



Very short **history** of projects and campaigns executed by **Gaeltacht Irland Reisen** and/or with the help of the “irland journal” Magazine

All in red refers to the role of the irland journal mag

(We have often been chosen by Irish bodies/groupings/regions to act as their German marketing strand in a series of complex and quite challenging projects of which a few involved some sort of European funding (such as INTERREG, “PEACE MONEY”, INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR IRELAND).

How it began

1983: Gaeltacht Irland Reisen founded by people, who did have no experience in the trade at all, but a lot of experience in travelling to and within Ireland.

1984: Gaeltacht joins the registered charity “Europäische Ferien-Heimvolkshochschulen“ which was a few years later re-named “**European Centres for Culture and Communication**”. EBZ consists of ten independent cultural and educational organisations in eight different countries. The primary aim of the EBZ is to encourage studies in European history, culture and politics. Gaeltacht Irland Reisen functions as office for the EBZ Ireland.

1989: Last “**Tarifdschungel-Buch**” catalogue published

1990: Christian Ludwig publishing Company founded : first issue of the “irland journal” appeared in 1990.

1993: Rainbow Route.

An existing but almost unknown car ferry route (into Northern Ireland: from Cairnryan to Larne) was the centre piece of a small package offered to 100,000 German families. **25% (25,000) responded and received a special edition of the *irland journal* on this particular area (the geographical north of Ireland).**

As a result, 10,000 people (approx. 2700 bookings) travelled this route **every year** (for a period of about 6 years), generating almost 30,000 additional bed nights in Northern Ireland alone.

1993 & 1994: Co-operation with *Irish Country Holidays* and the Frankfurt Book Fair

Starting point of our co-operation with the “National Rural Tourism Cooperative Society (Ireland) Ltd.”, trading under the name “Irish Country Holidays”.

...also in 1994:

Beginning of our co-operation with the *Arts Council of Ireland* and the *Frankfurt Book Fair*.

1995 & 1996: *Irish Folk Festival*

We (“irland journal” magazine) **produced and provided the official programme brochure for the “Irish Folk Festival”** with the consent of the concert organisers. What is so special about this?! **We wanted to get our messages across to the maximum possible number of visitors (and not only to those 10 to 20% of the audience who would buy the brochure). As a result, we distributed the brochure free of charge at the entrance two years in a row - and got in touch with an overall audience of about 50,000 people. In these two years we got about 30,000 new addresses of people being interested in going to Ireland at some stage – at least half of them was a result from this marketing action.**

1996: Frankfurt Book Fair

Our masterpiece: Focal Theme: Ireland and its Diaspora. Insider do know that there wouldn't have been an Irish participation without us – we even granted (and gave) some considerable money as sponsors. Our idea was simple: **We should not have the party (events) all over Frankfurt and its**

surrounding area – but all over Germany instead! At the end, some 1300 cultural events were part of this nationwide festival - "**A Day of Irish Life in Germany**" - and took place in the months from September to December, all under one umbrella and all co-ordinated by an (necessarily) increased team of the *irland journal* and *Gaeltacht Irland Reisen*. Press coverage is high, our work is highly praised, but at the end we probably pay 90% of a huge total bill ourselves. Furthermore, 200,000 copies of an extra special issue of the *irland journal* were distributed throughout Germany, being a great success with a lasting effect: Now, more than 15 years later, copies are still read and coupons are still coming back...

1997 & 1998: Arigna Leader Company & Riverdance

The "Arigna"-catalogue: We tried to sell an "artificial" region (not very successful). *Gaeltacht & the irland journal* have managed to become 'a partner' of *Riverdance* in Germany and accompany approx. 45 - 50 shows with a big information stand. At this occasion, 200,000 copies of a newly produced Fáilte-brochure were being distributed. Naturally – this brochure features the tourism product from Ireland as well.

In 1996 (Frankfurt Book Fair), we were the movers behind the foundation of the registered society "Netzwerk Irland" (Network Ireland). Starting in 1998 we soon had to meet the biggest possible challenge: The heirs of **Heinrich Böll** wanted to sell the **Cottage on Achill Ireland**. While we (Christian Ludwig Verlag) were paying most of the bill, the sub-society (Friends of the Heinrich Böll Cottage) leased the cottage and continued the Artist in residence programme until about 2001. However, Network Ireland couldn't raise funds – and at the end Rene Böll managed to find an even better (Irish) solution. But again, we "felt to be needed" - and re-acted in a very difficult time...

2000: The market of German Church Parishes

Second starting point of our (Gaeltacht) activities regards the huge market of German Church Parishes - in cooperation with the **North West Passage** the first version of the **Guide Book "Open your Mind"** is produced and mailed to app. 20,000 German parishes. 2 fam trips with decision makers (from the churches) take place. Result: within 3 years the number of groups (with a church background) has doubled.

2004: Riverdance.

During most of the autumn 2004, we - in a joint-venture with Tourism Ireland – organised an Ireland Information Stand at all of the 80 - 90 *Riverdance* performances. 80,000 specially designed brochures were distributed – along with a detailed questionnaire. The overall response was not overwhelming, but reasonably good: 4000 people filled in the form giving us information on their travel habits as well as their future travel plans. (Still, *Riverdance* lists *Gaeltacht* as a "Friend or partner" on its website)

2006: Invitation to the Sunny South (of Ireland) – a direct mail campaign. It has never taken that long from making a proposal (April) to the execution (September): 38,000 specially designed *irland journals* were dispatched exclusively to people who had previously booked with *Gaeltacht Irland Reisen* (various conditions applied). A specialty of this medium sized edition was the focus on the so called Superregion SOUTH (OF IRELAND). Again, we did so (in accordance with Fáilte Ireland and Tourism Ireland) to promote the more rural and less well-known regions of the South (in Ireland the cake of economic benefit caused by tourism activities is distributed still unevenly). Appr. 30 pages were dealing with different facets of Irish cultural (musical) Life...

2008: Since 1998, the Christian Ludwig Verlag has been publishing the only German Music Magazine dealing exclusively with "Folk, Song and Worldmusic". Name: Folker.

Celtic themes and music always had and have a good standing in this magazine. (between 20 / 30%). – This music magazine has 24 separate (so-called) BLUE PAGES – listing app. 2500 music events for the next 2-3 months. We had a lot of work to do in previous years to check some 10,000 mails bi-monthly in order to find out: does this music-event fit into our music criteria? Because we couldn't cope with this amount of mails any longer, **we created the new Internet portal www.folk-lied-weltmusik.de - and now all people in charge fill in their dates and events themselves.** It did cost us 1 year's work in "producing" it and in getting the German market informed and persuaded. But it works – and at all days now the portal now stores between 3000 and 4000 events – all in future.

Interesting for the Irish: people (organisers, musicians, newspapers, halls...) can classify their event as being "celtic" . If they do, all celtic related results are also being shown on our huge portal for Ireland: www.gaeltacht.de.

Also in 2008, we did again what we had done in 1996 (and 1995): at the delight of Peter Pandula (Concert Promoter / Magnetic Music) we edited and printed the official festival programme of the Irish Folk Festival 2008 – free for everybody and at our own expense by inserting it to the (heavily increased print run of the) irland journal September-issue. We wanted to make the "marketing platform" bigger and handed a copy out to every visitor, free again (versus selling it to only 10% of the audience). We directed a few thousand people to our website. Here, people could activate a voucher and - answer questions. For example: **"Are you interested in receiving information about the "electronic Beta- version" of a huge Irish CD-list?"** (which then later developed into this website www.celtic-music-net.com !)...

2008: While the irland journal was continueing and still continues to appear four times a year (now in its 20th year), we are also responsible for the latest development in the Internet, being our really biggest challenge now: **the new internet-portal www.celtic-music-net.com**

Content: (as per 12.12.2011):

1.096	Irish/Celtic bands
3.621	Irish/Celtic musicians
4.463	Irish/Celtic CDs
856	articles re. Cds/musicians/instruments
46	articles re Regions, music styles, dancing, genres
2.566.828	page impressions in total (since 1.12.2008)
2.320	page impressions per day

If this platform/portal was in English (and not in German only) it could and should be used by the Irish themselves. This was the content of a funding application towards Culture Ireland in February 2009 which was turned down ("We don't support websites"). **This portal is simple and complex at the same time. But we still won't be able to bring it further ahead on our own...**

2009: by the end of the year we produced "**dialann 2010**", a 50 page brochure (print run appr. 60.000) containing all available Irish/Celtic related concerts/gigs/events in Germany. As we showcased both, 500 small ones along with some 150 big ones, so-called highlights and because we actively distributed them nationwide at most of these concerts ourselves, we achieved that every big concert promoted all others including the small ones – and vice versa. The demand was so big that there was a need for a reprint in app. May.

2010: A private working group called "**Arbeitsgruppe Irland auf dem Kirchentag**", but mainly driven by us, co-operated with the **Second Ecumenical Kirchentag in München** (May 2010) – it was our first "Kirchentag". The overall theme was „That You May Live in Hope". Our theme was: "Without hope, without the living ecumenical experience, without the many holding on to their vision, the long journey towards peace in Belfast, (London-) Derry and the whole of Northern Ireland would never have taken place.



But what were the causes of the conflict? And how were they, at least partly, overcome? Is the peace process, starting with the Good Friday Agreement of 1998, irreversible? What further (ecumenical) efforts are necessary to allow the two communities to live together harmoniously and peacefully, with respect for each other's different traditions?

These, and many similar questions (historical, political and religious) were addressed by a number of individuals and groups and debated at the Kirchentag – **1**) - at the 'Encounters' Evening, **2**) - at three evening events in the theatre of the "MÜNCHENSTIFT" House in Rümmanstrasse 60 (München-Schwabing): a Long Night of Irish Music, a Panel Discussion

And an Ecumenical Celebration; **3**) - and on three long days (at the same physical place: a concert hall) in the 'House of Ireland' – set up by us for those three days as an open meeting place for talks, for information & displays, for Irish food and drink, an Irish library, for films and new (travel) projects.

All that was organised completely by ourselves. We had printed app. 60.000 brochures (Tourism Ireland, as the only sponsor, paid half of it).

2011: First of January was our biggest and most important step: after a 3-year cooperation with a different web portal **we decided to move back to our roots and re-vamped our own existing (12**

years old) website www.gaeltacht.de – and turned it into a new sophisticated information and booking portal for Ireland.

Since then we have been doing lots of promotions, we send out newsletters almost by the month, and the community seems to like all our different promotional or informational activities. Otherwise you could not explain the **2.1 million page impressions** since (128.000 per month or 4300 per day).

2011: Again we take part in another (Deutscher Evangelischer) Kirchentag: in Dresden, in Mai – at three levels: with a big stand at the Evening of Encounter, with a big stand at the “Markt der Möglichkeiten” all three days – and again with a (physical) “House of Ireland” for the public at the Johannstädter Kulturtreff – with music, seminars, an Irish Shop and more.

September 2011: we started a concert ticket draw under the name “**1000 Tickets fürs Folk**” (1000 tickets für you Folk-enthusiasts) – and extended it soon to first concerts/festival tickets to be won for events in Ireland. This promotion has gained enormous interest by the public, it has since long been decided to carry on with it until the end of 2012.

(Basic idea: the musicians/concert agencies sponsor 2 additional tickets per gig and get all our promotional activities for free – on – and offline, in our both magazines for example. And again, by searching our website, the public gets to know what else is on offer).



5.-10.11. 2011: The EBZ Irland (see: 1994) hosts the AGM of the “European Centres for Culture and Communication” (EBZ consists of ten independent cultural and educational organisations in nine different countries. The primary aim of the EBZ is to encourage studies in European history, culture and politics.

Gaeltacht Irland Reisen functions as office for the EBZ Ireland. Ireland is now the

longest serving member within this European structure.

The EBZ Irland is part of and is a centre of a comprehensive European-German-Irish/Celtic network, which provides multifaceted contacts to persons and institutions from all parts of society.

2012: January: A few interested people met in Dublin informally, at the occasion of the Temple Bar TradFest (which, by the way, was promotionally introduced into the German public by us, years back). **The result of this cross-border meeting: We will bring two / three different ideas together and will try to combine the following:**

1) a database > webportal for all big and small Irish music events/festivals (later to be extended into a Cultural Event Portal) (We have developed such a portal for the area of folk, song and worldmusic successfully)

2) to bring the festivals as such together (in order to be easier marketed overseas) and

3) go ahead with the plan of “30 Nights of Irish Arts & Culture in Germany” – in 2013 – but marry this with the so-called “Rainbow-Maling”, originally planned for early 2012 (100,000 families from our database, having been in Ireland once or twice only, to be re-motivated in visiting Ireland again)



Christian Ludwig / 14.3.2012

PS: Gaeltacht has a postal database of 269,462 customers (as per 14.3.2012)

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www.irish-shop.de