



Kent Tourism Business Barometer April 2006

Welcome to the April Business Barometer. April has been an eventful month with Easter and two Bank Holidays. Thank you to Dover TIC who were the first to return their questionnaire this month. We had 18 responses this month. As always please take the time to complete the short questionnaire as the more completed responses we get the better the sample is for everyone!

For enquiries regarding the Kent Tourism Business Barometer please contact Sarah Belsom on 01622 221636 or email sarah.belsom@kent.gov.uk

April 2006

- Kent Attractions were up by 35.3%
- Kent Carriers were up by 18.9%
- Kent TIC's visits were down by 3.1%

Attractions

The main reason attributed to the increase in visitor numbers to Kent's attractions was that Easter and two Bank Holidays fell in April this year, so special events took place this month. Refurbishment of one attraction was also thought to be a result of increased visitor numbers.

Carriers

As with the attractions the carriers considered Easter and the two Bank Holidays to be a major factor for the rise in numbers using the carriers.

TICS

Kent's Tourist Information Centres saw slight fall in visitor numbers compared to April 2005. Of the TICs who experienced fewer visitors, the poor weather and the fact that summer concert tickets are now available on their website affected footfall. Those TICs who experienced an increase in visitors this month attributed it again to Easter and the Bank Holidays, tickets sales for

special events such as the Heritage festival and National Express booking service which is now available.

↑	Increase	%
	Dover	29.1%
	Ashford	27.3%
	Maidstone	9.5%
	Gravesend	6.9%
	Herne Bay	1.9%
	Canterbury	0.8%

↓	Decrease	%
	Whitstable	3.8%
	Medway	3.2%

Figures Not Provided	
	Ramsgate
	Margate
	Broadstairs
	Tunbridge Wells

Accommodation

Accommodation providers reported a higher percentage of German and French Visitors this month. Occupancy rates are provided by Tourism South East:

HOTEL DISTRICT	MONTH	% ROOM OCC 2005	Overseas Occupancy
Canterbury	April	58.8	11.0
Dover	April	50.9	23.5
Maidstone	April	50.5	11.1
Medway	April	n/a	n/a
Shepway	April	34.4	16.7
Swale	April	63.2	21.8
Thanet	April	56.5	6.1
Tunbridge Wells	April	42.1	19.9
Total		59.4%	18.4%

News

- Kent Tourism Alliance Wins Prestigious Innovation Award**
 The Kent Tourism Alliance (KTA), which champions the county's 1.8 billion tourism industry, won the innovation award at the British Travel Trade Fair this April.



- The latest member to join the Kent Tourism Alliance is Dickens World, the exciting new £62 million themed attraction currently under construction in Medway.

Events

There were an abundance of exciting events in April which were well visited;

- The Tonbridge Garden & Home Show at The Sports Ground in Tonbridge
- Life at Leeds Castle Event
- Easter Fun at the Dockyard
- Seed Swapping Day at Yalding Organic Gardens
- Easter Fun Factory The Hop Farm Country Park
- A Knight's Tale at Canterbury Tales
- Easter Holiday Fun at the Museum of Kent Life
- European Kit Car Show at Kent County Showground
- 2006 British Motorcross Championship Canada Heights Motorcross Circuit, Swanley
- Wedding Fair Chilston Park
- Easter Weekend at Heaver Castle and Gardens
- Easter Egg Trail for Children at Walmer Castle and Gardens
- CAMRA Beer Festival in Ramsgate
- Easter Extravaganza in Ramsgate
- Easter Tea & Egg Hunt at Crabble Corn Mill
- Easter Gala at Leas Cliff Hall

News from VisitBritain

VisitBritain Easter Prospects

- **23% of the UK adult population are planning a trip over the next two weeks inclusive of Easter.**

23% of the UK adult population are planning a trip over the next two weeks inclusive of Easter. This is a 2% increase on last year. More than twice as many (60%) are planning an overnight trip in England during this period, compared to going abroad (27%).

Recent figures from BAA give cause for optimism regarding trends in the number of overseas visitors from Asia and the Far East to Britain, but there is continued concern for prospects for the North American market - visits from the USA have been declining for a number of months, and air traffic across the North Atlantic remained weak during March.

Industry could do more to attract 20 million potential visitors

- **Britain's tourism industry could do more to make accommodation, attractions and destinations more accessible to the 10 million disabled people and 10 million over-65s currently living in the UK.**

VisitBritain, and national registered charity, Tourism for All UK, are working together to ensure that older people and those with sensory and mobility impairments can enjoy the same holiday experiences as the rest of the population.

A new guide, Britain's Accessible Places to Stay – highlights the wide range of accommodation that caters for differently-abled guests. All the quality-assessed properties, including hotels, B&Bs, self-catering and caravan and caravanning parks, participate in a national accessible scheme operated by VisitBritain or one of its national tourist board partners. Priced £9.99, Britain's Accessible Places to Stay is available from leading bookshops, by telephoning 0870 606 7204 or online at www.visitbritaindirect.com.