



BIZ

www.ni-nl.org

Autumn / Winter 2012

The newsletter which keeps Northern Ireland in touch with the Dutch



NI-NL BIZ provides readers with an update on Northern Ireland - Netherlands trade relations over the last twelve months.

In the 10th bumper edition of NI-NL BIZ Steve Murnaghan, Founder of NI-NL...

- looks back at key NI-NL events in 2012
- confirms details of the 2013 New Year's Dinner
- looks back on Going Dutch 8 & 9 and looks forward to cohort 10
- reviews Lisburn City Council's 10th Outlook Programme to the Netherlands
- updates readers on recent trade successes, seminars, and shows
- experiences Titanic, a global tourism 'must see' which belongs in Northern Ireland
- wishes all readers a Merry Christmas and a healthy and successful 2013

Strong Global Outlook through The Netherlands

The Northern Ireland Executive has emphasised the importance of exports in assisting the recovery and future growth of the Northern Ireland economy.

The export sector has been the main driver of economic activity in recent times and will remain the key growth engine for some period to come.

The Northern Ireland - Netherlands Trade and Export Society, a unique not for profit foundation, plays an important role by organising events to support and maintain business relations between Northern Ireland and the Netherlands.

Since 2006, an active base of internationally focused SME's, based in NI and NL, continue to partner each other towards the communal objective of achieving global successes.

By continuing to engage with The Netherlands and develop strong Dutch relations, Northern Ireland companies continue to succeed in international markets.

Full reports inside.



January 2012 - Largest gathering of Dutch industrialists in the province to attend the NI-NL New Year's Trade Dinner with their local business partners.



June 2012 - NI and NL businesses don joint colours for the Summer Networking, BBQ and International football friendly at the Amsterdam Arena.

Record Dutch Presence at Trade Dinner

The magnificent setting of the Great Hall at Queen's University Belfast was the venue for the largest ever gathering of Dutch industrialists and their local business partners to be held in Northern Ireland.



A forty-five strong Dutch contingent attended the sixth New Years Trade Dinner organised by NI-NL, the not for profit platform supporting partnerships in trade, enterprise and investment between the two countries.

The annual Trade dinner was hosted by H.E. Pim Waldeck, Ambassador of The Netherlands to the United Kingdom, and coincided with a Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation Trade Mission to the province.

Over 110 Northern Ireland exporters, importers and distributors and their Dutch guests who had flown into the province, heard from a range of speakers including Ambassador Waldeck, Minister Arlene Foster and NI-NL Founder Steve Murnaghan as to how the activities of NI-NL continued to nurture significant bi-lateral trade activity in 2011.

Steve Murnaghan, Founder of NI-NL

In his annual address Murnaghan told the audience how over 250 companies had participated in NI-NL events in 2011 and, as is tradition at the New Year's Dinner, toasted the continued success of trade links with the Lowlands.

Jim Shaw, President of IFA

Looking forward to the first meeting in over 35 years of the Netherlands and Northern Ireland on the football pitch, IFA President Jim Shaw looked back on the last match in 1976 which saw two of the world's greatest footballers (George Best and Johan Cruyjf) play against each other. The IFA President warmly invited NI-NL companies to attend the match in June....and indeed they did.

Minister Arlene Foster

In her speech Minister Arlene Foster announced a number of new business partnerships generated through Invest NI's excellent 'Going Dutch' initiative which has enabled many SMEs from Northern Ireland to access the Dutch market.

Minister Foster explained how Going Dutch and the contacts that it has fostered through associated activities, including the NI-NL Trade and Export Society, have led to a 20% growth on NI exports to the Netherlands and to building mutually beneficial business relationships. Accelerating exports is a key element in Northern Ireland's economic strategy as documented in the Programme for Government document.

The Minister confirmed that exports to the Netherlands are truly cross sectoral from beef and seafood to engineering, aerospace components, construction materials and ICT.

Minister Foster believed that local businesses were learning much from the outstanding achievements of the Dutch in international trade, as they are among the world's top ten exporters. The Executive want to see Northern Ireland becoming an export-led economy, a UK region with a strong global outlook and working closely with the Netherlands to learn, to grow and to develop.

Peter van Laarschot

Peter van Laarschot, Deputy Director of Projects at BAM Rail BV, who have a joint venture with construction company FP McCann Ltd for upgrading local railway lines explained the impact of their work on tourism and the economy in the province. Van Laarschot also explained how their attention to Corporate Social Responsibility plays a significant role in their projects in UK, Ireland and continental Europe.

His Excellency Mr P.W. Waldeck, Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (retired Sep 2012).

Peter's words were echoed by Ambassador Waldeck who confirmed that, 'Sustainability lies at the heart of increasing competitiveness while at the same time helps us to manage our global natural resources. The Dutch government is committed to achieving sustainable economic growth by working in collaboration with business, civil society and research organisations, and by supporting private initiatives that increase sustainability.'



The record turnout at the dinner sends a strong signal that the Netherlands is not only a hub but a longterm partner for local companies involved in international trade.



Steve Murnaghan of NITC, with Maurice Winkel and Cormac Diamond of bloc blinds.



John Duffin of Keylite Roof Windows with Dutch guests over in the province.



Mrs. Joanneke Balfort, Head of Economic Department at the Netherlands Embassy, catches up with Evert Jan Krajenbrink of Ministerie van EL&I in Belfast.



Representatives of Lisburn City Council with local companies Decora Blind Systems, Boomer Industries and Linton Solutions.



Tracy Meharg of Invest NI (r) with Brendan McIlvanna of BMI Trailers and Dutch partners making their 1st visit to the Dungannon based factory.



Longterm partners Target Dry and Sietsje Adema who were brought together through Invest NI's Going Dutch programme.



Minister Arlene Foster with Meat men Maurice Kettle (l) and Jan Kunz of the Netherlands.



Peter van Laarschot (centre) and colleagues of BAM Rail with partners FP McCann, Ambassador Pim Waldeck, Tracy Meharg and Ian Jordan (r), Head of Business and Commercial Banking at Ulster Bank.



Representatives and invited guests of Tourism Ireland Amsterdam meet with Minister Arlene Foster.

Recent NI-NL Events and activities



Steve Murnaghan, Founder, with host Ambassador Waldeck and keynote speaker Minister Foster, Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment.



Alderman Jim Dillon, Chair of Lisburn City Council's Economic Development Committee, with colleagues Councillor Jenny Palmer and Alderman Allan Ewart with Minister Foster.

Many animated discussions and conversations were held during the trade dinner



Summer Networking at the Amsterdam Arena

On Saturday 2nd June over 120 Dutch and Northern Ireland companies enjoyed a fantastic Networking BBQ on the occasion of the friendly football international between The Netherlands and Northern Ireland.



Fans and guests, including Irish Ambassador Mary Whelan, practise their Mexican Wave on the 18th green.

The group enjoyed a succulent BBQ buffet and pre match drinks at the Amsterdam Old Course prior to the match at the neighbouring Amsterdam Arena.

Guests enjoyed delicious products including Glenarm Smoked Organic salmon on wheaten bread, Ripened Beef Steakburgers, Pork Sausages and Marinated Lamb from Linden Food Group and Kettyle Irish Foods, BBQ sauces from Rich sauces, and specially prepared Green and Orange Cheesecakes from Cottage Catering.

In order to support both teams NI-NL guests were provided with a specially designed green and orange quartered shirt for the occasion.

Given a big difference in the FIFA World Rankings, and the lack of availability of some of Northern Ireland's star players at the end of the season, there was no real doubt about the result of the match. Unfortunately the Dutch team used up much of their scoring power on the evening, rather than taking it to the European Finals in the Ukraine !!

The Summer Networking event allowed companies time to relax and network together whilst at the same time developing Northern Ireland - Netherlands trade relations. Many thanks to all the sponsors involved, as well as the Amsterdam Old Course, the IFA and Dutch KNVB for facilitating such a memorable day. After the BBQ there was an opportunity to taste Bushmills whiskey, produced at Ireland's oldest working distillery in County Antrim.



Football Fans and business partners, Aenova with Mobile Technology



Cottage Catering's Ford Arnold and Austin Moore (on the left), market leaders in Dutch cheesecake desserts, with invited business partners and supermarket buyers.



Harold Henning (r) of Henning Fish with invited Hanos seafood buyer and guest



Karl Devlin of Invest NI's International Business Team meets invited guests from the Dutch Meat retail sector



UForm with Jacques Mathijssen, General Manager Harman Kardon Home Systems, after the announcement of their business partnership.



Football is a not only a man's game!



No pancakes on the menu today, much to the disappointment of Ron Holland, De Bioderij, and guests.



Meat men and kitchen experts exchange notes.



Tourism Ireland guests enjoy the surroundings of the Old Amsterdam Course Clubhouse.



Guests network in the clubhouse prior to the football match



Pep talk for the fans before leaving for the Amsterdam Arena



NI-NL guests cover their options by supporting both teams.



10 Northern Ireland players in the box defending against a strong Dutch team

NEW YEAR'S TRADE DINNER Wednesday 6th February 2013



NI-NL is delighted to announce that the 2013 NI-NL New Years Trade Dinner shall be held on Wednesday 6th February at the distinguished International Club, The Hague.

The annual Trade Dinner, which rotates between Northern Ireland and the Netherlands, provides an opportunity for business partners to plan together for the New Year.

Dutch exporters together with their Northern Ireland business partner, or client, and Northern Ireland exporters together with their Dutch business partner, or client, as well as NI-NL Founders and Sponsors, are invited to attend.

The International Club, located in the heart of The Hague, is a historic building originally built in 1862 as a private residence before being acquired in 1912 by The Hague City Council to be used as the Town Hall and as an official wedding location. From 1912 – 1972 the City Council met weekly in the Chamber. The civil marriages of the former Dutch Queen Juliana (1937), Princess Margriet (1967) and more recently, Prince Constantijn (2001) took place in what is now the International Club ballroom and the venue for the NI-NL Trade Dinner.

Members today include diplomats, expats and the International Community in The Hague, who have exclusive access to the International Club for lunch, dinner, meetings, presentations, lectures, business nights, networking activities and a daily program of activities.

Should you wish to attend with your business partner, please register online with full details of both the Northern Ireland and Dutch company representative. **Registration is via www.ni-nl.org** (Code NYD2013) and shall close by Monday 21st January 2013, or prior to that, should the event be oversubscribed.

If you are planning a business trip to the Netherlands from Northern Ireland to incorporate the NI-NL Trade Dinner please contact Sandra Kelly of Invest NI sandra.kelly@investni.com to enquire regarding potential assistance on flights and accommodation.

NI-NL has reserved some hotel rooms close by the venue in The Hague for the nights of Tuesday 5th and Wednesday 6th February - full details will be provided on registration.

InterCity trains from Amsterdam Schiphol to The Hague Central Station take 30 minutes.



Partnership works when Going Dutch

Dr Vicky Kell,
Invest Northern Ireland Director of Trade

Companies seeking to develop or expand sales in the Netherlands, a market which has longstanding business and friendship links with Northern Ireland, can draw on a comprehensive range of advice and practical support from Invest NI.

Increasing exports, of course, is a core objective in the Northern Ireland Executive's economic strategy. The strategy wants to see exports increase by 20 per cent by 2014/15. Overall, the Executive sees growth in exports as being crucial to our strategic focus on transforming Northern Ireland into a vibrant private sector-led economy. Invest NI has developed and is delivering a portfolio of export-focused programmes designed to achieve the Executive's strategic objective.

The Going Dutch programme, for instance, has enabled many smaller companies to gain first time business in the Netherlands. The programme is an excellent example of the in-market support being provided to companies in manufacturing and internationally traded services by Invest NI in key global markets including the Netherlands.

This growth in trade with the Netherlands has been encouraged and assisted by the matchmaking work of Invest NI, its consultants in Amsterdam, and Lisburn City Council, and also endorsed by the Embassy of the Netherlands in London and, importantly, the Government of the Netherlands.

As a result of these initiatives, Northern Ireland exports to the Netherlands are now worth around £127 million and cover virtually every sector of the local economy, from beef and seafood to engineering, construction and ICT.

More than 30 companies, mostly smaller enterprises, are now doing worthwhile

business in the Netherlands and have gained the confidence to use Invest NI services to investigate and grasp business opportunities in other international markets.

The programme, in addition, has become one of the agency's most successful business initiatives, providing a successful model for the recently launched Going South Africa and Go Canada trade development programmes.

The key objectives of the support through Going Dutch, provided in a one-to-one basis, is to help increase the knowledge, capability and confidence particularly among companies new to exporting.

Invest Northern Ireland encourages and assists companies to look more closely at new markets that offer greater growth opportunities. We are helping them by strengthening our marketing expert services on the ground and by continuing to develop our programme of trade missions and opportunities to participate in major international exhibitions.

Our trade programme for 2013/14, to be published shortly, will be among the most comprehensive ever produced by Invest NI and covers more than 50 separate activities abroad.

As part of its ongoing efforts to help businesses develop their exports, Invest NI also now offers:-

- New company focused export initiatives introduced within the last year include:



Dr. Vicky Kell with David Craig who gained his export 'spurs' through Lisburn City Council's European Outlook Programme and is now a regular participant on Invest NI Trade Missions with his unique Fuel Polishing System.

free in-market research for companies planning a first ever visit to an international market; travel and accommodation support for follow up to a market following participation on a trade mission or exhibition; translation and consultancy services and legal advice for a new export market.

- A series of workshops on Basic Selling and Export Skills for the wider business community have been offered across Northern Ireland.
- To keep businesses informed of developments, a corporate ezine highlighting ways Invest NI can help business is sent regularly to all client companies and the wider business community including those companies which have previously attended an Invest NI event but are not clients.

- In addition, www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk has been available for several years to give guidance and help to all businesses in Northern Ireland.

Invest NI will continue to focus on flexible and company focused initiatives that encourage more Northern Ireland businesses, especially small and medium enterprises, the backbone of the local economy, to develop the capability to compete successfully in the Netherlands and other global markets.

Invest
Northern
Ireland

Building Locally
Competing Globally

Going Dutch 8

Eight representatives from seven Northern Ireland SMEs involved in Invest NI's Going Dutch programme visited the Netherlands in March 2012.

Neither the glorious spring weather, nor some uncharacteristic glitches with the Dutch railway network, distracted the companies from the task at hand - travelling throughout the country for a series of individual preplanned appointments.

Research and matchmaking was carried out by NITC on behalf of Invest NI, to arrange introductions to potential dealers, importers, influencers, channel partners and end users.

Following a final training session in Amsterdam on arrival the companies met with potential customers and partners from Maastricht to Heerenveen and from Capelle a/d IJssel to Vroomschoop.



Alfees - Producer of tasty handheld flatbread snacks for 'Out of Home' consumption - meet with specialists in frozen food sales



Clinivet - a brand of dry Super Premium Pet Nutrition sold through pet stores and through veterinary practices.



Linton and Robinson - a specialised supplier of dairy and slurry based farming solutions including the the ASBS Slurry Aeration System



OMJ - developer of specialist software to bulk oil trading organisations with online real time information on NW European prices based on the Rotterdam spot market - demos their real time system.



Spirited Drinks - the company behind Ireland's 1st berry Ruby Blue Liqueur available in 3 flavours - present their products to a leading Dutch off licence chain



WRX Eyeworks - supplier of 100 different styles, shapes and colour variants of eyewear (optical frames and sunglasses) as branded collections, choose the perfect week to test the market for 'shades' in major Dutch cities

Going Dutch 9

7 representatives from 5 Northern Ireland companies engaged in market orientation and introductory appointments over a 4 day period in the autumn of 2012. The group is the 9th to have done so in recent years, as part of Invest NI's successful Going Dutch programme.



Companies from the meat, produce, confectionary, software and environmental sectors took part in some 25 appointments with potential partners and end users across the Netherlands.



Representatives of Mash Direct meet with leading independent greengrocers and suppliers of Fresh Produce to hotels and caterers



Award winning natural soft fudge producers, Blackthorn, view the tasty display of their Melting Pot brand in an Amsterdam Tearoom.



Roy McDowell of PDFuelTec, manufacturers of fuel conditioners for diesel engines, easily won the intercompany competition for the highest number of meetings and kilometres driven through most provinces in the Netherlands, as well as some of Belgium !



Padraic McKeever, Managing Director of TeamKitPro, an innovative web application for independent sports retailers, gets to know the Dutch market for Teamwear in the Netherlands.

Each of the companies is committed to developing their sales into the Dutch market and shall schedule regular return visits over the next 12 months.

The NI companies and their Dutch partners now qualify for events organised by NI-NL, The Northern Ireland - Netherlands Trade and Export Society, including the 2013 New Year's Dinner to be held in The Hague on 6th February.



Western Brand, producers of pre cooked coated poultry products, meet with market leading companies supplying retail and food service in the Netherlands during the visit.

Going Dutch 10

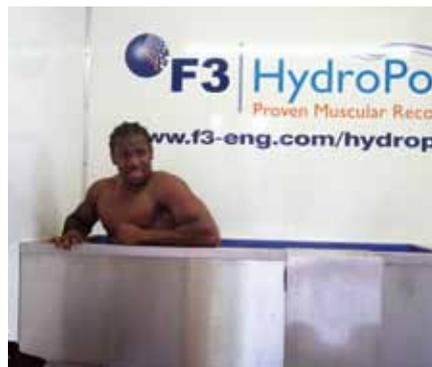
Invest NI has recently recruited a further 7 SME's to participate in the next Going Dutch Mission - the 10th in recent years. The companies shall receive Netherlands centric training, full market research and matchmaking, leading to a market visit in early February 2013, to coincide with the dates of the NI-NL New Year's Dinner. The participants, pictured below with Programme Manager Elaine Curran, Head of Trade Team Europe at Invest NI, represent a range of sectors including marine, tradeable services, food and drink, textiles and metal fabrication.



AMCA Draughting offers specialised draughting services for the structural steel industry.



Belfast Distillery Company produces Titanic Irish Whiskey - the first whiskey brand to emanate from the city of Belfast in nearly 100 years.



CHC Ltd. manufacture the F3 HydroPool which is a temperature controlled bath to aid recovery for 'top sporters' post training or regular matches



Jude Cassidy is one of Ireland's only designers dedicated to the craft of hand weaving of fabrics, cushions and blankets.



Donegal Rapeseed Company supplies bottled totally natural rapeseed oil with the lowest saturated fat content of any other oil on the market, and no aftertaste !



Holmes Deli supplies a full range of shortbread, tray bakes and mini bites to convenience stores, supermarkets, wholesale distributors and food service.



Redbay Boats is recognised as one of the finest manufacturers of high quality fibreglass work, fishing and leisure boats in the U.K.



Any Dutch companies interested in learning more about the Northern Ireland companies above, should contact Steve Murnaghan of NITC in Amsterdam (T 020 4217400, murn@nitc.nl) for further information.

Ten out of Ten for Lisburn!

Lisburn City Council's 10th consecutive Netherlands Outlook visit to the Netherlands took place in April 2012.

Seven representatives from companies in Lisburn involved in food manufacturing and distribution, construction industry, agriculture, materials handling and recycling spent 3 days based from the Dutch capital of Amsterdam.

Prior to departing for Amsterdam the companies engaged in a target market training at the Island Civic Centre delivered by NITC MD Steve Murnaghan.

Alderman Jim Dillon, Chair of the Economic Development Committee, and Mary Meehan, (Acting) Economic Development Manager, provided wise words of advice for the participants, based on previous mission experience.

Alderman Dillon confirmed, "I'm delighted to be celebrating 10 years of local business success in the Netherlands. To date the Council has supported over 60 businesses to develop new trade opportunities in what has become a very important international market for Lisburn companies, especially those who want to explore a new international market for the first time. The Council is already looking forward to the next trade mission to the Netherlands in 2013, and I've no doubt there will be many more successes to come for Lisburn companies. I'm confident that the linkages already established between Lisburn companies and their Dutch partners will continue to grow and prosper, bringing benefits to the local economy and City of Lisburn for a long time to come."

On arrival in Amsterdam the participants got used to using the excellent public transport system and prepared to visit host company locations across the Lowlands.

Twenty five individual meetings were held throughout the Netherlands with OEM's, buyers, potential suppliers, intermediaries and partners. Thousands of kilometres were covered by the companies who travelled the length and breadth of the country from Oldenzaal to Rotterdam and from Roosendaal to Harderwijk.



Rodney Magowan meets with leading Dutch Agricultural machinery suppliers



Aideen O'Hagan of Macs Quality Foods takes a close look at the Dutch poultry sector, centred in Barneveld.



David and Hilary Vance of Advanced Marketing have an opportunity to view 'ToGo' products at market leading food retailer Albert Heijn between meetings.



James Hanna of Fabrite Facades looks at innovative and sustainable facade suppliers.



Phil Trimble of ConveyorTek gets a grip on the Dutch Recycling sector by meeting leading machinery suppliers.

A Real Dutch Treat

Former BBC Radio Ulster Farmgate producer, UTV Farming Ulster technical advisor and FarmWeek chief Rodney Magowan established an agriculture focused Press & PR Agency 20 years ago. Rodney decided to participate in the Lisburn City Council visit to the Netherlands and reflects on the Outlook it has provided his business.

Having worked closely for three years with Bekina, a Belgian firm, the next logical step for our agency was taking part in this visit to the Netherlands organised for Lisburn City Council by Steve Murnaghan of Northern Ireland Trade Consultants.

The Dutch like to be organised, of that you can be certain when doing business in this relatively small country with a huge commercial, global reach. Be assured they will arrive on time for meetings, well briefed and with a clear idea of what they wish to achieve. Even more impressive will be their knowledge, not just of the markets they wish to serve in the UK and RoI, but of our small province.

For example, Hanskamp AgroTech, a young company specialising in innovative equipment for milking parlours was keen to do business across the British Isles. Having identified NI and the RoI as the areas where milk production was continuing to expand Hanskamp AgroTech took their first ever UK trade stand at Balmoral Show 2012.

With a strong presence in the farming press before and after the event this proved their gateway to doing good business across these islands. Aside from producing and placing press releases we were able to supply a freelance agricultural salesman to help them during Balmoral Show and take the Hanskamp AgroTech sales manager to meet key farm suppliers.

The company also took our advice to follow up with a stand at the Livestock 2012 event in the NEC Birmingham where further contacts were made and excellent coverage gained in mainland farming papers.

Flying into Birmingham Henk Hanskamp of Hanskamp AgroTech started to recommend the Rodney Magowan PR Agency to a fellow Dutch businessman bound for the same event. Amazingly he proved to be Robin Hansen, sales manager of livestock feeding equipment manufacturers Trioliet, another new client gained on this successful mission.



Rodney Magowan with Alderman Jim Dillon

As others in the Lisburn City Council group have likewise found taking part actually generated extra business closer to home. Doing business with the Dutch helps establish links with their agents and clients across these islands. Good news as anyone good enough to do business with this most businesslike of nations is held in higher regard at home.

NITC also arranged a meeting with Opraappers Communicatie, a Dutch PR agency similar to our as it specialises in agriculture. A link was established so that the Dutch PR Agency can use our expertise for their clients seeking to build market share supplying farmers and vets across the UK and RoI. Equally important, our clients producing agricultural equipment for export can now be supported on the continent by the multi lingual Opraappers Communicatie team.

My experience of the Dutch is as hard working, honest, good at business, driving a hard bargain and then clearing their invoices very promptly. The Dutch businesses we visited have proved a pleasure to work with either on one off projects or longer term.

My motto in business is clear, "If you aren't in you cannot win, so I made time for a new experience in the Low Countries and came home with invaluable experience, new contacts and almost immediate new business. Highly recommended....by a practitioner !"



Dungiven dairy farmer Ian Buchanan, left, with Klaas Breunissen of Hanskamp AgroTech discussing the L shaped closing gate for out of parlour feeding stations launched at Balmoral Show.



Photo taken with a new Trioliet mixer feeder wagon supplied to this 500 cow dairy unit. Ben Norris, left, UK Sales Manager, Trioliet and Robin Hansen, Export Manager, Trioliet with James and Reggie Gardiner at Corcreeny, Sumerhill, Lurgan. Picture: Columba O'Hare

Vertical gardening

A new and spectacular vertical garden – the only one of its kind in Northern Ireland – is part of the groundbreaking Skainos project on the Lower Newtownards Road creating a new heart for one of Belfast’s most rundown urban districts.

Fabrite Facades, Upper Ballinderry, Lisburn, worked together on the design, manufacture and installation of the structural facades together with Dutch company Vertical Planting, bringing years of commercial experience in green walls and vertical landscaping, to the project. According to ‘green experts’, the idea of planting hundreds of plants on walls was first inspired by botanists exploring plants in rainforest canopies and those that were growing on rocks around waterfalls.

Some 6,500 plants make up the breathtaking vertical gardens that greet commuters travelling into Belfast – a 500m2 green wall designed to change colour with the seasons and a creeper wall which will make the most of tougher conditions on the north-facing facade.

Apart from the visual impact and pleasure of beautifying the Skainos buildings, the many hundreds of plants buried into the walls also provide screening, will help to reduce noise and even have a positive impact on peoples’ health. Research by the Centre for Sustainable Development at the University of Cambridge has found that “a layer of vegetation can reduce heat loss from buildings, cutting the wind chill factor by 75% and heating demand by 25%. The architects say they have already met with success in using green roofs elsewhere that attracted wildlife and the vertical gardens are an extension of that idea. The plants will condition the air, remove pollutants and provide seasonal colour and vegetation. Meanwhile, a variety of roof gardens will harbour natural flora and fauna.

On the basis of this and other projects in Great Britain, Fabrite Facades are hoping to grow this business into Europe.



NI-NL founders wish readers of BIZ a Merry Christmas and a Healthy and Successful 2013. 

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Ghost Stories at Amstel Hotel

James Black Restoration Limited, based in Lisburn, Northern Ireland, is an internationally recognised company dedicated to the restoration and maintenance of historic Rolls-Royce motorcars.

The company offers a fully equipped machine shop, boasting some of the best and most modern lathes, milling machines, and fabricating equipment for restoration.

James Black has a particular expertise in the pre 1925 40/50 horse power model better known as the Silver Ghost.

The firm has experienced steady growth in recent months, receiving orders from customers across Great Britain, Europe and Asia.

Chassis number 1365, is a 1910 Rolls-Royce Silver Ghost which came into Mr. Black's possession in late 2008. The body was removed and the chassis stripped for restoration, and it was restored to the highest standards possible with a particular emphasis on historical accuracy.

The car was finished in mid 2010, around her 100th birthday, and as with all restored cars Mr Black decided to take it on a long distance road trip. The trip took James from Belfast across England by ferry to Denmark, then to Sweden, across to Norway and back home again through via Denmark, Germany and Holland.



A photograph of the magnificent car is captured on the steps of the luxurious five-star Amstel Hotel, Amsterdam, which offers incomparable tradition and excellence just like James Black Restorations.

Holland beckons for Lisnagarvey HC

Lisnagarvey Hockey Club, Lisburn, has qualified as the first-ever team from Northern Ireland to reach the knock-out stage of Europe's premier hockey competition - the EHL - the pinnacle of the hockey sport for many.

October saw round 1.2 where Lisnagarvey were drawn against French side, Lille and Dutch kingpins Bloemendaal. Drawing with Lille and holding Bloemendaal to a low score ensured that Lisnagarvey just did enough to progress to the KO 16, to be held at Easter in The Netherlands.

Qualification for the KO 16 is something that no side from Northern Ireland has managed before. The relative success of Lisnagarvey is something the club has become accustomed to over the past few seasons with domestic success the rule rather than the exception. To see players who have very little if any experience of hockey outside of Ireland holding their own against players of the calibre of Teun de Noijeer and Ashley Jackson is something that Lisnagarvey should be extremely proud of.

The EHL attracts the best players from both within Europe and farther afield and has been at the forefront of developing the spectator experience - bringing in new rules and a completely different style of coverage for the sport.

The Lisnagarvey squad and their merry band of supporters are anticipating a tough match in the KO 16 but the players and coaching staff are relishing the opportunity to cause a big upset in the higher echelons of European Hockey. Paul Bonar, Chairman of Lisnagarvey HC comments that, "It has been a great season for the club so far and the buzz that has been created following the EHL success has been infectious. Both of our elite 1st XI's are progressing well so far with a few cup semi finals & finals to look forward to already ahead of the New Year. There is no shortage of young talent coming through and it bodes well for the future."

Bonar continues, "Easter will be an amazing trip for the players and supporters alike, with the chance to compete against some of the best players in the world. We are all looking forward to the trip and the opportunities it brings."

NI-NL congratulates Lisnagarvey HC on their qualification to the KO stage and hopes that hockey fans amongst Northern Ireland's business relations in the Netherlands will cheer them on at Eastertime.



European Expansion for NITC



2012 has been a busy year for Northern Ireland Trade Consultants, as it has won a multi year contract to provide a Trade Advisory Service to Invest NI across key European markets.

As well as its activities in trade development into the Netherlands, the Going Dutch programme and it's pivotal role as Founding partner of NI-NL, NITC has delivered Trade Missions to 8 markets across the Nordics and Central and Eastern Europe, on behalf of Northern Ireland's lead development agency, from April to November 2012.

An NITC team of local business development consultants have been appointed as in-market support advisers operating in Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Norway, Poland, Czech Republic, Bulgaria and Romania.

The appointment of NITC and its local partners was announced earlier this year by Dr Vicky Kell, Invest NI Trade Director, who said: "The appointment of NITC is the latest stage in our formation of a network of experienced marketing professionals to assist companies, both large and small, to harness the business potential of markets in Europe and further afield that are continuing to develop strongly.

"The appointment of the new trade advisory service follows a series of trade missions to these markets which indicated high levels of interest in the type of quality products and services that Northern Ireland companies are able to offer.

NITC will play a key role in assisting our companies to increase awareness of their products and services in these markets and promote good business contacts."

Steve Murnaghan, Managing Director of NITC, commented, "NITC is delighted to have the opportunity to show that the business model which has been developed and fine tuned over the years in the Netherlands, also works well across Europe. Already this year over 75 Northern Ireland exporters have availed of Invest NI Trade Missions and individual interventions with Invest NI's support in the Netherlands, the Nordics and CEE regions"

He adds, 'NITC has chosen partners in these markets carefully over the years to deliver research and matchmaking projects to the high level clients expect. However the organisation is only as good as its last project, so I prefer to let the exporters do the talking.'

On returning from the missions feedback from the companies regarding Invest NI and NITC included:

“It is very clear to me that there has been a lot of careful planning and thought put into the Mission”

“Experienced a very efficient and professional service from Invest NI”

“Thanks for a great Trade Mission! The quality of meetings I had was of an excellent standard, NITC really understood our brief and identified excellent prospects for our potential distributor. I would highly recommend NITC to do research and set up meetings for any company wishing to go on a trade mission to a new market/country.”

“The Mission allowed me to develop an in-depth knowledge of the market in Denmark & Sweden in that we knew what products were on offer, the price structure and whether our offering would fit the market place. It allowed us to know the market share of the retailers and to set up the appropriate meetings & tailor our presentation.”

“I believe Invest NI have really done a great job on this Mission. I was very satisfied with their efforts before, during and after this Trade Mission”

“Excellent - the market research resulted in several appointments which I hope to get business from in the next 6 months or so & also some potential customers to follow up later.”

Polish Mission Accomplished



18 Northern Ireland companies assessed and access the Polish market from the mission centres in both Warsaw and Krakow

Czeching it Out in Prague



Fourteen companies from a range of sectors participated on the Trade Mission which was centred in Prague in June

Local Nordic Knowledge



23 companies crisscross the four Nordic countries during 5 days in September. Pictured on arrival in Copenhagen in Nyhavn (New Harbour)

Romance and Slavic Success



A delegation of fourteen Northern Ireland exporters visited Romania and Bulgaria in November. Pictured at Otopeni International Airport, Bucharest

SAM profiles TRI-MAX to Dutch Partners

The past few months has seen SAM Mouldings, the UK's market leader in MDF mouldings, continue its success and growth in the Dutch market with the addition of new trading partners coupled with adding value to already well established lines to market.

Quality and product innovation is key to the success that SAM has enjoyed, and the additions of both fully finished mouldings and SAM TRI-MAX to the portfolio underlines this ethos.

Finished MDF profiles provide a welcome added value addition to the existing pre primed option.

SAM TRI MAX combines the technology of Medite Tricoya board with the market leading manufacturing capabilities of the SAM factory to now offer the Dutch market an external cladding, fascia and soffit alternative to traditional materials, with key benefits including low maintenance costs and a 50 year guarantee.

The Medite Tricoya MDF material has already been used in an outdoor Kangaroo-shaped sculpture at a health centre for mothers and newborn babies in Veldhoven, the Netherlands. Produced by the Fiction Factory, the unique 6m-high, 111-piece sculpture, was machined as flexibly as normal MDF but with additional weather-resistant characteristics

SAM Sales Director, Gerard Wilson, is excited at the potential of the TRI-MAX brand, "This product I am confident will be of great interest in the Netherlands and we look forward to showcasing it in the weeks and months ahead to our client base."



Perfect Partnership to Take Care of Dutch

Earlier in the year, Enterprise Minister Arlene Foster announced that TotalMobile in Antrim has developed a strategic partnership with Aenova BV, a leading software company based in Delft.

Colin Reid, TotalMobile Managing Director, commenting on the perfect Dutch partnership said: "Aenova is an ideal fit for us because of the company's vast experience in Time Resource Management software and its excellent customer base such as local government, utilities and healthcare. Aenova integrates our software within its solutions and also market it as a standalone product and market it to existing and new customers".

"Invest NI's Going Dutch programme was extremely important in terms of the advice and guidance about doing business in the Netherlands and in helping us to find the right partner there in our business sector," he added.

Hans van der Last, Aenova Managing Director, said: "Working with TotalMobile's new technology enables us to extend our own portfolio and to offer existing and potential customers a wider software solution that will enable them to increase productivity and competitiveness."

Within months of this announcement, the first Dutch customer site, a healthcare organisation based in The Hague, is now live with the TotalMobile solution.

This healthcare organization, who provide care for the elderly both at home and in Care Homes, are now using TotalMobile™ on Samsung Galaxy X devices to improve their working processes. The team who

care for the clients at their own homes will be using the system to stay connected while out on visits. By improving access to information and making processes simpler and more efficient, staff will be able to focus on the task at hand and provide a higher standard of care.

The system will also help the organisation control costs and simplify the management of staff out on visits. The user can record who they are visiting, what activities they have carried out and how long they have attended the client, allowing managers to access real time reports of where a worker is and what work they have done.



Enterprise Minister Arlene Foster pictured at the annual Northern Ireland – Netherlands Trade and Export Society dinner in Belfast. Also in the photograph are (from left): Ambassador to the Netherlands, Pim Waldeck, Colin Reid, Chief Executive, TotalMobile and Hans van der Last, Aenova Managing Director.

Taking a look into the Woodland Kitchen

Invest Northern Ireland's Chief Executive Alastair Hamilton has announced the expansion of Rasharkin based company Woodland Kitchens.

The company designs and manufactures a range of cabinets for the kitchen, bedroom and bathroom sector working out of its 6500 sq. metre facility.

In the year that Woodland developed its 1st export sales of kitchens to The Netherlands they have announced that they shall take on 23 new staff and target new export business with the aim of doubling turnover within three years.

Brian McCloskey, Managing Director of the company, says: "The very positive response we have had to the recent launch of our new 'Livin' range prompted us to develop this expansion plan.'

Woodland Kitchens shall ramp up its marketing activity to increase sales in its target markets of Great Britain, Saudi Arabia and the Netherlands.



Dutch kitchen industry expert Co Verburg, receives a close up of Woodland Kitchen's quality offering.

LIVIN A room for life



Double Dutch Brand Development

Participating in the Going Dutch program has provided the catalyst for Aria Clothing Ltd to launch their brands in other European export markets. The Belfast based ladies clothing company design and manufacture 2 labels, Aria and Arianna.

Aria is a collection of co-ordinated separates and targets the stylish professional woman who wants wearable and comfortable clothes for all occasions but also wants to be at the forefront of fashion.

Arianna is a luxurious yet affordable collection of dresses in bold, colourful prints and quirky statement pieces for the 25+ market, which have been available in the Lowlands for the last few years.

Aria was successfully launched into the Netherlands through Mimatex Agency in the World Fashion Centre in Amsterdam in July 2011. After just one season, Aria already has 20 new stockists in the Netherlands and when combined with the existing 60 Arianna stockists, the Dutch market now accounts for 25% of the company turnover.

Fuelled by their Double Dutch success, the company has already appointed new agents for their Arianna brand in Belgium and Sweden.

Jenny Mullan, Brand Development Manager, says that the potential for further expansion into the European Market became clear to the company following completion of Invest NI's premium Going Dutch Export Programme. 'It is as easy for me to travel from Belfast to the centre of Amsterdam than to London, these days. Doing business in the Netherlands could not be any easier.'

The company's focus in 2013 will be to support their agents' sales activities and to develop retail brand awareness in these key markets. By Spring 2013 the company expects to be present in over 350 European Boutiques.



Pictured are Jenny Mullan, Business Development Manager at Aria Clothing, and Dr Vicky Kell, Invest NI Trade Director.

Blind Enthusiasm from Euro markets

Draperstown company Bloc Blinds recently announced a 50% increase in sales over the past 12 months, thanks to an innovative energy saving design that has revolutionised the roller blind market.

Distribution of the BlocOut window blind system to Holland, Belgium, Germany and France alone accounts for 30% of the companies' annual sales turnover.

Bloc Blinds, who design and manufacture domestic window blind systems, have also seen an increase in profits with the distribution of its BlocOut product across the United Kingdom, Ireland and Europe.

As a result, the company have invested £250,000 in R&D with the support of Invest NI and recruited 10 additional staff, with further recruitment targeted for 2013.

Managing Director Cormac Diamond said: "Bloc Blinds has experienced tremendous growth over the past 12 months and with the support of Invest NI this has given us the confidence to expand our operation. In 2013 we will continue to drive increased sales across the United Kingdom, Ireland and Europe, as well as expanding our sales territories further into Eastern Europe and North America."

Mr Diamond added: "The BlocOut window blind is a simple, yet innovative system that has revolutionised the roller blind market by delivering proven energy efficiency alongside design, style and a patented EasyFit system."

"Independent research indicates that the BlocOut window blind creates an energy efficient barrier that minimises heat loss and saves up to 43% on heating costs for single glazed windows and 33% for double glazed."



Titanic Success at Schiphol Airport

Belfast-based Spanwall, the manufacturer of specialist panels and facades, has followed up its stunning rainscreen cladding and internal custom-rusted panels project for the £97m Titanic Belfast with another dramatic, contemporary installation.

Designed by Van Aken Architecten for IT infrastructure and data security company Terremark, the building at Schiphol in Amsterdam features 2,500m² of aluminium panels, laser-cut and punched with a binary number design.

The external perforated rainscreen cladding comprises anodised and polyester powder coated panels in a 60%/40% panel split. The panels were manufactured in Spanwall's advanced manufacturing plant to fulfill the graphic effect envisioned by the architect for the exterior of the building.



Takes Two to Tango... in the Kitchen

Uform, www.uform.co.uk, the Northern Ireland-based distributor of innovative kitchen doors and accessories to the trade, are delighted to be announced as the UK Distributor of Harman Kardon's ground-breaking MaestroKitchen™100 in Partnership with Verburg Audio from The Netherlands.

The Harman Kardon high performance audio system, designed specifically for installation into a kitchen environment, provides hours of endless pleasure for customers who enjoy listening to their favourite music while cooking, eating or relaxing in their kitchen.

Designed to blend seamlessly into any kitchen landscape with no cables, speakers or other cumbersome audio equipment on show, the MaestroKitchen™100 appears as a simple digital display strip, housed behind stylish black glass, with speakers concealed behind the kitchen cabinet doors and subwoofer behind the kickboards.

Acting as speaker membranes, the doors help to create a fantastic range of high and midtones, while the bass tones emanate from the subwoofers below. The result is a superior quality; surround sound filtering through the kitchen via radio, CD, iPod, MP3, USB or streaming music from your smartphone or tablet via bluetooth.

Produced by the celebrated American manufacturers Harman Kardon, the system is a 'first' in terms of kitchen-focussed sound and is already taking other parts of the world by storm with its innovative design and distinguished quality.



Gone are the days when
'You'll Only Find Them In The Kitchen At Parties!!!'

Window of Opportunity for New Decora Collections

Based in Lisburn, Northern Ireland, employing over 400 people, Decora Blinds Systems Ltd is one of the UK's leading producers of a range of quality customised shutters and blinds.

The company is a design and brand led business with a quality collection which is right for the European market.

The product ranges include:

- Santa Fe Shutters
- Sunwood luxury wood venetians
- Timberlux bespoke Basswood venetian blinds

Northern Ireland's competitive operating cost climate coupled with short delivery times has attracted interest from window decor specialists. Decora products are manufactured to ISO 9001, wooden materials are all FSC certified and products are tested for child safety.

Russell Dickson, Sales Director, and Paul Rodgers, Product Manager Blinds recently visited the Netherlands to introduce their new range of shutters and blinds to trade partners, prior to launching.



Recession Proof B2B Tradeshows

No matter what industry you are involved in, from high tech to manufacturing or food and drink, chances are that the markets are challenging. Slowing sales and a sluggish consumer base with limited confidence have plagued the marketplace as a whole. Trade shows seem to be becoming smaller, with fewer exhibitors and a subdued atmosphere. However, some International B2B trade shows at the Amsterdam RAI are 'bucking the trends' and continue to appeal to the savvy Northern Ireland exhibitor.

Cleaning up in Amsterdam

2012 was a record breaking year for ISSA / InterClean Amsterdam in May attracting 28,001 visitors, compared to 23,415 at the last event in 2010. With 669 exhibitors this time, compared to 651 two years ago, project manager for the show Rob den Hertog said the quality and quantity of visitors made for a "vibrant and busy four days". NI-NL caught up with a number of Northern Ireland companies in Amsterdam for InterClean.



Brian O'Kane and Jacqui Walsh receive Spanish visitors on the Kitchenmaster stand



Des Peden and Gerard McTeague of Peden Power meet potential partners for pressure washers at InterClean



Roger Pannell, of Unicorn Group demonstrates the newest range of washroom equipment

PLMA keeps delivering the goods

PLMA's 2012 "World of Private Label" International Trade Show was also held in May at the Amsterdam RAI. 3,600 exhibit stands from more than 70 countries and 42 official national and regional pavilions make this show the most important meeting point of buyers for private labels worldwide.

The unique event attracts more than 9,000 visitors, including many from the world's largest retailers and wholesalers, coming from over 100 countries.

The show's success reflects the growth of retailer brands across Europe. The latest Nielsen data shows that private label market shares climbed in nearly all of the 20 countries tracked by Nielsen. Private label brands now account for 40% or more of the products sold in six countries: Switzerland (53%), Spain (49%), United Kingdom (47%), Portugal (43%), Germany (41%) and Belgium (40%).

Northern Ireland companies Mackle Petfoods and Evron Foods both had their own booths in the Europahal whilst Invest NI displayed a range of NI products.

Mackle Petfoods who specialise in tinned and trayed pet food promoted their new dedicated production facility for superpremium and single serve trays.

Evron Foods launched their innovative square EasiWrap to the European market at PLMA 2012.



Dominic Downey of Evron Foods shows easiwrap to Dutch department store buyers



Back to back shows for Mackle Petfoods from Interzoo in Germany to PLMA in The Netherlands

Whale of a Time at METS

Bangor based company, Whale exhibited at the 2012 Marine Equipment Trade Show (METS) in November, which is already being billed by the organiser as a vote of confidence for the entire industry.

Final visitor attendance at the annual show, celebrating its 25th anniversary, totalled 19,617, up from 19,232 in 2011. International attendance was up 2 per cent on last year, whilst exhibitors numbered 1,318, only marginally short of its record breaking 1,331 in 2011. During METS, Whale announced their recent acquisition of California based manufacturer of marine water heaters and cookers, Seaward products. Their booth also featured the launch of a brand new Watermaster water pump. The Whale team see METS as a leading industry event and it provides a perfect location to meet with global business partners to discuss strategic commercial opportunities.

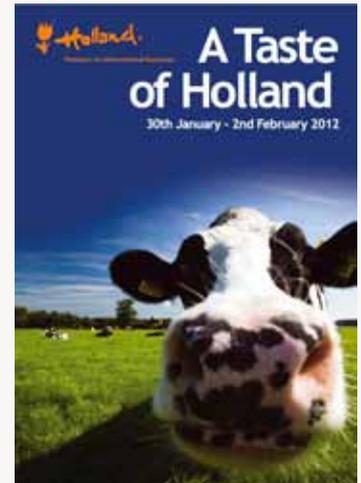


A Taste of Holland 2012

Fifteen executives representing twelve Dutch food companies participated in a Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation Trade Mission to Ireland and Northern Ireland.

The mission, delivered by NITC, was led by Evert-Jan Krajenbrink from the Ministry in The Hague and was supported by the Dutch Embassies in Dublin and London. In total the Dutch companies managed over 160 appointments with interested companies who could provide access to the retail and foodservice market in (Northern) Ireland.

The companies participated in a range of matchmaking and networking events during a four day visit to the island and roadtrip, which included:



Travelling 'en groupe'



A Taste of Holland 'Speed dating'



Promotional Events



Group Meet the Buyer events



Store visits and presentations by Irish Food expert James Burke



Site Visits



NI-NL New Year's Dinner in Belfast



Speed Dating



...and more Speed Dating



NI-NL New Year's Dinner



NI-NL New Year's Dinner

Keeping up with the Joneses... and Johnsons

In 2013, Johnson Brothers Ltd celebrate 100 years coffee roasting in Ireland. The Lisburn based company have long been known as the brand leader in the grocery and foodservice sectors in Northern Ireland, however, it has only been in recent decades that the 4th generation family owned business started selling tea.

While tea in the local marketplace has always been an important sector, the growth of specialty teas has enjoyed significant growth as consumers broaden their demand. Johnsons Coffee were delighted when NITC facilitated an introduction with Mr Jones Teas, during January's 'Taste of Holland' Trade Mission.

The range of premium boutique teas were exactly what the market needed as Philip Mills of Johnson Brothers explains; "It was obvious from my initial meeting with David Holscher of Mr Jones that this was a company who were passionate about their product, to the extent that profit was seen as a necessary evil to finance the evangelism that great tea requires. Both in terms of

product quality and design, Mr Jones was unique and the reaction from the Irish consumer has been superb."

David Holscher, joint MD of Mr Jones, commented, "It soon became clear that our companies, although different in heritage and cultural background, share the same values in quality, service and business ethics. Johnson Brothers was the obvious choice for a partnership and Mr. Jones are delighted to work with Philip and his team. Thanks to Johnson Brothers, Ireland has become our latest export success with Mr Jones teas now being sold and poured across Ireland."



Galbert's Launch with Superunie

Better known for its chilled & frozen food sales and distribution throughout Ireland, Lisburn based company PRM Group, founded in 1988 by Philip & Lynne Morrow, also manufactures an exciting range of products to appeal to the savoury, convenience and dessert categories through it's Galberts and Fresh Food Kitchen brands.



The company continues to explore new routes to market, and new markets for their products, and has already benefitted from their participation in the Lisburn Outlook Programme in 2011.

Both Philip Morrow, Managing Director, and David Connolly, Business Development Manager, have made regular visits to the Netherlands over the last 18 months and the hard work has started to pay off with the launch of Galbert's raspberry

and mandarin cheesecakes into selected Superunie stores from March 2012.

Managing Director Philip Morrow is delighted with the success of the Galbert's Cheesecake in the Netherlands. He confirms, 'Not only have we developed the right taste flavour for the Netherlands and Dutch language twinpacks but the logistics and service element of the contract is extremely important. This is an area of PRM expertise. Orders arrive in just before

9 a.m. and we despatch the same day, supplying our Dutch customers with fresh cheesecakes three times per week."

David Connolly, adds, "The Galberts brand continues to grow and delivers high quality products to its loyal consumer base, having gained the industry recognised BRC grade A approval. We continue to seek opportunities for our exciting range of savoury, convenience and dessert products both home and abroad."

Major Dutch export deal for Kettyle Irish Foods

Enterprise Minister Arlene Foster recently announced a major export deal for Kettyle Irish Foods in Lisnaskea to supply a leading Dutch retailer.

The contract involves the supply of a new, sustainably produced Fermanagh bacon as part of a range of premium private label meat products.

Kettyle Irish Foods is an award winning company which has pioneered dry-aged beef and bacon which has been quick to recognise a developing market trend in The Netherlands for foods which combine taste and sustainability.

Maurice Kettyle, commenting on the new business in The Netherlands, said: "Our parent company, Linden Foods in Dungannon, has been supplying beef to The Netherlands for many years and is also conscious of the move towards greater evidence of sustainability

that includes good standards of animal welfare. This relationship has enabled us to keep abreast of trends there."

"We were asked by the retailer if we could supply them with sustainably produced bacon from outdoor bred pigs, which we have been able to do. We offered a unique and distinctively cured Fermanagh bacon from outdoor pigs, which the buying team loved and placed a 12 month contract with us".

It's an extremely exciting development that gives us an important platform for further growth with the chain in The Netherlands and will encourage us to explore opportunities in other European markets," he added.



Enterprise Minister Arlene Foster and Invest Northern Ireland Chief Executive Alastair Hamilton (right) are pictured with Maurice Kettyle of Kettyle Irish Foods, Lisnaskea at a special 'Celebration of Success' event organised by Invest Northern Ireland in the Europa Hotel, Belfast, for winners of Great Taste Awards. Kettyle Irish Foods received one 'three star', one 'two star' and four 'one star' gold awards in 2012.

New Dutch Government to Build Bridges

On Monday 5 November the new Dutch cabinet was formally sworn in by Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands at her residence in The Hague. The new cabinet consists of 13 ministers and seven junior ministers.

The new cabinet is formed by a coalition of liberals (VVD) and the labour party (PvdA). There will be 7 VVD ministers and 6 PvdA ministers, as well as junior ministers from VVD (3) and PvdA (4).

The new coalition agreement is entitled 'Building Bridges', and it 'reflects our search for the best of both worlds,' according to the VVD and the PvdA. According to Prime Minister Mark Rutte, the government's financial and socioeconomic policy rests on three essential pillars: putting public finances in order, ensuring fair distribution and working for sustainable growth. Their aim is to help the Netherlands emerge stronger from the current crisis.

In total, the new cabinet will make €16bn worth of cuts to ensure a balanced budget.

"We realise this package will hit everyone, but we also realise it is important to make our beautiful country stronger," Rutte said.

"We are asking everyone to make sacrifices," Labour leader Diederik Samsom said. "This agreement is the result of give and take." He further emphasised the importance of unions and employers in reaching the cabinet's goals in many areas.

The coalition agreement drawn up by the two parties sets out the new alliance's strategy to 2017. The document outlines major policy decisions/initiatives in the following areas: taxes and finance, housing, education, healthcare, employment, immigration and infrastructure, among others.



How is the Netherlands performing Internationally?



Netherlands Ranks Among Top ICT Economies in the World

The Netherlands ranks sixth on a new list of information and communication technology (ICT) world economies, according to the International Telecommunication Union's (ITU) flagship annual report, "Measuring the Information Society 2012." The index ranks 155 countries according to their level of ICT access, use and skills, and growth in scores from previous surveys.

The Netherlands improved one spot from its seventh-place ranking in the 2011 report. According to the report, 94 percent of Dutch households have internet access.

The survey reports that ICT continues strong worldwide growth, particularly in the area of mobile broadband, thanks to decreasing telephone and broadband internet services costs.

The Netherlands is ranked world's 2nd Best Place for Business

The Netherlands is the world's second best place to do business, according to data compiled by Bloomberg. The Netherlands ran second to Hong Kong, reflecting the appeal of an economy with five major ports and easy access to mainland Europe. The U.S., the U.K. and Australia occupied the next three leading slots.

Bloomberg Rankings measured 160 markets on a scale of zero to 100 percent based on six factors. These are the costs of setting up business, hiring and moving goods; the degree of economic integration; less tangible costs such as inflation and corruption; and the readiness of the local consumer base, a category that includes the size of the middle class, household consumption and gross domestic product per person.

The Netherlands overtakes Germany, US in competitiveness ranking

The Netherlands has overtaken Germany and the US to reach fifth place in the latest edition of the World Economic Forum's ranking of the most internationally competitive economies.

Switzerland tops the overall rankings for the fourth consecutive year. Singapore remains in second position with Finland, in third position, overtaking Sweden in 4th.

The improvement in the Dutch position reflects a 'continued strengthening of its innovative capacity as well as the heightened efficiency and stability of its financial markets', the organisation said.

Although the country has registered fiscal deficits in recent years, its macro-economic environment is more stable than that of a number of other advanced economies, the report concluded.



Seminars

Dutch Kitchen Breakfast Seminar

Kitchen, Bedroom and Bathroom (KBB) manufacturers from across Northern Ireland attended a sectoral seminar in the Invest NI Boardroom delivered by Co Verburg of Verburg Agencies and Steve Murnaghan of NITC, Amsterdam.

The pair provided an unique insight to assist the Northern Ireland KBB branch in its understanding of the requirements of the Dutch market during the KBB breakfast seminar.

Steve Murnaghan opened the session by providing an overview of research prepared on the Dutch Market and competitive environment.

Companies then heard detailed information from industry expert Co Verburg on the correct product and buyer requirements in order to enter the Dutch market, including examples of those who had failed and succeeded. Co gave the example of how he helped build the Siematic brand in the Netherlands to a higher level of sales than Siematic in Germany, before setting up his own kitchens agency.

Seminar attendees had the benefit of Verburg's detailed knowledge of the the 'ins and outs' of the Dutch kitchen retail environment and the mentality of the Dutch consumer. It was clear that Co certainly knows the industry first hand as he regularly trains his own Ballerina and Character dealers who have won the Dutch Kitchen retail award for the last 3 years running.

Verburg left the NI manufacturers with clear thoughts on 'dos and don'ts' of entering the market as well as the USPs required to succeed. He left the door figuratively open for KBB companies interested in the Dutch market.



Marine and Offshore Best Practice

A delegation of Northern Ireland industrialists involved in supplying the wind, maritime and oil and gas sector have been involved in a visit to the Netherlands. The group visit, organised by Invest Northern Ireland, the lead economic development agency, included site visits in Rotterdam, a networking event and a visit to the Offshore Wind Exhibition in Amsterdam.

A group visit was arranged to the pragmatic SAIO Safety Training centre, a flexible and independent organisation focused on the provision of practical courses and training for operational personnel and their immediate supervisors.

Peter Carpay, the founder of SAIO Safety Training, with 20 years experience in the Oil & Gas Sector, explained how the company have developed their own teaching material in-house and deliver a variety of training courses in many different languages, either at their training centres in the Netherlands or at any other suitable location throughout the world. Clients include companies in the industrial-, petrochemical-, construction- and the Offshore-/Maritime- sectors. Carpay explained, in his entertaining presentation style, how SAIO



Safety Training & STC-SAIO Offshore have international experience in the design and build of Offshore Training centers and are expanding to various other locations around the world either independently or in cooperation with local partners. NI companies received a full tour of the Rotterdam training location including the welding department, submersion tank, lifeboat launch and the helipad.



Wall-to-wall culture for 2013

The only completely walled city in Ireland has announced its UK City of Culture 2013 programme; a year-long feast of events that will be as 'legenderry' as Derry itself.

Northern Ireland's second city is the UK capital of culture for 2013. Nowhere else is hosting so many diverse art forms, or performances, artists and exhibitions of such calibre, all in one place, in one unforgettable year.

Derry~Londonderry is looking forward to many firsts in its UK City of Culture year: the Turner Prize presented outside England; a new commission by the London Symphony Orchestra; the genius of award-winning choreographer Hofesh Shechter, and the first visit to Northern Ireland from the Royal Ballet in two decades. Also for the first time it will host the world's flagship Irish music

festival, the Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann.

Famous natives, including punk band The Undertones and musician Phil Coulter, are back to join City of Culture celebrations, as is Nobel laureate poet Seamus Heaney. And the acclaimed Field Day theatre company returns.

Stir in community engagement and you've got what is being called "Ireland's richest ever cultural programme", with something for every taste. Derry can't wait to share its cultural bounty with the world and is extending a worldwide invitation to come and join in the experience.



Beginning in January, Walls 400! ushers in a year of activities dedicated to the 400th anniversary of Derry's walls.

www.cityofculture2013.com

Once a symbol of a contested history, now one of Ireland's greatest heritage assets, the walls will provide a spectacular canvas when the spellbinding Lumiere festival of light brings its brilliance in November.



An inspired choice!

Marianne van Dijk, a travel professional with more than 30 years experience in the corporate group and incentive travel market, was a guest of Tourism Ireland at the NI-NL Annual dinner at Queens University in February.

Below, NI-NL BIZ passes on Marianne's positive feedback from one of two trips she made to the province in 2012.

"As a travel professional, it has been a sheer delight for me to see how Northern Ireland, and Belfast in particular, has redefined itself to become an inspired choice for both business and leisure groups in the coming months and years. This is owing primarily to the "Yes we can and we will – and if we can't, we will find a way" attitude which I find abounds in all walks of life and in all businesses.

I came away from my trip with full enthusiasm as to this positive, uplifting trend, and wanted to send all my clients on a familiarisation trip so that they can see for themselves what this wonderful destination has to offer.

Belfast is a busy harbour with a rich industrial history surrounded by breathtaking mountains. Wherever you look, you see in the distance this promise of natural beauty. Their proximity is a constant reminder that within 15 minutes in whichever distance you drive out of the city you can be in the countryside with wonderful vistas of sea or land. The city is buzzing, booming, and bright with oodles of Irish promise – who wouldn't want to go there? There is something for everyone:

Shops?

Both chains and independent boutiques abound in the accessible city centre.

Restaurants?

All tastes and pockets catered for with local and fresh produce.



Cafes and Pubs?

Yes - from the traditional with whiskey tasting to the hip and modern with exotic cocktails and further on to the sublime where rum can be imbibed in genuine rum joints.

Accommodation?

All budgets are met – from the ultimate Merchant Hotel to simple bed and breakfasts.

Museums?

From the recently-opened Titanic Visitor Experience and the adjacent Nomadic tender to the more traditional Ulster Folk Museum and everything in-between.

What makes Belfast wonderfully quirky is that over and above these basic categories, a myriad of possibilities exist ensuring every group and incentive trip is truly tailor-made. We in the travel business are only as good as our last trip and offering a trip to Belfast and Northern Ireland is practically a guarantee we will have a client for life.

Thanks to the professional assistance of the Belfast Visitor & Convention Bureau, the Northern Ireland Tourist Board and Tourism Ireland the destination has been well-represented enabling our 3 GI Travel offices to offer this wonderful country to prospective corporate and special interest groups as their next travel destination."

Please notify NI NL by email on info@ni-nl.org if:

- the contact details on the envelope are not correct
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- you would like a business contact in NI or NL to receive BIZ
- you have any articles or news stories of interest to NI-NL BIZ readers

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TITANIC belongs in BELFAST

Titanic Belfast® is a “must see” in any visit to Northern Ireland. It is located in the heart of Belfast, right beside the historic site of this world-famous ship’s construction and the the heart of Northern Ireland’s industrial and maritime heritage. The city that built the most famous ship on the planet has a story of Titanic proportions to tell.

After three years of construction – the same time it took to build the famous ship – the eye-catching £97 million Titanic Belfast makes an iconic addition to the city’s skyline. Silvery, shiny and standing proudly at the head of the very slipways down which the majestic ship first glided into the waters of Belfast Lough, the angular, aluminium-clad building is a sight to behold.

Housed in an iconic, 6-floor building, this nine gallery state-of-the-art visitor experience tells the story of the Titanic, from her conception in Belfast in the early 1900s, through her construction and launch, to her famous maiden voyage and tragic end.

The adventure begins the moment you walk through the door and into the building’s giant atrium surrounded by the four ‘ship’s hull’ shaped wings which house the Titanic Experience.

At the start, you’ll learn about Belfast at the turn of the century as a thriving boom town and experience a thrilling ride through a dramatic presentation of the shipyards and the Titanic under construction.

Watch the launch from the slipways, and explore the sumptuous luxury and superb craftsmanship of Titanic’s interiors. Be brought deep into the stories of the passengers, the crew and the heroes of the day; relive the drama of the tragic end to Titanic’s maiden, and only, voyage, and visit the wreck at her resting place on the floor of the North Atlantic. Voyage to the bottom of the sea in the unique Ocean Exploration Centre with live links to contemporary undersea exploration.

For corporate visitors, the spectacular banqueting suite on the fifth and sixth floors provide elegant surroundings in a unique design based on the Titanic’s interiors. The banqueting rooms, the largest of which have a capacity for 1000 guests, offering a very special and luxurious setting with first class facilities for any function.

