

# COUNTRYSIDE MOBILITY ON DARTMOOR



If you're inspired by The Disabled Ramblers but do not own a wheelchair or mobility scooter suitable for rougher terrain then Countryside Mobility may be able to help. Recently recognised nationally in the Visit England Awards for Excellence, it is run by the charity Living Options South West and aims to open up the South West's countryside to those with limited mobility through the hire of Trampler all terrain mobility scooters.

Trampers can go up and down slopes, over bumps and tree roots, through shallow puddles, mud and soft ground and are for use by anyone aged 14 or over who has a permanent or temporary condition that affects their ability to walk. With a top speed of four miles an hour they can keep pace with the briskest walking companion.

The scheme is for everyone who wants to enjoy the countryside but can't manage much walking. People don't have to be registered as a disabled person, or have a Blue Badge. Many people have found that the equipment has given them back their freedom, enabling them to enjoy time outdoors alone, with their partner or on a family outing.

To use the Trampers, people simply choose their site and arrange their first visit. On arrival, they join as members of Countryside Mobility which costs £10.00 per year or £2.50 for 4 weeks. Training is provided on how to use a Trampler lasting approximately 10 minutes. They are then given a membership card, which enables them to use a Trampler at any partner site without the need for further training.

Prior to a Trampler being placed at a site, an access audit is completed by Countryside Mobility staff to ensure that the site is suitable and safe for use by Trampers. Each site provides maps and route advice for Trampler users and has a breakdown/recovery system in place if a user has a problem.

Thanks to the scheme, there is now a network of accessible countryside locations across the region (including five in the Dartmoor area) that people can visit independently, knowing they will receive the same high quality experience. Physical improvements are happening at sites as a result of access audits and staff training provided through the scheme. This helps a wider range of disabled people as countryside managers, through contact with more disabled



## INFO

visitors, become more “disability aware”.

Countryside Mobility scheme member Rachael Martyn was the first person to make use of the scooter at Lydford Gorge. “Using the scooter was absolutely brilliant!” she said. “Being able to get right down to the bottom of Lydford Gorge with my family and friends is such a wonderful thing - and when you get to the bottom, what a spectacular sight the White Lady waterfall is! I find it difficult to walk and the scheme allows me really to enjoy and appreciate the natural environment, the smells, the beautiful wild flowers and the wonderful countryside. I can’t believe I would have missed out on all of this without Countryside Mobility and am so grateful for the freedom that the scheme has given me.”

Fay Langston is the National Trust’s Visitor Services Officer at Lydford Gorge. “We are really pleased to partner with Countryside Mobility and to be able to welcome more people to Lydford Gorge,” she said. “Previously, the Gorge was almost completely inaccessible to those with limited mobility due to the steep slopes but now the scooter enables people to travel right down to the bottom and back up independently and safely.”

James Maben, Project Manager for Countryside Mobility was equally enthusiastic. “We are always thrilled when any new site comes on board as a partner, or when an existing site adds another of our scooters, as more availability and more locations mean more people can enjoy the South West’s beautiful countryside,” he said. “We hope to see our site list grow and grow.” ■

## Trampers can be hired at the following sites in the Dartmoor area:-

### NATIONAL TRUST Castle Drogo

At Castle Drogo, the Trampler can be driven around the garden and grounds. Please note, it can’t go into the castle due to its size. The Trampler can also be driven on the estate, there is a designated route around Piddledown common (roughly 1 mile). The route is marked but please enquire with the team for further information on arrival.

The routes around the gardens are mostly on level gravel paths. Routes through the Rhododendron Garden, Mr Drewes path and the wooded path leading to the shop are on slightly sloping, rockier ground. It is still possible to take the Trampler along these routes. On the estate the route starts on grass paths but does have rockier sections in places with some slopes.

For more information on access at our site, please read the full access statement on the homepage.

Tel: 01647 433306

Email: [castledrogo@nationaltrust.org.uk](mailto:castledrogo@nationaltrust.org.uk)  
[www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/devon/castledrogo/the-trampler-at-castle-drogo](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/devon/castledrogo/the-trampler-at-castle-drogo)

### NATIONAL TRUST Lydford Gorge

At Lydford Gorge, the Trampler can be driven to the base of the Whitelady Waterfall and back up again and can also be driven along the railway path to the bird hide and back the same way. To cover both routes, with time to admire the views, usually takes between one and two hours.

There are steep slopes on the route to Whitelady Waterfall, there are some very rough, uneven sections of path that are bare bedrock, and there are drainage channels at intervals across the paths that are rough to travel over. On the route to the bird hide there’s a short slope at the start after which it’s flat but muddy in places.

Please note: The Trampler can be used to reach the toilets, tea-room and bird hide but cannot be taken into these due to a lack of space.

Tel: 01822 820320

Email: [lydfordgorge@nationaltrust.org.uk](mailto:lydfordgorge@nationaltrust.org.uk)  
[www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/devon/lydfordgorge/the-trampler-at-lydford-gorge](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/devon/lydfordgorge/the-trampler-at-lydford-gorge)

#### Further Information

[www.countryside-mobility.org](http://www.countryside-mobility.org); tel: 01392 459222

You can also find out more by following them on Twitter @CMSouthWest or Facebook CountrysideMobility.