

IRELAND'S ANCIENT EAST PROJECT UPDATE



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

Tintern Abbey, Co. Wexford

November 2015



Bishop's Palace, Waterford



Knowth, Co. Meath

IRELAND'S ANCIENT EAST – THE STORY SO FAR

In April 2015, Fáilte Ireland introduced a new umbrella destination brand, Ireland's Ancient East, to the tourism industry. Reflecting the rich and colourful history and diversity of the landscapes, the counties within the area fully embody the story of the brand. Primarily designed to appeal to the Culturally Curious and Great Escaper customer segments, the ambition of Ireland's Ancient East is to present this large geographical area with a brand promise that will create:

- ▶ A destination that is easy and enjoyable to explore.
- ▶ A destination where stories unfold through exploration of our history and heritage.
- ▶ A destination where the storytellers at each heritage site encourage further exploration of other historical eras, building up to an unforgettable journey through 5,000 years of time.
- ▶ A destination set against the lush, green, pastoral landscapes of Ireland.

To achieve its strategic objectives, Ireland's Ancient East must:

1. Drive growth of international visitors, revenue and associated employment in this geographical area.
2. Reposition this area from transit zone to touring destination.
3. Create a brand of international quality and credibility, presenting Ireland's Ancient East as the best place to experience Ireland's incredible built heritage brought to life by the best storytellers in the world.
4. Work with stakeholders, experience providers and heritage assets on the ground to develop world-class visitor experiences.
5. To link the larger iconic visitor attractions with lesser-known sites nearby in order to disperse visitors and increase their dwell time and spend in the area.

DELIVERED 2015

1. **APRIL:** Launch of brand at Meitheal to 300 international tour operators.
2. **MAY:** Briefed 800 industry partners on Ireland's Ancient East.
3. **JUNE:** Ireland's Ancient East Global Segmentation Workshops and production of international brand identities.
4. **SUMMER:** Phase 1 launch of 'New Ideas in Ancient Spaces' Capital Grant Scheme and €2million allocated in 2015.
5. **SUMMER:** Production of Ireland's Ancient East international advertising campaign.
6. **SUMMER:** Extensive Ireland's Ancient East photography shoot by Fáilte Ireland and Tourism Ireland.

7. **SUMMER:** Signage and orientation strategy developed. Ireland's Ancient East attraction signs designed and county boundary sites identified.
8. **TO DATE IN 2015:** Over 270 overseas journalists from 14 countries have sampled Ireland's Ancient East.
9. **TO DATE IN 2015:** 300 international trade buyers visited Ireland's Ancient East.
10. **TO DATE IN 2015:** Delivered Management Development Programme for visitor attractions.
11. **Throughout 2015:** Fáilte Ireland invested €496,500 in festivals in Ireland's Ancient East.
12. **NOVEMBER:** Digital strategy developed.
13. **NOVEMBER:** Roll out of Ireland's Ancient East Storytelling workshops.
14. **NOVEMBER:** Ireland's Ancient East stories developed and shared.

IN A NUTSHELL

In Ireland's Ancient East, visitors will listen to the best storytellers in the world weave their tales. They will discover vibrant towns and villages set in a lush green landscape where life is celebrated through festivals, food and a deep-rooted love of place. They will become part of 5,000 years of history.

"Capital grant assistance through Ireland's Ancient East is significant and timely for the Hill of Uisneach. We critically needed a visitor interpretative space as our numbers rapidly grew and this programme was there to help. This support is so much more than financial support. It is a new culture emerging within Ireland's Ancient East to work in genuine partnership with the likes of Uisneach to help grow visitor numbers, expenditure and jobs – especially into a less visited part of Ireland"

Alan Hill, Hill of Uisneach



Artist impression of orientation signage in situ at Kilkenny Castle, Kilkenny



Hill of Uisneach, Co. Westmeath

DEVELOPING EXPERIENCES THAT DELIVER THE BRAND PROMISE

A Capital Grants Scheme was launched to encourage the development of compelling visitor experiences across Ireland's Ancient East. Entitled "New Ideas In Ancient Spaces", the scheme is in its first phase of funding and has been created to ensure that the brand delivers on its promise to the visitor. In 2015, €2million has been allocated through the "New Ideas in Ancient Spaces" scheme. Phase 2 of the scheme will be announced in June 2016. The scheme favoured projects that delivered the core elements of the brand promise. It must be a place that is easy to explore; where the heritage experience stays in the memory due to how the experience tells its story; where the stories told link up the individual sites with other locations in Ireland's Ancient East and across the 5,000 year timeline of European history.

VISITOR ORIENTATION AND CROSS-SELLING STRATEGY

One of our key objectives is to increase the visitors' awareness of the wide range of attractions within Ireland's Ancient East, and to facilitate their exploration. We have commenced a multi-annual programme to develop and install signage across the geographical area. We are currently implementing 2 signage projects for 2016:

- (1) Signage to help orientate visitors around the area, and cross-sell nearby locations within the 5,000 year timeline.
- (2) County Boundary signs with Ireland's Ancient East branding.

By reinforcing the brand on the ground, the story of Ireland's Ancient East becomes instantly recognisable as a cohesive geographical area. To deliver these objectives we will:

- ▶ Install Ireland's Ancient East signage at attractions to create a physical presence for the brand on the ground, cross-sell other attractions and introduce Ireland's Ancient East and some of its story-led experiences.
- ▶ Train staff in customer service and cross-selling at the above sites as well as in businesses across Ireland's Ancient East.
- ▶ Develop a bespoke Ireland's Ancient East mobile website to facilitate the visitors in their holiday experience – in particular route planning

"Being part of Ireland's Ancient East will enable Hook Lighthouse, the world's oldest intact working Lighthouse, to shine a light on its stories. From the arrival in the 5th century of the monks who kept the beacon alight to warn sailors of possible shipwreck, to the story of the famous Knight William Marshal, 'The Greatest Knight', and all the way through 800 years of Lighthouse keepers.

We look forward to sharing this story through Ireland's Ancient East and we invite visitors to take to the well-worn stone steps of the tower and at each ascending step, to follow in the footsteps of every light keeper who served at Hook Lighthouse."

Ann Waters, Hook Heritage



Hook Lighthouse, Co. Wexford



Spraoi Festival, Waterford



World Travel Market, UK

INTRODUCING IRELAND'S ANCIENT EAST TO DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL MEDIA AND TOUR OPERATORS

This year has already been busy for media and trade experiencing Ireland's Ancient East. Highlights include a French food blogger group; eight major US Group Tour Buyers; and German coach operators. They were all new to Ireland and all gave very positive and enthusiastic feedback. Here are the numbers so far:

- ▶ 144 Domestic journalists
- ▶ 270+ Overseas journalists
- ▶ 14 Countries represented (including Australia and China)
- ▶ 300 International Buyers joined familiarisation trips

IRELAND'S ANCIENT EAST INTERNATIONAL ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN

Fáilte Ireland and Tourism Ireland jointly invested in a significant video production to create digital video footage for use in online video advertising. In total, six locations were captured in this shoot: Newgrange, Castletown House, Waterford's Viking Triangle, Rock of Cashel, Kilkenny Castle and Glendalough. This is part of our strategy to use attractions with high international recognition to cross sell other experiences in Ireland's Ancient East. There will be a range of video ads created that will bring Ireland's Ancient East to life in a motivating and compelling way for international audiences.

These advertisements will be used to promote Ireland's Ancient East to potential visitors in a large-scale online advertising campaign throughout 2016, across international markets on YouTube and on other video-on-demand channels. In addition, Tourism Ireland is sponsoring Downton Abbey in the US with a 30 second ad during Downton Abbey in 2016.

Wells House, Co. Wexford

BRINGING IRELAND'S ANCIENT EAST TO LIFE OVERSEAS

Tourism Ireland in collaboration with Fáilte Ireland has already launched Ireland's Ancient East in a number of key markets overseas and will continue this work during 2016. Ireland's Ancient East was highlighted to those attending IFTM Top Resa Paris, World Travel Market London, Flavours of Ireland London and a Ministerial launch in New York. At each of these events, Ireland's Ancient East was brought to life through storytelling and animation. Fáilte Ireland is also working with Tourism Ireland on other exciting initiatives, including an Ireland's Ancient East garden at the Philadelphia Flower Show in the US.



IRELAND'S ANCIENT EAST – BUILT ON STORIES

Ireland's Ancient East promises a journey through 5,000 years of history in lush green landscapes, a journey that's brought to life by the best storytellers in the world. Research has indicated that stories are the key to making Ireland's Ancient East stand out in a crowded travel marketplace. Yes, Ireland's Ancient East has fantastic history and heritage – but that's already a very competitive field. After all, our international visitors not only have the rest of Europe to choose from – they have the rest of the world.

What will differentiate Ireland's Ancient East from other destinations, which are equally rich in history and heritage, is both our treasure trove of legends and folklore and the Irish people's reputation for stories and storytelling – their wit, warmth and their way with words.

The combination of 5,000 years of experiences and storytelling, set within a backdrop of lush green landscapes, will be the unique selling point for Ireland's Ancient East.

Who are the storytellers?

That would be you. We want to involve as many of our industry partners as possible to develop a distinctive story-based approach to Ireland's Ancient East. This means communicating the brand through stories, as well as making sure that visitors experience this region as "a destination of stories". This will be through the people they meet, the experiences they have, and the way things are presented and interpreted.

Our workshops

Many of you joined our storytelling workshops, which ran throughout November. The workshops were all about the stories that will attract international visitors and the power of stories in tourism. We asked for your input into the stories we're using and helped you to develop stories for your own business, so that you could benefit fully from this new, story-focused brand.

If you are interested in attending further storytelling workshops, register your interest by emailing: info@IrelandsAncientEast.ie

IRELAND'S ANCIENT EAST PHOTO SHOOT

Words and stories alone won't communicate Ireland's Ancient East as an international brand. Photography that tells Ireland's Ancient East's story in a consistent manner and showcasing our naturally beautiful landscapes will build a picture in the minds of what visitors can expect when they arrive.



Rostellan Dolmen, Co Cork

During summer 2015, Fáilte Ireland and Tourism Ireland commissioned a large-scale photography shoot across the entire geographical region of Ireland's Ancient East. We now have hundreds of new images that communicate the Ireland's Ancient East brand. These are available now on www.Irelandscontentpool.com

What you need to do

Working together, we can create a consistent message of scale, so we are asking you to look at the experiences you can deliver across 5,000 years of history and remember that stories are at the heart of this brand. We would encourage you to make use of this new imagery. Please use it across your communications, and replace any existing photography you may be using with these shots. If you are carrying out future shoots, we would encourage you to use these visuals as the template reference for the Ireland's Ancient East brand.

To view photography from Ireland's Ancient East, please visit www.Irelandscontentpool.com

IRELAND'S ANCIENT EAST LOGO AND BRAND

To receive the Ireland's Ancient East logo and brand guidelines please email info@IrelandsAncientEast.ie. Your business must sign up to the Brand Charter, and adhere to its principles, which are as follows:

- ▶ Put the customer at the centre of everything you do.
- ▶ Have storytelling at the heart of the experience you offer.
- ▶ Have informed staff, who understand and promote what Ireland's Ancient East has to offer and commit to use the brand as per the guidelines.
- ▶ Help sell other suitable visitor experiences across Ireland's Ancient East.
- ▶ Build partnerships with local businesses and communities to provide a distinctive Ireland's Ancient East local visitor experience.
- ▶ Encourage customers to comment on their experiences through social media.
- ▶ Attend a minimum of one brand workshop per year, and positively work with Fáilte Ireland.



Lullymore Heritage Park, Co. Kildare



Cavan Burren Park, Co. Cavan

DIGITAL PLANS 2016

Fáilte Ireland is developing a new web presence for Ireland's Ancient East. This will focus on digital storytelling bringing to life the experiences of 5,000 years of history, along with its backdrop of lush green landscapes. The website will be built to be mobile first, in order to facilitate visitors access whilst on holiday in Ireland. The website is intended to engage by immersing visitors in the stories of Ireland's Ancient East, while also providing practical holiday planning resources, such as suggested itineraries and orientation tools.

DOMESTIC CAMPAIGN 2016

Fáilte Ireland will spend €2million promoting Ireland's Ancient East in Ireland during 2016 and our initial objective is to build awareness of the brand and its foundation in storytelling.

To communicate the brand, activities will include partnering with RTÉ TV and RTÉ Digital. You Tube and Google advertising will also play an important role in the campaign. Fáilte Ireland's 2.5million-strong audience on social media platforms will also be a core audience for this campaign. Fáilte Ireland intends to use a combination of display advertising, native content/video articles and advocates to build our brand awareness. While local and national radio stations will give Ireland's Ancient East a potential reach of up to 80% of daily radio listeners.

PLANNED 2016

1. **JANUARY:** Roll out of Ireland's Ancient East international advertising campaign.
2. **JANUARY-FEBRUARY:** Customer service and cross-selling workshops.
3. **MARCH:** Ireland's Ancient East digital toolkit available.
4. **MARCH:** Launch of Ireland's Ancient East domestic campaign.
5. **MARCH:** Launch Phase 1 of Ireland's Ancient East online presence.
6. **SPRING:** Extensive familiarization programme in place attracting media and international buyers to Ireland's Ancient East.
7. **SPRING:** Roll out of extensive range of supports for tourism businesses.
8. **SPRING-SUMMER:** 100 Ireland's Ancient East orientation signs and 300 County boundary signs in place.
9. **JUNE:** 20 projects of Phase 1 'New Ideas in Ancient Spaces' Capital Grants Scheme in place.
10. **JUNE:** Phase 2 of the 'New Ideas in Ancient Spaces' Capital Grants Scheme commences.
11. **SUMMER:** Phase 2 of Ireland's Ancient East online presence.
12. **SUMMER:** Phase 2 Ireland's Ancient East attraction signage commences.

Glendalough, Co. Wicklow