

David Frances

The building of the prison.

It was built by a local contractor, building started in 1806 and completed in 1809, which is when the first 500 French prisoners were marched up¹. It was built in local stone, in granite, all of which came from the prison quarry.

And the original prison consisted of what?

It consisted mainly of five two story buildings with one or two living quarters and administration buildings with them; these were soon over crowded with the number of people who actually came in, but the rebuilding of the prison in 1850, in its present form as you see it now, was carried out largely with volunteer convict labour, it was not forced labour, it was in fact volunteer labour for which they were paid six pence a day in old money.

¹ According to Elisabeth Stanbrook, *Dartmoor's War Prison & Church 1805-1817* (2002), the first 2,500 French prisoners arrived in May 1809 but the building of the prison was not completed until September 1809 when the numbers of prisoners had risen to 5,100.