



BIZ

www.ni-nl.org

Spring 2008

The newsletter which keeps Northern Ireland in touch with the Dutch

In this 2nd edition of
NI-NL BIZ
Steve Murnaghan,
Co Founder of NI-NL



... pays special attention to the visit of Dutch Foreign Trade Minister Frank Heemskerk to Northern Ireland in January

... looks forward to the forthcoming Dutch Agri Tech Pavilion and NI-NL reception at the Balmoral show

... welcomes input from the tourism and hospitality sector to NI-NL

... looks back at 6 months of solid business activity between Northern Ireland and the Netherlands

... announces that the NI-NL New Years Dinner shall become an annual event

... offers a special deal for a lucky Dutch reader to enjoy a luxury break in Northern Ireland

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's Mission is "to proactively assist in developing Partnerships in Trade, Enterprise & Investment 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.

Following the Dutch model of Export Clubs NI NL is the 1st country specific export association in Northern Ireland.

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

background to NI-NL



Netherlands Foreign Trade Minister pays a visit to Northern Ireland

During a brief visit in January for meetings with First Minister Ian Paisley, Deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness and counterpart Minister Nigel Dodds, Dutch Foreign Trade Minister Heemskerk was briefed on economic progress in the province.



NI-NL was honoured that Minister Heemskerk spoke at the Northern Ireland Netherlands Trade and Export Society New Years Dinner at Hillsborough Castle to celebrate Trade Partnerships developed between Northern Ireland and the Netherlands over the last number of years.

The dinner, hosted by Ambassador Waldeck, was attended by 70 Dutch and Northern Irish businesses directly involved in bilateral trade between the two regions.

(Full report on the following pages)

NI NL Events and Activities

- NI NL provides companies with advice on both initiating and developing their business ventures into the Netherlands.

- NI NL organises seminars on specific sectoral topics, legal issues, logistics etc

- NI NL creates opportunities for like minded companies to network through trade dinners and the events programme.



Previous Events

A Photographic report of the inaugural NI-NL New Year's Dinner at Hillsborough Castle 8th January 2008



Lisburn City Council Keeps Opening Dutch Doors
Powershield's Brian Sofley introduces Svedex, major European manufacturer of doors, met during a recent Lisburn Outlook programme, to Mayor James Tinsley and Councillor Allen Ewart.



Ex Bankers Compare Notes
Leslie Morrison Chief Executive of Invest NI brings Minister. Heemskerck up to date on the Northern Ireland economy



Opportunity to 'Meat' Suppliers
C & J Meats and Hewitt Meats directors enjoy the opportunity to entertain their Dutch partner Galtee Meats Holland (now Shannon Meats) which supplies top quality Northern Irish beef into the Dutch supermarkets.



Finlay Foods - Tickled Pink !
Finlay Foods Management Team celebrate a New Year's contract with leading Dutch confectionary company Delicia. Minister Heemskerck, Ambassador Waldeck and the Dutch press visited the Maghaberry plant earlier that day and learnt that production on Tuesdays was pink !



Ambassador takes 'Wright' bus to Stormont

Ambassador Pim Waldeck thanks VDL International MD Jan Cees Santema and Heavac MD Pieter Bremmer for the part they played in organising transport from Aldergrove to Stormont in a modern Wrightbus double decker.



Flamelily Flowers is ready for Dutch Auction

Minister Heemskerk is amazed to learn from Elaine Curran of Invest NI that peony roses grown in Northern Ireland are exported to the Netherlands - in a reversal of stereotypical roles. Rene Visser enjoys his 1st of many visits to Flamelily Flowers.



ArcaTech - Testing Dutch Telcos

Terry Simpson, MD of Arcatech invites Minister Edwin Poots to meet with Dutch partner Rick Wilbrink at the New Year's Reception.



'Plane' Sailing for Stork Fokker and JHE

Frequent visitor to Northern Ireland Ron Kleine of Stork Fokker Aerospace explains his delight at the new Aer Lingus flights between Belfast and Amsterdam to supplier Robert Huddleston in the presence of Leslie Morrison and Minister Heemskerk.



Aetopia - In the picture in Holland

Aidan McGrath explains to Netherlands Consul Carson McMullan how Aetopia, a leading local Online photo sales software developer, linked up with Henk Jansen of Wegener Multimedia through Invest NI's In Market Support programme



Tocado - Harnessing Natural Sources

Dr. Paul Brewster, Sam Knox, Hans van Breugel and Colin McClintock discuss how energy can be generated from harnessing strong tides along Northern Ireland's coastlines



Yes Ministers - 6th March !

Paul Sargent and Sandra Dijksman of Multi Development explain to Ministers Poots and Heemskerk that Victoria Square will open on 6th March 2008. How right they were ! The Minister, Ambassador and Dutch press had visited the inner city regeneration project earlier in the day - enjoying a great view over Belfast's skyline through the glass dome.



Leading Dutch Environmental Technologies

Colin Mc Clintock, Director Environmental Services at Lisburn City Council and Sam Knox of Invest NI's Energy and Environment Team are kept up to date on leading edge European technologies by Environmental Engineering Consultant Erwin Dirkse and local partner Colm Gribben of AWP Environmental.



Lisburn Welcomes Dutch Partners

Alderman Ewart, Chairman of Lisburn City Council's Economic Development Committee, and Mayor James Tinsley are delighted to meet with Tractomatic MD Pat Mc Cann's Dutch partner Hein Soesan of Agrar Direkt.



Classic Marble Goes Dutch

Donald Hackett, MD of Classic Marble, is delighted to have participated in Invest NI's Going Dutch programme which introduced him to Rene de Beer. Looking on are Programme Manager Elaine Curran and Steve Murnaghan of Northern Ireland Trade Consultants.



Welcome from Ambassador in the State Drawing Room

Ambassador Pim Waldeck, welcomes all to Hillsborough Castle, explaining its significance in the Peace process, and invites the NI-NL companies and their guests to dinner in the Throne Room, as host of the New Year's Dinner.



Leslie Morrison of Invest NI

Leslie Morrison of Invest NI expands on the strong SME linkages between Northern Ireland and the Netherlands



Minister Congratulates Northern Ireland

Minister Heemskerk congratulated Northern Ireland on a new political and economic life and was keen to offer help to grow and prosper the pillars of each others economies.



Smakelijk eten allemaal



Guests Toast Success of New Air Route

NI-NL and Guests, including Aer Lingus Director of Corporate Affairs. Enda Corneille and Uel Hoey of Belfast International Airport toast the success of the new direct route between Belfast and Amsterdam.



Highly Successful New Year's Trade Dinner

Off Road Driving at Clandeboyne

NI-NL companies, staff and guests enjoyed a wonderful day's Off Road driving and outdoor activities in the capable hands of David and Walter Corr and their team at the LandRover Experience Clandeboyne recently.

Sponsored by All Route Shipping and NI-NL, some 40 participants enjoyed a top class B2B arrangement in top of the range vehicles including Range Rovers, Discoverys, Defenders, Freelanders, Mini Diggers and Argos around the Clandeboyne Estate not to mention the Scaletrix 4X4s and rally cars available in the courtyard.

Carson Mc Mullan, Hon. Consul for the Netherlands and MD of All Route Shipping Ltd, addressed the group and explained the important role of Rotterdam to world shipping and to Northern Ireland.

New faces, Dutch visitors and new exporters were welcomed to NI-NL and beautiful autumnal networking activity was rounded off with a delicious Networking BBQ in the evening sun.



A 'Day in the Life' of a Foreign Trade Minister

Everyone claims to be busy these days but during the January visit of Dutch Foreign Trade Minister Heemskerck NI-NL received an insight into the 'daily routine' of a Foreign Trade Minister.

This visit was a double first early in the New Year as not only was Minister Heemskerck the first Dutch politician to visit Northern Ireland after the new regional government took office in May 2007 but he was accompanied by the largest group of Dutch industrialists (25) ever to visit the province.

07.45 The Ministerial delegation and Dutch companies met for a briefing and Press Conference in the VIP lounge at Schiphol airport. The Minister had already been interviewed by BNR (Business News Radio) about his visit to Northern Ireland en route from The Hague to the airport and was aware (in detail !) of all of the companies traveling in his company.

09.30 Ministerial delegation avail of the newly launched Aer Lingus direct route between Amsterdam and Belfast

10.05 Arrival at Belfast International and shuttled to Stormont Buildings in a Wrightbus double deck bus - in itself an example of NI-NL cooperation.

11.00 Visit to Stormont including meetings with First Minister Ian Paisley, Deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness and counterpart Minister Nigel Dodds of the Department of Economy, Trade and Investment who briefed the delegation on economic progress in the province.

12.45 During a presentation and working lunch with Wrightbus and 2 of their Dutch partners Minister Heemskerck revealed a keen interest in sustainable public transportation.

14.00 A pre-opening tour of the €400 million Dutch retail development and regeneration project at Victoria Square Belfast was provided by Paul Sargent and the team from Multi Development. Today the dome has already become as much a part of the skyline of Belfast today as David and Goliath.

16.30 Minister Heemskerck joined the Mayor of Lisburn James Tinsley, guests and press in congratulating Finlay Foods of Maghaberry and Delicia the largest producer of vermicelli, flakes and pajets in the world in extending their supply contracts into 2008. Minister Heemskerck, when interviewed by Dutch Business News Radio on the morning of the visit, explained that he was 'tickled pink' to view 'hagelslag'

being produced in Northern Ireland for Dutch breakfast tables.

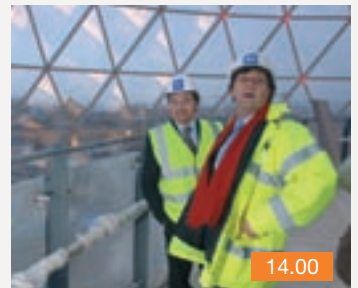
19.00 Interview by Eddie O'Gorman of BBC Radio Ulster at Hillsborough Castle followed by the opportunity to network with local NI businesses active in Northern Ireland - Netherlands Trade

19.45 Dinner in the throne room and speech by Minister Heemskerck where he referred to both the Netherlands and Northern Ireland sharing many positive traits: both being Pioneers in International Business based on growing, entrepreneurial and internationally oriented economies with a thirst for knowledge and a passion for innovation.

After an 18 hour work day the Minister was delighted to enjoy the luxury and tranquillity of his 1st visit to Northern Ireland in Hillsborough Castle before being collected at dawn for a visit to Dublin.



11.00



14.00



16.30



10.05



19.45

NI-NL Founders

Invest Northern Ireland

Invest NI promotes the Netherlands as a key market for aspirant exporters to continental Europe through the 'Going Dutch' Programme. From 2005 - 2008 39 NI SME's from Invest NI Regional offices will have successfully completed the programme.

www.investni.com



Lisburn City Council has assisted 42 companies into the Netherlands over the last 7 years through the European Outlook Programme and are now seeing tangible results in export sales and business partnerships being achieved.

www.lisburncity.gov.uk



Northern Ireland Trade Consultants have been involved in direct sales development, distributor searches, strategic alliances, buyers visits, sourcing, best practice and maintaining on-going contact between Northern Ireland and Dutch industry for over 13 years.

www.nitc.nl



Close NI-NL Ties

Ministers, NI-NL companies and guests were each presented with a specially designed NI-NL silk tie or scarf as a memento of the inaugural New Years dinner.

Up and coming NI NL events



NI-NL Network Reception

Thursday 15th May 2008, from 15.00

Holland Lounge, Stand 13, Nugent Hall, Balmoral Show



NI-NL companies are welcome to attend the Dutch Agricultural Technology Networking Reception during the Balmoral Show. Sponsored by the EVD, The Dutch Agency for International Business and Cooperation, a cluster of 8 Dutch companies, will exhibit in the 1st ever Dutch Agri-Tech Pavilion at the Balmoral Show, Belfast from 14th - 16th May 2008 to either establish or support local partners.

Many of the companies are members of the Federatie Agrotechniek, the trade association that represents manufacturers and importers of agricultural technology.

The companies are:

DTV AgriSpring
Tines and springs for agricultural machinery

Homburg Machinehandel
WeedSeeker® automatic spot-spraying and Greenseeker®, variable rate application and mapping systems

Koltec
One Stop Shop for electric fencing requirements

Royal De Boer Barn Equipment
Housing with strategy

Slootsmid
Leading manufacturer of slurry application systems

Steenbergen International
Solutions for storing and covering manure, (waste) water and slurry

VDK-Agri
Calf-O-Tel outdoor breeding system for calves and Flexxstore for storage of fallen animals.

VDL Agrotech
Manufacturer of equipment for intensive livestock (poultry & pigs), including complete turnkey projects worldwide.

Come along and give a Northern Ireland welcome to the Dutch SME's who are exhibiting and taste Dutch delicacies such as leverworst, Gouda and Edam cheeses. Please let NI-NL know if you are attending by registering at <http://www.ni-nl.org/events.php>



Thursday 23rd October 2008

Business Lunch and Networking at the Cherry Room, Island Civic Centre, Lisburn.
Guest Speaker and sponsor to be announced.



Thursday 15th January 2009

NI NL New Years Trade Dinner

NI NL is delighted to announce the NI NL New Year's Trade Dinner on 15th January 2009 at Kasteel de Wittenburg, Wassenaar, The Netherlands. The event, which shall become an annual event, shall be hosted in 2009 by Invest Northern Ireland Trade Division. Again it shall be an opportunity for existing business partners to plan for the New Year as well as for aspirant exporters between the 2 regions to investigate market potential.

Further details in the Autumn edition of NI NL Biz. The date can already be put in your 2009 diary – assuming you have one!

The Netherlands Embassy in London have agreed to host the 2010 NI NL New Year's Trade Dinner in Northern Ireland – but definitely too early for dates and details at this stage !!

Not yet registered for NI NL ?

To register your company for NI NL please browse to <http://www.ni-nl.org/register.php>

Individuals, companies, associations and their representatives directly involved in business or import / export activity between Northern Ireland and the Netherlands, as well as aspirant exporters can register.

Once your registration is accepted you will receive a password to access details of other NI NL registered companies.

Are you a contributor to NI NL ?

Companies interested in supporting Dutch – Northern Ireland relations and ensure the existence of NI NL – a not for profit foundation - (in Dutch a 'stichting') are kindly requested to make a contribution of € 125 to NI-NL

A contribution form has been included with NI NL BIZ.

Contribution should be transferred to Stichting NI NL, Rubensstraat 85, 1077 ML Amsterdam, The Netherlands
IBAN NI30 RABO 0121 6615 71,
BIC RABONL2U with the reference Contribution 2008

Royal Link at the Heart of Philip's Acquisition

Royal Philips Electronics of the Netherlands recently announced the acquisition of Northern Ireland based TOMCAT Systems Ltd.

TOMCAT Systems, founded in 1998, is a leading supplier of Cardio-Vascular Information Systems (CVIS) with over 85 customers in the U.K., Ireland, Scandinavia and Canada, serviced from its Belfast headquarters. TOMCAT offers a fully integrated clinical, administrative and management information solution addressing almost all sub-specialties of in-hospital cardiology practice.

Headquartered in the Netherlands, Philips employs approximately 123,800 employees in more than 60 countries worldwide. With sales of €27 billion in 2007, the company is a market leader in medical diagnostic imaging and patient monitoring systems, energy efficient lighting solutions, as well as lifestyle solutions for personal wellbeing. Through this acquisition, Philips will expand the use

of information technology in healthcare - and specifically in its cardiology business - to improve patient outcomes and help hospitals work more efficiently. The transaction is expected to close in the second quarter of 2008, upon which TOMCAT will become part of the Healthcare Informatics business group within the Philips Healthcare sector.

The TOMCAT Cardiac Information System is firmly established as the leading system of its kind in the UK and Ireland, having won over 80% of all orders being placed by hospitals in each of the last four years.

The Company recently installed the latest version of its innovative system in the Royal Victoria Hospital in Belfast as part of the recent major Private Finance Initiative project which is being managed by Philips Healthcare. It was this project, and a number of other similar ones in England, that attracted Philips to the Company and led to the acquisition.

Oran Muduroglu, General Manager of the Healthcare Informatics business group within Philips Healthcare, explains: "TOMCAT's solution is a great match with our current cardiology information systems, and as such already implemented as a total solution in various hospitals. Philips will now accelerate introduction of this integrated cardiology information solution in North America and in other selected markets."

"We are very excited about joining forces with Philips Healthcare and believe this is good news, both for our business and for Northern Ireland" said Stephen Gunning, founder and Chief Executive Officer of the Company. "We will benefit from the global presence and excellent brand name that Philips carries world-wide, and this will enable us to grow much faster than we could do on our own".



Pictured celebrating the acquisition of Tomcat by Philips are (l-r) Stephen Gunning, founder and Chief Executive Officer of Tomcat and Ronald Tabaksblat, Vice President, General Manager Cardiology Informatics, Philips Healthcare.

TomCat currently employs approximately 25 people at its modern offices beside the Titanic Quarter in Belfast. It anticipates a further 8 to 10 new jobs being created in the next 12 months as a direct result of the investment being made by Philips.

Successful 7

7 companies from Lisburn visited the Netherlands as part of the 7th consecutive European Outlook Programme in February 2008.

Following intensive research and matchmaking by NITC the 11 entrepreneurs presented their goods and services to a wide range of decision makers across a wide range of sectors including:

- Agricultural Technology
- Composites
- Bathrooms
- Food
- Interior Décor
- Construction
- Fair Trade

Already a number of partnerships have been formed between Lisburn and Dutch companies, initial orders have been placed and return visits have been organised by 4 of the 7 companies involved. On their return from Amsterdam the participants evaluated the 7th Outlook Programme as follows:

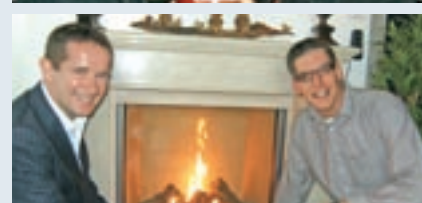
"The Netherlands Trade Mission was well organised and professional. The support of Lisburn Council / NITC was of enormous assistance. The trip was personally enjoyable and professionally valuable." Micon

"European Outlook has provided the express lane for Linton Ag into Europe" Linton Ag

"An excellent programme which generated quality meetings which on our own would have been virtually impossible to arrange". Creative Composites.

"Lisburn European Outlook with NITC gives Lisburn businesses a fast track opportunity to the European marketplace" Superchip

"The Program is entirely professional, the contacts, content schedule and arrangements were of a very high calibre. Fantastic value all round !" Easa Ltd



All Aboard with Phileas



In February a delegation from Lisburn City Council visited the research and development facility of Advanced Passenger Transport Systems (APTS) at Eindhoven. The delegation visited the facility during the 7th trade visit to the Netherlands funded by the City Council and managed by Northern Ireland Trade Consultants (NITC)

The Chairman of the Council's Economic Development Committee, Councillor Alan Ewart together with vice Chairman, Councillor Jenny Palmer and Director of Environmental and Development Services, Colin McClintock.

joined Jos Jansen (Project Manager) at the Eindhoven facility for a detailed presentation on the APTS Phileas "Tram on Wheels" system and had the opportunity to experience the technology in operation on the rapid transit network in Eindhoven.

The initial contact between the Council and APTS followed a presentation by Jos Jansen at the Dutch 'Bring New Energy to Northern Ireland' Conference held in Lisburn Civic Centre in May 2007 and led to discussions with the Department for Regional Development in Northern Ireland regarding proposals for a rapid

transit system which was being considered for the Belfast Metropolitan Area including the potential for a route connecting the city centres of Lisburn and Belfast.

As NI - NL BIZ goes to press the Minister for Regional Development had just announced a proposal for three pilot rapid transit routes in and around Belfast using "trams on wheels"

Ian Paisley and Martin McGuinness open Multi Development's Victoria Square



Multi Development's £400 million regeneration scheme turns Belfast into a shopping mecca

On 5th March the First Minister, The Rt Hon Dr I R K Paisley MP MLA, the Deputy First Minister, Martin McGuinness MP MLA and the Minister for Social Development Margaret Ritchie MLA lead the opening ceremony of the long awaited Victoria Square retail led regeneration scheme in Belfast.

Guests enjoyed a spectacular light and sound show that marked the Opening of the 800,000 sq ft (75,000 m²) project.

The presence of both the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister emphasized that the

project is a fundamental part of the regeneration of Belfast and evidence of the city's renaissance 10 years after the Good Friday agreement. Developer is Multi Development UK. Multi Development UK Ltd with its UK HQ in Belfast, is a subsidiary of Multi Corporation a leading property company in Europe, with its head office in Gouda, The Netherlands. Concept Architects are T+T Design.

Speaking at the Official Opening of the scheme, Paul Sargent, Managing Director Multi Development UK said: "The Department for Social Development, owner CGI and Multi Development have not just built a shopping centre - far from it. Jointly, we have created

a catalyst for the sustainable regeneration of Northern Ireland's capital city.

A development like this only happens once in a lifetime and it is far more than the simple sum of its component parts. This is the new social and cultural meeting point of a once divided city."

Victoria Square comprises a new urban area, with the new streets and buildings forming a harmonious whole with those already existing. A key element in the plan is two covered, multi-level streets linked to the massive glass dome measuring 35 m in diameter. A public square covered entirely by the glass dome will serve as the hub of the entire area.

Multi Development has attracted over 40 new retail brands to Northern Ireland including House of Fraser, Hamleys, Apple, Cruise, Hugo Boss, Urban Outfitters, ODEON cinema, All Saints, The Pier, Billabong and Reiss among others.

With Victoria Square opening, Belfast's retail offer has increased by almost a third. 98 unit shops, including a 200,000sq ft House of Fraser, 106 apartments and underground parking for 1,000 cars comprise the mix of retail. In the first opening weekend more than a quarter of a million shoppers visited the centre.

'On-Going Dutch' Programme

A number of SME's from Northern Ireland 'Targetted' The Netherlands in March 2008 as part of Invest NI's Going Dutch programme.

Going Dutch, the leading SME European Export Development programme, has now been delivered on 6 occasions by NITC on behalf of Invest Northern Ireland.

The group was trained at Invest NI's Ballymena Office during the preparation for the visit to the Netherlands. Participants are pictured here with Regional Manager Des Gartland and Programme Manager Elaine Curran.

Final Training took place in Amsterdam with NITC's Steve Murnaghan prior to engaging on a challenging meeting programme throughout the country.

Target Dry's Noel Mc Aneary engaged with local outdoor and sportswear distributors to assess the opportunities for their leading Mac in a Sac® product range. Market feedback on the product was excellent and hopes are high that Dutch consumers will soon be able to keep the summer showers at bay by having a Mac in a Sac to hand. Watch this space in the next NI NL BIZ magazine.

The companies will each develop an export marketing strategy for the Netherlands based on the findings from the market research and market visit.

All participating companies will be warmly welcomed into the NI NL network.



Banbridge flower firm to blossom in Holland

In an interesting reversal of roles Flamelily Flowers shall start selling flowers to the famous flower-producing nation in 2008.

Based in Katesbridge, near Banbridge, Flamelily is a producer of cut flowers grown on Ashleigh and Alan Mitchell's 20-acre farm and sold in local and export markets.

From 2008 Flamelily shall produce peony roses for export to Holland and is set to substantially grow its market share over the next five years. When in full production, which will be in three to four years time, the value of our exports to the country will be around €500,000, according to Ashleigh Mitchell.

Assisted in their research and business development by Amsterdam-based Northern Ireland Trade Consultants (NITC) through Invest NI's Going Dutch programme, Flamelily has teamed up with a professional agent in Holland who imports flowers and markets, sells and distributes them throughout the Netherlands.

Managing director of Nova Flor BV Rene Vissers said he had been extremely impressed by the Northern Ireland company's eagerness to do business in such a competitive market. "We were impressed by their entrepreneurship and the effort they have invested in specialising in flowers they can produce in Northern Ireland that will give them a competitive advantage."

Alan and Ashleigh Mitchell visited the world famous dawn flower Auctions at Aalsmeer and Rijnsburg during their visit to the Netherlands.

During a recent visit Rene (third from right), Ashleigh and Alan caught up with David Davidson (DARD NI Cut Flower Advisor) and David Kerr (DARD NI Foliage Advisor) at Greenmount.



Rural Best Practice

A group of rural entrepreneurs from Lisburn spent 2 days viewing best practices in rural diversification in the Netherlands in October. The companies are all involved in the SME Rural Marketing Awareness Programme, organised and funded by Lisburn Leader Ltd

Rural businesses in Holland and Northern Ireland have faced many similar problems of falling incomes and shifting markets across all sectors of the industry. Northern Ireland farmers have, like their Dutch counterparts, been forced to farm on a larger scale or to look at new activities to stay on the land.

The group of rural businesses and rural tourism providers were offered an opportunity to meet and exchange views and opinions with their Dutch counterparts.

Group and individual interests included:

- on farm accommodation
- (on farm) recreation & leisure
- care farms
- food processing

NITC offered a challenging and informative programme of group, cluster and individual appointments and a networking dinner for participants.

Visits included viewing excellence in:

- on farm recreation (including clog golf !)
- team building
- equestrian centres
- horse breeding
- care farms
- commercial golf courses
- vegetable processing and distribution



Profile Carson McMullan Honorary Consul

NI-NL BIZ catches up with Carson McMullan and asks the question "So what does an Honorary Consul do with his day and why does he not speak Dutch – Yet ?"

October 1998 HNLMS Walrus, a Dutch naval submarine, arrived in Belfast and as a ship's agent Carson McMullan was asked to look after the logistical requirements of this vessel. It was the first visit to Belfast of a non British naval service vessel since the end of World War Two. This led to Carson's appointment as Honorary Consul for the Netherlands in Northern Ireland. Since then Belfast has had many Dutch naval visits and they are a great boost to tourism in Northern Ireland as a whole.

Carson explains to NI-NL BIZ that the main purpose of a Consul is to look after the interests of Dutch nationals living, working or on holiday in Northern Ireland. This includes accepting passport applications in Belfast and applications for Schengen visas for non Dutch nationals visiting the Netherlands. Carson's secretary Leanna Oliver looks after the day to day running and

administration of the Consulate on his behalf. Dutch nationals who are visiting Northern Ireland who get into any sort of difficulty during their visit can apply to the Consulate for assistance. Interestingly this includes Dutch nationals who are currently being held at Her Majesty's pleasure of which there are three at present. The Consul's duty in this instance is to ensure that proper legal representation is given and that their physical needs are also catered for.

The Consul has regular economic and political visits to Northern Ireland by the Ambassador in London and also by Ministers from the Netherlands, such as Minister Heemskerk's visit which is covered elsewhere in NI-NL BIZ. The highlight for the Consul was to accompany the visitors to a meeting with the First and Deputy First ministers at Stormont. Other highlights of this trip were visits to the new Victoria Square development in Belfast and dinner at Hillsborough Castle. The Consul's duty at these events is to ensure the needs of the Ambassador and political visitors are catered for. The Consul also attends many other cultural and



political events throughout the year representing the Netherlands in Northern Ireland.

Finally one of the perks of the unpaid post - If you ever notice a car which has registration plate with an "x" in the middle (271X131) - the person driving is a consular representative and does not pay road tax - but contrary to popular opinion they cannot park wherever they like and avoid parking and speeding tickets !

So when the Consul looks after all of the above as well as his day job (All Route Shipping - shipping and overseas removals in this case) there is not much time left to for other activities. Dutch language lessons were tried for 2 or 3 terms but getting only as far as saying ja, nee and tot ziens - unfortunately the Consul threw in the towel.

Dutch Ferrari's 1st in Northern Ireland

As part of their 25th anniversary celebrations the Ferrari Club Nederland is visiting the island of Ireland with 40 Ferraris, around this time.

The visit has been organised by Dr Robert (Bert) Harper, originally from Ballynahinch (but long term resident in the Netherlands) who has promised all his Dutch fellow Ferrari club members great roads, great accommodation and hospitality in Northern Ireland - everything guaranteed in fact, except possibly the weather!

The Ferrari Club cavalcade has a programme in and around Northern Ireland on Saturday 26th April including an event with the Make-A-Wish Foundation, when children living with life-threatening conditions will take part in a number of hot demonstration laps during an NI Championship motor racing meeting being held at Kirkistown.

The Ferraris will be in Lisburn in the afternoon for a civic reception at the Island Civic Centre and dinner with The Right Worshipful The Mayor of Lisburn City Council James Tinsley. Lisburn has been one of the most active bodies in promoting trade relations between Northern Ireland and The Netherlands.

If you see the 'Dutch Stallions' on the roads make sure to give them a warm welcome wave or see them in action at Kirkistown.



Visitors to Belfast to bask in Luxury!

With a unique charm and vivacity, Belfast offers the corporate client an incentive with a difference. Not only is the Northern Irish capital emerging as one of the 'must see' destinations in Europe because of its beautiful setting, historic industrial heritage, literary and artistic credentials, cosmopolitan edge and fabulous facilities, it is also the new destination of choice for those conference and meeting delegates seeking a little luxury.

This year, Belfast Visitor & Convention Bureau (www.belfastconventionbureau.com) and Belfast City Council, supported by the International Fund for Ireland and the Northern Ireland Tourist Board have designed a campaign to make the city appeal to the most discerning business visitor and launched a website; www.luxurybelfast.com.

Luxury Belfast features a range of unique and luxurious

experiences, from stunning hotels to millionaire makeovers, professional shoppers, luxuriating spas and adrenalin-infused activities that are sure to motivate the team, inspire clients and make any meeting or event an unforgettable experience.

A range of inspiring activities with everything from helicopter rides to golfing at Royal Belfast, days out at Down Royal Racecourse and sailing excursions to the

Copeland Islands, are just a flavour of what is on offer. Visit www.luxurybelfast.com today for some luxury inspiration.

With an excellent, daily, direct business service provided by Aer Lingus (www.aerlingus.com) between Schiphol and Belfast and a journey time of only 90 minutes, it's high time to discover Belfast!

Luxury
Belfast
www.luxurybelfast.com



Win a luxury weekend break in Belfast!

For Netherlands based NI-NL BIZ readers in this edition, we are offering a wonderful weekend break sponsored by our partners: Aer Lingus (www.aerlingus.com), Ten Square Luxury Hotel (www.tensquare.co.uk) and Galgorm Resort & Spa (www.galgorm.com). This wonderful prize includes two return flights with Aer Lingus

from Amsterdam to Belfast. The first night includes B&B (for two people sharing) in the exquisite Ten Square Luxury Hotel complete with luxury dinner in the heart of Belfast. The second night includes B&B plus use of the Thermal Spa facilities in the magnificent Galgorm Resort & Spa located just 30 minutes from Belfast centre.

To enter this competition, please respond to info@ni-nl.org with the location of the 2008 NI-NL New Year's Dinner, your full name, address and telephone details before May 30th 2008*.

* Terms and conditions apply. Please email sfitzpatrick@tourismireland.com should you like to receive copy.



Your very own Ireland
Ontdek het op www.ierland.nl

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

- the contact details on the envelope are not correct
- you would prefer not to receive NI-NL BIZ in the future
- 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

Correspondence address

NI NL – Northern Ireland Netherlands Trade and Export Society
Rubensstraat 85
1077 ML Amsterdam
The Netherlands

If you have any relevant business news stories for publication on the NI-NL website or BIZ newsletter – please forward to info@ni-nl.org