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New Brand for Belfast



A new brand identity for Belfast was unveiled recently at a major event at the Waterfront Hall, attended by around 250 of the city's leading lights, including representatives of the public, private, community and voluntary sectors. The new brand is spearheaded by a heart-shaped B logo, accompanied by messages including the word 'be' - such as 'be welcome' 'be part of it', and 'be vibrant'. Its aim is to help market Belfast to international visitors and potential investors, promoting the city as an exciting, vibrant and welcoming place.

Further details including brand logos and a new advertisement can be found at belfastcity.gov.uk/brand

You can also view the latest advertisement for Belfast [here](#)

Photo caption: Kathryn Wilson with the new brand for Belfast

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Number of visitors to Belfast continue to rise



The number of visitors staying overnight in Belfast rose by 18 per cent last year, according to the latest figures released by the Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau from the tourism monitor conducted by Belfast City Council. The number of out of state overnight visitors has also increased by a healthy 20 per cent to 1.2 million in 2007 when compared to 2006. The overall number of visitors coming into the city last year reached an all time high at 6.9 million, bringing an estimated £313.3 million of tourism revenue into the local economy.

Photo caption: Councillor Michael Browne, Chairman of the City Council's Development Committee, Allison O'for of Diageo NI and BVCB Chief Executive Gerry Lennon announce the visitor figures at the Belfast Wheel.

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Norwegian Jade cruises in



The impressive NCL Norwegian Jade is the 16th ship out of a remarkable 38 cruise liners scheduled to visit Belfast this year and the first ship from the Norwegian Cruise Line Corporation to ever dock in the city.

Photo caption: The Lord Mayor of Belfast Cllr. Tom Hartley joins Laura Harvey (NITB) and Gerry Lennon (NITB) to welcome the liner

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Famous Faces Book and Heritage Plaque Trail launched

The Famous Faces of North Belfast booklet has been launched which profiles over forty remarkable people with links to the area, from famous flautist James Galway to sporting legends Mary Peters and boxer Rinty Monaghan, actors Kenneth Brannagh and Stephen Rea as well as revolutionaries, politicians, artists and writers. Additionally, a special bronze plaque heritage trail of the Shankill and Crumlin Roads has been installed and is ready for public viewing. The plaques, designed by artist Ned Jackson-Smyth, were commissioned as part of the Renewing Communities Visitor Servicing project, delivered by BVCB.



The trail aims to portray the rich history and highlight important aspects of the story of one of Belfast's oldest settlements. There are fourteen plaques in total and in conjunction with an 8 page leaflet some of the areas lesser known facts will be imparted to visitors and locals alike.

Photo caption: Councillor Nelson McCausland joins Jayne O'Neile at the launch of the Famous Faces of North Belfast booklet

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Special Summer tours and openings



Crumlin Road Gaol Tours

Guided tours of one of Belfast's most distinctive and notorious buildings, Crumlin Road Gaol, run on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays until 12 September. Tours will be conducted by qualified Blue Badge guides and will last approximately one hour. Tickets are available from the Belfast Welcome Centre at 028 9024 6609 costing £5 for Adults, £3 groups and concessions free.

CS Lewis Tour

Guided bus tour departs the Linenhall Library at 2pm every Sunday until 14th September. The tour lasts 2 hours 15 minutes and will include Little Lea, Campbell College, and St. Marks Church. Tickets available from Belfast Welcome Centre at 028 9024 6609, costing £8 for Adults and £5 concession.

Hillsborough Castle Openings

Hillsborough Castle will be opening for tours for the month of August and until 14th September Monday - Saturday from 9am to 6pm. There will be an exhibition of Silver from Ten Downing Street both in Hillsborough Castle and in Hillsborough Court House until 8th August. £5 per person entry. Tickets can be purchased from the Hillsborough TIC.

Lisburn's Castle Gardens Restored

Lisburn City Council recently celebrated the restoration of Castle Gardens with an official reception. The walled terraces are considered to be the best, perhaps only example of a 17th Century walled garden in Ireland.

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Access

Curious George welcomes children onboard Stena Line

Children's favourite Curious George will be onboard **Stena Line** every day during the summer holidays and children travelling onboard will receive Curious George goodies as well having the opportunity to win a family holiday to Universal Studios Hollywood on most sailings, with an onboard kids colouring competition. Plus, Stena Line's summer sale offers customers the chance to grab a bargain and set sail to Britain from only £90* single for a car and two adults with all children going free so families can save up to £82 return for travel up to 31st August.



Record profits for Belfast Port

Belfast Port has reported record profits for the last trading year. Around £21 billion worth of trade passed through the port, generating pre-tax profits of £22.1 million, making 2007 the port's most successful to date. Turnover in 2007 grew by around 8%, pushing net assets to £235m and gross profits to £31m. A record 17.5 million tonnes of cargo passed through the port last year, with passenger numbers expanding from 51,000 to 1,274,000. The Port of Belfast is one of the island's busiest ferry docks, and is also the second largest such facility both north and south of the border.

Translink launches Metro Fridays

Metro has launched a new, fun initiative -'Metro Fridays' to help bring back the Friday feeling. On Fridays, Metro bus users can avail of numerous offers including a free coffee all day from the Street, discounted tickets for the new Odeon cinema, a free drink at selected Botanic Inns venues and special offers at Nando's and Pizza Hut. Also free copies of the Belfast Telegraph's Weekend magazine will be given out to passengers in the city centre.

New Jet2 routes announced

Jet2 has announced new routes to Belfast from Jersey and Menorca due to commence Summer 2009
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Attractions



New Rainforest House opens at Zoo

Belfast Zoo's new Rainforest House was recently opened by TV presenter Zoe Salmon and the city's Lord Mayor, Tom Hartley. The Rainforest House is a walk through exhibit with extensive tropical landscaping. A newly installed sprinkler system provides a permanent source of water for the rainforest plants, and a new heating system and the moist climate have provided the perfect climate for growth and animal comfort.

Additionally the zoo is celebrating its latest arrivals -Baby Mumble a Gentoo Penguin, and red river hog babies Saffron and Scarlet who have also made their public debut.

W5 celebrates record breaking visitors and performance

W5 has enjoyed one of its best years ever, achieving record-breaking levels of visitors and performance. Visitors to the attractions are up 13% whilst website visitor sessions also increased by 29%. Additionally out-of-state visitor numbers are now 32% of the visitor total (approx 80,000) whilst Republic of Ireland visitors have increased from 17% to 21% (approx 52,000)

Happy Couple say "I do" at Grand Opera House

The Grand Opera Houses celebrated a real-life love story on stage by hosting its own wedding. Pauline McNamee and Gary Boyce made history on July 25 when they said "I do" on stage in front of an auditorium packed full of their nearest and dearest.

New home for S.S Nomadic

S.S Nomadic is to be given a permanent home as a tourist attraction in the 141 year old Hamilton Graving Dock, once part of the Harland and Wolff shipyard. It is expected the Nomadic will be in dock before the end of the year and the vessel should be open to the public next year after the move.

New Sunday Opening Hours for The Wickerman

The Wickerman is now open on Sundays from 11am to 5.30pm until the end of August.
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Awards

Queen's Welcome Centre celebrates Local Information Office status

Queen's Welcome Centre has received Northern Ireland Tourist Board Local Information Office status. The Centre provides a focus for thousands of visitors each year, including information provision about the University and tourist information on the local South Belfast area and beyond.



Causeway attraction a top 10 Euro hit

The Giant's Causeway ranked 10th in Europe's top ten most popular tourist attractions in a table compiled by travel website TripAdvisor.

Environmental accolade for Diageo

Diageo has won an environmental award for its packaging operation in Belfast. The plant in East Belfast received Business in the Community's Big Tick award for reducing waste to landfill by 87% since 2004 and reducing by 5.5% in the last year the amount of waste that is then recycled.

Odyssey's CEO shortlisted for award

Nicky Dunne - chief executive of the Odyssey Arena has been short listed at the First Women Awards 2008. Nicky spearheaded the opening of the venue in December 2000 and has since established the Odyssey Arena as a leader in its field.

Award for Home Front Exhibition

The Royal Society of Ulster Architects has awarded the **Home Front Exhibition**, the Arts Council-sponsored award for 2008 for best example of integrating artworks into a building project. The Exhibition is located at 21 Talbot Street, beside Belfast Cathedral. The architects were Robinson McIlwaine in collaboration with exhibition designer John McMillan, incorporating works by artists Diane McCormick, Stanley Murray Scott and James McKendry.

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Development



Belfast 'Premier' Spot For £5m Hotel

Belfast's thriving Cathedral Quarter has welcomed a £5 million investment by a top UK hotel chain. A new **Premier Inn**, owned by Whitbread Hotels and Restaurants will open its doors in October, bringing an additional 75 jobs to the capital. Its latest venture will be located on the site of the re-vamped Four Corners building at the Waring Street and Donegall Street junction encompassing 171 bedrooms and a 200-seater restaurant and bar. The historic Belfast building has retained its original brickwork facade and window size to tie in with the character and style of the Cathedral Quarter area.

Additionally, Belgian based Rezidor is to locate a 145 bedroom Park Inn at Clarence Street West in the centre of Belfast. The hotel will anchor the £25 million 11 storey Clarence West mixed use development under construction on the site of the former Superbowl complex.

Plans to expand Ten Square Hotel

Ten Square Hotel is set for a major expansion which will see the number of bedrooms increase from 23 to more than 100 and staffing levels more than double to 75. The hotel which has been sold to property developer Jim Miskelly has built a strong reputation used by visiting celebrities and locals alike since it opened in 2000.

Bushmills toasts £1.5m investment

Bushmills which is celebrating its 400th anniversary is investing £1.5 million in refurbishing and expanding the equipment used to distil its famous whiskey brand. The distillery which employs 120 staff produces 500,000 cases of the whiskey annually and the Bushmills site recently moved to seven-day operation breaking all previous production records. A new book *Bushmills - 400 Years in the Making*, published by Appletree Press, vividly portrays the history and heritage of the Old Bushmills Distillery and recounts the story of whiskey making in Ireland.

Belfast's economy shines in league

The economy of Belfast has grown fastest among the 30 largest cities in Britain and Northern Ireland over the past decade it has been revealed. The city has raised itself to third place in the league of the strongest economies - just behind Edinburgh and London. Belfast has seen a 99% increase in BVA (Gross Value Added) over the decade to £26,792 per capita per year according to national accounting group UHY Hacker Young which ranks cities by growth in GVA.

Major plan to revamp city centre

An ambitious multi million pound plan has been unveiled to transform the west side of Belfast city centre.

The proposed developments includes improving the area behind CastleCourt shopping centre and Donegall Place. More than 320 new homes - 20 per cent of which will be designated as social housing are also to be built

History set to hang in Ulster Hall

A series of famous oil paintings of historic importance to Belfast are to be restored as part of the ongoing refurbishment of the **Ulster Hall**. Originally commissioned for the hall in 1902, Joseph Carey's paintings of Belfast will once again adorn the wall of the landmark venue when it reopens its doors to the public in March.

Sail NI making a splash with luxury coastline tours

Carrickfergus based **Sail Northern Ireland** is riding the crest of the wave after securing cruise bookings from Scandinavia. Sail Northern Ireland offers visitors an alternative means of viewing the Giant's Causeway and the Mourne Mountains from the open seas. Sail NI owner Dee Neill offers charter cruises on board an Elan 434 - one of the most luxurious and sea worthy yachts available.

Belfast's Rotterdam bar reopens

One of Belfast's most famous live music venues, The **Rotterdam Bar**, has been saved from demolition and has reopened its doors after plans to redevelop the site were shelved. The bar in the historic dockland area of Sailortown is an iconic venue for live music acts and has attracted everyone from established rock legends through to new bands, and traditional musicians.

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BWC news and events

Advertising opportunities at BWC

As summer heats up, why not capitalise on the increasing numbers of visitors to the Belfast Welcome Centre and promote your business to over 350,000 people a year through our poster sites? Sites are available in prime locations throughout the centre which is visited by more than 2000 people daily. Prices start at just £ 350 + VAT per annum and look out for details of all the sites arriving with you in the next few weeks.



For more information on any of the extensive promotional opportunities in the Belfast Welcome Centre, please contact **Lisa Prior** or please do not hesitate to call in to experience the full range of services and facilities offered by our team of multi-lingual, friendly staff.

Tickets on Sale at Belfast Welcome Centre

Belfast's Big River Blues & Jazz Festival 21-24 Aug

Open House Festival 24-28 Sep

Lyric Theatre presentation of "Pumpgirl" by Abbie Spallen 01-20 Sep

The O'Malley Experience an exhilarating display of Irish music and dance Wed @ the Empire

Conversations & Cosmopolitans - Part of Belfast Pride Week celebrations Black Box 01 Aug

Guided tours of Friar's Bush cemetery Sundays until Sept

Henry & Harriet - a perambulatory adventure both thrilling and tragic through the streets of Belfast

c1912 Sunday until 31st Aug

Guided tours of Crumlin Road Gaol Fri, Sat, Sun until 12th Sept

Titanic Dock & Pump-House Tours Wed, Sat, Sun @ 2pm

CS Lewis Bus Tours - each Sunday from Jun to Sep @ 2pm

Coiste Political Walking Tours Daily

Historic Belfast Walking Tours Wed, Fri, 2pm, Sat 11am & 2pm & Sun 2pm

Daily Bus Tours to Giants Causeway

Northern Walking Tours, Walking tours of Giants Causeway & Rathlin Island

Range of events in the Black Box

Range of events by Moving on Music

Upcoming events

Belfast Circus School Summer Sundays. Performances begin at 2pm and 4pm and are free of charge!!

Grand Opera House Sex & The City Fabulous Frocks - Film Party Night Wed 20 - Sat 23 Aug

W5 Dino Jaws - throughout August

The O'Malley Experience Wednesday nights at Belfast Empire

Belfast Mela 24 August

Hilden Beer Festival 22-24 August

Belfast Waterfront World Snooker Championships 31 August

Belfast Zoo Back to School Madness 30-31 August

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