



REGIONSAMARBEIDET
Buskerud Telemark Vestfold



BTV: Eidsfoss Project

A Series of Cultural Tourism Projects in Norway



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1 PROLOGUE

Information about Glasgow Caledonian University – The Heyerdahl Institute Multi-purpose project & Buskerud-, Telemark- and Vestfold Project from 2004-2008.

Since 2002 Glasgow Caledonian University has had a formal collaborative agreement with The Heyerdahl Institute to work together on a variety of projects. The University is one of Scotland's largest with its 15 000 students and has people from 70 countries studying in its eight schools. It can offer a wide range of services across all these areas (www.caledonian.ac.uk)

The Heyerdahl Institute is a new international organisation, located in Thor Heyerdahl's home town of Larvik. According to the articles of association, it has three main objectives. It aims; to promote and continue the research and development ideas of Thor Heyerdahl; it would like to pave the way for international social dialogue through international conferences: and it hopes to increase the visibility and importance of Norway's international role. The institute was founded by Vestfold County Council in the year 2000(www.heyerdahl-institute.no).

The cooperation the two organizations has led to a number of activities taking place, including:

- The creation of a new MSc Cultural Heritage Studies with a strong multi-disciplinary emphasis. The degree is based on the study of cultural heritage, management theory, collaboration between public and private bodies and sustainable resource management.
- Grants provided by Telemark and Vestfold County Council for Norwegian students to study this Masters degree.
- Formalisation of a Europeans Union Erasmus exchange between Glasgow Caledonian University and Telemark University College.
Negotiation of an EU-contract between Glasgow Caledonian University and Buskerud University College.
- Personal and student exchange trips: Scotland to Norway and Norway to Scotland.
- Fact-finding trips by NHO-Vestfold, Innovation Norway and Vestfold County Council.

In 2004 The Heyerdahl Institute and the Glasgow Caledonian University was successful in gaining funding for the Buskerud-, Telemark- and Vestfold (BTV-project) to build on the success already achieved by working on the three main objectives:

- **To promote the building of international alliances in the Buskerud, Telemark and Vestfold region.**
- **To develop international educational co-operation across county borders**
- **To direct attention towards bridging the gap between business and research**

There has been good progress in the majority of the planned activities from 2004-2006 and both Glasgow Caledonian and the Heyerdahl Institute are very happy with everything that has been achieved.

2007-2008

For the last period of the project , 2007-2008 the organisations will be working together with the regional network for projects in Buskerud-, Telemark and Vestfold with a focus on cultural monuments and added value.

As a result of the Institute's relationship with Glasgow Caledonian University we are proud to include the Moffat Centre, as a part of wider Glasgow Caledonian University, in this pilot project. The Moffat

Centre has worked in over 30 countries on more than 350 tourism projects. In this project period we will provide the Buskerud-, Telemark and Vestfold network with the following :

1. **Initial Workshop in Stavern, Norway 23-24 January** (organised by Vestfold County council with workshop and lectures led by the Moffat Centre/GCU and the Heyerdahl Institute)
2. **Learning journey to Scotland 16-19 April** (led by the Moffat Centre/GCU and the Heyerdahl Institute)
3. **Work shop in Norway**, developing and identifying future strategies for the BTV-projects for 5-10 years (**Autumn 2007**) (led by Vestfold County council, The Moffat Centre/GCU and the Heyerdahl Institute)

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2 EIDSSFOSS PROJECT

This Industrial Heritage Project interprets the history of the local iron industry which was founded in 1697.

Key sites of interest for visitors are clustered together providing ease of access.



3 **FACTS AND FIGURES**

Population of Eidsfoss and the wider Hof municipality is approximately 3,300, and is within 1 hour drive time for 1 million Norwegians.

The appeal of the destination is far from assured. Accurate statistics on visitors to the village are unavailable.

Current visitation is estimated at 15-20,000. This is composed of the following breakdown:

Knife/Houseware Event	7,000
Jazz Event	1,000
Children's Event	1,000
Museum	1,600
Weddings (Restaurant)	1,500
General site visitors	3,000-5,000

Visitors are predominantly domestic and the profile and external awareness of the destination is not great. Children in the form of education parties make up a significant element of visitation.



4 RANGE OF ACTIVITIES

There is a cluster of relatively small scale attractions and activities which merit visitation at Eidsfoss. These include:

- Historic Garden (in development)
- Historic House (lower floor)
- Post Office Museum
- Design Craft Shop and Tourist Information Centre
- Black Smith Workshop/ Demonstration events
- Range of Heritage buildings / artefacts
- Quality Café
- Worker accommodation / Living Conditions (in development)
- Museum
- Onsite artefacts including Pleasure Steamer wreck



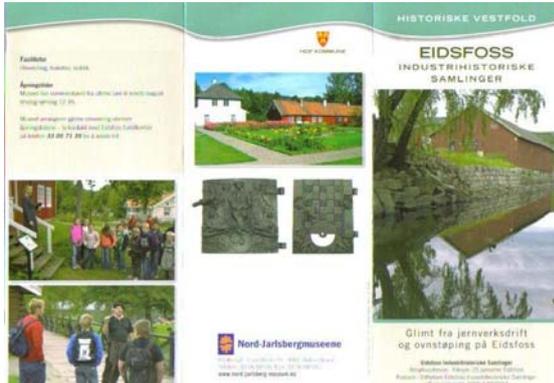
5 INTERPRETATION



Outdoor interpretation boards provide information in Norwegian and English explaining the relevance of cultural buildings including the mansion, pump room and bath house.

The site lacks an easy to follow trail and is much improved with a guide.

6 INFORMATION & SIGNAGE



There is a well presented promotion leaflet with high quality images of key cultural sites on offer. However, there is no map or directions encouraging out of town visitors. More emphasis on commercial services, such as the high quality design shop and café would be a significant pull factor encouraging visitors to spend money and stay longer.

The site lacks coherence and a self guided visitor might struggle to make the connection between the history and the various site elements.



The general landscape condition merits maintenance and work in the area of orientation, point of sale and signage.

7 COMMERCIAL SERVICES

The historic general store and petrol station is in a prime location to encourage visitors to stop for supplies and fuel. Picnic tables are located outside in a prime position with views of the river and lake. However, there is an opportunity to use as an information point to promote the area's cultural products.



8 LIMITATIONS



Signage on the road side and other visible indications of the presence of the heritage site remain low key.

On site orientation without a guide is difficult.

Planned/marked pathways are not clearly apparent and a guided visit is infinitely preferable to self guided.

The quality of the garden might be considered disappointing since it remains in development. Similarly, the main house offers only an experience on the lower level and furnishing and interior fit out is of mixed quality.

The heritage museum was very traditional based on historical classification and chronology and is obviously a result of limited funding. Areas such as lighting, narrative panels and lack of interactive facilities reinforce this.

The Post Office Museum has appeal and original artefacts but is low key. It is brought to life with a guided tour.

The Café is an attractive, quality operation with charming décor. It serves quality food in a range of connected rooms. Food is authentic, well presented and merits further promotion.

9 GUIDED TOURS & EVENTS

The landscape of this cultural site offers a range of contrasts which increase the appeal of guided tours and events.

This includes a very attractive lakeside location for the interpretation of artefacts and as venue for events.



There would appear to be the nucleus of some good events which serve to attract a range of visitors.

Tours do much to extend the appeal of the project but such guided tours are currently free.

10 RECOMMENDATIONS: THE CUSTOMER JOURNEY AND MARKETING

10.1. Understanding the Customer Journey

In order to build and develop the clear potential of this attraction from the consumer's perspective one has to consider the **customer journey**.

The consumer's perception of the organization is enhanced or undermined at various contact points with the organization.

Fundamentally, this attraction must understand that visitation is all about an experience for the consumer. This must be evident from:

- **Website**
- **Brochure**
- **Advert**
- **Signage**
- **Entrance**
- **Arrival**
- **First contact with staff**
- **Attraction**
- **Museums / Gift Shops**
- **Café.**

Concentration on improving these elements will differentiate Eidsfoss from its competitors.

Every element of the experience has to be emphasized in each stage of the customer journey. From website to exit the experience has to put the consumer at the centre.

Currently you happen upon the nature of the offer in a way that for many visitors may appear unrelated and less than coherent. The interpretation is both special and unique and merits much stronger experiential marketing and guided development.

10.2. Website

The web must convey and better market the nature of the experience. It is the key **information and marketing** tool that merits development. The front page must feature the unique selling proposition of what Eidsfoss is and why its heritage is so important.

The website should **major on the range and contrast in offers and products** and could thus be clearly differentiated from a traditional heritage offer.

The website should offer a clear map and driving directions with numbered roads. Drive times to the nearest hour should also be included.

Detailed below are a number of key operating tips for web and e-mail utilisation which may be of value:

- Keep written passages short and absolutely no more than a 60 second read
- Do not use 'we' in the web site or in any e-newsletter

- Allow the site to fast load without images
- Ensure the company name and the offers are in the subject line of any e-newsletters
- Always use visual images as a superior alternative to text.

The other key electronic marketing aid will be e-newsletters which should be mailed to **all email addresses** that have been collected. This is a most valuable marketing resource. These individuals have visited or made contact with Eidsfoss in the past and are thus well disposed to return, particularly, if the return is to a new and improved product.

The crucial data on the web are things like opening times and costs. A good idea is to introduce a **10% discount voucher** on the web which can be printed off and returned to the counter on admission. This at least will allow the managers to measure the significance of the web as an orientation and selling tool. An alternative to a 10% discount on admission is a printable voucher for free tea or coffee in the café. When presented to café staff it can be a prompt for them to sell cakes as an additional purchase. These **deals and special savers** must be prominent on the front page (preferably top right) to gain attention.

The generic website should also be high on Google search optimisation. Key search terms that could be adopted include:

- Eidsfoss Experience
- Eidsfoss Heritage
- Eidsfoss ; the magic of the past
- Eidsfoss Children's Birthdays
- Eidsfoss at Christmas

The aim here is to increase referrals. This can also be achieved via Google paid adverts (these will be found on the right hand side of the search title page). These are the 'click through' adverts which are only paid if the user clicks on the title. The other way of increasing search engine optimisation is increasing the number of references to Eidsfoss in www.tripadvisor.com This is an increasingly influential peer review site that allows consumers to place reviews, discuss and recommend accommodation, attractions and activities throughout the world.

Referencing an attraction will increase citation index in the search engine and will help with search engine optimisation (listing in the search engine).

The **front page** should also feature key events links to a page detailing when and where events will take place. For example, '**Christmas at Eidsfoss**' has clear event potential.

The **Christmas Fayre product** is an obvious addition to existing retail events. If this is combined with the decoration of the buildings for Christmas then there is good potential to generate new trade and for both events to pull visitors. The key here will be effective marketing of events.

An e-blast / e-newsletter campaign is recommended to the Bed and Breakfast and Farm house accommodation in a 2 hour drive time. Here again an introductory discount to be offered to residents of self catering cottages or bed and breakfasts is recommended.

The website and the brochure are at the heart of the experience and should feature blogs and appreciative comments of those groups and individuals that have seen and enjoyed the experience.

10.3. Brochure

The current brochure must be replaced with a much more distinctive style that emphasises the Eidsfoss experience.

The brochure must also feature the website address, opening hours, and an attractive excerpt from the menu and of course a clear and accurate map. This must represent where Eidsfoss can be found in respect of airports, ports and the capital. Then a more detailed map must feature the location of the attraction on the island. Drive times and actual route titles are vitally important (as is the case with the website).

Finally, the brochure should feature a discount deal (say 10% of admission for one adult). This stimulates brochure retention and gives this relatively remote destination a chance to appeal over the opposition.

Note to Ticket Pricing:

The concern that management may feel with the emphasis on discount can be simply reduced by increasing prices by 10% for 2008 and in reality with the 10% discount we are simply ensuring appeal and retaining admission charges at 2007 levels.

The issue of a ticket for regular visitors can be resolved by offering a season ticket which is calculated by multiplying adult admission by between 2.5 and 3.0 times. This should also give users a discount of 10% in the café and retail areas and should be accompanied by regular offers such as free admission to the proposed Christmas Fayre.

10.4. Entry Signage

The **experience of entering** the site at the moment is somewhat low key. There is a clear need to emphasis the range of aspects of the events via signage and symbolic indicators as one drives in.

The **car park and the entry** must build anticipation. This is a key element of the visitor journey and signs, props and details can help significantly in ensuring nobody decides to reverse the decision to enter and visit. The petrol station does little to convey the Eidsfoss experience.

A vital element is the appearance of the staff. The strength of the destination is in the passion of the guides and the actors in the tableaux for schoolchildren. This has to be extended and every member of staff should be immersed in the experience and play a character part. Accordingly everyone from Manager to Café assistant should dress in costume whether as a Butler or turn of the century waitress.

If staff have bought into the concept and are in costume they are much more likely to be enthusiastic and pass on this enthusiasm to visitors. The current lack of uniform, attitude and introduction to the attraction is carried out in an enthusiastic but non-theatrical way and fails to convince visitors or build buy in.

10.5. The Entry Point

This is a crucial element of the experience and it would be appropriate if the Guides took this key role (in costume) in order to orient the visitors to the experience.

An old Eidsfoss Map is a good prompt for tours and guided walks but the staff have to be closely involved in ensuring the customers understand the full range of options and activities the site has to offer.

10.6. The Café

The Café is a strong heritage and eating experience that has to connect to the greater Eidsfoss experience.

It should feature more props, artifacts and elements from the Eidsfoss offer to give a 'taster' of the experience to come.

The **food offer** should be cross promoted throughout the site. It must not be divorced from the other elements of the offer.

The **menu** should link to the Eidsfoss Experience with historical or historically created dishes. The staff in appropriate costume will reinforce this. Local foods and fruits should be used where possible and the offer should be differentiated by this local identity.

10.7. Site Orientation and the Nature of the experience

This is a good attraction that fails to fully merchandise the extent and range of activities available. The recommendations here are all about marketing and getting wider awareness of the experience.

The development of events offers a real chance to build the appeal of the location outside of traditional peak trading times.

Typically events should be introduced;

The Christmas Fayre – this should be undertaken on two weekends before Christmas and should be combined with a decoration of Eidsfoss to be known as the 'Eidsfoss at Christmas'. The use of candles can be a particularly effective in this context but care should be taken in respect of obvious fire risks. The benchmark in the UK is Chatsworth House and Gardens which is now regarded as the leading UK historic house that is 'dressed' for Christmas see www.chatsworth.org

A dual offer such as this can yield a higher ticket price and all visitors to the Fayre should be offered a discount voucher for the site tour to be used during the period April to the end of June (prior to the busier July period).

Other key events that have potential include:

Halloween and the haunted past: this has significant potential for the site over the end of October. The weekend closest to the 31 October is the most appropriate and this type of event lends itself to a guided tour of the 'dark past' of the location supplemented by recorded sounds, lighting etc.

This type of tour has been developed by was pioneered by the Edinburgh Witchery Tours (see www.witcherytours.com) and can be seen in attractions such as the Real Mary King's Close (see

www.realmarykingsclose.com) and in festivals such as the Edinburgh Ghost Festival (see www.edinburghghostfestival.com)

Easter, Mothers Day and Fathers Day has all been effectively used in tourist promotion in the UK and Ireland. Essentially, Easter can be built upon as the opening date wherein there are a range of children's activities undertaken. Egg hunts in the grounds of the house and Victorian Children's games in the external areas near the museum would be typical approaches.

The potential of **Children's Parties** should not be underestimated and the idea of a **Junior Archaeologist / Historian hunt** with a simplified theme could be a reasonably unusual pull factor for parents and grand parents. The child appeal can be significantly enhanced by simple additions such as 'Dressing up clothes'.

10.8. Film and Photo locations – enhancing appeal and market awareness

The Eidsfoss experience could catalyse a whole range of users from the film and media industries. This would reinforce the appeal of the heritage elements and theatricality of the site. This has to be emphasised in future marketing to these potential customers.

Developing Eidsfoss as a location for film settings or as a backdrop to photography needs to be proactively marketed. A brief computer generated set of images and brochure should be created and mailed electronically to all photographers, film makers and advertising and marketing companies in Oslo and other centers of population / creativity.

Once again an introductory discount should be offered to stimulate appeal and proximity. The availability of food and a range of fittings, artistic props and scenery can be offered to accompany the location itself. This represents good high return business with minimum requirement for staffing and few direct costs.

10.9. Exiting the Eidsfoss Experience

In returning to the analysis of the customer journey the end of the visit must be as pleasurable and theatrical as the beginning. As visitors return to Café at the end of the experience this is the key time to give them a positive conclusion and a reason to return.

This is a critical time for the up selling of the Café and the Retail offer. The end of the tour conversation and interactive discussion can easily be conducted over food or a beverage. This is where suggestion of the option of getting a warm drink or a bowl of soup may be most appropriate. Obviously this will be a function of how busy the site is but it should be part of a more general joined up product approach.

Critical in building customer data bases will be data capture on exit. This will be best achieved with an incentive. The aim being to get customers to leave their email addresses. The incentive being the potential to win a case of wine / beer in a draw. It can be strengthened if reinforced by a verbal request from staff.

Existing customers have the greatest potential to become repeat users and the relationship has to be built. This is initially via an e-newsletter / e-brochure with offers to return.

Signage on exit has to also thank customers, suggest care on the exiting road junction and suggest a return offer.

10.10. Other proposed Marketing Activities

Eidsfoss is a unique and appealing attraction that has potential to grow customers if marketing is increased.

Further marketing efforts should be focused on:

- On board marketing for in-bound cruise ships and at departure ports (via brochure and poster display)
- In house marketing aimed at bed and breakfast and self catering operators (via brochure distribution, electronic links and customer discounts)
- Marketing through all local hotels and accommodation providers that allows the operator to pass on to guests (via a range of 10% discount offers or Café incentive) to trigger local usage
- Marketing of the proposed Christmas Fayre to all existing email addresses and indication of a proposed 2 for 1 entry. Simply put, the sales offer has to be both Christmas at Eidsfoss and the Christmas Fayre.

Critical to growing sales and reducing costs will be the attitude of the manager and staff to this new approach to operations. Theatricality has to increase and guiding has to be focused on extending dwell time and cross selling all elements of the experience.

If these changes are effected in the immediate and short term then there is a real possibility of growth and profitability. The test will be as much the current management and staff as the proposals for marketing.

The range of activities and services currently on offer at this site are fairly well established and are sufficient to provide a positive visitor experience. Ideas for future development of the mansion and garden can also be found on the following websites.

Castle Kennedy is famed for its horticultural events and competitions which target all ages of visitor <https://vault2.secured-url.com/stair/ckg/>

Woodfall Gardens focuses on exploiting the garden's unique atmosphere, history and horticultural diversity as a venue for drama performance <http://www.woodfall-gardens.co.uk/open-gardens.htm>

A whole range of Gardens in Scotland can be seen on the following website <http://www.gardens-of-argyll.co.uk/gardens/colonsay-house-garden.html>

Although a much larger house and gardens than Eidsfoss, Chatsworth is an excellent best practice example <http://www.chatsworth.org/>

However, there is an overwhelming need for marketing of this site. It has very limited Internet presence, road signage is quite limited and general awareness of the project is low. The marketing of the site is key to increasing visitation and driving economic impact. The site has to be marketed as an integrated product. This will be achieved in the following ways:

Website linking: Post Office Museum, Heritage Museum, Café, Design Shop, Historic House and Garden, walks around the historic centre, guided tours <http://www.bowood-house.co.uk/refreshments.html>

Signage and Merchandising: better roadside indications of the range of facilities and attractions available. The site should utilise the garage and roadside store as a shop window for the products and offers available. It is a key potential introduction to the site that is currently underutilised. Further the

roadside buildings should feature 'banners' and 'buntings' attached to the buildings to heighten awareness of the café and other attractions.

Network Marketing: the Eidsfoss site is unique and should seek to market via website and a joint marketing leaflet with a range of contrasting experiences in the wider area. Such joint marketing will always be more attractive if the leaflet and website is combined with some form of discount and deal to encourage people to return.

Data Capture: the best proponents of this site are those who have visited before and are likely to return. There should be an effort via the visitor book and active requirement by staff to capture names, addresses and emails in order to advertise and promote events, return discounts and elements that may change such as menus etc.

The website should feature peer reviews and guest comments in the form of the highly influential www.tripadvisor.com site. This offers the type of subjective commentary that potential visitors are so keen to view.

A concerted PR campaign should be undertaken to help drive visitation particularly to the restaurant / café and the major events that Eidsfoss hosts. The area's staff and residents have to become Ambassadors for Eidsfoss verbally promoting the location, its heritage and services throughout Norway and beyond. The data in the example of the Scottish Borders Ambassadors programme (<http://www.visitscotlandupdate.co.uk/Article.aspx?id=1450>) should be used as an example to move the promotion of the site.

On site management should become more focussed and the technique of the customer journey should be used on developing a management model. Simply put there are a whole range of interfaces and contacts with the visitor that combine to make the customer experience. The operators of attractions should seek to ensure that all elements of interface are positive. Typically this would include:

Internet site, informative, sales oriented, with detailed maps of the location, selling the range of facilities and offering a range of discounts to the potential visitor.

Leaflet: providing attractive imagery, up selling the broad range of things to do and driving appeal with a discount or incentive to visit

Signage: clear offered well in advance, providing data on opening times, availability of award winning food etc.

Visitor Contact: every point from the garage to the notice board should seek to inspire visitors to stay, visit and return. Staff area crucial here and the garage is particularly important because it has a primary purpose as a shop and provider of fuel

All staff within the various museums and retail offers in the village should be similarly focussed on the visitor

Guided tours: these should be available and should be undertaken in period dress to increase the theatricality of the performance and to enable a charge to be made. The passion of the history of the location should be passed on in an entertaining way to the visitor

The renovation of the Garden should be undertaken in partnership with the University/College authority as a TV programme in order to generate promotion and awareness of the destination.

The link to the water and activities on the water should be made and every effort to encourage a provider of canoe and kayak hire should be made. This would offer a further appeal for families and extend the really impressive range of facilities on offer.

11 CONCLUSION

There are many clear examples of how Eidsfoss can grow. It is viable and has potential that with investment in both people and place will show visitor growth and economic impact.