



## **2012 SET TO PUT TOURISM IRELAND CENTRE STAGE AT THE BEST OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND SHOW**

This year's Best of Britain and Ireland Show is set to continue the huge interest already growing in Ireland for 2012 and 2013 due to the range of world-class events that the island will play host to over the coming 24 months. These include:

### **Opening of Titanic Belfast 2012 – April 2012**

Built to commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the world's most famous cruise ship, the £97m Titanic Visitor Attraction is well on its way to being completed and on schedule to open its doors to the public in April 2012. It is set to become one of Northern Ireland's major visitor attractions. Also open to the public will be the fully restored tender ship for the RMS Titanic, the SS Nomadic. Nomadic is the last remaining vessel built for the White Star Line that is still afloat. Used by the first class passengers on Titanic, Nomadic's interior replicates that of the first class lounge on the mother ship.

### **Opening of the Giant's Causeway Visitor Centre – September 2012**

You can get an update on how work is progressing for the new Giant's Causeway Visitor Centre which will be opening to the general public in the summer of 2012. Designed to enhance the visitor experience to the Causeway area, the new underground arena will offer visitors shopping and restaurant options, as well as in-depth information on the Causeway.

### **Tall Ships**

In 2012, this annual European event is coming to Dublin, from 23rd to 26th August. The Tall Ships Races are designed to encourage international friendship and training for young people through the art of sailing and consist of two racing legs of several hundred nautical miles. These ships will sail up the Liffey right into the heart of Dublin for a long weekend of festivities.



### **Volvo Ocean Race – July 2012**

During the nine months of the Volvo Ocean Race, which starts in Alicante, in 2011 and concludes in Galway, Ireland, in July 2012, the participating teams will sail over 39,000 nautical miles of the world's most treacherous seas. This event is run every three years and following the success of its visit to Galway last time, it has been chosen as the finish line in 2012. Now there's an excuse for a party!

### **Derry-Londonderry Round-the-World Clipper Race in July 2012 & UK City of Culture 2013**

Clipper Race debutant Derry-Londonderry has been designated UK City of Culture 2013 and the Clipper 11-12 will form an essential part of the lead up to the year of celebration. The second last stage in the race will visit Derry-Londonderry and with its own Clipper in the race, great celebrations are planned.

Gearing up for 2013, Derry-Londonderry has made history after winning its bid to be the first ever UK City of Culture in 2013.

### **Irish Open – 28<sup>th</sup> June – 1<sup>st</sup> July 2012**

The Irish Open Golf Championship will be held at the Royal Portrush Golf Club, during the week of June 28th 2012. It is the first time since 1951 that the famous golf course is to hold a major competition, and the first time since 1947 that the Irish Open has been held here.

Proclaimed as "one of the best golf courses in the world" by Darren Clarke, local boy Graeme McDowell expressed his delight at the Irish Open being held in his home town by saying, "We are 100% behind anything we can do to make the Irish Open in Portrush the best it can be." Graeme McDowell and Darren Clarke, who both have strong links with the north coast, have agreed to act in an ambassadorial role for Royal Portrush, which will celebrate its 125th anniversary in 2013.

### **Dublin Festival Season – September – October 2012**



Dublin Festival Season runs from the beginning of September to the end of October. The continuous run of festivals and events will bring world-class culture, arts, theatre, music and architecture to the capital. Here's just a taster of what's going on; Dublin Contemporary, Absolut Fringe Festival, Arthur's Day, Dublin Culture Night, Ulster Bank Dublin Theatre Festival and Open House

### **All on Board**

Niall Gibbons, CEO, and Vanessa Markey, Head of GB, Tourism Ireland, along with other members of Tourism Ireland will be on the Ireland stand at Best of Britain and Ireland to meet the trade, give updates on upcoming events and openings, and discuss future tourism initiatives.

Vanessa Markey, Head of GB, Tourism Ireland says, "The island of Ireland has got an incredible line-up of events this year and next. This presents the perfect opportunity for the GB trade to engage with us and build on their Ireland portfolios. Interest from the trade is on the increase and we expect that to continue throughout the next 24 months. Uptake of our Shamrock Agents Programme has exceeded expectation, but we would love to welcome more agents to become Irish experts next year."

**ENDS**

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