekends are the busiest time.

# Where do people stay?

A range of accommodation is provided for staying visitors – **camping and caravan sites**, camping barns and youth hostels, plus numerous holiday cottages, B&Bs in private houses, guest houses, pubs and hotels.

Camping and caravanning are the most popular options for people staying in the Peak District National Park (21%), followed by hotels (19%), friend

# What do people do?

The most popular areas in the Peak District National Park are historic houses, towns and villages, and well-known landmarks, including:

- Bakewell [Bakewell Fact Sheet], the largest settlement and only market town in the National Park, with interesting buildings and a thriving farmers' market
- **Chatsworth House**, historic home of the

- Duke of Devonshire;
- Dovedale [Dovedale Fact Sheet], a spectacular limestone dale;
  - Hartington, a quintessential Derbyshire village;
  - Castleton [Castleton Fact Sheet], with spectacular show caves and a ruined castle;
  - Upper Derwent Valley [Upper Derwent Fact Sheet], and the

- Ladybower, Derwent and Howden reservoirs;
- Stanage Edge and The Roaches, famous climbing crags.

The most popular activity is a walk of between two and ten miles, then strolling, sightseeing and visiting an attraction/place of interest/event.

Activity	%*
Walk of two to ten miles	53
Sightseeing	29
Stroll/walk of less than two miles	26
Visiting an attraction/place of interest/event	24
Picnicking	20
Dog walking	11
Cycling/mountain biking	6
Climbing	4

\* Percentages do not add up to 100% as some people gave more than one reason for visiting.  
Source: Peak District National Park Visitor Survey 2005.

# What are the benefits of tourism?

Some 38,000 people live in [Living In Fact Sheet] the Peak District National Park. Tourism provides a livelihood for many, with more than 2,000 jobs in hotels and catering, and thousands more in shops and other tourism-related service industries. Hotels and restaurants accounted for 19% of businesses in the National Park in 2007-08. Visitors contribute nearly £225 million directly to the local economy, and tourism generates some £125 million a year for local businesses.

Through shops, attractions and accommodation, visitors provide a livelihood for local people. Many village shops and pubs rely on tourism to survive. Extra income from visitors helps farmers carry on their more traditional farming [Farming Fact Sheet] role. Tourism is also essential for maintaining historic houses, such as Chatsworth.

The National Park Authority supports sustainable tourism schemes based on the special qualities of the Peak District National Park. Current schemes include:

- Environmental Quality Mark – a pioneering certification scheme for businesses that actively support good environmental practices in the Peak District National Park. The EQM won an international responsible tourism award in 2008;
- Peak District Foods – a group of food producers and food businesses based in and around the Peak District;
- Sustainable Development Fund – financial support for projects that bring environmental, social, cultural and economic benefits to the National Park;
- Live & Work Rural – a partnership programme for 2009-2012 to help people develop ideas to benefit the Peak District environment. In 2006, 261 business (19% of tourism providers) participated in a recognised scheme

Tourism can encourage the preservation of historic buildings and sites. Former industrial sites, such as Richard Arkwright's water-powered cotton mill at Cromford, have been restored as heritage visitor attractions. Old farm buildings find new uses as holiday homes, camping barns, etc. Tourism also provides a welcome boost for local crafts and for traditions such as well dressing.

# What problems does tourism bring?

Although tourism does make a significant contribution to the quality of life of local communities, the industry tends to offer part-time, low paid and seasonal work, and local people have little say in how tourism develops in their area.

85% of visits to the Peak District are made by car. Traffic congestion [Traffic Fact Sheet] results in noise, nuisance and pollution, as well as detracting from visitors' enjoyment and causing frustration to local residents. Some of the most popular areas attract large numbers of visitors resulting in pressures on local facilities and services. Local residents may feel 'pushed out' by tourists.

Other problems caused by careless or too many visitors include:

- footpath erosion;
- disturbance to wildlife, particularly ground-nesting birds;
- damage to wildlife habitats;
- litter;
- damage to farmland;
- threats to livestock from dogs and gates being left open;
- damage to green lanes and bridleways by off-road vehicles; and
- moorland fires, resulting in long-term damage.

Conflict can arise between different groups of visitors. For example the noise and physical damage caused by off-road vehicles conflict with other people's enjoyment of the National Park.

# What is the National Park Authority's Policy on Tourism?

The two purposes of the National Park Authority are:

- to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage; and
- to promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of their special qualities.

Where these conflict, the Authority must give priority to conservation [Conservation Fact Sheet]. The Authority must also 'foster the economic and social well-being of the local communities.'

Although most of the land is in private ownership, the National Park Authority is responsible for drawing up policies for planning and managing the National Park. It has developed policies on recreation and sustainable tourism.

The **Peak District Sustainable Tourism Strategy** recognises the need to build an economy which depends on and contributes to the conservation of the special qualities of the Peak District, improves the quality of life for the local community and promotes opportunities for public enjoyment and understanding. The aims of the strategy are to:

- maximise the benefits of tourism to local communities;
- reduce visitors' dependence on cars;
- encourage visitors to stay longer;
- enhance visitors' enjoyment and understanding of the area's special qualities;
- encourage the best use of resources; and
- promote the Peak District to a more diverse range of visitors, particularly ethnic minorities, young people, people with a disability and those from a disadvantaged background.

The strategy is being implemented in partnership with the tourism industry, local authorities and other agencies to provide a 'high quality visitor experience'.

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Not all activities are suitable for all parts of the National Park. For example off-road vehicles can damage footpaths and bridleways, and cause noise and nuisance. Where there is a conflict the National Park Authority aims to **resolve** it through good management, discussion and dialogue, with conservation the priority.

The Authority encourages recreation activities that are appropriate and do not conflict with the main aim of conserving the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage. The Authority tries to meet the needs of different groups of visitors by providing targeted facilities.

The National Park Authority provides a range of direct services to visitors, including car parks, toilets and cycle hire. There are Peak District National Park **visitor information centres** at Bakewell, Castleton, Edale and Upper Derwent.

Access Peak is a series of videos showing how wheelchair users and others with mobility problems can enjoy the Peak District. The videos can be **watched online** or DVDs can be purchased from visitor centres.

**Losehill Hall**, the Peak District National Park Learning and Environmental Conference Centre based at Castleton, offers a wide range of environmental learning opportunities for people of all ages, including school visits, teacher training, and training and development for environmental professionals. It also offers conference, training and seminar facilities.

The **Peak District National Park Ranger Service** provides information and advice to visitors and local residents and monitor the impact of

recreation on the Biodiversity and landscape within the National Park. They work with partners and local communities to seek solutions to recreational issues and where appropriate carry out practical countryside works to improve access.

The Peak District National Park Interpretation Team works with partners and local communities on projects that help people understand the environment and the rich cultural heritage of the Park. Interpretation panels, leaflets and trails provide visitors with information.

## Further information

- Peak District National Park Visitor Enquiry Line: 01629 816558
- Peak District National Park Rangers: 01629 816290, [rangers@peakdistrict.gov.uk](mailto:rangers@peakdistrict.gov.uk)
- **Peak Experience**
- **Peak District and Derbyshire Tourist Board**
- **Friends of the Peak District**
- **Peak Connections**
- **National Trust**