

BRINGING IRELAND'S ANCIENT EAST TO LIFE OVERSEAS

Tourism Ireland, in conjunction with Fáilte Ireland, continues to promote Ireland's Ancient East in key overseas markets. One example of Tourism Ireland Ireland's Ancient East campaign was seen in the city of Barcelona. Trams and trains in the city were 'wrapped' in giant Ireland's Ancient East ads over a six week campaign to boost travel to the region in the summer.

Tourism Ireland in Great Britain and Smooth Radio teamed up to showcase the delights of Ireland's Ancient East, exploring destinations and showcasing experiences with the help of Richard E. Grant. Newgrange, in Co Meath, Kilkenny's Medieval Mile and Powerscourt House were just three of the experiences visited.



Ireland's Ancient East 'Wrapped' Train in Barcelona

INTERNATIONAL MEDIA AND TOUR OPERATORS

This year has been another busy one for media and trade visiting Ireland's Ancient East. In 2017, forty-two overseas operators will feature Ireland's Ancient East in their 2017 programmes.

Since January, some 206 buyers from around the world, including New Zealand, Mexico, India, China, The Gulf States, Nordics, North America, Britain and Europe, have undertaken extensive familiarisation programmes to personally experience the region. In all, 46 international publicity visits have been made to Ireland's Ancient East including Bloggers, TV and Press Journalists. For 2017, we are developing a new media pass for visiting journalists to use as they travel the region.



International media with Youghal Town Crier - Cliff Winsler, Co Cork



Richard E Grant at Powerscourt Estate, Co Wicklow

DOMESTIC AND DIGITAL ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN

In June, a new domestic consumer campaign "Great Stories Stay with You Forever" launched to build awareness for Ireland's Ancient East. The goals of this campaign were to:

- ▶ Establish Irish Ancient's East in a cohesive and unified manner that offers visitors a compelling and motivating reason to visit, and stay, in the region;
- ▶ Inspire holiday makers to take incremental short breaks and holidays in the region;
- ▶ Increase revenue and visitor numbers and encourage short trips in shoulder periods;
- ▶ 3.1m (93% of all adults) is the reach for the 'Great Stories Stay With You Forever' campaign

We invited 26 domestic journalists to experience Ireland's Ancient East and delivered 24 individual itineraries throughout the region. To date this has resulted in features appearing in publications including: Irish Daily Mail, Sunday Independent, Irish Independent, Irish Examiner etc. We also have had coverage in Cara Magazine, Irish Garden and supplements in Sunday Times and Independent.

A number of strategically timed press releases were also issued across all media highlighting Festivals and Events, Halloween Happenings and the signature stories in Ireland's Ancient East.

A multimedia partnership with Irish Independent gave Ireland's Ancient East an opportunity to feature in interactive articles on Food, Music and Halloween. Each multimedia article delivered a minimum 22,000 impressions.

We continued our strategy of enlisting well known individuals to act as Brand Ambassadors and invited Fiona Shaw to experience some stories. This resulted in several engaging and interesting features, both on radio and in print.



Fiona Shaw with Clare Durdin Robertson at Huntington Castle, Co Carlow



The Irish Maritime Festival, Co Louth



Cavan County Museum, Co Cavan

BUILDING INDUSTRY CAPABILITIES

A total of 21 workshops have taken place in Ireland's Ancient East in 2016 on a range of sales, digital, storytelling and festival development topics. These are designed to build capacity across the sector. In addition, Management seminars on such topics as revenue management, site guiding and attraction interpretation took place.

A joint venture between Local Enterprise Offices, Chambers of Commerce and County Councils resulted in the delivery of a Digital Master Class programme incorporating 1-2-1 coaching. The collaborative element of this programme facilitates greater efficiencies through a partnership approach to recruitment and delivery to Ireland's Ancient East tourism business.

The 'Dwell on Excellence' workshops are designed to directly train participants with a training responsibility drawn from within Attractions and Activity Businesses across Ireland's Ancient East. The objective of the Dwell programme is to increase visitor dwell time by encouraging exploration of signature and lesser known sites and stories. Participants, in turn, train their own employees resulting in an additional 2,500 trained people through the Dwell programme in 2016.



Orientation Sign at Dunbrody Famine Ship, New Ross, Co Wexford

Some of the supports planned for 2017 include a Storytelling Symposium, Growing Overseas Business as well as a Best Practice Workshop and Interpretation for Attractions.

PLANNED FOR 2017

Our goal is to make Ireland's Ancient East the most personally engaging cultural destination in Europe by harnessing the authentic character of the real Ireland, its living culture, lush landscapes and hidden history, opening it up for everyone. If we are successful in doing this we will deliver an incremental €204 million international revenue by 2020. 2016 has seen the establishment of the brand on the ground with the installation of the county boundary and the orientation signage and the new improved visitor experiences funded through the Ancient Spaces grant scheme. The brand has been promoted with the launch



Casey's Bog Sculptures, Co Longford

of our mobile first website and domestic and international marketing campaigns.

In 2017 our focus will be on building the stories that bring the brand to life out on the ground, working with industry and stakeholders to engage the visitor through the delivery of story lead experiences. We will continue to promote Ireland's Ancient East in both the domestic and international markets and will again drive demand through buyer familiarisation trips. We are forecasting to grow revenue ahead of volume as we move Ireland's Ancient East from a transit zone to a touring zone.

"2016 has been a successful year for Ireland's Ancient East we have seen the establishment of the brand on the ground and we are already reaping positive results particularly from the International markets. Fáilte Ireland will continue to develop Ireland's Ancient East in 2017 and beyond and work with stakeholders and industry partners to develop the visitor experiences and leverage the huge potential this brand offers."

Jenny De Saulles, Head of Programme - Ireland's Ancient East.

PHOTOS, PLEASE.

Want to make photos of your business available to domestic and international media, Fáilte Ireland, Tourism Ireland, and companies promoting things to see and do in your region to international tour operators?

Upload your high resolution, copyright free images to

www.irelandscontentpool.com

a joint digital repository owned by Fáilte Ireland and Tourism Ireland.

IRELAND'S ANCIENT EAST PROJECT UPDATE 3

 **Fáilte Ireland**
National Tourism Development Authority

 **IRELAND'S ANCIENT EAST**
Wander Through Time

Loughcrew Cairns, Co Meath

November 2016



Austrian Press visit Lough Gur, Co Limerick



Food Journalists with Julie Calder-Potts at Highbank Orchards, Co Kilkenny



International buyers with Lord Rosse at Birr Castle, Co Offaly



Fiona Shaw with John Bourke at Holycross Abbey, Co Tipperary



International food journalists with Paul Flynn at the Tannery Cookery School, Co Waterford



Travel Bloggers at Rock of Dunamase, Co Laois

IRELAND'S ANCIENT EAST – A WORLD CLASS BRAND

In early 2016, Fáilte Ireland introduced a new destination brand for the East and South of the country. In creating this world class brand which promises an enthralling journey of exploration through “5,000 years of history, in lush green landscapes, with stories told by the best storytellers in the world”, and to achieve our goals of attracting overseas visitors to this region we are:

- ▶ **Building a brand of international quality and credibility;**
- ▶ **Creating a unique and authentic storytelling approach to set us apart from the competition;**
- ▶ **Repositioning the East and South as a region to explore, transforming it from transit to touring;**
- ▶ **Working with our partners to develop world-class experiences.**

DELIVERED IN 2016

- ▶ Fáilte Ireland is **investing €18million** in Ireland's Ancient East in 2016;
- ▶ Ireland's Ancient East hosted a series of **Stories Experience workshops;**
- ▶ In May, the new mobile first website **www.IrelandsAncientEast.com** was launched;
- ▶ The domestic press campaign '**Great Stories Stay with you Forever**' was launched and ran from June to October.
- ▶ **Ireland's Ancient East TV** ad created a TV roadblock in June where the TV ad was aired across 47 channels at the same time;
- ▶ **Over 200 international trade buyers** visited Ireland's Ancient East;
- ▶ **46 international media** including Bloggers, Press and TV journalists have visited;
- ▶ In excess of **2,500 front line staff** received '**Dwell on Excellence**' training;
- ▶ Some **256 County Boundary signs** have been installed;

- ▶ Phase 2 of the **www.IrelandsAncientEast.com** website will be launched in December;
- ▶ By December, 24 **“New Ideas in Ancient Spaces”** projects are due for completion in visitor attractions across Ireland's Ancient East;
- ▶ **76 visitor orientation signs** will be in place;
- ▶ Fáilte Ireland **invested €551,000 in festivals** in Ireland's Ancient East.

IRELAND'S ANCIENT EAST – A LAND OF STORIES

STORY DEVELOPMENT

In light of our new 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”**, we have continued to add to our Story Tree over the past few months and now have developed 30+ Hero stories, highlighting attractions such as Hook Lighthouse, Battle of the Boyne Visitor Centre and Lullymore Discovery Park which have created a compelling story based experience for visitors. We also have devised a bank of Short Stories, which focus on the surprising and the quirky, as well as some important and intriguing characters, such as William Marshall and the Rebel General at Beaulieu House. Go to **www.IrelandsAncientEast.com** to watch how we bring these stories to life.

EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT PLANS

We held a number of workshops with 600+ partners. At these workshops, participants have identified story experiences for visitors, and have made commitments to adopting a stories approach in their own businesses. The next step of this process is to develop a Signature Experience Development Plan – one for each of our nine signature stories.

IRELAND'S ANCIENT EAST - WEBSITE

Since the launch of the Ireland's Ancient East website in May, there have been in excess of 232,000 visits to the site. Already, this is almost 90% ahead of target for the first year. The website puts storytelling at the heart of the digital experience and is the first tourism website to

take this approach. As testament to the immersive and engaging quality of the content, the content developed for the Dunbrody Famine Ship story won a gold award recently at the Kinsale Shark Awards in the Web Content Design category. There is new story content being developed and added on an ongoing basis.

Phase Two of the website will launch towards the end of 2016, and will incorporate more functionality to enable consumers to plan personalised itineraries, discover attractions nearby, add items to a wish list for planning purposes and search the tourism listings for attractions and activities. Please familiarise yourself with the website **www.IrelandsAncientEast.com** and ask your visitors to use it. It will inspire and motivate them to explore and uncover stories in Ireland's Ancient East.

“Ireland's Ancient East website is now the 4th largest referrer of visitors to my website. In July we increased cruises from 4 to 6 per day, with lots of days in high season sold out. With strong passenger numbers from the domestic market and increasing numbers from the UK and US, we welcomed on-board visitors from Japan, Israel, Norway and India. For November, weekends are busy and bookings for 2017 are coming in. I am very optimistic about the future of the business and tourism in Kildare, and am making plans for future expansion. Ireland's Ancient East has given my business a sense of place and connection with an amazing story of Ireland.”

Ger Loughlin, Skipper, BargeTrip.ie



BargeTrip.ie, Co Kildare

SOCIAL MEDIA

Ireland's Ancient East is actively engaging with consumers across Facebook, Twitter and Instagram with combined followers of over 20,000 across the three social platforms. Please follow us and join in the conversation on social media using **#IrelandsAncientEast**

- Facebook** www.facebook.com/IrelandsAncientEast
- Twitter** [@ancienteastIRL](https://twitter.com/ancienteastIRL)
- Instagram** [@irelandsancienteast](https://www.instagram.com/irelandsancienteast)

IRELAND'S ANCIENT EAST - DIGITAL STORYTELLING TOOLKIT

The story of Ireland's Ancient East started some 5,000 years ago. In the next chapter of this intriguing tale, you have the opportunity to craft your very own story – with your business as the hero – using our online Digital Storytelling Toolkit. This e-book toolkit is designed to help you bring the Ireland's Ancient East brand to life, outlines how you can play your part in the telling the nine signature stories of Ireland's Ancient East and includes top tips on using stories in your business, at your attraction, or on your website.



Digital Storytelling Toolkit

“Our new video presentation and audio guides are available in 5 languages and provide compelling reasons for visitors to come and immerse themselves in our stories and characters and grow word-of-mouth post visitation. Feedback has been very positive; they are enjoying learning more about the estate and about Ireland's Ancient East, and feel the enhanced tour ties their visit together.”

Sarah Slazenger, Managing Director, Powerscourt Estate

Here is how to get involved with Ireland's Ancient East:

- ▶ Sign up to our Brand Charter so you can use the Ireland's Ancient East logo and brand guidelines in your own business. Email **info@irelandsancienteast.ie** for the Brand Charter;
- ▶ Make use of the 100s of new images in the Ireland's Ancient East collection on Ireland's Content Pool **www.irelandscontentpool.com**. These are FREE and available for you to use;
- ▶ Keep us up to date with your stories and the new experiences and services you are offering – email us **info@irelandsancienteast.ie**
- ▶ Follow us on social media - **Instagram, Twitter, Facebook.**

VISITOR ORIENTATION AND CROSS-SELLING STRATEGY

One of our key objectives is to increase visitor awareness of the wide range of attractions within Ireland's Ancient East and to encourage and facilitate their exploration. The multi-annual signage programmes to develop and install signage across the geographical area continues. By the end of the year, 256 county boundary signs will be in place and this work was undertaken with our partners in Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) and the Local Authorities. By mid December, 76 of the branded Ireland's Ancient East orientation signs will be in position, with a target of 50 more signs to be installed in 2017.

Part of the cross selling strategy will be promoting collaboration, networking and cross-selling between tourism businesses and communities to maximise the appeal of their geographical areas. This will support destinations in their delivery of the Ireland's Ancient East brand and develop story lead experiences.

“It is a great feature, which we all loved and thought it was a very clever idea for visitors”

GB Tour Operators at the new orientation sign at Wicklow Gaol.

The purpose of the signs is:

- ▶ To bring the brand to life on the ground and make it visible for the consumer;
- ▶ To cross-sell those nearby tourist attractions and points of interest that are part of the Ireland's Ancient East story, thereby encouraging visitors to explore the area and make connections with other places within the region;
- ▶ To present the story of Ireland's Ancient East and reinforce the core values of the brand.



GB Tour Operators at Wicklow Gaol, Co Wicklow

DEVELOPING EXPERIENCES THAT DELIVER THE BRAND PROMISE

Last year, the **“New Ideas In Ancient Spaces”** Capital Grants Scheme was launched to encourage the development of compelling visitor experiences across Ireland's Ancient East and €2.3 million in capital funding was allocated to 25 projects.

The majority of these projects are now complete and open for business. By supporting various initiatives including the introduction of new technology, the enhancement of existing infrastructure and the upgrading of visitor attractions, this scheme has resulted in new experiences for Ireland's Ancient East which are bringing the stories of our past to life. The reaction from international tour operators and visitors has been very positive to date and we are already seeing the benefits of the investment throughout the destination.



Athlone Castle, Co Westmeath



Glaslough Heritage Trail, Co Monaghan

“We are delighted with our interpretation investment at St Canice's Cathedral and Round Tower. With the new interpretation media mix we have managed to maintain the sense of sacredness in the Cathedral and yet tell our great ecclesiastical story. Furthermore, we have certainly noticed a considerable increase in the dwell time of our visitors both in the Cathedral itself and within the Close and we are delighted to report increased levels of satisfaction.”

Elizabeth Keyes, Cathedral Administrator, St Canice's Cathedral, Kilkenny

“The Ancient Spaces grant facilitated us to introduce multi lingual audio guides and, consequently, we have been able to secure increased tour business. For example, a weekly tour series from April to October has been confirmed with a Dutch tour operator who have decided to include us on their tour itinerary as a result of the availability of Dutch audio guides. We are grateful to Fáilte Ireland for their grant assistance and promotional activity.”

Jack Walsh, General Manager, Cobh Heritage Centre