



REVIEW OF 2020

SUMMARY

The Covid 19 pandemic was, unsurprisingly, the defining feature of 2020. The museum was closed to the public from March to June and for the months of October and November. For the months that the Museum was open, visitor numbers were a fraction of previous years. There were no tours, butter making demonstrations, lectures or other organised events during the year. The year-on-year decline in visitor numbers was just over 88%; 17,443 as opposed to 2,153. This seems to have been the general trend across the city visitor attractions.

The pandemic also involved additional costs for the Museum. The acquisition of PPE, modifying the exhibition and the museum space, and work on the website to offer an alternative point of access to the museum's cultural resource all had cost implications. Additional financial support from the Department of Culture and reduced costs, associated with reduced activity, mitigated the impact of the substantial loss of visitor income.

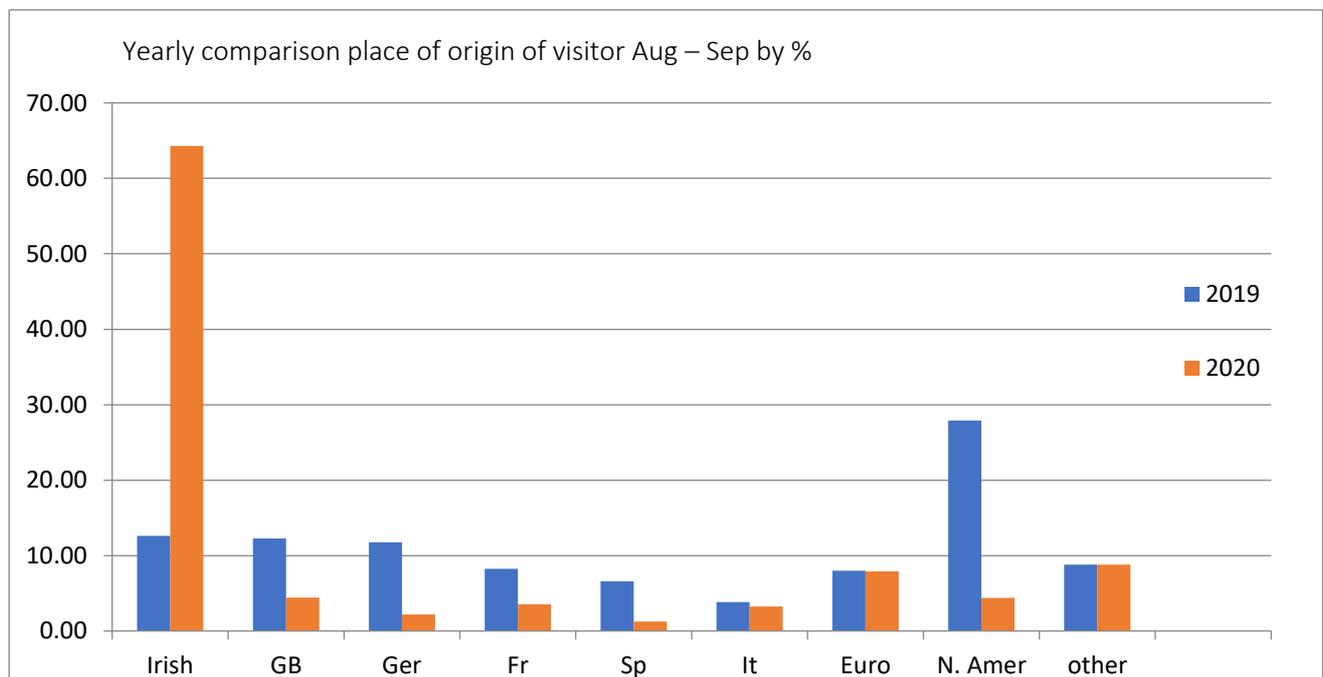
The year was not without its positive aspects. All staff remained healthy and we believe that visitors had a safe experience. Progress was made on conservation of the collection and the creation of an up-to-date digital catalogue. There were a number of acquisitions of both objects and documents to add to the museum's collections. Work on upgrading the fire safety infrastructure continued. The 2019 refurbishment has been nominated for the EUMies, a prestigious European architecture award. Perhaps most significantly for the future the museum has developed an expertise in digital production, exemplified in the videos on aspects of the museum's collection and dairy history that have been produced since March.

The Museum's level of activity through the year and the prospects for the coming year are far better than could have been anticipated on the outbreak of the pandemic.



VISITOR NUMBERS

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	% change
Jan	250	257	215	Closed due to Capital Project	209	
Feb	432	335	388	Closed due to Capital Project	368	
Mar	1158	1070	928	1218	250	20.53
Apr	1055	1547	1325	1605	Closed due to Pandemic	0.00
May	1320	1747	1964	1964	Closed due to Pandemic	0.00
Jun	1657	2201	1970	2529	Closed due to Pandemic	0.00
Jul	2494	2411	2752	2822	413	14.64
Aug	3219	3182	3485	3188	536	16.81
Sep	2298	2064	2293	1963	327	16.66
Oct	999	1309	1397	1357	Closed due to Pandemic	
Nov	229	302	Closed due to Capital Project	609	Closed due to Pandemic	
Dec	274	285	Closed due to Capital Project	172	50	29.00
	15,385	16,710	16,717	17,427	2,153	12.35



We would have expected that, in the July to December period, over 80% of our visitors would be from overseas. In fact, visitors in the period were predominantly (65%) Irish. While we did not conduct a Visitor Survey this year, it was apparent that many of the non-Irish visitors were resident in Ireland. The actual decline in Irish visitors was not a great compared to the overall decline of 86%. In July 2019, for example, we had 409 Irish visitors: in July 2020 we had 355 Irish visitors, a decline of 14%. This comparatively small decline was not enough to mitigate the overall decline in visitor numbers. This simply emphasises the point that the largest part of our market is from overseas.

We were able to open for Culture Night on 18 September but we had only three visitors, as opposed to 224 in 2019. We did, however, create a digital event for Culture Night, of which more later.

COVID

The Covid19 pandemic required responses on a number of different levels. A staff manual was prepared based on the voluminous advice available from various official sources. PPE and cleaning materials were acquired and a cleaning routine introduced. Exhibits had to be modified: headphones on audio devices replaced with speakers; visitor activated audio material was either looped and/or subtitled to remove the necessity for a visitor to touch the device. The children's farm and the Print your own Butter Wrapper facility were both removed. The layout of the exhibition area was modified. The orientation of the video area was changed to allow for adequate social distancing. This modification greatly reduced the number of people who could watch the video at any one time, from 25 to 12.



View of the film viewing area with reduced seating capacity

A one-way system was introduced, and social distancing and directional markings were placed on the floor. The bathroom doors were modified to admit only one person at a time. Two fixed hand sanitiser points were introduced with three more sanitising points available through the museum. A large sign was placed outside the door advising visitors of the changed conditions of entry. The

Museum applied for and received Fáilte Ireland's Covid Safety Charter.

For the month of July two staff were always on duty which required us to close on Mondays. As events progressed over the summer, the wearing of masks became mandatory and contact details were taken. With one exception, visitors had no difficulty either of these requirements. In practice, the very low visitor numbers made visitor management very straightforward, but this could not have been anticipated at the planning stage.



View of the downstairs exhibition area with social distance markings

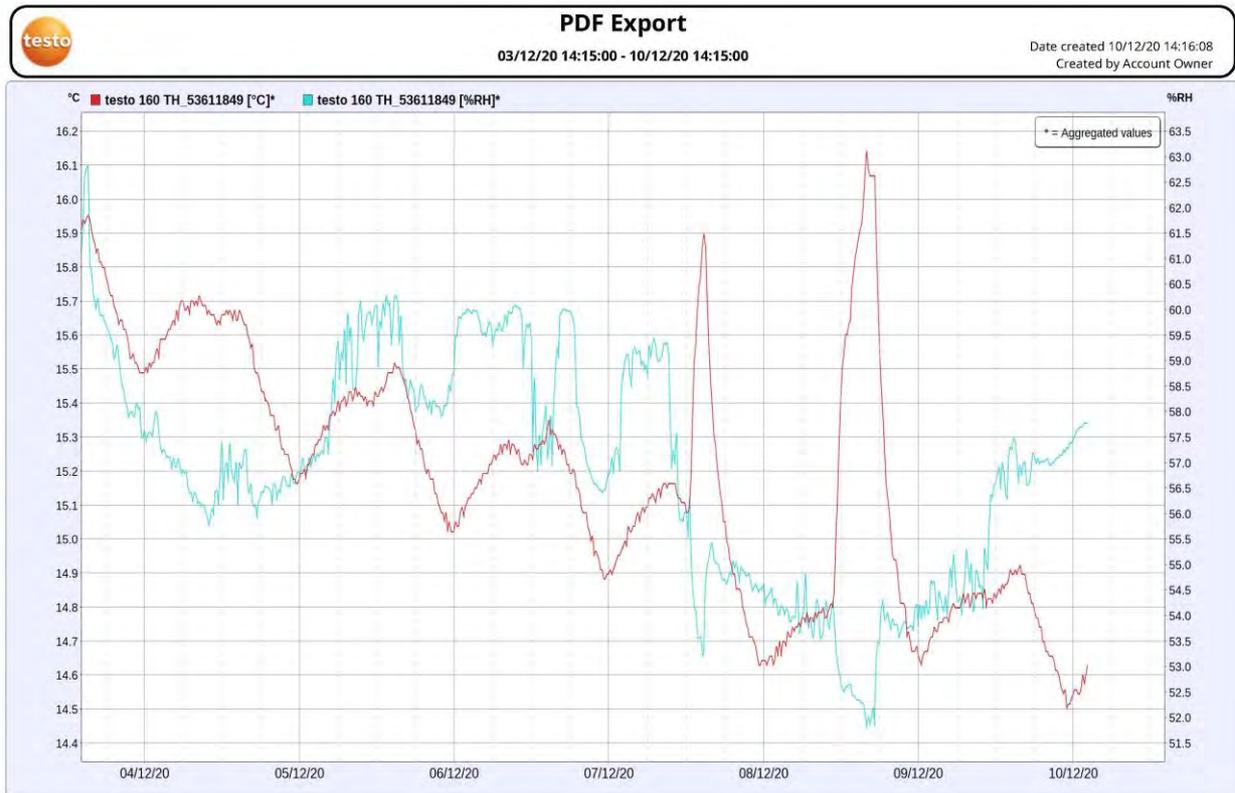
CONSERVATION/COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT

We have created the skeleton of a digital catalogue of the collection. More input needs to be done to the database and its structure refined but the basic work has been done. A storage area has now been created and laid out for the items not on display. Work has begun on listing the collection of creamery related documents. Wooden items acquired since the last major conservation project in 2016 have been sent for freezing to the National Museum. These will return in 2021 and may be added to the exhibition.



Wooden artefacts being packed in preparation for freezing to kill any dormant woodworm larvae

A digital temperature/humidity monitor has been installed on the ground floor which allows the atmospheric conditions to be monitored and recorded. Two more will be installed upstairs.



Printout from the Meaco environmental monitoring device showing temperature and humidity

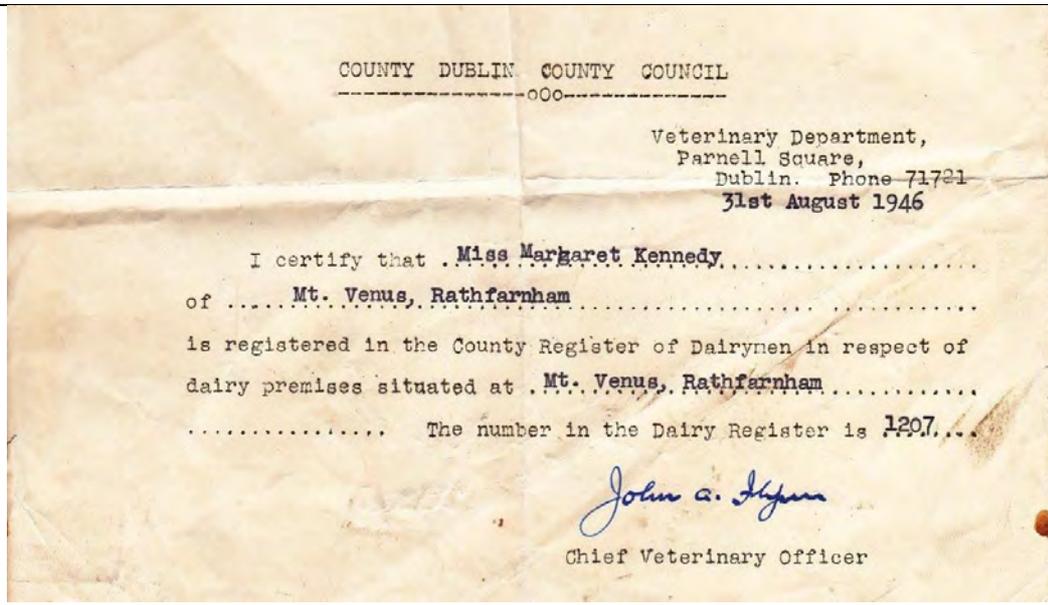
Don Humphreys began a programme of cleaning some of the metal artefacts, which he did from home.

DIGITAL PROGRAMME

The Museum has started a programme of digitisation to allow access to the museum’s resources when the premises is closed. This began with the digitisation of a number of historic trade catalogues that we held. These were an early 20th-century catalogue from Alfa Laval, one of similar date from the Dairy Engineering Company of Ireland and a late 1920s promotional booklet from the Condensed Milk Company of Ireland. We also extracted two sets of early 20th-century photographs from the journal of the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction. One set was on early butter packaging and the second on early creamery interiors. The website was modified and the material uploaded for public viewing.

We also produced a series of short videos intended for both the website and for dissemination via Twitter. The subject matter of the videos looks at both the museum’s collection and that aspect of the history of dairying in Ireland. The programme is ongoing.

Twitter Videos	
The Travelling Creamery	The Parchment Butter Wrapper
The Condensed Milk Company of Ireland (Cleeves)	Tinned Butter
The Glass Butter Churn	The Coming of the Creamery
The 20 Gallon Churn	Cork’s Butter Trade
Setting Pans	Butter Boxes
Aunt Maggie’s Churn	

 <p>COUNTY DUBLIN COUNTY COUNCIL -----000----- Veterinary Department, Parnell Square, Dublin. Phone 71721 31st August 1946</p> <p>I certify that Miss Margaret Kennedy..... of Mt. Venus, Rathfarnham..... is registered in the County Register of Dairymen in respect of dairy premises situated at Mt. Venus, Rathfarnham..... The number in the Dairy Register is 1207....</p> <p><i>John A. Hyman</i> Chief Veterinary Officer</p>	<p>Certificate of Miss Margaret Kennedy, who was entered into the the Dublin County Register of Dairymen in 1946. Miss Kennedy’s churn, now in the Museum’s collection features in a video</p>
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For Culture Night, the 18th of September, we produced a 40 minute video with Dr Claudia Kinmonth which focused on the object types in the museum’s collection. Dr Kinmonth is the author of the standard work on Irish country furniture.



Claudia Kinmonth describing the aluminium ware collection in the Museum, part of the Museum’s Culture Night offering

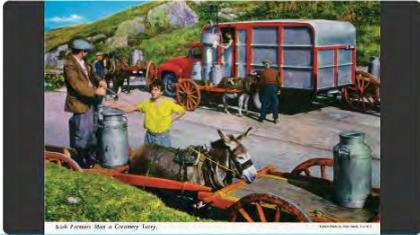
Culture Night Video	
Upholstered Butter Boxes	Firkins and Butter Boxes
Crocks	Piggins & Noggins
Butter Working Bowls	Butter Stamps

The Museum also produced a short children’s video for Cruinniu, called *Basher makes Butter*, featuring the puppet Basher. Dominic Moore, normally covers the desk at the weekends, was instrumental in the production of these videos and the Museum is greatly indebted to him. All the videos are on our Vimeo page and are being rotated through our website;

<https://vimeo.com/thebuttermuseum>.



23 videos



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Cleaves of the CMCI



Tinned Butter

Cremer, Creameris, -ry, var. of CRAMER, CRAMERY, Sr., pedlar, etc.
Creamery (krēmēri). [f. CREAM + -ERY: in sense 2 certainly, and in sense 1 possibly immediately ad. F. *crèmerie*]
 1. An establishment (often worked on the co-operative or joint-stock principle) in which butter (and cheese) is manufactured on a large scale from milk supplied by a number of producers; a butter-factory. Also the work of such an establishment, the making of butter, etc. (First used in U.S.)
 1879 *title* Associated Dairying: Creameries and Creamery. Butter, Cheese and Cheese-making. 12mo. pp. 74. *Lancaster Pa.*. 1882 *Chicago Times* 16 Apr. The creamery is fast superseding the dairy in all thickly settled por-

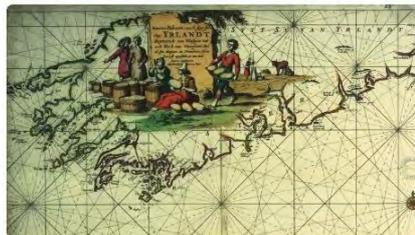
The Coming of the Creamery



Table Top Churns



Milk Cans



Cork's Butter Trade



Butter Boxes



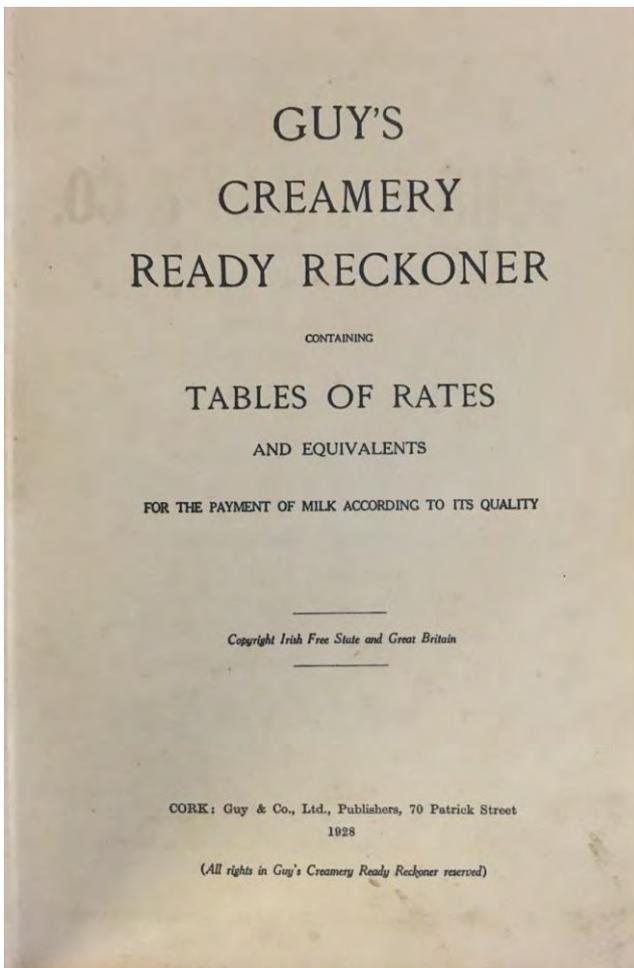
Leak Pans

Screenshot from the Museum's Vimeo page showing some of the short videos created during the year.

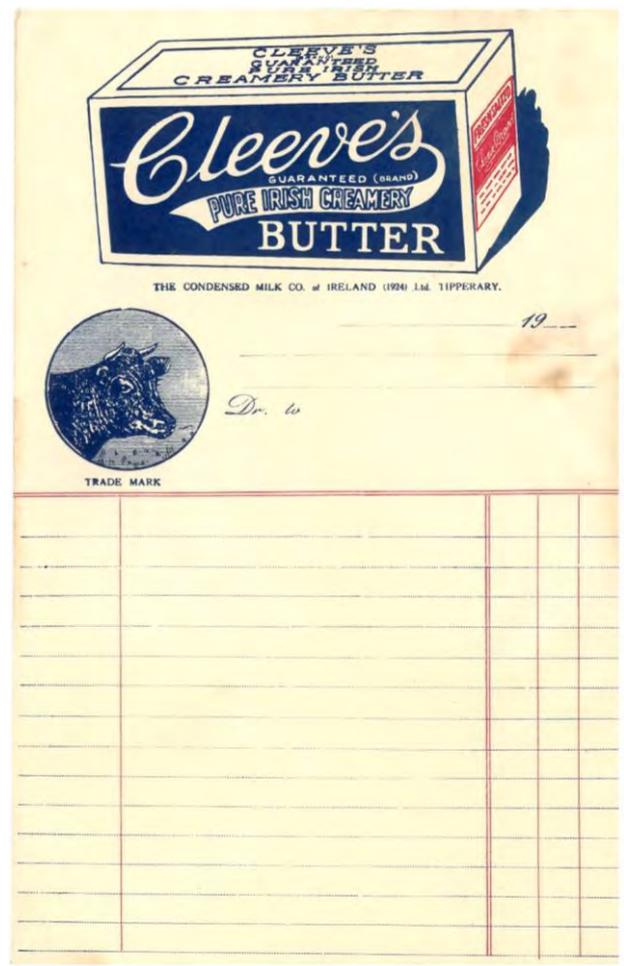
EXHIBITION

There was little direct work done on the exhibition this year, other than the rearrangement necessary to meet the requirements of visitor safety and social distancing. However, some of the videos produced will be used to enhance the existing exhibition or to create new exhibits. We have also done some preparatory work for new exhibits on the Glass Tabletop churns and on the Gerber Test, a test that was used to check the butterfat content in milk.

We also acquired two important books. The first is *Guy's Creamery Ready Reckoner*, which was the standard reckoner used by creamery managers to pay farmers on the basis of their milk's butterfat content. It is now a very rare item. The second is Lyons and O'Shea's 1950 *Commercial Methods of Testing Milk*, once a standard textbook but now also a rare item.

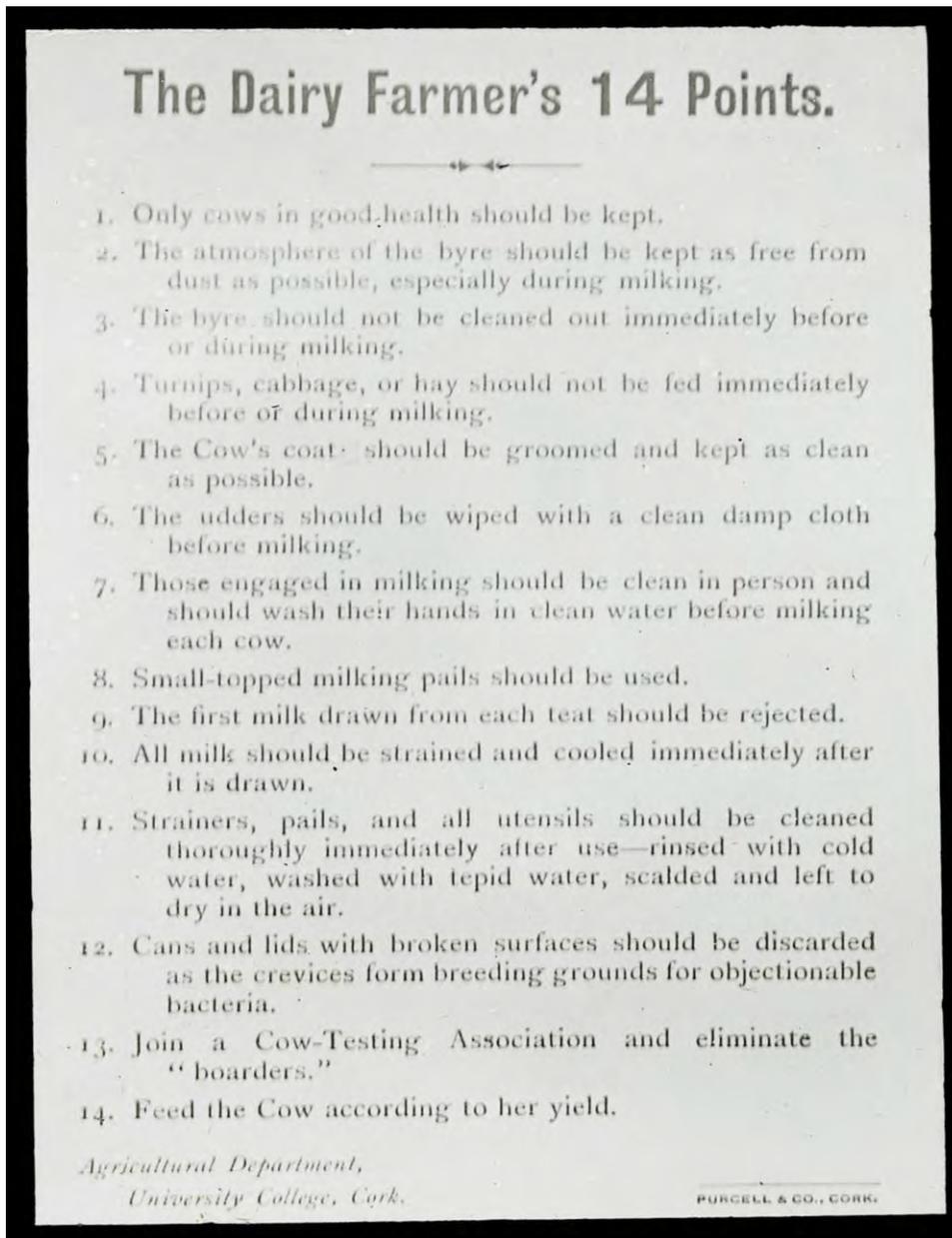


Title page from *Guy's Creamery Ready Reckoner* which was acquired this year.



Sample of office paper from the Condensed Milk Company's Tipperary premises. c.1926

We also came across a set of sixty-six glass plate negatives of dairy scenes and material in UCC. These came from the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction. They may have come to UCC when part of the educational function of the Department was transferred to the Department of Education in 1924. It seems these negatives were used in the Journal of the DATI. We have scans of similar material but these are the first glass plate negatives of the series to come to light and are an important find.



A slide from the collection of glass plate negatives in UCC. The allusion to the "Fourteen Points" is almost certainly a reference to Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points to end the First World War, published in 1917. The attribution to the "Agriculture Department, University College, Cork" suggests that the pamphlet is prior to the creation of the Dairy Science Faculty in UCC in late 1926

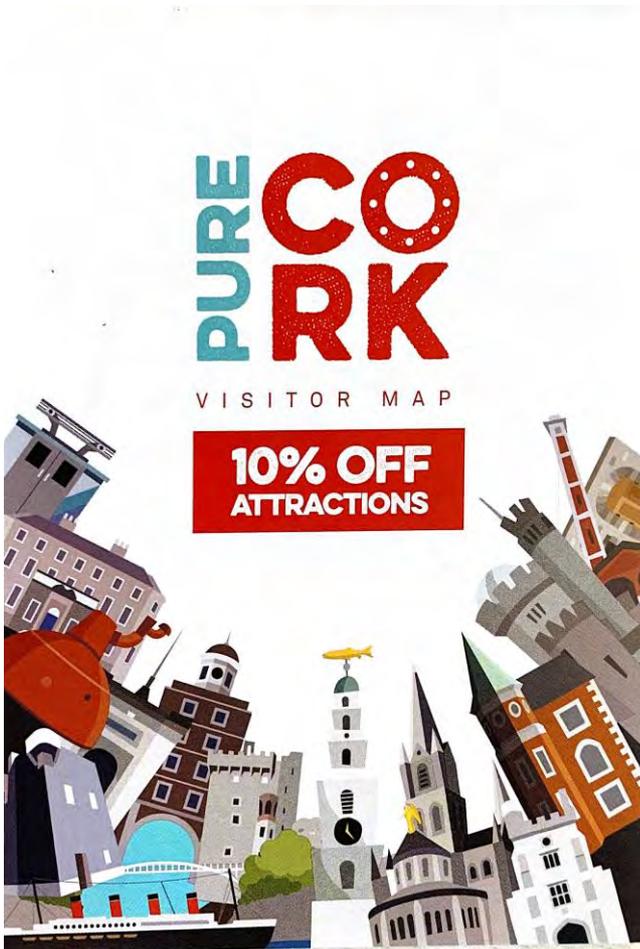
ACQUISITIONS

End over glass churn	acquired at auction	 A clear glass churn with a black metal frame and a black handle, sitting on a white surface.
Two ceramic crocks	acquired at auction	 Two ceramic crocks, one dark and one light, sitting on a white shelf.
Butter bowl	acquired at auction	 A large, shallow, light-colored ceramic butter bowl.
Butter Print	Private purchase	 A circular, dark-colored butter print with a central floral design.

Maypole Dairy Butter Crock	Private Purchase	
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OTHER MATTERS

The Schools Project was, understandably, in abeyance for the year. The material was reviewed by an expert in the field and some deficiencies in the work were identified. This will have to be addressed in 2021. The upgrade of the fire safety infrastructure is ongoing and we remain in dialogue with the Department of Culture on the matter. The Historic Spine project has foundered due, in part, to personnel changes among the partners. The journey to Governance Code compliance is largely completed, though it was delayed by the exceptional events of 2020. All necessary paperwork has been filed with the Companies Office and with the Charities Regulator. Accounts have been transferred to SAGE software. After an eighteen month saga, the lift has finally been fixed. The Museum also participated in a city wide discount brochure which was issued in the summer. The Museum also featured in a short video on Cork city attractions that ran early in the year.



City wide promotions brochure.

Peter Foyne, January, 2021