Tourism trends quarterly bulletin
Spring 2006 (Q2: Easter to mid July)

This bulletin provides the key findings of the tourism monitor for the period March 27th to July 17th 2006 (a 16 week period). This period includes the Easter holiday and continues through to just before the summer peak season. In contrast to last year, Easter was quite late, 14th to 17th April, and this was at the end of the school holidays. This period also includes two bank holidays in May and the school spring half term holiday.

Where possible comparisons are made with previous research dating back to 2000.

Introduction

The UK economic situation continues to be stable with no changes to interest rates up to mid July.

This period included the football world cup, which dominated the media from 9th June to 9th July. When England matches were played, key high street retailers noticed a significant fall in customers and revenue and visits to attractions were affected adversely.

Looking at international travel, for the 3 month period from April to June, the international travel market* continued to expand: overseas visitors into the UK reached 8 million and were up by an estimated 7% versus the same period in 2005; UK trips abroad exceeded 17 million and increased by 5% versus 2005. Visits are also up on 2004.

Turning to the Isle of Wight, in spring and early summer there is now a well established schedule of events to attract visitors to the Island. The key events are the annual walking festival in May and in mid June the highly successful Nokia music festival.

Domestic short breaks (1 - 4 nights) reached a record high this spring: there were almost 300,000 such trips which is 5% up on last year and over 20% up on spring 2004. Short breaks are a very important sector at this time of year, making up almost three quarters of the staying leisure trips. Longer trips (5+ nights) are less significant in spring/early summer; there were 110,000 of these which is down by 20% versus last year but on a par with 2004.

Day visits to the Island were down versus last year. All types of day trips, except VFR, were down in volume.

It is estimated that almost 200,000 new or lapsed visitors came to the Island on a leisure trip (day or staying trip). This represents approximately a third of leisure visitors (excluding VFR) which is a significant proportion of new visitors.

The Isle of Wight website continues to perform well: visits increased by 36% versus the same period last year.

In addition to the visitors arriving by ferry, those arriving by yacht spent an estimated 146,000 visitor nights on the Island. This is an increase of approximately 10% on spring 2005.

The proportion travelling to the mainland ports and around the Island by coach has fallen significantly. Both day and staying trips have been affected but staying trips more so.

The value of tourism is estimated at £140 million: the average weekly value (excluding inflation) is down by 5% versus last year which is attributable to the decline in 5+ night trips, business trips, trips from overseas residents and day trips. (This estimate excludes spending by those arriving by yacht. This spending will be included next year when estimates of average spending by those arriving by yacht should be available.)

* Source: International Passenger Survey. Seasonally adjusted figures.

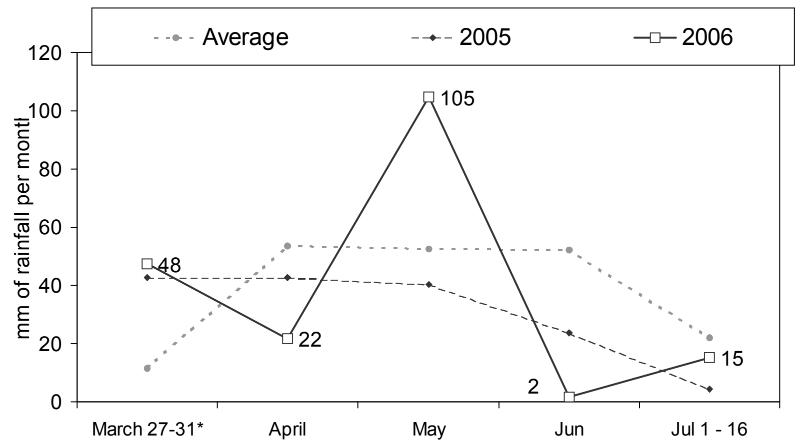
Weather

Spring was a period of extremes:

- April and June were exceptionally dry and sunny. April had almost double the hours of sunshine expected; June had less than 10% of the average rainfall for the month and 30% more sunshine.
- In contrast, May was much wetter with almost double the average rainfall.
- The start of July was slightly drier than average but the temperature and sunshine hours were in line with expectations.

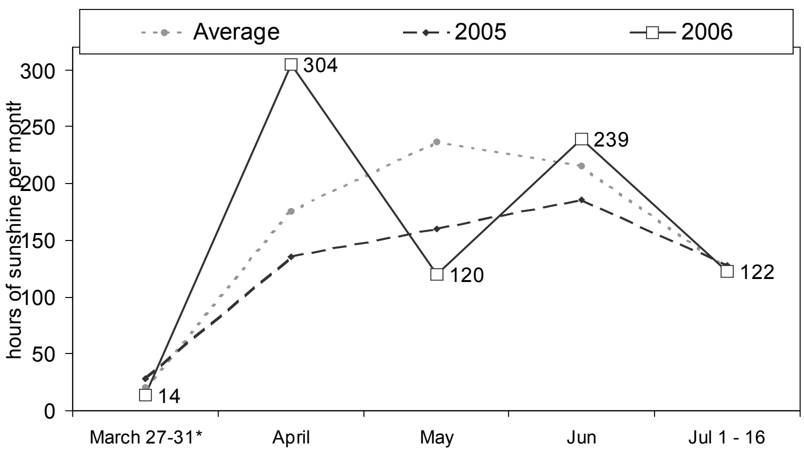
Average maximum temperatures were at a similar level to last year and the long term average throughout the spring period.

Rainfall on the Isle of Wight
Q2 2006 vs. 2005 and long term average



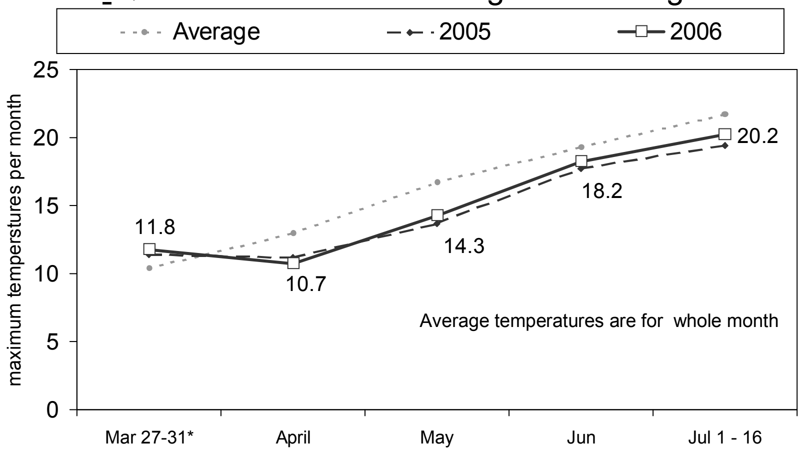
* March 2005 was 17th – 31st
Weather data is supplied by Medina Valley Centre

Sunshine on the Isle of Wight
Q2 2006 vs. 2005 and long term average



* March 2005 was 17th – 31st
Weather data is supplied by Medina Valley Centre

Maximum temperatures on the Isle of Wight
_Q2 2006 vs. 2005 and long term average



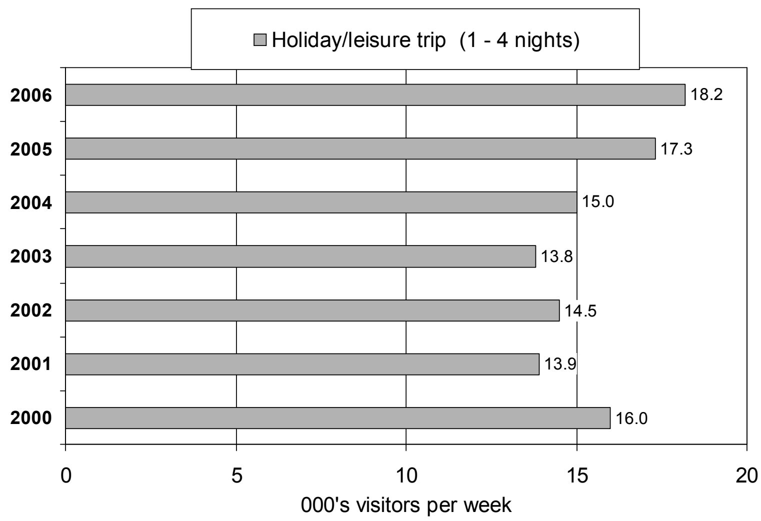
* March 2005 was 17th – 31st
Weather data is supplied by Medina Valley Centre

Estimated number of leisure short break visitors

It is estimated that there were over 290,000 domestic short breaks (lasting 1 - 4 nights) during the spring period. This is an average of 18,200 per week and takes short breaks to a record high over the 7 year period. Year on year increases are significant: +5% vs. 2005; +21% vs. 2004; +32% vs. 2003.

Estimated number of domestic short break leisure visitors
Q2 2006 vs. previous years

Average visitors per week



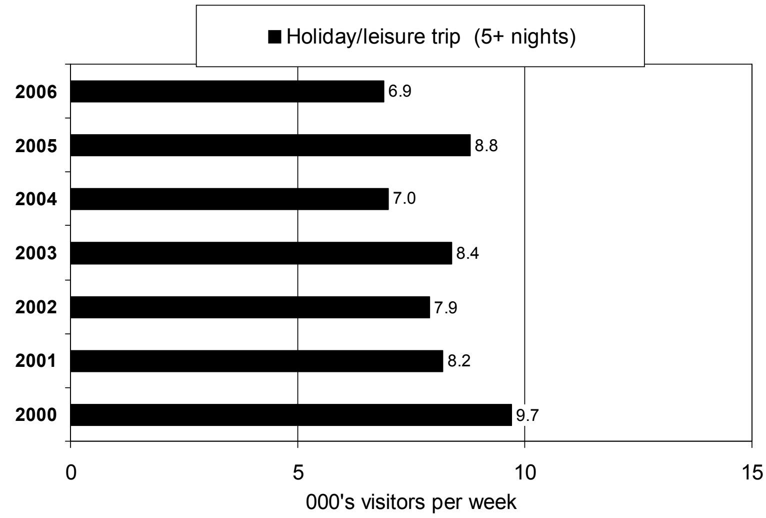
In addition to these domestic short breaks there were an estimated 10,500 short breaks taken on the Island by overseas residents. At an average of 700 per week, this is up an estimated 9% on last year (but on a small base).

Estimated number of longer stay leisure visitors

Last year longer holidays/leisure trips (5+ nights) increased significantly versus 2004. This year the number of these trips is more in line with that seen in 2004. These reached 111,000, an average of 6,900 per week.

Estimated number of domestic longer stay leisure visitors
Q2 2006 vs. previous years

Average visitors per week



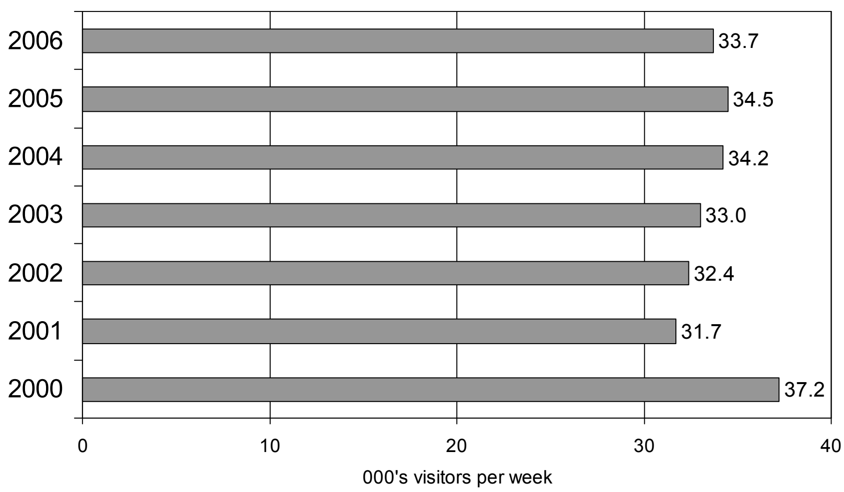
Longer stay visits by overseas residents were relatively scarce during the spring.

Total number of staying visitors

Looking at the total number of staying visitors during the spring, it is estimated that almost 565,000 visitors went to the Island on an overnight trip; 95% of whom were domestic visitors. Therefore an average of 34,000 domestic staying trips were made each week. This volume of staying trips has fluctuated very little over the last four years.

Estimated number of domestic staying visitors
Q2 2006 vs. previous years

Average visitors per week

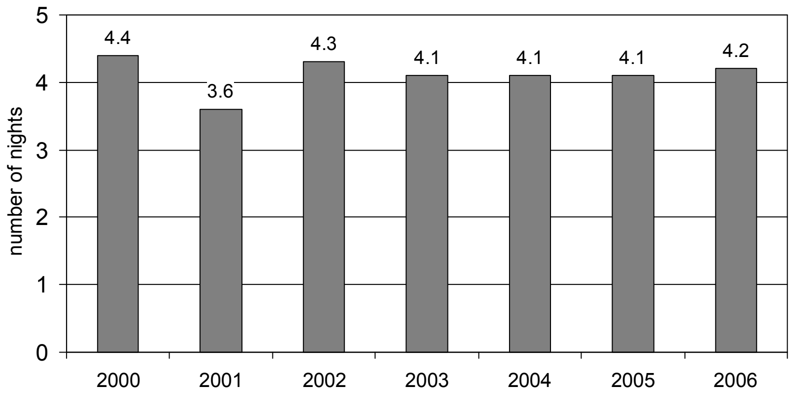


There has been some of change in the make up of staying visits: as already discussed, short breaks have increased in importance at the expense of longer stay holidays; combined business and leisure trips are down somewhat whilst VFR trips are up on last year. Coach tours/trips are down significantly (-18%) this spring (see p 9 -12) .

Average length of stay

The average length of all types of staying trips has remained fairly constant over the course of recent years. This spring it was 4.2 nights: even though there were fewer longer holidays, the length of these and of short breaks increased very slightly, as did VFR trips, making up for the fall in the number of longer stay holidays.

Average length of stay
Q2 2006 vs. previous years



Numbers of day visitors

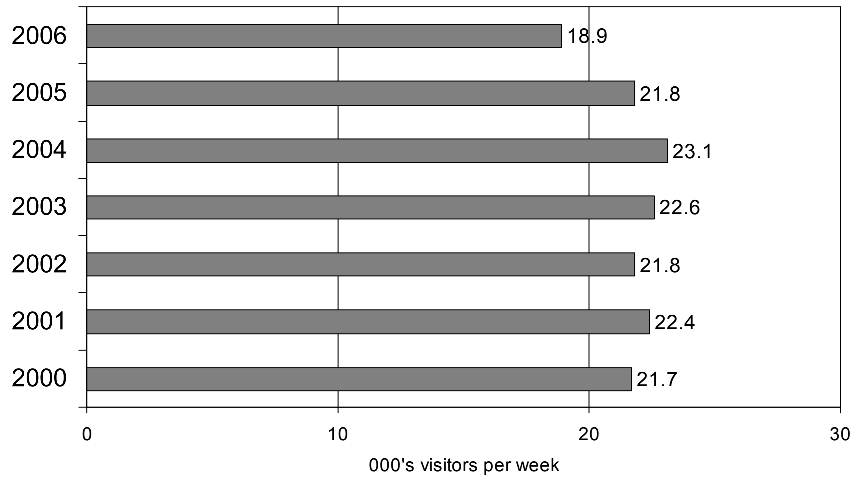
An estimated 334,000 day visits were made to the Island, with the majority of these being domestic day visits (91%). This is an average of 19,000 domestic visits per week. The trend over the last three years has been downwards and this is the lowest level of day trips recorded during spring (-13% vs. 2005). The decline is attributable to fewer business trips and a decline in leisure day trips. Mode of travel indicates that day coach trips are down by about 5%.

VFR day trips were the only type of day trip to increase versus last year.

Day trips made by residents abroad were down by 11%.

Estimated number of domestic day visitors
Q2 2006 vs. previous years

Average visitors per week



New versus repeat visitors to the Island

Day and staying leisure visitors are asked when they last visited the Isle of Wight. The following data excludes those visiting friends and relatives as these are, by definition, likely to be frequent visitors. (Only 4% of VFR visitors were on their first visit to the Island.)

During this spring period there was a high proportion of repeat visitors but around a fifth of these two visitor groups were on their first trip. This is a positive picture, with enough new visitors coming to the Island, or returning after a long break, to refresh the visitor base whilst the proportion of returning visitors suggests a high degree of visitor satisfaction.

1. Day visitors: Almost a fifth (19%) of leisure day visitors were on their first visit to the Island. Adding in those lapsed visitors who have been attracted back to the Island after a considerable break (not visited in the last 5 years), this increases to 31%.
2. Staying visitors: a fifth (20%) of those on a short break or holiday were visiting for the first time. In addition, 16% were returning for the first time in 5 years making the total of new and lapsed visitors 36%.

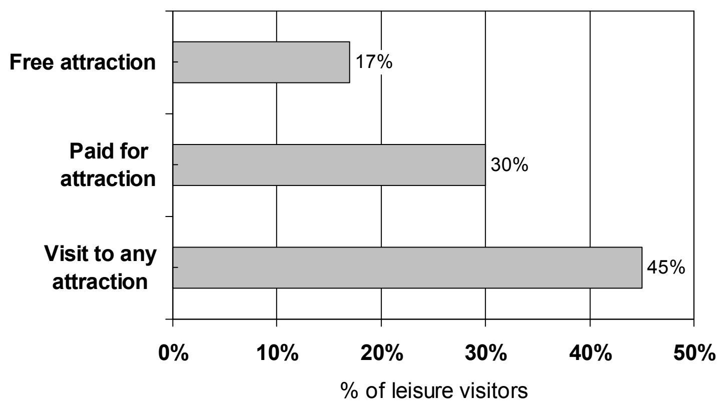
	Leisure Day visitors (not VFR)	Short break/holiday visitors (not VFR)
First visit to Island	19%	20%
Visited before in last 12 months	49%	43%
Visited before 12 months to 5 years ago	21%	21%
Visited before but more than 5 years ago	12%	16%

Consequently, it is estimated that approximately 190,000 new or lapsed leisure visitors came to the Island on either a day trip, short break or holiday during the spring.

Visits to attractions

It is estimated that 45% of leisure visitors went to at least one of the Island's attractions. Many more visited the attractions charging an entrance fee than free attractions. *

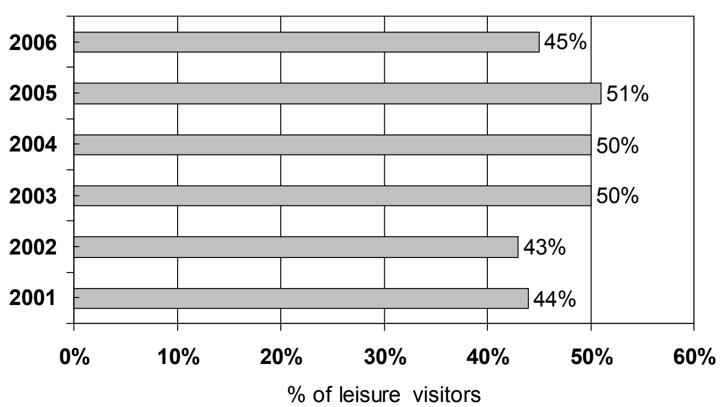
Estimated visits to types of attractions
Spring (Q2) 2006



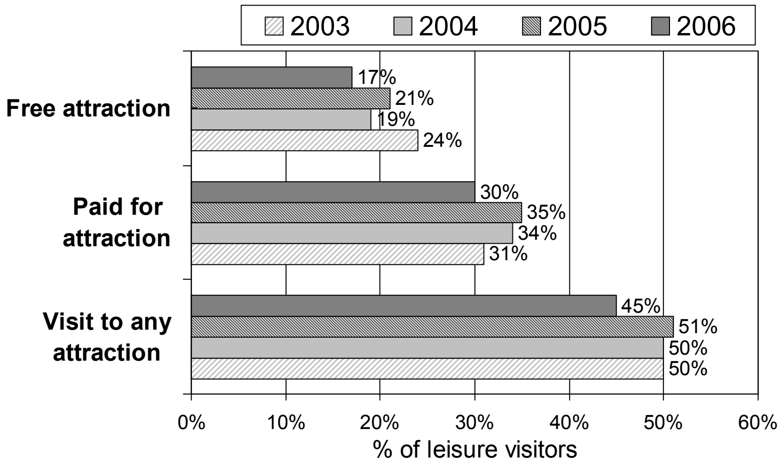
* N. B. Recall of visits to free attractions may be underestimated due to the reliance on respondent's recall.

This incidence of visiting is a significant drop versus the last three years when visits were fairly constant at about 50% visiting. It is 2002 since the percentage visiting was at this sort of level. The reduction has been felt by both categories of attractions and is likely to have been due, at least partially, to the world cup coverage.

Estimated visits to any type of attraction
Q2 2006 vs. previous years



Estimated visits to types of attractions
Q2 2006 vs. previous years



Mode of transport

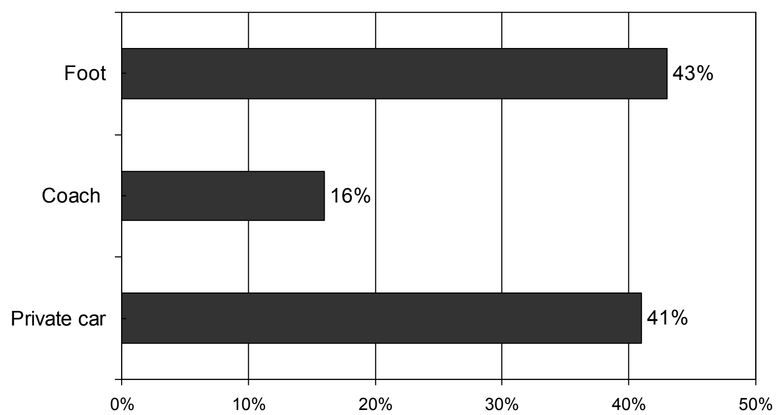
All visitors are asked how they travel to the mainland terminal and around the Island. Mode of travel on board the ferry is also recorded and used to estimate the overall split between visitors travelling as car, coach and foot passengers.

N.B. One year of historical data is available for mode of travel to the mainland terminal and around the Island, but not for mode of travel on the ferry.

Mode of travel on board the ferry

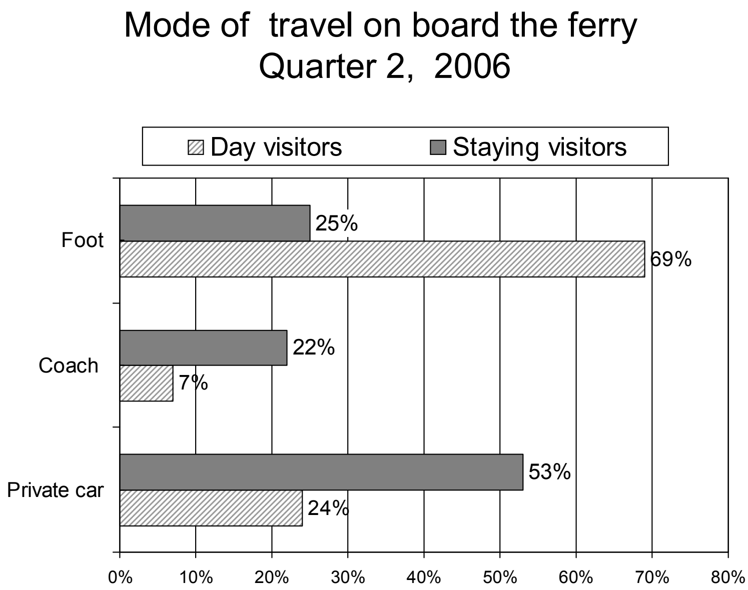
At this time of year it is estimated that about two fifths (41%) of visitors travelled by car, however 44% travelled as foot passengers making this the most common mode of travel on board. Coach travel accounted for only 16% of visitors during the spring.

Mode of travel on board the ferry
Quarter 2, 2006



Travel as a foot passenger was much more prevalent amongst day visitors, with 69% travelling this way. A quarter of day visitors travelled by car but only 7% by coach.

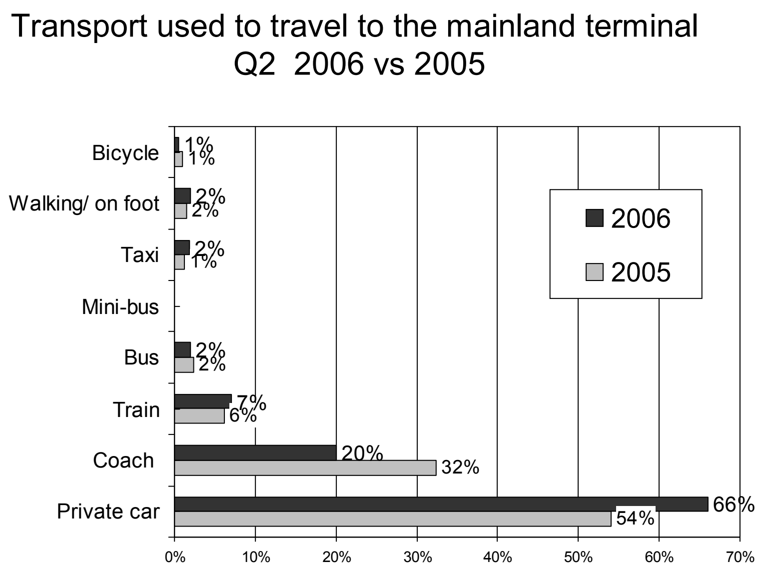
Coach travel was more important amongst staying visitors (22%), as was travel by car, which rose to 53% amongst staying visitors.



Mode of transport to the mainland terminal

Car and coach travel account for most of the journeys to the mainland port (66% and 20% respectively). A minority travelled by bus or train (2% and 7% respectively).

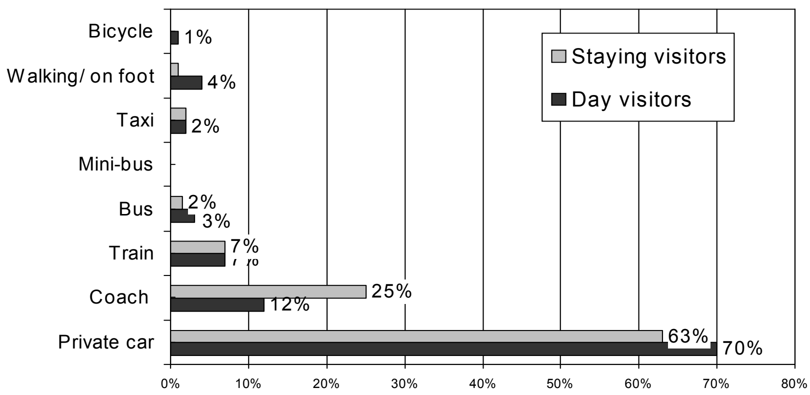
There have been changes since last spring: incidence of coach travel is down from 32% to 20% with most of this transferring to private car (up from 54% to 66%).



N.B. It is assumed that anyone travelling with their own car on the ferry uses that as their main mode of transport to the port. Likewise, those travelling with a coach on the ferry are assumed to travel by coach to the port.

Looking at the difference between day and staying visitors; use of coaches was higher amongst staying visitors whilst use of the car was higher amongst day visitors. Those walking to the terminal were primarily day visitors.

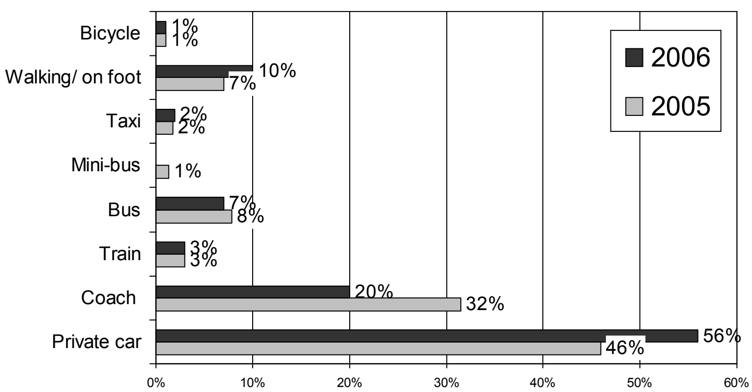
Transport used to travel to the mainland terminal
Day versus staying visitors
Q2 2006



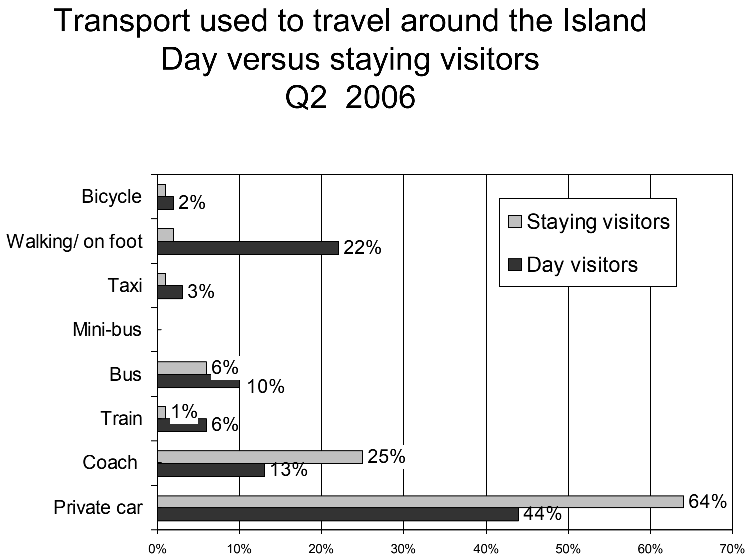
Mode of transport to travel around the Island

On the Island, the private car (either their own or that of a relative) and coach continue to dominate travel. Over half travelled by car, 56%, which is up since last spring. 20% travelled by coach but, in line with travel to the mainland terminal, that is a drop since last spring.

Transport used to travel around the Island
Q2 2006 vs 2005



Walking around the Island was primarily by day visitors, likewise the use of the bus services. Travel by coach was mainly by staying visitors. Use of the private car was higher amongst staying visitors.



N.B. It is assumed that anyone travelling with their own car on the ferry uses that as their main mode of transport around the Island. Likewise, those travelling with a coach on the ferry are assumed to travel by coach on the Island.

Value of tourism

The value of tourism is estimated at £140 million during the spring of 2006. After taking account of the quarter length, this equates to an average weekly spend of £8.7 million. This is 6% below the average weekly value for spring 2005 (excluding inflation), a drop which is attributable to the decrease in all types of day trips, except the lower value VFR day trips, and in staying trips- particularly business trips and longer holidays (5+ nights) and trips by overseas residents.

Staying trips are worth £128 million and day trips account for another £11 million.

Staying trips	
All domestic staying trips	£119 million
All overseas staying trips	£10 million
All staying trips	£128 million*
Day trips	
All domestic day trips	£10 million
All overseas day trips	£1 million
All domestic day trips	£11 million

* Addition of individual figures exceeds £128 million due to rounding of figures.

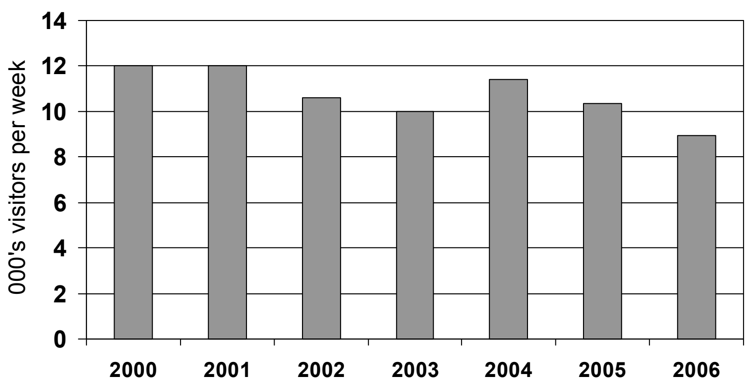
N.B. Spending by visitors arriving by yacht is not included in this calculation. It is planned to include this visitor segment in the future and research is underway to facilitate this.

Activity at Island Tourist Information Centres

143,000 people visited the Island TIC's in the spring, which is an average of 8,950 per week. This is a reduction compared to last year and is a reflection of the closure of Ventnor TIC, the extreme weather conditions and, to a certain degree, the increasing use of websites to access information.

However, despite falls in numbers, overall spend and spend per head increased. The average spend was £8.32 which is up from £7.92 in spring last year. This notable increase is partly due to the sale of tickets for the Bestival and the Westlife concert and the Classical Extravaganza at Osborne House.

Number of visitors to TIC offices
Q2 2006 vs. previous years
Average number of visitors per week



Island website activity

There were 257,000 visits to the website in the spring period, an average of 16,000 per week. Comparable data for last year shows that visits to the website are up by 36% (April to July). Clearly the website has performed extremely well and is attracting an increasing number of visitors.

Occupancy statistics

The Isle of Wight occupancy statistics for spring 2006 will be issued in a separate bulletin in late September.

Summer peak season tourism bulletin (17th July to 3rd September, 2006)

Visitor statistics for the next trading period will be circulated in October with the occupancy statistics due early November.