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While controversy rages on the concessions Flanders and the Netherlands might be willing to make to co-host World Cup in 2018, locals teams are charged with match-fixing



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Much to ING's surprise, its plan to decrease senior citizens' weekly limit at the cash machine to help them avoid con artists and robbers has been called discriminatory by major organisations representing the elderly



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Sint-Niklaas will open Flanders' first forest burial site, where families can spread their loved-one's ashes among the green grass, tall trees and autumn leaves



The big cheese

How short books about small failures made Willem Elsschot one of Flanders' biggest literary heroes

DEREK BLYTH

You would not expect much action from a novel about cheese. And indeed you don't get much action in Willem Elsschot's *Kaas* (*Cheese*). A critic once described *Waiting for Godot* as "a play in which nothing happens, twice." *Kaas* is just like that, only more so.

The novel tells the story of Frans Laarmans, a humble shipping clerk who takes unauthorised sick leave to accept a post as a cheese agent with responsibility for Belgium and – deep breath – the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg.

He immediately orders 10,000 full-cream Edams, but turns out to be hopelessly inept at selling them, spending more time organising his office furniture and working out a name for his company. By the end, he had sold only a couple of these round, red cheeses. The rest remained piled up in a warehouse, slowly turning rank. There's not much more to tell, and yet it's one of Flanders' most popular novels of all time, and its author is one of the region's literary icons. He's being celebrated this year in Antwerp during *De stad van Elsschot* (*The City of Elsschot*), which marks the 50th anniversary of his death.

Elsschot (pictured left with his wife in the late 1950s) was born in 1882 as Alfons Jozef De Ridder, the son of an Antwerp baker. After a rebellious youth spent among anarchists, he eventually adopted a conventional career as an Antwerp businessman, founding his own advertising agency in 1931.

He wrote short novels, sporadically. His entire output of 11 slim books hardly weighs as much as one Dan Brown thriller. Yet Elsschot's books make compelling reading, even 80 years after they were first published, a claim that can be made by very few early 20th-century Flemish authors. In *Kaas*, like in most of his novels, he describes the lives of small people with big ideas for making money. Their plans always fail, no matter what.

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© Even De Ridder & Letterenhuis

TV art attack misses mark

The producers of a Flemish comedy sketch show have responded to allegations of a "dastardly art heist" by a British comedian and journalist. Writing last week in *The Independent*, Dom Joly accused producers of the 2BE show *Trigger Hippy*, which ran from 2006 to 2008, of stealing the ideas from his own sketch show, *Trigger Happy TV*.

"I got a weird email from somebody asking me whether I'd checked out *Trigger Hippy* on Belgian TV," Joly wrote. "Thinking this was a joke, I hit the link. I spent the next 10 minutes in absolute shock." He went on to say

that the programme is "not merely a rip-off" of the ideas in *Trigger Happy TV*, which he is used to, "but the sketches are identical – shot for shot, often in the same locations. It seems that a production company has gone about remaking my show...without asking for permission or licensing." Tim Van Aelst of production company Shelter, which made three series of *Trigger Hippy* for Flemish TV, responded that everything was done by the book. "Every year we paid format rights, and we never pretended the show wasn't based on the British original – otherwise we might have

chosen a different title." Joly's show ran for only one season, Van Aelst pointed out, while his company's version lasted for three, ruling out plagiarism. So how could Joly have missed three years of payments from Flemish TV? Simple: by the time *Trigger Hippy* was first aired here, Dom Joly's production company had gone bankrupt. "Evidently, all of the income from his format went to Channel 4," Van Aelst explained. "So there's a good chance he never saw any of the format rights. That's enough to make anyone upset."

Mafia boss arrested in Schaerbeek

Phone calls to his wife in Italy tipped off police

ALAN HOPE

Michele-Silvestro Romano led a quiet life in the busy Josaphatstraat in Schaerbeek, a solitary Italian in a quarter of largely Moroccans, Turks and Albanians. His neighbours described him as a grandpa who kept to himself. Nobody knew him by name, referring to him only as "the Italian".

That all changed on the evening of 4 August, when a squad of about 40 police officers from the Fugitive Assets Search Team (FAST) and the drugs squad of the federal police descended on the modest four-storey house where

he lived in a third-floor apartment. Romano was led away in handcuffs with a bag over his head, and it was revealed that he was one of Italy's 100 most dangerous fugitives.

It turns out the quiet neighbour is looking at a 15-year jail sentence for drug trafficking and is one of the bosses of the Neapolitan Camorra, one of the three organisations people are referring to when they use the word "Mafia". His real name is Vittorio Pirozzi.

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OFFSIDE

Counting heads

© Shutterstock



The people of 15 Flemish municipalities are significantly more fertile than the norm for the region, according to the latest research from the Flemish government's study service. They are: Antwerp, Mechelen, Boom, Sint-Niklaas, Lokeren, Temse, Willebroek, Vilvoorde, Asse, Beersel, Bertem, Herent, Huldenberg, Overijse and Ronse. In some cases, the difference is as high as 20%.

However, there are also 23 places where fertility is "significantly lower" than might be expected for the region as a whole. Limburg province is especially infertile, with Lommel, Mol, Neerpelt, Tongeren and Hasselt, among others, making the list. Antwerp province has Schilder, Vosselaar, Brasschaat, Heist-op-den-Berg and Herentals. East Flanders provides Erpe-Mere, Haaltiert and Zottegem, and West Flanders Bruges and Koksijde.

In Flemish Brabant, the only place affected by lower-than-usual fertility is the city of Leuven, apparently a result of the large population of students.

The study, which looked at all 308 Flemish municipalities between 2003 and 2007, is part of a three-pronged examination of the population of Flanders, examining fertility, migration and death – the beginning, middle and end of the population narrative, as it were. When completed, it will form the basis for a whole range of policy decisions. The study also looked at the differences between Belgians and non-Belgians, and found non-Belgians are 89% more fertile than Belgians – or at least, they have 89% more births, once other factors such as age have been adjusted for.

In the cities, the difference is greater still. In Antwerp, non-Belgians outperform the natives by 125% - for every 100 births to natives, there are 225 births to immigrants, regardless of origin. In Ghent, foreigners are 112% more fertile than Belgians, and in Mechelen the difference is 163%, the highest in Flanders.

The study's authors attribute the difference to the character of each city's foreign population. "Antwerp and Mechelen have high concentrations of foreigners of North African origin – populations with a traditionally higher fertility rate than other foreigners," the study says. "Other cities like Ghent, Leuven and Genk have a relatively high number of foreigners, but their origins are different."

FLANDERS TODAY

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FLANDERS TODAY
AUGUST 11, 2010

News in brief

A 15-year-old boy struck by lightning on the beach at Ostend last week has been transferred to the burns unit of Ghent University hospital, where his condition is stable. The boy was watching kite-fliers when the lightning struck. A bystander who was a doctor immediately began CPR.

Brussels city centre will operate a blanket 30 km/h speed limit from 16 September. The new limit will affect all streets within the "Pentagon", or inner ring road, with the exception of the main avenues Adolphe Maxlaan, Anspachlaan, Lemonnierlaan and Diksmuidelaan, where the limit will be 50 km. All vehicles are affected, apart from trams. Brussels city council said the measure would make the city safer: similar measures in the Netherlands led to a 40% reduction in accidents, and in some British cities accidents fell by 60%.

Police in Bruges last week shot a man after he refused to lay down his firearm and allegedly fired a shot. The man was injured in the wrist, leg and side, but his condition is not critical. The weapon turned out to be a replica of a Magnum.

Brussels City Parade, due to take place on 21 August, will no longer be free for safety reasons, organisers said. Following the crush at the Love

Parade in Duisburg in which 21 people died, City Parade organisers will now charge €5 in advance for all participants, to allow numbers to be accurately registered. About 200,000 visitors are expected.

A group of altar servers from churches in Flanders were robbed last week during a visit to Rome when thieves broke into their coach and stole their bags. Mostly from Flemish Brabant, the tourists were part of a group of 300 travelling to see the Pope. An organiser said the loss of ID papers would cause some administrative problems, but they would not allow the theft to ruin the occasion.

Police in Antwerp last week opened fire on a vehicle acting suspiciously in the heavily secured diamond district. The vehicle had been brought to a halt by retractable bollards when police went to investigate. Suddenly it went into reverse, narrowly missing one officer and crushing a parked motor-scooter. Police fired on the tires and brought the vehicle to a halt, arresting two men, both of Polish nationality. They were later released.

Antwerp Zoo will work with an American university to help extract and store the sperm of the hellbender salamander

(*Cryptobranchus alleganiensis*), a giant salamander native to North America whose numbers are dwindling. Robert Brown, an Australian researcher working in Antwerp, has developed a technique to harvest the sperm from the salamander, which can then be frozen and stored for a breeding programme run by Michigan State university and the Nashville Zoo.

Police in Veurne last week carried out a search warrant at the home of a 73-year-old man accused of stealing more than 150 books from public libraries in Brussels, Antwerp, Diksmuide and Veurne. Mostly chemistry textbooks, the man claims to have bought them at book sales.

Students in their first year at university have a 70% chance of putting on 3.5 kilograms because they are not active enough, according to research from Ghent University. The survey followed nearly 1,500 secondary school students as they moved on to university. Apparently sixth-year secondary school students take 698 minutes of exercise a week, which drops to 358 minutes at university. "Students want to do other things," the team said.

FACE OF FLANDERS

ALAN HOPE

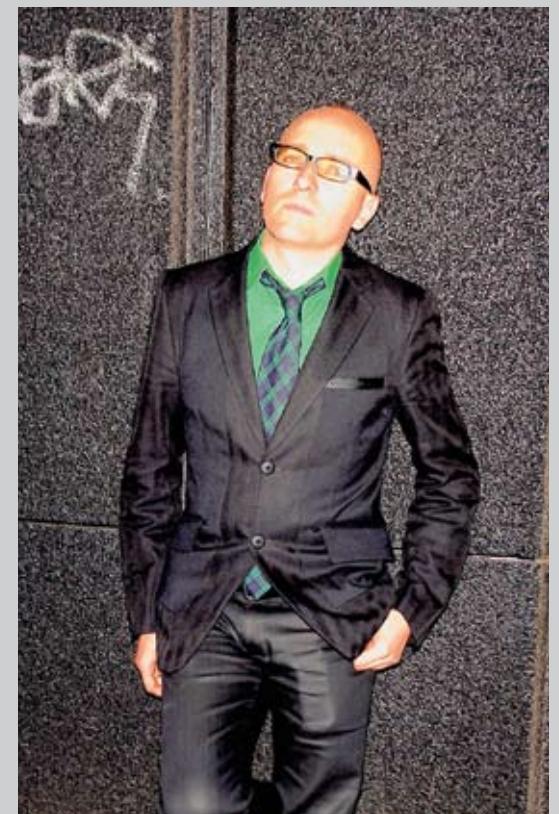
Kris De Meester

€10,000 doesn't seem like much to invest for the chance to win an award at Cannes Film Festival, but that depends on how much you have. Kris De Meester's English-language film *Four Roses* won the award for best no-budget film, so we're supposing there wasn't much more in the kitty. To the victor go the spoils, and De Meester can certainly be satisfied with creating such a remarkable debut film with no help, including the Flemish Audio-visual Fund, which refused him both initial funding and post-production support.

Every penny he spent is up there on the screen: 80 minutes and essentially one location. (There's a suggestion from a couple of exterior shots that we may be in the US, but it was all shot in an Antwerp hotel). The cast of six couples inhabit rooms, where their lack of communication is at the centre of each individual's alienation.

He shot the entire film in four days in a rich black and white, which, together with the general atmosphere of anomie, has led to comparisons with American indie filmmaker Jim Jarmusch, whose early work, like *Down by Law* and *Stranger than Paradise*, were similarly no-budget, similarly alienated and similarly monochrome.

De Meester wrote, produced and directed. He also did the casting, which is in fact the 38-year-old's day job. He'd met most of the actors on previous jobs, and only auditioned one of the roles – the girl Hubke, played by Mieke Daneels, who spends most of the film naked. He fell in love instantly, he says in an interview posted on the film's website but kept everything on a professional level until the end of shooting. The two of them are now a, and she and her three children feature in his new film, which is about



"talking rabbits, invincible vampires, flying hippos and a woman getting over the suicide of her husband".

Four Roses, in English with some Portuguese, is showing at Actor's Studio in Brussels, Cartoon's in Antwerp and Studio Skoop in Ghent

→ www.fourrosesmovie.com

Your move...

The Flemish government will not subsidise chess organisations under its sports policy because the game does not involve enough movement, sports minister Philippe Muyters said. The goal of a subsidised activity has to be "to encourage physical development".



Drugs and extortion boss baked pastries in Brussels

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Pirozzi, the prosecutor's office said, has been living here for at least two years under the assumed name of Romano, using a fake ID bought for €50. According to Pirozzi's statements, he lived alone in the apartment after living for six months in Jette, where he got up in the morning and baked traditional Neapolitan pastries which he would then deliver to customers in an unnamed restaurant.

Near his apartment is the Art Nouveau Italian restaurant Le Stelle, and the staff said they had bought *pastiera* (ricotta cake flavoured with orange blossom water) from him once, for their own consumption.

It's all a far cry from Pirozzi's past experience as a *capo*, one of the lieutenants of the Mariano family, who controlled the Chiaia area of Naples through the 1980s. At the end of the decade, he was convicted of extorting protection money from small businesses in the area, before stepping up his activity in drugs, for which he was sentenced *in absentia* in 2003. By the time the verdict was handed down, however, Pirozzi had vanished.

Two years later he was traced to Málaga, Spain, but got wind of danger and disappeared again.

THE WEEK IN FIGURES



14,185

jobs lying vacant despite requiring no educational qualifications or experience, according to employment agency VDAB. The jobs include sales, cleaning, construction, metalwork and security

17 years

the new minimum age for driving, if a proposal from both motoring organisation VAB and the institute for road safety BIVV is accepted. Young people could begin lessons at 16, pass their test at 17 but only drive unaccompanied at 18

129%

increase in thefts of copper from the rail authority NMBS in 2010. The NMBS blamed the increase on the scrap price, as well as the abolition of rules forcing sellers to provide identity details

610

bankruptcies in July, according to information bureau Graydon – bringing the total so far this year to 5,893, an increase of about 5% on the same period last year

21

new carpool parking places planned by mobility minister Hilde Crevits, to add to the 71 already in place in Flanders. The new spaces, where commuters leave their own cars to join the pool car, will be spread across all provinces



© Berga

Vittorio Pirozzi ended up in Belgium after fleeing Italy and Spain

Row over World Cup demands

Former Brussels sports minister Bert Anciaux this week withdrew accusations that the government was "bending the knee" to the International Federation of Football Associations (Fifa) over the concessions it was ready to make to be allowed to host the World Cup of 2018. Writing on his personal website, Anciaux, now a senator for the socialist party SP.A, says he may have been "too hasty to take over all of the criticisms that appeared in the press".

The row began when parts of the so-called "bid book" were leaked and commented on by Anciaux and by LDD party leader Jean-Marie Dedecker, as well as the Flemish green party Groen!. The Belgian government and the Dutch put in a bid to co-host the World Cup, as they did the European Championship in 2000. According to the bid book, the governments appeared ready to offer Fifa a number of controversial concessions, including:

- no tax to be paid on any income made by Fifa during the tournament
- no VAT to be paid by Fifa on any goods or services, such as hotels and restaurants
- a separate lane on motorways to be reserved for Fifa-approved vehicles to avoid congestion
- cafes and other businesses within a two kilometre radius of every World Cup venue to be restricted from advertising any product competing with the official sponsors of the tournament, which include Coca-Cola, Adidas, Sony and Budweiser. In addition, cafes operated by brewers selling competing drinks would have to change their product range for the duration

The concessions, including some that are clear restrictions of trade, was picked up by local opponents of the World Cup bid, who consider the event too expensive to organise during a time of crisis, involving huge expense with little benefit to Belgium. Critics pointed out that Fifa made €1.5 billion profit from this year's World Cup in South Africa, but the host country itself had a deficit.

This week, as Fifa officials arrived in the country to inspect sports facilities here and in the Netherlands, Anciaux admitted that not all of the criticism was accurate but that Fifa would do well to be more transparent in its dealings to prevent exaggerated reports. On the tax question, for instance, Fifa, being established in Switzerland, pays its tax there and not elsewhere. However the question of VAT, which is payable even by foreigners on goods and services consumed here, remains unanswered.

Anciaux also published on his site a document containing details of the eight guarantees given to Fifa by the Dutch government, which, like the administration of Yves Leterme, is a caretaker government awaiting replacement following recent elections. Among the guarantees: the use of armed forces to ensure security at events; a ban on "ambush marketing" as carried out by Bavaria beers; the banning of commercial public viewing of matches (such as sports bars); free use of telecommunications networks and broadband internet connections and links, which Fifa may sub-let to third parties; and free entry visas for all Fifa officials, partners and guests. ♦

→ www.bertanciaux.be



Fifa chairman Sepp Blatter announces Brazil as the host of the 2014 World Cup. Belgium and the Netherlands are competing to host the 2018 tournament jointly

Match-fixers lined up for court

The former trainer of football team SK Lierse, together with the goalkeeper, eight other players and 21 others could face charges of corruption relating to match-fixing at the behest of an Asian betting syndicate. The federal prosecutor's office in Brussels has prepared files against a total of 31 people, among them the alleged ringleader Zheyun Ye, to be put before a committal hearing in November. The hearing will determine which of the accused will go to trial and on what charges.

The plan was that the syndicate would bribe players and officials to throw football matches on which the players had bet heavily in China and other parts of the Far East. No suspicious activity would be registered by bookies here in Belgium, and the Chinese bookies would never notice any irregularities in the results of a match in Europe.

It was Ye's job to convince trainers and players – up to eight in a match – to go along with the plan. He had a budget of between €5,000 and €40,000 a man in bribes, depending on the stakes being wagered.

The authorities began to investigate in 2005, starting with nine suspect results in games involving Lierse, in Antwerp province. The enquiry soon spread out to include FC Brussels, La Louvière and Sint-Truiden. Investigators tracked down 13 players who said that they had been offered up to €100,000 to rig results; but none of them had accepted the offer.

The suspects who did now have until the end of November to prepare a defence. The likely charges include corruption, bribery, forgery and criminal conspiracy, which carries a sentence of up to 10 years in prison. Names have not been released, but Ye will probably not be showing up for a trial: he is believed to be in China, untraceable since investigations began. ♦



An estimated 15,000-20,000 visitors turned up for the Doelse Feesten in the Scheldt estuary town of Doel – an event no-one believed would ever be held again. The small suburb of Beveren, East Flanders, was slated for demolition as part of the development of the left bank of the Port of Antwerp. However, residents and their supporters are fighting the order and have won a stay of execution from the courts until the Flemish government can make legal changes to the status of the region. On 9 August, the Doelse Feesten and the Scheldewijding – a version of an ancient consecration of the river – took place, after last year's ostensibly final celebration. The crowd was made up of musicians and other performers, as well as well-wishers and tourists. Jan Creve, spokesman for the Doel 2020 protection group, called the event "fantastic" and "a really strong message to the government". Opponents of the demolition claim there is no economic case for extending the port of Antwerp in the foreseeable future and no concrete plan to do anything with the cleared land left behind should Doel disappear.

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www.ing.be/expat



The big cheese

Eighty years later, Elsschot is as contemporary as ever

► continued from page 1

Elsschot died in 1960 the most celebrated Flemish writer of his day. Some of this is due to his staunch belief in writing in Dutch during a time when most of his Flemish contemporaries wrote in French. He used a modern, proper Dutch rather than that famous Antwerp dialect, raising a storm of criticism locally but making him extremely popular in the Netherlands. A shrewd businessman, this was no accident.

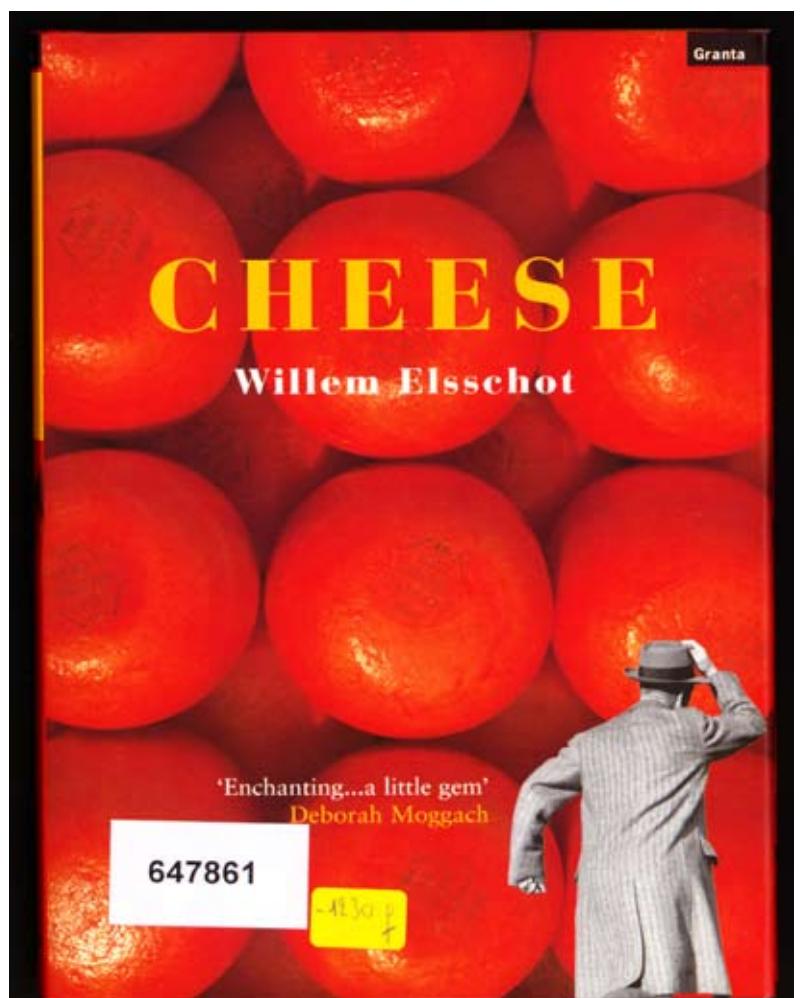
Though he might be long buried in the city's Schoonselhof Cemetery, Elsschot's writing is as sharp as ever. Not every reviewer gets this. The book jacket of the Granta edition describes *Kaas* as "a delightful period piece", but there's nothing "period" about this story. It's as contemporary as the TV satire *The Office*.

What makes Elsschot so compelling is the way he captures essential truths in a single dry sentence. In *Villa des Roses*, his first book, he dissects the sordid reality behind a prim Parisian hotel that described itself as "First Class Family Boarding House" with "English Spoken". "English spoken," he writes, "dates from the time when one of the paying guests was a gentleman who had lived in London and liked to show off his English. Madame Brulot still knew about five words, such as 'yes', 'no', 'money', 'room' and 'dinner'."

Madame Brulot, in fact, is up to all sorts of tricks. She buys cheap eggs for her guests, pretending that they come from the chickens in the garden. She overcharges Americans (but not the Poles or Armenians). The most momentous event in the novel is the arrival of a new chambermaid, which Elsschot describes in one chapter of three sentences: "A new chambermaid has arrived whose name was Louise and who dressed in black. She never missed a day in washing Madame Gendron, and her coming to work there was bad news for the bedbugs. She did not make much fuss, but it was clear from the sound of her voice that she took things seriously."

Flemish director Frank Van Passel made a film of *Villa des Roses* in 2002 starring French actress Julie Delpy as Louise. He unfortunately took Elsschot's desperately sad story and turned it into a romantic war epic. It won the award for best feature film at the Hollywood Movie Awards.

Kaas, as well as four other Elsschot novels, including *Villa des Roses*, are translated into English, and the film rights to *Kaas* have been bought by a British studio. Not surprising, given its comic potential. But please, with all respect, don't let it be a Frank Van Passel. *Kaas* is not an epic. It is not a romance. It is just a short novel in which nothing happens, twice.♦



Snuggling up to Elsschot

Newly acquired archive is the extraordinary cornerstone of Antwerp celebration

Curse technology. This is one of the sentiments with which you might come out of *Dicht bij Elsschot* (*Close to Elsschot*). The exhibition that serves as the centrepiece to Antwerp's Stad van Elsschot celebration is almost entirely made up of the archives of Willem Elsschot: original manuscripts, a wealth of photographs, charming home movies and letters – many, many letters that tell the story of a man and his family. Without these hand-written letters and postcards, not to mention business contracts and correspondence, a slice of history – social, literary and commercial – would have been lost. It's difficult to imagine a contemporary writer being able to produce such a wealth of material in an email world.

It's fortunate that one of Elsschot's six children, even while the author was still alive, gathered together both his professional and personal papers and manuscripts – from the early handwritten *Villa des Roses* to the typewritten *Het Dwaallicht* (*Will-o'-the-Wisp*). Elsschot's archives are themselves a history of technology.

It's further fortunate that Elsschot's last surviving child, Ida, closed the deal to sell the complete archives to the city of Antwerp, who had been trying to get them for more than a decade, just a few weeks before her death last year. As such archives become rare and valuable commodities – surrealist master Andre Breton's, for instance, were auctioned off in pieces to the highest bidders – it's more and more difficult to keep them together and get them into a public literary archive, such as Antwerp's Het Letterenhuis.

Dicht bij Elsschot, then, is an literary fan's dream. The author's life is narrated through documents and photos (and text provided by curator Wieneke 't Hoen), from his anarchist turn-of-the-century youth to his love affair that produced a child out of wedlock to his travels to clerk in Paris and Rotterdam. He finally returned to Antwerp, married the mother of his child, and set to work to become a successful ad man.

The exhibition, which is all in Dutch, is heavy on text and therefore not too lengthy, though fans will find themselves easily whiling away a few hours reading Elsschot's letters during the wars, corrections in the margins of his manuscripts and his wife's postcards to her sister. The atmosphere is one of a 1940s home, with two colossal, purple-fringed lampshades looming over some of the simple interactive displays. Tuck

under one of the lampshades to see which characters in Elsschot's 11 books match which of the people he knew in real life. Press the button to light up the corresponding photographs above.

Another highlight is the home movies, shot by Elsschot and other members of his family, as they play about in the dunes of his beach home, swim in the cold sea and read in the garden.

They are fascinating documents, nicely and succinctly put together. But, as much as you do learn about Elsschot, you aren't given the opportunity to discover the other side of the upright businessman, which in fact goes a long way to understanding him. Having started his adult life consorting with young artists, he ended up having a child very young. He got married and had several more children, and "he had to take responsibility for them", explains Michaël Vandebur, artistic director of De stad van Elsschot. "So he conformed to the bourgeois ideal to have a house and a proper job. On the other hand, he had an artist's soul. He also had mistresses and was in the bars a lot, even during the day. He really led a double life."

If you mix the exhibition, then, with the books penned by his daughter Ida De Ridder about her father and her unhappy mother, this picture becomes much clearer. The most concrete evidence of this alter-ego is in his name itself: He was Alfons De Ridder, strict father and rather stiff Antwerp businessman, and he was jolly, drinking Willem Elsschot, a name derived from a mediaeval Flemish writer and a forest in southern Antwerp province called Helsschot.♦



A young Elsschot with wife Fine Scheurwegen and two of their children in Brussels in 1912

De stad van Elsschot

Besides the exhibition *Dicht bij Elsschot*, there are a number of other events in Antwerp through October. **Elsschot in vertaling** (Elsschot in Translation) is an exhibition of his books in translation – more than 25 languages in all, including Chinese, Japanese and Arabic. **Elsschot on the Road**, meanwhile, is a caravan that pops up in different parts of the city with 3D animations of Elsschot novels. **Elsschot Filmed** is self-explanatory: see *Het Dwaallicht*, *Kaas*, *Lijmen* and *Villa des Roses* onscreen. Finally, for the dark side of Elsschot, see page 11. ► www.destadvanelsschot.be

Dicht bij Elsschot

Until 31 December
Het Letterenhuis
Minderbroedersstraat 22
Antwerp

► www.letterenhuis.be

On the radar

Flemish researchers examine our travel habits

TANIA RABESANDRATANA

Flemings are overwhelmingly keen on driving cars: they decide to drive (or are driven) for about two thirds of all their journeys. That's according to a report published last month, by the Flemish government's department for mobility about its citizens' travel behaviour in 2008 and 2009.

The proportion of trips made by car remains close to 50%, even for short journeys (under three kilometres) and is on the increase compared to the previous study year. Unsurprisingly, the report shows that "up to 200 meters, we do almost everything on foot". However, the proportion of walkers falls to 30% for journeys between 500 metres and one kilometre, while regular public transport users make up less than 5% of all travellers. The report also summarises important findings about the psychology of travellers, such as "the 10-minute rule", a psychological barrier that makes any transfer or waiting time over 10 minute seem too long. (That's a figure to keep in mind for urban transport planners.)

What's more, drivers are sticking to the theory of the so-called Brever law, which defines the most time anyone wants to drive per day at about 90 minutes. The mean travel time per person has stayed constant throughout driving history, but the distances increase with faster trains and better roads.

A day in the life of a driver

This snapshot of Flemish transport patterns should help the

government improve its policies and infrastructure for a more fluid, less polluted region. The Flemish researchers who collect and analyse data are based at the University of Hasselt's Institute for Mobility (IMOB), headed by Professor Davy Janssens. Founded in 2003 and now home to about 50 staff, IMOB uses computer-based modelling to understand how people travel and make predictions to advise policy makers.

Researchers at IMOB observe the behaviour of travellers in great detail with a micro-simulation approach. "We predict the travel behaviour of every person," explains Janssens. "Not only do we simulate travel, we also look at activities to model one typical day in a Flemish's life. For instance, at 8.00, a person drives to work but then might take a bike they keep at work to buy lunch."

The principle is complex to implement in practice: IMOB is the only institute that uses this approach in Flanders and just one out of a handful of research teams worldwide.

The Hasselt team has also developed a user interface to visualise the data and combine them with actual, detailed information about Flanders' population and air pollution. The research culminates in the publication of the Flemish Mobility Plan, a "bible" predicting travel behaviour in 10, 20 or 30 years.

IMOB's second strength is traffic safety research. The Hasselt team coordinates the Flemish Policy Research Centre for



Traffic simulation technology can provide a wealth of information, including where best to place road signs

Mobility, Public Works and Traffic Safety, a group that includes researchers from the Provincial College of Limburg, the Free University of Brussels (VUB), the Flemish Institute for Technological Research and Ghent University. The research centre explores a large range of topics, including road safety for older people, noise annoyance, driving behaviour, the impact of seat belt campaigns and the safety of roundabouts.

In particular, IMOB and the research centre identified specific places where it can be unsafe to drive. "Five years ago, we came up with a ranking of 800 'black spots' from most to least dangerous," Janssens recalls. The government took these conclusions on board to improve the worst-rated spots, which led to a decrease in the number of injuries and casualties.

Video-game technology

The institute also leads more fundamental research projects. Janssens is excited by IMOB's

sophisticated traffic simulator – a room in the lab that allows a thorough simulation of the driving experience in a three-dimensional virtual environment. "For instance, we can track the eye movements of drivers to know where would be the ideal spot to place temporary signs for a road deviation," he says. Researchers seek to answer questions: Where is the most visible place? What if it's misty or rainy?

In addition, IMOB looks into innovative methods for data collection. The group refines methods using mobile phones to track drivers in real time; this could help model and predict traffic jams.

IMOB has funding from the Agency for Innovation through Science and Technology. "The Netherlands is often cited as a leading example since they have a lot of transport research funding," Janssens notes. "Thanks to these grants, Flanders is really catching up."♦

So you want to become a transport scientist

IMOB is training the next generation of specialists through its two-year Master's programme in transportation sciences. The course, taught in English, includes training in economics and management, environment, technology and sociology. In October, the group launches its third international training programme about road safety in Asia and Latin America. ➤ www.imob.uhasselt.be

Generation gap

The private sector is making up for the lack of housing for the elderly

ALAN HOPE

If there's one sure thing in these times of economic uncertainty it's this: we're all getting older. Property companies realise this, and they've been moving into a whole new sector lately: rest homes for the elderly. And that trend has given rise to concern from the care sector.

In Flanders, rest homes are built and run by non-profit organisations or by a municipality's social-aid agency. The Flemish government pays a subsidy of about €8 a day per resident towards the average daily price of €42. The rest is paid by the resident or the resident's family.

But there are not enough rest-home places: by 2020 Belgium will have a population of 1.58 million people between the ages of 65 and 79 and a further 638,000 over the

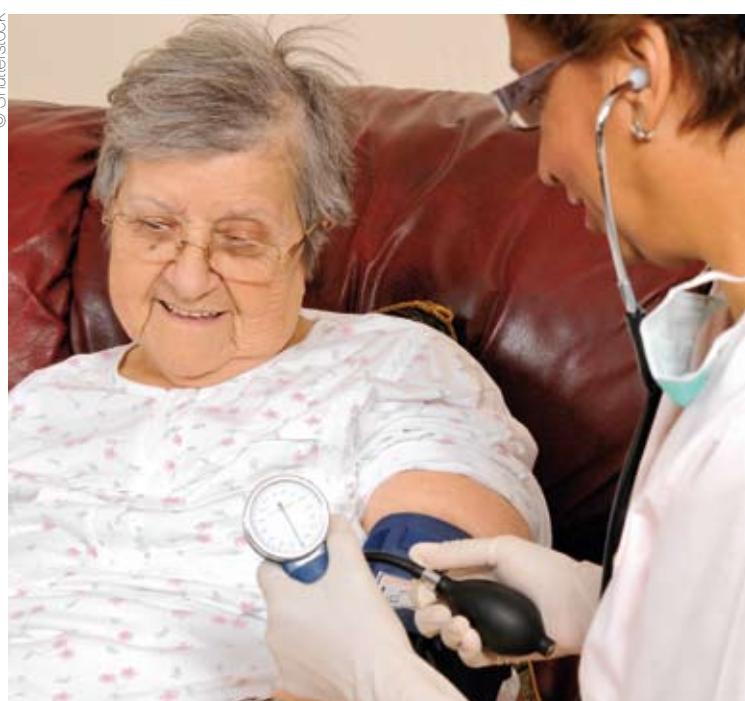
age of 80. The Flemish government is planning to provide six new rest homes for Dutch-speaking inhabitants of the capital over the next five years, each housing 140 elderly. But the government admits that some 1,250 beds are already needed.

Enter the private sector. "We made the decision five years ago to invest in care-related properties, particularly in rest homes, psychiatric institutions and clinics," says Sébastien Berden of Belgian property developer Cofinimmo. "Today we have 100 or so institutions in Belgium and France, which are good for about 10,000 beds."

The public care sector is wary of the trend. "It's important to be able to negotiate fixed and stable prices so that care of the elderly

doesn't become a cash cow for the real estate business," explains Peter Degadt, director-general of Zorgnet Vlaanderen, the umbrella organisation for the care sector. "The danger is that people will try to make a profit out of care in order to pay off shareholders. And that's clearly not a good direction to move in."

According to Degadt, there could be 80,000 new over-80s in the next 20 years. If only one in four of those needs to go into a rest home, that still leaves the sector looking for 20,000 new beds. "It's one thing when we're dealing with active seniors who can make decisions and even move out if things don't suit them, but our worry comes in relation to seniors who are more dependent on care and who need extra protection," he said.♦



Late payment problem continues

Government needs to "set example", says Unizo

ALAN HOPE

More than one in four small businesses have trouble with late payments from clients, according to a survey carried out by Unizo, the federation representing the self-employed. According to a poll of 925 businesses carried out this summer, 27% have suffered economic consequences of late payments or of clients who do not pay at all. The latter category of non-payers accounts for 2.5% of all invoices. According to the business information bureau Graydon, which tracks the number of companies going out of business, that rate represents a country-wide cost to industry of €8.7 billion a year.

Despite the high number of non- and late payers, only one in 20 companies uses the services of a collection agency. Most find that route too expensive in relation to the sums recovered; others fear it might be seen as heavy-handed and scare away customers. However, one in five businesses are considering changing their minds. Unizo now offers its members a bill-collection service where payment is on a sliding scale depending on when and how much the client pays.

According to the study, the main problem is the balance of power between a small business facing late payments from a larger company or being forced to accept longer-than-normal payment terms for fear of losing a major client.

"Bad payers undermine small businesses and the whole economy," a Unizo spokesman said, pointing out that companies that don't receive



THE WEEK IN BUSINESS

Autos • Renault

French car manufacturer Renault has recalled more than 28,000 models of the Scenic II in Belgium after problems were discovered with the automatic hand-braking system in cars constructed between 2003 and 2005.

Autos • VW

The Volkswagen Golf is the country's most popular second-hand car, according to industry federation Federauto. Dealers and individuals sold 350,000 used cars in the first six months of the year. Federauto last week launched a campaign to make consumers aware of their rights and guarantees when buying a second-hand car.

→ www.zichtopuautogarantie.be

Brewing • Duvel

Antwerp brewery De Koninck has been taken over by Puurs-based Duvel Moortgat, beating off a bid from Heineken and making sure the speciality brewer stays in Belgian hands. The deal includes the site of De Koninck's brewery and 63 cafes and restaurants in Antwerp. De Koninck has seen its production halved from a peak of 130,000 hectolitres.

Materials • Umicore

Metals and materials giant Umicore has raised profit expectations for the year after a strong first half. Profits to June reached nearly €127 million, compared to only €21 million in the first half of 2009. The forecast for the whole year is now raised from €260-€290 million to €315-€335 million.

Retail • De Slegte

The nine Flemish branches of the Dutch-based De Slegte bookshop chain, known for its huge stock of second-hand books, will carry more new books after a full evaluation of a pilot project next month. The future stock will include new fiction and non-fiction bestsellers.

Transitions • Belgacom

Michael De Coster, the former director of British Telecom Benelux who stepped over to Belgacom to head up their enterprise business unit, will leave the company at the end of the month. De Coster, as famous for his colourful lifestyle as for his executive talents – he is a race car driver and bass player in the rock group DeMens – said he was leaving to pursue other career paths.

Transitions • Fiat

Giorgio Garelli has taken over from Jan Flipsen at the head of Fiat Group Automobiles Belgium. Garelli, 51, was previously the manager of international operations.

Big pharma denies strategic shortages

The pharmaceutical industry has rejected claims from pharmacists in Limburg province that they were deliberately withholding medicines. Last week, about 600 pharmacies across Flanders reported widespread shortages of one particular drug, Miacalcic (salcatoninum), which is used to combat the bone disorder Paget's Disease. Shortages were also noted for some asthma treatments and two medicines against blood clotting.

According to the pharmacists in Limburg, the problem is caused by a deliberate policy on the part of the drug companies, which give precedence to countries where they earn the most on a particular drug. In Belgium, meanwhile, prices for prescription drugs are determined by law.

The drug industry association Pharma.be called the claim "nonsense" and pointed out that the pharmaceutical industry is obliged by law to ensure a constant supply of drugs barring *force majeure* such as a recent strike by Glaxo Smith Kline workers in France.

However, drug companies have no control over what happens to their products once they enter the wholesale and retail supply chain, said Pharma.be director Leo Neels. The pharmacists' claims were "wild accusations without the slightest factual basis," he said. ♦

Bank backpedals over senior cash limits

ING Bank was last week forced into an embarrassing about-turn after uproar over a plan to limit cash withdrawals by customers over 60 to €1,000 a week.

The bank initially said its proposal was aimed at preventing older people becoming the target of fraudsters who convince them to withdraw large sums, as well as thieves who could force them to reveal their PIN before emptying their account. At present, a limit of €2,500 per week applies to all customers without special arrangement.

"We have statistics that show that the over-60s are a select target group for the ill-intentioned," commented ING's media relations manager Ilse De Muyer. "They are more likely to be the victims of abuse and theft." She also pointed out that 98% of customers never take out more than €1,000 a week.

However, groups representing seniors criticised the measure as discriminatory. The organisation OKRA, which has 218,000 members over the age of 55, said the limit was against the law on age discrimination and called on its members to switch to another bank.

"We're not against the fact that older people should be encouraged to use their bank card more often, and we even organise internet and online banking courses," said Johan Truyers of OKRA. "But this measure is out of proportion."

The question of possible age discrimination was also raised by the Centre for Equal Opportunities and the Flemish Seniors' Council, which advises the Flemish government. The cause was also picked up by Joëlle Milquet, federal minister for equal opportunities, and by Vincent Van Quickenborne, federal minister of consumer affairs.

The over-60s are still very active, Van Quickenborne said and, in many cases, still employed. "In the years to come, they will be playing an ever-greater role in our society. Portraying them as helpless sends entirely the wrong signal."

The combined pressure was enough. "From



No entry after 60

reactions we have received, it appears some uncertainty could exist regarding the correct interpretation of the measure concerned," an ING press release stated. "ING Belgium has therefore decided not to enforce the new measure and to inform clients individually of the possibility of setting their own weekly withdrawal limit."

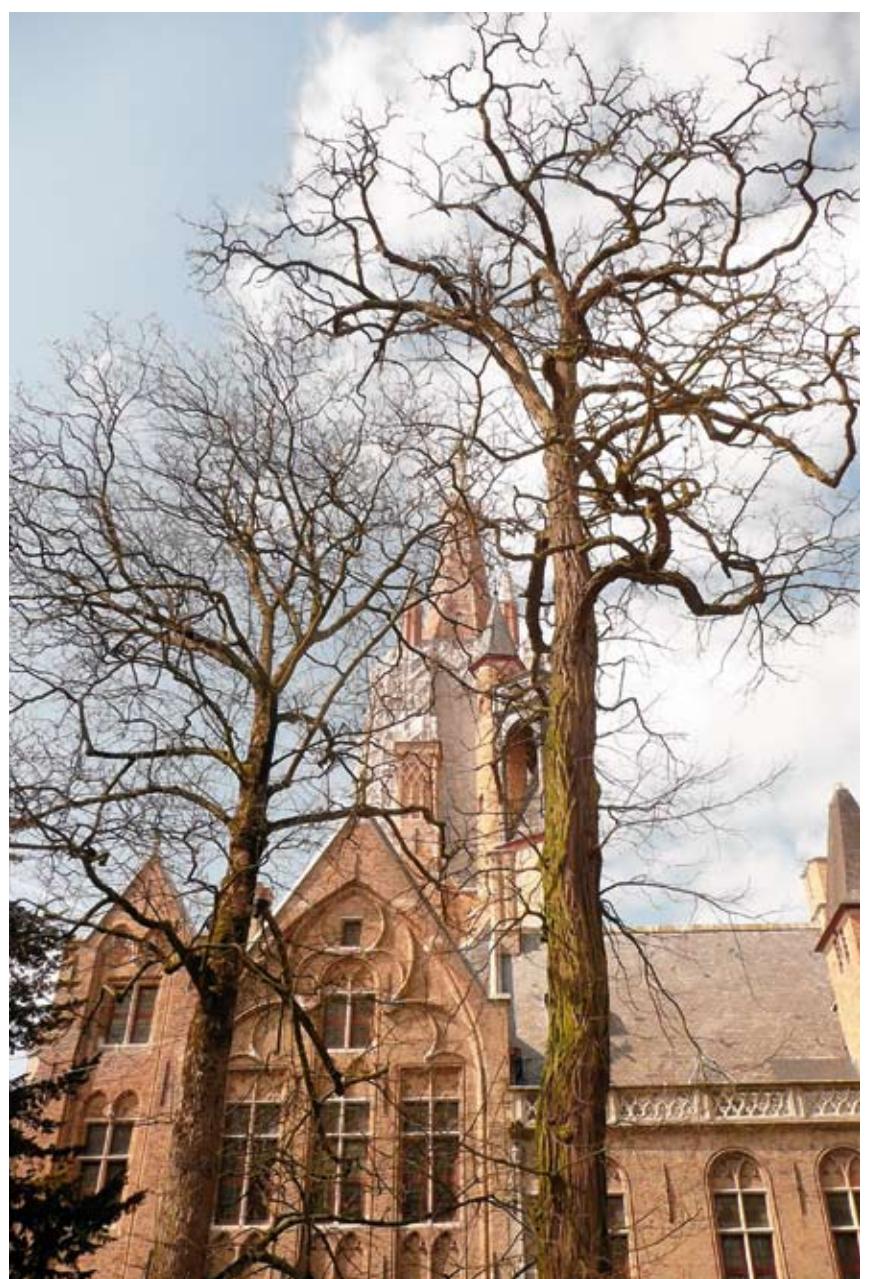
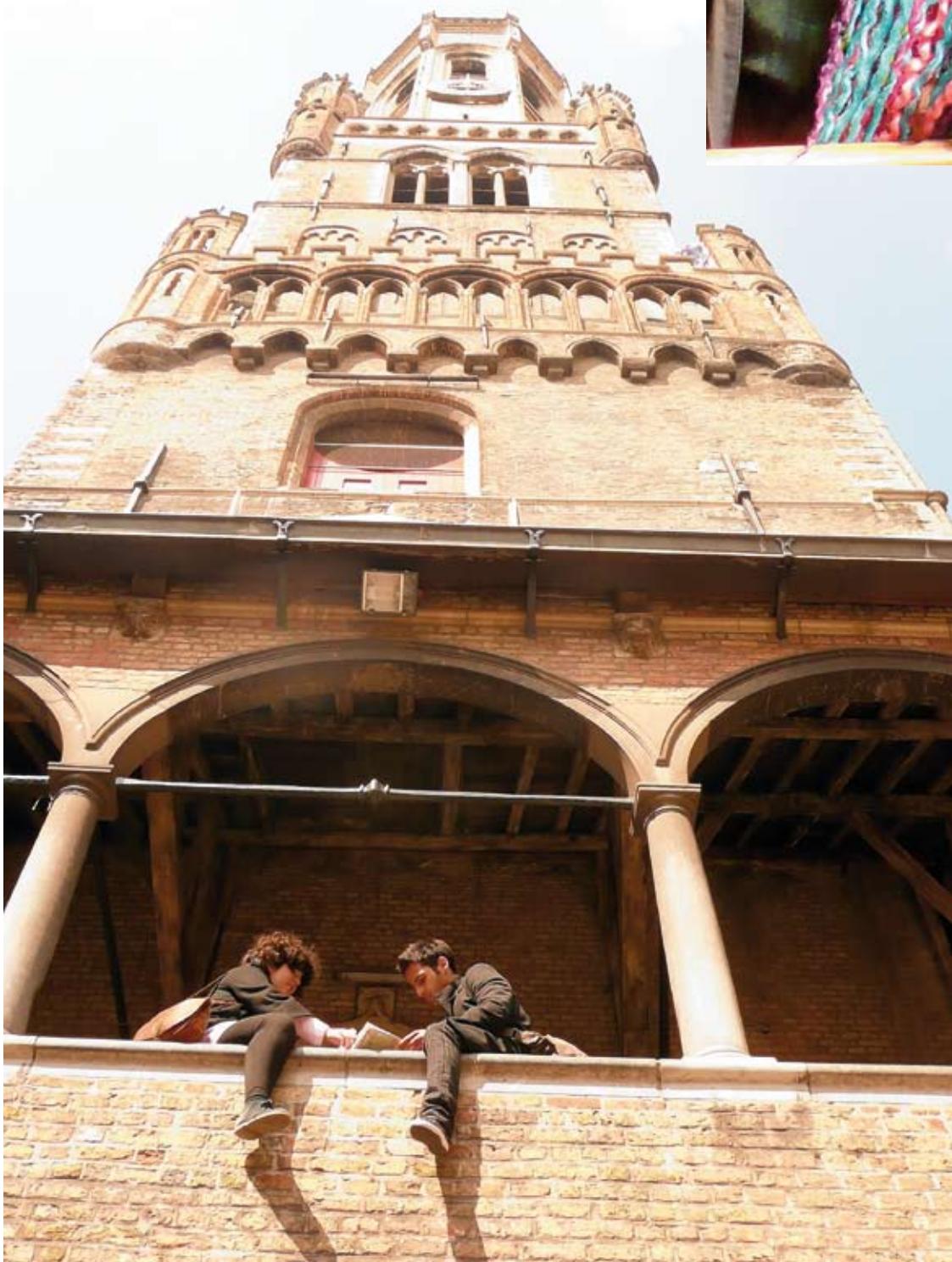
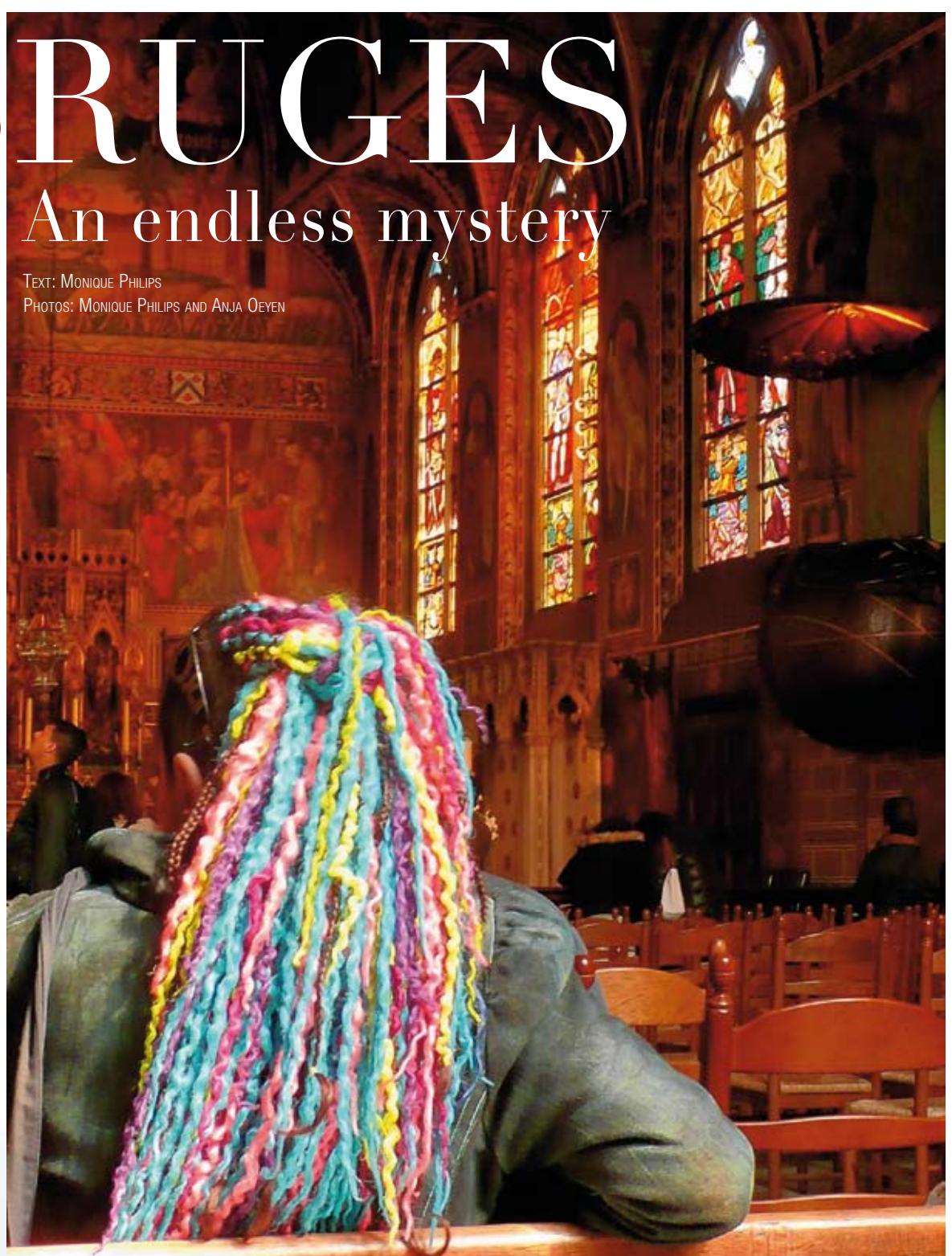
• Also last week, the National Bank reported that Belgian savers now hold the record sum of €203.4 billion in their accounts – the equivalent of €18,885 per person. In each of the last two months, savings have grown by €1.9 billion, with the total growing by €14.7 billion in the first six months of the year – despite the fact that interest rates are currently relatively low. ♦

BRUGES

An endless mystery

TEXT: MONIQUE PHILIPS

PHOTOS: MONIQUE PHILIPS AND ANJA OEYEN





There's something strange going on in Bruges. Writers and painters have been trying to capture its eeriness for centuries, and their accounts still ring true today. *Bruges-la-Morte. Brugge Die Stille.* The dead one, the silent one.

Does time really stand still here? It's a fact there's only a single clock that adorns the many spires.

Once a buzzing trade town and home to the family Van der Beurze, from whom we have the word *beurs* (stock market), this Manhattan of the Middle Ages was like a magnet to the world, and every single cellar was stocked with precious goods. Merchants imported and exported exotic goods by ship from all over the world. The city prospered thanks to the taxes imposed on commodities such as English wool, Irish salmon, herbs and spices, diamonds, paper and books, all according to fashion.

This spirit of commerce happily prevailed until the canal to the sea silted up in the 15th century, and the small city fell into a wintry sleep, only to be rediscovered much later by dreamy poets – and hence tourists.

Religion has always been a major force in town. Nothing less than the Holy Blood of Christ was brought in to grace a new church. Even today, countless pilgrims queue up to touch the relic (for a small fee). At one point, protestant heretics were burned at the stake. At another, Napoleon closed all churches and confiscated their possessions. Religion is a bit of a gamble, after all.

Though bishops come and go, the church spires in Bruges still dominate the low town, even if they offer little resistance to the cold winds that blow so fiercely. National icon Jacques Brel sang about the wind of the north blowing around

the towers of Bruges, and there are still windmills on the old dykes. So, be warned: If you step off in Bruges, bring a sweater.

It's undeniable: Bruges is just perfect for a tremendous good day of touristy fun, whether strolling its labyrinth of crooked streets, entering its churches at will, discovering its turbulent history or its world-famous art. Be sure to take a boat ride or climb the 366 steps of the Belfort to see where actor Brendan Gleeson took his famous fictional plunge. (It's just one of the stops of the movie-inspired city map *In Bruges*.)

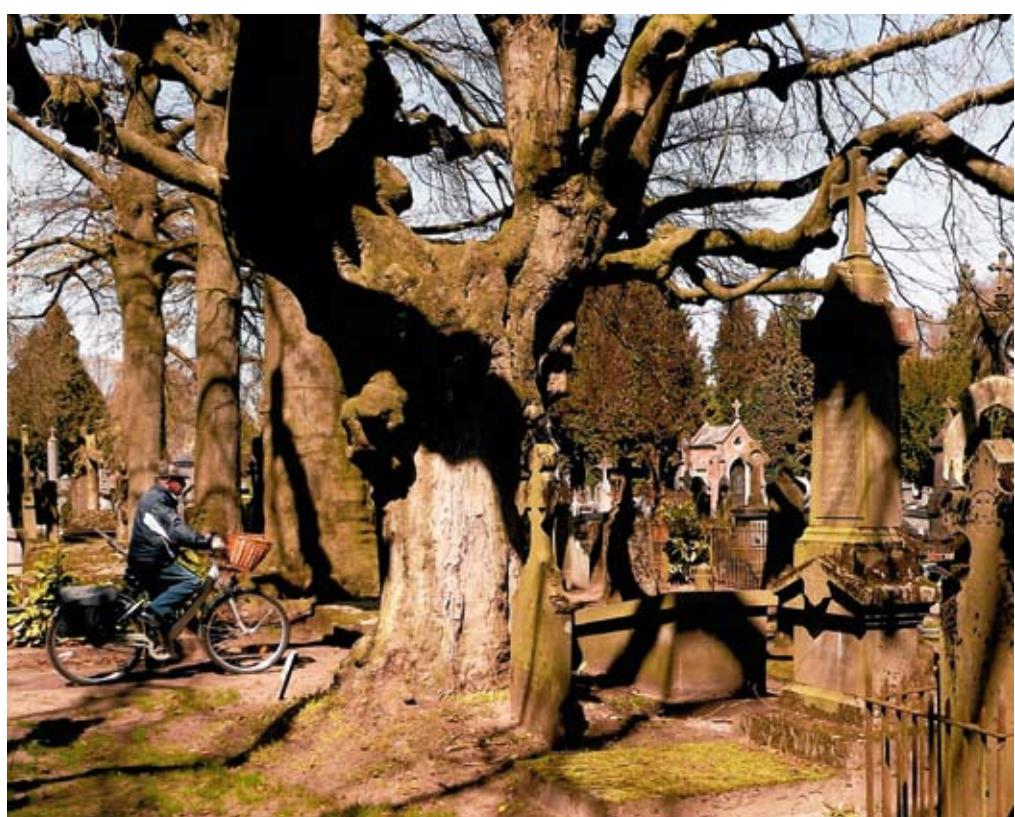
Or stay at the foot of the belfry and order a hearty portion of fries at the oldest *fritkar* in town. Bruges is chock full of the oldest this, the oldest that. No wonder romantic couples dream in this Venice of the North about mating for life like the swans in the Minnewater.

"We people of Bruges enjoy a good façade," a Bruges friend mockingly orates. The 19th-century city architect Louis Delacenserie saw the city's potential and revamped many major buildings into a Neo-Gothic style, which gave the city its architectural uniformity of gabled façades that so many appreciate and that gained Bruges as a whole its Unesco World Heritage status. I hardly found his grave, a plain grey slab amongst the ornate edifices of the cemetery. (He himself wasn't all too fond of Neo-Gothic.)

Bruges. The streets are full, yet somehow empty. The city is set in stone, petrified, yet light. The sun is shining down hard, but doesn't seem to touch the ground. There's wind, but like in a bell jar. There's beauty, but remoteness. There's a mystery, but no insurmountable desire to solve it.♦



FLANDERS TODAY
AUGUST 11, 2010



LE TOUT BRUGES

ik ben in een kleine,
dode stad
geboren.
ik heb er nooit
het levenslicht gezien.
ik heb er nooit
meer dan
tien levenden
samen gezien;
tien levenden
waarvan
negen vreemdelingen
negen vreemdelingen
waaronder
ik.

Renaat Ramon, 1981

I was born in a small,
dead town.
I never
saw the light of day.
I never
saw more than
ten living together
ten of the living
of which
nine were strangers
nine were strangers
of which one was
me.

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• 1500 Halle, Mr Yves Tielemans, Tel 02/363.15.35, yves@sterckx.be

Forest burial

The first nature cemetery in Belgium will open in Sint-Niklaas next spring

DENZIL WALTON

The British poet Helen Dunmore had the right idea.

I should like to be buried in a summer forest where people go in July, only a bus ride from the city,

I should like them to walk over me not noticing anything but sunlight and patches of wild strawberries –

Here! Look under the leaves! I should like the child who is slowest to end up picking the most,

and the big kids will show the little the only way to grasp a nettle and pick it so it doesn't sting.

I should like home-time to come so late the bus has its lights on and a cloud of moths hangs in their beam,

and when they are all gone I should like to be buried in a summer forest where the dark steps blindfold, on cat foot-pads, with the dawn almost touching it.

*"I Should Like to be Buried in a Summer Forest" by Helen Dunmore is from the collection *Out of the Blue: Poems 1975-2001* (Bloodaxe Books, 2001)*

Until now, such a burial was impossible in Belgium, although it is feasible – and highly popular – across the border in the Netherlands and Germany. But thanks to an initiative of city councilor Wouter Van Bellingen, the country's first official forest cemetery is due to open next spring in Sint-Niklaas.

Work is in progress at the Heimolen, where a "green zone" is being created in a currently wild area of the cemetery and crematorium. Old, diseased trees are being removed, and new ones will be planted this autumn. There is clearly a demand for these eco-burials; as soon as plans were announced, people were already registering.

The site is specifically for the scattering of ashes, not the burying of bodies. Memorial plates will indicate who is resting at the site but will not specify exact locations. There will be no gravestones, crosses, memorials or statues – just trees, bushes and wild flowers.

The absence of these normal



People are already reserving a space for their ashes in the forest of Heimolen crematorium, which is currently being landscaped for use in the spring

accessories to a burial will mean that the forest site will not look like a traditional graveyard but a pleasant, peaceful, living environment. It will reduce the cost of a burial, too, and, without having to find space in the ground to bury coffins, is more environmentally friendly.

"In Sint-Niklaas we already have a forest where parents can plant a tree to commemorate the birth of their child," explains Van Bellingen. "We also have forests where children can play and where people can walk and cycle. The logical extension was to have a forest where people can be buried."

Van Bellingen is a great believer in bringing people closer to nature, and this

"cradle to the grave" experience in Sint-Niklaas is a step towards this vision. "I also believe it will help the grieving process," he adds. "Traditional cemeteries are usually very formal, despondent areas. A forest cemetery will be a pleasant place, where the presence of nature will promote good and uplifting memories of the people we have lost. Dying is, after all, a perfectly natural process, and people will soon be able to be buried in a perfectly natural environment."

The Heimolen forest cemetery is currently unique in Belgium, but other municipalities are expected to follow close behind.♦

Ashes to ashes

In Belgium, ashes may be scattered in a designated place in a cemetery, interred in a columbarium, crypt or grave or scattered in Belgian territorial waters. Scattering or burying ashes in another location, such as a forest, is only allowed with the permission of the land owner.

The first official cremation in the country took place in 1933. By 1979, only 5% of the deceased were cremated, but by 2008 this figure had jumped to 48%. According to www.crematorium.be, in larger cities such as Brussels, Ghent and Antwerp, more than half of people choose to be cremated.

I'm hip, and I have a kid

Park parties in Ghent for the whole family

COURTNEY DAVIS



Having children is a blessed event, but an improvement to your social life it is not. For frustrated young parents, it's usually an either/or scenario. Either you are relaxing with your friends or you are playing with your kids – rarely is it a combination of the two.

Enter Ghent's tree-lined Koningin Astrid Park on Ferdinand Lousbergkaai. Every Sunday in August from 14.00 to dusk, the young, creative and often child-carrying enter the park *en masse* to enjoy a pretty special atmosphere.

In a handful of wading pools near a large sand pit, kids of all ages are screaming, running and having the time of their lives. A small walking path around the park is filled with strollers, Frisbee and games of tag. A van is on hand to teach circus tricks, while parents are camped nearby on benches or picnic blankets.

Also in the park are a few food vendors and an inexpensive drink stand selling the lovely, local Lousbeer brew, plus cava, soda and more, all with umbrella-covered cocktail tables. A DJ plays an effortlessly relaxed mix, ranging from The Stone Roses to She & Him.

While created for the neighbourhood by, among others, Eric Smout of the hipster Ghent music club Democrazy, the ability to bring together all the perfect pieces of a party has attracted an ever-increasing range of attendees. So next time you are in the area, pop on by, with a baby stroller – or not – and enjoy Friday night on a Sunday afternoon.

→ www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=838444658&ref=ts

Welcome to the dark side

Jolly Joker brings out the id in Eijschot

While Antwerp's exhibition *Dicht bij Eijschot* introduces you to the family man and successful advertising exec Alfons De Ridder (see front page), this club reminds you that his alias Willem Eijschot was more than a pen name – it was a full-fledged alter-ego.

Open until 25 September, this impromptu hot spot in a cool location hosts themed events every weekend in the style of the 1930s and '40s, when Eijschot was prowling the bars and sneaking about with mistresses.

In 't Eilandje's 1960s round glass-covered building dubbed The Shop, Radio Modern is right at home on Friday nights with "The Eijschot Tapes", a mix of literature, burlesque, DJs and poetry set to music. Saturdays are pop and rock concerts by local bands, including The Bony King of Nowhere, Tommigun, Isbells and Stijn.



→ www.jollyjoker.be

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Cost-cutting panic or investments in human capital?

In times like these, where we have to do more with less, there are two types of managers. **Those who cut costs across the board, and those who even now choose to continue to invest prudently.** Which type are you? The financial crisis and the uncertain economic situation are confronting managers with new challenges, but all too often they are also driving them to take decisions that are infused with panic and doom-and-gloom. But the ones who are forward-thinking and keep to their own course don't slam on the brakes – instead, they invest in the future.

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Aller/Retour

ALAN HOPE

For the duration of its stint as Flanders' first City of Culture, Ostend is a celebrated destination. But internationally, it's a way-station: for the British, it's the gateway to the continent. For the world, it's a gateway to the United Kingdom.

That's what Ostend represents for the people portrayed in the exhibition *Aller/Retour*, staged in odd locations around the town. It's a collection of large-scale photographs by Stefaan Vanfleteren with commentaries by Michael De Cock of Theater 't Arsenaal in Mechelen, also co-curator of Ostend's recent Theater aan Zee (TAZ). *Aller/Retour* launched as part of TAZ but fortunately lasts several weeks longer.

First, the locations. This exhibition has no home, which is entirely fitting considering its subject. The people in the photos have had to leave their own homes and are heading for a new home that does not want them. The British language may be steeped in the influence of the sea – but that doesn't mean they're open to foreigners, whether from Africa or Eastern Europe.

For their material, De Cock and Vanfleteren travelled to places like Senegal and Slovakia, the points at which the odyssey of a migrant begins; to Malta and Ostend, major crossing points; into Europe and the UK, to see where they end up; and especially to London, the El Dorado, to record those faces we usually only see in the papers when a flood hits or a war ravages.

See all of them – which takes a bit of determination, with the whole city as venue – and the theme of heroism emerges. Mankind, from the Polynesians to the Vikings, has always set out upon the sea to seek out "new life and new civilisations". These migrants, so often despised and rejected, ask no more than that. Vanfleteren's skill as a portraitist is well known; in this series, we're also reminded that he used to be a news photographer.♦

The book Aller/Retour, with text by Michael De Cock and photos by Stefaan Vanfleteren, is published by Meulenhoff/Manteau at €29.95



Aller/Retour
Until 30 September
Across Ostend
→ www.theateraanzee.be

MORE PHOTO EXHIBITIONS THIS WEEK

Filip Tas → Photo Museum, Antwerp →

Albrecht Fuchs → Goethe Institute, Brussels

Innocent, Yet Punished → Dr Guislain Museum, Ghent



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AUG 14 22.00 Ruben Block + Eat Lions + Blue Flamingo + Garrett McMullan + Koentje & Rakesh



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Kaasrui 1; 03.232.51.53
www.busterpodium.be
AUG 12 21.00 Partie Plaisir **AUG 14** 22.00 Havana 1 **AUG 17** 22.00 Karamell's **AUG 18** 21.00 Playtime Session

Openluchttheater Rivierenhof

Turnhoutsebaan 232; 070.222.192, www.openluchttheater.be
AUG 16 20.30 Charlie Winston

Agenda

FLANDERS TODAY
AUGUST 11, 2010

Brussels

Café Bonnefooi
Steenstraat 8; 0487.62.22.31
www.bonnefooi.be
AUG 11 22.00 Spout Big Space + Funkarium

Viage
Anspachlaan 30; 070.44.34.43
www.viage.be
AUG 14 22.00 Gingko Family



Antwerp

Openluchttheater Rivierenhof
Turnhoutsebaan 232; 070.222.192,
www.openluchttheater.be
AUG 13 20.30 Pannonia All Star Orchestra, Balkan ska/reggae



Brussels

St Michael and St Gudula Cathedral
Sinter-Goedeleplein; 02.507.82.00
www.cathedralestmichel.be
AUG 15 16.00 Schola Gregoriana Dominicana conducted by Jacques Maertens; J Jongen, Babou, Cornet
AUG 17 20.00 Anne Page, organ: Bach, de Grigny, more



Antwerp

HetPaleis
Theaterplein 1; 03.202.83.11
www.hetpaleis.be
AUG 18-28 20.00 Compagnie Cecilia in Schöne Blumen, written and staged by Arne Sierens (in Dutch)



Antwerp

Contemporary Art Museum (M HKA)
Leuvenstraat 32; 03.238.59.60
www.muhka.be
Until AUG 22 August Orts: Correspondence, work by the four Brussels artists who make up the Auguste Orts production platform on aspects of apparatus (camera movement, editing, sound vs image) and the unstable status of language
Until SEP 19 Art Kept Me Out of Jail, performance installations by Jan Fabre

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Diamond Museum

Koningin Astridplein 13-23; 03.202.48.90
www.diamantmuseum.be
Until AUG 31 HarT voor HarD, heart-shaped jewellery

Middelheim Museum

Middelheimlaan 6; 03.828.13.50
www.middelheimmuseum.be
Until SEP 19 New Monuments in the Middelheim Museum, Belgian artists focus on the future of the monument

Photo Museum (FoMu)

Until SEP 5 Filip Tas, work by the late Antwerp-based photojournalist, critic and visual arts instructor, who helped usher in a new era of media photography
Until SEP 5 American Documents, Walker Evans' 1940s Labour Anonymous series and part of Robert Frank's The Americans from the 1950s join several well-known American photographers of the 1970s, including Diane Arbus, Robert Adams, Lewish Baltz and Mitch Epstein
Until SEP 5 Jacky Lecouturier: POLAROIDs (and others), polaroids by the Belgian photographer

Royal Museum of Fine Arts

Leopold De Waelplaats; 03.238.78.09
www.kmska.be
Until OCT 3 Closing Time, curated by Flemish artist Jan Vanriet, who presents his own work alongside related pieces from the museum's collection

Bruges

Hospitaalmuseum

Mariastraat 38; 050.44.87.11
www.museabrugge.be
Until NOV 7 Ivory in Bruges, rare pieces from museums, churches and monasteries

Kunstcentrum Oud Sint-Jan

Mariastraat 38; 050.47.61.00
www.miro-brugge.be
Until OCT 3 Expo Miró, lithographs, ceramics and manuscripts from the surrealist painter Joan Miró

Brussels

Archief en Museum voor het Vlaams

Leven te Brussel

Arduinkkaai 28; 02.209.06.01

www.amvb.be

Until AUG 31 Herinnering & Migratie: Erfgoed van nieuwe Brusselaars (Memory & Migration: The Heritage of new Brusselaars), presentation of the stories behind the arrival of 19 new immigrants to Brussels

Atomium

Heysel Park; 02.475.45.75

www.atomium.be

Until AUG 31 BE.WELCOME: Belgium and Immigration, interactive exhibition on the migration experience in Belgium

Belgian Comic Strip Centre

Zandstraat 20; 02.219.19.80

www.stripmuseum.be

Until AUG 29 Moomin: Tove Jansson's Dreamworld, work by the Finnish illustrator and author

Until JAN 30 The Studio of Franquin: Jijé, Morris and Will, rare documents and drawings show mutual influences between the four comic-strip artists who revolutionised the art form in Europe

Folklore Museum

Eikstraat 19; 02.514.53.97 www.brussels.be

Until AUG 22 Manneken-Pis: A Very European Member of Brussels, costumes from the wardrobe of the famous Brussels icon, contributed by every member of the EU

Hallepoort Museum

Zuidlaan 29; 02.533.34.51

www.kmkg-mrah.be

Until AUG 29 Brussels Calling!, works by 10 Belgian and international artists, who were all lured by the capital at one time or another

ISELP

Waterloosesteenweg 31; 02.504.80.70

www.iselp.be

Until AUG 21 Médium, work by Belgian photographer Vincen Beeckman

Jewish Museum of Belgium

Minimstraat 21; 02.512.19.63

www.mjbjmb.org

DON'T MISS

Uit met Vlieg

All the time

Across Flanders

Although you can find Uit met Vlieg (Out with Fly) suggestions throughout the year, this month is particularly pertinent with families back from holidays and kids still out of school. The organisation Vlieg scours the music halls, parks and museums of Flanders and Brussels to find activities appropriate for children and lists them all on its very user-friendly website. You might recognise its little buzzing fly icon, which you often see on posters to designate a Vlieg-recommended event. Suggestions this week include puppet theatre behind the Sint-Amandsberg public library, storytelling from Africa in Bozar and "Children-Do-Day" at the Technopolis in Mechelen.

» www.uitmetvlieg.be



Belvue Museum

Paleizenplein 7; 02.511.44.25

www.belvue.be

Until SEP 12 Facing Brussels, contrasting views of the city by the Nadaar photography collective

Until SEP 19 Brussels: A City with a View, interactive exhibition focusing on Jean-Baptiste Bonnecroy's 17th-century painting Gezicht op Brussel, showing panoramas of the city

Bibliotheca Wittockiana

Bemelstraat 21; 02.770.53.33

www.wittockiana.org

Until SEP 11 Parti pris: the duo Léon Wuidar and La Pierre d'Alun, books and illustrated bookbindings

Until SEP 11 Françoise Clabots, books, objects, prints and drawings

Bozar

Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00

www.bozar.be

Until SEP 26 GEO-Graphics: Mapping Historical and Contemporary Art Practice in Africa, African objects from Belgian museums come face-to-face with work of contemporary African artists (part of Visionary Africa)

Until OCT 10 A Passage to Asia: 25 Centuries of Exchange between Asia and Europe, a selection of 300 objects, including funeral urns, jewellery, semi-precious stones, gold and glass, Buddhist and Hindu images, ivory, manuscripts, textiles and archaeological finds

Brussels Info Place (BIP)

Koningsplein; 02.563.63.99

www.biponline.be

Until DEC 31 Europe in Brussels: Fragmented Past, Shared Future?, video exhibition looking at the European quarter, from its beginnings to the present day (www.europeinbrussels.be)

De Elektriciteitscentrale

Sint-Katelijneplein 44; 02.279.64.45

Until OCT 3 Fighting the Box: 20 Belgian Designers, 20 Stories Behind the Products, the relationship between local designers and the international industry

European Quarter

Wetstraat;

www.thehumanrightsproject.org

Until SEP 10 The Human Rights Project, outdoor exhibition of photographs of South Africa by Lukas Maximilian Hüller and Juliane R Hauser

Folklore Museum

Van Volxemlaan 354; 02.340.00.50

www.wiels.org

Until AUG 15 Rehabilitation, multi-media show by young artists on the theme of architectural renovation

Until SEP 12 Wangechi Mutu: My Dirty Little Heaven, collages by the New York-based Kenyan artist, Deutsche Bank's Artist of the Year

Yaruna

Waversesteenweg 214B; 02.512.93.12

www.anunsroom.com

Until OCT 14 Jeanne: A Nun's Room, installation by Scottish artist Paul Morris

WIELS

Van Volxemlaan 354; 02.340.00.50

www.wiels.org

Until AUG 15 Rehabilitation, multi-media show by young artists on the theme of architectural renovation

Until SEP 12 Wangechi Mutu: My Dirty Little Heaven, collages by the New York-based Kenyan artist, Deutsche Bank's Artist of the Year

Deurle

Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens

Museumlaan 14; 09.282.51.23

www.museumdd.be

Until SEP 19 Biennale van de Schilderkunst: het sublieme voorbij (Biennale of Painting: The Sublime Past, a subjective look at painting over the last 100 years (See also Roger Raveelmuseum in Machelen-Zulte)

ISELP

Waterloosesteenweg 31; 02.504.80.70

www.iselp.be

Until AUG 21 Médium, work by Belgian photographer Vincen Beeckman

Jewish Museum of Belgium

Minimstraat 21; 02.512.19.63

www.mjbjmb.org

Until SEP 12 Wangechi Mutu: My Dirty Little Heaven, collages by the New York-based Kenyan artist, Deutsche Bank's Artist of the Year

Ghent

Caermersklooster

Vrouwebroersstraat 6; 09.269.29.10

www.caermersklooster.be

Deurle

Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens

Museumlaan 14; 09.282.51.23

www.museumdd.be

with an Angel by Anthony van Dyck
Until AUG 29 Philippe Van Snick, paintings, installations and sculpture by the Flemish artist
Until SEP 12 Angus Fairhurst, retrospective of the the late artist, a member of the Young British Artists movement

Machelen-Zulte

Het Roger Raveelmuseum
Gildestraat 2-8; 09.381.60.00
www.rogerraveelmuseum.be
Until SEP 19 Biënnale van de Schilderkunst: het sublieme voorbij (Biënnale of Painting: The Sublime Past), a subjective look at painting over the last 100 years (also at Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens in Deurle)

WEEK IN FILM

LISA BRADSHAW

Openlucht cinema



Antwerp

Feestfilms: Part of the Zomer van Antwerpen, these party-themed open-air screenings are under a covered hangar at the port. Coming up: Hairspray (2007), Mamma Mia! and Laila's Birthday

Until AUG 22 in Hangar 19A, Scheldekaaien

→ www.zva.be

Brussels

PleinOPENair: Open-air screenings of features and shorts in three spots in the capital, including themed walks, concerts and workshops under the umbrella of "safety" (or lack thereof)

Until AUG 11 on the esplanade of the Natural Sciences Museum, Laine Square and the Gézu Cloister

→ www.nova-cinema.org

Cinemusik: Music documentaries in the open-air, preceded by DJs and followed by concerts. Coming up: Brass Unbound and Parno Graszt: Life of a Hungarian Gypsy Band

Thursdays until AUG 20

→ www.recyclart.be

Geraardsbergen

Openluchtcinema: Open-air cinema preceded by live concerts. Coming up: BX5 band followed by Twilight

Wednesdays until AUG 18 at 20.00 on Stationsplein

→ www.openluchtcinema.be

Mechelen

Drive-In Movies: Open-air cinema with free entry for those driving antique cars. Avant-premieres and a cava bar. Coming up: The Back-Up Plan, The Expendables and Sex and the City 2

Thurs-Sat until AUG 28 at Sportpark De Nekker

→ www.utopolis.be

Meise

National Botanic Garden of Belgium
Nieuwelaan 38; 02.260.09.20
www.plantentuinmeise.be
Until OCT 24 Boxes Brimming with Life, photo installations by Flemish wildlife photographer Tom Linster

Neerpelt

Musica
Toekomstlaan 5B; 011.61.05.10
www.musica.be
Until SEP 5 Good Vibrations: Summer in Your Ears, an international exhibition of sound-art installations at various locations between the train station and provincial park Dommelhof

Ostend

Kunstmuseum aan zee (Mu.zee)
Romestraat 11; 059.50.81.18,
www.pmmk.be
Until AUG 29 Bij Ensor op Bezoek (Visiting Ensor), the world of master Flemish painter James Ensor seen through the eyes of a variety of artists, writers and filmmakers who visited him in Ostend
Until AUG 29 Louise Bourgeois, 14 works by the recently deceased French-American artist from the collection of her Ostend friend and fellow artist Xavier Tricot

Tervuren

Royal Museum for Central Africa
Leuvensesteenweg 13; 02.769.52.11
www.africamuseum.be
Until SEP 30 Bonjour Congo, photographs and documents from Brusselaars on the presence of the Congo in Brussels
Until JAN 9 2011 Congo River: 4,700 Kilometres Bursting with Nature and Culture, interactive exhibition on the lifeblood of Congo, from source to mouth
Until JAN 9 2011 100 Years in 100 Photographs, outdoor exhibition celebrating the 100th anniversary of the African Museum building
Until JAN 9 2011 Indépendance! Congolese Tell Their Stories of 50 Years of Independence, multi-media exhibition looks at the Democratic Republic of Congo from independence to today

Ypres

In Flanders Fields Museum
Grote Markt 34; 057.239.220
www.inflandersfields.be
Until AUG 15 Toiling for War, films, photos and objects tell the story of the presence of 140,000 Chinese workers in the Second World War
Until OCT 10 More Force Than Necessary, photos and films by Brazilian artist-in-residence Rodrigo Braga



Belgium's EU Presidency: Belgium takes the helm of the European Union Council for six months and launches a series of events to mark its presidency
Until DEC 31 across the country
www.eu2010.be

Antwerp

Antilliaanse Feesten: 28th edition of the world's largest Caribbean festival, with four stages featuring Wyclef Jean, La Monarca, Calle 13, more
AUG 13-14 in Hoogstraten
www.antilliaansefeesten.be

Jazz Middelheim: Annual roots and jazz festival, featuring Wayne Shorter Quartet, Ahmad Jamal, McCoy Tyner Trio feat Joe Lovano, Dave Holland Flamenco Project, Cassandra Wilson, Toots Thielemans, and more

AUG 12-15 in Park Den Brandt
www.jazzmiddelheim.be

Zomer van Antwerpen: Annual summer-long festival with parties, concerts, circus acts, theatre, film, BBQs and more
Until AUG 29 across the city
www.zva.be

Bruges

Klinkers Festival: Outdoor music festival featuring Anouar Brahem, Ojos De Brujo, Flip Kowlier, more

Flip Kowlier, more
Until AUG 14 at 't Zand
www.klinkers-brugge.be

MA Festival: Part of the Festival of Flanders, this Bruges-based classical festival focuses this year on exotic influences in European music from the 17th and 18th centuries
Until AUG 15 in venues across Bruges
www.mafestival.be

Brussels

Apéros Urbains: Weekly aperitif plus after-parties at one of three partner clubs: Fuse, K-Nal and the Vaudeville; free entrance to clubs with purchase of drink at Apéros Urbains
Until SEP 3 across the city
www.aperos.be

Bal Moderne: Brussels' parks are transformed into dance floors in a series of public events where you can learn a new choreography in 45 minutes
Until AUG 28 across Brussels
0476.47.03.67, www.balmoderne.be

Brussels Beach: A full-fledged beach, with deck chairs, cocktails, food, water sprays, sports, circus acts, concerts, canal cruises and more
Until AUG 22 along the Akenkaai on the canal
www.brusselbad.be

Brussels Summer Festival: Outdoor festival with music, street theatre, and Classissimo, a classical music programme
AUG 13-22 across Brussels
www.brusselsummerfestival.be

Bruxellons 2010: Annual summer theatre festival with an emphasis on comedy
Until AUG 30 at Château du Karreveld, Jean de la Hoeselaan 3
02.724.24.24, www.bruxellons.net

Ecran Total: Annual summer film festival with classics, reprisals, a Chris Marker cycle and a focus on John Cassavetes
Until SEP 14 at Cinema Arenberg, Koninginnegalerij 26
02.512.80.63, www.arenberg.be

Festivaeria: Outdoor festival providing a platform for young artists, with musicians, singers, DJs, dancers, bodypainters, jugglers, photographers and street theatre artists

Until SEP 18 at Jubelpark
www.myspace.com/playnewconcept

Floral carpet: Biannual event with a carpet made out of more than 700,000 begonia blooms in the yellow and blue colours of the European Union on the occasion of Belgium's EU presidency
AUG 13-15 on the Grote Markt
www.floralcarpet.be

Midi Fun Fair: Annual carnival with rides and games
Until AUG 22 from Hallepoort to the end of Zuidlaan
02.279.25.31, www.kermis-feest.be

Midis-Minimes: Lunchtime classical concerts
Until AUG 27 at Miniemerk, Miniemerstraat 62, and the Royal Conservatory, Regentschapsstraat 30
www.midis-minimes.be

Mini-Europe by Night: Sound and light show with fireworks and music
Until AUG 14 22.30 at Mini-Europe, Bruparck, at the foot of the Atomium
www.minieurope.com

Reggae Bus: Free Reggae, roots and dub music, entertainment and bar
AUG 14 15.00-23.00 at Jubelark
0499.35.23.35

Visionary Africa: Festival of literature, music, performance and exhibitions recognising the 17 African nations celebrating their 50th anniversary of independence
Until SEP 26 at Bozar, Ravensteinstraat 23
www.bozar.be

Ghent

Parkkaffee: Cultural festival in the park, with dance and theatre performances, circus and magic acts, children's entertainment, workshops, campfires, concerts, food and more
Until AUG 31 at Groenstaakstraat 37

09.227.99.94, www.parkkaffee.be

Patersholfeesten: Cultural folk festival featuring concerts, parades, themed walks, childrens entertainment, antique markets and more
AUG 13-15 in the Patershol quarter
www.patershol.org

Hasselt

Nocturne: Atmospheric night lighting at the Japanese Garden
AUG 11 from 20.00 to 23.00 at Gouverneur Verwilghensingel 23
www.hasselt.be

Pukkelpop: Belgium's second biggest outdoor rock festival, with more than 200 performers on eight stages including Iron Maiden, Placebo, The Prodigy, Kate Nash, more
AUG 19-21 in Kiewit, near Hasselt
www.pukkelpop.be

Virga Jessefeesten: 45th edition of the seven-yearly cultural heritage festival celebrating Hasselt's centuries of generations, with atmospheric lighting and decoration, concerts and a parade reflecting the festival's Christian origins
AUG 13-29 at Lombaardstraat 3
www.hasselt.eu

Knokke-Heist

ArtNocturne: International art and antiques fair
Until AUG 15 16.00-22.00 at CC Scharpoord, Meerlaan 32
www.artnocturneknokke.be

International Cartoon Festival: Annual festival, this year featuring the work of Flemish cartoonists Jonas Geirnaert and Jan De Maesschalck, plus Press Cartoon prize competition
Until SEP 12 at Rubensplein
www.cartoonfestival.be

Leuven

Markrock: 100% Belgian rock festival featuring The Van Jets, Discobar Galaxie, Customs, School is Cool, Turbopascals, King Dj, Balthazar and Stijn
AUG 14-15 across Leuven
www.markrock.com

Zomer van Sint-Pieter: Lunchtime classical concerts every weekday
Until AUG 26 at 12.15 across the city
www.zomer-van-sint-pieter.be

Ostend

Cirque du Soleil: The world-famous Canadian circus returns to the coast with the show Varekai
Until AUG 29 20.00 under the big top at Napoleon Fort, Fortstraat 059.70.11.99 www.cirquedesoleil.com

FuZee! Third edition of the cultural festival featuring four Saturdays of international street theatre, fire and light displays, a parade and more
Until AUG 28 on the beach
www.fuze.be

Ostend City of Culture: Flanders' first City of Culture, a designation to highlight culture in certain Flemish cities. Circus, parades, performances, exhibitions and more, all year long
Until DEC 31 across Ostend
http://cultuur.oostende.be

Zomershow: Fun summer revues, with singing, dancing and comedy, for the whole family
Until AUG 28 at Casino Blankenberge, Zeedijk 150
www.zomershow.be

Oudenaarde

Feest in het Park: Outdoor music festival, featuring Fun Lovin' Criminals, Vive La Fête, The Heavy, more
AUG 12-15 at Tenten Donkvijver
www.feestinhetpark.be

Watou

Kunstenfestival Watou: Outdoor arts parcours featuring work by more than 100 artists, writers and poets, focusing on the link between word and image
Until SEP 5 across Watou
www.watou2010.be

DUSK 'TIL DAWN

SAFFINA RANA

Jeudibars

There's finally a reason to head to the industrial shedlands of Jette on Thursday nights: a pre-party chill at the all-new Bulex Jeudibars. Between the commune's cemetery and the Guillame de Greef tram stop, wander through the open iron gate marked "Celier" and down the dark driveway with its beautiful avenue of trees. You'll know you're on the right track when you hear the sound of jamming musicians rising up to meet you.

Catch sight of the tower block looming on the right. In the clearing, out in the open under what looks like an aircraft hanger roof, old leather sofas are grouped around wooden coffee tables and small-patterned rugs. It's the stuff of surreal Belgian moments. There are neat arrays of Formica cafe tables, bands jamming on a low wooden stage and a well stocked corner bar that also serves fresh mint tea in silver Moroccan teapots. The range of bands is eclectic, from jazz and skiffle to cyber-punk and rock – all advertised in advance on the website. It all starts at 18.00 and costs you a fiver.

After 23.00, a DJ takes over, and the eco-friendly crowd takes up its place on the sofas to drink and mingle. The last tram back to the centre is around 1.00, but if you aren't ready to leave, you can arrange to have a Bulex taxi drop you off anywhere in Brussels for €5. Just ask at the bar. The first Saturday of the month is an all-night party when well known underground DJs spin everything from funk and soul to house, reggae and hip hop in the slightly dank warehouse at the back.



→ www.myspace.com/bulexjeudibars

ROBYN BOYLE

bite



La Pizzeria

La Pizzeria

The best pizzeria in Ghent is also one of the city's smallest restaurants. The straightforwardly named La Pizzeria is very popular in the surprisingly cosy neighbourhood near the Kinepolis cinema. Restaurant pickings here are admittedly slim, but more and more non-locals are reserving a table there, too, because the pizzas are floury, warm halos of goodness, with crust made fresh on the spot in front of you, the owner throwing them in the air from her tiny open kitchen.

Isabelle Traets took over the business back in 1993 and now runs the place with help from her mother. The duo manage to keep up with increasing demand while continuing to work at their own pace. "I have to keep my own rhythm," Traets explains. "Instead of producing more faster, I prefer to give each pizza the individual attention it deserves. I bake them fresh so as to honour the Italian cuisine."

I devoured every bit – including the crust

The only difficulty apart from getting a table is choosing from the more than 80 different combinations, from spicy or veggie pizzas to calzones and house specialties. Once you've finally made up your mind, it takes no more than 15 minutes before the pizzas appear before you.

I initially turned up my nose at my companion's choice with fish, but I was mistaken. The *pana spinaci salmon* consists of layers of flavourful

pink salmon on top of a creamy spinach and cheese sauce, with a little rocket salad decoratively placed in the middle. Underneath it all is La Pizzeria's famously thin and crunchy crust. It was even tastier than it looked, which is saying a lot.

Same goes for my *Il punto*, a delectable combination of cherry tomatoes, mushrooms, thinly sliced spicy ham, basil and gorgonzola cheese. It could have been a bit spicier to my taste, so I added a few drops from the bottle of hot chilli oil on the table and devoured every bit – even the crust. Despite my healthy appetite, I had ordered a small and found it to be just right. To eat more would have been purely out of greed.

The service is friendly and fast, although we were in no kind of hurry. Seated outside on the sunny sidewalk, we laughed that it was almost like being in Italy. Even the busy passing of traffic added to this feeling. It was tempting to stay longer, in which case we most certainly would have found ourselves indulging in chocolate mousse and limoncello or grappa to close off the whole pleasant experience.

Instead we walked away, happily sated, after paying €21 for one large and one small pizza, plus two drinks. We'll be back, the sooner the better.

► Tentoontstellingslaan 119, Ghent
🕒 Tue-Wed & Fri, 11.30-14.00, 18.00-22.22;
Sat 18.00-22.00. Thursdays by reservation
at 09.225.53.03
★ Ghent's best pizza is delicious, fresh
simplicity

Contact Bite at flandersbite@gmail.com

NEXT WEEK IN FLANDERS TODAY #143

Feature

Many consider it the best beer in the world, and it's brewed by a handful of monks in West Flanders. Follow along on the journey as our reporter gets her hands on a precious case of Westvleteren

Focus

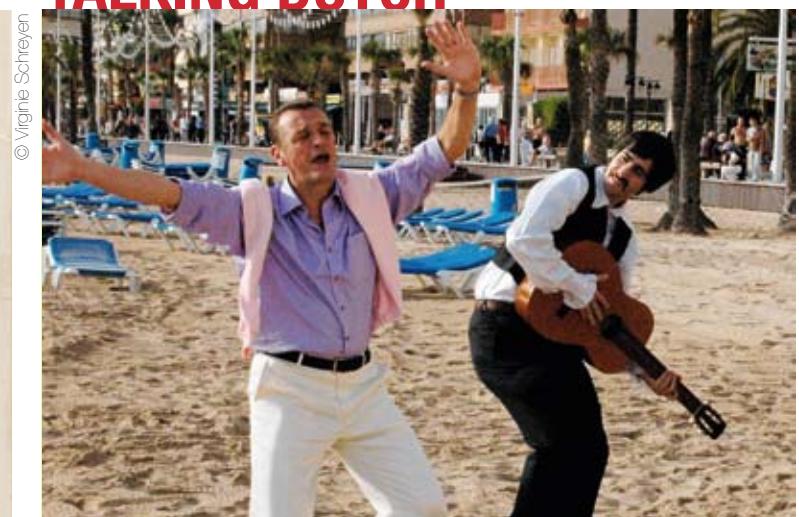
The diamond community of Antwerp is facing major challenges in security, following high-profile robberies this year. In the second of our series on the Indian community in the city, we look at what can be done

Active

Ostend's Fort Napoleon is a defensive military base that was never used. News editor Alan Hope looks at how the city is putting the historical building to use now

TALKING DUTCH

ALISTAIR MACLEAN



‘zingen’

I've given that earworm of a song by actor Tom Waes three months to fade, but "Dos Cervezas" – "Two Beers" – still plays in my head at unguarded moments. Tom fronts a TV show on channel één called *Tomtesterom*, in which he takes up challenges, including *Hoe word je een sumoworstelaar* – How do you become a sumo wrestler? and *Hoe tem je een wild paard?* – How do you tame a wild horse? These painful-to-watch dares he accomplishes with panache, and foreign TV stations were interested in buying the format but backed out of a deal because they have no one with the multi-talent to take on the challenges. The not-so-young Tom must have been pleased to face the challenge of *Hoe word ik schlagerzanger?* – How do I become a (sweetly sentimental) pop singer? instead of learning how to hypnotise sharks. This "Two Beers" song, which Tom co-wrote, is about a holiday in Spain: "Ik zag haar zitten in een bar – I saw her sitting in a bar". His Spanish is limited to ordering two beers, which he does repeatedly. He discovers that *elke Spanjaard heeft een snor* – every Spaniard has a moustache, including his beloved Conchita. This surprise was probably added because *snor* rhymes with "por favor".

Drivel of course, but his mission was to sing this at a *schlager* festival in May. The reception?

De tent ging uit de bol – the place went crazy.

Tom has been invited to sing his hit at every *kermis* – fair in Flanders this summer. He said that he did not intend to make a habit of singing the song (he was probably afraid that singing it too often could damage his health), yet he has been spotted on many occasions giving everyone what they want. "Dos Cervezas" was used as ammunition in a Flemish parliamentary debate about support for home-grown popular music. Apparently only 25% of music played on the main channels is *Nederlandstalig* – Dutch language.

But the real Flemish *schlager* singers are not happy. They are envious of Tom's access to play time, and perhaps annoyed at how easy he made it look. As Danny Fabry, a long-serving crooner, complained: "Tom Waes kan niet eens zingen – Tom Waes can't even sing." More sour grapes from Salim Seghers: "Op één nummer de zot uithangen kan iedereen – Anyone can act the fool with one number."

But the point is surely that most people can't even do that. Are you curious to hear "Dos Cervezas"? You'll easily find it on YouTube and on Tom's website.

You are warned, however. Once you've heard the number, *is het bijna onmogelijk om het uit je hoofd te zetten* – it's almost impossible to get out of your head.

→ www.een.be/programmas/tomtesterom

THE LAST WORD . . .

Jean-Luc Dehaene, former prime minister and still a central figure of the Belgian scene, turned 70 at the weekend. We selected a few of his many memorable quotes

"If you had an opinion poll about who people trust most and who they trust least, I'd come top in both."

Dehaene in 1995, after his first government had managed to rein in public debt

"You should only solve problems when they present themselves."

The dictum which helped win Dehaene his reputation as "the plumber" or problem-solver

"Sire, give me 100 days."

On his first attempt to form a government under prime minister Wilfried Martens in 1988

"I did more or less everything the textbooks say is not done. I tried to stay myself, and it worked out. Because of that, I can now get away with a lot."

Dehaene is still called upon when problems need solving, like Brussels-Halle-Vilvoorde, Dexia or a government break-down