

## REVIEW OF 2017

### Visitor Numbers & Survey

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	% change	
January	168	252	223	250	257	102.8	
February	296	243	288	432	335	77.55	90.17
March	1,041	855	966	1,158	1,070	92.40	
April	918	1,149	1,005	1,055	1,547	146.64	118.01
May	1,423	1,343	1,490	1,320	1,747	132.35	
June	1,475	1,565	1,690	1,657	2,201	132.83	133
July	1,849	2,255	2,592	2,494	2,411	96.67	
August	2,726	2,993	3,507	3,219	3,182	98.85	97.76
September	1,823	1,753	1,694	2,298	2,064	89.82	
October	1,090	1,111	1,237	999	1,309	131.03	110.42
November	110	347	334	229	302	131.88	
December	175	219	199	274	285	104.01	117.95
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>13,094</b>	<b>14,085</b>	<b>15,225</b>	<b>15,385</b>	<b>16,710</b>	<b>108.61</b>	

Visitor numbers are up 8.3% on last year. July and August were weak, due, I believe, to the good weather in July and lower numbers for Heritage Day in August. The off peak months were very good, other than September. which was weak, in part due to lower numbers for Culture Night. As the table below shows, the relative importance of July/August is declining, though we still receive one third of our visitors in those two months.

### Percentage of visitors in July/August

2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
39.32	37.13	34.94	37.26	40.06	37.13	34.04

## Visitor Income 2013 - 2017

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
<b>Admissions</b>	€32,717.00	€35,062.00	€35,918.81	€41,495.50	€45,391.50
<b>Aprons</b>	€332.00	€2,543.00	€1,960.98	€2,598.00	€886.00
<b>Cards</b>	€213.00	€435.50	€346.34	€480.00	€715.00
<b>Books</b>	€193.00	€1,487.00	€587.80	€976.50	€690.00

**TOTAL**                                      **€33,455.00**      **€39,527.50**      **€38,813.93**      **€45,550.00**      **€47,682.50**

The decline in apron sales is due to the loss of supply of aprons in August. This will have to be addressed in 2018.

## Visitors by place of origin

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Irish	25.60	24.67	23.86	23.33	22.03
GB	16.10	17.12	13.45	14.84	15.72
German	13.3	17.22	15.73	13.82	13.56
French	9.09	9.68	9.63	12.10	10.93
Spanish	8.39	6.74	6.07	4.99	6.27
Italian	3.63	1.07	2.37	1.97	2.24
Other European	5.03	3.73	5.6	5.85	5.75
North American	15.85	13.32	15.81	16.67	16.53
Other	5.72	5.81	5.06	7.44	6.97

## Visitor by type

	Full	Student	OAP	Child	Child under 12	Free	Tour
<b>2016</b>	39.55	27.18	14.91	1.40	12.43	5.11	
<b>2017</b>	34.79	24.93	16.63	1.51	9.06	2.92	10.19

Last year's figures excluded tours, so year on year figures are not directly comparable

## Survey

This year we collected data via a touch screen left in the upstairs corridor. I am giving two sets of data for 2017. The first (2017a) covers the last fortnight in August and the first in September, which is the normal data collection period and compares directly with other years. The second (2017b) covers the entire months of August and September. The response rate, 26%, was higher than other years when we used the paper survey, when the response rate was in the low 20s. The response rate for the two month period was 21%.

The touch screen system, however, is less amenable than the paper system identifying the frivolous response. A visitor who seemed familiar with touch screens and data collection told me that they attracted a younger demographic.

### Why did you visit the Butter Museum?

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017a	2017b
Curious	27	22.78	37.41	39.08	21.67	21.42
Interested in Food	37	20.17	35.41	36.4	22.86	24.62
In Cork to see all the sights	39	27.11	34.52	27.59	19.05	18.82
Interested in History	41	22.56	33.85	39.08	20.71	19.02
Told it was worth seeing	7	4.12	9.13	8.43	8.33	9.71
Other	4	3.25	7.17	4.6	7.38	6.41

### How did you hear about the Butter Museum?

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017a	2017b
Guide Book	29.1	41.3	37.19	30.65	20.37	22.02
Passing By	16.9	15.18	13.5	9.96	10.65	9.68
Tourist Office	13	8.54	12.69	13.03	6.02	7.14
Internet	13.04	11.71	12.02	20.31	21.53	21.3
Word of Mouth	11.7	11	11.58	13.79	14.58	14.58
Accommodation Leaflet	5.65	10.44	7.79	8.43	9.26	9.17
Tour Bus	7.82	6.96	4.23	3.83	6.71	6.42
Other Visitor Centre	1.3	0.95	3.11	1.53	3.94	2.96
Other	7.82	5.38	2.67	5.36	6.94	6.73

### Would you recommend the Museum to someone else?

%	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017a	2017b
Yes	70	65	72	75	70	71
Perhaps	18	27	20	18.5	21	23
No	12	8	8	7	9	6

### Activities & Events

We had seventy butter making demonstrations and forty six tours during the year. Of the tours, fourteen were primary school children, twelve Transition Year students and the remainder 3rd level students or adults. Groups came from the US, Germany, France and the UK. This was the first year that we had Transition Year

students and it seems to have been a success.

The annual lecture was held in October, with Aidan Cotter speaking. The audience was modest, but the event was well received and the process of publicising the event is important in our maintaining our visibility in the industry.

We also had a food event, "A Bread and Butter Day" of discussions and making of bread and butter. Our capacity for food production and audience numbers is limited, but the event was regarded as a success and I hope to have an annual food themed event, combining production and discussion. The event was organised in association with the Old Butter Roads Food Trail, which is a group of food producers and restaurants in the North Cork area. I look forward to a continuing relationship with this group which gives us an entrée into both food and rural circles.

The Museum was also present at the "National Treasures" day at the Glucksman Gallery on the 29th of October. The event was of limited value, though I renewed an acquaintance with Tony Candon, Keeper of the Folk Life Division in the National Museum.



*Butter making at the Cork Public Museum as part of Heritage Day*

I gave tours of both the Museum and the Shandon area as part of the Lifelong Learning Festival in April. We also offered free admission as part of Heritage Week and Culture night, as well as participating in a UCC organised food event at the Public Museum on Heritage Day in August. I also spoke on the history of the butter trade to an event organised by Goodbody Stockbrokers for their clients.

## **Exhibition, Acquisitions, Conservation**

### **Exhibition**

Last year saw the most significant alteration to the exhibition since the Museum opened. One of the large exhibition cases was removed and more artefacts left in open space. This seems to be working well. The National Museum returned its material to the Museum early in the year. This year we have begun to frame the butter wrapper collection, a process which is almost halfway completed. We have also begun the updating of the video. The Department of Culture agreed to fund €10,000 of the cost, with Ornuá meeting the remainder. This is a very significant development, as the video is a central part of the exhibition and its age was becoming apparent even to those unfamiliar with the industry. We await agreement from the Department of Culture on our revised proposals for the refurbishment of the downstairs area.

### **Acquisitions**



*Unusual butter print with crown motif*

Waide No. 5 endover churn	Private; provenance documented
2 x Butter spades	Bought on Done Deal; owner known, photo supplied
2 x Butter boxes, one upholstered, the other partially so	Bought in an antiques shop, Blackrock, Co. Dublin
Butter stamp, crown motif (illustrated)	Auction at Victor Mee
Centenary butter poster	Auction at Victor Mee
2 x butter scoops	Auction at Victor Mee
Stool made from Butter Box	Donation, Ray Farrell, Co. Kerry
2 x box churns	Auction at Victor Mee
Butter box with factory number	Bought on Adverts.ie, provenance known
Wooden table top churn	Bought at Castledermot Festival,
Metal Diabolo churn	Bought privately, Gorey, Co. Wexford
Box churn Dairy Engineering Company of Ireland	Private purchase, provenance known

### Conservation

There has not been as much progress as I would have wished towards a formal conservation policy, but many of the necessary elements are in hand. A condition survey of the collection is in process and I am confident that the situation has not disimproved in the year. A programme of treatment of the wooden artefacts is ongoing. Acquisitions are quarantined until freezing can be arranged. The National Museum have agreed to allow to their freezer, though we have yet to work out the costs and the logistics of this.

We have also begun the marking of the artefacts as a means of identification. I have resisted marking the artefacts for some time, but other systems have not proven durable.

# Marketing and Publicity

We had a double page spread in the Farming Independent in August.



The Museum is located in the Shandon district close to the former Cork Butter Exchange which prospered in the 1700s and 1800s  
PHOTOS: ROLAND PASCHHOFF

## CORK BUTTER WAS OUR FIRST GLOBAL BRAND

THE Butter Museum is aptly located beside the impressive entrance to the old Cork Butter Exchange. Although the buildings date from the mid-19th century, the exchange was established in 1769 to regulate the burgeoning butter business out of Cork port.

Exports of butter out of Ireland had been steadily increasing from the late 1600s, but had grown significantly during the economic boom of the 18th century. Dairy produce provided much of the Gaelic diet and 17th century sources talk of people producing an array of sweet, sour, thick and thin drinks from milk.

In addition, salted and unsalted butters were a staple food, as well as a variety of cheeses. In fact, the English visitor, John Stevens, described the Irish in 1690 as "the greatest lovers of milk" he ever saw.

As the 18th century progressed, dairy farming became increasingly prevalent in Munster, with the primary produce being butter for export. This was transported to Cork in 56lb barrels called firkins.

The trade out of Cork was controlled by the Butter Exchange which was run by a Committee of Merchants. The members of this body undertook not to engage in the shipment of butter unless it had been publicly inspected, graded and branded.

This code of regulations was enforced by means of fines and possible expulsion from the trade where necessary.

"The Cork merchants were the first people in the modern period to grade food before selling it," museum director Peter Foynes points out.

Their efforts ensured that Cork butter was Ireland's first global brand. By the early decades of the 1800s the Exchange virtually monopolised the butter trade with the West Indies and Brazil, with Cork butter also developing lucrative markets in Britain and Australia.

It was supplied by more than 70,000 farmers and sales totalled around 400,000 firkins a year, valued at around €1.5m in 1875.

However, the development of the mechanical milk separator in 1879 heralded the beginning of the end for the Cork Butter Exchange.

The variable nature of Irish hand-made butter was no match for the consistent quality of Danish creamery product, and Irish exporters steadily lost market share on the vital British market. The seasonality of Irish supplies was a further problem.

The Cork Butter Exchange continued into the 20th century but was overtaken by developments in the industry – such as the development of the co-operative creameries and the continued fall-off in exports to Britain – and finally closed in 1924.



Clover Queen, an orange-coloured cooking butter, was produced for the Caribbean market. It was discontinued in 2001, ending a butter-trading connection between Cork city and the West Indies that had existed since the 1690s

## Enhancing the visitor experience

THE Butter Museum is a non-profit institution. Operating costs are met through a combination of visitor revenue, funding from the Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (DAHRRA) and Cork City Council, and some industry support.

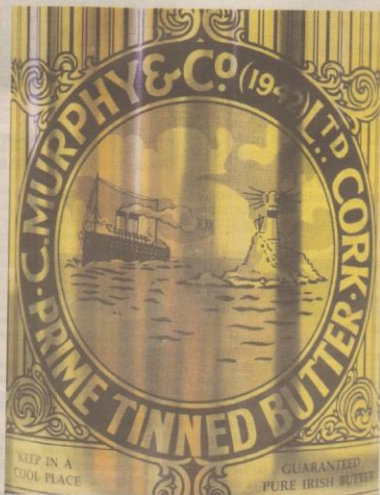
Now in its 20th year, the museum has embarked on an ambitious project designed to upgrade its food demonstration capacity and enhance the exhibition.

A grant from the DAHRRA will part-fund this development, and the museum is in the process of seeking matching funding from major dairy industry players.

"This refurbishment will allow us to move into the next decades confident that we are offering the visitor a quality experience and the dairy industry a museum that reflects its achievement," explained museum head Peter Foynes.



(above) Museum director Peter Foynes; (left) Anna Hosford – a granddaughter of Con Murphy of C. Murphy and Son Ltd, the Cork butter blenders – viewing the display of milk churns at the Butter Museum; (right) tinned butter from C. Murphy and Son, produced for hot climates and ships' provisions



Part of the double page coverage in the Farming Independent

Film crews from Japanese and Swedish television visited the Museum and I was interviewed by the Japanese crew. I have also an interview with the in-flight magazine for West Jet, a Calgary based airline. I also did an interview with Red Hare Media for a radio documentary yet to be broadcast and we received a passing mention in Edible Manhattan, a New York food magazine, as part of a wider piece on food in Ireland. We also had a stand in the Tourist Office promoting the butter making demonstration.

General marketing has followed established lines, using brochures distributed to Tourist Offices and accommodation centres. The Cork Heritage Circle, the loose association of city heritage attractions, has extended its membership which has given it a new vitality. As the visitor survey shows, brochures are a declining source of visitor information.

#### **% of visitors reporting Internet/Brochures as information source**

	Internet	Brochures
<b>2007</b>	4.75	33
<b>2012</b>	13.86	27
<b>2017</b>	21.53	15.28

There may be a bias towards a younger demographic in the 2107 data, but the change in ten years is marked. Our web presence will need to be re-visited in 2018. This is among the projects in the list that we sent to the Department of Agriculture.

#### **Administration & Maintenance**

The process by which the company has been renamed from a Limited to a Company Limited by Guarantee was completed this year. The company also registered the trading name "The Butter Museum". All public facing material, including the building exterior, e-mail addresses and website, have been rebranded "The Butter Museum", though the legal entity remains the "Cork Butter Museum CLG". The bank account needs to be changed to reflect the CLG status. Two members left the Board this year, Liam Downey and Pat Dawson and one new member joined, Michelle Cashman.

The front of the museum has also been repainted.





*Changing the signage after the repainting of the Museum's façade*

The long running difficulty between ourselves and the Girl Guides over access to the connecting door has been solved with the installation of a keypad operated magnetic lock on the door, funded by ourselves, the Guides and Cork City Council. The problem of water ingress from the roof via the Guides remains.

## **Conclusion**

There are quite a few positives from 2017. Visitor number growth is satisfactory. A pattern of demonstrations has been established and has a profile in the city. The appearance of the Museum has been refreshed. Funding from the Department of Culture for both the update of the video and the refurbishment of the ground floor gives the opportunity to move forward positively into its third decade. A revitalised Cork Heritage Circle offers new possibilities for co-operative marketing and joint project development. Funding from the Department of Agriculture opens the way to a more active web presence and to finally progressing the Schools Project. We have also acquired a number of items, particularly churns, to extend the collection.

On the less positive side, less has been achieved in enhancing the exhibition that had been hoped. Similarly, the conservation/accreditation programme is moving more slowly than is desirable. Positive visitor response is at the lower end of historic ranges, though year on year fluctuations are to be expected and the data

collection method may have affected the result. Nonetheless, the striking increase in the significance of the internet as an information source will need a response in marketing strategy.

Peter Foynes

Jan 2018