



**HARROGATE
INTERNATIONAL
CENTRE**

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**2003 HARROGATE DISTRICT TOURISM FIGURES
SHOW BIG INCREASE**

Latest facts and figures released today make welcome news for everyone involved in the tourism industry here in the Harrogate District, North Yorkshire. The externally validated Tourism Economic Activity Monitor Report for 2003 provides positive evidence that holiday and business visitor numbers, resultant visitor days and direct economic benefit have all increased substantially.

During 2003 the District attracted 3.5m visitors, producing 6.2m visitor days (10% increase on 3.2m and 5.5m in 2002). Of the 3.5m some 2.4m were day visitors (12% increase on 2.1m in 2002). Further increases in staying visitors are reflected in a 15% increase in serviced accommodation and 18% in non-serviced, which includes caravans and campsites.

The overall direct spend by all visitors is estimated as £234.1m (an increase of 17% on the £199.7m in 2002). Of this £74.1m is determined as attributable to holiday tourism and £160m to business tourism compared to £55.6m and £144.1m the previous year.

Harrogate International Centre who undertake the marketing of the District to business visitors to conferences and exhibitions along with marketing holiday tourism on behalf of Harrogate Borough Council are delighted with the results.

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Paul Lewis, Director of HIC says, “This good news confirms that as a destination we have dramatically increased our visitor numbers. Substantial growth in holiday tourism figures indicate recovery from the 2001 foot and mouth crisis enhanced by investment, good weather and pro-active promotion. Business tourism direct revenue increases endorse our position as third in the league table of principle UK conference and exhibition venues resulting from further infrastructure investment and an effective marketing strategy. The all year round nature of our visitor industry continues to pay huge dividends, supports some 7,000 jobs and with the ongoing improvements and developments in attractions, hotels and by the HIC in the additional meeting rooms presently under construction the future looks good for the Harrogate District.”

Ends/318 words

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