

REVIEW OF 2023

Visitors

The Butter Museum had its highest number of visitors, 18,986 in 2023. This is a 38% increase on 2022 and a 9% increase on our previous highest figure, which was 17,443 in 2019. This increase seems to be in large part due to the growth in American visitors, which was a national phenomenon. In the month of June, for example, American visitors exceeded Irish English German French and Spanish visitors. The attractiveness of the Butter Museum to this audience was undoubtedly enhanced by the popularity of the Kerrygold brand in the United States. Irish butter has an identity for American visitors and the Butter Museum has benefited from this.

Our other key performance indicator, the proportion of visitors who would recommend the visit to the Butter Museum, based on our annual survey was, at 86% also at an historic high. Particularly gratifying was the response of those who cited Word of Mouth as their motivation for visiting the Museum. Of this cohort, 98% said that they would recommend the Museum to someone else.

Numbers

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
January	215	0	209	0	210	416
February	388	0	368	0	225	491
March	928	1218	250		697	1021
April	1325	1605	0	0	1060	1393
May	1964	1980	0	169	1016	1633
June	1970	2529	0	398	1611	2331
July	2752	2822	413	576	1949	3086
August	3485	3188	536	990	2664	3553
September	2293	1963	791	791	1838	2739
October	1397	1357	33	725	1434	1311
November		609	0	429	684	829
December		172	0	91	302	183

	16717	17443	2600	4169	13690	18986

Place of Origin year on year

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2023
Irish	23.86	23.33	22.03	18.93	20.08	17.42
GB	13.45	14.84	15.72	14.16	14.46	14.42
German	15.73	13.82	13.56	11.00	9.08	10.08
French	9.63	12.10	10.93	8.08	7.41	4.42
Spanish	6.07	4.99	6.27	5.44	6.15	3.42
Italian	2.37	1.97	2.24	2.27	5.5	
Other European	5.6	5.85	5.75	6.92	8.39	7.08
North American	15.81	16.67	16.53	25.52	20.4	33
Other	5.06	7.44	6.97	7.69	6.92	9.75

Place of Origin by month 2023

	IR	GB	Ger	Fr	Sp	Eu	N America	Other		
January	28	12	10	2	3	0	20	25		
February	21	13	7	5	10	13	21	9		
March	21	13	10	3	2	6	38	5		
April	19	13	14	7	2	6	26	13		
May	11	13	12	4	2	3	45	11		
June	13	14	9	3	2	5	44	11		
July	15	16	11	7	3	6	33	10		
August	19	15	14	6	4	9	27	6		
September	10	16	10	4	2	5	43	10		
October	13	20	12	3	1	4	44	3		
November	23	14	10.8	6.4	3	3.1	4	5.7	35.1	610.3
December	16	14	3	3	7	24	20	8		

Visitor Survey Results

How did you hear about the Museum?

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2023
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Guide Book	37	31	21	18	17	20
Passing By	14	10	7	11	9	11
Tourist Office	13	13	7	8	8	7
Internet	12	20	21	27	32	36
Word of Mouth	12	14	15	16	15	20
Accommodation Leaflet	8	8	9	8	9	7
Tour Bus	4	4	7	3	4	4
Other Visitor Centre	3	2	3	2	1	1
Other	3	5	7	5	4	7

Why did you visit the Museum?

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2023
Curious	37	39	22	26	23	44
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

Would you recommend the Butter Museum to someone else?

%	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2023
Yes	72	75	70	83	79	86
Perhaps	20	19	22	14	14	13
No	8	7	8	3	7	1

Events and Activities

Butter Demonstrations resumed in June. There were forty-four butter making demonstrations in the year. There were twenty-nine tours and group visits, itemised below. Of particular interest was a group social media influencers brought to the Museum by Ornuá which resulted in extensive social media mention.

Group Visits	
Primary School	5
Language School	5
Tour Groups	3
Adult Education	3
Senior	4
Third Level	3
Secondary School	4
Cork Historical and Archaeological Soc	1

Ornua	1



Figure 1

Butter making demonstration; Miriam's began to do the butter making demonstrations this year.



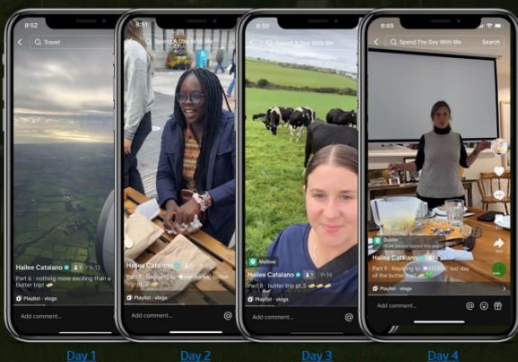
Images from the visit of American media organised by Ornuia (photography by Barry Cronin). Apart from the responses of the visitors, the visit resulted in mention of the Museum in the Irish Times. We are “surprisingly enthrallingr”

<https://www.irishtimes.com/life-style/people/2023/10/13/kerrygold-s-masterclass-in-modern-marketing-an-all-expenses-paid-trip-for-butter-influencers/>



SOCIAL COVERAGE HIGHLIGHT

Hailee Catalano (@haileecatalano) shared daily vlogs of the tour across her Instagram and Tik Tok channels resulting in 1MM+ views and tremendous engagement from her followers.



TIK TOK

695k Views	116k Likes	1k Comments	4k Shares
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INSTAGRAM

369k Views	25k Likes	400 Comments	1.4k Shares
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Figure 2 Social media coverage from the Ornuia visit.



Figure 3 Children from a Macroom primary school visit in October



Figure 4

Pupils from the local St Vincent's N.S. after a visit to the Museum

We also took part in a number of city wide and national events;

Lifelong Learning	2nd April
Cruinniú	11th May
Drinagh	30th July
Cork on a Fork	18th August
Heritage Day	19th August
Culture Night	22nd Sep



Figure 5 Cruinniú Na nÓg 2023.

This year we invited parents and children from Ukrainian families who are now living in the Shandon area. The event was a great success. This is an aspect of creating access and integration that we hope to develop in the future.



Figure 6 Cork on a Fork; The event was planned as an outdoor event in O'Connell Square.

The event was to feature butter making, breadmaking a talk on spiced beef from our local butcher James Nolan (just visible extreme left) and a selection of foods from the local Syrian restaurant, the Four Liars. Storm Betty meant that we had to move indoors. This last minute change notwithstanding, the event was a success.



Figure 7; visitors to the Museum on Culture Night. Culture Night this year was very busy with 437 visitors, as opposed to 132 visitors last year.

Digital and Web

The home page of our website was extensively remodelled in 2023 and a prepayment system added. We have also engage with Fáilte Ireland *Digital that Delivers*, a process that is ongoing.

A tot of 47 3D models sitting in draft form in the application Sketchfab. Most of the original artefacts are of wooden construction; the reflective and ceramic artefacts are in the process of being successfully digitised. The next step is to annotate the material models are ready to be annotated, completed with accompanying metadata and placed in their appropriate contexts.

Social Media

X' or the site formally known as Twitter has unfortunately descended into toxicity and it was decided to withdraw from posting on that platform for now. We still are present there and our follower numbers total 2.1k. We are posting on Instagram regularly where our follower number is now 993.

We are effectively 'letting go' Bluesky and 'Mastodon' as we have no real reach there and our presence there servers us little purpose.

Scanning

Our collaboration with UCC and their students continues. Dominic gave a lecture to the Digital Humanities Colloquium in November and this was appreciated by the Department. Our ties with the University will strengthen in this collaboration and we look forward to availing of some of the University's resources with our own digital work.

Artefact Photography

We have begun a process of artefact photography which originated as a by-product of the hundreds of photographs needed of artefacts that go into producing a 3D model. These are a welcome addition to our social media posts and have attracted an appreciative audience.

Marketing and Publicity

Our marketing during the year followed existing practice, with our main physical tool being out brochure. We also made adjustment to our homepage, of which more later.

We did, however, receive considerable media attention, in part associated with our campaign to seek out butter wrappers. This included two articles in the Farmers' Journal; one in January dealing with the Butter Museum in general, and one in May about the search for butter wrappers. In the same month, we provided an article for the Dairygold newsletter for their suppliers. This was featured on the back page and was well received. We also spoke briefly, in January, on The Joe Duffy Show in association with the centenary of the Kerrygold brand. In May we received coverage in the Irish Examiner on the butter wrapper and I was interviewed on the same subject on the Countrywide radio programme on RTE 1. Dominic spoke on RedFM, a local station.

I was also interviewed in May on the Moncrieff Show on Newstalk on the Butter Museum and butter trade in general and in November I appeared on the RTE1 television afternoon show, Today, as part of the National Treasures slot.

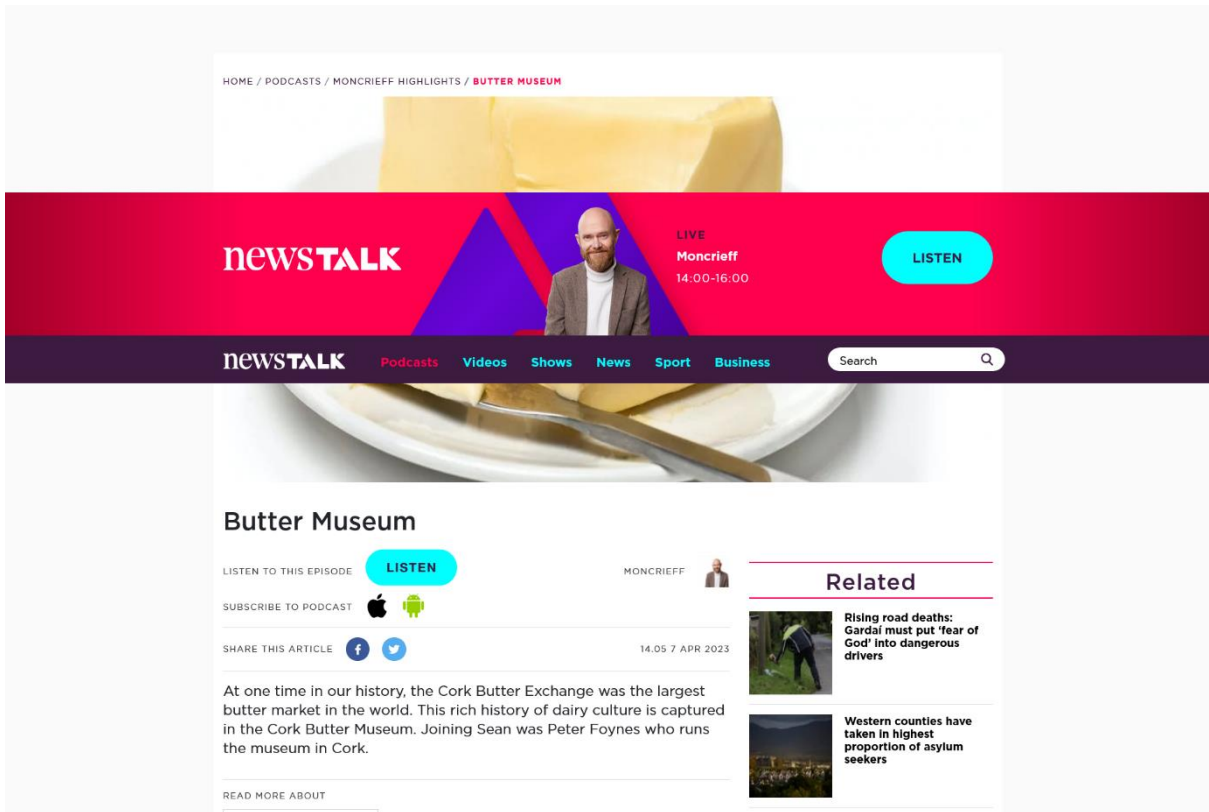


Figure 12 Weblink to the Butter Museum piece on the Moncrieff Show, 7th April



Figure 8 With Dáithí Ó Sé on the Today Programme, 27th November

Collection and Collection Management

Cataloguing of recent acquisitions is ongoing. This year as in previous years, we had the benefit of a Museum Studies student, Jillian Adams, for the month of June. We invested in specialist museum catalogue software, MODES, and Jillian input the essential details of the paper catalogue onto the software. We also brought in Dr Claudia Kinmonth who worked with Jillian in cataloguing recent acquisitions. As always, there remains some details to be attended to but I think the combination of Dr Kinmonth and a Museum Studies student gives us a method for the systematic cataloguing annually of recent acquisitions.



Figure 9 Jillian Adams, the Museum Studies intern, who worked with us for the month of June. She assisted with both the digitisation of the key points of the Museum catalogue and the cataloguing of recent acquisitions, working with Dr Claudia Kinmonth.

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Acquisitions

Item Description	Date	How Acquired
Cardboard Box, Cleeves	Jan	Victor Mee Auction
Surprise Butter Medal	May	Donation Ted Scriven
Glass Butter Churn in frame/Sweet Jar	July	Scarva Auction
Milk Cooler	July	Scarva Auction
TallPainted Churn	July	Scarva Auction
Liquid milk churn	July	Scarva Auction
"Separator"	July	Scarva Auction



Figure 10 Cleeves box with wood straw packing. Straw packing is an interesting survival. The C342 refers to Tipperary Co-op. The co-op was given the Cleeves Tipperary business when the company was wound up in 1927.

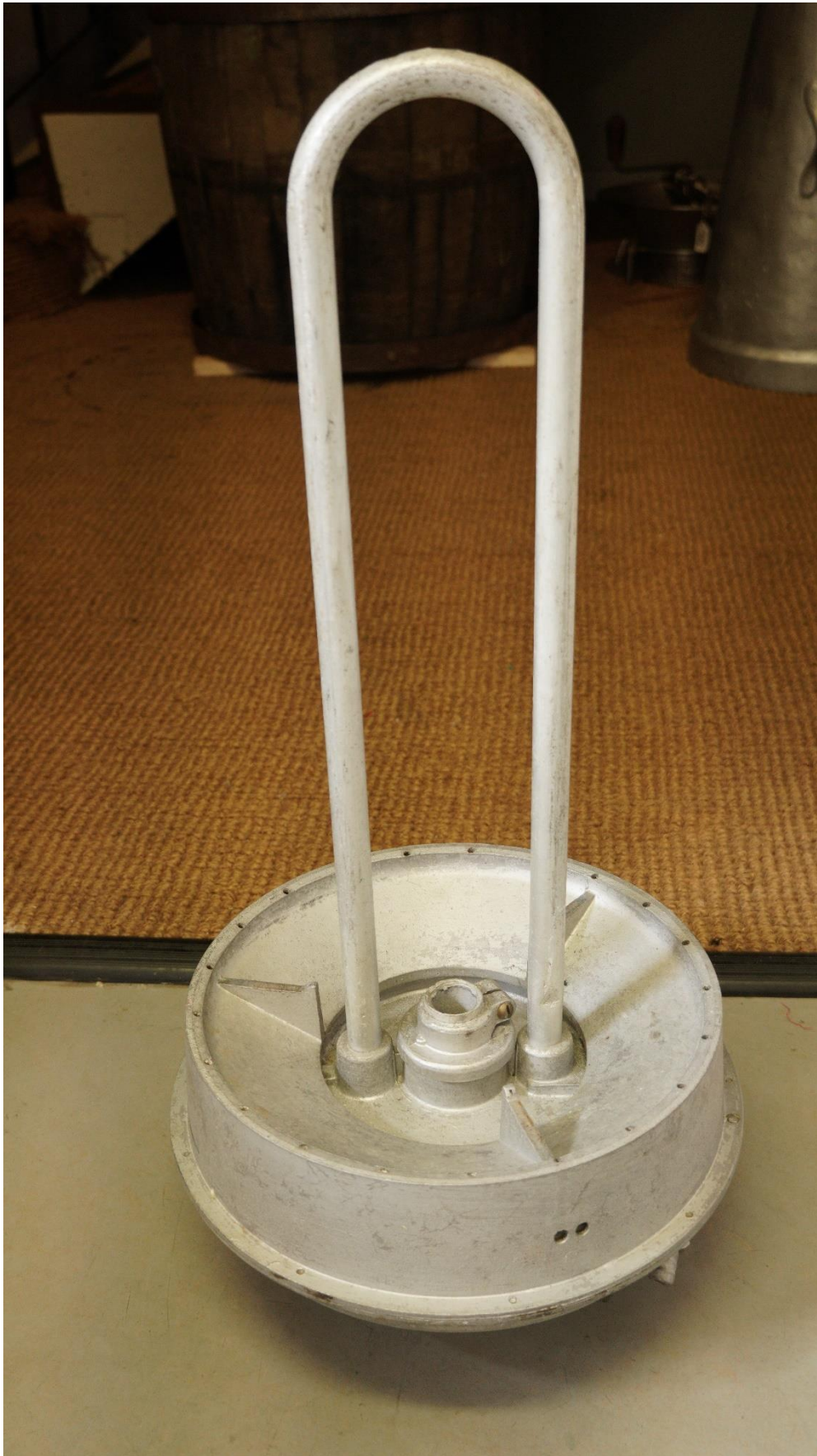


Figure 11 A milk cooler; now rare. In the days when electric power was not available, these devices were used to water cool the milk in a milk churn.

Butter Wrappers

Golden Vale		Private Donation
Ballypatrick, Co. Tipperary		Private Donation
Carrigaline, Co. Cork		Private Donation
Roll of Dromkeen Wrappers		Private Donation
Roll of Callan Wrappers		Private Donation
Hollyford, Co Tipperary		Mike Carey, Purchase
Kenmare, Co. Kerry		Mike Carey, Purchase
Freshford, Co. Kilkenny		Mike Carey, Purchase
Freemount, Co. Cork		Mike Carey, Purchase
Ballyclough, Co. Cork		Mike Carey, Purchase
Four Elms - Drombanna, Co. Limerick		Mike Carey, Purchase
Knockmeal, Ballinamult, Co. Tipperary		Mike Carey, Purchase

WE now have a collection of 108 original parchment wrappers, mainly from dairy co-operatives, but also from private producers.



Figure 12 Wrapper roll from Dromkeen, Co. Limerick



Figure. Carrigaline did not produce butter but took butter from the UCC dairy. When UCC stopped making butter in 1968, Carrigaline switched to Muskerry Co-op Kilcrea brand. Not wanting to waste their butter wrappers, they overprinted, in red, references to UCC on the wrappers and added the Muskerry details.

Exhibition

There have been significant developments in the exhibition this year.

We acquired photographic prints of two iterations of the series of works known as *Irish Energies*, done by the the important German artist, Joseph Beuys. The works comprised Kerrygold butter sandwiched between two peat briquettes. These prints were then mounted onto a wall created and designed by the artist Maud Cotter. Then, with the support of the Regional Museum Exhibition Scheme of the Department of Tourism Culture Arts, Gaeltacht, Sports and Media we both two new exhibition cases. One to house the existing keg of bog butter that we hold, courtesy of the National Museum of Ireland and the second to house one of the *Irish Energies* series which we hope to acquire.

We also had fruitful discussions with the National Museum regarding the loan of additional samples of bog butter. The National Museum has agreed, in principle, to our proposal and we are now in the process of preparing for the reception of those pieces.

The upstairs room, which deals with the development of the city of Cork in general and the Butter Exchange in Cork in particular has been extensively renovated; repainted, re-plastered and the exhibition is in the process of being rehung.

We also mounted a number of framed items that we had in our collection installed a short video from Sergi Eisenstein's 1929 film *Old and New*, which features a short clip on the use of a mechanical separator. We generally try to keep non-Irish material outside the main exhibition area but in this case we made an exception.



Figure 13 Isabella Mulhall of the National Museum and the artist Maud Cotter relocating the keg of bog butter to one of the new exhibition case



Figure 14 View of the two new cases, one awaiting the Beuys piece, *Irish Energies*



Figure 15 Plastering the upstairs room



Figure 16 Painting the upstairs room

Other matters

The external woodwork (doors and window frames) was painted during the year and the small number of outstanding matters regarding Fire certification were completed, allowing us to be formally certified as substantially compliant with the necessary regulations. We also commissioned an Energy Audit of the premises.

Staff members continue their professional development; one is completing a Masters thesis in Digital Humanities, a second completed a Failte Ireland course on business marketing and a third and Institute of Public Administration course on risk management.

All staff have completed the Safe to Create programme, designed to provide safe and respectful working conditions.

Peter Foynes

Jan 2024