

# NI-NL BIZ

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THE NEWSLETTER WHICH KEEPS NORTHERN IRELAND IN TOUCH WITH THE DUTCH.

ISSUE 13

## NI-NL SAILS INTO 2ND DECADE

10TH ANNIVERSARY  
NI-NL TRADE DINNER  
AT TITANIC BELFAST  
27TH JANUARY 2016

FURTHER DETAILS ON HOW TO  
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# Hello

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



**In this redesigned 13th edition of NI-NL BIZ Steve Murnaghan, Founder of NI-NL...**

- looks back at key NI-NL events in 2015
- celebrates KLMs return to Belfast
- looks forward to the 10th consecutive NI-NL Trade Dinner
- describes ongoing successes of Invest NI's Going Dutch programme
- reports on Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council's 1st Trade Development programme
- announces NITC's new office facility in Amsterdam
- covers many trade successes achieved over the last months
- shows how exhibitions in the Netherlands pay dividends for NI exporters
- focuses on how datacentres are booming business in the Netherlands

**NI-NL BIZ wishes all a Healthy and Prosperous Export Year in 2016.**

## Background to NI-NL

The Northern Ireland Netherlands Trade and Export Society (NI-NL) was founded in 2006 to encourage and stimulate export trade between Northern Ireland and The Netherlands.

NI-NL is a forum and platform for companies and professionals active, or who wish to be active, in trade between Northern Ireland and the Netherlands. NI-NL's Mission is to "proactively assist in developing Partnerships in Trade, Enterprise & Investment between Northern Ireland and The Netherlands".

NI-NL is a not for profit foundation and plays an active role by organising a number of business networking events and activities per year and keeping businesses abreast of activity between the 2 regions.

## Founding Partners

**Invest Northern Ireland**  
Building Locally  
Competing Globally



### P3 Welcome

Minister Bell & Ambassador Smits

### P4 NI-NL Events

New Year's Trade Dinner - February 2015  
Summer Networking & KLM Launch - May 2015

### P10 Upcoming NI-NL Events

10th NI-NL Trade Dinner - January 2016

### P11 Invest NI

Going Dutch 15 - October 2015  
Sensurity  
Naturo PetFoods  
Dragons Den

### P14 Lisburn & Castlereagh

Outlook Mission - June 2015  
Andrew Ingredients  
Palmer Agencies  
Trailblazer

### P17 NITC

Day in the Life of a Trade Consultant  
NITC Amsterdam office  
On the Road - courtesy of Ulster Tatler

### P20 Industry Special

Datacenters Growing out of the Ground in NL

### P22 Trade News - NI

Ulster Weavers  
Decora Blinds

### P23 Trade News - NL

Bettink Wind  
Damen Shipyards  
Hanskamp  
Shannon Meats  
Groenveld Vlees

### P26 Show News

Cottage Desserts & Mackle Petfoods @ PLMA  
SAM Mouldings & Keylite @ Bouwbeurs  
OMJ @ Platts Exhibition

### P27 Business Tourism

Schiphol Privium Service  
KLM Touchdown in Belfast

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- you have any articles or news stories of interest to NI-NL BIZ readers

### Correspondence address

NI NL - Northern Ireland Netherlands  
Trade and Export Society  
Beethovenstraat 176  
1077 JX Amsterdam  
The Netherlands



## Minister Jonathan Bell MLA

NI-NL welcomes Minister Bell to his role as Northern Ireland Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, to which he was appointed on 11th May 2015.

Prior to this he held the position of Junior Minister in the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister and was appointed following the 2011 election where he served until 10 May 2015.

By profession Mr Bell is a social worker and a graduate of Queen's University, Belfast, where he studied Psychology and Social Work.

Mr Bell gained 14 years of experience in local government. He was first elected to Craigavon Borough Council in 1997 and served as Mayor in 2002. He was then elected to Ards Borough Council in 2005 for the Ards East electoral area.

Mr Bell has made a number of trips to China, including to the Confucius Institute, and he is honorary Professor of Media and Communication at the Zhejiang University.

The Netherlands is also very much in the forefront of his mind as one of Minister Bell's 1st official functions just one week after he took office was the launch of KLM's Amsterdam - Belfast route.

**“One of Minister Bell's 1st official functions just one week after he took office was the launch of KLM's Amsterdam - Belfast route.”**

## Ambassador Simon Smits

NI-NL welcomes Simon Smits as Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland a role he was appointed to from 11 September 2015.

Mr. Smits studied English language, literature and international law at the VU University in Amsterdam. He joined the Netherlands' Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1983. Since then, he has served as Head of the Bureau of the Secretary General, Head of the Economic Department at the Netherlands Embassy in South-Africa, Head Nature and Environment at the Permanent



Mission to the EU in Brussels, Senior Advisor Government Relations to Shell International, acting Director-General for European Cooperation and Director-

General for Foreign Economic Relations/ Vice Minister for Foreign Trade.

The Economic Team of the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, which the Ambassador oversees, deals with Economy, Trade, Investment and Agriculture between the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. This includes the Economic & Agricultural Department of the Netherlands Embassy in London, the Netherlands Business Support Office in Manchester and the The Netherlands Foreign Investment Agency.

The Economic & Agriculture department in London also edits [www.hollanduktrade.nl](http://www.hollanduktrade.nl), an online platform for Dutch companies doing business in the UK.

**“One of Ambassador Smit's first tasks in September was attended the opening of Walthamstow's £27m mini-Holland cycling scheme.”**



The 9th NI-NL New Year's Trade Dinner, at the West-Indisch Huis, Amsterdam on Thursday 5th February 2015, was attended by 100 Northern Ireland companies and their Dutch partners.

The unique location, the strong turnout, the cordial atmosphere demonstrated that NI-NL activities continue to underpin the economic harmony that has developed between Northern Ireland and the Netherlands over the years.

During the pre-dinner drinks reception NI-NL was delighted to welcome Stijn

van de Laar, Sales Manager, KLM, to announce the new route between Amsterdam Schiphol and Belfast City Airport in May 2015.

KLM committed not only to the Belfast route, but also to NI-NL as a Corporate Sponsor and were welcomed as NI-NL's Airline of Choice in 2015.

**Attending his 1st NI-NL event Stijn, presented a movie on KLM in their 95th year, giving guests an insight into the AF KLM relationship, and their plans for 2015.**



## PRE DINNER DRINKS AND NETWORKING



01



02



03



04



05



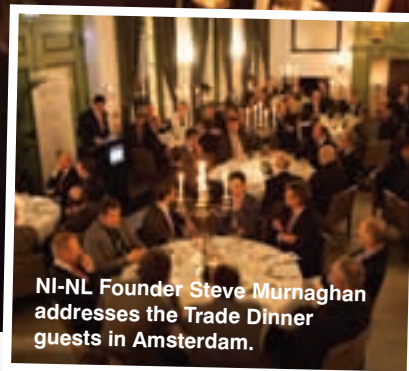
06



01. Guests enjoyed pre-Dinner drinks and Networking 02. Ian McCrea MLA (2nd from left) with The Oil Market Journal and their guests from Salland Olie 03. Dr. Vicky Kell of Invest NI with Aidan Strain Electrical Engineering Management and guests from the Netherlands. 04. The Right Worshipful the Mayor of Lisburn Andrew Ewing and Jenny Palmer (Economic Development) welcome David Connolly and Philip Morrow from PRM with Dutch partner Ron Holland. 05. Stijn van de Laar, KLM, Arjen van Elk, Damen Shipyards, Ian Moore, The OMJ, and Steve Murnaghan Founder of NI-NL. 06. Frank de Roon and Hans van der Last of Aenova with Neil Williams of Total Mobile.



100 NI companies and their Dutch guests attended the 9th Trade Dinner in Amsterdam.



NI-NL Founder Steve Murnaghan addresses the Trade Dinner guests in Amsterdam.

## FOUNDERS SPEECH

### NI-NL Founder Steve Murnaghan addresses the Trade Dinner guests in Amsterdam.

As is tradition at the annual Trade Dinner, Steve looked back at the previous year's activities including the Trade Dinner at Parliament Buildings, the Summer Networking and Golf Day, and the publication of the NI-NL BIZ Magazines.

He recounted a conversation with a Dutchman involved in the oil and gas and offshore industry who had visited NI, Harland & Wolff, on occasions and reckoned that Northern Ireland people share a lot of similarities with the Dutch. "We are both hardworking, uncomplicated people, who speak their mind and take a no nonsense approach. We base relationships on trust and our word is our word."

Murnaghan referred to role that the unique location The West Indisch Huis played in the history of NL trade, and where in the same building the Lords Nineteen took the decision to build the city of New Amsterdam, which would grow into today's New York.

The NI-NL Founder welcomed guests to the 9th Trade Dinner from a wide range of sectors including construction materials, aggregates, interiors, machinery, plastics, chemicals, engineering services, software, meat, fresh food, and packaging and provided an insight into the results of the work of Invest NI, Lisburn City Council and NITC through their export assistance.

### Some examples included:

- Developing and launching KIWA approved tanks for fuel storage on farms
- Helping to build global data centres both in Amsterdam and Groningen
- Supplying polished stone value to asphaltting company for Dutch roadbuilding programs
- Providing mobile solutions to the Dutch care sector
- Fitting out the electrical requirements of major department stores
- Renovating Dutch homes with exterior Quality MDF cladding
- Supplying fresh desserts to leading supermarkets

Steve Murnaghan quipped that in 2014 his export consultancy company NITC was involved in cradle to grave programs: Setting up distribution of Moses baskets and bath tubs for new borns as well as coffin transportation buggies, trollies and lifters to Dutch funeral parlours!

He soon turned the attention to the evening's major announcement. "Based on all the stable and emerging trade links, it is no wonder that KLM sees the potential in linking into Northern Ireland to complete

their air routes and to take ambitious export focused companies into Europe and further afield."

From a professional perspective he expressed that it was excellent to see KLM flying back into Belfast after too long an absence - more than 15 years. Prior to that, for nearly 20 years, from 1980 - 1999, Northern Ireland had enjoyed a longstanding relationship with KLM providing a daily lifeline with 3 flights per day into the hub at Schiphol, connections into Europe, and Intercontinental access.

He referred to the fact that KLM would fly with a Fokker 70 into Belfast City, in the heart of the harbour and close to Bombardier Aerospace, where previously Short Brothers had manufactured the wings for Fokker aircraft over many years. KLM's decision to fly to Belfast was applauded by NI-NL companies.

Rounding off his speech Murnaghan thanked exporters, Dutch partners, the Embassies, AF KLM, the Founders - Invest NI, especially the Trade Team, Lisburn City Council, especially the Economic Development Committee and NITC for their continued support. "Without their vision and participation none of this would ever have happened".

As Founder of NI-NL a toast was raised to the warm trading relations between the 2 countries.



## TWO SPEAKERS FROM NORTHERN IRELAND AND THE NETHERLANDS ADDRESSED THE AUDIENCE BETWEEN COURSES.

First to speak was Ian Moore, Director of Markets, at Enniskillen headquartered The Oil Market Journal, which provides live intraday oil prices, news and analysis on the Rotterdam spot market and markets in London and New York via their internet based terminal, wallboard, ticker, smartphone / tablet, email and text messaging services.

Ian explained how he is responsible for oil price analysis on the Rotterdam spot market in addition to the international oil futures markets in London and New York and addressed guests on the background to the 2014 oil price fall and the outlook for both oil prices and the Euro in 2015.

Despite being a young business they are extremely active across Europe - from the Netherlands, the Nordics, the Alpine region and into Central Europe.

Companies were able to relate to Ian's speech on many fronts - not only were they benefitting from the lower fuel prices but also experiencing currency swings in quite a turbulent financial market.

Arjen van Elk, Sales Manager UK & Ireland for Damen Shipyards explained how he is jointly responsible for the sales of all Damen new build vessels and additional services, from small tug boats up to Naval vessels.

Founded in The Netherlands the company employs 8.000 people worldwide in 32 ship- and repair yards. Damen has delivered more than 5.000 vessels in more than 100 countries and delivers approximately 180 vessels annually to customers worldwide.

Arjen had just returned from one of his regular trips to the UK and Ireland and shared his views on the challenges and rewards of a leading Dutch company developing their business abroad.

Small, medium and large businesses alike all seem to have to take the same steps to develop brand awareness, leads and relationships to get traction in the 'foreign' marketplace - eventually to generate sales. In this way neither the



**“Neither the size of the company, nor the product really matter.”**

size of the company, nor the product really matter - even if you are a large vessel from a global player approaching the British Isles!

Stimulated by the insights from the speakers into their sectors, the Trade dinner, as ever, was an ideal platform for New Year's discussions and served to strengthen the longterm strategic linkages between the two countries.

**INTENSE AND ENTERTAINING DISCUSSIONS TOOK PLACE  
THROUGHOUT THE TRADE DINNER.**





## The NI-NL Summer Networking held at the Ulster Museum was hosted by KLM Royal Dutch Airlines on the evening of the inaugural flight from Amsterdam Schiphol to Belfast City Airport.

After an action packed day which had included a early morning breakfast reception at Schiphol's VIP Lounge, the inaugural KLM flight into Belfast City Airport, a lunch with local dignitaries and influencers, the KLM team were looking forward to meeting with the active export community who had long awaited KLM's return to the province.

NI-NL companies were invited to the exclusive evening reception, at a magnificent venue, to meet and mingle with the KLM delegation, colleague business travellers and tourism trade representatives. The networking event consisted of champagne, canapés, musical entertainment, fine art, and one lucky guest even became the owner of a magnificent Gassan diamond!



Air France - KLM Management and staff members from the United Kingdom and Ireland held individual meetings with invited guests and fielded practical questions about the new route and future plans, together with their Dutch colleagues.

Mr. Pieter Bootsma, Executive Vice President, Commercial Strategy gave a keynote launch speech outlining the reasons behind KLM's choice to begin flights from Belfast, the opportunities the route presents for business and leisure travellers, plans for future growth, and more.



### Pieter Bootsma was clear in his message to guests as to what sets KLM apart from competitors:

- their punctuality credentials: KLM having been voted most punctual major airline
- the effectiveness of KLM Cityhopper who operate the Belfast route - voted 2015 regional airline of the year at the 2015 Air Transport News Award
- KLM's dedication to customers with 24/7 social media assistance;
- the seamless experience through Schiphol (SPL) with its one terminal concept. SPL is constantly voted best Airport in Europe at the UK Business Traveller Awards;
- KLM's new World Business Class product;

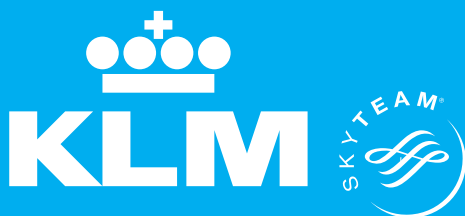
Many of the guests present were well aware of KLM's credentials from their previous track record into Belfast from 1980 - 2000 and were delighted to raise their glasses to toast the Dutch national carrier back to Northern Ireland.







**01** 'Northern Ireland exporters with KLM representatives' From l to r, Laurance Coey, Managing Director, Clarehill Plastics; Carl Schelleman, Commercial Director Europe and North Africa, Air France-KLM; Geoff Spence, Head of Europe and Russia, Invest NI; Warner Rootliep, General Manager UK and Ireland; Nicola Coey, Director, Clarehill Plastics; Pieter Bootsma, Executive Vice President, Commercial Strategy, Air France-KLM. **02** Lorriane McGoran - Marketing and Campaigns Manager- Visit Belfast, Julie Hastings, Director Marketing- Hastings Hotel, Caitriona Lavery, National and International MICE Manager- Hastings Hotels, Anne McMullan- Director of MarComms- Visit Belfast. **03** Nigel Mc Sorley Group COO of Americk Packaging, Mrs. Amber McSorley, Ms. Lily McMulland and Jim Hewitt, Managing Director of Hewitt Meats. **04** Chris and Richard Sherry of Ulster Tatler meet Steve Murnaghan, Managing Consultant of NITC, and Founder of NI-NL at the KLM Launch.



NI-NL AIRLINE OF CHOICE

## NEW YEAR'S TRADE DINNER Wednesday 27th January 2016



The 10th consecutive NI-NL Trade Dinner shall be held on Wednesday 27th January at Titanic Belfast.

The Trade Dinner, which rotates annually between Northern Ireland and the Netherlands, provides an opportunity for business partners to meet up to plan together for the New Year. If you trade between Northern Ireland and the Netherlands then this unique event should be of interest. Northern Ireland exporters together with their Dutch business partner, or client and Dutch exporters together with their Northern Ireland business partner, or client, as well as NI-NL Founders and Sponsors, are invited to attend.

Titanic Belfast is an architecturally stunning monument to Belfast's maritime heritage on the site of the Harland & Wolff shipyard where the RMS Titanic was built. Not only the most popular tourist attraction in Northern Ireland and one of the top attractions in Ireland, but Titanic Belfast also competes on a global stage with renowned attractions such as the Guggenheim Museum and the Eiffel Tower. The building's design dually reflects Belfast's history of shipbuilding and showcases 21st Century design in the heart of Belfast's modern urban-waterfront Titanic Quarter - home to over 100 national and international companies.

From 18.00, the Pre dinner Drinks Reception shall be held in the North Viewing Gallery providing views across the original Harland and Wolff Slipways.

The NI-NL Trade Dinner shall take place in the luxurious Titanic Suite, reminiscent of the First Class surroundings on-board the ship and home to Titanic's stunning staircase, during which a number of keynote speakers from both private and public sector shall address guests.



NB Attendance at the New Years Trade Dinner is exclusively for Northern Ireland exporters together with their Dutch business partners, and/or clients and Dutch exporters together with their Northern Ireland business partners, and/or clients. Dress code is business suit and tie.

**Should you wish to attend together with your business partner, please register both the Northern Ireland and Dutch company representatives individually by Wednesday 20th January either through [www.ni-nl.org](http://www.ni-nl.org). The registration code required is NYD2016.** A contribution of £65 per person shall be charged towards the overall event costs (with the exception of Founding Partners and Sponsors).

Should companies be travelling from Amsterdam to Belfast NI-NL recommends the direct KLM flight from Amsterdam Schiphol to The George Best Belfast City Airport (1km from venue). KLM is kindly offering the Trade Dinner guests double Flying Blue miles collected on their Amsterdam - Belfast flight to the event. NI-NL has secured preferential hotel rates with the Europa Hotel in Belfast. Further event, flight and hotel details are available on registration.

**The NI-NL Trade & Export Society Founders and Sponsors hope that exporters will turn out in force to attend the 10th Trade Dinner.**



## GOING DUTCH

Companies in Northern Ireland may have heard about the Going Dutch programme, offered by Invest NI and delivered by NITC, which takes aspirant exporters from limited knowledge of their market in the Netherlands to well versed, well prepared exporters over an intense 4 month period.



Robin Adair of Airtech Distribution, Garry Campbell of Adamsez and Gabriel Bradley of TaskMaestro prepare for their market visit to the Netherlands.



Robin Adair presents the Econoliser to Infod BV's Peter Cornello, prior to engaging on a Benelux sales drive.



Donnacha McAteer of Newry based Mobile Variable Message Signs demonstrates solar powered trailer based signs during the market visit.

The most recent Going Dutch Group (June - October 2015) to have completed the programme were:

**Adamsez** - A range of finest quality bathtubs, from one of Britain's oldest and most respected designers and manufacturers of bathroom products.

**Econoliser®** A unique CE approved and patented sterilising system, designed to save energy and water at the same time as sterilising knives in abattoirs.

**MVMS** - Solar powered portable variable message signs for use on roads for traffic management but also for event management - such as crowd management at the recent Rugby World Cup.

**Floorgard** - a range of lightweight floor protection products, for companies specialising in datacentres, cruise ships, laboratories, cleanrooms and other sensitive construction projects.

**Taskmaestro** - cloud based task management software for use in the catering industry, especially for those operators who are running multiple sites.

Invest NI and NITC were able to provide each of the companies with a challenging programme of training, relevant appointments and advice throughout the programme.

The pragmatic programme geared to developing successful sustainable exports into one of Northern Ireland's most import European export markets includes:

- market definition
- perfect match profiling
- Target market training
- in-depth market research
- filtering of companies
- market prospecting
- powerpoint delivery
- market visits
- action plans

Already (by December 2015) 60% have already exported to the Netherlands on the back of the export assistance provided, with more successes expected in the short term.

## SENSURITY, SECURES DUTCH PARTNERSHIP



Sensurity, the industry's leading supplier of intelligent Perimeter Intrusion Detection Systems (PIDS), have secured a major partnership deal in the Netherlands teaming up with Hexta, a company that ranks as one of the top suppliers of fencing in the Netherlands.

Paul Moffett, Business Development Manager for Sensurity said "We are delighted to have secured this breakthrough partnership with Hexta in the Netherlands. We first came into

contact with Hexta through participation on Invest NI's Going Dutch Programme. The programme gave us a unique opportunity to showcase our products to buyers and in turn has opened many doors for us. The Netherlands is a market that we've been targeting for some time as part of our export development strategy to accelerate growth in global markets." Hexta chose Sensurity's state-of-the-art HALO and Vigil microwave perimeter detection products. Using patented digital microwave technology, HALO and Vigil intrusion detection sensors are intelligently designed to reduce intrusion nuisance alarms (dead zone elimination) and boast to offer the narrowest alarm detection zones available within the perimeter security market.

With more than 15 years of experience in solutions and perimeter security, Hexta is committed to providing customers with the most reliable and complete security systems on the market. Hexta's team has extensive experience within the business, government and contractors industries and their skilled technicians are on hand

to support any regional installations. Published Hexta references include key Dutch infrastructure and industrial assets such as Rotterdam The Hague Airport, The Port of Rotterdam, Maasvlakte 1, KPN Teleport boulevard, and Fokker Aerostructures BV.

Sensurity are confident that the alliance with Hexta will enhance local support for Sensurity's industry-leading perimeter security solutions, and that their end user and Integrator customers will derive long-term benefit from the partnership. Paul adds, "Invest NI's Going Dutch initiative enabled us to visit the market, meeting a number of qualified potential representatives for our product and benefit from expert advice and practical support in market. We believe that Hexta is a perfect fit for us in terms of size, experience in our sector and knowledge of the Dutch market. Perimeter Intrusion Detection Systems (PIDS) are expected to grow at a steady pace for a number of years, this increase will be driven by the escalating security risks and improvements in technology."

## DUTCH PETS GO NATURO

High quality pet food produced in Northern Ireland is now available to Dutch dogs and cats since leading supermarket Albert Heijn launched Naturo dog food and cat food in their largest stores in June.

Naturo, manufactured by Mackle Petfoods, Moy, is made from 100% natural ingredients, with no artificial colours, flavours or preservatives added. The products have 60% meat content from British and Irish meat sources providing good quality protein and additional essential vitamins, minerals and omega-3 and omega-6 oils to contribute to a healthy immune system, strong bones and teeth and for keeping a dog's skin and coat in great condition.

20% brown rice in the recipe helps to give optimum energy delivery and helps towards a healthy digestive system. 15% vegetables – carrots, peas & potatoes – provide easily digestible protein to promote muscle growth and repair. Naturo grain free recipes are suitable for dogs with allergies.

The Naturo range was launched in the UK and Ireland in 2013, but Managing Director John Mackle has set his sights on export to develop sales of the unique convenience products, and recounts the market development below:

"Mackle Petfoods realised through intensive market research, storechecks and market visits that there was nothing quite like Naturo on the Dutch supermarket shelves. In a pet loving country like the Netherlands with 4.5 million cats and dogs we realised that there was an opportunity for Naturo especially as the Dutch prefer quality natural products - and their pets too!"

Mackle continues, 'We like to do our homework before entering a market and realised that there are some differences. High quality pet food produced in Northern Ireland is now available to Dutch dogs and cats since leading supermarket Albert Heijn launched Naturo dog food and cat food in their largest stores in June.'

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**Mackle continues, 'We like to do our homework before entering a market and realised that there are some differences between the Netherlands and our domestic markets.'**

- Small dogs are popular as there is limited space in urban households, and a higher amount of time and spend is required for larger dogs.
- The cat population is high in the Netherlands, especially because many people live in flats rather than detached houses. In the West of the Netherlands (also known as the Randstad) 47% of households are cat owners.
- Dutch consumers visit the supermarket regularly, sometimes up to 3.6 times per week, travelling often by bicycle

and do not necessarily wish to buy bulk in cans. Naturo Dog Food, available in 150g & 400g trays, and Naturo Cat Food in 85g trays are convenient and sized correctly for bicycle panniers.

- As Mackle Petfoods is totally committed to developing the market they launched the products in full colour Dutch language sleeves and their own Dutch language Facebook page.
- In order to support the product Naturo exhibits at local dog shows in the Netherlands to acquaint consumers, and their pets, with the product range."

Albert Heijn is the perfect partner and lead customer for Mackle Petfoods in the Netherlands as they have a dominant market share of consumers seeking quality, natural products at the right price, and therefore Naturo satisfies this requirement. From January 2016 Naturo will be available in 400 Albert Heijn stores.

During this whole process we have been professionally assisted by Invest NI's Trade Team who have provided excellent market research reports, provided introductions to the Buying Team at Albert Heijn and have supported our presentation and translation requirements. Working with their Trade Advisors, NITC in Amsterdam, is like having your own local presence, with capable and pragmatic consultants who speak the local language and know the market.

Based on the success we have experienced in the Netherlands we know that Naturo can compete anywhere in Europe, and we have recently participated in Trade Missions and 'Czech It Out' to assess and access the Nordic and CEE markets. In both cases we have been successful in appointing distribution partners who are receiving their first deliveries in local language packaging.

As a medium sized family business we take export as seriously as our domestic business and have now appointed an export manager to look after these new markets, develop new markets and to exhibit at major European trade shows.

The process does not happen overnight, it takes time, effort, research and travel but Mackle Petfoods have now developed a clear vision for rolling the Naturo brand out into Europe.



Robin de Neve of NITC with Catherine McGuckin and Stephen Haslam of Naturo display a month's supply of dog food for the lucky winner at the show.



Dogs of all sizes are catered for at the Naturo stand the Holland Cup dog show in Amsterdam.



## CHINESE DRAGONS RAISE THEIR HEADS ..... IN EINDHOVEN

China has huge numbers of seniors and the Chinese market is calling to the developers of smart health products. But how do you get a foot in the door, and what is the Northern Ireland link?

This meeting was a joint production organised by the Province of North-Brabant, Coral (Community of Regions for Assisted Living), China Connected Health Alliance and Europe Connected Health Alliances. International experts, including Invest NI Chairman Mark Ennis, and Brian O'Connor, Chairman of the European Connected Health Alliance provided advice at the Health@Home meeting in October in Eindhoven on how to corner the Chinese care market.



Caption: The expert panel including Brian O'Connor, William Kilque, Yuan Lu and Mark Ennis provide the contenders with invaluable advice.

Care parallels between China and the Netherlands One of the experts was Yuan Lu, Professor of Industrial Design at the Eindhoven University of Technology. She is a perfect example of the situation many Chinese find themselves in: living far away from her parents/in-laws, who live independently hope to be able to continue doing so for some time. Lu sees parallels between the Chinese and Dutch care markets. In both countries, 25% of the population will soon be over 65. In China this will be exacerbated by years of one-child policy. Interpersonal care provision will become a heavy burden.

Like Dutch seniors, many Chinese pensioners are still wary of digital technology, explains Lu. The challenge is to use good design to seamlessly attune that technology to the seniors' daily lives to create acceptance.

Collaborate with a reliable Chinese partner Perhaps the most important factor for successfully conducting business in China is to cooperate with a reliable Chinese partner, says Brian O'Connor, Chairman of the European Connected Health Alliance and also a shareholder in the China Connected Health Alliance. "Always start where you know someone. Never just go at it, as you will get lost. Prepare very thoroughly for the

market you wish to access."

"Whatever you do, don't go it alone," continues O'Connor. "Collaborate in ecosystems, link Chinese stakeholders such as providers, investors and suppliers to potential partners in Europe. Only then do you maximise your chances of success." Mark Ennis, Chairman of Invest Northern Ireland who has years of experience as an investor in countries including China adds: "Healthcare ecosystems promote the development of a joint language and facilitate the creation of cooperations, and are therefore interesting to investors. This approach has already provided excellent results in Europe and I am convinced that joining the Chinese ecosystem will also lead to successful market implementation for European companies."

Be the specialist Properly studying the market is also the advice William Kilque of the JUMO Group gives. He started multiple companies in China and helps other entrepreneurs do the same. "Carefully assess what the market has to offer. A lot of the smart health market has already been covered by Chinese companies. There is however demand for very high-quality, specialised products. Also, ensure your product is easy to scale up, because the market is enormous."

Kilque points out the huge popularity of social media and smartphone use in China. In 2017, an estimated 745 million people will be active on digital social media networks, primarily on the Chinese counterparts of Western networks such as WeChat, the Chinese WhatsApp and Weibo, comparable to Twitter. One should note however, that not all seniors have smartphones. Their children, who often arrange care for them, do.

Finally, the language is a point of attention. Speaking Chinese yourself helps, but it's hard to learn. Make sure you can understand and monitor the companies you work with, recommends O'Connor. This also speaks in favour of having a reliable Chinese partner.

Five pitches Five entrepreneurs developed smart health innovations, thoroughly tested them and then pitched the panel of 'Dragons' seeking to find out whether they

stood a chance on the Chinese market.

- **'Family Secrets'** a game especially for senior citizens to develop contact with others. [www.atlantisgames.nl](http://www.atlantisgames.nl)
- **Gociety Solutions:** smartphone for use by seniors who live independently, making them more confident about living alone. [www.gocietysolutions.com](http://www.gocietysolutions.com)
- **Dirk Peek's** tablet based ambulance-to-hospital based telemedicine system.
- **Zensor**, developed in Northern Ireland, a body worn sensor to monitor whether there are signals that might indicate an increased risk of a heart attack - one of the most prevalent causes of death in China. Patients with heart conditions feel safer with body sensors, giving them the confidence to continue living independently. [www.intelesens.com](http://www.intelesens.com)
- **Positoos**, a payment system devised by a Dutch community-based savings and payment organisation. Neighbourhood inhabitants who offer each other help can save points which can then be exchanged for another person's service or product. [www.samen-doen.nl](http://www.samen-doen.nl)

The jury questioned whether seniors were used to smartphones, tablet and apps yet, whether seniors do not rely community centres in Chinese villages for social activation, and how ambulance care is relatively new but growing, especially in private hospitals. After much gnashing of teeth, the jury chose the winner of the 'Most excellent smart health innovation' - Frank Verbeek of Gociety Solutions.

Rather than an investment from the 'Chinese Dragons' Verbeek received a voucher for supervision from experts when approaching the Chinese care market. On receipt of the prize, Verbeek said "There are a lot of players on the mobile market, so we need to enter large markets, such as the Chinese one, soon and find distributors. Once seniors get used to the system they never want to be without it again."

You could just imagine Evan Davis (Dragon's Den presenter) saying at the end of the BBC programme, 'A confident approach by the Dutchman which resulted in the Dragons' Commitment'.



## PROGRAMME REPORT & FACTFILE



In June 2015 companies located in Castlereagh joined with Lisburn companies for the inaugural Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council European Outlook Programme to the Netherlands.

This successful trade development initiative, which has been delivered by NITC for over 10 years, was warmly welcomed by Castlereagh based businesses at the programme launch, who registered for 75% of the available places, with the majority participating on an Export focused Mission for the 1st time.

Chairman of the Council's Development Committee, Alderman Allan Ewart says

"What a fantastic start to the first trade development programme delivered as part of the new Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council. I am delighted that once again the Netherlands has proven to be an excellent market for our local companies to do business in, with initial feedback indicating that close to 1 million of new sales will develop, backed up with first class in-market support from the team at NITC."

Economic Development Manager at the Council, Hazel King adds: 'The Netherlands has become one of the leading trading partners for Lisburn & Castlereagh based companies, and to this end the Council intends to support a further 6 companies to explore new business opportunities with a market visit taking place mid April 2016. I would encourage any local business with potential to expand into international markets to speak to the Council as soon as possible to ensure they avail of the support on offer or make contact with the delivery agent, who can provide further details.'

**Contact details for Northern Ireland Trade Consultants:**  
Tel: + 31 20 4217400,  
Email: [info@nitc.nl](mailto:info@nitc.nl)

### Mission Factfile

- Companies represented a variety of sectors from the Council area, such as food technology, textiles, motorsport, tradeable services, engineering, chemicals and industrial lubricants.
- In total, 58 meetings were planned by NITC in advance of the visit throughout the Netherlands with OEM's, buyers, potential suppliers, intermediaries and partners.
- Companies averaged 6.4 meetings over the 3 day visit period and on average scored the meetings 8.4 out of 10 in terms of suitability.
- All 9 companies who made the market visit have developed clear business opportunities with the Netherlands since returning to Northern Ireland.
- 100% of companies were satisfied that their individual objectives were met by the programme and are grateful to Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council for the opportunity to participate.
- From participant feedback new trade opportunities of £1 million can be generated from the programme.

### Qualitative feedback from the companies included:

"Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council's Trade Development Programme to The Netherlands has given Adamsez the ideal opportunity to start the process of selling its Northern Ireland built baths into the Dutch market place."

**Gary Campbell**

"Very relevant programme with excellent meeting arrangements"

**David Buchanan**

"NITC provide targeted sales leads at the right level with the right companies, more than a foot in the door – they get you a seat at the table – the rest is up to you."

**Albert Hamilton**

"All the meetings arranged were of good quality. The contacts were very relevant to our market and appeared to be some of the key players in the market and, in fact, our most interesting contact also operates outside the Netherlands, in Belgium and Northern France."

**Leonard Hamilton**

"Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council's Trade Development Programme to The Netherlands was a great experience. Delighted with the meetings as they were all beneficial and with the right decision makers."

**Jude Cassidy**

"I would advise any company thinking of starting to export to the Netherlands, or who wish to increase their already existing business in the Netherlands, to stop thinking about doing it and just do it. If you truly believe your business, product or service has the potential to work in Europe, don't waste any more time, give the NITC guys a call. "

**Mike Brennan**

"Through the Council's trade visit, Momentum Motorsport has already taken its first order in less than a week from taking part in the trade visit.

I would highly recommend any company to spend the time and effort in focusing their market efforts using NITC. Momentum hopes to build on the newly found partnership and look forward to the future with 3 specialists in the Netherlands."

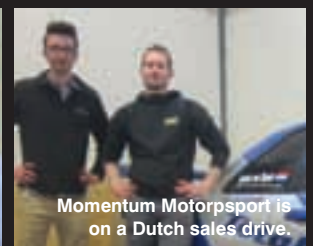
**Jonathan Hardman**

"It is great to be on a programme that delivered so well. It is a great programme, well organised, well prepared and hit the nail on the head the first time - Well done!"

**Lester Manley**



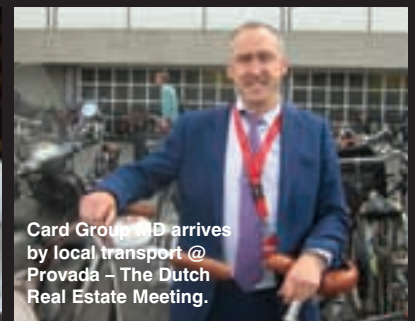
MDS meet with potential business partners.



Momentum Motorsport is on a Dutch sales drive.



Jude Cassidy meets with influencers in the Interiors sector.



Card Group MD arrives by local transport @ Provada - The Dutch Real Estate Meeting.



## ANDREW INGREDIENTS ANNIVERSARY EXHIBITION GOES DOWN A TREAT

Andrew Ingredients, importer of dry and chilled food ingredients, hosted their 70th Anniversary 'Celebration of Success' Exhibition at their modern premises in Lisburn.

Their new covered loading bay was transformed into an impressive exhibition hall which housed over 20 exhibitor stands, a cafe and seminar room. Suppliers from all over Europe exhibited, introducing new products and ideas to over 400 customers and potential customers that attended over the two days.

Customers involved in the baking and food processing industry had the opportunity to meet with suppliers face to face to learn about new products, tour the new test bakery and kitchen and attend seminars on topical subjects such as gluten free, trends and salt reduction.

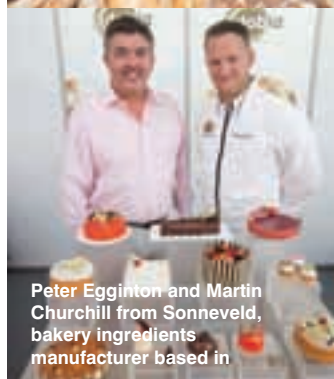
Andrew Ingredient's new test bakery and kitchen was officially opened by Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment Minister, Jonathan Bell.

Andrew Ingredients have a comprehensive range of ingredients selected from Europe's top food manufacturers, for distribution throughout Ireland. Dutch suppliers to Andrew Ingredients were very supportive, joining in on the opportunity to participate at the Open Days.

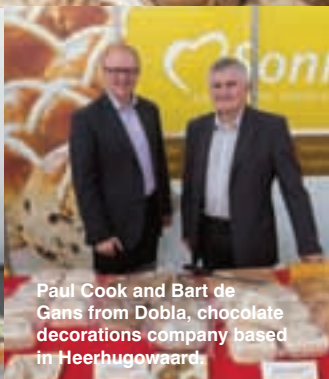
A Celebratory dinner was held at the historic Hillsborough Castle for suppliers and staff, to look back on the first 70 years and plan for the next 70 years in business.



Han Boers and Pieter Roskam from Meneba, a 100-year old Flour Mill, head quartered in Rotterdam.



Peter Egginton and Martin Churchill from Sonneveld, bakery ingredients manufacturer based in



Paul Cook and Bart de Gans from Doba, chocolate decorations company based in Heerhugowaard.

## HALLOWEEN MARKET IN THE NETHERLANDS IS VERY MUCH ALIVE

Palmer Agencies, based in Castlereagh, Northern Ireland, is a distributor of Halloween, fancy dress, carnival costumes and accessories. The family business is well respected in the industry over the last 45 years and is a member of Equitoys and the British Costume Association.

Sergio Battaner, Marketing Director, participated in Lisburn & Castlereagh Council's Trade Development Visit to the Netherlands in June.

Palmer Agencies who already ship to Scandinavia, Germany, Spain, Portugal, Italy, France, Czech Republic, and Poland were aware prior to the visit that there was a demand for Halloween articles, given previous enquiries, but had not really been able to dedicate time to identifying new prospects and visiting the market.

With the assistance of the local council and NITC in Amsterdam, Sergio embarked on a 3 day 5 city tour of the Netherlands - his car packed full of Halloween costumes, hats, wigs, props, makeup, masks, and pumpkin carving kits.

Sergio told NI-NL BIZ that, "Halloween seems to be booming in the Netherlands. The market is not just in The Hague and Amsterdam, where many expats live, but also in towns and cities with student populations and more provincial cities such as Groningen, Heerenveen, Den Bosch and Maastricht. The stores I visited were very interested in the masks, teeth, fake blood, face paint and costumes I had to offer. The shops were very well presented and some of them even have all year round Halloween displays".

Sergio found the programme to be excellent throughout, a fully packed visit with appointments at 'feestwinkels' (party and costume stores) across the Netherlands enabling him to meet new potential customers and extend his network. The timing of the visit in June was also an opportune moment to meet with shops in order for articles to be on sale at Halloween.

"New orders were won, the collection sold well, clients and customers were happy so I can conclude that the Halloween market in the Netherlands is anything but dead!", added the fun loving Spaniard.

**Palmer**  
Agencies Ltd



## BLAZING A TRAIL INTO THE NETHERLANDS

The relationship between food and business is a bond that has spanned countless of centuries. Over the past few years, the Netherlands has slowly developed a budding food movement – from new restaurant concepts, craft beer brewers and food trucks.

The concept of Food Trucks is not a new concept in the Netherlands, but they are definitely 'in' and trendy at the moment. In fact in 2014 there were about 25 food truck festivals which grew in 2015 up to circa 150 festivals. Most festivals take place throughout the spring and summer seasons. The most famous multi day festival with over 70 vehicles is Rollende Keukens (Rolling Kitchens) Amsterdam but there are also food festivals in Leiden, Rotterdam, Utrecht, The Hague and Nijmegen which attract vast numbers of visitors in combination with music and culture festivals.

**Trailblazer BBQ Ltd**

[www.trailblazerbbq.com](http://www.trailblazerbbq.com) based in Dundonald, on the outskirts of Belfast, has followed this trend of high quality outdoor catering concepts by designing and manufacturing a range of towable road approved charcoal powered barbecues.

Trailblazer's unique characteristics include controllable temperature from searing hot, to slow cooking, whilst the gullwing doors provide protection from the occasional shower of rain.

The Trailblazer 600 uses both

convection and radiant heat, comfortably reaching a volume of up to 600 burgers per hour for event catering. Typical Trailblazer BBQ clients include event caterers, festival organisers, contract caterers, pubs, meat brands, rental companies, parties, and also private individuals.

Purely to get a taste for export and as an initial fact finding exercise to see if there was a market for their exciting and unique range of towable BBQ's, Trailblazer joined the trade delegation to the Netherlands run by Lisburn & Castlereagh Council in June 2015.

Professor Lester Manley, founder and MD of Trailblazer BBQ Ltd (pictured) is amazed with the level of interest he received from the Dutch companies they met up with during the visit. Looking back at the visit, Lester said, "All parties I met were very excited about the product and all requested to become resellers. One of the companies actually called me 4 hours after the meeting to let me know that they had a customer for Trailblazer!"

Trailblazer has chosen to run with one company initially, "Food Truck Company" who specialize in the development and fit out of custom built mobile food solutions, like food trailers and food trucks.

Lester adds "Entrepreneurs like Marcel de Reus and I are convinced that food trucks and food-related business are the

way of the future. Due to the fact that Food Truck Company develops Food Trailers, Pop-Up Containers and Trucks in order to offer high quality dishes in hip, mobile restaurants, they have the right network to distribute the product in the Netherlands."

Marcel de Reus, MD of Food Truck Company is equally buoyant about Trailblazer. "This is a great product for the Dutch mobile food market. The authenticity of a charcoal BBQ, combined with live- and showcooking is phenomenal! Besides that, the different models have a great capacity for all different kinds of events and parties and I am convinced that Trailblazer will grow into a brand with more and more fans. Lester gives Trailblazer a soul and I am very happy to add it as a complementary brand into the portfolio of Food Truck Company."

Due to the real affirmation of the market's response, Trailblazer have decided to go full steam (or charcoal) ahead and launch the product range at the annual Horecava exhibition in early January in Amsterdam. The Netherlands will be Trailblazer's first mainland Europe export market which they believe will be an ideal starting position for rolling out into the rest of Europe and beyond.

Professor Manley concludes "We were absolutely delighted with the organisation, quality of contacts and briefings prior to the Council's market visit but most of all the overwhelming positive Dutch reaction to the product. As a young company we simply wouldn't have been able to have done this ourselves with the stimulation and support we received."





## A LIFE IN THE DAY OF A TRADE CONSULTANT



Robin de Neve, NITC Trade Consultant (back row, middle)

Clients often ask NITC what else they are up to in Amsterdam, apart from work on their individual projects. Robin de Neve, In Market Consultant in the Netherlands for NITC, looks back at some of the tasks and projects with which he has been involved in 2015.

Robin is part of the team for clients who wish to initiate and develop their presence in the Netherlands - with NITC playing the role of pathfinder, matchmaker, and partner.

"Firstly it is important to be 'au fait' with what is happening in the Dutch economy in general as well as the many varied sectors in which NITC works", explains de Neve. "On a daily basis different media are read, each morning financial newspapers are devoured, trade press ezines scanned, and social media sites browsed. As the 'eyes and ears' in the market, relevant information is summarised and passed on to the client involved in the Dutch market."

"Regularly we visit trade shows to look at competitor's presence and activity, 'hoover' any relevant press releases and brochures, speak to influencers, media and potential prospects. There are a number of International trade show locations such as the RAI in Amsterdam (next door to NITC), the Jaarbeurs in Utrecht, Ahoy in Rotterdam and MECC Maastricht, but we often visit national shows in Gorinchem, Hardenberg, and Venray. These are shows which are very relevant to clients but maybe not on their radar for exhibiting and would take 2 days to visit from Northern Ireland whereas we can cover them in a half day, or an evening."

The core of NITC's work however remains developing market intelligence, building target databases, speaking with prospects and ensuring that clients are in front of the right people in the market. This takes time, a concerted approach and a skillset of putting the best foot forward for clients - and all in Dutch of course! As we know only too well, 'you only have one opportunity to make a professional first impression'!

**"THE LIFE OF A TRADE CONSULTANT WORKING FULL TIME WITH SME EXPORTERS IS ALWAYS VARIED, SOMETIMES CHALLENGING BUT ALWAYS REWARDING WHEN YOU LOOK BACK AT WHAT WE ACHIEVE TOGETHER WITH THE CLIENT WITHIN RELATIVELY SHORT TIMEFRAMES."**

The pragmatic support NITC provides includes writing extensive market reports one day, carrying out storechecks the next day and helping to adapt, translate and finetune marketing materials to get the right message into the market, another day.

Robin gives examples of a few projects, (some of which may feature elsewhere in the BIZ magazine):

For SAM, an Antrim based profiler of MDF mouldings, already exporting to building materials distributors, we worked together on their Dutch brand launch at Bouwbeurs (the main bi-annual building exhibition), bringing together trade partners and customers. For the SAM Trimax external range we are currently developing a strategy together with the client and Invest NI to focus on architects and specifiers involved in cladding projects.

For Trailblazer, manufacturer of mobile catering BBQs NITC studied the contract catering the large festivals market, and especially those supplying them, using a variety of sources. However in this particular case, visiting the events themselves gives a much better overview of the active players.

For Naturo, branded premium dog food we have been involved throughout the entire project - introduction to retailers, PPTs in Dutch, gap analysis through store checks,

translation, advertising, developing a social media presence in Dutch and organising the official launch at the Holland Cup dog show in Amsterdam.

Some of the services won't appear anywhere in the magazine as they happen 'behind the scenes' de Neve explains with a smile. We take a non-nonsense, 'can do' approach to our work and tend to go the extra mile for our clients.

- Collecting samples of Christmas desserts 'off the back of a lorry' or at a coldstore and rushing them to a meeting of buyers just in time to win the business.

- Driving around the Netherlands with a vehicle full of samples, and a client, to present for example abattoir equipment, security products, and even Halloween outfits. This can also included a vehicle with a trailer to demonstrate the product.

- Approaching dog owners in the local parks to quiz them regarding their dogs eating patterns. Tip: walk your own dog at the same time, as it is an ice breaker, and a good decoy - much less obvious when questioning owners than being without one!

So, NITC is much more than an office based consultancy - you can see only see so much of a market from an office. Getting out and about, meeting people face to face and especially building relationships is one of the keys to success in the Netherlands.

A typical 'NITC' day or week means many phone calls will be made, much market information will be collated, databases and reports will be prepared but also many kilometres of the Dutch motorway network will be travelled across the length and breadth of the country. The life of a Trade Consultant working full time with SME exporters is always varied, sometimes challenging but always rewarding when you look back at what we achieve together with the client within relatively short timeframes.

**2015 was another busy year for Northern Ireland Trade Consultants assisting client exporters with individual business development projects and development agencies with group missions to The Netherlands, Germany, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Norway, Poland, Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia and Hungary. Below two examples of group projects delivered by NITC on behalf of its clients.**

#### **A First to Hungary**

A group of companies completed Lisburn City Council's First Trade Development Programme to Hungary. NITC set up 26 appointments for 5 participating companies across a range of industrial sectors – engineering, plastics, ICT, and electronics.



The group, together with Economic Development Manager Hazel King, was pictured prior to departure in Lisburn with Mayor Andrew Ewing and Council members and also on arrival in Budapest in March.



#### **Nordic Capitals**

Following an extremely well attended 'Doing Business in the Nordics' Seminar in January, 11 companies were involved in over 90 preplanned appointments across the Nordics region in May, organised by NITC on behalf of Invest Northern Ireland.

**Below the visiting companies were pictured in Helsinki, Copenhagen and Stockholm.**



## **New Office**

**NITC is not only expanding its markets but also its market presence. In January NITC will open its new office in the shadow of the Amsterdam World Trade Centre, just 6 minutes from Schiphol Airport.**

**The office will offer clients:**

- Full time or parttime office
- Pied à terre facility
- Meeting facilities
- Training room
- Company registration
- Telephone answering facilities
- Accountancy services



**If you have always considered having a European base or you wish to expand into new European markets, do not hesitate to contact Steve Murnaghan in Amsterdam T + 31 20 4217400 or [murn@nitc.nl](mailto:murn@nitc.nl).**



## STEVE MURNAGHAN

This month we catch up with Co. Down born Steve Murnaghan - Managing Consultant at Amsterdam headquartered Northern Ireland Trade Consultants to find out, among other things, his best cycling memory and why he thinks people cycle more in Amsterdam than in Belfast. Read on....



### What type of bike do you own?

A matt black Cortina U4 urban transport bike. The U4 has 3 Nexus gears, pedal back brake, a comfortable brown leather seat, a loud bell, and full automatic airco of course! It has a rack on the front for carrying a small suitcase for when I cycle to the train station heading for Schiphol Airport.

### If you could have any bike in the world, what would it be?

If I was cycling longer distances for work I think an E Bike with an integrated electric motor would have to be considered.

### What is your best cycling memory?

The cycling memory that really stands out for me was taking part in the Cooperation North Maracycle from Belfast to Dublin back in 1984 or 1985. I trained really hard for this, cycling on the hilly roads in Donegal so when I came to the continuous climb past Drogheda it wasn't as daunting as it was made out to be.

### Do you cycle more than you drive?

Certainly in and around Amsterdam I rarely take the car unless something has to be transported which doesn't fit on the bike. It's simply a way of life. It's quicker than by car, metro or tram, healthy, safe, environmentally friendly and cost effective - as long as your bike doesn't get pinched! Traffic congestion caused by

the 'school run' simply doesn't exist in and around Amsterdam as kids cycle to school from primary school age

### Why do you think people cycle more in Amsterdam than Belfast?

**"I RARELY TAKE THE CAR UNLESS SOMETHING HAS TO BE TRANSPORTED WHICH DOESN'T FIT ON THE BIKE".**

Cycling is simply in the DNA here. The bicycle is used for everyday stuff: for shopping, going to school or work, seeing family and friends, going to bars, cinemas and theatres, all year round. There are over 18 million bicycles for the 17 million population so when you discount the very young and the very old who don't cycle then there's close to an average of two bikes per head of population - sometimes one bike at either end of a train journey if you commute by train. If you use your bike for work-related transport, or cycling to work, you can claim the kilometres as a tax-free perk. Many employers offer a government supported tax free company bike scheme.

### What could entice more people to cycle in Northern Ireland?

Safety is an extremely important factor as

well as mentality. Cycling in the Netherlands is the safest in the world, thanks to the bikes being separated from other traffic, especially at junctions, with separate cyclist traffic lighting, roundabout priority (in some cases) and advanced driver / cyclist awareness. In terms of mentality, it is great to see so much interest in Northern Ireland in cycling for recreational, leisure, sport and work purposes. The new shared bike system in Belfast has been shown to work in many other capital and regional cities. However, I'm not sure how to tackle the school run mentality yet!

### Have you got any cycling peeves?

In the Netherlands (nearly) every motorist is also a cyclist so there is not the same 'them and us' attitude which seems to prevail in the UK, leading to frustration and at the upper limit 'road rage' situations. Cyclists in Amsterdam are bold, daring, somewhat lawless regarding the highway code, and other road users, but there is a healthy juxtaposition - especially when the rule of thumb is that as a motorist if you are involved in an incident with a cyclist you are in the wrong!

*This article appeared in the Ulster Tatler August 2015 Edition and has been published with permission in NI-NL BIZ.*

## DATA CENTRE CAPITAL OF EUROPE



Source: dataplace

Milan is recognised for fashion, London and Frankfurt as global financial hubs but a lesser known fact is that Amsterdam is the hub for data center operations in Europe. In fact, about one third of all European data centers are located in the Amsterdam area and take advantage of AMS-IX—the world's largest internet exchange.

In this article NI-NL BIZ reports on how Global giants from the ICT-industry are currently deploying billions of dollars in data centre capacity on Dutch shores and how specialist suppliers from Northern Ireland are benefitting from this upturn.

In the evolution of The Netherlands from a country specialized in physical transport and distribution into a digital transport and distribution frontrunner, there are a number of technical reasons why multinational firms, such as Google, IBM and Amazon are operating and investing in Dutch data centres.

Beyond being the most wired country in Europe and having the continent's fastest connection speeds, the Netherlands has the world's second-highest penetration of household broadband connections. It also directly links continental Europe to North America, with 11 out of 15 transatlantic sea cables going directly to the Netherlands. What's more, the highly competitive Dutch telecommunications network is 100% digital

and ranks among the world's best for quality, speed and reliability.

Dutch experience with renewable energy provides sustainable and affordable options for data center energy efficiency needs - from power production to cooling. The country has generally a very moderate climate, with often relatively cool summers and soft winters. This makes the energy consumption of cooling installations much more predictable than in many other countries, with larger temperature fluctuations.

The total surface of the data floors of multi-tenant data centers has reached well over 250.000 square meters, distributed across more than 200 data centers across the Netherlands. Although mainly around Amsterdam and Schiphol Airport, there are a several local hotbeds around Eindhoven, Groningen, and Rotterdam and last year, the announcement came that that Microsoft would develop a €2 billion data centre at Agriport close to Middenmeer.

Agriport A7 is an area development project north of Amsterdam, the two elements of which are a 100 hectares business park and a high tech greenhouse park of 850 hectares. In an area known for producing cabbage, flower bulbs and potatoes the project will deliver computer sheds full of servers, next to greenhouses

full of tomatoes and other vegetables!

IBM's public cloud subsidiary SoftLayer has opened a second data center in the Netherlands. The facility in Almere, just outside of Amsterdam, is part of an ongoing global expansion which has seen the company open 13 data centers in the space of just 10 months.

Meanwhile Google is investing a reported \$773 million in a multi building data center project in Eemshaven, a seaport in Groningen, which will span 44 hectares. Google is already present in Eemshaven with a smaller data centre, which has a capacity of 20 Megawatts. The new facility will consume six-fold of this energy usage: 120 Megawatts.

Each of the mega projects will offer 150 -200 structural jobs at least, and then the construction phase will require construction workers and electronic infrastructure companies, many of which are based outside of the Netherlands.

Projects such as these are acting as a magnet for Northern Ireland companies who have developed expertise in power generation and electrical installation from projects previously delivered successfully, on-time and on-budget in the United Kingdom, Ireland and other European countries.



## GALLAGHER & MCKINNEY

Another Northern Ireland company involved in new build of a datacentre in the Netherlands is Gallagher & McKinney (GMK), based in Maydown, who specialise in the delivery, project management and installation of piping systems and solutions into industry.

GMK are currently involved in the manufacture, installation and testing of pipework and pipework support systems for a major datacentre project in the North of the Netherlands as a subcontractor to an Irish contractor.

Having not previously worked in Europe the GMK Management Team turned to Invest NI for advice and support regarding business legislation and business practices in the Netherlands and were assisted through the Trade Advisor Service.

Seamus Mellon, Managing Director commented to NI-NL BIZ on their Dutch project. "Our work, quality and skillset in the Netherlands have been highly praised by contractors and subcontractors alike. As a company we have developed datacentre expertise in the domestic market and are now competent in exporting it abroad. We currently have over 20 men on site and depending on the build process and workscope we could be involved for a number of years. To date we have not run into any technical nor administrative problems, due to the grounding which was provided by Invest NI so that we could gain traction in the market in record time. GMK looks forward to successfully delivering this and many more international projects."



## AIDAN STRAIN ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING

In recent years Aidan Strain Electrical Engineering based in Mullaghbawn, County Down, has successfully completed several major projects across Europe including multiple generator installations, ranging in size from 5 to 100+ megawatts, at different locations and including the supply of fuel storage, fuel delivery, engine exhaust, ventilation and control systems.

Aidan Strain, CEO, looks back over the 10 years that he has actively been targeting the Netherlands, and reminisces, "There is no doubt that it takes time, effort, resource and sheer doggedness to build sustainable business abroad. In 2006 we took our first steps into the Lowlands when ASEE participated in the Going Dutch programme with a group of companies around our local Invest NI Newry branch."

"One of the first projects in The Netherlands undertaken by ASEE came a few years later. Terremark, an American company that chose Amsterdam over London, Frankfurt, and Paris for the construction of its first 'Network Access Point' in Europe was successfully completed, and ASEE had developed skill sets and experience of working abroad."

The Senior Management and Project Teams were then ready to undertake further datacentre projects including DRT/PBB, Telecity, and Global Switch. Today ASEE is employing over 50 men at 3 sites in The Netherlands and will generate an

estimated turnover of over €15 million from their Dutch projects in 2015.

Aidan Strain is delighted with the support which has been provided along the way by Invest NI, both domestically and In Market. "I know for a fact that a number of the Going Dutch companies have been successful in the Dutch market place over the years, like ourselves," he tells NI-NL BIZ. "Having local knowledge in the market, Dutch speakers on the ground who have assisted ASEE with a range of different services means that we have been able to develop sustainable and profitable business in the Netherlands."

Strain explains the benefits of Invest NI's In Market Support. "Researching, vetting and selecting a range of local suppliers and subcontractors to get the best deals, arranging group accommodation at the right price (ahead of the posse), identifying accountants and advisors with experience of foreign labour legislation as well as support with transportation has been invaluable to ASEE in terms of delivering recent projects. Both myself and senior members of the project team have been able to avail of a no-nonsense service from Invest NI's Trade Advisors in the Netherlands."

"ASEE's presently committed work in the Dutch market is expected to continue well into 2017, but with global players continuing to pump millions into data centres in the country I may have to start brushing up on my own Dutch language skills!" Aidan quips.

## EUROPEAN CUSTOMERS DRIVE DECORA GROWTH



Stuart Dickson with Minister Jonathan Bell MLA during a visit to the Decora showroom in Lisburn

Decora Blind Systems, one of the largest window blind producers in the UK, plans to expand in Lisburn, creating 80 new jobs over the next two years.

Enterprise, Trade and Investment Minister Jonathan Bell MLA visited Decora's Knockmore Hill Site to view the production, assembly and the customer showroom facilities.

The family-owned blind manufacturing business is benefiting from an Invest Northern Ireland employment grant towards the new jobs. Recruitment is underway and 43 of the roles are already in place.

Jonathan Bell said: "Over the last 35 years, Decora has grown into a dynamic, innovative business and this expansion, supported by Invest NI, underlines its drive and ambition to succeed in markets outside Northern Ireland."

The company has focused on manufacturing and wholesaling speciality products, introducing contemporary ranges with high value design properties. Decora's clients include some of the largest

independent blind companies in the UK and Ireland but the management team have designed and created new ranges with the European market and taste in mind.

The Decora range was launched in early 2015 at the tri-annual R & T Trade Fair in Stuttgart, one of the leading B2B shows for window decor, window accessories and sun protection systems. This coincided with the appointment of a Netherlands based Export Manager earlier this year to drive B2B and contract sales into International markets.

International progress in 2015 for Decora has been swift with four Dutch nationwide distributors and the No.1 Dutch web site launching Decora products. Due to their local presence in the Netherlands Decora secured a large project featuring 300 screens at Amsterdam-Schiphol for the offices of a global player. More successes are due to follow with the active pursuit of distribution opportunities across Europe as well as client projects in Monaco, Dubai and Miami.

Stuart Dickson, Managing Director of Decora Blinds Systems, said: "Decora's business growth over the past five years has been consistent. Our continued goal is to ensure employee, customer and supplier relationships are harnessed to their full potential. This makes sure that we continue to have the passion, creativity and imagination to continue to produce blind solutions that deliver and communicate value to our customers in all markets."



## FEELING AT HOME IN THE THE NETHERLANDS

Ulster Weavers Home Fashions Ltd is a home textiles company based in Hollywood, County Down, where the history of the company can be traced back to the 1800's.

Originally specialising in the spinning, weaving, bleaching and finishing of the finest quality linen in Ireland, now the business' main focus is manufacturing high quality kitchen textiles, giftware and home-ware, both for their own catalogue and as special, bespoke projects for larger customers.

Having moved all production to factories overseas several years ago, Ulster Weavers are extremely excited to have started manufacturing from Northern Ireland again, with a range of Made in UK catalogue products, as well as bespoke projects.

As evidence of commitment to quality, Ulster Weavers have held the Royal Warrant as suppliers of kitchen textiles to Queen Elizabeth since 1995.

A family company, Ulster Weavers have a constantly expanding range to cater for worldwide markets.

The European market as a whole is becoming increasingly important for Ulster Weavers, who have a loyal customer base in Italy, Germany, France, Belgium, and an increase in demand from Central Eastern European countries such as Poland and Czech Republic.

Ulster Weavers have been exporting to the Netherlands for over ten years, and have a very strong customer base in the country, from speciality tea shops to cook shops, marine shops to gift shops.





## DUTCH WIND SPECIALIST BLOWS INTO NORTHERN IRELAND



Bettink Service Team, based in Barneveld, The Netherlands, specialises in the servicing and maintenance of various types of windturbines from 80kW up to 3.6 mW turbines.

Across Europe they provide support to more than 500 windturbines, but they noticed more and more interest in their all-in contracts in Northern Ireland. Recently they have established presence in the province with local service vehicle and technicians providing service to farmers, project developers and energy utilities.

Frans van Zetten, Sales Manager responsible for Bettink Service Team Ltd told NI-NL BIZ on board a recent flight to Amsterdam, "In some ways the wind energy sector is still in its infancy in the province and with our 20 year experience of the wind sector Bettink can think along and grow along with the customer."

Seamus and Gerard McCloskey of McCloskey Farms Ltd in Ballymoney are an example of a customer who farm a 150 cow dairy herd, but who have installed 2 Vestas V27 turbines.

McCloskey recounts on Bettink's website ([www.bettink.nl](http://www.bettink.nl)) how in 2013

Bettink came all the way from the Netherlands, to install their first turbine which originated from Northern Europe. But, by the time the McCloskeys installed the second turbine in June 2015 many things have changed and Bettink has its own local operation, service van and locally hired employees - which is something they highly appreciate. This means that arrival times (in the case of service calls) are short plus they have the option to speak to local technicians. Since Bettink is taking care of the turbines, the McCloskeys can focus on running the farm. Bettink takes care of everything in respect to the spare parts, service and maintenance of the turbines.

Frans van Zetten confirms, 'there is currently strong demand for wind power in Northern Ireland, especially with farmers looking to diversify, so as well as servicing contracts we are also installing and commissioning second-hand turbines which are assisted by good subsidies. The forecast for wind energy sector in Northern Ireland looks promising, and we hope to be very much part of this development.'



## DAMEN SAILS INTO IRISH WATERS



Damen Exhibition

Netherlands headquartered Damen Shipyards were an active participant at the British Ports Association Conference co-organised by Warrenpoint Port Authority in their 40th Anniversary Year.

Arjen van Elk, Sales Manager UK & Ireland, an active attendee at NI-NL events, exhibited and spoke at the event at the luxurious Slieve Donard hotel, Newcastle, Co. Down, which was attended by a record breaking number of delegates, exhibitors, sponsors and guests.

Peter Conway, CEO of Warrenpoint Harbour Authority, welcomed the conference to Northern Ireland and saw it as a great opportunity to showcase the local industry in the backdrop of the stunning Mountains of Mourne.

Given Damen's experience in the global maritime sector Arjen was invited by BPA as a key speaker at the event.

Damen Shipyards Group operates 32 ship- and repair yards, employing 8,000 people worldwide. Damen has delivered more than 5,000 vessels in more than 100 countries. In 2015, Damen, whose ships are based on thorough R&D and proven technology, deliver 200 vessels to customers worldwide.

Damen has won a contest for the concept design of an all-island sail training vessel for The Atlantic Youth Trust which will provide over 1,000 places every year to integrate various cultures through its sailing programmes.

Plans for the cross-border project were announced at Belfast's Tall Ships maritime festival in July, based on the model of the Spirit of Adventure Trust

in New Zealand, a 45-metre steel-hull vessel, which has delivered youth development voyages for over 40 years.

Concept drawings of the vessel were recently unveiled, while behind the scenes the Trust has been consulting, researching, and tailoring their plans for three years. Damen is hoping to add the 3 masted vessel to their order book once the cross border finance has been agreed by both governments.

Given the Dutch prowess in the maritime sector, Damen Shipyard wasn't the only Dutch company represented at the BPA conference - engineering and contracting concerns Volker Stevin, Boskalis and Van Oord also exhibited their expertise.



BPA Conference

Pictured: Peter Conway, Warrenpoint Harbour Authority, Minister Danny Kennedy, Northern Ireland Minister for Regional Development and Arjen van Elk.

## SIX OF THE BEST

Over the last 6 years Groenveld Vlees, based in Nieuw-Vennep, close to Amsterdam Schiphol Airport has become a specialist importer from Northern Ireland and distributor to the Dutch red meat sector.

Since 2009 Groenveld Vlees has matured into a main player of quality branded beef, from the larger global meat producers such as ABP to smaller niche slaughterhouses. Groenveld supplies traditional grassfed and grainfed beef from quality breeds such as Aberdeen Angus, Hereford, and Charlois to the meat trade in the Netherlands and further afield.

Groenveld Vlees has a unique position on the market with an ability to distribute

to the requirements of the larger retailers as well as butcher's shops and the catering trade. The company prides itself on its knowledge of the market and



trends, its quality brand labels and its ability to react to market requirements, especially if the retailers have consumer promotions on.

Arjen van Wieringen, Groenveld's beef specialist explains, 'It is important for our customers to know that we are a major stockholder, so they are not faced with out of stock positions. Groenveld can supply directly to the retailers within hours in order to ensure that the promotions succeed. No retailers like to miss out on sales opportunities so we have developed a win - win model together with them. Groenveld looks forward to developing its position based on its market expertise and quality supply from Northern Ireland.'



## HANSKAMP FEED OFF BALMORAL LEADS

Hanskamp, with both feet firmly planted in the agricultural Achterhoek region of the Netherlands, supplies innovative, practice-based solutions for cattle farmers in the fields of feeding, milk production and stabling. These include smart feed dispensers and sublime milking parlour feeding to practical closing gates.

Hanskamp demonstrated one of their latest innovations at the Balmoral Show in Belfast, the L'Port Closing Gate to ensure that heifers and shy feeders are not bullied away from out of parlour feeding stations by dominant cows in the milking herd.

A dairy farmer, wants not only good (milk) production, but the best for their animals to give more milk and have a longer life. In typical Dutch fashion the Hanskamp range of products is well thought-out, sound and durable to improve animals' welfare, enhance milk production and make things easier for the dairy farmer across the world.



Jochem Tolkamp of Hanskamp presents the L'Port Closing Gate with Patrick, James and Plunkett Carraher from Crossmaglen at the Balmoral Show in Belfast.  
Photograph: Columba O'Hare



Ronnie Bosma (l) and Jim Dobson at the JV announcement.

## DUNBIA ANNOUNCE SHANNON MEATS DEAL

Leading meat processor, Dunbia has announced a joint venture agreement with Dutch based meat company, Shannon Meats.

Dunbia is one of the leading multi-species meat processors in Europe with 12 sites located in the UK and Ireland, export markets across Europe and an annual turnover of £800m. Jim Dobson, the company's owner and chief executive was named UK Director of the Year in 2014 by the Institute of Directors for "being a focussed leader with a strong understanding of the market and competitors." The company was also named UK Manufacturer of the Year in 2014.

"This agreement marks a key milestone in Dunbia's strategic expansion plans," explains Jim Dobson, Dunbia Group Chief Executive. "We have been doing business with Shannon Meats for many years and have always been extremely impressed with their business approach which sits well with our own corporate ethos and values. Our plans to increase our export markets have been well documented. Shannon Meats have the networks and infrastructure to allow us to access new customers in the retail and wholesale trade in Holland and Benelux countries."

Shannon Meats has over 25 years experience in the meat industry, trading in 100% Irish beef products. Mr Ronnie Bosma, Chief Executive Shannon Meats has welcomed the partnership with Dunbia: "This is a very exciting time for Shannon Meats. We have excellent relationships with a number of key suppliers across Ireland who supply us with top quality Irish beef and these relationships will continue. The agreement with Dunbia will bring us experience in livestock procurement and an introduction to the excellent farmers which Ireland has. Dunbia is a company with whom we have done business for years. We have great respect and admiration for their drive, vision and integrity and look forward to a long and successful partnership."

## Northern Ireland exporters have participated at various sectoral trade shows in the Netherlands in 2015 and they keep paying dividends

### PLATTS BUNKER CONFERENCE, ROTTERDAM

The Dutch language version of the OMJ Wallboard for oil traders was launched in February in Amsterdam. In May 2015 Sam Galloway show-cased the OMJ Wallboard to oil traders at the Platts Bunker Conference in Rotterdam. This event for the oil and shipping industry was attended by nearly 200 oil traders and shippers and Sam provided live demonstrations of the live oil price Wallboard.



Rotterdam Port - one of the largest oil trading ports in the world.

### BOUWBEURS, UTRECHT

SAM Mouldings and Keylite were neighbours at the biannual Bouwbeurs Building Materials Show in Utrecht in February which attracted over 72.000 contractors, subcontractors, architects, specifiers, advisors and engineers.



Bouwbeurs was the perfect launch pad for the SAM Mouldings team to launch their SAM Stock, SAM Wrap, SAM Zero and SAM Trimax brands in the Netherlands.



Keylite's Mike Ensing (l) and Colin Wells (r) R+D Manager at Keylite Roof Windows welcome Dutch customers onto the impressive Keylite stand.

### PLMA, AMSTERDAM

Cottage Desserts and Mackle Petfoods returned to the Amsterdam RAI in May for the Private Label Manufacturer's Association to win new business with Western European retailers.







## KLM TOUCHDOWN AT BELFAST CITY AIRPORT

In May 2015, KLM began its new daily flight service from Amsterdam Schiphol to the George Best Belfast City Airport. The ceremonial water cannons saluted the inaugural flight arriving from Amsterdam at the start of the new KLM service, which opens up a key market for business and leisure travellers.

The new flight from Belfast marks KLM's 19th departure point in the UK and Ireland, offering Northern Ireland passengers convenient access to KLM's worldwide network of over 200 destinations, in more than 100 countries, via the award-winning Amsterdam Airport Schiphol.

**Pieter Bootsma, Executive Vice President, Commercial Strategy at Air France-KLM, said:** 'George Best Belfast City Airport marks a significant addition to our growing network across the UK and Ireland. We recognise the importance of the city airport as a convenient departure point for both business and leisure travellers, and are pleased to now offer Belfast passengers access to our worldwide network of over 200 destinations, via our award-winning hub at Amsterdam Airport Schiphol.'

'Our new daily service from Belfast marks our 19th departure point in the UK and Ireland and demonstrates our continued commitment to the Irish market. We are already seeing a good level of bookings on this new route, and look forward to welcoming new and returning passengers to fly with KLM in the coming months.'

**Katy Best, Commercial and Marketing Director for Belfast City Airport, said:**

*'KLM's decision to include Belfast City Airport is a significant feat for Northern Ireland and both business and leisure passengers within the region, who benefit from the airline's competitive fares to Amsterdam and an endless list of worldwide destinations.'*

*'In addition to this, the new service will play a huge role in driving inward tourism to Northern Ireland. As a one terminal airport, Amsterdam Schiphol offers a quick and convenient transfer product making Belfast and Northern Ireland more accessible than ever for international tourists.'*

*'Due to our location, just a few minutes'*

**L to R: Warner Rootliep, General Manager UK and Ireland, Air France-KLM; Pieter Bootsma, Executive Vice President, Commercial Strategy, Air France-KLM; Jonathan Bell, NI Minister of Enterprise, Trade & Investment (DETI); Brian Ambrose, Chief Executive, Belfast City Airport; and Carl Schelleman, Commercial Director Europe and North Africa, Air France-KLM.**



*drive from Belfast city centre, and continuous private investment in our facilities, which has exceeded £15 million in the last few years, Belfast City Airport remains an attractive facility to both passengers and airlines.'*

KLM Royal Dutch Airlines was founded in 1919 and is the oldest airline still operating under its original name. After merging with Air France in May 2004, they are a major player in the air transport industry operating the leading long-haul network on departure from Europe. In 2013, Air France and KLM carried 77.3 million passengers to a network of over 200 destinations in more than 100 countries.

With customer-friendly technology and innovative products remaining at the heart of KLM's strategy, Belfast passengers will benefit from KLM's award-winning services, which include payment for flights via social media, high speed customer service available on Twitter 24 hours a day, and the award-winning Flying Blue frequent flyer programme, which has over 21 million members (of which 775,000 are in the UK) offering exclusive benefits for KLM passengers.



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