BLUE SAIL

VISITORS PLACES DESTINATIONS

FUTURE OF TOURISM ON SCILLY: RESEARCH SUMMARY

TECHNICAL PAPER FOR ISLAND MARKETING

APRIL 2011

CONTENTS

1 BACKGROUND

ABOUT THE *FUTURE OF TOURISM ON SCILLY* STUDY

Between September 2010 and March 2011, Blue Sail carried out a study into the future of tourism on the Isles of Scilly, in consultation with local people. We were asked to advise on how tourism can continue to support the islands, the islands' economy and the islanders' quality of life. We focused on how Scilly can stay competitive in the future, while retaining its unique character and special environment.

Our overall recommendations are summarised in two standalone documents that will be sufficient for most people's purposes: the **Blueprint Report** and the **Blueprint Action Plan**.

For those who need or want to go into our findings in more depth, there are also a number of detailed technical papers:

- Green Framework
- Product Improvement Plan
- Marketing Plan
- Tourism Organisation Report
- **Research Summary (this paper)**
- Research Plan
- Storyboard
- Consultation Meetings Report
- Marketing Workshop Report

Technical papers are online at www.scilly.gov.uk/community/tourism

2 VOLUME OF VISITORS

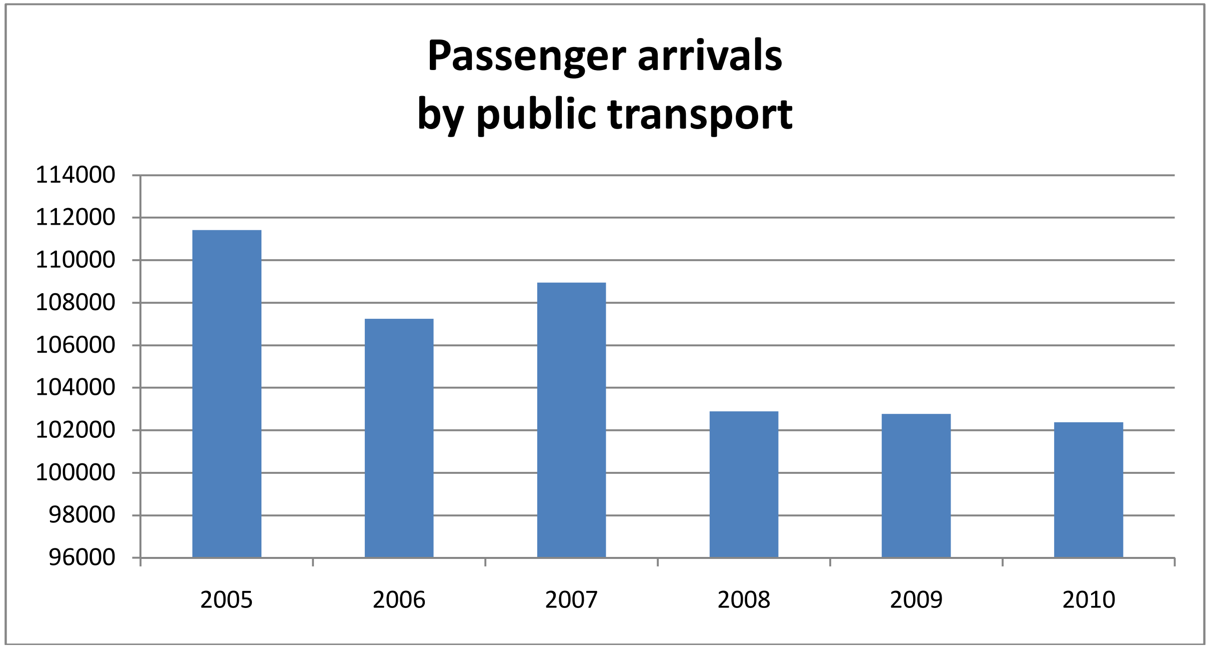
As a group of islands, Scilly is able to record fairly precisely the number of arrivals and departures. The modes of public transport are

- Scillonian III - passenger ferry from Penzance
- Skybus flights (fixed wing) from Newquay, Southampton, Bristol and Land's End
- BIH helicopter flights from Penzance and Land's End

Relatively small numbers also arrive by private plane and private boat, and a larger number come as day visitors by cruise ship. These numbers, and arrivals by helicopter to Tresco, are not included in the table below.

NUMBER OF ARRIVALS

There has been a decline of arrivals by the main transport modes in the period 2005 to 2010 – from 111,420 to 102,381. This is a decline of 8%. The headline figures include Scilly residents and contract workers (such as construction workers) and though there is no hard data the impression is that the arrivals of contract workers have increased, implying a greater decline in leisure visitors.

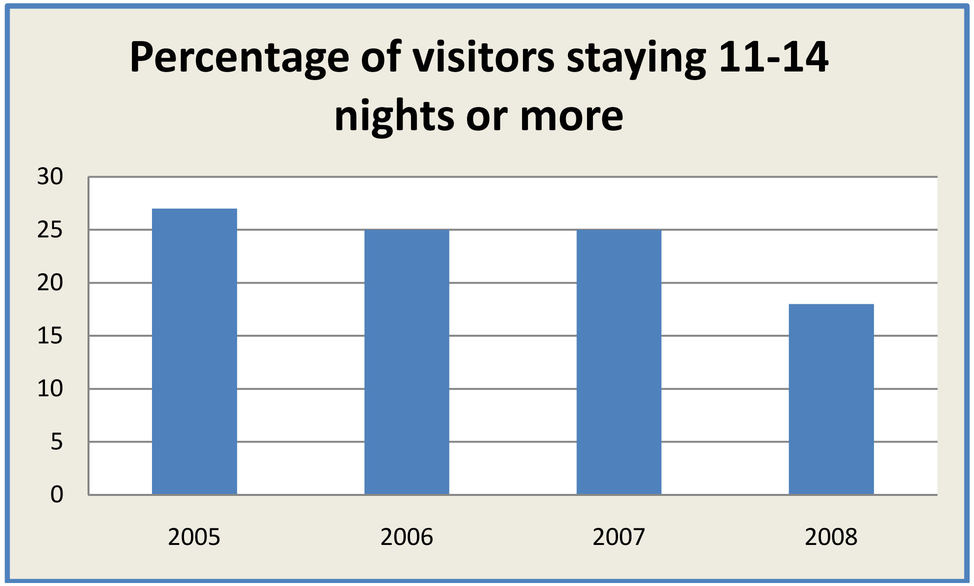


CRUISE PASSENGERS

A total of 41 cruise ships anchored at Scilly in 2010 and 7472 passengers came ashore by tender for day visits. We do not have figures for earlier years but it is believed that numbers of cruise passengers has increased significantly. This is likely to be driven by promotional effort to attract more ships and by the substantial growth in cruising over the past decade, which appears to be continuing.

LENGTH OF STAY

Scilly has profited from visitors taking long stays on the islands. But the number of long-stay visitors is declining as the table below illustrates.

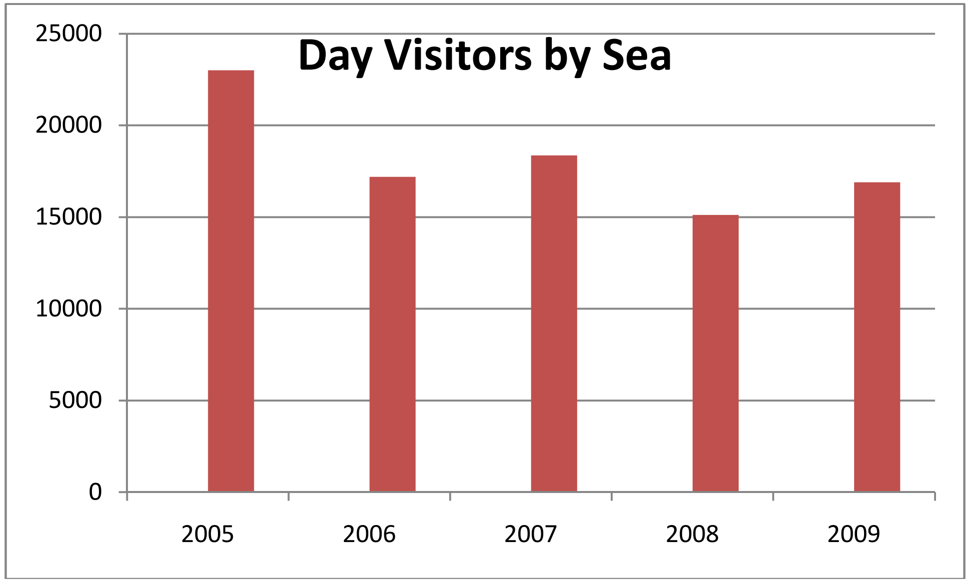


Source: Isles of Scilly Visitor Surveys 2005-2008

This trend to shorter stays is common to Cornwall and other parts of the UK; indeed it is less marked in Scilly than elsewhere. But it will reduce significantly the overall number of nights spent in Scilly.

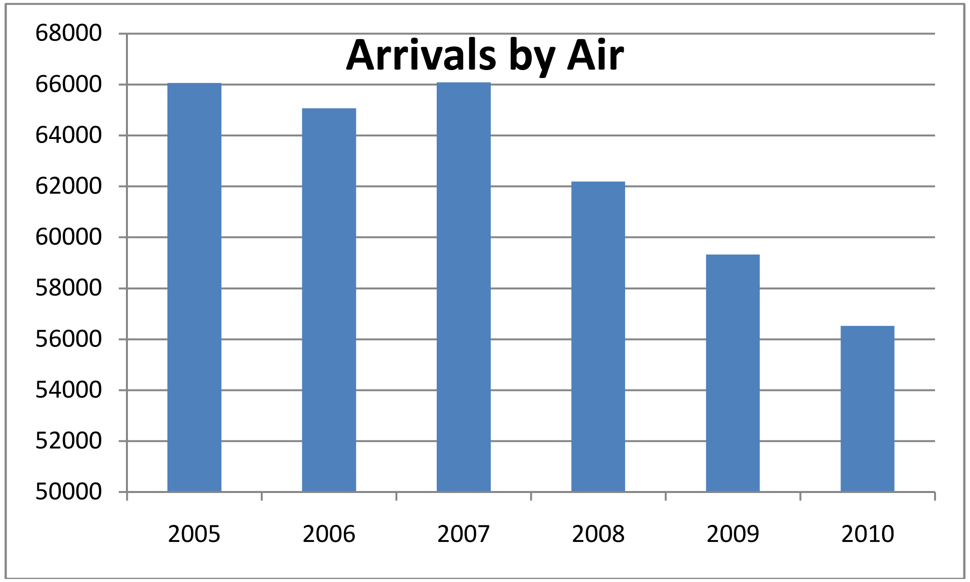
DAY AND STAYING VISITORS

The headline arrival figures include both day and staying visitors. Figures for day visitors on the ferry showed a marked decrease over the period 2005 -2009. (There is no comparable data to distinguish between day and stay visitors by air) This decline in day visitors accounts for much of the fall in the total numbers of arrivals – or in other words the number of staying visitors has declined only marginally.



CHANGES IN MODE OF TRAVEL

There has been a significant decline in arrivals by air over the recent period, from 66087 in 2007 to 56529 in 2010, a decline of about 4% a year.

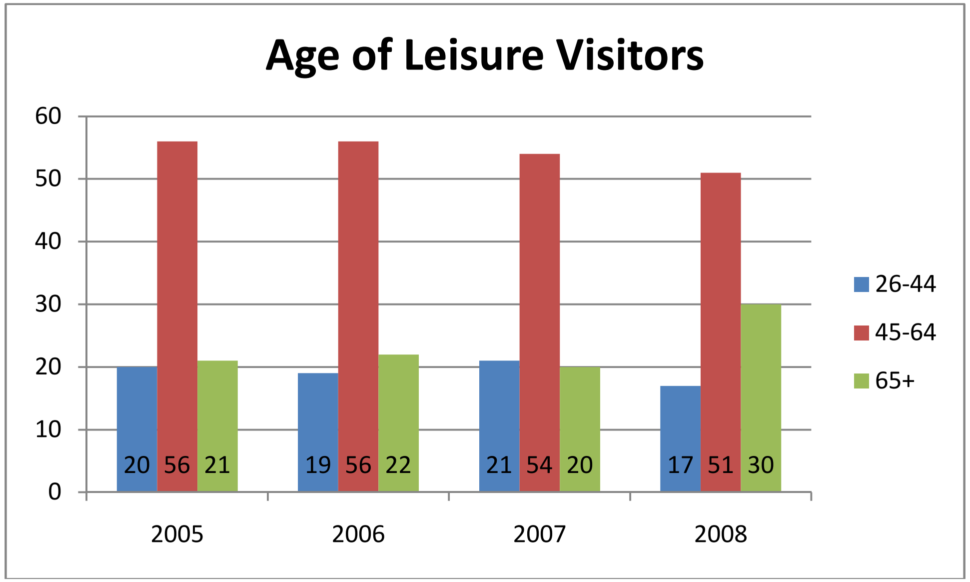


By contrast during the period 2008 -10 arrivals by ferry have increased from 40695 to 45853. This suggests a signficant change of mode; the most likley explanation is that travellers have sought out a less expensive route to Scilly.

3 VISITOR CHARACTERISTICS

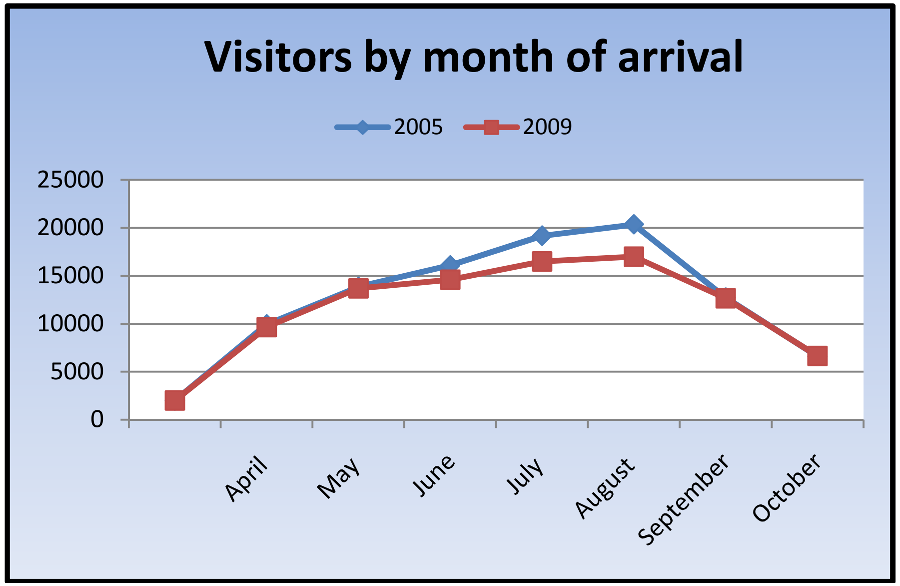
AGE OF VISITORS

There is evidence from visitor surveys that visitors are mostly mature and are becoming older. There is still a large body of middle aged visitors in the 45-64 range, and this will include many regular visitors. But inevitably these individuals will in time join the growing proportion of 65+ visitors. Fortunately today's senior citizens are fitter, richer and more adventurous that earlier generations, but will in time eventually cease to come. Meanwhile fewer visitors in the 26-44 age group appear to be coming - the ones that Scilly would like to become the regulars of the future.



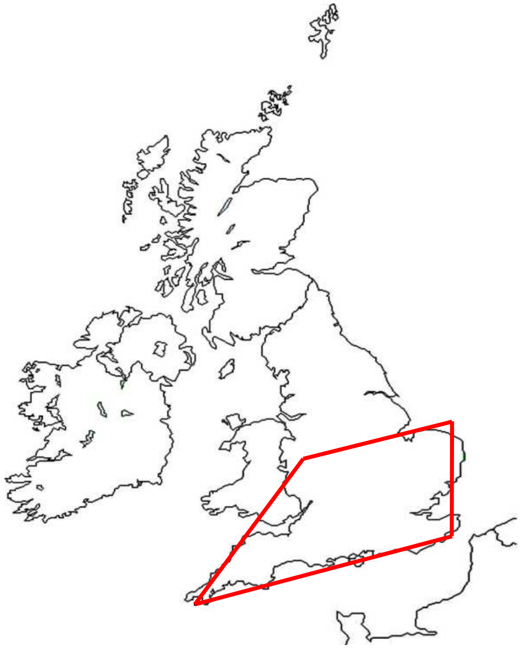
WHEN VISITORS COME TO SCILLY

There is evidence of a changing pattern of visits. Whereas in 2005 there was a clear peak in July and August, progressively that peak has become less pronounced. By 2009 those months were only marginally busier than May and June. . Arrivals in April, May, September and October were almost identical in 2005-2009, suggesting that it is in the peak period that Scilly is losing visitors, while the shoulder periods are holding up well.



WHERE VISITORS COME FROM

By analysing their post codes, we can establish where UK visitors live. More than half are from the southern-most regions of England; and three-quarters come from the southern half of England, shown in the boxed area below.



Origin of visitors to Scilly 2010	
London and South East	*30%*
South West	*27%*
West Midlands	*9.3%*
East	*8.8%*

SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF CURRENT VISITORS

Postcode analysis of a robust sample of visitor postcodes shows us that the key Mosaic Groups[1] currently visiting Scilly are:

Group A	Alpha Territory
Group B	Professional Rewards
Group C	Rural Solitude

Scilly is indexing high for these groups – i.e. attracting above-average percentages in each compared with their prevalence in the UK population as a whole. Group B is by far the largest group. There are over 10 million people in the UK in these 3 Groups – so there is scope for increased penetration. 9% of the UK population – i.e. over 5 million people - are in Group B.

Key characteristics of these 3 groups are:

A. Alpha Territory: Wealthiest people – living in elite areas such as Notting Hill, South Kensington, Islington, Bath, Edinburgh, Surrey, Chilterns etc. High spenders on services e.g. private education, private healthcare, interior design, domestic services, business-class & first-class air travel etc. Own overseas property. Use exclusive hotels / restaurants.

B. Professional Rewards: Executive and managerial classes, either owners of businesses or senior within corporations. Aged 40s-60s, significant equity, beneficiaries of legacies, spacious homes, children at university. Own 2nd homes. Take multiple holidays.

C. Rural Solitude: Live in deep countryside and small villages – remote places, not dormitory commuter villages. High numbers of farmers, suppliers to agriculture, or retired into countryside. Likely to be married or widowed. Value traditional way of life – strong community spirit. Leisure time is spent on country pursuits. Not influenced by fashion – do not spend on high-end luxury.

[1] Experian's Mosaic is a widely used consumer-profiling system which analyses postcodes and splits them into 15 different Groups and 67 different Types

Mosaic Types that are particularly prominent (i.e. larger actual numbers plus higher indexing) are:

A02 Voices of Authority
Cosmopolitan and cultured. Between 36 and 65 – most with older children (teens & adults at home). Living in leafier suburbs of the capitals of London, Cardiff, Edinburgh. Professionals – including public sector & self-employed. Work hard, long hours. Work and personal lives are intertwined.

B06 Yesterday's Captains
Mostly older former professionals and managers who live in attractive and spacious houses in well established suburbs of large provincial cities. Retired, comfortably off, empty nesters. Settled, middle-class, conservative.

B08 Dormitory Villagers
Upmarket Middle England. Middle-class, middle-of-the-road. Live in new developments in commuter villages. Married couples with kids in teens or adult children still living at home. Both parents work full-time. University educated. Hard-working, practical, organised. Well-informed consumers looking for quality, service, value for money. Innate sympathy for Britain's countryside and heritage.

B10 Parish Guardians
Mid 50s to mid 60s. Empty nesters. Living in small and medium-sized picturesque villages. Traditional rural communities. Community focused. House-proud and family-oriented. Support local independent businesses. Leisure pursuits are heritage, environment, countryside, travel.

C11 Squires among Locals
Live in rural settings, often in farms and country houses. Proud of their independence of thought. Family stage – aged 35-55. High-paid professional jobs. Highly educated, career-oriented, big-C Conservatives. Less integrated with rural community than other C Types – but busy social lives, expensive leisure activities/hobbies. Love travel – en famille and in groups.

4 POTENTIAL VISITORS

PRIMARY RESEARCH FOR THIS STUDY: QUALITATIVE

Focus groups were carried out with non-visitors in March 2011. All participants took holidays and/or breaks in the UK and would consider trips to relatively remote rural spots, including islands. None had visited Scilly. Participants were all comfortably off and fitted broadly into Mosaic Groups B (empty nesters age 50-65) and O (age 35-50 with young children).

We found:

- Awareness and understanding of the Isles of Scilly and what it has to offer were limited and typically vague
- Perceptions were of a remote place, strongly associated with nature, wildlife, and - in the empty nester groups - wit h a place for older people to holiday
- The Isles were perceived as somewhere ‘different’, unusual – somewhere that ‘*should be seen*’
- The concept of the Isles of Scilly as a holiday destination has some appeal, but perceptions of *access*, *journey-time* and *logistics* are creating barriers
- The empty-nesters have a higher propensity to visit – being child-free and more attracted by the peace and tranquillity the Isles offer
- The young families found the Isles attractive and appealing – but not typically appropriate for young children. Nevertheless, it is a place to consider for when children are older
- All Groups were pre-occupied with travel to the Isles – long journey times and associated cost position the Isles as a destination for a holiday, rather than a short break
- This changes the competitive set – the Isles of Scilly must compete with more typical holiday destinations – where climate and cost are key considerations

- There is however scope to position the Isles as a short break destination embedded within a trip to Cornwall – reducing the barrier of journey time
- The journey there has potential to appeal to some as part of the *experience / adventure* – the sleeper, a helicopter ride – all part of the holiday experience
- Cost is an important consideration, but the prospect of an *'adventure',* and *new experience* adds value and may expand cost criteria a little, as long as they are within the bounds of affordability.

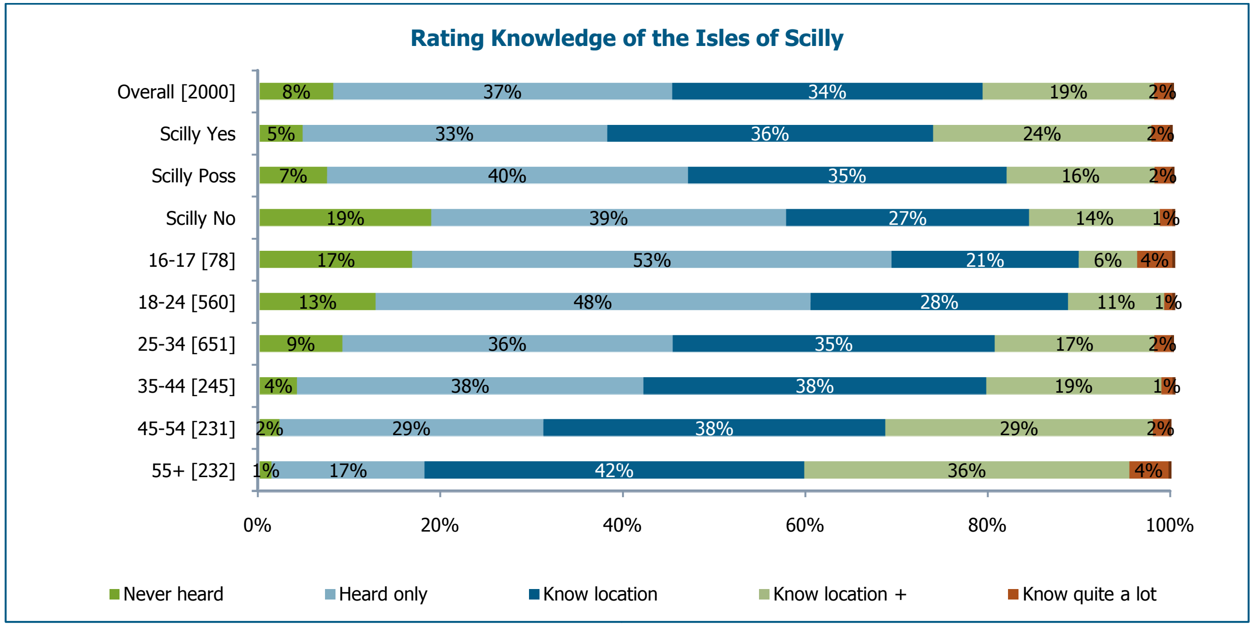
Draft propositions and words that we had developed from creative work with stakeholders on Scilly were tested with the focus groups and:

- Propositions which suggested *unspoilt beauty*, *freedom*, *space, opportunity to view wildlife and uncrowded beaches* were appealing - the younger Groups however are not convinced that there are suitable activities to keep their small children amused
- The draft propositions & supporting words tended to re-enforce images of a wild, rugged place – respondents were pleasantly surprised by the bright and colourful imagery of the literature
- Imagery and motivating messages could combine to make a strong proposition for some – providing issues of access, cost and competitive positioning can be overcome.

PRIMARY RESEARCH FOR THIS STUDY: QUANTITATIVE

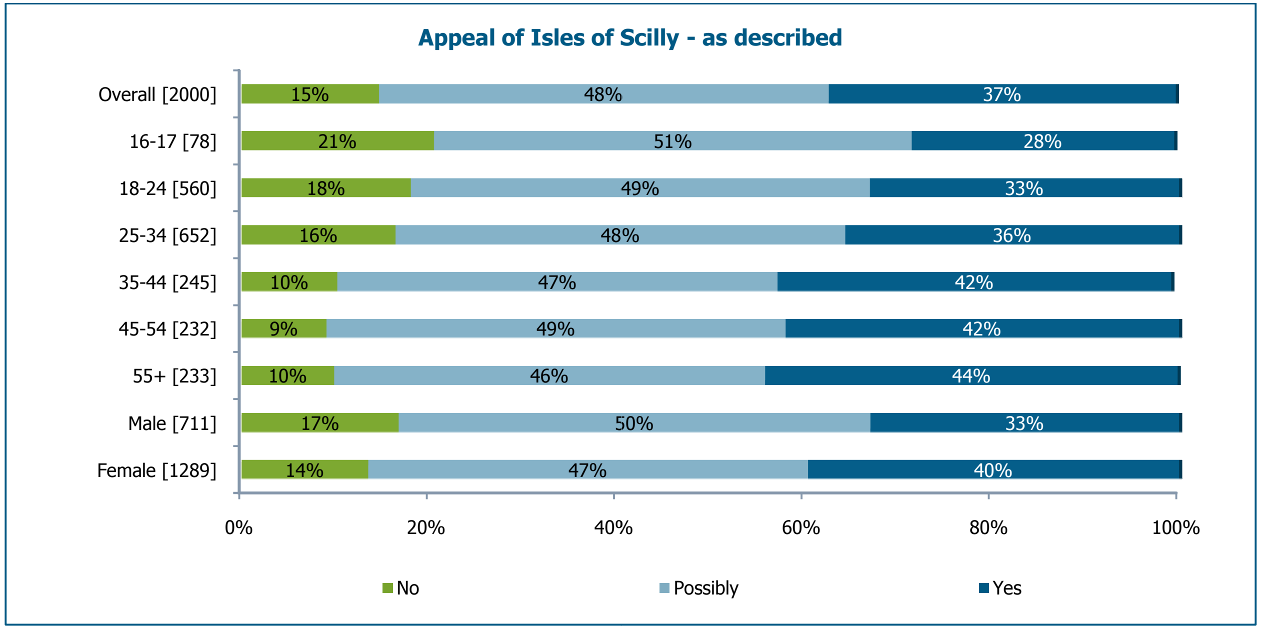
In addition to the primary research originally commissioned, we added an extra piece of quantitative research to test some emerging conclusions following the focus groups. We used a short online survey of 2,000 UK adults who had never been to Scilly. This time we surveyed adults with no children under the age of 16. And they all take at least one overseas holiday a year.

We first asked if they had heard of the Isles of Scilly. This chart shows all respondents, then breaks down into categories (of yes, possibly and no) according to people's answers to a later question (once respondents had further information) asking if Scilly sounded like 'their sort of place' for holidays. Then it shows responses by age. Bear in mind that people don't like to admit ignorance – even in an anonymous survey.



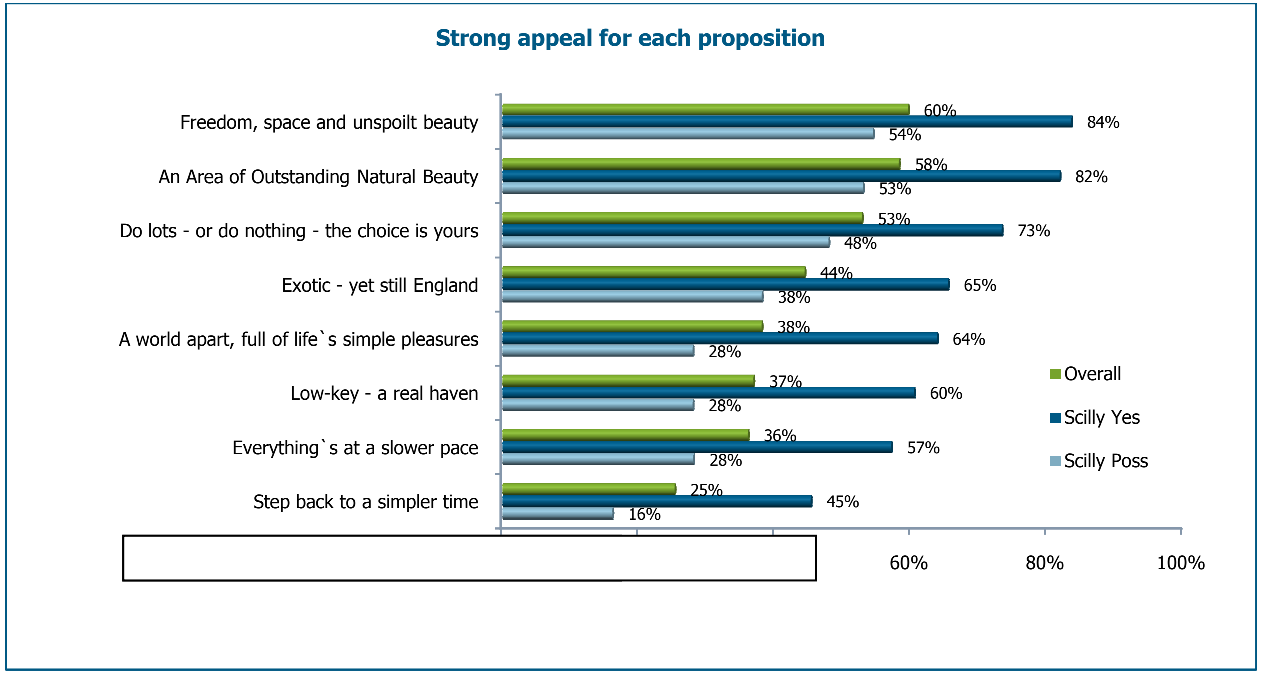
We asked them which three words spring to mind when you say ‘Isles of Scilly’. We’ve created a word cloud from the 6,000 words (the larger the word, the more frequently it occurred). About 12.5% of respondents couldn’t suggest any words and replied “nothing”, “haven’t a clue”, “I don’t know” etc. These have all been recorded as “nothing”. A significant minority confused Scilly with Sicily.

We gave respondents a short description of the islands what there is to do on Scilly. Then we asked: “Do the Isles of Scilly sound like your sort of a place for a holiday?”



Overall, 85% of this sample said *‘yes’* or *‘possibly’* to the Isles of Scilly being ‘their sort of place for a holiday’. Although the appeal is clearly stronger in the older age groups, it is interesting to note there are still reasonably high ratings amongst the younger groups and the age differentials may not be as marked as could be expected.

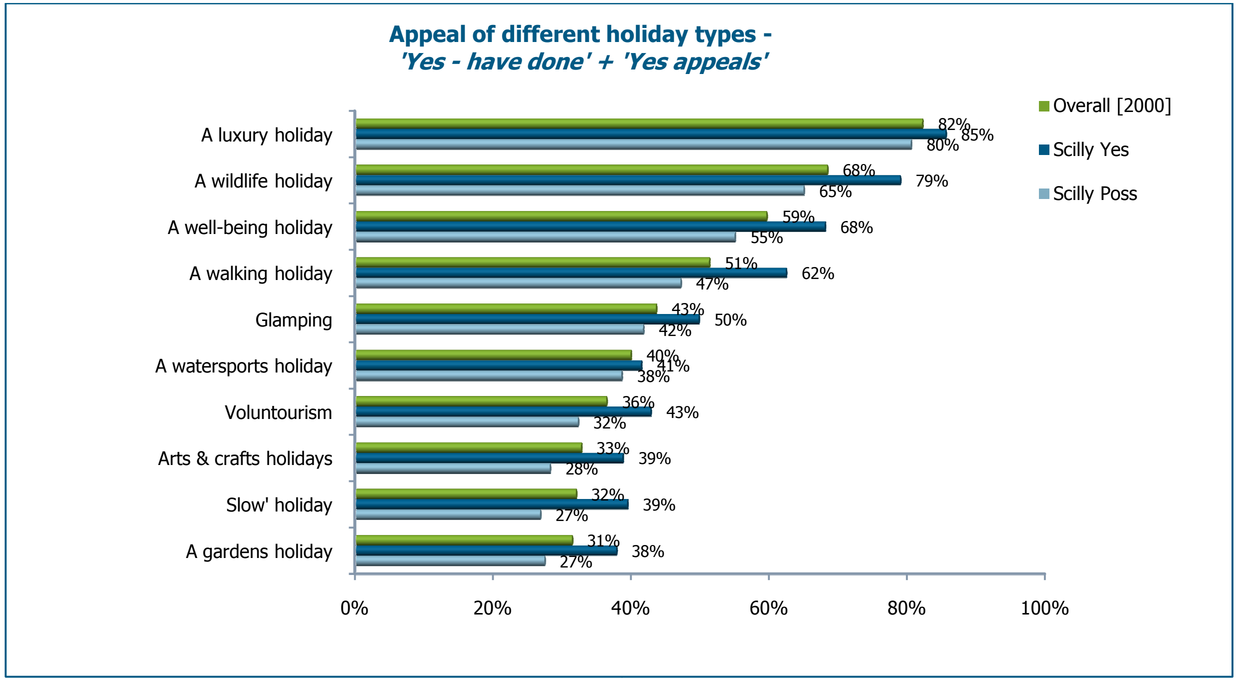
We presented respondents with a series of 'propositions' that we had already tested in the focus groups and further developed. The propositions with the strongest appeal are "Freedom, space and unspoilt beauty" and "An Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty", scoring very strongly amongst those who would consider a holiday in the Scilly Isles. The rankings for the propositions are the same for those who said 'yes' and those who said possibly to the Isles of Scilly.



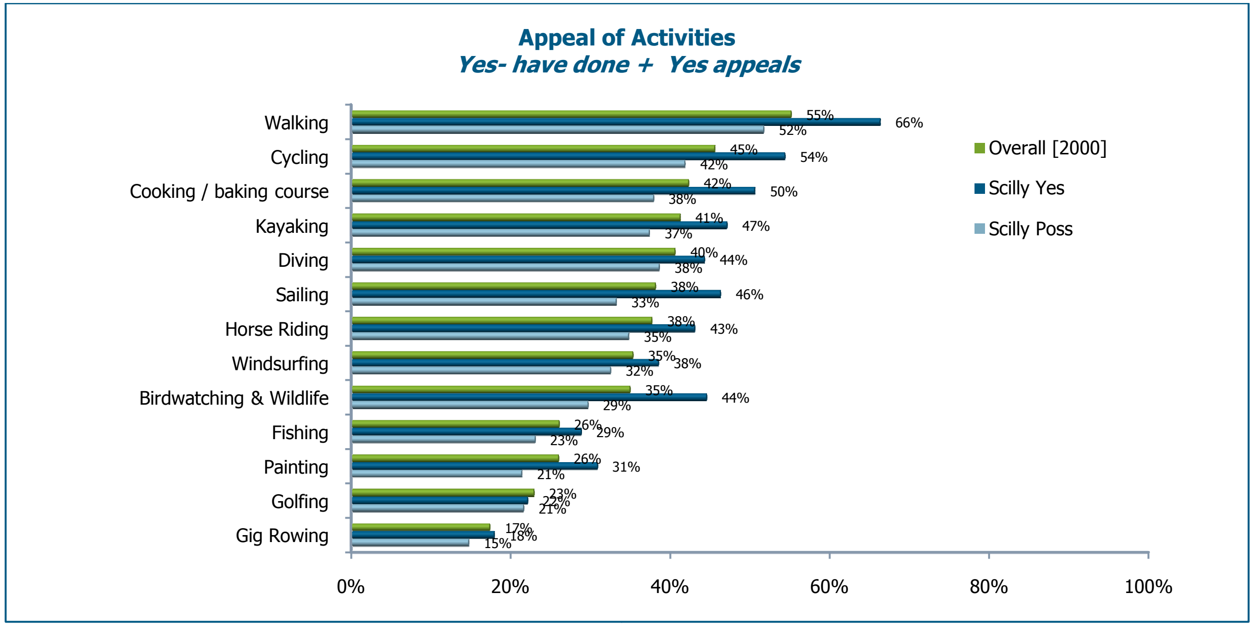
The survey asked questions about the appeal of different holiday types.

A *'luxury holiday'* and a *'wildlife holiday'* were most favoured holiday types generally and were especially favoured by those who had expressed an interest in Isles of Scilly.

Cautionary note : This chart shows responses '*yes – I have already done this as part of a holiday'* and *'yes it appeals' combined,* assuming they are both positive responses. However, it should be considered that although people have already done a particular type of holiday they may not necessarily want to do it again.



The appeal of walking is evident, especially amongst the 'Scilly Yes' group:



Other findings include:

- When it comes to likely time of year for a holiday in Isles of Scilly, the majority go for May - August with little difference between the groups.
- The predominant group size is 2 – indicating the perception of the Isles as appropriate for couples. However, there is a significant contingent who perceive a holiday with a larger group.

CURRENT VISITORS TO CORNWALL[2]

- 90% are staying visitors – whatever the time of year.
- 79% of groups comprise 2 adults.
- Middle/older age brackets – 55% were aged 45+ years.
- Relatively affluent - 47% are ABC1s (of which 16% are ABs).
- 92% are from the UK. 22% are from the South West. Overseas visitors (8%) are growing.
- Relatively high average length of stay - almost 7 nights (6.68 nights). But even Cornwall holidays are getting shorter (stays of less than 1 night were 20% in 2001 and are now 45% of all visits – although NB total tourism visits have grown).
- 29% are on their main holiday (up to 48% of visitors in the summer). 62% of visitors during the spring are on an 'additional' holiday.
- 88% repeats. First-timers are highest in the summer at 15%. Repeats highest in autumn/winter at 91%.
- Loyalty is high: the average number of previous staying trips taken in the county in the last five years was also high at around 5 trips.
- Sources of info: 36% rely on information from previous visit. 23% sourced info online. 10% found print useful.
- Autumn/winter visitors spend more than spring, then summer (lowest)
- Visitors to Cornwall are keen sightseers visiting a number of different towns in the county, visitor attractions and places of interest. They also participate in a wide range of different activities and outdoor active pursuits during their trip to Cornwall.
- Asked what they liked about visiting Cornwall they said: the scenery/views (22%), relaxing nature of the county (18%) sea/coast (9%) and beaches (9%).
- Visitors are satisfied with attractions: they rate range and quality high, but are less happy with 'wet-weather provision'. The Eden Project, National Trust/English Heritage properties and Land's End were the most visited attractions/places of interest

[2] Cornwall Visitor Survey 2008/09 – for VisitCornwall by the SW Research Co Sept 09