**Press release:   
*Star Wars™: The Last Jedi* star Mark Hamill joins St Patrick’s Festival Dublin celebrations**

Tourism Ireland is delighted to announce that *Star Wars™* legend, Mark Hamill, will return to Ireland as *International Guest of Honour* of the St Patrick’s Festival Dublin. This new honorary role has been created to celebrate the achievements of those in the fields of business, arts, and the media who have a special connection with Ireland.

Nothing could be more special in 2018 than the connection Mark Hamill has with Ireland and its people after his captivating journey along the Wild Atlantic Way – from Skellig Michael to Cork and all the way up to Donegal – for the filming of the latest chapters in the *Star Wars™* saga! In the year that the incredible beauty of Luke Skywalker’s Jedi retreat was shared with millions around the world in *Star Wars™: The Last Jedi*, the charming actor is an obvious first choice for the inaugural position.  
  
**Mark Hamill is coming *Home***

This year’s theme for the St Patrick’s Festival is *Home*, with thousands of performers taking part in the rich tapestry of events around the city over the Festival’s 5 days (March 15-19). On March 17th, St Patrick’s Day, Mark Hamill will be a special guest in the Presidential stand in front of the National Festival Parade. As well professing his love of Ireland during and since filming (even Tayto crisps were enjoyed), Hamill has strong Irish roots – so it seems the 2018 theme is ideally suited to the superstar actor, too.

***Star Wars™* meets *Game of Thrones®***Big screen also meets small screen on St Patrick’s Day. While the Wild Atlantic Way provided the backdrop for Luke Skywalker over the last few years, Northern Ireland became *Game of Thrones®* Territory. Fans of the fantastical series will be thrilled to hear that Ser Davos Seaworth, AKA Irish actor Liam Cunningham, will also be taking part in the Festival. As Grand Marshal, Cunningham will lead Dublin’s festival parade through the streets of the city from 12pm on St Patrick’s Day, March 17th.   
  
**The island of Ireland – as seen on screen**

*Star Wars™* and *Game of Thrones®* are certainly not the only times location scouts have spotted this green island and shouted: [Lights, Camera, Action](https://www.ireland.com/en-gb/articles/tripideas/screen-tourism/). The island’s credits are long and varied: Braveheart, PS. I Love You, Harry Potter, Saving Private Ryan, Miss Julie, Brooklyn, The Quiet Man… Ireland’s impressive allure for international film and television projects not only allows directors to reject green screen in favour of the magic of reality, the warm welcomes received during filming led [Lucasfilm](https://www.ireland.com/en-gb/destinations/republic-of-ireland/clare/articles/star-wars-episode-viii/) to place ads in local newspapers in honour of the people they’d met on their Irish journey.

**Fast Facts:**

1. This year’s St Patrick’s [Festival](http://www.stpatricksfestival.ie/) is on from March 15-19. The Parade in Dublin will see over 2,000 band members from far and wide delivering dazzling rhythms and uplifting music along the city’s streets.
2. Mark Hamill’s Irish roots reach back to his great-grandmother Elizabeth Keating, who was born in Kilkenny on 6th December 1873. She left Ireland for America when she was still a teenager.
3. Mark was only in his mid-20s when his leading role as Luke Skywalker in *Star Wars™: A New Hope* catapulted him to worldwide fame.
4. Liam Cunningham hails from Dublin and is best known for his role as Davos Seaworth in *Game of Thrones®*. He is also known for his roles in *The Wind that Shakes the Barley*, *Hunger,* *War of the Buttons*, and his debut appearance in the Irish film, *Into the West*.
5. To find out what other places in Ireland have been seen on screen, follow [this trip](https://www.ireland.com/en-gb/articles/tripideas/screen-tourism/).
6. St Patrick is celebrated on March 17th as that marks the day he died. Patrick died in 461 in Saul, County Down, and this date is intended as a traditional day of spiritual renewal. Across St Patrick’s Country around Newry, Mourne and Down, the [Home of Saint Patrick Festival](http://www.saintpatrickscountry.com/) celebrates the saint’s Christian heritage from March 9-18.

For more information, go to [www.ireland.com/stpatricksday](https://www.ireland.com/articles/whats-available/ireland-stories/st-patrick/)

**Assets:**

Playlist: [*Videos showing Star Wars*](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLh-wuYZBmIaeEaIQO-ehxAhpQQT_8QDHr)*™* [*Videos showing Star Wars™ in Ireland*](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLh-wuYZBmIaeEaIQO-ehxAhpQQT_8QDHr) *Playlist:* [*Game of Thrones® in Northern Ireland*](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLh-wuYZBmIadV9-aLdsp6uCUc7SMxb6vR)

[*St Patrick’s Festival Media Library*](http://www.stpatricksfestival.ie/gallery/media-gallery)

**Image assets: https://www.dropbox.com/sh/1we0ebg73gb2hy8/AAD8h2ZsChV1u4SXkigVCV1Ka?dl=0**