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BIZ

Autumn 2009

The newsletter which keeps Northern Ireland in touch with the Dutch



NI-NL BIZ provides readers with an update on Northern Ireland - Netherlands trade relations in a period when businesses are experiencing many challenges.

In the 5th edition of NI-NL BIZ Steve Murnaghan, Founder of NI-NL...

- shows how more NI companies are pounding their way into Europe
- congratulates twelve companies who have completed the Going Dutch programme in the last 6 months

- announces Lisburn City Council's eight Trade Mission to the Netherlands in Spring 2010

- confirms details of the 2010 NI-NL New Year's Dinner to be held on 27th January at Hillsborough Castle

- meets up with Dutch golfers enjoying a break in the luxury of one of Northern Ireland's most magnificent hotels

In a special focus on NI-NL Food trade NI-NL BIZ

- profiles successful food companies trading between Northern Ireland and the Netherlands
- welcomes the forthcoming Dutch Food Trade Mission to Northern Ireland in January 2010
- provides an insight into changes afoot in the Dutch supermarket sector

Dutch Stand Tall in Belfast

18 years since they were last in Northern Ireland the Tall Ships sailed into Belfast this summer attracting hundreds of thousands of people to what was billed as the largest event ever staged in Northern Ireland.

Northern Ireland, like the Netherlands, is proud of its maritime heritage and the traditions that surround it. The Maritime Festival, with the backdrop of the ever developing Titanic Quarter, produced a common ground for businesses, families, their guests, and visitors to enjoy what the city can offer. Some estimates suggest that half the population of Northern Ireland came to see the ships.

NI-NL Businesses were delighted to attend a reception on the Dutch naval vessel *Urania* - the flagship of the Royal



Photo Courtesy of Alan Lewis - Photopress Belfast

Netherlands Naval College. The crews were adamant that in Northern Ireland they received the friendliest and warmest welcome of any port on their trans Atlantic challenge. Speaking of friends, The Dutch naval vessel *Urania* was named the winner of the Tall Ships Atlantic Challenge Friendship Trophy.

Thursday 13th August 2009 Tall Ships Networking Reception

Northern Ireland companies with business interests in the Netherlands were out in force to enjoy the drinks reception on the 1st day of the Tall Ships event.

Representatives of the NI-NL Founding organisations Invest Northern Ireland, Lisburn City Council and Northern Ireland Trade Consultants, Amsterdam, were updated by Northern Ireland exporters from a wide range of sectors such as food, textiles, environmental, ICT and consumer products who are successfully trading with the Netherlands.



Honorary Consul for the Netherlands Carson Mc Mullan and Commanding Officer Ferry van Schoonhoven hosted the Northern Ireland – Netherlands Trade and Export Society mid summer networking event on board the HNLMS Urania during the recent Tall Ships event in Belfast.



Given his strong links to worldwide shipping routes Mr. McMullan, Managing Director of All Route Shipping, welcomed the officers and crew from the first Royal Netherlands Navy sailing vessel to visit Belfast and referred to the close historical and current maritime and trading links between the Netherlands and Northern Ireland.



Urania's Commanding Officer van Schoonhoven with Aidan McGrath of Aetopia and Elaine Curran, Programme Manager of Going Dutch at Invest NI.



John Mc Kenna of Invest NI's Trade team hears that it's full steam ahead in the Netherlands for McCauley Trailers MD Owen Kelly.



Brian Sofley, Sales Director of Powershield enjoys exchanging Middle East trading anecdotes with Mr. and Mrs Cregan Boyd of Trackcare International.



Noel McAneary MD of Target Dry, manufacturer of waterproof leisurewear explains to Invest NI Director of Trade Dr. Vicky Kell that he is hoping for a wet autumn in the Netherlands as he launches Mac in a Sac through a major department store chain.



Chair of Lisburn City Council's Economic Development Committee Councillor Jenny Palmer, with Councillor Allan Ewart, Mayor of Lisburn and Director of Economic Services Colin Mc Clintock and their wives, enjoy a warm Dutch welcome on board



Nigel Johnston, General Manager of Linton Solutions enjoys the Tall Ships reception



Serial entrepreneurs Ian and Colette Pennick learn about the challenges of the cross Atlantic voyage from Urania's Dutch crew members.



Joan and Richard Moore of Linden Foods exchange notes on dealing with the Dutch with Aidan Mc Grath.



Honorary Consul for the Netherlands Carson Mc Mullan looks on as the Mayor of Lisburn City, Councillor Allan Ewart, presents Commanding Officer Ferry van Schoonhoven with the Lisburn City crest to mark the occasion of the Urania's visit to Northern Ireland.



Cormac Diamond, Managing Director of Fours Blinds, Invest NI Chief Executive Alastair Hamilton, and Andrew Robinson, Managing Director of Boomer Industries enjoy a close up of the fireworks as dusk fell on the Belfast skyline.

New Years Trade Dinner

Wednesday 27th January 2010
Hillsborough Castle, Hillsborough

NI-NL is delighted to announce that it will return to Hillsborough Castle for the 2010 New Year's Trade Dinner on 27th January. Dutch exporters with a Northern Ireland business partner, and Northern Ireland exporters with a Dutch business partner, are invited to attend.



Hillsborough Castle



Ambassador Waldeck



Hillsborough Castle is a late 18th Century mansion house situated in the heart of Hillsborough village which since 1972 has been as the residence for the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. In the last 20 years Hillsborough Castle has become a key venue for political events in Northern Ireland, including meetings between the British and Irish governments and the local political parties as part of the peace process.

The dinner shall coincide with a Trade Mission of Dutch food companies to Northern Ireland and shall be hosted by H.E Pim Waldeck, Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

The dinner shall also provide an opportunity for existing business partners to plan for the New Year.

If you and your partner company wish to attend please register details of both the NI and NL company representative to be invited on www.ni-nl.org.

Strictly one guest per company in 2010.

Invitations shall be issued from The Royal Netherlands Embassy in early January 2010.

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

Fresh From Holland Trade Mission to Northern Ireland

The Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality recently announced a Trade Mission to Northern Ireland for Dutch food companies from 26th - 28th January 2010.

The mission offers participants a unique opportunity to develop an understanding of the market and meet with key players in a group and individual format in a 3 day period. Meetings with decision makers from Northern Irish food manufacturing companies and distribution partners to both retail and out of home clients shall be arranged by Northern Ireland Trade Consultants.

The key activity shall be a 'Fresh from Holland' Trade Market and matchmaking event at Hillsborough Courthouse on Wednesday 27th January.

The focus will be on suppliers covering, e.g.: fruit & vegetables, meat, horticulture, fish, dairy, bakery, dessert, organic products and convenience.

The mission should appeal to those Dutch companies who are interested in exploring the Northern Irish market as well as those with existing distribution or clients in NI in order to further develop business for 2010.

The trade mission dates coincide with the Northern Ireland – Netherlands Trade and Export Society 2010 New Year's Dinner in the presence of His Excellency Mr P.W. Waldeck, Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands - a perfect networking and entertaining opportunity!

No time to waste - a maximum of 10 companies may participate in the Trade Mission,

Interested Dutch companies can register for the intake meeting and trade mission by sending an email with their details to murn@nitc.nl



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Going Dutch

Elaine Curran Programme Manager of Going Dutch at Invest NI explains to NI-NL BIZ the demand from Northern Ireland SME's to export to the Netherlands.

In 2009 alone Invest NI will assist 55 companies to assess and access the Dutch market.

In February Invest NI, together with Minister Arlene Foster, lead a delegation of 37 companies to the Netherlands - Invest NI's largest ever European Trade Mission. Since then 12 companies have been assisted through the Going Dutch programme to prospective sales and partnerships in the Dutch market and a further 6 shall visit the Netherlands before the end of the year.

Elaine explains, "Going Dutch is geared towards smaller companies in particular seeking to win their first export orders in a European marketplace."

"Over the years, the programme has proved successful for many companies because the Netherlands is an open market with a longstanding relationship with the UK and Republic of Ireland. The strong trading tradition in the Netherlands means companies there are also keen to explore business with new suppliers, especially smaller enterprises".



The programme has become a flagship export programme for companies who wish to develop their export skills, ability to do business abroad and their network of contacts in one of the leading European markets. Local managers and owners of aspiring companies are being identified through their client executives and learning about the programme through their peers. Success breeds success and companies are realizing that there is a never a better time to look internationally given the favourable currency exchange rate towards Europe.

Six Seek Success in the Lowlands

In June six companies from the Western Regional office visited the Netherlands having received detailed market research and country specific market training from Northern Ireland Trade Consultants in Amsterdam who deliver the Going Dutch programme. Each of the companies engaged in an average of 6 meetings over a 3 day period and are now implementing their export strategy for the Netherlands.

Short case studies of the companies involved, their successes and views on the programme, follow.



Tyrone Competes for Dutch Enclosure Fabrication



Tyrone Fabrications Limited, designers and manufacturers of equipment enclosure solutions for industrial use is confident that new business will be won on the back of the Going Dutch programme. The Going Dutch visit afforded TFL the opportunity of five excellent face-to-face meetings with relevant customers from the telecommunications, railways, broadcasting and power sectors. Despite the current downturn in the manufacturing markets TFL could be requested to quote all 5 companies for varying sizes and priorities of projects.

On his return to Northern Ireland Adam McDermott commented 'TFL found the whole experience to be very rewarding and we hope to receive some real orders within the coming months'.

One Size Does NOT Fit All

Paramount Textiles is a manufacturer of protective and replacement car seat covers who met with companies covering various sub sectors of the automotive spares sector in the Netherlands - retail, B2B, garage trade, commercial vehicles and camper vans.

Paramount Textiles is today able to provide competitive quotations for manufacture and supply of higher quality close fitting product than what is currently available in the Netherlands. Business shall be forthcoming through a variety of sales channels in the short to medium term.

Commenting on the programme Charlie Scott, MD of Paramount Textiles stated "The Going Dutch programme is focused from start to finish"



A 'Recycling Paradise'



TESAB, manufacturers of self-contained mobile JAW crushers and impact crushers, was able to 'select' 6 potential partners from profiles of over 50 companies generated by NITC. TESAB have established that the Netherlands is a key recycling market with a focus on quality of equipment, service and back-up.

TESAB, although experienced in exporting to other territories was missing a piece of the European puzzle and according to Brian Mills found Going Dutch to be 'An excellent well organised trade event which gave me the knowledge of the market and the confidence that I can do business with the Dutch'

ASIS RIB Boats prepare for European launch



ASIS Boats Europe, supplier of Rigid Inflatable Boats (RIB) to both commercial and private users met 10 potential dealers for the ASIS RIB range in the Netherlands and developed a clear understanding of the market requirements and the main players involved, the number and size of boats sold, and the best channels to market.

ASIS believe there is good potential in the next 12 months for exports into Holland and hope to offer a maximum of 3 stock holders dealerships in Holland with a product launch at the HISWA boat show in Spring 2010. Dominic O'Loughlin, MD of ASIS Boats Europe commented 'The support provided on the Going Dutch programme was excellent and we found it was a very worthwhile trip'.

Window of Opportunity for Fours Blinds

Fours Blinds is a young company, based in Draperstown, which manufactures of a range of roof window blinds suited to the main brands such as Velux and Keylite style windows

Through Going Dutch Fours Blinds met with window décor and screening component companies supplying blind retailers and interior specialists throughout the Netherlands. As part of a dual strategy Fours has also recently gone live with the fully translated Dutch language website www.dakraamgordijnen.nl which is proving to be a great success.

As they have already developed sales into the Netherlands less than 3 months from the initial visit Cormac Diamond MD can confidently claim. 'The Going Dutch program offered our company the potential to expand into a market by utilising expert knowledge of the market in a cost effective and practical way.'



Not only the correct channel but also checking out transport to market is of key importance!

Erne Extrusions Develops Dutch Profile

Erne Extrusions are machinists of high performance engineering plastic materials and components including PVC plasterbeads to the building trade through builders merchants.



Through Going Dutch opportunities were identified in both plaster and tiling profiles and it soon became clear from the partner search that a major player, currently manufacturing metal profiles, was seeking a partnership with a PVC profile producer not already represented in the market. The company's MD has already visited Erne Extrusions in Lisnaskea twice within weeks of the initial Netherlands visit and is interested in exclusive representation of Erne Extrusions range to the builders merchants in the Netherlands and Germany. Vincent McCoy, Erne Extrusions is delighted with the short term outcome of the programme 'Through the Going Dutch programme opportunities have arisen for Erne Extrusions to supply both plaster and tiling profiles to the building industry in the Netherlands and into Germany. An extremely worthwhile programme which will generate literally millions of metres of profiles to be manufactured in Lisnaskea'

Going Dutch Pays Dividends

A further six Northern Ireland companies selected by Invest Northern Ireland to participate in the Going Dutch programme have recently completed an informative, challenging and commercially rewarding visit to the Netherlands as part of the Going Dutch Programme.

The companies, the second cohort in 2009, took part in the programme from June – October to enable them to assess and access the Dutch market. The company executives engaged in 32 individual on-site appointments with influencers, intermediaries, and end users over a 3 day period.



The photos below record the variety of projects and the visits to host Dutch companies.



Boomer Industries – PVC Extrusions and SAM Mouldings – MDF Mouldings meet a Dutch recreational home manufacturer to view materials being used



Canal Lock Gates - Wooden Lock Gates - meets with leading Dutch manufacturers and potential alliance partners.



Finnis Organic Worms – The Worm Works Composting Wormery – demonstrates the product to Amsterdam school garden teachers



Roy Edwards Fine Arts – Framed Reproduction Prints – engages with a furniture agent at the Home Trade Centre in Nieuwegein



Moyfab Tool Company – Precision Engineered Components and Tooling – tours a leading machine builder to discuss component and sub assembly requirements

Invest
Northern
Ireland

Building Locally
Competing Globally

Bombardier Aerospace Chooses Schiphol

Bombardier Aerospace opens its first wholly owned European aircraft service center at Schiphol Airport in Amsterdam.

© Bombardier



© Bombardier



This new addition to Bombardier's company-owned aircraft service center network, will enable the company to support its growing fleet of over 550 Learjet, Challenger and Global aircraft in the region. The Bombardier Aircraft Service Center will feature 4,240 sq. meters of hangar space and will include a staff of approximately 50 technicians and will be equipped to perform a variety of light to heavy maintenance tasks. The Schiphol facility will offer extensive capabilities to accommodate aircraft maintenance, refurbishment and modification for business and commercial aircraft. Bombardier-trained technicians deliver a complete range of after-sale services, from scheduled maintenance, inspections and refurbishment to fly-in repairs, mobile repair parties and Aircraft-On-Ground support.

The European aircraft service center is expected to begin operation in early 2010.

Going Dutch – Uncut !

The Going Dutch Programme is also designed to immerse companies in local culture, history, protocol, traditions, language and cuisine as can be seen from some of the company's photos on their return from the market.



On the way to a meeting in Fryslan, The Worm Works van parks up on the Afsluitdijk and learns about this amazing feat of Dutch water management constructed in the 1930's - a 32 km causeway dike damming off the Zuiderzee, a salt water inlet of the North Sea, and turning it into the fresh water lake of the IJsselmeer.



A Dutch distributor of mobile home components insists on a rendition of 'Tulips from Amsterdam' prior to departure !



Going Dutch participants enjoy an Indonesian 'Rijsttafel' - a mini banquet of nasi padang - side dishes served in small portions, accompanied by rice prepared in several different ways. Typically Dutch !

Lisburn - Did you know ?

- Lisburn is known as the birthplace of Ireland's linen industry, which was established in 1698 by Louis Crommelin and other Huguenots.
- The city was originally known as Lisnagarvey. However, after a large fire destroyed much of the city centre in 1707, it was renamed Lisburn.
- This year Lisburn celebrates its origins and 400 years of heritage. Interestingly at the same time a Dutch ship called the Halve Maen ('Half Moon') arrived to the shores of what is now New York City with Captain Henry Hudson at the helm !
- The River Lagan played a vital role in the growth of Lisburn - on the main trade route from Belfast to Dublin, Armagh and Enniskillen.
- Formerly a borough, Lisburn was granted city status in 2002 as part of Queen Elizabeth II's Golden Jubilee celebrations.
- Local companies excel in the provision of services, retailing, information & communications technology, electronics, software, design, manufacturing, engineering & construction, transport and distribution sectors.
- Strategically situated on the Belfast to Dublin economic corridor, the city enjoys world-class road transportation and communication links, with air and seaports a mere 30 minutes away.
- The City of Lisburn is one of the most popular investment locations in Northern Ireland. Impressive new retail, business and capital developments reflect investor confidence and confirm the City's strategic positioning as the centre for regional growth in Northern Ireland.
- Lisburn has developed a strategic relationship with the Netherlands over the last 7 years with 43 companies from Lisburn

developing partnerships with Dutch companies and Lisburn City Council becoming a founder of NI-NL.



A Vision for Linenhall Street, from the draft Lisburn City Centre Masterplan

Premier Accommodation in Lisburn

Lisburn's newest hotel has officially opened at a site on the Hillsborough Road, creating 50 full and part-time positions. The 60 bed hotel which also boasts an adjoining 200 seat family restaurant and onsite carpark, represents a £5 million investment for the area.

At the opening, The Mayor of Lisburn, Councillor Allan Ewart, said: "Lisburn City Council is delighted this hotel and 200-seater restaurant is open for business in the city of Lisburn. It is in a great location, has created local jobs and will bring new business and investment to the area. Lisburn is well known as one of Northern Ireland's premier shopping destinations and I hope that many of our visitors will choose to extend their stay in the City Centre by availing of the hotel facilities. The Council has backed plans to bring this hotel to our city since it was first proposed and we are delighted to join in the celebrations today and wish the Premier Inn every success for the future."

Jill Moore, General Manager of the new Premier Inn hotel and Linen House restaurant, said: "Lisburn is a fantastic city with much to offer visitors and locals alike so it was an obvious location for us to open our newest hotel and restaurant."

We're delighted and privileged to be the first hotel for Lisburn. Bookings are already high, from both business and leisure guests, and we have received very positive feedback from the local community who have been so welcoming."



Trade Development Programme to the Netherlands

Lisburn City Council is pleased to launch its 8th consecutive trade development programme to the Netherlands. The Dutch marketplace has realised many successes for Lisburn companies and the Council is confident that this time around will also bring many business benefits for participating companies.

Funded by the Council and the EU through the Sustainable Competitiveness Programme 2007-2013, and managed by Northern Ireland Trade Consultants (NITC), the programme in 2009/2010 will once again assist growth orientated local businesses to identify and develop new market opportunities and strategic business partnerships in the Netherlands.

Each participating business will benefit from a bespoke programme of assistance specifically tailored to meet their export and trade development requirements. This will include one-to-one company meetings and establishment of individual company objectives, provision of market research, targeting and itinerary planning, information and advice on developing sales and marketing skills for the Netherlands. Ultimately companies will receive assistance to identify new business opportunities, with a series of individual business appointments to take place during the market visit. There will also be the provision of follow up assistance to assist companies to pursue new business opportunities identified.

Chair of the Council's Economic Development Committee, Councillor Jenny Palmer states: 'Local economic growth can only be achieved with a dedicated export development plan in place. With this in mind Lisburn City Council continues to provide support to trade development initiatives such as this, in order to encourage local businesses to explore new market places, realise new business opportunities and generate additional revenue streams into the local economy.'

She adds: 'To date the Council has assisted 43 companies to access this key European marketplace, and has seen over £ 3.5 million of new sales development as a result. Therefore I would strongly encourage any local business keen to develop new sales in an international market to make contact with the programme delivery agents for further information on what opportunities may exist in this market for your company.'



Here is how Lisburn companies involved in 2008 evaluated the programme:

- "An excellent programme which generated quality meetings which on our own would have been virtually impossible to arrange".
- "The program is entirely professional, the contacts, content, schedule and arrangements were of a very high calibre. Fantastic value all round"
- "European Outlook has been the express lane for our company into Europe."
- "For any business that is ready to look seriously at exporting to Europe, the NITC / Lisburn City Council programme is crammed with useful and practical help to guide you on your way".
- "The Netherlands Trade Mission was well organised and professional. The support of Lisburn City Council / NITC was of enormous assistance. The trip was personally enjoyable and professionally valuable".
- "This was an excellent opportunity to test the market for growth potential in the Netherlands."
- "Lisburn European Outlook with NITC gives Lisburn businesses a fast track opportunity to the European marketplace"

INTERESTED?

The breakfast launch of the Netherlands Trade Development Programme is planned to take place on 12th November 2009.

Any Lisburn companies interested in participating on the programme which will include a market visit to the Netherlands in March 2010 should contact:

Council's Economic Development Unit

Hazel King

Tel: 028 9250 9484, or by email hazel.king@lisburn.gov.uk

or

Steve Murnaghan of NITC

Tel: +31 20 4217400, or by email murn@nitc.nl



Leading the Way in Waste Water Treatment in Ireland

Newry company Viltra (formally known as AWP Environmental) and DMT of Holland have now enjoyed two years of continued growth and success with their range of innovative and market leading sewage treatment products.

Viltra along with DMT have developed a new single house treatment plant capable of 5/5 (BOD/SS) effluent quality discharge. The system, which has been independently tested in the Van Hall institute Holland, and certified to the new European standard EN12566-3 has proved very successful in Northern Ireland since its launch in May 2008 and has also developed interest in the UK market and indeed throughout Europe where they have delivered their first container load of systems.

Through the partnership Viltra has transformed from a distribution outlet for other companies products to a company which is now competing with major players on an international stage, and succeeding thanks to a commitment to innovation and the continued development of the uniquely designed water treatment systems.

The companies continuously refine their product range in order to stay ahead of the opposition. The partnership combined with the achievement of recognised industry quality marks, positions Viltra strongly to grow its export turnover despite the current downturn in the construction sector in the UK and Ireland.



Colm Gribben, Managing Director of Viltra, said: "We see the partnership and first delivery of systems to Greece as an important breakthrough into European markets and are eager to build on both. The partnership with DMT and introduction through NITC has been essential in helping us achieve this success and raise our profile within the waste water industry".

Erwin Dirkse, Managing Director of DMT, said: "With the help of the EVD, the Dutch Agency for International Cooperation, which engaged NITC for the partner search, we were able to establish a partnership for our IWOX single house waste water treatment technology on the Irish and UK market as well as create very interesting perspectives for future short term development into other European markets".

Mac in a Sac - The future is orange!

Target Dry, established in 1987, is a family owned designer and manufacturer of waterproof outdoor leisurewear with 95% of sales outside Northern Ireland. Target Dry is the core brand, with Mac in a Sac one of the brand leaders in the UK lightweight packaway market.

Exports are really taking off over recent years with expansion in both Europe and around the world to distributors in countries as far away as Japan and New Zealand. The Netherlands is a prime example of how export sales have been addressed by the Belfast based company.

In 2008 Managing Director Noel McAneary participated in the Going Dutch Programme and explains that 12 months down the line Target Dry has developed a multiple channel sales strategy in the Netherlands.

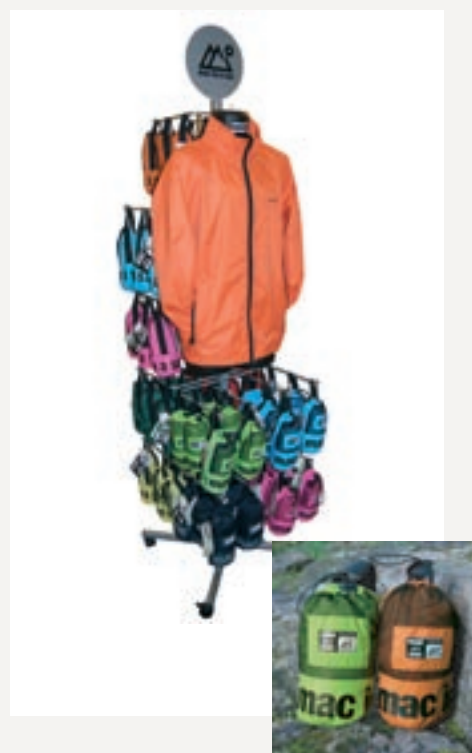
Two years ago, almost no presence, and now a successful equestrian distributor working alongside a specialist outdoor distributor, both with a very optimistic outlook on future business.

Most recently a separate deal was concluded during Invest NI Trade Mission to the Netherlands in February to supply directly to the largest department store group in the

Netherlands, Vroom en Dreesmann. V & D, as it is known locally, with 63 stores, focuses on female clients and their families and is developing a 'New style' of stores with a modern and fresh image into which Mac in a Sac fits seamlessly.

Noel McAneary is delighted at the success of this adventure into Holland. He praises the Dutch on their good business ethics, underlying honesty and open communication. Target Dry has developed the three pronged approach with full approval from existing distributors.

As well as the simplicity of doing business in the Netherlands, Noel experiences a sense of good humour in all his dealings. Sharing this humour Noel states for him the 'future is bright, the future is orange' – that is an orange Mac in a Sac, of course !



It's Curtains for Dutch Online Retailers

Many companies would love to generate online sales directly to end users in an export market. Having recently launched www.gordijnen.nl, a Northern Ireland entrepreneur is doing just that by selling directly to home owners in the Netherlands.



According to John Gallen owner of the successful site www.curtains-on-line.com it is not just a question of optimisation in the Dutch google ratings.

Gallen's company Home Design Centre has taken a strategic approach to the Dutch market following interest from a Dutch entrepreneur with a fairly unique combination of both a curtain manufacturing and online selling background.

Gallen explains, "It's not just a question of sitting back in the factory and letting the project take place. It still requires a good understanding of materials, designs and more importantly the Dutch market requirements before investing time, energy and resource in such a project."

John Gallen has partnered with Amsterdam based entrepreneur Maurice Winkel in the project. It has been a learning curve over the last few months but Maurice has been instrumental in terms of his knowledge of the market and advice on online retailing in the Netherlands.

John expands, "Despite our (slight !) age difference we are very similar in terms of our entrepreneurial spirits and no nonsense approach. I suppose that what makes the project so interesting for me is having a real 'WIN - WIN PARTNER' in the market whose goals and timeline are similar to mine."

Maurice is glad that he can profit both from the experience of John in the curtain retail business and his five years experience with the website. All the growing pains had been ironed out and following translation it was nearly immediately operational. Having met Maurice originally in the spring the website has been operational since July 2009 and already orders have been forthcoming.

John puts the success of the website down to market knowledge of both the market and the sales method required. According to entrepreneurs Gallen and Winkel, it is important to have a fully Dutch set up when selling to the end consumer in the Netherlands.

- An excellent Dutch URL – www.gordijnen.nl (gordijnen is the Dutch word for curtains!)
- Excellent optimisation on Google
- A full Dutch language website and local address
- Dutch window measurement system
- Free sampling service
- Dutch speaking customer service
- Dutch payment systems
- Free delivery in the Netherlands (and Belgium) for orders over € 150.

Time will tell whether the venture is a success, according to John. "We will learn more about the market together with Maurice and if the sales are strong after a 6 month period we have a commercial model which can be rolled out in other territories."

John and Maurice are delighted with the site to date and recommend all Dutch readers to browse to www.gordijnen.nl before drawing your own conclusions.



Food Industry Special

In this Autumn 2009 edition NI-NL BIZ looks at some successful relationships developed over the recent times between companies in the Netherlands and Northern Ireland in the food sector.



Dutch Sales off to a Flying Start for Forest Feast

Forest Feast, Northern Ireland's leading dried fruit & nut company, recently participated in Invest NI's Food Going Dutch programme to crack open the Dutch market.

The Forest Feast products range from healthy to indulgent, homemade to processed, organic and fair trade and are available via multiples and symbol stores throughout the island of Ireland and parts of the UK.

Lorraine Hall, Sales and Marketing Director at Forest Feast, first visited the Dutch market on an orientation visit in January 2007 and returned 18 months later with the right products in attractive packaging at a time that the Dutch market was looking for new tasty and healthy snacking products.

Lorraine's objective was to generate leads with Dutch multiples, the airline industry as well as key Food Service players.

To date the results themselves have been more than healthy:

- Dutch supermarket group Super De Boer (8% grocery market share) listed 4 Forest Feast lines of healthy snacks, including the best selling mango strips, in 250 of their stores from November 2008.
- Schiphol airport has taken a number of lines of the range and are exceeding initial expectations given that the airport caters for nearly 50 million passengers who pass through the airport each year.
- Top notch department store De Bijenkorf (The Beehive) – comparable to the British Harvey Nicholls chain - have placed regular orders for their 10 stores, sales of which should increase towards Sint Nicolaas and Christmas.

Lorraine Hall is delighted with progress in the Dutch market and have appointed a full time Dutch account manager, based in Portadown, following up on these and other opportunities.

"I suppose you could say that products are literally flying out of Schiphol", says Lorraine with humour. "In terms of global exposure for Forest Feast, we could not have developed a better global shop window with De Bijenkorf and Schiphol. Already this latter account



Pictured following one of their visits to Schiphol are Anne Woods (Airline Industry Account Manager) and Machteld Mc Kinistry (Dutch Account Manager).



has developed into other airport contracts for Forest Feast and we are receiving requests from countries which are not even currently part of our export marketing strategy. Super de Boer is our first direct export supermarket contract, and to date have been no different to deal with than multiples in Ireland and the UK, apart from relabelling the products into Dutch."

Lorraine is glowing in her praise for the assistance she received from Invest NI and Northern Ireland Trade Consultants in breaking into the Dutch market. "Invest NI's Going Dutch programme has delivered exactly what it claimed for Forest Feast – a practical fast track international sales development programme with hands on lead generation and sales consultancy."

Hollandaise to Holland?

When Rich Sauces first started assessing the market for sauces and mayonaise in the Netherlands the phrase ‘coals to Newcastle’, or even ‘beer to Belgium’, admittedly crossed Tim Kells’ mind.



Award winning Northern Ireland company, Rich Sauces, a leader in sauces, mayo and bouillon, has made a number of visits to meet with strategic partners and customers in the Netherlands over the last number of years.

Tim Kells, Business Development Manager, explains, “Our focus is on building long-term partnerships with manufacturers and distributors who value sauces, dressings and bouillon that offer superb quality and outstanding flavours. To date through NITC and through participating on Invest NI’s February trade mission we have been brought in contact with the leading players in the Dutch sandwich industry, ready meal manufacturers, vegetable processors and coleslaw manufacturers.”

Tim adds: “The Netherlands is now an important market for us, one which we are particularly keen to grow through our commitment to satisfying customer demands. Our experienced R&D team works alongside customers in developing end applications. Our products are often an ingredient in a recipe, so we use our development kitchen to work with our customer in creating the perfect dish in terms of quality and profitability. We have already had a number of our Dutch customers into the development kitchen with great success and will continue this with existing and new customers”.

The company, which gained a gold award in last year’s prestigious UK Great Taste Awards for its richly flavoured Coronation Mayo, is already supplying its sauces to the catering and food service industry in the Netherlands.

Recently Rich Sauces launched a new range of products in the Netherlands created to meet the focus on healthy foods in the government and industry endorsed Ik Kies Bewust (or “I make a conscious choice”) programme.

The new healthier sauces include a Three Mustard Mayo and Garlic Mayo and are part of a new business strategy by the company to expand sales to customers in the Netherlands.

The company has longstanding reputation, gained over 20 years in business, for quality products and manufacturing capability.

All the products have been created by a team of experienced chefs, and are manufactured at the company’s purpose-built factory in Newtownards, County Down, using only the finest ingredients.

The 5500 sq metre purpose built plant has the latest manufacturing technology which is capable of producing a diverse range of sauces and dressings. Rich Sauces has achieved accreditation to the British Retail Consortium standard and operates to the highest international hygiene rules.

Another measure of its versatility is the company’s capability in the development and manufacture of cooked products.

Hence their ability to develop the “I make a conscious choice” range specifically for the Dutch market which satisfies the niche market which requires healthier products in terms of lower fat, salt and sugar content.

Seeking Private Label Business

Five Northern Ireland companies explored new business opportunities at the Private Label Manufacturers Association (PLMA) exhibition at the Rai in Amsterdam in May.

More than 3,000 companies exhibit at the European show which covers 11 food and non-food halls including in excess of 30 national and regional pavilions. PLMA attracts food and drink retailer buyers from throughout Europe to the Dutch capital.

The companies, which already supply many of the leading grocery businesses and foodservice organisations in Great Britain, the Republic of Ireland and other parts of Europe, explored new opportunities from their attendance at PLMA.

The delegation to PLMA was organised by Invest NI as part of an extensive range of activities for local food companies in global markets. Food and drink processing is now Northern Ireland’s biggest manufacturing industry.

Dr Vicky Kell, Invest NI’s Trade Director, commenting on the Northern Ireland group, said: “The longstanding commitment of our food companies to quality and innovation has attracted major retailers and



several have won private label business. These and other companies are keen to develop relationships that will increase this important business. Our support for the industry has already included events in the Netherlands, other parts of Europe, as well as the Middle East and the US.

“PLMA’s World of Private Label in Amsterdam provides the best possible platform for those seeking such business. It’s also a market that Invest NI has identified as offering excellent opportunities to Northern Ireland companies and we are keen to assist them to develop relationships at the show which will attract a huge number of buyers.”

Ulster Beef on the Menu

Buyers from leading Dutch HoReCa cash and carries and importers of beef, lamb and pork products for hotels and restaurants, as well as the institutional sector visited Northern Ireland this summer to visit leading meat exporters.



The visit was a follow up on Invest NI's highly acclaimed trade mission to the Netherlands in February this year and forms part of a long term strategy of inward international buyer missions for the Northern Ireland Red Meat Industry. This forms part of Invest NI's strategy to encourage growth in export markets.

The buyers, pinpointed by NITC on behalf of Invest NI, engaged in a series of meetings including farm visits, slaughter houses, processing and further processing plants.

Sales representatives from some of Northern Ireland's beef and lamb exporters including ABP, Dunbia, Foyle Food Group, Linden



Foods and C & J Meats welcomed the Dutch with typical warm Northern Ireland hospitality and provided presentations and detailed tours of their facilities over the 2 day period.

The buyers were able to experience the industry from the farm to the fork with their own eyes and taste buds.

Dinner at award winning Grange Lodge Country House with a Roast Rib of beef on a bed of champ, whole grain mustard and Guinness gravy left the guests with a mouth watering memory of their first visit to the province.



Making the Difference at ABP

NI-NL BIZ catches up with Dutch national and Northern Ireland resident Jelmer Hania who has transferred his knowledge of Friesian dairy cattle to Hereford and Angus beef cattle.

Born and bred in Dokkum (Friesland) Jelmer moved to Northern Ireland in 2002 and having worked for a number of years at the Livestock and Meat Commission in economic and export promotion roles, he started at ABP in early 2009. His recent arrival has made a difference to ABP sales to The Netherlands which have been given a boost and new partnerships have been developed with the help of Invest NI and NITC.

Hania (40) is enjoying his new challenge at ABP - one of the largest beef producers in the UK and Europe. ABP is a dedicated processor of Northern Ireland beef and lamb with up to 25% of the beef slaughter in NI. ABP supplies a number of the UK retailers, for example, Sainsbury, ASDA, LIDL and ALDI and has several retail packing plants throughout the UK.

Jelmer: 'As an important part of the export portfolio, ABP sells top quality steer beef and lamb to wholesale and retail across the Netherlands. In order to succeed in the Netherlands, customers need a constant high quality product. The quality specifications in the Dutch market are very high, prices are very competitive and competition is strong. However, if you recognise and understand what is important for the client, there is a genuine demand for Northern Irish produce'.

Jelmer has had to 'get up to speed quickly' on the product specification and unique selling propositions in order to convince buyers to adopt the ABP product. He explains to NI-NL BIZ, "ABP Steer beef can best be described as Slow Meat. The animals have time to mature and get the space on the Northern Ireland grass pastures. The mainly grass based diet gives that excellent taste to our tender beef. For extra tender beef, ABP uses a proven slaughter technique whereby the carcass is electrically stimulated to prevent PH increases. Further, ABP hangs the carcass on the hipbone. With hip hung

beef the high value topside muscles are stretched, which increases the tenderness. Finally, the carcass is slowly chilled which also increases tenderness."

It is clear that it has not taken much time for Jelmer to become an important part of the export team at ABP as he adds the corporate slogan, "As we say at ABP, that's what makes the difference".



Jumbo changes in the Dutch supermarket sector

A deal by Jumbo supermarkets to acquire Super de Boer supermarkets has recently been confirmed after months of speculation that the market was ripe for consolidation.

French owned Casino, which owned 57% of the shares, has agreed to the takeover which will see Jumbo Supermarkets further their strategy of developing national coverage from their traditional base in the South of the Netherlands.

Industry sources state that the near tripling of Jumbo stores from 127 stores to 352 will not have gone unnoticed in Zaandam where market leader Albert Heijn (with 800 stores) has enjoyed a dominant national market position over the years.

From the consumers' point of view Jumbo's move shall develop the family owned chain into a long awaited national competitor to Albert Heijn.

Given Jumbo's 7 'assurances' to customers including offering the greatest choice for the lowest prices, guaranteed freshness and service with a smile they have won the Best Supermarket Chain in the Netherlands award regularly over the last 5 years, without having had national coverage.

Consolidation in the Dutch supermarket sector had long been anticipated as food retailers look to improve their purchasing power and entice increasingly price-sensitive consumers. To stay competitive and support margins, retailers have needed to scale up to save on buying and distribution costs.

As part of the deal, Jumbo will sell off 80 of Super de Boer's supermarkets to

Schuitema, which operates the C1000 chain and join forces with Schuitema in their purchasing combination. According to 2008 data, Ahold and Superunie both controlled 31% of the market, while the combined market share of Super de Boer, Jumbo and Schuitema would amount to around 25%. However, Superunie lost almost 5% market share as Jumbo's membership was ended immediately after it announced the intention to move purchasing group.

The takeover, which may take until the end of 2009 to complete, is subject to scrutiny and approval by the Netherlands Competition Authority (NMa) and if approved will make Jumbo the clear No. 2 player in the market.



Building Bridges with the Dutch

Working as a joint venture - Hollandia, a specialist steelwork company from Holland, and Northern Ireland civil engineering and construction specialists Graham Group - have recently added to their already impressive portfolio of iconic bridges with the Samuel Beckett Bridge project in Dublin.

NI-NL BIZ provides an insight into the newly formed Graham Hollandia JV and the elements involved in the partnership to successfully build and install the Samuel Beckett Bridge in Dublin.

DESIGN

The bridge, designed by the internationally acclaimed architect Dr. Santiago Calatrava Valls, has a distinctive structure with a curved profile leaning northwards. The cable-stayed bridge is designed to be a landmark feature of the city, evoking the image of a harp.

FABRICATION

The steel structure of the bridge was constructed in Rotterdam by Hollandia, well known also for the steel fabrication of the London Eye. The 123 metre structure weighed 2,300 tonne, is 28 metres wide and 45 metres in height.

CIVIL AND MARINE WORKS

Graham, and local subcontract partners, had been on site in central Dublin for 12 months constructing the civil and marine works necessary to support the bridge prior to the arrival of the structure. The concrete central pier which encloses the opening / closing mechanisms was designed for Graham Hollandia JV by AECOM.

TRANSPORTATION

The steel span of the bridge was transferred from the Hollandia wharf in Krimpen a/d IJssel with support from specialist transport company ALE Heavylift. The superstructure began its odyssey in Rotterdam on Monday 4th May, and charted its way down the English Channel and across the Irish Sea. It then travelled through the Eastlink Bridge



Who says their products are too large to export ??

FINISHING AND COMMISSIONING

The bridge is expected to open to traffic in early 2010 following finishing and commissioning works. It will have 4 lanes with cycle tracks and footpaths on either side and has the capability of opening through an angle of 90 degrees to facilitate maritime traffic. Total cost of the project is €60m, which includes a major upgrade of the approach roads.

STRAIGHT TO THE POINT

Alan Bill, Managing Director of John Graham (Dromore) Ltd and Graham Projects Ltd endorsed the benefits of their Dutch business relationship and noted the long association between Graham and Hollandia in Macken Street Bridge from the 'early discussions' back in 2004 and 2005 during the Prequalification and Tender Stages. He added that the Dutch and Irish had many similarities in terms of attitudes and style to trading and business and that Graham appreciated the Dutch straight forward way of doing business.

POSITIVE ATTITUDE

Nico Noorlander, Project Director at Hollandia commented to NI-NL BIZ on the relationship with Graham, 'Building a Calatrava bridge is an adventure in itself, which requires the best and a positive attitude of all involved. With Graham, and Dublin City Council, Hollandia learned to work very well together and only by working together have we been able to deliver such a challenging structure. This project forms a solid basis for our relationship with Graham and I am sure that further projects will follow that we will deliver together.'

Another good example of Dutch and Northern Ireland companies building business together.

ABCO Marine Limited gets 'Float of confidence' from Holland

Partnership within a partnership. ABCO Marine of Hillsborough, Co. Down, also engaged in its own partnership with a Dutch company to successfully deliver a sub contract package from the Graham - Hollandia JV.

ABCO recently completed the large diameter & piling contract on the prestigious Samuel Beckett Bridge Construction in Dublin.

ABCO Marine, which offers a professional specialist marine, construction and engineering services to a wide range of clients and marine construction industries, installed seven 19.5 metre long 1,400 mm diameter ship impact piles in preparation for the arrival of the bridge. This work involved the use of two barges, one supporting the piling rig and the other supporting an 80 tonne crawler crane.

To deliver the project ABCO procured a C5 series Self Elevating Combifloat Platform from the Netherlands.

Bas de Jong, Managing Director of Flexifloat Systems explains that the Combifloat modular floating construction system can be combined and constructed to nearly any shape and size of floating or self-elevating platform. "Combifloat is a unique solution, covering a variety of needs, for those working in difficult conditions whether coastal or inland."

ABCO Marine felt that Combifloat was the perfect system for the Dublin project, suited the application well and commissioning with a GL Germainster Lloyds approval.



John Osborne, Managing Director, says, "Having recently expanded activities into Scotland, ABCO Marine looks forward to working with Combifloat again in the not too distant future."

Relax...You're with Hastings Hotels

That's exactly what golfers from the Noordwijkse and Rozenstein Golf Clubs did this summer – experiencing the luxury of the Slieve Donard hotel and the challenge of one of the world's top golf courses - Royal County Down in Newcastle, Northern Ireland.



Often referred to as the “Gleneagles” of Northern Ireland, the 5 star flagship hotel of the Hastings Group nestles in a breathtaking location at the foot of the Mourne Mountains, under the watchful eye of its namesake Northern Ireland's highest peak.

Just 50 kilometres south of Belfast, and 140 north of Dublin, the Slieve Donard Resort and Spa in County Down is perfect for touring and sight-seeing, an ideal choice for corporate weekends or midweek breaks in Northern Ireland.

If you enjoy Victorian grandeur with all of today's modern comforts this is definitely the place to be. The Slieve Donard Hotel in Down was originally built by the Belfast and County Down Railway in 1898, as an 'end of line' luxury holiday destination.

Today the 178 bedrooms and suites are finished in tasteful, traditional styles with every modern comfort, and enjoy magnificent views of the stunning coastline or mountains.

Over the years many additions and developments have been undertaken at the hotel, but the recent major £15 million development, extension and refurbishment project with the addition a magnificent new Spa is the 'pièce de résistance' – making the guest feel at one with the sea and mountains but yet protected from the elements.

A five minute walk from the hotel brings you to the bustling resort town of Newcastle, recently crowned Ireland's Best Kept Town, picturesquely situated between mountains and a sweeping strand.

For golfers it's just a pitching wedge from the back door of the Slieve Donard and you're on a world class championship links golf course - rated fourth in the world by Golf Digest Magazine.

Standing on the 1st tee at Royal County Down is a truly breathtaking 'pinch yourself' moment with the backdrop of Northern Ireland's highest peak and the beautiful Dundrum Bay. As one of the first short but heavy squalls passes, you have time to contemplate all that is good in life and enjoy a short prayer to the golfing gods not to be too severe on you today and not for your tee shot to land exactly where the 'Mountains of Mourne Sweep Down to the Sea'.

As well as being one of the world's most beautiful courses, Royal County Down is also one of the most challenging with great swathes of heather and gorse lining fairways that tumble beneath vast sand hills, and wild tussocky faced bunkers defending small subtly contoured greens.

With the challenge of the course and the luxury of the neighbouring accommodation one can appreciate why Tiger Woods drops in as a regular visitor and guest. Unfortunately that's where the similarities with the billionaire golfer end... after many golf shots from varying lies and angles, types of shrubbery not seen in the Netherlands, bunkers deeper than Holland is under sea level and weather conditions which change à la minute, the welcome and security of the roaring fire, the cosy bars and, of course, the finest hospitality, proves why 'the Slieve'

is one of the finest and most luxurious hotels in Northern Ireland.

Back in the spa and pool complex one has time to look out and contemplate how the conditions may have been fairer on other golfing greats and hotel guests such as Tiger Woods, Tom Watson, Jack Nicklaus, Gary Player, and Arnold Palmer !

However once you have got your breath back from the view and challenge of the surroundings you certainly can relax at The Slieve Donard.



Royal County Down is an extreme test even for talented Dutch single handicappers and club champions!



Northern Ireland – has so much on offer for the business traveler. Discover the “Bear Grills” in yourself and your colleagues with essential survivor techniques at Clandeboye Lodge. Or go deep sea fishing off the Coast of Antrim and cook your own catch for dinner! If you prefer something a little less strenuous – how about a workshop with a guitar-maker who has Eric Clapton on his customer list? Or learn how to make cocktails in ‘The World’s Best hotel Bar’ at the Merchant Hotel... read on to discover a whole new Northern Ireland!



Why not try the Outdoor Survival Course at Clandeboye Estate

Conquer the challenge of surviving on what nature provides! By the end of this day you will have mastered outdoor cookery from scratch, shelter building with natural materials and other essential survival techniques! Alternatively, your group can choose from a range of Courtyard Activities – At the historic Clandeboye Estate, a short distance from the Culloden Hotel overlooking Belfast Lough, your group can choose their activity from an imaginative catalogue, with archery, off-road 4x4 driving and dry-stone wall building to name only a few!

Web: www.clandeboye.co.uk

Go North Coast Deep Sea Fishing

Travel to the North Coast via the stunning Causeway Coast and Glens, recognized as an area of outstanding natural beauty for deep sea, big game fishing. The chef of the historic Londonderry Arms Hotel (once owned by Sir Winston Churchill) in the pretty fishing village of Carnlough will prepare your catch for dinner.

Web: www.glensofantrim.com

Take a Hot Air Balloon Ride and then relax in Galgorm Resort & Spa

Take a hot-air balloon ride over the Glens of Antrim accompanied by a local historian. When you return, enjoy a range of relaxing treatments at the wonderful spa.

Web: www.galgorm.com/leisure

Enjoy the ultimate golfing experience at Lough Erne Golf Resort near Enniskillen in Co. Fermanagh

Other activities in the area include hydroplane lessons or flights on Lough Erne. Local celebrity chef, Noel McMeel can prepare luxury picnic hampers. The hotel itself boasts a magnificent luxury Thai spa.

Web: www.loughernegolfresort.com

Enjoy “Bar Magic” in the ‘World’s Best Hotel Bar’

The Merchant Hotel has just won ‘World’s Best Hotel Bar’, ‘World’s Best Drinks List’, World’s Best Cocktail List: Awarded the prestigious accolade at the recent world famous, internationally acclaimed Spirit Awards, as part of the ‘Tales of the Cocktail Festival’ in New Orleans. The hat-trick of success means the hotel is the only venue globally, to win three world-class awards, in the history of the New Orleans event. ‘Bar Magic’ - cocktail workshop evenings with a top class mixologist is a fun activity specially designed for groups.

Web: www.themerchanthotel.com

Host a Gala Dinner at the newly renovated Ulster Museum

A wonderful evening including a private tour of the museum, accompanied by a senior curator.

Web: www.nmni.com

Visit George Lowden Guitars

A modest, Northern Irish hero, George Lowden has been lovingly crafting some of the world’s finest quality guitars for over 35 years. With clients such as Eric Clapton and Irish Folk legends, Paul Brady and Mary Black, he is a busy man! You will be escorted around the workshops where you will discover the intricacies of these specialized and highly sought after guitars.

Web: www.georgelowden.com

EASY ACCESS

Northern Ireland is easy to access with daily flights from Amsterdam to Belfast International Airport starting from as little as €38 one-way with EasyJet (www.easyjet.com).

With Dublin located only 100 miles from Belfast – the 6 daily flights with Aer Lingus (www.aerlingus.com) from Schiphol to Dublin Airport are also a convenient and good value-for-money option. Prices start from only €45 one-way including taxes and charges.

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