



BIZ

www.ni-nl.org

Autumn / Winter 2011

The newsletter which keeps Northern Ireland in touch with the Dutch

NI-NL BIZ provides readers with an update on Northern Ireland – Netherlands trade relations over the last six months. In the 9th edition of NI-NL BIZ Steve Murnaghan, Founder of NI-NL

- Looks back at a 3 recent NI-NL events - Summer Networking, the Dam to Dam business run, and the Autumn Lunch
- Confirms details of the 2012 New Year's Dinner
- Looks back on Going Dutch 7
- Promotes Lisburn City Council's 10th Trade Programme to the Netherlands
- Asks Ulster Bank, Corporate Sponsor of NI-NL, to explain how it helps make international trade straightforward
- Reports on how Northern Ireland is a 'Golfing Superpower'
- Updates readers on recent Trade successes
- Welcomes the improved easyjet schedule between Belfast International and Amsterdam Schiphol as well as the newly launched bmibaby route from George Best Belfast City creating a total of 16 return flights weekly between the two capitals

Generating Sales in the Netherlands

NI-NL accepted the invitation of Mark Crimmins, Regional Director of Ulster Bank, to host the autumn business lunch at the bank's magnificent headquarters in Belfast, in early November.

Guest speaker from FG Wilson, Johnny Maguire, Regional Sales Manager for Northern Europe provided a full dining room with a frank and informative overview of their export activities entitled 'Generating Sales in the Netherlands'.

FG Wilson was established in Northern Ireland in 1966 and has become a global leader in open and enclosed generator sets providing prime and standby power. Today, part of the Caterpillar concern, they employ nearly 2,600 people and export 92% of their £654 million turnover.

As an example of a 'best in class' local company, the speakers shared their Global Distribution Strategy Model and provided pointers for distributor management, to nearly 50 exporters, keen to further develop the Netherlands as a key export market.

The lunch guests benefitted from tips and anecdotes on penetrating the market from Dutchman Peter Havenaar, Solution Sales Engineer for FG Wilson, who has been resident in Northern Ireland for 18 years.

Further photos can be found on pages 4 & 5



Steve Murnaghan, NITC, Dr. Vicky Kell, Invest NI, Mark Crimmins, Ulster Bank, Peter Havenaar, FG Wilson, Karen Loughrey, Ulster Bank and Carson Mc Mullan, Honorary Consul at Ulster Bank Headquarters.



Dutch Courage leads to successful Open Mic session Summer Networking BBQ

The 2011 Summer Networking and BBQ was held at Hilden Brewery in glorious mid-summer weather. The renovated Hilden beer garden with unique TiPis offered NI-NL companies an excellent social setting for summer networking and pre-holiday BBQ using only the best of local produce.

Over seventy exporters to the Netherlands, alumni of Going Dutch and Netherlands Outlook programmes and many others who have found their way to the Dutch market exchanged views, opinions and anecdotes with their peers.

Steve Murnaghan, Founder, was delighted to be in Hilden Brewery, Lisburn, for the BBQ and thanked the founders Invest NI and Lisburn City Council for their continued support in promoting NI-NL trade and welcomed Corporate Sponsor Ulster Bank and guests to their first event.

During NI-NL's first Open Mic session - a mix of public speed dating and networking - companies were offered the opportunity to inform the seventy plus guests, in less than one minute, about their Dutch business interests. Over 20 companies availed of the opportunity and showed how the NI-NL Trade and Export Society is generating advanced levels of knowledge, expertise and confidence between guests.



Dickson brothers Russell and Stuart of Lisburn company Decora Blinds with Paul Rodgers



Head Brewer and Product Sponsor Owen Scullion shows how to 'pull a Belfast Blonde'.



Lisburn companies Linton, AB Pneumatics and ConveyorTek stick together at Hilden



Hilden's French chef Vincent looks at home in his Dutch apron.



Delicious and succulent Ulster Beef on the BBQ



Honorary Consul Carson Mc Mullan enjoys a balanced diet!



Dutch exporters Linton, Craigs, ASEE and SAM Mouldings line up at the bar... the SALAD bar!



Representatives of Killeel seafood companies Henning & Rooney enjoy some 'turf' with Head of Food Marketing at Invest NI, Nigel Hardy.



Companies enjoy the unique TiPi set up at Hilden for the NI-NL event



Ulster Bank representatives and guests à table.



Austin Moore of Cottage Catering explains how they are developing market share in fresh desserts in the Netherlands.



Brian McClure provides companies and guests with some of his experiences of dealing with the Dutch



Going Dutch participant Lee Willdrige, Sales Director at Labelone, Belfast based label manufacturers, entertained guests with Gerry McBrien - locally known as Bridges.

Autumn Lunch Generating Sales in the Netherlands



Brian Mc Clure, Orion Group, Carson Mc Mullan, Honorary Consul, Aidan Strain and Barry Strain from ASEE



Vincent McCoy and Tony Reihill of Erne Plastics, discuss logistics into the Netherlands with Richard Holmes of SAM Mouldings.



Russell Dickson and Alistair Speer of Decora Blinds meet with Hazel King, Economic Development Manager at Lisburn City Council and Alderman Jim Dillon, Chairman of the Economic Development Committee, before the lunch.



Mark Copeland of PF Copeland (I) and Tom Smyth, MD of MSM Promotions meet up at the NI-NL Autumn lunch.



From left to right: Ulster Bank clients from the Crumlin branch Alan Macauley Dufferin Shipping, and Martin Cadam MC Import Export with Jonny McIlrath, Ulster Bank Crumlin and Galette Terhaardt, NITC Scandinavia



Peter Havenaar, FG Wilson, Simon Seaton, Ulster Bank, Elaine Curran, Invest NI, Mark Crimmins, Ulster Bank, Johnny Maguire, FG Wilson and David Andrews, Ulster Bank



Gary Irvine, Contract Sales of Ulster Carpets with Karen Loughrey, Head of Corporate Risk Solutions, Ulster Bank



Mark Crimmins explains the role Ulster Bank plays for internationally focussed businesses.



Johnny Maguire, outlines the FG Wilson Global Distribution Strategy Model



Working lunch for NI-NL at Ulster Bank Headquarters



Dutchman Peter Havenaar explains how to successfully build business with his compatriots



Clients and guests enjoy a view over Belfast City Centre



Hazel King of Lisburn City Council thanks FG Wilson speakers for their joint wisdom on behalf of NI-NL

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.



Founding Partners NI-NL

Team NI-NL in Dam tot Dam Business Run

Team NI-NL, made up of 20 'athletes', ran in the 27th Dam Tot Dam Race - one of the most fun business runs in the world with 40000 participants representing a wide variety of industries and sectors e.g. Ahold, KLM, Nike, Hema, ING, ABN Amro, KPMG, Amsterdam City Council and the Dutch Police who all enter multiple teams in the annual race

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Despite extremely wet conditions (note sky colour in photo!), all NI-NL runners in the 10 mile (16.1 kms) road race from the center of Amsterdam through the IJtunnel to the finish in Zaandam, prepared well and all set personal best times. Overall, the NI-NL team, with the 5 fastest times counting, came in the top 15% of all business entries - 300th out of 2072 teams starting !!

2

Foyle Food Group and Linden Meats sponsored Nike running shirts with the slogan 'Top Quality Beef from Ireland' with the Greenfields and 'Puur and Eerlijk' logos. The Greenfields brand has featured on quality beef and lamb at Albert Heijn for many years, and the Dam to Dam run was a great opportunity for Team NI-NL to promote the brand to some of the 200,000 spectators and over 300 teams from the leading food retailer who participated.

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Peter Meewisse of Hilton meats Zaandam (I) and Paul Armstrong of Foyle Food Group before...and after



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Elaine Curran of Invest NI, Founding partner of NI-NL, records one of the fastest team times on the day.

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Steve Murnaghan, Founder, does his bit for Team NI-NL by running a personal best to help the team time.

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Run, run as fast as you can, you can't catch us....we're the pancake men !! Congratulations to Ton Heinen (pictured right) of De Biederij who completed the Dam to Dam 2011 in 1 hour and 10 minutes. Not only the quickest NI-NL Team member but also the most 'senior' at 56 years of age - an example to us all.

7

The atmosphere surrounding the superbly organised event, including bands playing along the whole route, and the warm welcome received for the Team NI-NL runners from the Dutch spectators was fantastic.

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Team Tourism Ireland, regular contributors to NI-NL BIZ, proudly display their medals.

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Cormac Diamond is delighted to reach the finish line with running partner Wietse Slort

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Maurice & Helen Kettle representing Linden Foods are delighted to be treated to healthy local produce by Albert Heijn after the run.

Despite the wet conditions, the runners followed long distance experts' advice and ensured that they rehydrated properly after the run !

From initial feedback the Dam to Dam run could become an annual fixture on the NI-NL activity calendar.



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New Year's Trade Dinner

The 2012 NI-NL New Years Dinner shall be held on Wednesday 1st February in the Great Hall, Queens University, Belfast.

Housed within the distinctive Lanyon Building, the focal center of the University, the Great Hall provides NI-NL with an unique location for the 6th New Year's Trade Dinner. The magnificent panelled walls in the Great Hall carry a selection of portraits from the University's art collection creating a warm, powerful and theatrical space and the imposing Robson organ adds to a memorable occasion.

The dinner will be hosted by His Excellency Mr P.W. Waldeck, Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and shall coincide with a Trade

Mission of Dutch Agri Food companies to the province. NI-NL offers places at the New Years Dinner for up to 100 NI business executives together with their Dutch partner companies.

Dutch exporters with a Northern Ireland business partner, or client, and Northern Ireland exporters with a Dutch business partner, or client, are invited to attend. If you wish to attend with your business partner, please register online (www.ni-nl.org) by Monday 16th January 2012 with full details of both the Northern Ireland and Dutch company representative.



Should companies be traveling from Amsterdam to Belfast NI-NL recommends the easyjet flight on Tuesday 31st January returning Thursday 2nd February. NI-NL has been offered a discount code by easyjet for guests travelling to the dinner.

NI-NL has blocked a number of rooms on Tuesday 31st January and Wednesday 1st February at the Europa Hotel just 5 minutes from Queen's University Belfast. (£ 80 p.p.p.n incl. breakfast.) www.hastingshotels.com/europa-belfast

Details of how to avail of the flight and room deals are available following registration.



Invest NI News

Going Dutch 7 X 7

The largest group, to date, of Northern Ireland SMEs involved in Invest NI's Going Dutch programme, which started in June, visited the Netherlands for a series of preplanned appointments in October 2011. Twelve representatives from 7 companies spent 3 nights in the Netherlands during the market visit which is an integral part of the programme.

The companies engaged in over 30 individual meetings at host locations from Rotterdam to Almelo and from Hoogeveen to Helmond. Research and matchmaking was carried out by NITC on behalf of Invest NI, to arrange introductions to potential dealers, importers, influencers, channel partners and end users.

Visits were also made to a number of specialist Dutch Trade Shows in the Energy, Medical and Public Spaces arena. (The Offshore Energy show in the Rai, OK Dagen in Veldhoven and Openbareruimte Show in Houten).

Departing the Netherlands with a range of positive results (RFI's, RFQ's, potential distributorships, private label and brand supply opportunities) it will not be long before they return to nurture relations and invite their business hosts to Northern Ireland for a return visit.

The Northern Ireland companies represented a wide range of products and services. Below an update on their projects and their feedback on Going Dutch.



Core Systems

Provider of innovative technology solutions to the prison sector.

'The Going Dutch programme provided us with important market intelligence and identified key market players who operate in the custodial market. With NITC's assistance we were able to get in front of the right people including practitioners and potential partners. Invest Northern Ireland's support on the programme has been invaluable as we continue to exploit the business opportunities arisen from the programme.'

Joanne Mc Mullan, Sales & Marketing Manager



Evergreen Peat

Top Quality Sphagnum Irish Moss Peat for professional growers and hobby gardeners.

'Going Dutch is a pragmatic programme which has not only expanded Evergreen's knowledge of the Netherlands market but potentially the global market for our top quality products'

Nuala Breen - Sales and Marketing Manager



Peden Power

Engine driven cold water high pressure cleaners for rental companies, lawn & garden distributors, agricultural distributors, and industrial cleaning contractors.

'Going Dutch has shown Peden Power the Gateway into Europe'

Gerard McTeague, General Manager



Dawson Medical

Instrument storage and transportation trolleys for hospital CSA departments

'Going Dutch provided Dawson Engineering with an easy & enjoyable introduction into the European markets'

Andrew Chatten, General Manager



Precision Processing Services Limited

Thermo-Chemical filter cleaning process for the polymer-melt, petro-chemical, pharmaceutical, oil and gas and food and beverage industries.



Project Design Engineers

Engineering, design and technical consultancy services for projects in the bulk liquid and oil storage sectors.

'The Going Dutch programme has opened PDE's eyes to a market which is literally on our doorstep and the Netherlands has so many commonalities such as language, large potential client base and engineering requirements.'

Adrian Watson, Director



Woodland Cabinets

High quality custom made kitchen and bedroom carcasses to trade partners in the retail and building materials industry.

'Invest NI have tailored a fantastic programme taking inexperienced companies and introducing them to the export market in a very easy to understand way. Without the expertise and financial assistance provided, Woodland would probably not be exploring this opportunity to open up these exciting European links.'

Enda McCrystal, Sales Director



The Going Dutch entrepreneurs 'Go Indonesian', as has become tradition on the last night of the market visit in Amsterdam.



Going Dutch 8

Invest NI has already recruited another 7 companies to participate in the 8th programme from November 2011 to March 2012. Invest NI clients interested in widening their export horizons should get in touch with their Client Executive to find out more about they too could 'Go Dutch' in the future.



Ten out of ten for Lisburn Outlook

Lisburn City Council is pleased to launch details of its 10th consecutive trade development programme to the Netherlands. To date the Council has assisted 54 companies to access this key European marketplace, and has seen over £ 6 million of new sales development as a result.

Recently two more Lisburn companies ABCO Marine and AB Pneumatics have announced that they are successfully trading with the Netherlands, following participation in the Netherlands Outlook programme in 2010 and 2011.

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 2012 will once again assist growth orientated local businesses to identify and develop new market opportunities and strategic business partnerships in the Netherlands.

The programme offers business orientation, trade and best practice opportunities. Each of the seven participating businesses will benefit from a bespoke programme of assistance specifically tailored to meet their export and trade development requirements and an itinerary of planned appointments to take place during the market visit to Amsterdam from 23rd - 26th April 2012.

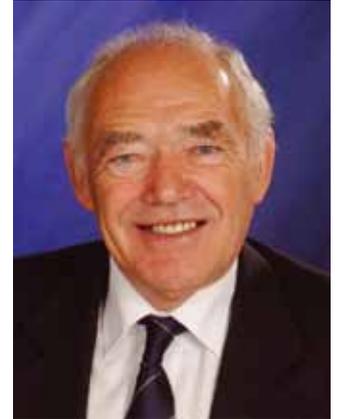
The Dutch marketplace has realised many successes for Lisburn companies and the Council is confident that this time around will also bring many business benefits for participating companies.

Chair of the Council's Economic Development Committee, Alderman Jim Dillon states: 'Local economic growth can only be achieved with a dedicated export development plan in place. The Economic Development Committee and Team fully understand that export sales typically have a longer gestation period than domestic sales, and we are delighted that successfully trade linkages are continually being developed.'

He adds: 'I would strongly encourage any Lisburn businesses keen to develop new sales in an international market to make contact with the programme delivery agents NITC for further information on what opportunities may exist in this market for their company.'

Details of Lisburn's European Outlook Programme are available from Steve Murnaghan of NITC. T + 31 20 4217400, or E murn@nitc.nl

Alderman Dillon also looks forward to seeing the previous Lisburn Outlook participants together with their Dutch partners at the NI-NL New Year's Dinner in February.



Lisburn Companies show their export ABilities

Recent successes have been reported to NI-NL by Lisburn companies ABCO Marine and AB Pneumatics. Despite sharing the prefix AB the companies are unlinked and independent of each other.

AB Pneumatic double workforce through export sales

AB Pneumatics Ltd, www.abpneumatics.com, provides a manufacturing service of rubber vulcanisation for both OEMs and for spares. Products include Seat Air Springs, Shockabsorber Sleeves and an exciting new range of DONUT anti-vibration rubber springs.

The AB Pneumatics service offers design, validation and manufacture of systems for a varied range of customers and products. The company offers full testing facilities, has ISO accreditation and works closely with local universities such as Queens University Belfast for polymer developments.

Participating in Lisburn City Council's Netherlands Outlook Programme in 2010 helped Directors Peter Blair and Jonny Boomer of AB Pneumatics to get serious about export markets.

During the market visit just 18 months ago Peter Blair met with OEMs and distributors, specialised in various rubber

related industries, and developed an excellent synergy and trading relationship with a Rotterdam based importer / distributor.

Today, AB Pneumatics, exports rubber 'buses' and Donut Springs and imports Steel rings to and from the Netherlands.

Peter Blair, who jointly acquired the company in 2010, is delighted with how business with Holland has developed. 'Export is a key focus in our plans to grow the business, and after the 'bedding in' period we now have 90% of sales outside of Northern Ireland and have doubled our workforce to 12 employees.'

'Not only does export add to sales and instil pride in our workforce, but having a network of international partners keeps us commercially sharp and aware of market trends,' added Jonny Boomer recently when talking to NI-NL BIZ.

Steven Boal (below) has joined the company the KTP Programme through Queens University to develop the engineering design side of the business. Already he has been heavily involved in the new products for the export business and here is preparing an order for dispatch to their Dutch partner.



ABCO Dive into Dutch partnership

ABCO Marine participated in Lisburn City Council's Netherlands Outlook Programme in February 2011, and have won a project on the Northern Ireland coastline from a leading Dutch marine contractor.



Pipeline being towed into position in preparation for installation on the seabed



ABCO Marine, www.abcomarine.co.uk, based in Hillsborough, offers specialist marine construction, engineering and diving services to a wide range of clients within the marine Construction sector.

One of the main objectives for Directors John Osborne and Niall McGill for participating in the Council's trade development programme was to identify Dutch engineering consultants and contractors with existing projects and forthcoming plans for UK and Ireland.

One of the 6 meetings which NITC secured for ABCO Marine was with Van Oord - a world-class marine contractor involved in dredging, offshore (oil, gas and wind) and marine engineering projects around the world. Van Oord employs 4,500 across 25 branch offices worldwide and generated a turnover of €1,6 billion in 2010.

A meeting with the Area Director for Europe and the Director of Van Oord's UK operations at their Rotterdam Head Office, was positive and informative for both parties and opened the door to discussions and RFQs on a number of projects.

ABCO successfully won a subcontract package from Van Oord for construction of a long sea outfall to discharge treated wastewater effluent to the Irish Sea.

The initial sub contract package for the work at Islandmagee - the Cloughfin Outfall pipeline - to install 192m at the offshore end of the outfall was for £600k but has increased to £1.3m due to additional works caused by the varying nature of the ground along the drill path.

ABCO are currently installing a total 760m of outfall and have increased labour and mobilised additional equipment to complete the works on time.

On the back of this project due for completion by end of November 2011 ABCO Marine looks forward to developing their partnership with a global industry leader such as Van Oord.

Despite Osborne and McGill working to a tight deadline to complete the project, they haven't forgotten how the opportunity came about and say to Lisburn Economic Development team, 'Thanks a million for assisting the internalisation of ABCO's business'.



Smart Moves by AMT-SYBEX

AMT-SYBEX exhibited in Amsterdam in October at Metering, Billing/CRM Europe - the industry leading meeting place for smart utility professionals. This was the natural progression from the Going Dutch programme and market visits earlier in 2011 to engage with industry partners such as IBM and Genpact.

AMT-SYBEX availed of the trade show which attracts 4500 professionals to rebrand their market interaction, meter data management, and mobile working products to be collectively known as the AMT-SYBEX Affinity Suite™.

The company also announced that they completed their benchmark test with IBM for their Meter Data Management Solution. IBM and AMT-SYBEX testing demonstrated the capability of the Affinity Meterflow application using IBM Informix™ TimeSeries software to offer linear scalability up to 100 million meters to load and process meter data at 30-minute intervals in less than 8 hours.

This represents ground breaking levels of performance which is ten times faster than other published benchmarks in this area.



Duncan Sedgwick, Former chief executive of the Energy Retail Association; AMT Sybex Affinity Suite Product Manager, Gordon Brown; Ton Francissen, Commercial Leader Utilities at Genpact meet at Metering, Billing/CRM Europe at Amsterdam Rai

Total Support for Dutch Partner



Total Mobile, one of Northern Ireland's fastest growing software companies supported their Dutch partner, Aenova, at the Government & ICT show in Utrecht. The two day show entitled 'ICT en Overheid' has become the annual benchmark for ICT and innovation within the government arena.

Headquartered in Belfast, Total Mobile has developed a complete mobile working software system for local authorities and other government agencies which can be deployed at an enterprise level or departmentally. In 2010 they met Aenova through the Invest NI Going Dutch programme and appointed them as their reselling partner for the Netherlands.

Based in Delft, Aenova is a market leader in time solutions software, especially to local government, with 40% of councils in the Netherlands using their TimEnterprise software. Director Hans van der Last is an entrepreneur who shares the Total Mobile vision of how the local government market is moving.

Today government agencies across Europe are being required to do more with less. Increasing productivity for mobile workers and support for real-time communications across multiple organisations is more important than ever. TotalMobile's line of enterprise mobility applications have been specifically designed to curtail challenges and pressures faced by national, provincial and local government agencies.

TotalMobile provides the lifeblood of the new work environment by delivering highly secure mobile applications onto BlackBerry, Windows Mobile and Windows Tablet platforms. TotalMobile applications radically change the way mobile government workers do their job.

Hans van der Last and his sales team have already been to Belfast for training and to see the software applied. **Here Ciaran McClintock of Total Mobile, pictured second from right, returns to the Netherlands to support Aenova, and easily blends in on the stand with his Dutch sales colleagues.**

Henning Bros wins 1st Export Business for Crab Meat

Henning Brothers in Kilkeel has won its first export business in Europe for frozen crab products, with assistance from Invest Northern Ireland. The shellfish processing company took part in a recent Invest NI trade development programme in the Netherlands. Through the "Going Dutch" initiative, the company secured business from two wholesalers for frozen crab meat and crab claws.

The business breakthrough in the Netherlands was announced by Harold Henning, who founded the seafood company in 1997 with his two brothers, and welcomed by Dr Vicky Kell, Invest NI Trade Director.

Dr Kell said: "This important development gives the company a platform for growth in a market which has demand from high-end hotels and restaurants for quality shellfish."

"Our "Going Dutch" initiative gave Henning Brothers access to an experienced marketing organisation with a wide range of contacts in foodservice organisation, contacts which the company has followed up successfully and has now secured worthwhile business in the Netherlands for its premium quality crab products."

"The business is a further example of how our food companies can grow business outside Northern Ireland for products which are locally-sourced and feature the provenance and traceability increasingly sought by consumers."

Mr Henning said: "We developed the frozen products as the key element in strategy to grow our business outside Northern Ireland. We had developed good business for live shellfish, prawns, mussels and oysters, particularly in France and Germany, and saw an opportunity to expand sales through the introduction of frozen crab products using an innovative tub".

"Taking part in the programme in the Netherlands enabled us to assess the market potential of the frozen products. We benefited immensely from the knowledge and experience of the team at Northern Ireland Trade Consultants (NITC) in Amsterdam, Invest NI's export consultants there. NITC has a tremendous network and is respected particularly by the wholesale industry in the Netherlands.

"We were introduced to several major wholesalers supplying key market sectors including foodservice and retail. Subsequent discussions led to orders from two leading wholesalers and, as a result, we now have a solid platform for future growth in this important European market."



Sweet Success at PLMA for Desserts Company

Participation at the PLMA show in Amsterdam in May 2011 is already starting to pay Cottage Catering back sweetly.

The Dromore based company supplies branded and private label chilled desserts to supermarkets in UK, Ireland and more recently to mainland Europe. At PLMA private label retail buyers from across Europe provided excellent feedback on the extensive range of chilled desserts including: Cheesecakes, Trifles, Sundaes, Hot & Cold Puddings.

Cottage Catering has already developed significant sales into the Netherlands and hopes to increase its private label business in the Lowlands by introducing new products which suit the local palate.

The company's export strategy in 2012 is to supply the countries closest to the UK by focusing on France, Belgium, Germany, Sweden and Switzerland. Meetings and tasting sessions with key decision makers in these territories have taken place during the summer and autumn.



Managing Director Hertford Arnold, welcomes Dutch retailers onto the Cottage Catering stand at PLMA to taste his desserts.



Innovation, People and Export Lead to Continued Growth for Whale®

NI-NL BIZ speaks to one of Northern Ireland's leading exporters, to establish how they have continued to grow despite the global economic recession.

Munster Simms Engineering Ltd can trace its origins back to 1810 and as such last June it celebrated its two hundredth anniversary.

The Bangor based company today is better known to its customers as Whale Water Systems. From the North Down facility the company exports its own designed and manufactured goods to more than 48 countries around the world. Its primary markets are Leisure Marine, Caravan/RV, Healthcare and the exotic world of Portable Toilets.

BACKGROUND

First established as a timber importer, the company later branched into petroleum and oil distribution around Ireland in the late 1950s/early 1960s, and later established a thriving hardware wholesale division.

It was during the Second World War that the business started making brass pumps on which today's company was founded, and during the 1990s a strategy of global expansion led to today's worldwide distribution network spanning 48 countries. In 2011 with an in-house design team of 29 engineers, offices in England, America, Sweden and most recently in France, Munster Simms employs nearly 150 people.

THE BUSINESS TODAY

The business is almost unique in its markets by manufacturing and marketing all its own products. Particularly in the past 4 years, the business has grown significantly beyond the traditional Water System products to now include a full range of Gas/Electric Water and Space Heaters as well as IC – Intelligent Control electronically controlled waste management systems for mobile applications.

2010 was a year of outstanding growth (35% increase year on year) and it had its highest turnover on record. The results are clear with Whale kicking off 2011 by winning tier one supplier status for pumps to Beneteau/Jeanneau Group in France (largest sail boat manufacturer in the world), in one of the largest contracts in the company's history.

The most recent highlights were being named in the Best Companies Accreditation and Sunday Times 100 Best Small Companies to Work for, the second consecutive year running and in being presented with the Top Northern Ireland Quality Award.

PEOPLE AND INNOVATION AT ITS HEART

The company's team is totally committed to manufacturing in Northern Ireland and believe that through innovative design, excellent customer service and total commitment to quality Whale has a long term, bright future.

Over the last 3 years, 15 world-wide design patents have been registered highlighting the new innovation culture created within the business. On average, 70% of the Whale product offering today is new to the market-place compared to 4 years ago. This (combined with focus on sales and marketing) has enhanced the Whale brand and led to significant competitive advantage.

DUTCH CONNECTIONS

From the exporter's point of view, working with the right locally based Dutch partner means that a Northern Ireland company can maximize their sales into the Netherlands, and be well placed to promote their brand and products for the long run. The benefits of local distribution include the obvious language and cultural fit, as well as real in depth understanding of the Dutch market.

All these are vital elements for a Northern Ireland company breaking into any European country.

In the case of Munster Simms Engineering, the Whale brand has been well known in the marine industry in the Netherlands since the early 90s. Since then, the company has developed a long-standing partnership with Belship, their exclusive marine distributor.

Belship's technical hands-on experience of Dutch watercraft and local vessel types combined with their sales team's high level of product know how, continues to be beneficial. As such they are best placed to promote the Whale brand and the latest innovations. The results speak for themselves with Belship sales of new products now accounting for 14% of their overall Whale sales turnover.

In today's economic climate, innovation is the key to continued growth, and the right distribution partners bring local knowledge that is vital in assisting new exporters to enter new markets, as well as helping innovative companies to continue to grow business.



New Digital Gateway to Europe @ Schiphol

Aidan Strain Electrical Engineering Ltd, based in Mullaghbawn, County Down, have played an integral role in the recent delivery of a new European flagship data centre at Amsterdam Schiphol airport.

ASEE Ltd, offers reliable, innovative solutions to specialist requirements in the electrical and mechanical field. The company focuses on the provision and installation of secondary power requirements to large installations, typically in the order of 5,000 to 10,000 kilowatt.

Already a major hub for air, rail and road connections, the opening of Terremark's Network Access Point (NAP) will make the Schiphol area a vital nexus for telecommunications and technology.

The airport's location and links to cities across the continent make business travel fast and convenient for people from Brussels to Berlin. And the airport is an established worldwide business centre, with 600 international companies and 62,000 employees located onsite.

Data centres are a common feature of today's technological landscape. These facilities, used to house mission critical computer systems and associated components, require environmental controls, redundant/backup power supplies and high security.

ASEE Ltd's role at Amsterdam Schiphol involved the installation of the complete electrical system to the data centre, comprising of High Voltage incoming supplies, generator Low Voltage supplies, lighting and general services power to the Data Hall, offices, switchrooms and plantrooms as well as the infrastructure to support this and the building security and monitoring services.

NETWORK ACCESS POINT

The NAP facility enhances Terremark's global footprint of close to 50 state-of-the-art data center facilities that offer enterprise-class cloud infrastructure, cyber security solutions and their complete suite of highly reliable IT infrastructure services.

The Network Access Platform (NAP) European flagship facility provides 25,000 square feet of data center space meeting in-region demand for advanced cloud computing, security and IT infrastructure services. The NAP of Amsterdam was strategically built to access one of the world's largest Internet hubs in terms of traffic and members.

Amsterdam was chosen as it is an established central business hub for more than 500 international companies. Additionally, the new NAP is directly connected to AMS-IX, one of the world's largest Internet exchanges with more than 350 members.



EXCELLENT SUPPORT

Aidan Strain, Managing Director of ASEE, commented on the Dutch project. "In setting up for and completing our works at Amsterdam Schiphol, and a similar project just south of the city, working to the main contractor for the whole of the works, Mercury Engineering Ltd, we have benefited from continuing and valuable support from Invest NI. This initially from our local, Newry, branch, from our initial attendance on a Going Dutch fact finding and trade visit to Holland back in 2006, all the way through to our completion of these high profile fast track projects."

"Introductions to local business advisors and consultants by NITC and their day to day guidance on all aspects of local business, from travel advice, though accommodation recommendations and advice on local procedures, was invaluable in giving us the necessary confidence to engage with local suppliers and to set up work systems in compliance with local requirements and regulations. Through all of this we were able to establish a secure foothold ahead of our work starting on the ground which ensured the subsequent smooth running of these projects".



This is the company's first main project in the Netherlands and now, after a break of some 5 years from undertaking this type of work outside of the UK and Ireland, ASEE is actively looking at a number of further mainland European projects.

Dutch Technology to Blast Away the Rest

Ridgeway Plant, one of Northern Ireland's leading specialist hire companies, has recently taken delivery of the Waterkracht Hot Aqua Blaster Trailer to lead the way with Dutch industrial cleaning technology.

The Hot Aqua Blaster employs a unique patented BHWT (boiling hot water technique) by means of an Eco boiler contained in the trailer.

Imported by Craigs of Lisburn, the Hot Aqua Blaster is a powerful cleaning system designed to use considerably less water and operating pressure than conventional models making it an environmentally friendly choice for exterior cleaning and disinfecting.

In 1969 Ridgeway Plant Company Ltd acquired its name from their first location at Ridgeway Street, beside the Lyric Theatre in Belfast. However, as an owner managed company, they have moved with the times and have taken the lead from mainland Europe where there are now over 500 such units in service in the public and private sectors.

The Ridgeway Hot Aqua Blaster is the first of these units in Ireland and available to hire for a range of industrial cleaning such as the removal of graffiti, road markings, moss and lichen, paint, coatings and chewing gum etc.

Abrasive blasting have long been used as industrial cleaning and surface preparation techniques. However they have obvious health and safety issues for both the operators and the surrounding environment. Over the last few years the environmental impact of these methods have dictated a fresh approach and new thinking.

Boiling Hot Technology uses the combined power of temperature and pressure together exploding on a surface to remove contaminants. The Hot Aqua Blaster uses only clean water - no chemicals are involved !

The machine is designed to work in public areas, and therefore the self contained unit is operated by remote control by the operator.

The noise levels have been reduced by enclosing the unit in an acoustic trailer, and by using heat exchange technology rather than the traditional radiator cooling.

So if someone asks you what is hot but quiet, powerful yet mobile, efficient yet environmentally friendly?... you'll know the answer, and you'll also know where to find it !



Helping make international trade straightforward

Doing business internationally offers the potential for many small and medium-sized businesses to significantly expand their customer-base. What's more, according to Karen Loughrey, Head of Corporate Risk Solutions, NI, at Ulster Bank, it doesn't have to be complicated.

Karen says that many more Northern Ireland SMEs could be benefiting from doing business in a greater number of overseas markets and she is keen to point out that global trade is not only for larger manufacturers with sales teams or a physical international presence.

“Many small and medium-sized companies are put off by the word exporting and the perceived difficulties. They see it as something that only larger firms can manage successfully. But we're saying to SMEs that they could potentially do business outside of Northern Ireland and may well be surprised at how accessible foreign markets can be. Whilst the most successful are those who invest in building long term, working relationships, we work with many small local companies and sole traders who are actively building an online international sales presence. There is definitely potential for many more ambitious local businesses to do this,” she points out.

Speaking as the bank launches a new international business proposition, with enhanced incentives for exporters, importers and cross-border traders. Karen continues “We are reminding those businesses who are new to exporting that there are markets close to home that are worth considering as a first step. The Republic of Ireland is right on our door-step and cross border trade can significantly widen a company's customer-base. For any businesses that are a little nervous about taking the first step, the geographical proximity of such trading partners can be reassuring.”

Cross border trading also avoids one of the most commonly quoted reasons for not considering international markets – language barriers. However, Karen is keen to encourage Northern Ireland firms to seek out a range of markets. “Northern Europe is often considered as a next step for businesses on this island and the Netherlands, in particular, is a well established trading partner. Very much a gateway to Europe, English is widely spoken and a business trading successfully with a Dutch partner can easily launch their product into the rest of Europe.”

On the issue of foreign exchange (FX), Karen challenges businesses. “Instead of looking at FX as an obstacle to trade, why not look at whether a competitive exchange rate may actually benefit your business and give your product a competitive advantage in the global marketplace? Or perhaps effective FX management would allow you to set price lists for your website? Similarly, if your concern is the ease of making payments, or the credit worthiness of your customer, your bank should be a key source of support.”

“Additionally, Ulster Bank can help clients to access continuously up-dated market research on countries around the world and, through our parent company, tap into the expertise afforded through the physical presence of our staff in over 37 countries. We are keen to highlight the volume of help available. For every concern raised by a prospective importer or exporter, there are a wealth of experts, advisors and agencies available to provide answers, guidance and support.”

“Organisations like NI-NL, Invest Northern Ireland, UK Trade & Investment, the Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce and InterTradeIreland offer invaluable insights both into the macro issues around global trade and country specific challenges.”

“We know that there are great opportunities for many Northern Ireland SMEs in international trade and we really want to encourage them to look at the potential benefits. Attending one of our Business Live events could just be the right place to start.”

The bank is hosting 14 Business Live events across the island of Ireland – five of them in Northern Ireland – between November and March. On stage, entrepreneurs who are already successfully trading internationally will share their experiences, mistakes and accomplishments and some of Northern Ireland's lesser-known but most inspiring stories of global business success will be highlighted and discussed at the events.

All companies are being invited to register for the Business Live events which are being run in association with [Smallbusinesscan.com](http://www.smallbusinesscan.com) and are free of charge to attend. To register for one of the free Business Live events, contact your local Ulster Bank branch or visit: <http://www.smallbusinesscan.com/business-live-events>

Ian Jordan of Ulster Bank and Fionan Murray of [Smallbusinesscan.com](http://www.smallbusinesscan.com) announce the package of Business Live events with Karen Loughrey of Ulster Bank, who advises all kinds of exporting and importing companies.



Industry Special

A Golfing Superpower

In this Industry Special, NI-NL Founder and Hollywood man Steve Murnaghan looks at the growing golf tourism industry in Northern Ireland, a subject close to his heart, and how homegrown golf professionals are showing the rest of the world how the game should be played !

Northern Ireland is a marvellous natural golfing country with fantastic scenery whether you prefer links or parkland courses. With improved flight connections from Amsterdam to Belfast and the current Euro vs pound exchange rate there has never been a better time to discover a golfing break in Northern Ireland.

Where did it all go... right ?

During the summer of 2011, Northern Ireland boasted 3 major Champions, out of a possible 4 of the most prestigious annual tournaments in professional golf. US Open champion Rory McIlroy, British Open winner Darren Clarke, and 2010 US PGA Championship winner Graeme McDowell all held their respective titles simultaneously in August of this year.



Since then, Ballymoney born Michael Hoey has won the Alfred Dunhill Links Championship while Rory McIlroy lifted the Lake Malaren Shanghai Masters and these 4 golfers are all in the world's top 100 - an amazing feat for a nation with just 1.7 million inhabitants!

And good news travels fast these days...

- Over 34,000 news articles appeared in more than 100 countries in the aftermath of Rory McIlroy's US Open win.
- Moments after Darren Clarke won the Open Rory McIlroy wrote on Twitter: "Northern Ireland...Golf capital of the world!!!"
- The New York Times carried the headline "Northern Ireland has an outsize presence in golf"

As the personal success of Northern Ireland golfers goes from strength to strength it is no wonder therefore that golfers throughout the world are interested in playing the wide variety of courses NI has to offer and in particular the courses on which the golfing stars grew up and learnt their game.

Northern Ireland's Golf Offering

Northern Ireland offers a whole series of lovely links along the coasts of Down, Antrim and the North West as well as a dozen courses in the Greater Belfast area. With over one hundred courses to choose from - whether meadowland, parkland or superb coastal settings - the most difficult decision is how many courses to play and how long to stay for !

Within ten minutes drive of Belfast city centre visitors can be teeing up on the first on a number of stunning courses - Malone, **Belvoir Park**, Royal Belfast, Shandon Park, Knock, Royal Belfast or Lisburn Golf Club.

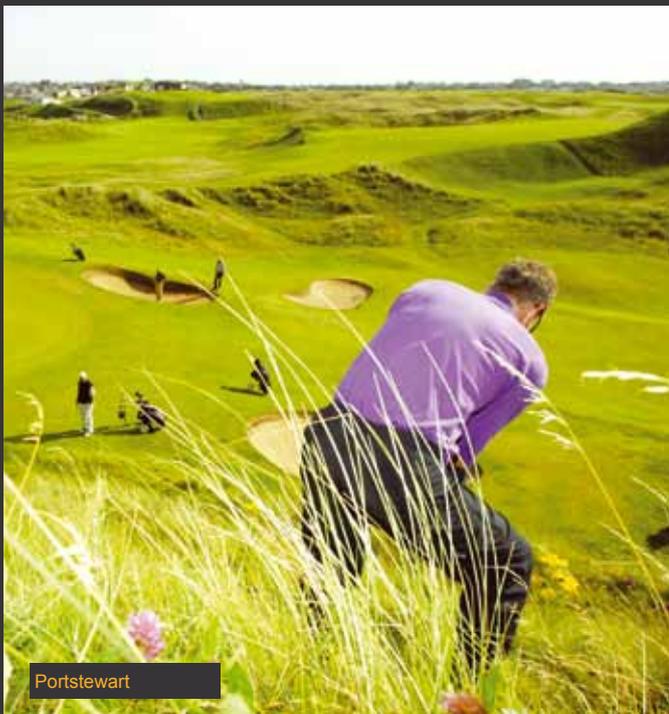
The Causeway Coast and Glens region has more than a dozen golf courses offering links and parkland challenges to tempt golfers of all abilities. The area is truly a golfer's paradise, offering courses such as Royal Portrush, **Portstewart**, Castlerock, Ballycastle, Galgorm Castle and the Radisson Blu Roe Park golf course.

One of the most picturesque areas to play golf in Northern Ireland is South (County) Down with the Mourne Mountains as a backdrop. **Royal County Down** is the signature course in the area,

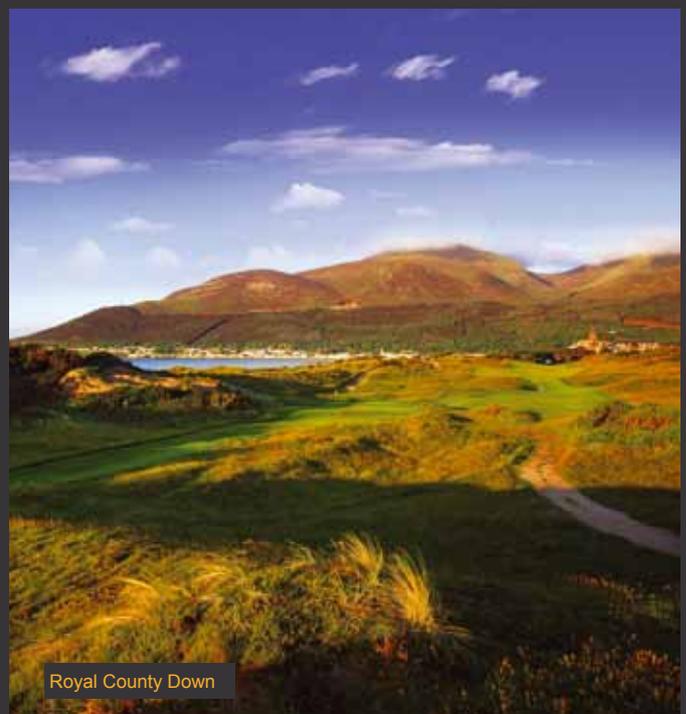
but links courses such as Ardglass and parkland courses such as Mourne Park, Kilkeel, and Warrenpoint are hidden gems which are welcoming for the visiting golfer and golf societies alike.

The famous fairways of championship courses like Royal Portrush and Royal County Down, both ranked in the top ten internationally, provide a serious challenge for the keen golfer, if the weather conditions are less than perfect - which happens from time to time on the Emerald Isle !

However welcomes such as those received throughout Northern Ireland's golf courses are amongst the friendliest experienced by travelling golfers.



Portstewart



Royal County Down



Belvoir Park

“The Home of Champions” campaign swings into action

The golf market is very important for tourism, particularly from the US and Britain but also, increasingly, from the European markets. Tourism Ireland is therefore rolling out a ‘Major’ golf tourism campaign to capitalise on the huge international media interest in the local golfers’ global successes.



Golf media from around the world line up to take on the challenge of Royal Portrush, Co Antrim.

The new tourism drive has been dubbed Northern Ireland “The Home of Champions”.

Tourism Minister Arlene Foster said many commentators now label Northern Ireland the “golfing capital of the world. The fact that we can now boast three Major-winning golfers in 13 months gives us an unprecedented opportunity to show the rest of the world what makes Northern Ireland’s golf offering so special,” she said. “Our golf courses are among the best in the world and our three Major winners have proven that Northern Ireland is the top golfing destination.”

“This campaign, together with the prospect of a major golf tournament at Royal Portrush, will be a tremendous boost in our continuing efforts to showcase our golf tourism offering on the international stage.”

Recently sixteen golf writers from nine countries around the world, including the Netherlands, were invited to Northern Ireland to play the courses where the local golf champions perfected their skills.

Niall Gibbons, Tourism Ireland’s chief executive, said: “On this trip alone, media outlets and titles represented included Golf European Monthly, Golf Digest China, Golf International as well the US Golf Channel. The potential publicity value of a trip like this is fantastic – the ensuing articles and programmes will be read and watched by hundreds of thousands of potential golf holidaymakers around the world.”

“Tourism Ireland is focused on growing the number of golf tourists to Northern Ireland and building on the tremendous positive publicity surrounding the extraordinary wins of our golfers.

Golf is the world’s largest sports-related travel market and Tourism Ireland is working hard to drive home the message that a golfing holiday in Northern Ireland is about much more than a round of 18 holes – the combination of Northern Ireland’s world-class golf product and unique brand of hospitality plays a key role in attracting golfers to come here.”



Tourism Minister Arlene Foster is pictured at Royal Portrush Golf Club in County Antrim with Darren Clarke, Winner of the Open 2011 and Graeme McDowell, US Open 2010 winner. Also pictured are Philip Tweedie, Captain of Royal Portrush Golf Club and Mayor Maurice Bradley.

Golfers' blustery paradise

Pauline and Louk Sanders, keen Dutch golfers (and cyclists) report to NI-NL BIZ on their challenging tour of some of Northern Ireland's toughest golf courses. Both Louk and Pauline (pictured right) play Senior team golf for De Noordwijkse Golf Club.

'If you like your golf nice and easy, trundling about on a friendly parkland course with the sun blazing down on you, Northern Ireland isn't the place for you. If, however, you like a bit of a challenge and you are a fan of classic links golf, put it at the top of your wish list!

We started our golf tour on the **Valley course in Portrush**, County Antrim, which lies next to the Championship Dunluce course. Do not make the mistake of regarding this as a kind of 'B' course, though, because it is an excellent course in its own right, home to 2010 US Open Champion Graeme McDowell, whose trophies can be admired in the clubhouse. They call it the hidden gem, and that is exactly what it is. The course showed its teeth in the tough conditions, force 6-7 winds with occasional showers or, as some lady members who passed us on the third hole put it, 'a bit squally'. Little did we know at the time what was in store for us!



Next on our list was the **Dunluce**, the only course in Ireland to have hosted the Open Championship. For the occasion we had hired caddies and we were provided with father-and-son team Tony and Steve. We certainly needed them, because in the meantime the wind had increased to a force 7-8 and this course is really tough! It is absolutely stunning and offers magnificent views of the rough coastline. A very memorable experience! To our delight after our round we were invited to sit with two spry old geezers, one of whom had been a member for 75 years! Also a member is Darren Clarke, who was out there practising his short game and spending time with his mates in the pro shop. It just goes to show that practice does make perfect, as following our visit Darren won the British Open in July of this year!



Our third and last stop on the North coast was the **Strand Course at Portstewart**, another spectacular and challenging course, especially in force 7-8 winds, once again. We were almost getting used to the weather by now.

In between your rounds, a visit to the **Giant's Causeway** is an absolute must. It is an amazing formation of basalt columns formed by volcanic activity some 60 million years ago. We much



preferred the local legend which has it that it was built by local giant Finn McCool as a causeway to Scotland in order to fight his rival over there. Also take a hike through the Glens of Antrim and cross the **Carrick-a-Rede** rope bridge. Finish it all off with a visit to the **Bushmills distillery**.

After staying on the North coast for a week we traveled to County Down for our final four days. If you are traveling from Belfast to the North or vice versa and are not in a hurry, be sure to take the scenic **Causeway Coastal Route**. It takes you right along the coast for almost its entire length and offers absolutely breathtaking views.

We stayed in the **Glassdrumman Lodge** in Annalong right outside Newcastle. It is a converted farmhouse with just ten rooms, located in the foothills of the Mourne Mountains, run by the Hall family. Ben Hall runs the place while his brother Johnny is the chef, and they will go out of their way to make you feel very special and welcome. You start your evening with drinks in front of the fireplace in the bar and then you move on to the dining room for a really special treat. They serve a wonderful table d'hote menu using local produce including, of course, beautiful fresh fish. Be sure to try their chocolate torte as well. They also run a cookery school and Ben told us that they were planning to build their own smokehouse and set up a scheme to take their guests fishing and have them smoke their own catch, which sounds like a great idea! Breakfast is served at a huge table offering you a chance to chat with the other guests, and includes delicious homemade soda bread.



The following day we played **Royal County Down** which is currently ranked no. 4 in the world. Golf does not come any more challenging than this course in a force 8 wind! Rumour has it that even Tiger Woods once shot 83 here. The course is absolutely stunning with the Mourne Mountains as its backdrop and wonderful seaviews. There are several daunting blind shots and you would be well advised to take enough balls with you.

For something completely different we took a cycling tour with a delightful lady by the name of Loretto Coyle. She is a Blue Badge tourist guide and will take you hiking, cycling or walking in the Mournes or along the coast. Thinking we were quite fit, being Dutch and thus regular cyclists, this turned out to be quite challenging with some steep slopes to negotiate. We were even glad to be wearing helmets which, being Dutch, we originally sniffed at. I even put mine on backwards which had Loretto in stitches. It was great fun and made a wonderful change from all the golf.

You can track Loretto down at www.outdoorirelandnorth.co.uk.

GOLF TOURISM (CONTINUED)

Our toughest round of golf yet was still awaiting us, though.

Ardglass was perhaps the most surprising of the golfcourses we played. It features what must be some of the most dramatic holes in golf, located on the cliff tops, and offers stunning seaviews from the entire course. Their grey granite clubhouse dates back to the 12th century and is completely in keeping with its surroundings. The members are extremely welcoming and hailed us as heroes for completing our round since we were the only ones out on the course in a force 9 gale! Be sure to include this course in your itinerary...for the golf, the scenery and also because it's great value for money!

Despite being well used to playing tough links courses in The Netherlands the courses we chose to play were amongst the most challenging we have ever played - especially the conditions we endured ! **All in all, this was a very special active break for us to visit what is being called the Home of Open Champions !**

Pauline and Louk Sanders



Links Golf Course of the Year 2011

Ardglass Golf Club, a dramatic links golf course set on a rugged coastline, with cliff tops and an ancient town as a backdrop, recently celebrated being named as the Irish Golf Tour Operators Association (IGTOA) Links Golf Course of the Year 2011.

The award was collected up by Club Captain Cormac MacMullan and together with the promise of **'a welcome like no other golf club in the world'** the publicity alone will help towards the club's projection of receiving 6,000 visitors on the course in 2011, a 20% increase on 2010.

Debbie Turley, Club Manager said "Despite the global economic difficulties, Ardglass has continued to develop not only our golf course but our hospitality, packages and the overall offering. We currently have visitors from as far away as Australia, North and South America and Japan coming to Ardglass. Bringing such a range of tourists into the area not only benefits the club but the whole county Down tourism and hospitality sectors." Chairman of Down District Council, Councillor Dermot Curran added his sincere congratulations on the tremendous accolade for Ardglass GC and for the whole area.

In terms of the course itself, the first five-hole stretch may be among the best five opening holes in the world. They start beside the wall of a 13th Century castle, then snake out along the stunningly natural cliffside edging the Irish Sea, which the player does not lose sight of on any of the 18 holes.

Local knowledge is important and you are advised to listen to members, such as TV personality Gerry Kelly, who reminds you 'Make sure you don't pull or hook on the first 5 holes... there is plenty of room on the right... in fact you have the whole island of Ireland on that side to land your ball!'



Belfast is 'THE BUSINESS' for Dutch Group

Decision-makers from leading conference and event organisers in the Netherlands flew in on the inaugural bmibaby flight from Amsterdam to Belfast in early November, as guests of Tourism Ireland - the organisation responsible for promoting Northern Ireland and the island of Ireland overseas as a leading holiday destination.

The group included senior representatives of companies involved in the MICE (meetings, incentive, conferences and events) industry, who organise international conferences, meetings and large-scale incentive events.

They were invited to the province to inspect some of the meeting facilities and accommodation on offer in Belfast, as well as to sample some of the great experiences that delegates can enjoy on the sidelines of their conference.

Tourism is responsible for in excess of 4.9% of GDP in Northern Ireland and supports approximately 40,000 jobs. Approximately 1.4 million overseas visitors came to Northern Ireland in 2010, delivering revenue of approximately £210 million.

The guest's itinerary, designed by the Northern Ireland Tourist Board, included a walking tour of the Titanic Quarter as well as a visit to the Lyric Theatre and Queen's University. They also had the chance to sample some of Northern Ireland's top-quality, locally-produced food at the Belfast Cookery School.

Tourism Ireland chief executive Niall Gibbons warmly welcomed the new bmibaby service, which will certainly help boost tourism business from the Dutch market to Northern Ireland.

He said: "We look forward to working closely with bmibaby to maximise the promotion of this new route in the Netherlands. Tourism Ireland is committed to working with bmibaby, Belfast City Airport and other tourism interests to drive demand for this new service, and all other services to Northern

Ireland, and to help maintain our vital network of routes and services.

"Familiarisation trips such as this are a great way for us to showcase Northern Ireland to decision-makers involved in the area of business tourism in the Netherlands. Business tourism is an important, high yield sector and Tourism Ireland is working hard to promote Belfast and Northern Ireland as a premier destination for conferences and large-scale events.

This visit was also a great opportunity to tell the visiting group about the many exciting events planned for Northern Ireland under the banner of 'NI 2012'. With the opening of iconic new tourist attractions like Titanic Belfast and the Giant's Causeway Visitor Centre next year, 'NI 2012' is a wonderful opportunity to showcase Northern Ireland."



Pictured under the November blue skies outside the Queen's University Lanyon Building and at the Belfast Cookery School are Dutch MICE guests with Karen van der Horst, Tourism Ireland.

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

Amsterdam joins in easyJet success



easyJet's first flight from Belfast was from the International Airport to Luton in September 1998. Since then it has been progress all the way – and Amsterdam is part of the success story.

The success is clearly indicated by the recent expansion of easyJet's Belfast - Amsterdam daily service to 10 flights per week (20 return flights). There are now two flights on Monday, Friday and Sunday with fares from £23.99, one way including taxes.

Ali Gayward, easyJet commercial manager, said: "The Belfast to Amsterdam service has been a big attraction for the travelling public, particularly the business community.

"After ten great years of flying the route, we are delighted to be able to offer further choice to customers by adding these extra flights.

" We are aware of the strong business links between Northern Ireland and the Netherlands and are fully committed to

helping people do business by delivering a great travel option with affordable fares."

easyJet has revolutionised low cost air travel on its way to becoming Northern Ireland's largest airline, and there are now 22 direct routes from Belfast. Internationally, the airline has a fleet of 200 aircraft spanning 30 different countries.

Speaking about the business offering, Ali Gayward said: "We are very grateful for the support we have been given by the business community and have created a package for business people that includes flexibility, flights frequency and high-quality service."

The introduction of easyJet's new Flexi fares gives business passengers unlimited

flexibility to change the date of their flights up to two hours before the scheduled departure time, and up to three weeks after the original booking.

The Flexi fares also include speedy boarding, no-booking fees and a checked-in hold bag at no extra cost.

The Flexi fares will stay true to easyJet's commitment to low fares, with prices starting at £99.99...far cheaper than those offered by the legacy carriers.

easyJet's new Flexi fares are now available on easyJet.com