

# TAPPING INTO TOURISM

A toolkit for craftspeople  
and craft businesses in  
Ireland's Ancient East

Front cover image: House of Waterford Crystal, Waterford  
P1 image: Local Crafts at Taste of Togher, Louth

**This Toolkit is for craftspeople and craft businesses in Ireland's Ancient East who want to get more out of tourism – meaning more visitors to your workshop, more sales to tourists, and raising your profile further afield.**

In the Toolkit you'll find information about types of tourists, ideas for improving the experiences you offer tourists and the way you market them, and examples of craft tourism elsewhere. There are top tips, checklists, and sources of support.

We aim to make Ireland's Ancient East the most engaging, enjoyable and accessible cultural holiday experience in Europe. And we believe that the

craft sector – from single artisans to larger businesses – can help us to achieve this by providing world-class craft visitor experiences. That's why we're delivering a programme of work – from mystery-shopping and workshops to mentoring and business support – specially designed for craftspeople. This Toolkit is part of that programme.

We look forward to working with you!



Jenny De Saulles  
Head of Ireland's Ancient East at Fáilte Ireland

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# ABOUT IRELAND'S ANCIENT EAST

WE ARE MAKING A PROMISE TO VISITORS:  
COME TO IRELAND'S ANCIENT EAST AND YOU'LL FIND ...

.....  
5,000 YEARS OF HISTORY  
.....

IN LUSH GREEN LANDSCAPES  
.....

WITH STORIES TOLD BY THE BEST STORYTELLERS IN THE WORLD  
.....

Colm De Rís Irish Pottery

The idea of Ireland's Ancient East is to attract more people to holiday in the East and the South of Ireland – the region stretching from Carlingford to Cork, and from the Irish Sea to the Midlands.

It's a part of Ireland that's long been overlooked by tourists – especially from overseas. Now we're changing that – turning it from a region they travel through to a region to stop in and explore.

Our aim is to grow the value of tourism significantly, bringing more visitor spend into local businesses and communities. So we're working with people like you – and with public agencies such as the county councils – to develop the experiences on offer to tourists.

We're promoting Ireland's Ancient East strongly at home. And we're working with Tourism Ireland to spread the word overseas.

## Craft in Ireland's Ancient East

Ireland's Ancient East is competing with the best destinations in the world. So we need world-class experiences to attract visitors and encourage them to stay longer, spend more, recommend the region to others, and then come back again themselves.

Our targets are well-travelled Culturally Curious people who are looking for authentic, high-quality experiences that will be memorable and enriching. They want to be active participants, rather than passive spectators and consumers. They want to learn from the places they visit and connect with the people and culture. They want experiences that are special and 'only here' ... experiences that create memories to share with friends, family and social networks.

### ABOUT FÁILTE IRELAND



**Fáilte Ireland** is the National Tourism Development Authority. Our role is to support the tourism industry and work to sustain Ireland as a high-quality and competitive tourism destination.

We provide a range of practical help to businesses and work with other state agencies and representative bodies to support tourism.

We run a tourist information network, promote Ireland as a holiday destination to the Irish, and partner with **Tourism Ireland** to attract international markets.

We have developed 4 key propositions to motivate people to visit: Ireland's Ancient East, the Wild Atlantic Way, Dublin Surprising By Nature and Ireland's Hidden Heartlands.



Quay Arts, Ballina Killaloe, Lough Derg, Tipperary

Through our Craft Visitor Experience programme we're supporting the craft sector to develop existing experiences and create new ones. To date, we have:

- Conducted research into national and international craft visitor experiences
- Carried out 'mystery shopping' reviews of 15 craft visitor experiences in Ireland's Ancient East
- Run workshops on how to deliver great craft visitor experiences
- Created business supports to develop new saleable experiences
- Worked in partnership with key organisations – Craft Council of Ireland, Local Enterprise Offices and LEADER, County Councils and their Tourism and Heritage Officers

Email [info@irelandsancienteast.ie](mailto:info@irelandsancienteast.ie) for our latest Project Update and how to get involved.



Sean Egan Art Glass, Waterford



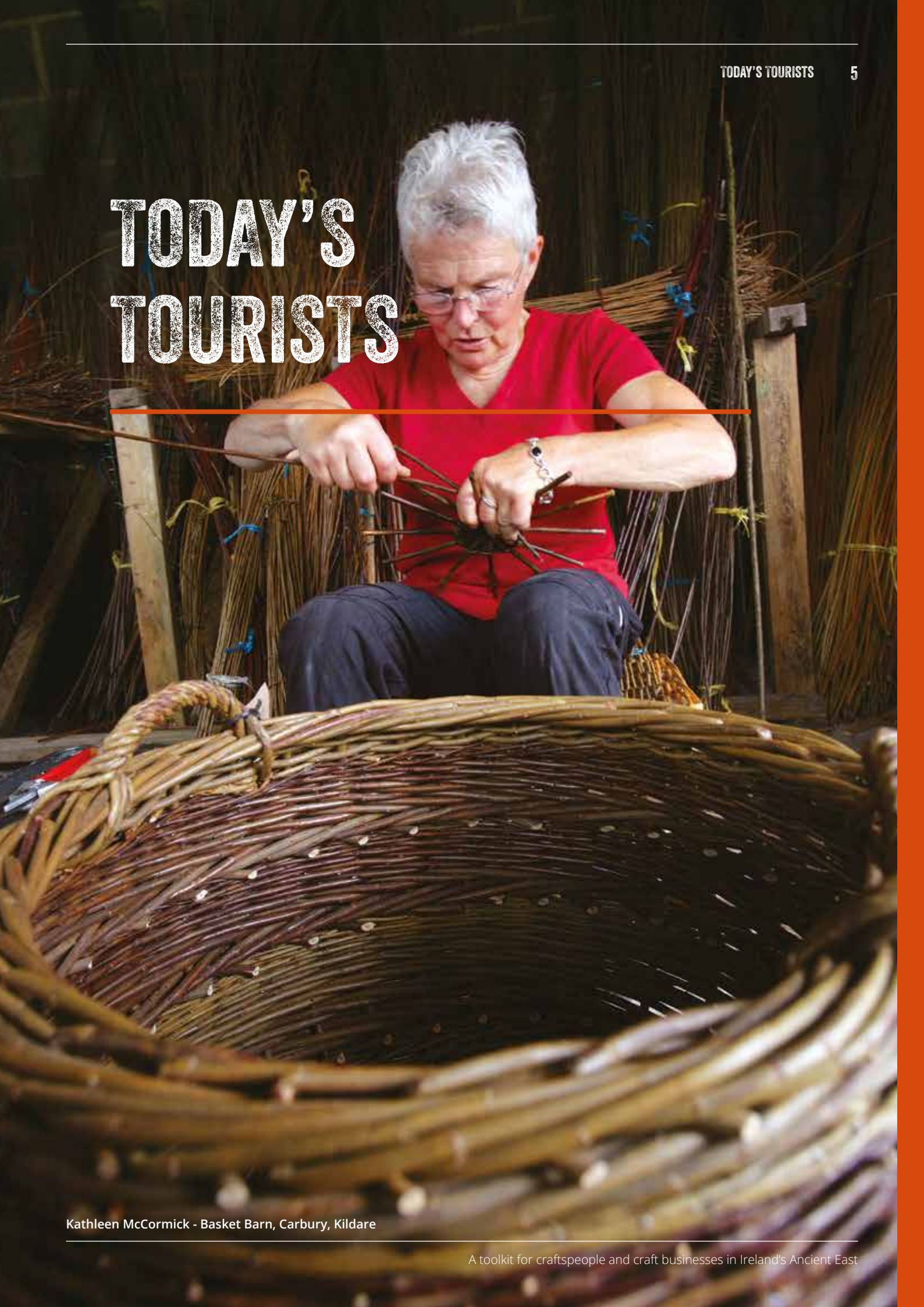
Robert O'Connor - Woodturning Studio, Wexford

**GET INVOLVED** 

- So that tourists recognise you as part of Ireland's Ancient East, sign up to our Brand Charter, and you can use the Ireland's Ancient East logo and brand guidelines – email [info@irelandsancienteast.ie](mailto:info@irelandsancienteast.ie) for details
- To make sure you are meeting tourists' expectations, send your frontline staff on one of our training courses – see **Supports section** in this Toolkit and email [info@irelandsancienteast.ie](mailto:info@irelandsancienteast.ie) for more details
- Get listed on [discoverireland.ie](http://discoverireland.ie) and keep your entries updated – your opening hours, contact details, events you are planning etc
- Get to know the other businesses near you, so that you can work together to offer more and attract more visitors
- Follow us on social media – **Instagram, Twitter, Facebook** – join the conversation and use #irelandsancienteast in your own activity
- Keep us up to date with the new experiences and services you're offering – email [info@irelandsancienteast.ie](mailto:info@irelandsancienteast.ie) so we can use them in our promotion where appropriate

# TODAY'S TOURISTS

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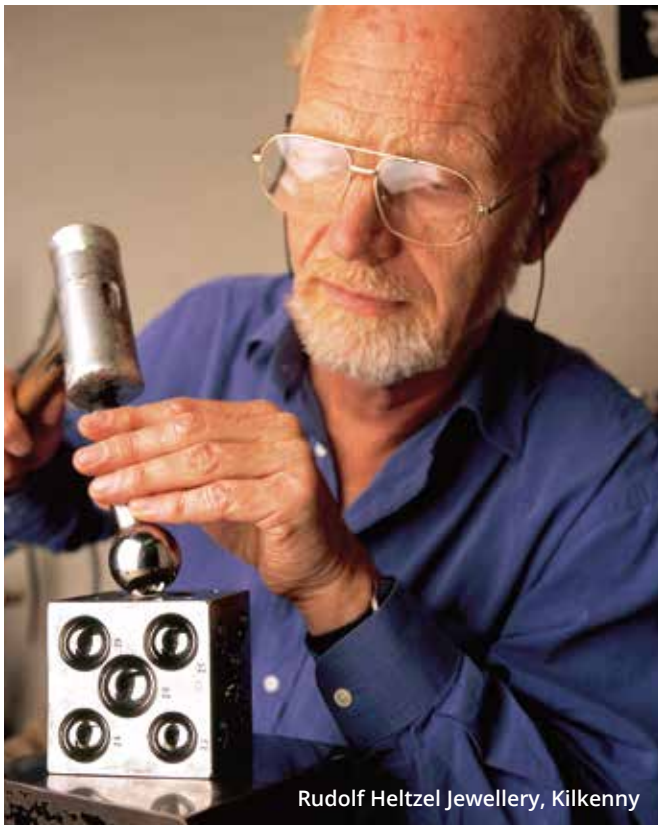
Kathleen McCormick - Basket Barn, Carbury, Kildare

## Types of tourism

Ireland's Ancient East targets people from Ireland (domestic visitors) and from overseas.

**Independent travellers:** Domestic holidaymakers and most overseas tourists (83%) make their own holiday arrangements and travel independently. As well as tourism development, Fáilte Ireland delivers domestic marketing, and Tourism Ireland markets overseas. They use a range of marketing, from online campaigns to TV and press advertising to PR, including running regular press trips.

**Package holidays:** Some tourists (17%) – especially people from newer long-haul markets – travel in groups or are on a package holiday, with their arrangements made by a tour operator. So Fáilte Ireland and Tourism Ireland work to make sure that Ireland features in the packages and programmes of incoming operators.



Rudolf Heltzel Jewellery, Kilkenny

### TOURISTS: MAIN PURPOSE OF VISIT

Includes an overnight stay



**Conferences:** While most visitors are on leisure trips – either pure holidaymaking or visiting friends and family – conferences are an important part of the Irish tourism industry. There may be opportunities for craft businesses to be included in the social programme of a conference, or to provide gifts for delegates.

**Incentives:** Or you could be part of an ‘incentives’ package. Incentives are rewards programmes paid for by businesses for their employees and agents: the specialists who organise these are on the lookout for unusual and exclusive VIP experiences that are not available to the general public.

Find out more about how we target visitors and how you can take part at [failteireland.ie/Sales](http://failteireland.ie/Sales).

### TOURISM FACTS



**Tourism** is one of this country's most important sectors. It supports around 240,000 jobs. In 2017 overseas tourists spent €7.2bn. There were 9.6 million domestic tourist trips, and 9 million tourists from overseas – 38% of those were from Britain, 36% from mainland Europe and 19% from North America.



## Market trends

There are a number of tourism market trends that are relevant for craftspeople and craft businesses.

**Experiences not things:** Today's tourists expect more than just sights to see. They're looking for experiences that will deliver benefits such as well-being, learning and a sense of achievement. And many visitors want to feel a connection with the places they visit – through the people they meet and the experiences they have. Increasingly, people want experiences that will have a lasting impact – for example to learn a new skill.

**'Slow tourism'** is a growing trend – it's a style of travel that encourages people to spend longer in a place, rather than just ticking off the 'must-sees'. Instead, the 'slow tourist' wants to absorb the feel

of the place, see the detail, listen to the stories, appreciate local traditions and skills, and support local producers.

**'Living like a local'** is another, related travel trend: people hope to immerse themselves in a place, even if only for a short stay. They want to get off the tourist trail, meet locals and get insider tips about where to go and what to do.

**Authentic objects:** When it comes to buying something to take home with them, people are looking for things that feel authentic, original and personal, rather than mass produced. They want to know the stories behind what they buy.

For tourism facts and figures and more about tourism trends, see the Research & Insights section of [failteireland.ie/research](https://failteireland.ie/research).

## CASE STUDY - TOURISM AND STORYTELLING



For an example of how craft lends itself to tourism and storytelling go to [irelandsancienteast.com](https://irelandsancienteast.com), click on **Local Stories: the Master Glass Blower** and watch the short video of Rory Leadbetter from Jerpoint Glass. As well as the history and techniques of glassblowing, Rory's 30-minute workshop tours reveal the family story and inspiration behind the designs. Visitors handle the tools and some get the chance to blow a 'bubble' of glass themselves.



## CASE STUDY: AUTHENTICITY



Images © Melin Tregwynt

**Melin Tregwynt** is a picturesque white-washed wool mill on the Pembrokeshire coast in West Wales. There has been a mill on this site since the 17th century, when local farmers would bring their fleeces to be spun into yarn and woven into fine Welsh wool blankets. Visitors can see weaving in progress, there are colourful displays of yarn, an interpretation room, mill shop and café. This summer they launched a dog-friendly pop-up café.

There is a striking blend of the contemporary and the historic in their designs and their marketing. Their website is beautiful, warm and witty. Location and heritage are to the fore – but the history is worn lightly and always linked to today. Mentions of good coffee, local food, and nearby beaches, cliffs and coastal footpaths give a rounded picture of a trip worth doing to the potential visitor.

The mill has been owned and run by the same family since 1912. The water wheel no longer drives the looms, but it has been restored and there are plans to use it to generate power. “Woven in Wales” and “keeping the tradition alive” are the key phrases they use over and over. The impression is of a hyper-local company that is inspired by and historically rooted in place.

*“Consumers are always looking for stories that are local and authentic ... 20 years ago we didn't emphasise the traditional Welsh roots of our fabrics; we sold our work on its appearance and design. These days, we find that the authenticity and the story behind the company are equally important.”*  
Eifion Griffiths, owner

## International tourists

These are Ireland's four largest international markets (the following statistics are from 2017):

### GREAT BRITAIN

- The British are looking for experiences that set Ireland apart from home and that will inspire them to travel. Experiences that highlight Ireland's distinctive culture perform well.
- British holidaymakers are relatively young: 69% are under 55. 47% are couples, 21% adult groups, 19% solo and 14% are family groups.
- 54% of British holidaymakers are repeat visitors to Ireland, 6% are Irish born and the balance (40%) are visiting for the first time.
- 44% of British tourists cite visiting friends and relatives as the main purpose of visit to Ireland with a further 38% visiting for a holiday. They mainly travel to Ireland for short breaks - 50% will stay up to 3 nights and 68% stay less than 5 nights. When in Ireland 55% use hotels and a further 17% use guesthouses and B&Bs.
- The vast majority (92%) travel independently – that is, they make their own arrangements and do not buy a package or inclusive trip.

### RESEARCH RESULTS



We asked potential holidaymakers in our 4 largest international markets (GB, USA, Germany and France) about what things they would like to see and do on holiday in Ireland.

- How much would you want to watch a traditional craftsperson design and work in their studio? 29%
- How much would you want to explore your creativity by trying an Irish craft for yourself, like pottery? 19%

### USA

- Americans are drawn to Ireland's history, heritage, scenery and living culture. The more informal experiences of exploring towns, people watching and 'living like a local' are particularly appealing. They like Ireland as a place for city breaks and for touring.
- US holidaymakers are typically under 55 years old (68%). 42% are couples, 20% solo, 18% are adult groups, and 20% are family groups.
- 74% are first-time visitors – so 26% are returning for a repeat visit.
- 73% of US visitors come for a holiday, while a further 15% are visiting friends and family. They travel between May and September (64%) and when in Ireland they prefer to use serviced accommodation, especially hotels (70%).
- 74% travel independently. 26% arrive on a package holiday.

### WHERE DO IRELAND'S TOURISTS COME FROM?

Great Britain	3,445,000
United States of America	1,511,000
Northern Ireland	1,315,000
Germany	644,000
France	513,000
Spain	411,000
Italy	343,000



## GERMANY

- Ireland's scenery appeals to Germans. They are particularly attracted to Ireland's coast, and enjoy getting under the skin of the real Ireland and interacting with locals.
- German holidaymakers are young: 55% are under 34 years of age. 46% are couples, 24% adult groups, 15% solo, and 15% family groups.
- 70% of German holidaymakers are first time visitors to Ireland – so 30% are returning for a repeat visit.
- 69% of German visitors are here for a holiday. A further 14% are visiting friends and relatives. They prefer to use serviced accommodation while in Ireland, split between guesthouses and B&Bs (43%) and hotels (37%). 37% will stay more than 9 nights.
- Most German holidaymakers travel independently to Ireland. 11% arrive on a package holiday.



## FRANCE

- The French are looking to relax, recharge batteries and soak up the atmosphere of picturesque Irish towns and dramatic scenery.
- French holidaymakers are young: 52% are under 35 years of age. 40% are couples, 22% adult groups, 17% solo, and 20% family groups.
- 67% of French holidaymakers are first time visitors to Ireland – so 33% are returning for a repeat visit. French holidaymakers are the second largest market after GB for return visits to Ireland.
- 64% are here for a holiday and a further 18% are visiting friends and relatives. When in Ireland 75% prefer to use serviced accommodation, split between hotels (34%) and guesthouses and B&Bs (41%). 32% will stay more than 9 nights.
- Most French holidaymakers (83%) travel independently to Ireland, with 17% on a package holiday.

## CASE STUDY – IRISH DESIGN



Kilkenny Design originated in the 1960s with the specific aim of promoting craft making in rural Ireland and has a history of reaching international visitors. The company's East Cork base is at Shangarry Design Centre, where its shop, Irish artisan café and design studios – for visits and classes – are all under one roof.

**The website** promotes views, walks and visitor attractions in the surrounding area.



## Market segments

Fáilte Ireland and Tourism Ireland target holidaymakers from these three global segments, as they offer the most potential for holidaying in Ireland. Each of these could visit your area – but of

the three, the Culturally Curious are most attracted by Ireland's Ancient East, and have the most potential for the craft sector. For more information go to [failteireland.ie/GlobalSegmentation](https://failteireland.ie/GlobalSegmentation).

### Culturally Curious

- are independent 'curious sightseers' looking to visit new places
- are looking to get under the skin of a place
- like to delve deeper into history, culture and environment, and consider 'how and why'
- are looking for authenticity and will pay for what they consider to be a quality experience
- want unique experiences, but also like a comfortable relaxed pace
- enjoy exploring landscapes, connecting with nature and wandering off the beaten track
- usually travel in a couple or as individuals and rarely in a family group

### Social Energisers

- are travelling as couples and adult groups
- are looking for excitement, new experiences, and a fun, social holiday somewhere different
- want lots to do in a relatively small area – they like to pack lots in and tend to have shorter breaks than the other segments
- are up for interesting events and fun activities, having a laugh and sharing an adventure with friends
- are always ready to try new things – often described as 'early adopters'
- looking for something unusual, especially if it's got the 'wow' factor

### Great Escapers

- are looking for time out from busy lives
- go on holiday to recharge their batteries and reconnect with their travelling party
- want rural holidays in order to connect with nature, but will also visit a castle or landmark
- want to feel the earth beneath their feet and to soak up the beauty
- want to get off the beaten track and experience the elements – stars, water etc
- are usually couples, some with babies or quite young children

## CHECKLIST



### TODAY'S TOURISTS OFTEN WANT TO ...

- ✓ Learn unusual skills
- ✓ Mix with the locals
- ✓ Share an experience
- ✓ Relax through activities
- ✓ Be creative, active, mindful, inspired
- ✓ ... & then tell everyone about it!

# THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE

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Newbridge Silverware factory, Kildare

The craft sector is well-placed to meet tourists' desire for engaging, immersive experiences. Whether designing your retail space, opening up your studio, joining a cooperative to display and sell your crafts, running workshop tours and demonstrations, or taking a stall at a fair or a festival, you can give tourists a really strong sense of authenticity and connection.

## The retail space

The best experiences start with great customer service – with eye contact and warm personal interaction. Visitors enjoy insights into the creative process, skills and materials. You can help them to appreciate the detail, skill and craftsmanship. Let them hold or try something tangible – so that they feel like an active participant. Showing and talking about an object is a great way in to telling the stories you want to tell about the craft and the place.

Make sure that visitors experience a sense of place by helping them to understand what has inspired the makers – the local landscapes, materials, histories, traditions and legends. Can you 'stage' your retail space – using objects, pictures and even sounds to depict the local landscape and culture?

Can you talk about other features of your area, including other craft businesses, so that you give visitors a strong sense that you are rooted

### CASE STUDY – FACTORY TOUR



Newbridge Silverware, established in 1934, opened its factory doors to the public in June 2018. During a 45-minute guided tour, visitors learn about the processes – from blanking to soldering and from finishing to plating – and true life stories, including local man Willy Kett, who worked in the factory for more than 60 years.

in the place? Tourists particularly value insider tips from creative people and will remember you warmly if you help to make their trip a success by recommending other places – so make sure that you are generous with your local knowledge.

## Tours & demonstrations

Tours and demonstrations give visitors the chance to watch artisans at work and to learn about the materials, processes and skills. They are particularly powerful when they engage the senses – not just sight but sound, smell, touch and taste – and when they use a storytelling style to connect with visitors. This means a guide who doesn't simply deliver a dry script but brings it to life with a personal style and a warm tone. It makes a big difference to use an 'authentic' guide – someone who can speak to visitors from the heart about the skills involved or the history of the business or the location – and to give people the chance to handle objects. Short audio and video clips can help to tell the stories too. Small groups and a relaxed pace increase visitor satisfaction.

### CHECKLIST



#### WHAT TOURISTS VALUE

- ✓ Products that reflect local history and tradition
- ✓ The opportunity to take away memories of a place
- ✓ Opportunities to meet and engage with makers
- ✓ Products made from locally sourced materials
- ✓ The sense that buying a local artist's work supports the local community

From *Mapping the Craft Sector in Southern Ireland: A report for the Craft Council by WMUD*

## CASE STUDY: AWARD-WINNING TOUR



**Emma Bridgewater Factory** – in Stoke-on-Trent, the traditional home of English pottery – is a Victorian pot bank where Emma has manufactured her iconic handmade and hand decorated pottery for more than twenty years. The Factory is very busy, with tours by award-winning guides, drop-in ‘have-a-go’ clay sessions for children, decorating-studio sessions, experience days, parties (for adults as well as children) in the decorating studio, and the (all-important) shop and cafe. The Factory Tour received national tourist board VisitEngland’s “Best Told Story” accolade in 2016.

*“We had the most wonderful, eye-opening tour of the factory, following the process of production from start to finish. The guide was so lovely and knowledgeable. The kids threw a plate. Most incredible was the painting floor with rows of artists hand-decorating the pottery. The intense concentration was palpable.”*

TripAdvisor review



Image © Emma Bridgewater

## TOUR TIPS



- Introduce yourself and make eye contact
- Use an informal and friendly personal style and tone
- Ask questions to gauge their interest/knowledge
- Tailor the tour to suit the audience – content and length
- Give visitors an experience that involves more than looking – are there sounds, smells, textures or tastes you can incorporate into the tour?
- Allow enough time for questions – and encourage them to ask
- In advance: Provide online booking and information about availability and accessibility. Be clear about dates, times, and length of tour – state if you welcome individuals or if it’s just for groups. Provide phone numbers and email contact details



## Workshops

People increasingly want their travel experiences to make a difference in their everyday lives – and that includes the chance to learn a new skill, or take an existing skill to a higher level. So when you're designing and promoting your workshops, focus on how it will give participants the chance to develop their own creativity and skills, and the impact it will have when they return home.

You are asking people to give part or all of their trip to Ireland over to this experience – so it needs to be meaningful and memorable. It needs to be worth making the journey for – something that they cannot get at home. They should feel your workshop has enriched their visit, and connected them more deeply to the place. You can achieve this through the location of the

workshop, the materials you use, or the stories you tell about local traditions, skills, settings and characters, and by sharing information about other craftspeople, attractions and activities in the area. If you provide refreshments as part of the workshop, you can add a stronger sense of place by serving locally produced food, ideally homemade, on locally produced tableware.

If they are going to want to take their work back home, provide suitable packaging for them to transport it – or make arrangements to ship it for them. Include information about this in advance, and make sure you are up to date with rules on **tax-free purchases**.



### CHECKLIST



#### BEFORE THEY COME ...

- ✓ Promote workshop dates well in advance - several months ahead if you're looking at independent travellers, and 1-2 years if you want to feature in tour operators' programmes
- ✓ Provide online booking – most people expect to be able to book online at a time that suits them
- ✓ Link to places to stay – although take care not to get caught up in **Package Travel regulations**
- ✓ Make it clear that tourists are welcome, and also what the level is – people don't want to feel out of place or out of their depth
- ✓ In your publicity, link to or feature positive reviews of your workshops written by other tourists if you can

### WHAT'S YOUR STORY?

#### Which details ...

- set you apart?
- give an insight into the life you live?
- create a sense of place?
- are alive with tradition or innovation?

#### Remember, people are interested in ...

- Where you learnt your skills and who from
- Processes and techniques
- How long you've been working here
- Which local materials and suppliers you use

## Craft Fairs & Markets

Public fairs and markets give you the chance to reach a wider audience, including tourists. Use on-stand demonstrations and images to position yourself as a maker, not simply a retailer. Tourists will be looking for something local to buy, so foreground your local credentials with images and information about the location of your workshop, the history of your business, the roots of your skills and the inspiration behind your creativity. Include words and images that connect you to the place in any handouts, labels and bag inserts. Use this opportunity to promote your online retail, tours, demonstrations and workshops – and to do some informal research about what visitors are most interested in. Make sure you collect email addresses from potential future customers and follow-up quickly with a friendly message and link to your website.



Taste of Togher Local Crafts, Louth

### CHECKLIST

#### CAN YOU ...

- ✓ Share an insight into the maker when a shopper picks up a product?
- ✓ Create an experience that gives people a hands-on connection with your craft and a real chance to get to know you?
- ✓ Find a way to stay in touch or generate a return visit?

### CHECKLIST

#### MAKING MEMORIES

An engaging, immersive visitor experience is memorable because it ...

- ✓ is authentic – true to the place
- ✓ is hands-on – with opportunities to learn and do
- ✓ stimulates the senses – not just sights, but sounds, smells, tastes and textures too
- ✓ connects – the visitor to the place, the local community, and perhaps to other like-minded visitors
- ✓ inspires – can provide a personal sense of achievement and open up new horizons
- ✓ feels special – is not widely available, mainstream or mass market

## CASE STUDY: LEARNING IN THE LANDSCAPE



*“Everything was organic and local as much as possible, and things that could not be used were composted or recycled ... Members of the community participated in the lessons, including a local singer and a spinner ... They provide a wonderful balance of learning and working at a relaxing pace ... A full circle of fleece to felt enriched by hearing about the old crofting way of life”*

Customer Reviews, Responsible Travel website

**Wild Rose Escapes** run day, weekend and week-long traditional crafts experiences in the Scottish Highlands that promise inspirational landscapes, a unique perspective of life in the Highlands, the chance to enjoy a simpler way of life, and a new skill to take home. The fleece to felt week involves starting from scratch watching the owners’ small flock of sheep being hand-sheared, learning about processing a fleece, gathering plants to make dyes over the wood fire, learning to felt, and creating artwork inspired by the place.

The emphasis is on learning traditional skills, using natural products, and the great outdoors. Days are spent in the woods. If the weather is bad, there’s a large barn to work in, and an Iron-Age style round house for lunch round a fire. After the days outdoors, participants are promised homely accommodation, snug fires, space to relax and great home cooking. Evenings can be spent finishing off craft projects, learning to spin and enjoying Gaelic singing. The local community gets involved and hosts a pop-up restaurant on Saturday night in the local café, with food cooked by locals ... the epitome of slow tourism.

*“The landscape is such a part of traditional crafts up here ... People love being out and about and seeing beautiful places, but it’s even more satisfying if you are collecting things along the way, learning skills ... As well as seeing things, people love to be part of things as well.”*

Rosie Hazleton, Wild Rose Escapes

# REACHING TOURISTS

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Castlecommer Craft Centre, Kilkenny

A toolkit for craftspeople and craft businesses in Ireland's Ancient East

## Understanding your targets

It's always important to identify then understand your target markets and what makes them tick. This is more of a challenge when it comes to tourists compared to locals. Fáilte Ireland has lots of information online about who tourists are, what motivates them to visit, and how to reach them. See the **'Today's Tourists'** section of this Toolkit, and go to **our website** for more sales and marketing supports.

## Working with others

Reaching and attracting tourists almost always means working with others. If you're not already involved in the local tourism scene, speak to others in your area who are selling to tourists, learn from them and share ideas. Call in at your nearest visitor information centre and introduce yourself to staff. Talk to local hotels and B&Bs, to visitor attractions, museums and galleries. Get to know local tour guides. Contact the tourism officer at your local council. Join your local tourism association if there is one – and offer to give a talk or demonstration at one of their meetings.

Contact us at **info@irelandsancienteast.ie** to make sure you are invited to our events, workshops and courses – not only to learn but also to network with tourism businesses.

You should seek out those tourism businesses whose customers match the sorts of people your work appeals to and who you particularly want to attract. As well as reciprocal promotion such as displaying each others' leaflets and information on each others' websites, talk to them about opportunities to showcase your work to their customers. Would they display your work in their public areas? Can their staff wear or use something you've made? Make sure front-line staff know where you are and experience what you offer, so they can recommend you enthusiastically: could you host a visit and offer them special discounts, or stage a workshop specially for them?

There is strength in numbers: in a crowded and noisy marketplace you are much more likely to get onto tourists' radar if you collaborate with other craftspeople and craft businesses on joint promotions, trails, pop-ups, fairs and festivals. There are already several craft trails in Ireland's Ancient East – contact us for more information about how to get involved, or if you are thinking about developing one for your area.

### CASE STUDY: PART OF THE BIGGER PICTURE



**Nicholas Mosse** has a page on their website, not only promoting Ireland's Ancient East but also giving insider tips and recommendations in a personal tone that goes way beyond simple listings. The page features quirky shots of Nicholas Mosse pottery in different nearby visitor destinations such as Kells Priory and Smithwick's Brewery.



## Reaching tourists online

With our suite of consumer websites and apps, you can showcase your business to consumers in the domestic and international markets. Fáilte Ireland reaches around 55,000 people a week through [discoverireland.ie](https://discoverireland.ie) and almost 350,000 individuals a week internationally through [Ireland.com](https://ireland.com). Find out [how to get a listing](#) on [discoverireland.ie](https://discoverireland.ie).

### SOCIAL MEDIA TIPS



- Content is still king – keep it fresh, live, interesting and creative
- High-quality images, (very) short videos and carousels/galleries add interest
- Tag your posts – highlight things to see and do in your area beyond just your own business. Location-tag images on Instagram
- When posting about another business, place, person or brand, make sure to mention them in the post by using @ and tagging the relevant page
- Watch other channels – follow, like, engage, comment and share
- Use #IrelandsAncientEast in your posts
- Use # for location and trending topics or events – join in with trending conversations
- Use our Twitter handle where relevant @ancientIRL
- Link to [www.irelandsancienteast.com](https://www.irelandsancienteast.com) from your channels
- Social media is the main driver of traffic to websites – so always make sure there's a link from your profile to your website

Your marketing should inform as well as inspire. So as well as great images and creative words – content that uses a story-telling style and has a strong sense of place – make sure that your website has the sort of practical information that tourists need to plan a trip. Can they visit your gallery or workshop? What will they do there, and how long will a visit take? What are your contact details and your opening times? Will they meet you in person, and can they see you at work? Do you give demonstrations – what time are these and how long do they take? How can they find your business – give directions from your nearest town or landmark.

Make sure you include information about other things to do in your area. Where can they get a coffee or lunch? What other visitor attractions,



Avoca, Powerscourt Estate, Wicklow

arts and crafts businesses, great views, walks and other activities could they combine with a visit to your place?

You have no doubt got great pictures of your craft work, but have you got images of the destination? Fáilte Ireland has hundreds of images and videos that are free for businesses to use to promote Ireland – sign in to [Ireland's Content Pool](#) to search and download.

User reviews are really important to tourists when it comes to planning a trip. Sign up to [Google My Business](#) to verify and enhance your business listing, gather market insights and to be able to respond to customer reviews. On TripAdvisor, go to [Find and Claim Your TripAdvisor Listing](#) to claim your listing and learn how to update your description, add photos, encourage reviews and engage with tourists. Acknowledge and respond to all reviews – good and bad.

## SALES CHANNELS

Generating sales – especially sales from overseas markets – is not easy. Here is a snapshot of the various [routes to market](#).

To find out more and for useful tips on sales activities, register on our [Trade Portal](#).

### DIRECT

- Own Web
- Social Media
- Google/ Search Engines
- Hosted Media Feature
- Direct Email/Ezine
- Phone
- Email
- Walk-In
- Local or Customer Referral

### INDIRECT TRADITIONAL

- Realtime booking systems
- Own software solutions
- Irish-based inbound tour operator
- Destination Management Company (DMCs)
- Tour operator (wholesale)
- Tour operator (retail)
- Coach tour operator
- Travel agent – independent or consortia
- Travel concierge/travel designer

### INDIRECT ONLINE

- Airlines' holiday shops
- Online Travel Agents (OTAs)
- Online Aggregator
- Comparator Sites
- Wholesale online agencies
- OTAs for activities, tours, events

## Travel trade

As well as communicating with potential tourists direct, through other local tourism businesses and through Fáilte Ireland’s channels, you may also look to sell to tourists through the travel trade. These are intermediaries such as Destination Management Companies (DMCs); Experience Aggregators such as Viator or Get Your Guide; Online Travel Agents (OTAs) such as Expedia; Tour Operators and Coach Operators. The advantages of working with the travel trade are that they partner with you to market and sell

your product, they have well-established channels and an established customer base, and they have market knowledge – they are experts in their field.

This route could be for you if you have saleable, bookable ‘product’ – workshops and tours for example – and you are willing to pay intermediaries commission. For more about the different channels and how to work with them, register on our **Trade Portal** – and ask us about opportunities to take part in travel trade promotions, sales missions, exhibitions and familiarisation visits.





## CASE STUDY: INSPIRATION &amp; INFORMATION



Images © Louis Mulcahy

*“Our hotel had a display of Louis Mulcahy Pottery in the lobby so we were on the lookout for this shop/cafe when we did our driving tour of the peninsula.”*  
TripAdvisor reviewer, California

Louis Mulcahy’s headquarters are at Clogher Beach, at the very tip of the Dingle Peninsula. This spectacular setting has inspired his pottery, and images of the coast and sea are used in his marketing materials.

Visitors can watch a professional potter at work and will be helped to throw a simple shape. They can bring their raw pot home with them, or have it fired, glazed and delivered anywhere in the World. The throwing experience is available on a drop-in basis for independent travellers (groups of more than 10 have to book in advance). There are videos showing techniques and processes. Full workshop tours can be arranged.

The shop sells the full range plus things you can only find if you visit – described by the company as “eccentricities, prototypes and other experimental pieces peculiar to the workshop”.

Upstairs the bright café serves local homemade food – the likes of Dingle smoked salmon, local seaweed bread – on Louis Mulcahy ceramics, and sells books – including guide books and maps about Dingle and Ireland. Staff take time to chat to visitors about the best places to go next.

*“Stopped for some tea and snacks on the drive. Left warmed by tea, full of scones, and with a shipment of pottery heading back to the United States ... they remind me of my wonderful trip to Dingle every day.”*  
TripAdvisor reviewer, USA

*“We’d gone from planning to spend €5 on coffee to spending €80 on guidebooks and pottery because of the level of engagement. [The place] was on brand, showing how it all knits together: the place, and the pottery and our experience.”*

Customer quote from *5,000 Years in the Making*

# WORKSHEETS

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ARE YOU READY TO TAP INTO TOURISM? WORK THROUGH THESE QUESTIONS TO THINK THROUGH YOUR NEXT STEPS:

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## ABOUT YOUR BUSINESS

1. How would you describe the kinds of people your business attracts? What types of visitor are 'your people'? Take another look at the segments described in the **Today's Tourists section** – which of these are you most likely to attract?

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2. What are the most common comments visitors make about your business? Think about what people say they love, what makes them most animated when they meet you, or what they say on TripAdvisor.

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3. What were your visitor numbers last year (exact or approximate numbers are fine). List separate figures for different business types if that would be helpful. If you don't monitor numbers, you could make better record-keeping a goal for the future.

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4. What are your peak and quiet times – not just seasons or months of the year, but days of the week and times of the day? If you are at full capacity in August, then your plans for the future might need to be targeted at building visitor numbers in May and September, for example.

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5. What is your average customer spend? This is something you might decide to start monitoring if you don't already. (It's helpful to create benchmarks so you can check whether changes are paying off.)

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## ABOUT YOUR OFFER

1. What are the things you do now that really impress your customers and make you an excellent visitor destination? These are the things you can start promoting now!

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2. Are there more experiences (however small) you could develop to create that wow factor? You might think about creating more hands-on moments through tours or workshops, introducing compelling stories you don't already tell, or sharing 'behind the scenes' access or insights.

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3. What do you do already to attract and stay connected to visitors? Do you

a. Advertise – if so, where?

Yes  No

b. Take part in a trail – if so, how involved are you? Do you actively promote it to your customers by bringing it to their attention and recommending other businesses?

Yes  No

c. Take part in local tourism networks? Yes  No

d. Work in partnership with other local businesses to target visitors? Yes  No

e. Use social media to promote your business? Yes  No

f. Stay in touch with visitors via email or other mechanisms? Yes  No

g. Get listed on our suite of websites? Yes  No

4. What more could you do to drive up revenue? Are there activities above that you could do better?

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## MEASURING SUCCESS

1. Have you benchmarked your business against other providers working in the same kind of field?

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2. Describe what your business will be doing in 5 years' time (think big!) – you might say 'we'll have added workshops', 'we'll be catering for tour groups', or 'we'll be a must-visit stop for any visitor interested in x', for example.

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3. How will you know you're on track to achieve that vision? Think about the kinds of things you'll have to measure to check your plan is working. Measurements can be as simple as 'Number of people signing up to workshops', 'Visitor numbers in September', 'Number of staff required in May'.

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4. List the kinds of practical support you'll need to put your plan into action – see the [Supports section](#) for examples.

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# SUPPORTS

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Inistioge Pottery, Kilkenny

A toolkit for craftspeople and craft businesses in Ireland's Ancient East

## Fáilte Ireland business supports

Fáilte Ireland has a range of business supports designed to help develop world-class tourism experiences – for example:

- How to tell your story
- Customer service
- Understanding overseas markets
- How to approach and work with tour operators
- Dealing with groups
- Packaging and cross-selling
- Help with making your experience more immersive
- Pricing strategies

If you want to develop a really great craft tourism experience, email us [info@irelandsancienteast.ie](mailto:info@irelandsancienteast.ie) to find out more.

## Design & Crafts Council Ireland

**The Design & Crafts Council of Ireland** is the national agency for the commercial development of Irish designers and makers, stimulating innovation, championing design thinking and informing Government policy.



Carlingford Design House, Carlingford, Louth

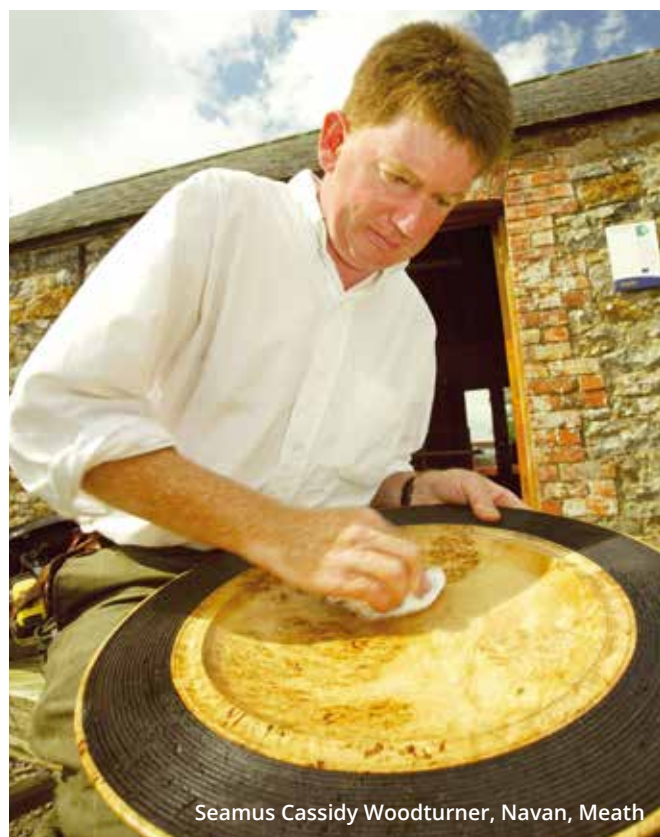
The Council offers a range of supports – for craftspeople there is help to develop your enterprise and market and sell your products; for retailers and gallerists there is help to source new designers and craftspeople, and identify new opportunities for collaboration.

The Council's activities are funded by the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation via Enterprise Ireland.

## Other organisations

Other sources of support are:

- **The Local Enterprise Office** – advice, information and support for starting up or growing your business
- County Councils – contact your county council's Arts, Heritage & Tourism Officers for information about what business supports they can offer
- Community Development Groups



Seamus Cassidy Woodturner, Navan, Meath



Carrickmacross Lace Gallery, Monaghan



Avoca Handweavers, Wicklow

## Contact us

We hope you found this Toolkit useful. If you have any questions or simply want to tell us about the visitor experiences you are developing, please do get in touch with the Ireland's Ancient East team.

Email us at [info@irelandsancienteast.ie](mailto:info@irelandsancienteast.ie)

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Craft Stall at Kilkenny Arts Festival, Kilkenny