

TOURISM THRIVES IN ROSSLYN THANKS TO THE DA VINCI CODE



Rosslyn chapel in the heart of Midlothian, Scotland has always attracted a reasonable number of visitors. The regular number of tourists at the chapel before this year was averaged an annual 30,000. However, 2006 has seen of the amount of people making the modern-day pilgrimage reach 5 times that amount at around 160,000.

Bus services have been increased and public transport has been taking and bringing visitors to and from Midlothian for the first time. Perhaps more strikingly, the area has financially benefited by the notable amount of GBP 6 million. The reason for this rise in the amount of visitors is found in the Hollywood blockbuster movie the Da Vinci code and the subsequent joint venture between Scotland's main tourist agency, VisitScotland, and Sony pictures.

These 2 bodies joined forces in order to promote principally Edinburgh, London and Paris. These 3 locations feature in the film with scenes from the Louvre gallery in Paris, Westminster Abbey in London and, of course, the Rosslyn chapel itself, where Tom Hanks and Audrey Tautou search for clues to the bloodline of Jesus. A joint website was created, competitions created and advertising campaigns launched.

This marketing scheme was not only aimed at established tourist markets such as in the U.S.A. and Germany, yet similarly at developing markets such as China, India and Russia. The result has been a huge success, whereby Ben Carter, VisitScotland's area director has stressed the importance of the link between Sony pictures and the Scottish tourist agency. He insisted that the area has enjoyed such financial gain from mass worldwide exposure, indeed Sony pictures has grossed GBP 400 million in box office receipts since the movie was released. Although the popularity of the chapel was steadily increasing beforehand, thanks to the release of Dan Brown's novel in 2003, the movie and the following promotions have brought great financial rewards.

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