



REVIEW OF 2019

Capital Project

The refurbishment of the ground floor of the Museum was completed this year, on budget and in an acceptable time frame. The ground floor now has a more contemporary look.

Visitor Numbers

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Jan	223	250	257	215	0
Feb	288	432	335	388	0
Mar	966	1158	1070	928	1218
Apr	1005	1055	1547	1325	1605
May	1490	1320	1747	1964	1980
Jun	1690	1657	2201	1970	2529
Jul	2592	2494	2411	2752	2822
Aug	3507	3219	3182	3484	3188
Sep	1694	2298	2064	2293	1963
Oct	1237	999	1309	1423	1357
Nov	334	229	302	0	609
Dec	199	274	285	0	172
TOTAL	15,225	15,385	16,710	16,742	17,443

Visitor numbers were satisfactory for the year; a 4.2% increase from 2018. The increase was entirely in the first part of the year. March to July was up 13.5% on the same period in 2018; August to October was down by 10%. Part of this is the continuing decline in visitors for Heritage Day, 17th August, (345/220) and Culture Night, 20th Sep (300/224). The comparatively high number in November reflects the fact that we opened every day for the month, as opposed to weekends only in previous years. The low numbers for December continues the decline evident in the second half of the year.



Places of origin of visitors

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Irish	23.86	23.33	22.03	18.93	20.08
GB	13.45	14.84	15.72	14.16	14.46
German	15.73	13.82	13.56	11.00	9.08
French	9.63	12.10	10.93	8.08	7.41
Spanish	6.07	4.99	6.27	5.44	6.15
Italian	2.37	1.97	2.24	2.27	5.5
Other European	5.6	5.85	5.75	6.92	8.39
North American	15.81	16.67	16.53	25.52	20.4
Other	5.06	7.44	6.97	7.69	6.92

As in previous years, just over half (55%) of our visitors come from Ireland, Britain and North America. There has been a proportionate decline in American visitors from 2018 but the trend over time is positive. The decline in Germans as a proportion of visitors since 2015 is of note but the proportion of Europeans has remained more or less the same between 2015 (39%) and 2019 (37%).

Visitor Survey

The survey was conducted in the last two weeks in August and the first two weeks in September. As with last year, the response rate was 15%, which was low. As in previous years, it is the Spanish and Italian visitors who respond least positively to the Museum, presumably for reasons of culinary culture. The reasons given for visiting the Museum are as in previous years, with a more or less even split between people in the city visiting everything, the curious and those with an historical or culinary interest.

The sources of information are the most striking results, with the decline in the use of the Guidebook and the increasing reliance on the internet. Word of mouth is also good.

1. Would you recommend the Museum to someone else?

%	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Yes	65	72	75	70	83	79
Perhaps	27	20	19	22	14	14
No	8	8	7	8	3	7

	English speakers	German	French	Italian	Spanish
% responding Yes	85	81	75	65	60

Why did you visit the Museum?

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Curious	23	37	39	22	26	23

Interested in Food and Butter	20	35	36	23	24	23
In Cork to see all the sights	27	35	28	21	20	22
Interested in History	23	34	39	21	20	21
Told it was worth seeing	4	9	8	8	9	8
Other	4	7	5	7	4	3

How did you find out about the Museum?

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Guide Book	41	37	31	21	18	17
Passing By	15	14	10	7	11	9
Tourist Office	9	13	13	7	8	8
Internet	12	12	20	21	27	32
Word of Mouth	11	12	14	15	16	15
Accommodation Leaflet	10	8	8	9	8	9
Tour Bus	7	4	4	7	3	4
Other Visitor Centre	1	3	2	3	2	1
Other	5	3	5	7	5	4

Tours and Demonstrations

Butter making demonstrations began in mid-April. There were 57 demonstrations in 2019, as opposed to 65 in 2018. The largest single attendance was 41 but there was no need this year to put on extra demonstrations to cope with large numbers. Average attendance in the second quarter was 27, in the third quarter 39. We continued the Saturday demonstrations into November and December for 2019.

WE had 36 tours in 2019, as opposed to 45 in 2018. The 2018 figure was in part due to a German tour group which sent us seven tours. Fourteen of the tours were from primary schools. The remaining were either adults or university students. Groups came from Ireland, France, Italy and the United States.

Events

We hosted the launch of the Old Butter Roads Food Festival in late April and participated in the Festival, in Watergrasshill, in June at which Don and Dominic did some butter making.

We also participated in the Lifelong Learning Festival, also in April. This year, rather than the usual guided tours of the Museum, we did a butter related puppet show which was greatly enjoyed by those who attended. Attendance was very modest, perhaps deterred by the requirement to book. I also took a group on a walking tour of Shandon, though the weather was not very good.

The Museum participated in the Heritage Day in August and Culture Night in September, offering free admission for both events. We also made butter as part of **Dig the Past**, a food archaeology event organised by the Dr Katharina Becker from the Dept of Archaeology in UCC held in the Cork Public Museum on the 27th of September.

The Butter Museum loaned a number of items for the exhibition marking the centenary of Mitchelstown Co-op held at Dairygold in Mitchelstown which was held in September.

The most significant event was the performance of the dance piece *IM-I AM* choreographed and performed by Sara Hernandez, in fulfilment the requirement of the Per Cent for Art scheme to commission or purchase a piece of art. It was a significant investment on the part of the museum, both financially and organisationally, but the performance was a success and has exposed new possibilities for the museum as a cultural venue. We will have a video copy of the performance for our use.

PR & Publicity

The Museum also took part in the RDS Holiday Show in late January as one of a number of city visitor attractions on the Visit Cork stand. The exercise was of limited value, but it was important that the city visitor attractions be seen to be take part. I was also invited to, and attended, the launch of Ornua's new social media videos in Dublin on the 12th February.

Tourism Ireland sent a video crew from a US group called In The Know who work entirely in social media with 44m followers, apparently. They were doing an item on Irish food. Bord Bia also sent an English journalist doing an item on butter to visit the Museum. This latter resulted in a mention for the Museum in the Guardian of the 27th March, which was reprinted in the Irish Times. A number of Dutch and Swedish journalists visited the Museum under the aegis of Fáilte Ireland. Bord Bia organised a visit to the Museum from Anoothi Vishal, a food/food business journal from India. We also received mention in a Microsoft News item on food museums around the world and in a similar article in an online magazine from Vancouver called Basenotes. The links have been posted on our website.

Exhibition and Conservation

The completion of the capital project necessitated a complete repainting and a new installation of the downstairs exhibition, which is still in process. We were successful in getting funding from the Department of Culture for the creation of an animation of the process of butter making. The piece has been completed and is in the process of installation in the exhibition area. The framing and hanging of the butter wrapper collection is ongoing. There are now 59 wrappers on display. The roof in the shed in the back yard has been repaired and the shed is now used as a reception area for artefacts, prior to conservation and processing.

Almost all the collection has been condition surveyed, described and item numbered

Over the year the Museum acquired a number of items

Metal tabletop churn; purchase
Glass flywheel tabletop churn; purchase from Clonakilty
Ceramic Crock; purchase
Flatpack Rathmore butter box, unused; purchase
Black Swan Butter box; purchase Mike Carey
Upholstered butter box; donation
Millvale butter box; donation
Keeler; purchase Victor Mee auction

Ceramic slipware crock; purchase Victor Mee
Mechanical Separator; private purchase

Administration

All staff have now been Garda vetted. A Safety Statement has been prepared and lodged with the Health and Safety Authority. The Board of the Company is engaged with the Charities Governance Code and would expect to be fully compliant by the end of 2020.

The fire alarm and emergency lighting systems have been upgraded, staff have been trained in the use of fire extinguishers and related procedures and a more robust fire safety routine introduced.

Opening times are being reviewed to reflect the difficulty in getting lunchtime cover.

Peter Foynes
Feb 2020