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# **NORTH-SOUTH DIVIDE: THE ROLE OF THE BORDER IN TOURISM TO NORTHERN IRELAND**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Using the case study of the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, this paper addresses a number of key issues related to borders and tourism: attractivity and co-operation. Visitor data from 1994 to 1997, reveals that the border itself does not function as a tourist attraction, but rather there is sufficient attraction within what is identified in the paper as a border zone. Attention is given to examining heritage attractions (those receiving over 5000 per year, and those that are free) as the position taken in the paper is that heritage tourism best encapsulates the experience available to the visitor. Results show there to be no difference between attendance at attractions within the border zone and those outside it. The border is not key to influencing movement, but rather represents a barrier where tourism flows have been strongly influenced by the history of conflict that has characterized Northern Ireland over the last 30 years. Discussion is also presented on co-operation, particularly how the signing of the Good Friday peace Agreement (April 10, 1998) may create opportunities to develop formalized links with the Republic of Ireland, those specifically directed at tourism, helping to foster greater cross-border movement of visitors.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Borders have received limited attention in the tourism literature (30, 31). This is somewhat surprising as they represent arbitrary lines that separate different places, peoples, and spaces—all elements that have the potential to be of interest to tourists, especially if these differences help shape their overall trip experience. In light of this, this paper addresses a number of key issues related to borders and tourism, using the case study of the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Attention is given to the role that borders play both as a deterrent (barrier) and stimulus to tourism movement, as well as their potential to be considered part of a region's attraction base.

Two broad concepts related to borders underpin this paper. The first is attractivity in terms of the degree of similarity or dissimilarity of cultures that are present on both sides. This concept can also be considered from the perspective of what type of attractions exist at borders to appeal to tourists. The second concept is that of co-operation, both in a general political sense between both countries, as well co-operation required to promote cross-border tourism planning. With respect to the first concept, a paucity of research exists. One work is that by Timothy (30) who provides a typology of border

types for tourism crossings based on the degree of difficulty tourists are presented with crossing borders, and the degree of similarity in the culture and society present on both sides. Four types emerge, those that present high degree of difficulty to cross and where the cultures are dissimilar or similar; and those which are easily crossed but where cultures are either similar or different. While this simple classification is useful, if exogenous factors are considered, it is possible to suggest that the nature of the border type can change through time. Also, it is possible to argue that sections of borders can have elements of both cultural groups. It is these latter elements that emerge when the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland is considered.

It may be inferred that exogenous factors such as ongoing terrorist activity, along with borderlands being perceived to be dangerous given their high security presence, could influence border crossings, making it psychologically difficult to cross even though the act of crossing was relatively easy. The fact that 'the other side' was viewed as different and foreign could add to this unwillingness to cross. For sections of a border where the culture is relatively similar (sections inside the Northern Ireland border which had strong nationalist tones), the reality of terrorist activity, for example, could be argued to remain a strong enough deterrent to limit the extent of movement across the border.

A number of researchers have addressed actual attractions present at borders, where they involve the experiences of crossing the border itself (28), or viewing specific landmarks or monuments which demarcate boundaries (30). When the attraction of the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland is considered, it is hard to argue that this represents a border which functions as a tourist attraction. In fact the most popular attractions are located away

from the border, supporting what Matznetter (16) views as a scenario in which the political boundary runs between two touristic areas in both countries, but at a significant distance from each. If, however, the border region is viewed as having a tourism appeal, then it is possible to infer that a different scenario may emerge, one that Matznetter (16) describes as touristic areas touching the border itself.

Co-operation has received most attention within the general tourism planning literature, being viewed as an actual type of tourism planning (13, 32). When the context involves borders, the concept is important in forging linkages to encourage cross-border tourism planning. Recently a number of researchers have noted the increase in tourism planning across political boundaries which capitalizes on developing and promoting common resources (14, 26, 32). One element of this cross-border tourism planning has been the development of attractions within the neighboring jurisdiction (31), particularly activities like cross-border shopping. At a more general level, co-operation can be viewed as the establishment of mechanisms that can promote better relations between different polities from which tourism can benefit.

In light of these concepts, a number of key points are examined in the paper. First, in addressing the issue of attractivity, an argument is made that the Northern Ireland-Republic of Ireland border itself is not key in influencing movement. Instead it represented a barrier with tourism flows being strongly influenced by the history of conflict that until recently had characterized the North of Ireland for the past thirty years. The absence of exogenous factors, particularly terrorism activity, consequently resulted in a significant tourist flow into the North from the South. This is examined by looking specifically at the 1994 to 1997 period as it

represented the start of the cessation of violence and the development of political initiatives to promote peace within Northern Ireland. Both the extent of movement occurring and flow from specific market regions is examined. The fluctuation of the Irish Republic market is particularly singled out as it represents the obvious market to engage in crossing the border. Movement of this market sector is examined in general and through a case study of a popular tourist attraction in the North. The second element of attractiveness is directed at the border region itself. Here the border is not being presented as a tourist attraction, rather the argument to be made is that the border region has tourism appeal, albeit somewhat limited. Focus is also directed at a specific type of tourism—heritage tourism—as it is argued that this best represents the majority of tourism attractions present in the North. Third, and lastly, discussion is presented on cooperation in terms of how the signing of the Good Friday Peace Agreement (April 10, 1998) has created opportunities to develop formalized links specifically directed at tourism, which may foster greater cross-border movement of visitors.

Within the context of tourism, Northern Ireland has evoked a limited, if negative body of research which has focused more on the factors of decline (5), the consequences of terrorist activity (34), and the image left for Northern Ireland given the history of terrorism the region has endured (35), than on the wealth and diversity of tourism opportunities present (4, 18). A positive perspective of tourism opportunity is presented in this paper with particular focus directed at the border region between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. In order to address attractiveness, and hence the first of the key points noted above, the following section provides the necessary background on the extent of tourist activity to the province.

## TOURISM IN NORTHERN IRELAND

A conceptual model of the nature of tourist flow for regions that once enjoyed peace, then endured long periods of terrorist activity before conditions changed to promote a return to peace again is shown in Figure 1. While a multiplicity of endogenous and exogenous factors influence tourist flows for regions facing terrorism, the model plots only key developments, namely the time when conflict starts and when negotiations begin to resolve it, and depicts how the nature of tourist numbers are influenced by these events.

This generalized pattern of tourist flow can be applied to suit the Northern Ireland situation as illustrated in Figure 2. Total trips taken are plotted over a time period starting in 1959 (pre-trouble years) continue up to the present, and include the period of early negotiations (late 1980s) and recent terrorist cease-fires (1994 and 1997). The graph shows that the years prior to the start of terrorism (1959-1967) were characterized by substantial growth, rising from 615,000 (1959) to 1.1 million tourist trips (1967). With the start of terrorist activity in 1969, visitor numbers declined dramatically with 1972 recording the lowest figure of 435,000 tourist trip, a 53% change takes place in only five years. Despite improved tourism growth throughout the latter years of the 1970s, by 1981 the number of tourist trips had only risen to 520,000. With steady and continuous growth in tourist trips being recorded on an annual basis, it was not until 1991 that overall trips had recovered to a level enjoyed before the years of terrorism. As such, the period 1969-1993 is often referred to as the 24 lost years, lost in the sense that the rest of Northern Europe enjoyed a 100% growth in visitor numbers during the same period (1). The years prior to the 1994-97 period saw steady growth, often in the region of 3 to 6%

per annum, but these were modest rises compared to the 20% growth in tourist trips that were recorded for 1995. Influenced by a cease-fire in August 1994, total tourist trips rose to more than 1.55 million. Since that time numbers have declined (1.43 and 1.41 million trips in 1996 and 1997, respectively), in part a response to the breakdown of the terrorist cease-fire (February 1996), actions of loyalist groups linked to the marching season by the Orange Order (July 1996), and also because a new cease-fire was not in place until Spring 1997. Despite recent declines, total trips remain above those recorded prior to the first cease-fire of 1994. With the Good Friday agreement being reached (April 10, 1998) and endorsed (May 22, 1998), and with paramilitary cease-fires remaining in place, growth in the future can be anticipated.

For the purposes of this paper, specific attention is directed to recent years, in particular the 1994-1997 period as these years cover events which are helping to shape a new political climate within Northern Ireland, events that are expected to benefit tourism. These years also represent a time frame from which data on individual attractions are readily available.

Located on the periphery of Northern Europe, Northern Ireland is not an obvious holiday destination. Instead, visiting friends and relatives (VFR) is the dominant form of tourism, followed by business, with pure holiday choice being ranked third (Table 1). The only change in this order occurred in 1995 (the year following the first cease-fire) in which the proportion choosing to visit for holidays was greater than those travelling for business. The VFR market remained the primary purpose for visiting but with a reduced percentage share of total visits.

With respect to key markets, while the province of Northern Ireland relies on Great

Britain for the majority of its visitors, the second largest market is the Republic of Ireland. Table 2 shows how this market and its market share has changed in recent years. While 1995 recorded significant growth in all key markets, the following year saw, in terms of numbers of trips recorded, a decline in only the Irish Republic market. This pattern of decline was repeated in 1997, with overseas market figures almost returning to what they were in 1995. Given that the focus of this paper is on borders, while the decline in the Irish Republic market is of some concern, it is important to consider if a portion of the overseas market is the result of trips starting in the South, but now including the North given the cessation of terrorist activity. Unfortunately, border crossings are no longer recorded, owing to the opening of EU borders, but it is not uncommon now for international travelers to include the North as part of their overall trip.

Values in Table 2 are aggregated statistics because this information is not often readily available at the micro level of individual attractions. This is unfortunate as it is at this level that the change and fluctuation of markets are most relevant. The author was fortunate to acquire nationality data for visitors over the 1995 to mid-1997 time period for a specific attraction, the Old Bushmills Distillery, viewed as a popular attraction for the Irish Republic market. These micro-level data provide a unique opportunity to see if the general trends shown in Table 2 translate down to individual attractions. While the writer is cognizant that this information relates only to one attraction, it can nevertheless be used to make inferences on the extent of movement across the border. As such, it adds weight to the first objective of this study, which is to assess the impact of the border on cross-border movement.

## **CASE STUDY: OLD BUSHMILLS DISTILLERY**

Famous for being the world's oldest licensed distillery (operating since 1608, but with few records prior to 1704), it is regarded as one of the premier industrial heritage tourism attractions in Northern Ireland and a key stop on the Irish Whiskey Trail (17). Located in the village of Bushmills, in close proximity to the Giant's Causeway in the North, visitors take guided tours of the distillery, learn about the various stages of whiskey production, as well as sample the product. Opening as a free tourist attraction in 1975, and aided by a grant from the Northern Ireland Tourist Board for car parking, landscaping, bar and coffee shop and provision of an audio visual theatre, visitor numbers have risen from 5000 to approximately 100,000 over a twenty year period (17). It has only been since 1993 that visitors have been asked to pay for admission.

This attraction is appropriate to address the movement of tourists over the border. In addition to it being marketed as part of a wider Irish attraction, managerial links exist with breweries in the Irish Republic and hence clear association with the South. While situated in close proximity to the north coast and away from the border, recent visitor statistics show a variable picture of the importance the Republic of Ireland market has played (Table 3). Accounting for 17 % of all visitors in 1995, visitor numbers have continued to decline, down to 11% the following year to almost near collapse (5.4%) by July of 1997. Even if the 10,440 unsigned tickets are not included in the overall total for 1997, the Irish Republic still only accounted for 6.8% of all visitors, still significantly down from the previous year.

The decline in all market regions in 1996, and not just the Irish Republic, is explained by the breakdown of an IRA cease-fire in

April of that year. Other factors, such as the violence linked to certain Protestant movements (Orange Order) and events (July 12th parades) may have influenced visitors from the Irish Republic to stay away in 1997. Visitor statistics for the month of July show the following decline from this market region and lends weight to the above assumption: 3,206 visitors (1995); 1,109 (1996); 966 (mid 1997). While this factor may account for the poor performance of the local markets, it clearly has not affected the overseas market which has rebounded from having low visitor numbers the year before. Given the location of this particular attraction, it is not the fact of having to cross the border that is accounting for low numbers, but rather other exogenous factors. The border region may no longer be viewed as a dangerous and hostile region, but the perception of the province has changed little, in that violence may simply have shifted from one population group to another.

The next section of the paper turns to examine a specific form of tourism, namely heritage tourism, providing a general discussion first and then assessing the extent to which heritage best represents the tourist experience that the province can offer visitors.

## **ATTRACTION OF HERITAGE**

As of late, heritage tourism is enjoying unprecedented interest (25). While the 1980s and early 1990s saw a focus on ecotourism and promotion of sustainable tourism, the latter 1990s are witnessing an interest in promoting the past (in its many guises) as a tourist "product" and understanding and re-living the past as a key tourist "experience" (24, 25). The term heritage may be viewed in different ways. It takes on the identity of an interest in the past, an interest in cultures, buildings, artifacts, and landscapes of the

past (12). However, it is often more than simply tourism based on the past as it is an interest that is more often than not determined by the sets of values and criteria imposed on it—values which differ over time, space and across society (2). In the context of this paper, heritage tourism is viewed as a holistic term, incorporating attractions that have a natural, cultural, historic, industrial and educational (museums, visitor centers) focus.

Northern Ireland is well endowed with heritage. Commonly associated with a higher spending visitor, predominantly mature and highly educated (24), the heritage tourism market is being targeted as one key sector to increase overall numbers of holiday visitors. According to the recently released corporate plan for the 1998-2001 period by the Northern Ireland Tourist Board, this number is expected to rise by 88%, up from 263,000 to 495,000 (21). By viewing heritage in a broad and holistic way, it can be argued that the vast majority of attractions within the province can be considered heritage, exceptions being resort tourism along sections of the north and southeast coast, and water-based tourism which is centred on the loughs (lakes).

Figure 3 shows the location of key attractions between 1994 and 1997. In light of the foregoing comments, a number of conclusions can be taken from the figure. First, the border and its hinterland do not feature prominently, although five attractions are found within close proximity to the border. These are Belleek Pottery (3 on Figure 3), Buttermarket, Enniskillen (4 on Figure 3), Navan Centre (13 on Figure 3), Armagh Planetarium (1 on Figure 3), and Newry Arts Centre (14 on Figure 3). Principal attractions are found along the north coast, or in and around the capital city of Belfast. With respect to selling a heritage experience, of the 25 top attractions named, it could be ar-

gued that only five do not focus on offering a heritage dimension (Belfast Zoo (2 on Figure 3), Fantasy Island (8 on Figure 3), Pickie Family Fun Park (17 on Figure 3), Portstewart Strand (18 on Figure 3), and Waterworld (25 on Figure 3)). In short, there is strong justification for focusing on heritage tourism, which encompasses a variety of forms, where individual attractions can be labeled under specific subtypes (3). These include:

1. *historical* (elements within the built landscape; e.g., houses, castles, cathedrals)
2. *cultural* (links to past societies, lifestyles, customs; e.g., early settlement, early British presence)
3. *natural* (elements of the natural landscape; e.g., causeways, country and forest parks, caves)
4. *industrial* (links to products indicative of the region's past; e.g., linen, pottery, crystal, whisky)
5. *educational* (links to attractions where the ultimate purpose is the dissemination of information for the purposes of learning; e.g., museums, visitor centres, libraries, planetariums).

Using this typology, the next section turns to examine the opportunity for heritage tourism within the border region for those attractions which received over 5000 visitors per year between 1994 and 1997 and those that were free to the public. This assessment is made against findings for heritage tourism in the province as a whole.

## TOURISM IN THE BORDER REGION

Attention has been given elsewhere to border-related attractions such as cross-border shopping, bordertown gambling, welcome

centres, and exclaves (30). Focus here is not with specific border attractions that centre on the phenomenon of the border itself, but rather discussion is directed toward an examination of those attractions that are situated within what has been termed a 'border zone'. Problems, however, arise in delimiting such a region. Hansen (11) views borderlands as those areas in the immediate vicinity of international boundaries whose economic and social life is directly and significantly influenced by proximity to a border. In light of this line of thinking, for the purposes of this paper, an arbitrary distance of 20 kilometers is used to allow for the inclusion of key towns (Enniskillen, Newry) and cities (Londonderry, Armagh). The rationale for establishing such a zone is to examine the tourism potential that exists near the border for short day trips from neighboring Irish counties.

Before examining attractions located within this zone, an important point first needs to be made regarding crossing points. Figure 3 shows the location of what can be termed primary, secondary and tertiary border crossings based on the class of road they are on or to which they are linked. While the majority are tertiary links (28 in total), tourists would be expected to use both secondary and primary points. Many of the tertiary links result from the presence of a number of pene-exclaves existing between the North and South (30, 33). In light of all these possible crossing points, it would be wrong to perceive the border as being closed during the years of violence. No actual border crossings were closed, therefore allowing movement to occur over the border itself. In addition to the many road crossings, the border cuts through forested areas, large open stretches of countryside, and dissects several waterways, again allowing for ease of movement to take place. Because of the fact that most Northern Irelanders saw much of the border area as a region sympathetic to

Republican paramilitary groups, crossings, if they occurred, predominantly took place at key points where a strong security presence was evident. In the current climate of relative peace, what is changing is the removal of this security presence at key points, such as Newry in the southeast. While it is hard to believe that people's perception of the border areas will change, the absence of the fear of being caught in a bomb location near the border may witness greater movement between the South and the North. Activities such as cross-border shopping may, therefore, take on greater importance. While not located within the border zone itself, the growth of large shopping malls south of Belfast, situated along the main road to Dublin, has in recent years witnessed greater volumes of Southern Irish shoppers (9). It is feasible, therefore, to assume that this trend may become more evident in the towns and cities located in close proximity to the border itself.

Of the 53 attractions identified that receive over 5,000 visitors per year (Figure 4), 17 of these can be found on or near the border. All five categories of heritage attraction are present, with the emergence of attraction clusters in both South Fermanagh (south of Enniskillen) and Armagh, including its surrounding environs. Examination of these attractions on an individual basis, particularly in terms of how visitors numbers changed between 1994 and 1997 (Table 4), reveals that only a few places are well visited. All but the historical heritage category of attraction are covered. Belleek Pottery factory (world renowned and on par with Wedgwood and Royal Doulton), a well visited attraction, offers visitors a guided tour showing all stages of production, with the opportunity to talk to workers themselves on the various production lines, and watch how individual items are crafted, hand painted, and finished. In terms of being attractive to a Southern Irish market, two cultural attrac-



tions stand out: Navan Centre and St. Patrick's Trian. Both of these are in the vicinity of Armagh and recount the early history of Ireland, particularly the development of the first fort for the first kings as well as the story of St. Patrick and his links to Ireland.

A clear pattern emerges in the table showing that all attractions with the exception of two experienced growth in numbers between 1994 and 1995, but which quickly declined the following year. Only a few attractions in the historical and natural categories continued to attract more visitors, with one industrial heritage attraction (Tyrone Crystal) maintaining, for the most part, the large gains it achieved from previous years. A variable picture emerges in the 1997 data with no clear pattern being established in any of the categories. When visitor numbers to attractions in 1996 and 1997 are compared against 1994 figures, the overall picture is actually positive as very few attractions fell below their 1994 count. While the gains of 1995 have not been maintained, growth remains above a level experienced in the last year when terrorism was present.

When these border attractions are compared to attractions throughout the province, the same pattern becomes evident, with growth in 1995, decline in all categories in 1996, and with variability but perhaps more growth as opposed to decline in 1997 (3, 19, 22). What this demonstrates perhaps is that attractions in the border areas performed no differently than those situated in other more tourist-related regions. While the actual numbers may be different, the trends remain the same. As such, it is possible to argue that the border is not a deterrent to tourists, but that other factors play a key role in the decision to visit.

When free attractions are considered, the following pattern develops. Of the 50 attractions listed, only 15 are found within the

20 kilometre border zone. An attraction cluster exists around the city of Londonderry in the northwest, with a smaller cluster centred on Armagh to the southeast, leaving large sections of the border region absent of any attraction (Figure 5). The dominant attraction type within the zone is those labelled as 'educational', accounting for seven of the 23 listed for the province as a whole. The remaining attractions comprise three country parks, three 'historical' and two 'industrial'. In light of actual visitor numbers (Table 5), only four of the 15 appear to be very popular, namely the Castle Archdale Country Park, on the northern edge of Lower Lough Erne; Kilbroney Park, south east of Newry and situated near the eastern coast; the Buttermarket in the centre of Enniskillen; and Newry Arts Centre.

While Table 5 shows a less complete recording of visitor numbers at each attraction, it is still feasible to suggest that a similar pattern, as was shown in Table 4 for attractions receiving over 5,000 visitors, was also present over the 1994-97 period. Where figures exist, all attractions, with the exception of two, received greater numbers in 1995, only to be followed with more declines the following year. While the values for 1997 are more mixed, the general trend is one of growth again. If visitor numbers to attractions in 1996 and 1997 are compared against 1994 figures, again a similar picture emerges with few attractions receiving fewer people than they did in 1994. Once again this shows that growth still remains above that recorded prior to the cessation of violence. However, caution must be exercised in interpreting visitor numbers. In particular, the above average attendance to country parks is influenced by a high local and domestic market and not driven by interest from out-of-state visitors (10).

If all the free border attractions are compared to free attractions in the province, a

similar picture emerges. For the majority of attractions, growth is dominant between 1994 and 1995, followed by a decline in 1996, and a renewed growth in 1997 (3, 19, 22). This supports the point made earlier that the border attractions react no differently to external forces that influence visitor choice to travel than other attractions.

If both categories (visitor numbers greater than 5,000 and free admission) are considered together, the border region contains 32 of the 103 attractions in total, which represents 31% of those shown in these respective figures. While they offer a diversity of heritage experiences and appeal to a range of interests, three focal regions emerge as central to this attraction base: Londonderry, Enniskillen (including South Fermanagh), and Armagh, including its surrounding environs. Although these key centres have established specific attractions, the fact that they are key urban centres, will encourage other activities such as greater levels of cross-border shopping to take place. This possibility is aided all the more by the reality of being less than 20 kilometres from a major crossing point.

#### **OPPORTUNITIES UNDER PEACE: NORTH-SOUTH RELATIONS**

Tourism has been recognized as a passport to peace (7, 8). As early as the Manila Conference of 1980, tourism claimed to stand out as a positive and ever-present factor in promoting mutual knowledge and understanding (6, 15, 27, 29). While many authors have recognized the increased income to local communities, the support for local services, and the forging of greater understanding between different cultures that tourists offer destination regions, the reality can often be somewhat different. Instead of offering only positive gains to destination regions, tourists can also be guilty of doing very little to promote international under-

standing, creating intolerable strain on the host population, presenting undesirable demonstration effects, and debasing cultural expression and way of life of the resident community (23).

Despite this degree of polarity of effects, there exists a strong belief that in uniting different peoples under the common interest of peace, conflict situations can be resolved (7). The Northern Ireland situation is different from that in the Middle East. For example, the conflict was often not between two rival communities (or populations at large), but rather against the political establishment in relation to place. Terrorists rarely deliberately attacked the local people, although the recent Omagh tragedy is one notable exception. Instead they target people and landmarks linked to British rule. As such, it was the presence of terrorist activity that had the tendency to set the more extremist elements of both communities apart. What is of interest here is that it was the desire for peace that created a framework against which both communities started to search for common interests to achieve this goal and which has been the basis of the Good Friday Agreement.

Under this agreement, political cross-border bodies are to be established. Under Strand Two of the Agreement, tourism has been identified as one sector where discussion is most likely to occur. While it is not expected that this will focus much on the border region, it is important that this area is not discounted as it offers potential for the day-trip market. It is also hoped that the amount of marketing co-operation between the Northern Ireland Tourism Board and the Bord Fáilte Éireann (Irish Tourist Board) will increase, in view of the fact that they have been active for many years in the joint promotion of tourism to the island of Ireland as a whole. While it is difficult to determine what focus this co-operative body will take in regard to what sectors to promote, it is

essential that the international overseas market is not discounted against attempts to boost a somewhat weakened Irish market. Visitor facts presented in this paper clearly show the strength, and hence potential, of the international market.

At present, a number of initiatives are active which promote transboundary movement. One that received attention earlier is the promotion of a specialty tour around the attraction of malt whiskey. Another is the development of water-based activity holidays and cruising that promote the use of the Northern Loughs, in particular Lough Erne, linking up to Loughs in the South via the river Shannon.

## CONCLUSION

Attention in this paper has deliberately focused on heritage tourism, particularly within the border region. It is not because this area is heavily endowed with this type of tourism attraction, but rather this type best encapsulates the overall experience visitors seek and take back from their trip to Northern Ireland.

Evidence has been presented to show that movement across the border, while possible, was influenced by the general presence of violence perceived to be present for the Province as a whole. The case of Old Bushmills Distillery should not be taken as representative of all attractions, but it does confirm the general pattern of visitation be-

tween 1994 and 1995. Why this case example is especially useful, is that nationality data (given to the author) allows for a more in-depth assessment of trends for specific populations. A significant portion of the increase of 1995 was explained by an unexpected surge of visitors from the Irish Republic (17). Conversely, the emergence of violence of a different nature in the summer of 1996 accounts for why this market dramatically declined that year.

A case has been presented that illustrates that while the border itself may not become a tourist attraction in its own right (save for the few that want to see the places where heavy security infrastructure was in place), there exist sufficient attractions to appeal to both domestic and international tourists. The presence of a number of recognizable attraction clusters in which a number of popular attractions exist lends creditability to the previous statement.

While tourism linkages, as set out in the Good Friday Agreement, are at present not yet formalized, it is nevertheless hoped that they can generate greater cross-border movement. With increased interaction between the peoples of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, with the current political settlement remaining in place, the negative image people hold of the province may be slowly changed, thus opening up Northern Ireland as a viable tourism destination on the periphery of Northern Europe.

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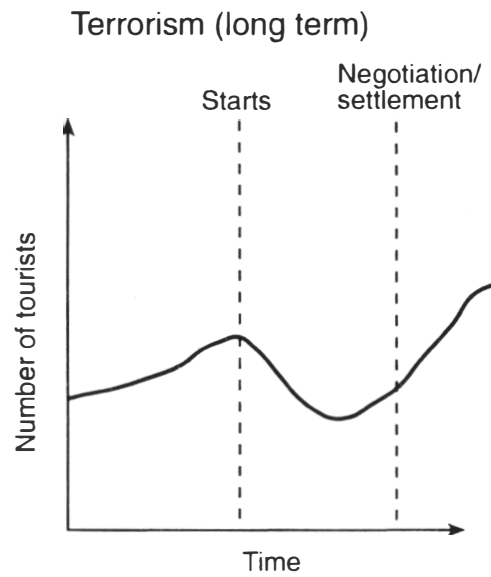
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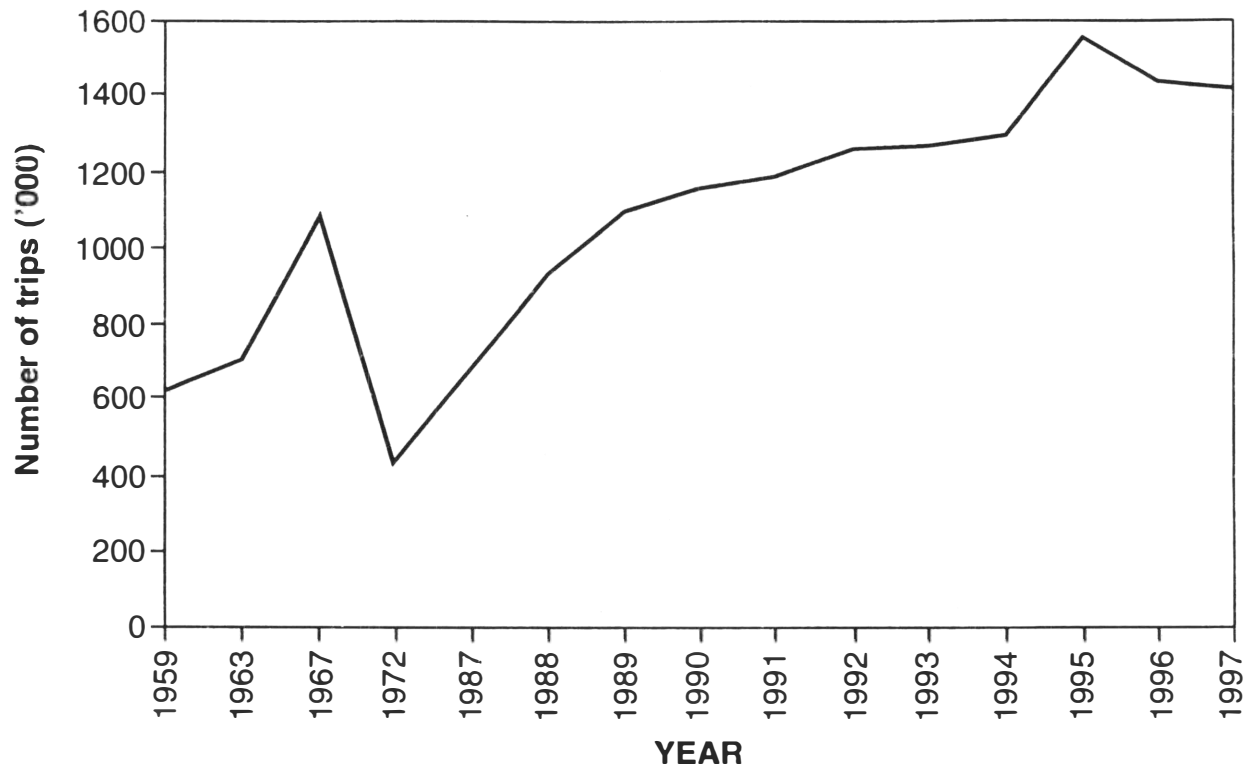
**FIGURE 1**

**Conceptual Model Showing the Impact of Terrorism on Tourist Flow**



**FIGURE 2**

**Total Visitor Trips to Northern Ireland Between 1959 and 1997**

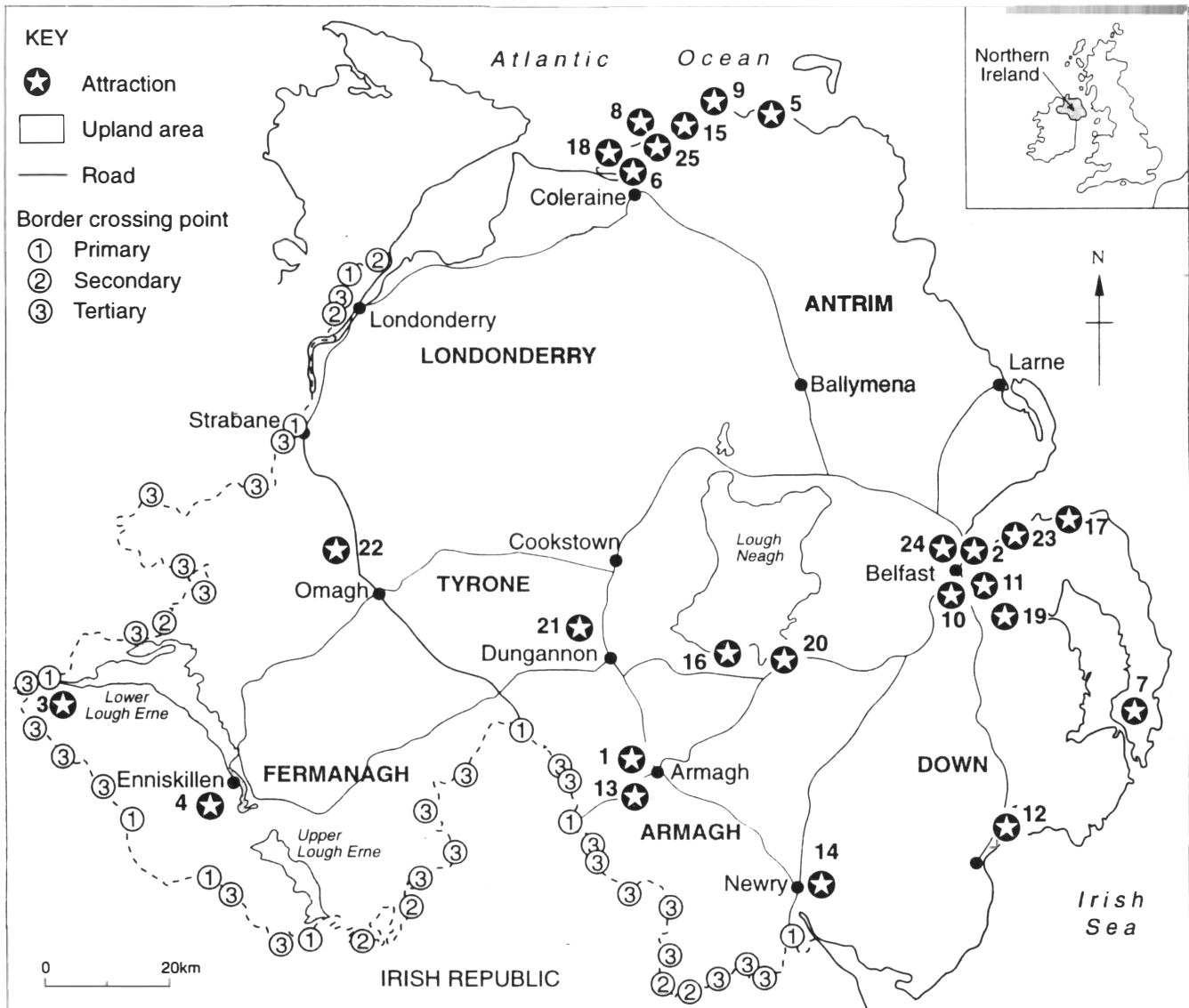


Source: Northern Ireland Tourist Board, Tourist Facts 1997



FIGURE 3

Top Tourist Attractions Visited: 1994-1997



**Key to Top Tourist attractions**

- |                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| 1 Armagh Planetarium                | 13 Navon Centre                          |
| 2 Belfast Zoo                       | 14 Newry Arts Centre                     |
| 3 Belleek Pottery                   | 15 Old Bushmills Distillery              |
| 4 Buttermarket                      | 16 Oxford Island National Nature Reserve |
| 5 Carrick-a-rede Rope Bridge        | 17 Pickie Family Fun Park                |
| 6 Dunluce Centre                    | 18 Portstewart Strand                    |
| 7 Exploris                          | 19 Streamvale Open Farm                  |
| 8 Fantasy Island                    | 20 Tannaghmore Gardens/Farm /Museum      |
| 9 Giant's Causeway Visitor Centre   | 21 Tyrone Crystal                        |
| 10 Linen Hall library               | 22 Ulster American Folk Park             |
| 11 Malone House & Barnett Demesne   | 23 Ulster Folk & Transport Museum        |
| 12 Murlough National Nature Reserve | 24 Ulster Museum                         |
|                                     | 25 Waterworld                            |

FIGURE 4

Visits to Northern Ireland Heritage Attractions Receiving Over 5,000 Visitors, Both Within and Outside of the Border Zone

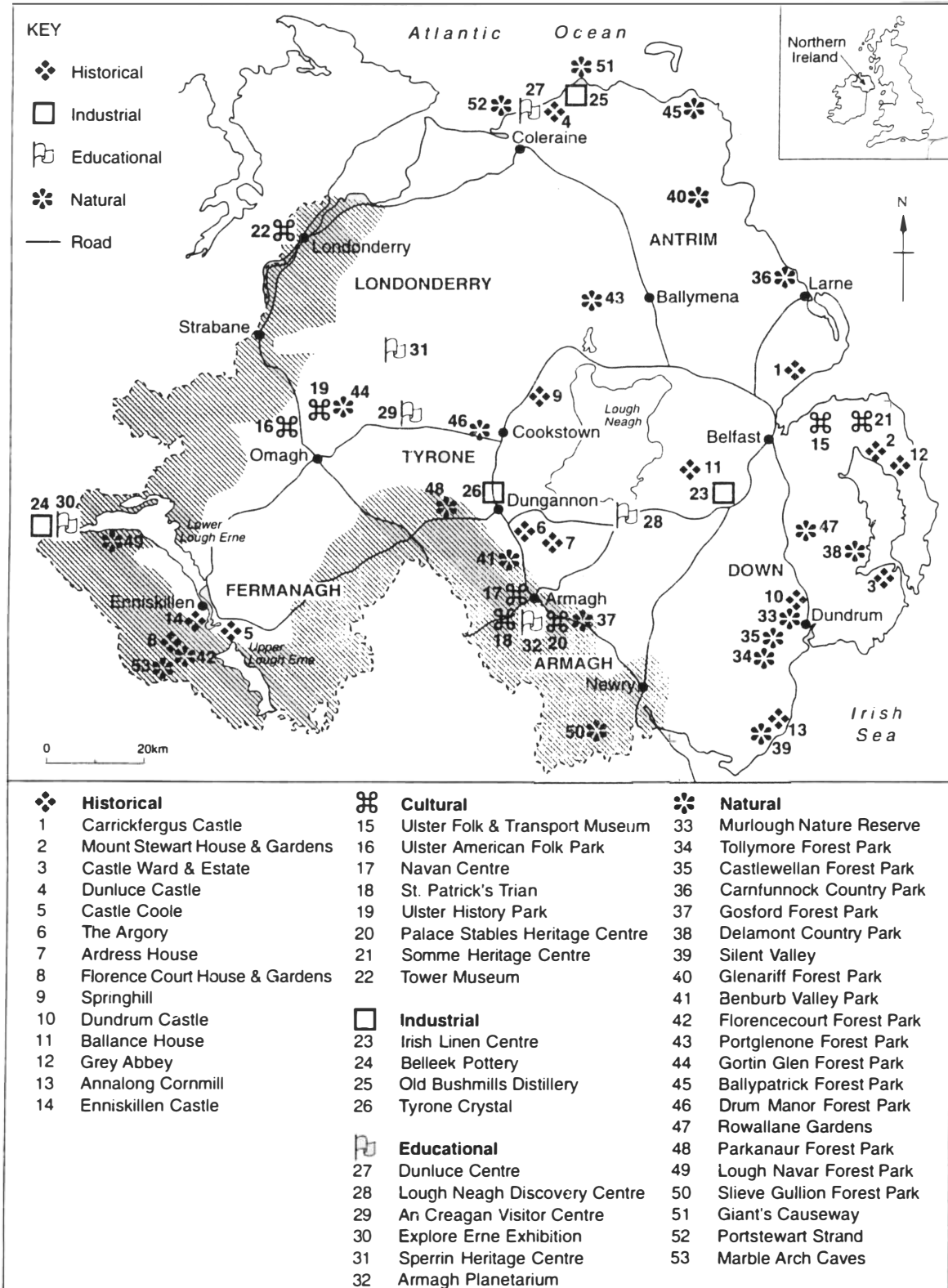


FIGURE 5

Visits to Northern Ireland's Free Heritage Attractions, Both Written and Outside the Border Zone

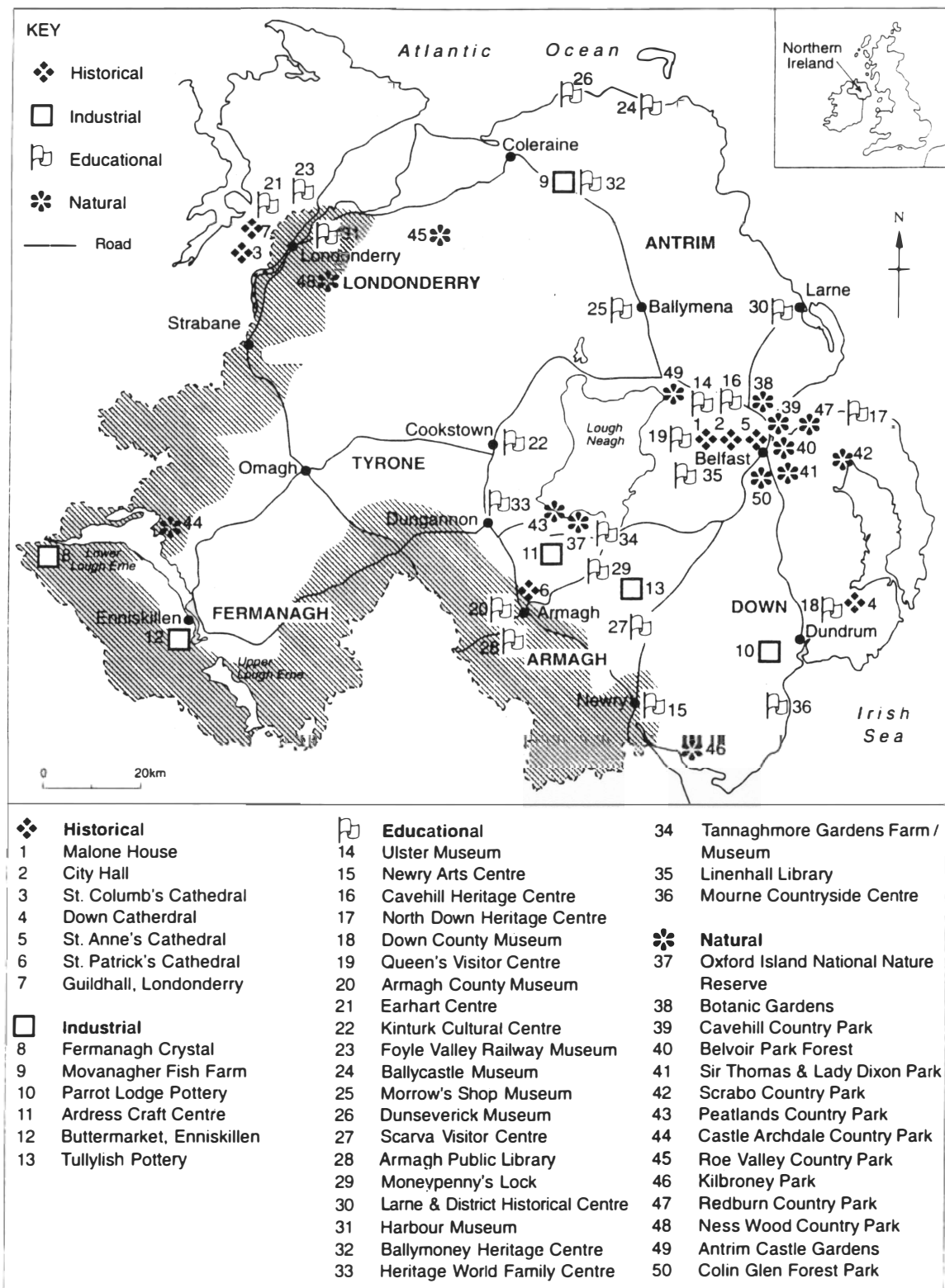


TABLE 1

## Main Purpose for Visiting Northern Ireland

	1991		1994		1995		1996		1997	
Type	Trips	%	Trips	%	Trips	%	Trips	%	Trips	%
VFR	456,500	39	521,500	40	564,000	36	590,000	41	577,000	41
Holiday	262,900	22	275,500	21	461,000	30	297,000	21	263,000	19
Business	333,900	28	387,700	30	402,000	26	409,000	28	419,000	29
Other	132,800	11	109,200	9	130,000	8	140,000	10	156,000	11
Total	1,186,000	100	1,293,900	100	1,557,000	100	1,436,000	100	1,415,000	100

Source: (20).

TABLE 2

## Key Tourism Markets for Northern Ireland (1994-1997)

Market Region	1994		1995		1996		1997	
	Trips	% change	Trips	% change	Trips	% change	Trips	% change
Great Britain	708,100	+ 1	810,000	+ 14	825,000	+ 2	799,000	- 3
Irish Republic	390,000	+ 5	470,000	+ 21	370,000	- 21	345,000	- 7
Europe	86,600	+ 6	109,000	+ 25	97,000	- 11	105,000	+ 8
N. America	76,800	+ 10	118,000	+ 53	100,000	- 15	109,000	+ 9
Other Overseas	32,400	- 3	50,000	+ 56	44,000	- 12	57,000	+ 30

Source: (22)

TABLE 3

## Visitor Attendance to Old Bushmills Distillery (1995-1997)

Market Region	1995	1996	1996 (Jan-July)	% change 95/96	1997 (Jan-July)	% change 96/97
Republic of Ireland	13,856	6,031	3,271	- 56.5	2,771	- 15.3
Northern Ireland	20,061	n/a	n/a	-	7,432	-
Great Britain	18,766	27,519(a)	16,668	+46.6	12,314	- 26.1
Western Europe	14,085	10,494	6,858	- 25.5	8,289	+20.9
North America	9,301	7,064	4,078	- 24.1	5,419	+32.9
Australasia	2,602	2,522	1,175	- 3.1	1,952	+66.1
Other	1,823	1,778	356	- 2.5	13,178 (c)	-
Total (b)	80,494	55,408	32,406	- 31.1	51,355	+58.5

a. this figure includes totals for Northern Ireland also

b. these totals are sub-totals and do not take into account those which are complimentary, children and visits to only the shop.

c. this value includes 10,440 unsigned tickets where no nationality was given

Source: (17)

TABLE 4

Visitor Numbers to Heritage Attractions in the Border Region Receiving Greater than 5,000 Per Year Between 1994 and 1997

Heritage Attractions	1994	1995	% change	1996	% change	1997	% change
<b>Historical</b>							
5 Castle Coole	9,413	13,714	+ 46%	17,252	+ 26%	12,478	- 28
8 Florence Court House	19,349	16,324	- 16%	14,059	- 14%	20,197	+ 44
14 Enniskillen Castle	16,535	18,037	+ 9%	21,762	+ 21%	17,569	- 19
<b>Cultural</b>							
17 Navan Centre	60,000	65,500	+ 9%	49,268	- 25%	40,028	- 19
18 St. Patrick's Trián	60,000	57,027	- 5%	N/A		48,327	
20 Palace Heritage Stables	21,814	32,723	+ 50%	28,500	- 13%	31,009	+ 9
22 Tower Museum	28,000	32,620	+ 16%	24,368	- 25%	21,527	- 12
<b>Industrial</b>							
24 Belleek Pottery	148,386	185,838	+ 25%	161,000	- 13%	177,824	+ 10
26 Tyrone Crystal	24,902	76,000	+ 205%	75,000	- 1%	74,700	- 0.2
<b>Educational</b>							
30 Explore Erne Exhibition.	11,000	15,700	+ 42%	13,000	- 17%	14,000	+ 8
32 Armagh Planetarium	38,941	99,923	+ 156%	49,459	- 51%	47,300	- 4
<b>Natural</b>							
41 Benburb Valley Park	60,000	60,000		60,000		55,000	- 8
42 Florencecourt Forest Park	20,330	22,300	+ 10%	35,200	+ 58%	29,300	- 17
48 Parkanaur	12,510	25,300	+ 102%	19,400	- 23%	51,800	+ 167
49 Lough Navar Forest Park	19,780	20,600	+ 4%	17,600	- 15%	16,200	- 8
50 Slieve Gullion Forest Park	10,880	22,600	+ 108%	12,800	- 43%	15,500	+ 21
53 Marble Arch Caves	52,000	60,228	+ 16%	63,000	+ 5%	57,000	- 5

Source: (19, 22)

TABLE 5

Visitor Numbers to Free Heritage Attractions in the Border Region Between 1994 and 1997

Heritage Attractions (Free)	1994	1995	% change	1996	% change	1997	% change
<b>Historical</b>							
3 St. Columb's Cathedral	19,639	24,018	+ 22%	27,487	+ 14%	31,954	+ 16
6 St. Patrick's Cathedral	N/A	15,000		14,800	- 1%	16,200	+ 9
7 Guildhall, Londonderry	N/A	N/A		13,000		13,000	0
<b>Industrial</b>							
8 Fermanagh Crystal	N/A	N/A		8,000		9,000	+ 13
12 Buttermarket, Enniskillen	57,000	74,000	+ 30%	N/A		N/A	-
<b>Educational</b>							
15 Newry Arts Centre	61,000	65,000	+ 7%	N/A		75,000	-
20 Armagh County Museum	13,657	18,396	+ 35%	15,205	- 17%	7,632	- 50
21 Earhart Centre	5,000	11,000	+ 120%	N/A		N/A	-
23 Foyle Valley Railway Mus.	11,144	8,110	- 27%	8,415	+ 4%	9,002	+ 7
28 Armagh Public Library	1,380	2,535	+ 84%	2,160	- 15%	2,165	0
31 Harbour Museum	1,000	1,000		1,000		N/A	-
33 Heritage World Family Cent	N/A	N/A		400		N/A	-
<b>Natural</b>							
44 Castle Archdale Country P.	100,000	125,000	+ 20%	100,000	- 20%	100,000	0
46 Kibronev Park	90,000	130,000	+ 31%	90,000	- 31%	100,000	+ 11
48 Ness Wood Country Park	20,000	15,000	- 25%	25,000	+ 67%	20,000	- 20

Source: (19, 22)