



East Cork Tourism newsletter

EAST CORK TOURISM Brochure launch



Michael Aherne, TD, Minister for Trade and Commerce, launched the new 'www.eastcorktourism.com' Mini Guide in November at the Old Midleton Distillery. The new Pocket Guide is another example of the unified and co-ordinated plan that has been developed by East Cork Tourism, working in partnership with East Cork Area Development Ltd.

Margot Mulcahy, Marketing Manager, East Cork Tourism said, "Primarily, this Mini-Guide is a further development of our web site strategy. It will be printable and updateable from the web site. Secondly, our goal is to publish a

limited annual issue, which can be used by our members for visitor information, and this will be used for promotional activities as well." According to Ryan Howard, CEO of ECAD Ltd, "East Cork Area Development is delighted to be able to assist in developing the awareness of the region as a tourist destination. Over the past year a number of very successful projects have been completed by our partnership with East Cork Tourism. These have included the new web site 'www.eastcorktourism.com', the highly successful Tourism Showcase and the inaugural Midleton Food & Drink Festival." The partnership between ECT and ECAD has been most creative and innovative. In essence it is encouraging tourism businesses to work together to offer a better product and to market the area in a more effective manner. Prior to this initiative the various tourist interests tended to work more against each other rather than approach the market in coordinated fashion. It is this unique spirit of partnership that Minister Aherne recognised. The East Cork Mini-Guide has since

proved so popular that an additional print run of 25,000 copies were required in a very short time. The guide is available at the information desk at Cork Airport and is distributed through Glance Promotions and TIO's.



www.eastcorktourism.com

in this issue

- Holiday World Experience Dublin in January ■
- HSMIA Awards ■
- East Cork Tourism Carnival Party ■
- Web Update ■
- DART Forging links 'A La Region' ■
- Tourism Language Training ■
- Small Atlantic Ports Project ■
- Midleton Food & Drink Festival ■
- NEW Members for East Cork Tourism ■



A Letter from the Chairman

Dear Member

I hope that the 2005 main summer tourist season was as favourable as expected. The feedback from hotels and visitor attractions seems to be positive with a big thank you going to Mother Nature for blessing East Cork with a generous helping of sunshine this year.

This sunshine was most welcome, especially given the cold shudders generated by concerns over the increases in the costs of doing business. Such cost pressures and the effects from competition will continue to require sharper marketing, standards and all round practices. East Cork Tourism Co Ltd, under the dynamic influence of Margot Mulcahy has been fulfilling its role to this end.

Through Holiday Exhibitions, Website, Tourism Guides, Trade Magazines, Training Workshops, Festival support and promotions such as the National Ploughing Championships..... ECT has been engaged in doing all it can to create awareness and attract visitors to our beautiful area and home. Given the tight resources and limitations of available support, a lot has been achieved over the year to date. But there is still so much more to do if the momentum is to be sustained.

East Cork Tourism as a body needs support. It requires more active participation from new and current members to plan and deliver upon the priorities. I encourage all existing and potential members to get involved. To get involved all you have to do is notify your local tourism body representative or contact myself or Margot.

The upcoming AGM is open to all ECT members and is an ideal opportunity to see first hand the shape of things to come. With the opening of the new Cork Airport pending and recent announcements regarding additional scheduled air-routes ... these are definitely the most opportune times to join your local tourism team.

An extra one million passengers will travel through Cork airport alone. One of the aims of ECT is to do all that is possible to attract as big a portion of this pie..... eastwards.... towards our destinations and businesses. This task will need energy and vision and your continued support. I thank Margot and all the members and supporters for their help over the last twelve months.

East Cork is certainly developing its tourism product at a fantastic rate. In closing, I would like to wish good luck to all current projects underway - the swimming pools in Cobh and Youghal and the Fota Island Resort Development. For projects in the pipeline, such as the Marina in Cobh, the Fota Wildlife expansion, and the Castlemartyr development, we look forward to your fruition. Finally, to those projects that are still just dreams to people of vision, let us hope that your dreams become reality.

Yours sincerely

Seán Woodgate
Chairman
East Cork Tourism Co Ltd



Small Atlantic Ports Project

A new INTERREG IIIB Programme, the Small Atlantic Ports Project, was launched in March by Minister Dick Roche, T.D. Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. The Project will promote the development of a tourism trail in a network of ports along the European Atlantic Coastline.

The South West Regional Authority is leading the Project in co-operation with East Cork Tourism and local tourism interests and in partnership with a number of local and regional authorities along the European Atlantic Coastline. The project, addressing all tourism interests, will concentrate on the development of nautical tourism. The network includes eight Ports, from the Shetland Islands in the North, to the Canary Islands in the South. In Ireland, the Project will address tourism development in Cobh, Ballycotton and Youghal.

In addition to an interactive web portal, the Small Atlantic Ports network will produce brochures, guides and other printed materials. Additionally, information panels will be erected in the partner port areas promoting information about the trail.

The Project is funded by the INTERREG IIIB programme and the South West Regional Authority



Holiday World Experience

Dublin in January

Over 1000 visitors flocked to the East Cork stand at the Holiday World Experience in Dublin in January. One of the major attractions was a 'Free Draw' for one of the two free mini-breaks in East Cork. The holidays included a stay at the 4 star Midleton Park Hotel and Spa and a break at the Commodore Hotel Cobh, plus vouchers for all the major visitor attractions.

"The camaraderie at the Travel Show was fantastic this year," noted Margot Mulcahy, Marketing Manager for East Cork Tourism. "Cork 2005 - European Capital of Culture, Trabolgan Holiday Village, Kinsale Tourism, Blackwater Holidays, the Baltimore Hotel, Pier Head Holiday Homes, the Fuscia Brand and, of course, East Cork Tourism, all came together and worked side by side in promoting the area to the mutual benefit of all."

A special initiative marked a great sprit of cooperation among the various tourist interests in the region – "Cork from East to West". For one week, commencing on Friday the 28th January, a unique competition was broadcast on the airwaves in Dublin, promoting some of the excellent hotels and fantastic attractions in the region. Margot reported, "The winner will be staying in East Cork and sampling the delights of the East, this will include a stay in the brand new Quality Hotel in Youghal and a hundred euro voucher for a night out at Perks Casino. The winners will then stay at the recently refurbished Garryvoe Hotel and play a round of golf at Fota Island. Also on offer are complimentary tickets to all the fantastic visitor attractions in East Cork, including a walking tour of Cobh on the Titanic Trail. The next stop will be Cork City for some 2005 Culture, with tickets to a show and a night in the Imperial Hotel. The lucky winners will then visit Kinsale with an overnight stay at the Trident Hotel and finish with a boat trip to Skerkin Island and a visit to Mizen Vision, staying overnight at the Baltimore Harbour Hotel."

Margot also reported that, "Perkie Bear promoted the new state of the art Casino at Perks in Youghal and several youngsters were delighted to go home with his 'little brother'. The younger generation was also delighted with the entertainment put on by Trabolgan – especially Barney. Miskella's Super Valu & Centra's in Cobh also contributed a fantastic supply of lollypops, which was a great hit with the little ones!"



East Cork Tourism Carnival Party

Over four hundred guests attended the 'Season Launch Carnival Party' at Perks Entertainment Centre in Youghal in March. Following on from the very successful "Showcase" that was held last year in the Midleton Park Hotel and the enjoyable "Party Night" at Trabolgan, East Cork Tourism decided that they would combine the two events in 2005 into one exciting new occasion.

Philip and Sal Tivy of Perks Family Entertainment Centre were delighted with the turn out. Philip noted that, "All the entertainment was complimentary, including Bowling, Lazar Tag, Snooker/Pool, Blackbeard's Adventure Play Centre and all the Kiddies Rides. For the children we organised the Wobbly Circus, Juggling and Balloon Making." Sal went on to add, "We also gave all our adult guests a chance to experience the brand new state of the art Casino here at Perks with a free casino ticket. Over six hundred euro was raised and all casino proceeds on the night are being donated to the local hospice here in Youghal." Entertainment was supplied by "The Jazz Train" jazz band and Comhaltas Ceoltoirier. The evening also included complimentary wine and finger food plus free raffles.

"For those who were not familiar with the fabulous new facilities at Perks, the evening was an eye-opener" said Margot Mulcahy, Marketing Manager of East Cork Tourism. "Philip and Sal were most generous in making the Carnival Party possible and welcomed all tourism interests in the area. In addition, we also used the event to actively seek new members so that we can continue the good work. Everyone had a chance to find out more about all the different products in the area and to meet friends in the industry. Hopefully, this will familiarise everyone with East Cork!"



Sean Woodgate, Chairman of East Cork Tourism, noted, "This event was a showcase opportunity. We wished to demonstrate what East Cork Tourism has been doing to promote the area. We are also working with ECAD in developing an integrated tourism concept for the whole region. In this regard, we branched out further this year and included our neighbours in the Blackwater Valley and West Waterford tourism, who we will be working with us on the new Interreg IIIB programme, 'Developing Active Regions and Sustainable Tourism (DART)'. We were also pleased to welcome, Eileen Crowley from the South West Regional Authority, who is working with us on our second Interreg IIIB project, The Small Atlantic Ports Project."

HSMIA Awards



Various Cork tourism initiatives featured prominently again in the shake up for the Annual Hospitality and Sales Marketing Association of Ireland (HSMIA) Awards. East Cork had two finalists for the awards that were announced at the HSMIA Awards Presentation in October. Raymond Kelleher of the Quality Hotel and Leisure Centre was short-listed for the “The Best Hotel and Sales Marketing Professional” Category. In “The Best Marketing Innovation or Innovator” Category, Margot Mulcahy from East Cork Tourism was one of the five finalists.

Margot, who was also part of the “Cork Un-Corked” group that won the 2003 top award, was thrilled to once again be nominated. “I put in a submission on behalf of East Cork Tourism and was then called for an interview Dublin. My submission was based on the recent Strategic Marketing and Development Plan for East Cork and the strategic actions that have resulted from that project. But really, this is more about our members. They have been so fantastic with their support and contribution over the past two years. I wish to congratulate and thank them all. Even though we didn’t win, it is great to get to the final hurdle!”

DART - Forging links ‘A La Region’

Representatives of East Cork and North Cork were privileged in June, when they attended the ‘A La Region’ gastronomic food showcase in Frankfurt Hahn Airport. ‘A la Region’ is an official umbrella, uniting many wine growers and caterers from the Rhine-Hunsruck country who benefit from this co-operation and networking. Competing producers and providers join at one table to present their local gourmet specialities and wines.

“‘A La Region’ is part of the DART Interreg IIIB initiative and one of the action plans of our German partners,” stated Ryan Howard, CEO of ECAD Ltd (East Cork Area Development). “Being part of DART Cork, ECAD and Blackwater Resources were invited to attend this event, that was a fusion of flavour and culture.” Ryan went on to add. “We were encouraged to bring a professional chef with us and were fortunate that Shane Nugent, from Raymonds Restaurant in Midleton, was able to oblige. Shane was amazing, and with very support, produced 700 scrumptious Irish-style fish cakes, with a lemon grass coconut dip which were a favourite for the 600 guests”

The Delegation from East Cork represented a large cross section of food interests from the area. Representing the Midleton and Cobh Farmers Market were Ted Murphy - Mayor of Midleton, Kate O’Donovan, Barbara Icke and Peter Kidney. Anthony Barry from Dairygold attended along with Mike Walley, who represented the local Chambers of Commerce. Margot Mulcahy from East Cork Tourism and Des Donnelly deputised for the Midleton Food and Drink Festival, which is also one of the Irish actions in the programme supported by DART.

The representative delegates visit to Germany included attending workshops, specifically for SME Networks (Small and Medium Sized Enterprises). These related to the benefits of cooperative marketing, building business networks and, importantly, the case study for ‘A la Region.’

“The DART project focus’s on tourism development and the opportunities to increase tourism, economic and cultural links within NW Europe.” Ryan noted. “The emphasis of the undertaking is on maximising the benefits from passengers already using the airports of Cork, Prestwick and Frankfurt Hahn, by encouraging them to stay in the associate regions”. Ryan went on to add “Our project colleagues are based in the Hunsruck region of Germany (Frankfurt Hahn) and South Ayrshire in Scotland (Prestwick)”



The DART project is already enhancing transnational and interregional co-operation. It offers a huge opportunity to East Cork and North Cork in identifying solutions, increasing publicity and influencing future planning. The action plan for North and East Cork includes market research, promotion and marketing. Also included are festivals and events (Midleton Food and Drink Festival), infrastructure development (outdoor activity trails in North and East Cork) and training for tourism providers.



Web Update

An excitingly enhanced East Cork East Cork Tourism web site went live on Wednesday, 15th June. Sean Woodgate, Chairman of East Cork Tourism, noted "In just a year since its official launch at Fota House, hits to www.eastcorktourism.com have gone from 7,450 for the month of June 2004, to 61,000 for the week of 5th June 2005!"

Work was on-going for phase two of this ambitious project over a few months. Margot Mulcahy, Marketing Manager for East Cork Tourism, explained "We want visitors to our site to have an enjoyable, yet informative visit, without an overload of information or the frustration of pop ups and adverts. The amendments to the site have stemmed from statistical research and feedback from our members. We have been working closely with Bluefire Internet Ltd. in developing more interactivity to make visits to www.eastcorktourism.com more memorable and fun."

Major changes to the site include the development of the 'Special Interests' sector. Margot Mulcahy noted, "These feature five different 'Trails'. These interactive maps highlight the particular interests. For example, there is a 'Family Fun' trail that will encompass all the family attractions in East Cork - i.e. Fota Wildlife Park, Perks Family Entertainment, blue flag beaches, Trabolgan etc. Other trails include an 'Activity' trail, a 'Heritage' trail, an 'Eco' trail' and a 'Retail & Relaxation Therapy' trail." Margot noted, "Other major new features on the site include a 'Downloadable brochure' and a new 'Whatzon' feature on the home page. We have also developed new maps of East Cork, Cobh, Midleton & Youghal."

Other important changes to the East Cork Tourism site include amendments to the 'Special Offers' section and a new 'Gallery' tab. The latter is of specific interest to East Cork Tourism members and indeed all tourism interests in East Cork. The Gallery also incorporates a downloadable East Cork Tourism Newsletter.

On further developments on the site, Sean noted that, "Our initial research found that many people are frustrated at being directed to booking sites when they are searching for specific hotels. We therefore provided direct links to all our member's web sites." Sean went on to note that, "A year down the line we now feel that a booking facility on the site would be most beneficial and we are currently undertaking this initiative. The East Cork Tourism web site would not have been possible without the generous sponsorship of East Cork Area Development Ltd. (ECAD) and we are most thankful to Ryan Howard and his staff for their financial support on this project."

Tourism Language Training

A unique and innovative language programme, targeted specially at foreign workers within the hospitality industry, took place during the early summer months. The programme was launched by East Cork Area Development (ECAD) and East Cork Tourism.

"At the 'Needs Assessment Workshop' of East Cork Tourism in February, English language coaching for foreign staff was identified as an area where training would be very beneficial," noted East Cork Tourism's Marketing Manager, Margot Mulcahy. "There are a number of general language courses available; however, we were looking to develop a curriculum that addressed the very specific language requirements of the tourism industry - especially the restaurant/hotel environment. ECAD were most supportive of this initiative and arrangements were made with the Cork English College to commence a specially designed language training module. The take-up was excellent and our first course was fully subscribed in a matter of days."

Concerning the content of the course, Margot Mulcahy noted, "Importantly, a needs analysis of management and staff was undertaken prior to the commencement of the course in order to 'tailor make' the programme. We are now well into the first module and according to reports from the Cork English College, all our participants are progressing well. Each student will receive a Diploma on completion of their course."

"Training for the tourism sector is high on our agenda," stated Ryan Howard, ECAD's Chief Executive. "We were delighted to be able to facilitate the leisure sector in supporting this project, especially as tourism training is also a component part of the DART Interreg IIB initiative for East and North Cork."

All of the trainers from the Cork English College are university graduates with the relevant teaching qualifications necessary for English or foreign language training. The Cork English College training centre has been inspected by the Department of Education and has met the standards necessary for recognition. The College is members of the following associations: MEI-RELSA www.mei.ie, IATEFL, FIYTO, ALTO, Cork Chamber of Commerce and Cork and Kerry Tourism. Cork English College is also the first Irish school to be accepted to the "Quality English" network of schools. www.quality-english.com



Midleton Food & Drink Festival

"Way over our expectations!" ... "Professionally managed and organised" ... "Resounding success!"

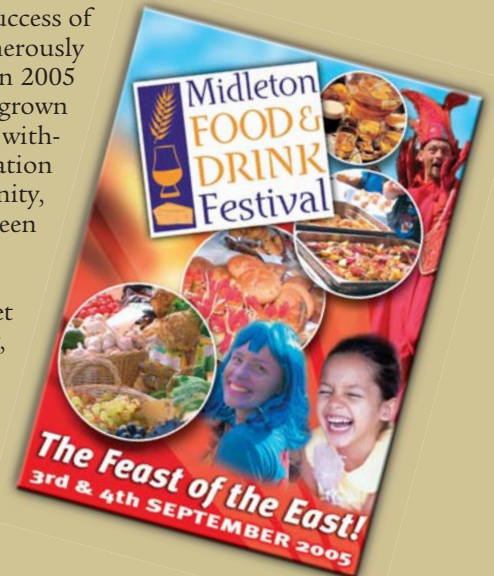
were just some of the comments made by stall holders after the inaugural Midleton Food & Drink Festival in September 2004

"Our second Midleton food and Drink Festival, in September 2005, built on the success of the 2004 event," said Committee Chairman, Sean Woodgate. "The Festival was generously sponsored again by Jameson Irish Whiskey and DART. With the added support in 2005 of Failte Ireland, Cork Kerry Tourism, Safe Food and Brennan's the Festival has grown into a major event. The Festival was one of the key actions identified for Midleton within the recent East Cork Tourism Strategic Review. With the added and crucial dedication of a fantastic festival committee plus the support of the entire Midleton community, the Town Council, the Garda and the Chamber of Commerce, the Festival has been exceptional."

"Over 60 stalls, including the Farmers Market, some crafts and many other gourmet vendors set up shop on Main Street and in the Courtyard" said Margot Mulcahy, "Multi ethnic aromas carried on the breeze with flavours from the Himalayas, India and South Africa. Other specialities sizzled on the street, including speciality meats, and much more. The event was included in the programme for Cork 2005 European Capital of Culture. Initially, we set out to increase visitor numbers to Midleton by two thousand, the reality was that the two thousand looked like twenty thousand in 2004 and, even with the rain on Sunday, twenty five thousand in 2005!"

Entertainment organiser, Seamus Cunningham said, "Hoteliers, publicans, as well as those in the entertainment industry combined their talents and came up with an astounding itinerary of entertainment for all ages. Children were spoiled by an extravaganza of fun and frolics from balloon artists, jugglers, stilts roaming, face painters, puppet shows and much more, while adults could enjoy set dancing, traditional Irish and folk music as well as performances from brass bands, string quartet and music from local artists in the area."

Midleton's second Food and Drink Festival emanated the joys of what had gone before and built on the experience of the past with an even more mouth-watering line up of food exhibition, sampling, tasting, food culture combined with a truly remarkable array of entertainment.



NEW Members for East Cork Tourism

2005 saw the launch of some exciting new product for East Cork.

WHALE OF A TIME Sea Adventures - was launched in June. A trip with 'Whale of a Time' takes you far out to sea at exhilarating speeds to see wildlife first hand in the summer and will bring you on a quest to spot gigantic sea mammals in the winter.

KINGFISHER - the first airboat in Ireland - was launched in September. Airboat rides, once seen only on billboards when approaching the Everglades in South Florida are now accessible to locals and visitors alike in the East Cork town of Youghal. Kingfisher now offers you the thrill and beauty of an airboat ride several thousand miles from the home of the Alligator!

RADISSON SAS Hotel - IRELAND'S 9th Radisson SAS Hotel, located in Ditchley House, Little Island, East Cork, was officially opened on the 16th September by the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Micheál Martin. There are 145 staff employed at the hotel and €37 million was invested in its development.

To celebrate the opening, the senior executive team of Rezidor SAS Hospitality, the parent company of Radisson SAS, were in attendance including Kurt Ritter, Rezidor SAS President and CEO. The Radisson SAS Hotel and Spa is owned by local businessmen Rick Fitzgerald, managing director of the Oran Group and Des O'Dowd, proprietor of Inchydoney Island Lodge and Spa.



East Cork Tourism supported/sponsored by ECAD



Cork 2005 European Capital of Culture