

DECEMBER 8, 2010

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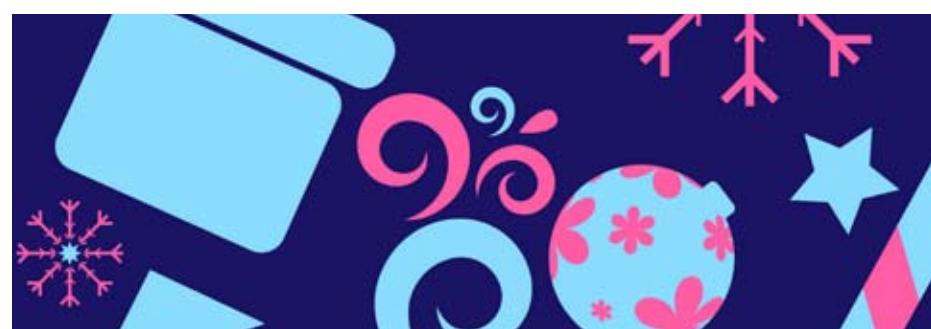
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Happening holidays

What to buy, how to buy it and where to go when the shopping's done

p8

Frozen Flanders



The coldest start to winter since 1875

ALAN HOPE

Flanders last week got its first taste of winter, as snow and ice caused problems on the roads and railways. Although the Eurostar suffered cancellations, the transport situation in Brussels and Flanders was less serious than had been expected.

The construction industry came to a standstill, though, as sites were closed due to the cold. In Limburg and Brussels, waste collections were disrupted. In East and West Flanders, postal services were affected. On De Lijn, buses and trams

suffered delays of up to one hour with services disrupted across the region. At Zaventem, all runways were open, but some flights were delayed, mainly as a result of the situation at the airport of destination, as Europe grappled with early snow and freezing temperatures.

In De Panne, a 63-year-old Dutch woman died after being discovered on the beach suffering from hypothermia. The exact circumstances of her death are not clear, but it is thought she had been drinking.

Plants in the national botanical gardens in Meise were suffering cold-related damage as a result of broken windows in greenhouses. The botanical gardens are a casualty of the political stalemate in Belgium, as the procedure to transfer authority to Flanders cannot be completed until a new federal government is formed.

Photo: Knokke-Heist under snow



The disappearing village

As the Port of Antwerp expands northward, the Flemish Region grapples with heritage versus commerce

ANNA JENKINSON

Doel is no ordinary Flemish village. Its houses are boarded up, graffiti covers the walls lining its main road, and there's hardly a soul on the street. The schools have closed down, the shops have shut, and most residents have left. But there are still a few villagers determined to stay put.

Frie Lauwers is one such resident. When I ask her why she wants to continue living in such a desolate and abandoned village, she gives me two reasons: "I love it – the nature, the freedom. That's mine," she says,

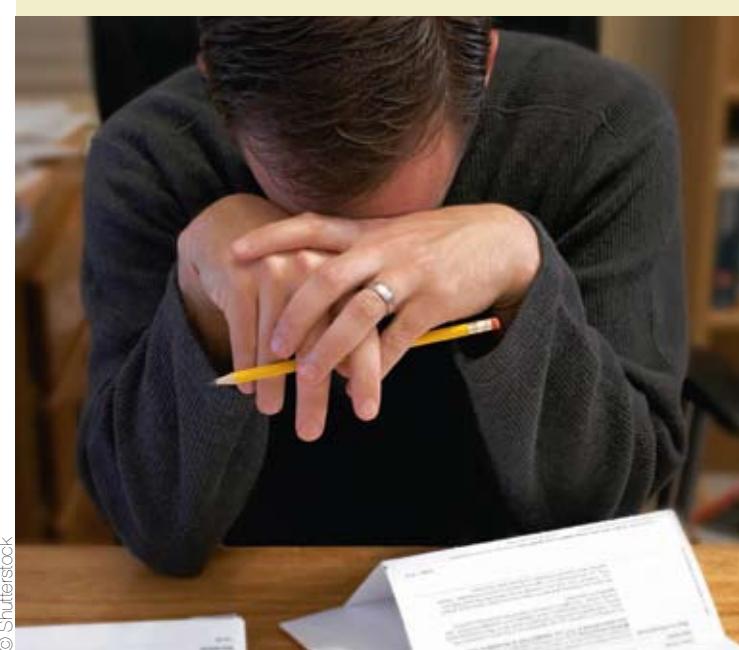
pointing to the view of open fields from her kitchen window. She pauses, and her smile disappears. "And because I'm angry, very angry at what has happened here."

The second reason gets to the crux of the matter. Doel is a village that lies on the left bank of the Scheldt River, and its existence has long been threatened by the expansion of Antwerp's port. This threat became all the more real when, just over a decade ago, the Flemish government said that the liveability of the village could not be guaranteed in the long term.

► *continued on page 5*

OFFSIDE

Tears for arrears



© Shutterstock

Last year, budget minister Guy Vanhengel admitted last week, the government spent €5.2 million in penalties for late payment of its bills. The worst offenders, Vanhengel said, were the buildings agency (€2.2 million) and the defence ministry (€1.8 million). Those are also, not coincidentally, the two departments who make the most use of outside contractors. For most small businesses, late payment of invoices by other businesses is a constant irritant, and sometimes worse. Companies are expected to deliver goods and services to the perfect satisfaction of the customer, who then pays the invoice in his own time. That leads to cash-flow problems and often to a knock-on effect, as your own bills go unpaid – putting other small businesses into difficulties.

According to estimates, one invoice in three is paid late. Belgium is reckoned to be one of the worst offenders in Europe on this score, and some estimates suggest as many as 2,000 bankruptcies a year can be attributed to late payment of invoices.

Organisations representing small businesses have tried for years to make penalty clauses more widespread, against the opposition of large companies, who often use late payment as a deliberate strategy. But now the website ikki.be may have come up with the answer: an invoice that bursts into heart-wrenching tears.

Ikki, a sort of marketplace site where freelancers can advertise themselves and look for work, is offering two free music chips for every new registration. Just attach the chip to your next follow-up invoice and, when it's opened, your client won't be able to resist the sounds of sobbing that follows.

The action is meant to be tongue-in-cheek, but the demand is clearly there; no sooner had the campaign started than it ground to a halt, as demand outstripped supply. People who had requested chips were asked to be patient until new stocks could be sent.

In the meantime, the site also allows you to make up a weeping telephone message. It's enough to melt even the steeliest corporate heart.

→ www.ikki.be

FLANDERS TODAY

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FLANDERS TODAY
DECEMBER 8, 2010

News in brief

One of the three men suspected of a role in the **murder of a family of three** in Wemmel last month has been handed over by the Luxembourg authorities to the Belgian justice system. Frédéric M was caught in possession of one of the family's two Mercedes cars, the theft of which is thought to have been the motive for the killings. Two other men are in detention in France awaiting extradition.

Two men arrested in Brussels on **suspicion of terrorist activity** have been freed by a court after a mistake was discovered in the arrest warrants. However, the two will remain in detention for at least two weeks while the prosecutor's office lodges an appeal. The pair are suspected of raising cash for terrorist activities in Iraq and Afghanistan and of recruiting locals to travel to the two war zones. Meanwhile, police in Austria arrested a Chechen refugee on suspicion of being linked to the Antwerp terror plot reported here last week.

People in possession of a **war-time firearm** for which they have no permit will be allowed to hand it in without facing any penalties, federal interior minister Annemie Turtelboom has announced. The aim of the amnesty, which particularly targets Kalashnikov automatic weapons, is to tackle the trade in illegal firearms, which are often stolen from otherwise law-abiding owners and sold on the black market.

The number of **companies going bankrupt** fell in November for the first time this year. Some 844 companies closed their books, down 6% from the 899 in November of last year. Graydon, the consultancy that tracks bankruptcies, said it was too soon to speak of a reversal of the overall upward trend. A total of 9,160 companies have gone bust so far in 2010.

Flemish households produced an **average of 551 kilograms of waste** last year, an increase on 2008 of 2%. However, more of that waste than ever (73%) was sorted for recycling or composting, with less than 150kg going to incineration or landfill, the lowest figure ever. The Antwerp municipality Rijkevorsel, with an average of 65.6kg, is the least wasteful in Flanders. In total, households produced 3,437,309 tonnes of waste.

Dangerous **corrosive gas seeped into a laboratory space** where it damaged high-tech equipment, the chemistry department of the Catholic University of Leuven (KUL) has revealed. The gas was not properly evacuated from the space by the laboratory's powerful extractor apparatus, allowing it to come in contact with fixtures and equipment, vice-rector Karen Maex said. The damage is estimated at one million euro. The incident took place during the summer, so not students or staff were present. The KUL has now set up a panel to review security procedures.

The **coldest place in Europe** last week was Middelkerke, the Flemish coastal municipality southwest of Ostend, where the temperature reached -13 degrees. By comparison, the temperature in Moscow was -10.7 degrees.

The customer service desks of telecommunications companies need to be able to answer calls **within a maximum of 2.5 minutes**, federal telecommunications minister Vincent Van Quickenborne proposed last week. According to his Twitter feed, Van Quickenborne had been forced to stay on hold for more than an hour after experiencing a problem with his Belgacom TV and is now pushing for legislation.

Belgians held in prison in Tilburg, the Netherlands, will not be brought back as a result of complaints over the regime there, justice minister Stefaan De Clerck told the Senate last week. Prisoners have complained about being served cold meals and said they would prefer Belgian bread to the Dutch variant served in Tilburg. The jail houses 150 Belgian prisoners sent there because of prison overcrowding in this country.

FACE OF FLANDERS

Ivan De Vadder

There have been some memorable occasions in journalism when an interviewee has stormed from the studio because of impudent questioning, but it's less usual for the interviewer to walk off when an interviewee won't stop talking. But that's almost what happened on last weekend's *De zevende dag* (*The Seventh Day*), the VRT's flagship weekend current affairs programme. Ivan De Vadder was interviewing acting prime minister Yves Leterme on the subject of the week: the government's failure to deal with homeless asylum seekers. He asked Leterme a fairly reasonable question: what do you say to people who are shocked that you [the government] were unable to take measures in time?

Leterme carried on explaining his government's policy, going back to September, refusing to allow De Vadder even to pose another question. Eventually De Vadder got out of his seat and stood out of shot until Leterme finished, interjecting at one point: "This is really not a government announcement service. You ought to understand that."

De Vadder lives in Ghent and is a graduate of the Catholic University of Leuven (KUL). He started with what was then the BRT in the traffic section, before reporting on science for the culture show *Eenhoorn*. He joined the TV news department in 1991, first as a general reporter and then as part of the team reporting on politics.

De Vadder first helmed the popular *De zevende dag*, which tends to set the news agenda for the coming week, in 2003, before leaving to become the regular political commentator of the evening news. He was also a permanent fixture on election programmes. He came back to *De zevende dag* this year.



© VRT Bart Musschoot

Also this year, De Vadder published the book *Pleidooi voor een eerlijk politiek* (*Plea for Honest Politics*) in which he diagnosed – and attempted to remedy – the plummeting reputation of politics in the public mind. Among the bad practices responsible: the tendency of big-name politicians to stand in elections when they have no intention of taking up their seats, and the accumulation of mandates that sometimes follows.

Unlike his former colleague Siegfried Bracke, it doesn't look like a conversion to politics is on the horizon for De Vadder.

Going, going, bomb!

Another unexploded bomb from the Second World War was discovered on the same Brussels building site – the future NATO headquarters – where a similar discovery was made two weeks ago



Newspaper encourages Roma to come to Flanders

Bourgeois responds to Bulgarian "invitation"

ALAN HOPE

Flemish integration minister Geert Bourgeois has written to the press in the Bulgarian capital Sofia to correct an article in the newspaper *Standart News* at the weekend. Under the headline "Bulgarian Roma Welcome in Belgium" the newspaper's website reported in English that: "The government of the Belgian province of Flanders adopted a plan and strategy for social and professional integration of Roma from Bulgaria and Romania on the territory of Belgium." Citing the Russian news agency RIA Novosti as its source, the report continued: "The Roma will be given access to labour market sectors experiencing shortage. So far such access was not allowed for

THE WEEK IN FIGURES



195,770

unemployed in Flanders, down 33,000 since August, and more than 8,000 lower than November 2009, in the midst of the economic crisis. The figure started coming down in September, putting an end to a two-year rise

10,000

Number of people using car-sharing service Cambio, with the numbers constantly growing. The customers share a total of 369 cars spread across the country, which studies suggest have taken some 3,600 private cars off the road

€9.50

for a return train ticket between any two Belgian stations on weekends in December and January and during the Christmas holidays. The "shopping ticket" is designed to encourage use of the train

11,400 tonnes

grit spread on the region's roads since last Wednesday, when the snows first began, according to the government's roads agency

6.5%

increase in energy use in 2009, despite an increase in demand of 16%, thanks to better heating efficiency and insulation, according to the Flemish environment agency VMM. Carbon dioxide emissions rose by only 5%, though businesses performed better than households



citizens from Bulgaria and Romania although the two countries have been EU members since 2007. 'The message we would like to send is that the Roma from Bulgaria and Romania who come here will have to be ready to work,' commented Geert Bourgeois, Flemish Minister of Civic Integration.

The story, which later appeared on some Romanian sites, was sparked by a plan announced by Bourgeois (pictured) last week. "The mass arrival of Roma puts our society, which is already struggling under the burden of asylum seekers, under even more pressure," he told *De Standaard*. "Anyone who remains here legally has at the same time rights and responsibilities." The plan would set up contact points giving advice to local authorities on housing, education, integration and welfare.

"Until now these people were not eligible for employment help. That will change," Bourgeois said. "Local authority social aid agencies need to be able to steer those on benefits towards employment, and benefits

recipients have to accept suitable job offers or take up training."

On Monday, Bourgeois sent a press release via the Belgian embassy in Sofia to the Bulgarian press. "The action plan of the Flemish Government is not an open invitation to all Roma citizens to move to Belgium. On the contrary... We cannot handle the ongoing massive migration towards Belgium.

...A vast majority of newcomers from Eastern Europe currently have to survive in conditions below all acceptable standards."

Bourgeois also stressed that only the so-called bottleneck jobs (including French teachers, roofers, carpenters and information technicians) where there is a labour shortage would be concerned. ♦

Asylum seeker situation worsens

Problems of accommodation for asylum seekers and the homeless continue to undermine the government this week. Last week, defence minister Pieter De Crem came under attack from the army union ACOD and municipal social aid agencies (OCMWs) for his failure to open up military barracks to the homeless. According to the OCMWs, De Crem had imposed such strict conditions on the use of the barracks that they remained effectively inaccessible. The first barracks, which will provide additional space for 400 homeless in Eisele, are not expected to be ready until

later this week. The army, meanwhile, started its annual Operation Winter, which provides shelter for the homeless and distributes surplus clothing to OCMWs. About 50 asylum seekers were allowed into part of the Sint-Suzanne church in Schaerbeek. Meanwhile, representatives of the 250 or so squatting in Schaerbeek and Laken filed suit against secretary of state for social integration Philippe Courard for failure to ensure asylum agency Fedasil provided them with accommodation. They also demanded that the government pick up the bill for water, electricity and heating

in the squats. Another group of asylum seekers was allowed back into North Station in Brussels, days after being ejected by police on the order of Sint-Joost mayor Cécile Jodogne.

In Antwerp, the city council brought forward its annual programme to provide homeless shelters. In Hasselt and Genk, homeless shelters were full to capacity, as staff appealed for beds and blankets to convert offices and meeting rooms into sleeping accommodation. ♦

No World Cup for Belgium

LEO CENDROWICZ

As they made their final pitch just a few hours before the crucial FIFA vote last week, the Belgians and Dutch bidding collaboratively to host the 2018 World Cup knew they were the clear underdogs. Yet Red Devils goalkeeping legend Jean-Marie Pfaff and acting Belgian Prime Minister Yves Leterme still gave their all, alongside Dutch stars Ruud Gullit and Johan Cruyff.

The group extolled their virtues at the heart of Europe, their compact efficiency and their love of the game. And, although they lost out to Russia, they won plaudits for their honesty, pragmatism and humour.

Belgium and the Netherlands actually survived the first round, collecting four of the 22 votes; England's bid, collecting just two votes, was eliminated at that point. But as the FIFA members moved on to the second round, Belgium bizarrely lost two votes, while Spain's joint bid with Portugal kept their seven votes, and Russia gained four to win the bid with 13. The bid's final half-hour presentation included interviews with Leterme and Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte, as well as a video, set to Jacques Brel's "Le Plat Pays" and showing lots of famous Belgians.

In 2000, Belgium and the Netherlands hosted a successful European championship together, but this time they faced a more complex and controversial bidding process that many saw as riddled with corruption.

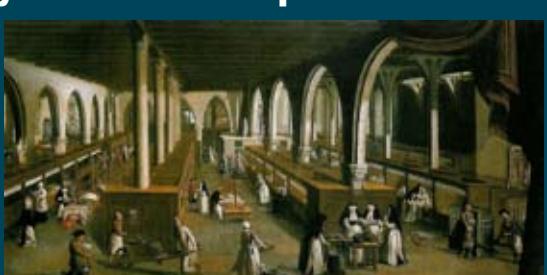
With the 2022 World Cup also awarded to Qatar, *De Standaard* newspaper's angry headline the morning after was, "Defeated by gas-rubles and oil-dollars", while *Het Laatste Nieuws* said, "We could not compete with the Russian cash flows, but the Netherland/Belgium bid created a positive atmosphere." ♦



trio.be

What the Belgian presidency of the EU is up to this week

The mediaeval setting of the old St John's hospital in Bruges is the venue on 9 December for a conference on cultural heritage. Not only do the millions of visitors to monuments, museums, historic city areas, archives and archaeological sites contribute enormously to the local economy, attention to cultural heritage also plays an important role in adding to the quality of life for European citizens and in forging their own social identity. The conference, organised by Flemish integration and tourism minister Geert Bourgeois, will hear from speakers on how to incorporate the interests of the cultural heritage into other policy areas.



Painting of St John's hospital, 1778

→ <http://heritageconference.rwo.be>

FIFTH COLUMN

ANJA OTTE

Asylum crisis

Migration and asylum have been hotly debated issues for more than a decade. Asylum is only granted to people who are unfairly persecuted in their own country; it is not given to those often referred to as fortune seekers.

The difference between the two categories is clear to everyone in this country but, unfortunately, it is not so for those on the run – be it from persecution or poverty. The regularisation of 1999 granted rights to people who had been living here for years waiting for news on their asylum applications. But the discussions did not stop here, nor did it stem the flow of asylum seekers.

Within the current federal government, two ministers fought bitterly over the issue. Annemie Turtelboom of the Flemish liberals Open VLD defended the common Flemish view that large-scale regularisations only encourage more fortune seekers to try their luck. Those who are here should be given shelter while they wait for the outcome of their applications, but not much more. Those who are rejected should be expelled.

Her counterpart, Marie Arena of the French-speaking socialists PS, took a more "humane" viewpoint and refused to provide extra shelter in protest at Turtelboom's policy.

The result is what we see now. As winter kicks in, hundreds of people, including children, are literally left in the cold. Ministers and secretaries of state from all parties are laying the blame on one another. Philippe Courard, responsible for shelter, did not provide enough. Melchior Wathelet, responsible for migration, did not speed up the asylum procedures nor expel enough people. Pieter De Crem (CD&V) of Defence was not quick enough to provide empty army barracks for shelter. And prime minister Yves Leterme (CD&V), who is meant to coordinate the migration and asylum policy, is responsible for everything.

The Flemish nationalist party N-VA now demands that the new government should have one minister for migration. But the Flemish minister for integration, Geert Bourgeois (N-VA), has just experienced how tricky this issue can be. He recently responded to a cry of help from Daniel Termont, mayor of Ghent, where the city is struggling to cope with no fewer than 10,000 new arrivals of Roma origin.

As they are EU citizens, Bourgeois cannot force them to follow integration courses, but the jobless among them can now be made to accept employment. This would not be popular with those involved, Bourgeois stated. And what did a newspaper in Bulgaria, the country of origin of many Roma, make of this? Roma welcome in Flanders. Even offered a job!

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BELGIUM - MEMBER GOSSELIN GROUP

The disappearing village

Residents of Doel have been given until February to clear out

→ *continued from page 1*

Doel's fate is still not clear. The Flemish Region had set a deadline of 1 September, 2009, for the residents to leave, but some refused. In the end, a court ruled that they could stay until February 2011.

Today, there are about 40 people living there, including a few homeowners, residents like Lauwers who rent their property from the Maatschappij Linkerscheldeoever (the public agency managing the left bank) and a handful of squatters. And for now at least, no one is going anywhere.

"I stay until the day the court tells me I have to leave. Then I go, not an hour before," Lauwers says, her voice becoming increasingly tense. She tells me that the agency sent her a letter saying that she no longer needed to pay them any rent. "I will pay until the last," she says. "I have my pride."

Growing pains for port

Although nobody wants to see Doel disappear, the Port of Antwerp simply has no choice but to expand in the area. "The only space available for the port to expand is on the left bank," explains Annik Dirkx, spokeswoman for the Antwerp Port Authority.

As *Flanders Today* reported in September, larger and larger container ships are pulling into the port, with more cargo than ever before. This is excellent news for the port, the second largest in Europe, as it maintains its competitiveness with Rotterdam, which currently holds top ranking in Europe. But it is outgrowing its current facilities and urgently needs to expand.

One proposal is to build a container terminal in Doel to help cope with the increased use of containers in world trade, said Peter Van de Putte of the Maatschappij Linkerscheldeoever. Only when the Flemish government's plan for the Saeftinghe area (which includes Doel) is published will it be known whether the Saeftinghe dock concept remains part of the industrial

expansion plan. After publication, there will be a consultation period during which the public can submit comments, Van de Putte explained.

Worth fighting for?

The first-time visitor to Doel may well wonder why anyone would fight to save this village. The approach is hardly the most scenic, as you drive through the maze of roads and industrial zones that make up Antwerp's port. The main street as you enter the village isn't much more promising, with windows boarded up, signs warning you not to enter properties and abandoned petrol stations.

When you drive down to the edge of the river, though, you realise what the village could have been. Running the length of the village is the river and a dyke along which you can take a stroll. Dominating one end is a 17th-century stone windmill, a protected building since 1946 and today housing a tavern.

In the distance is the cooling tower of a nuclear power station, a source of employment for the area. There's also a church in the village, although a sign on its entrance notes that it's now only open for special occasions, baptisms, marriages and funerals.

Lauwers, who grew up in the area but not in Doel itself, put her name down on the waiting list of people wanting to move to the village eight years ago. "I was number 434," she recalls. Presumably most of the others gave up before their time came. Five years ago, her wish was granted and she joined the ranks of those seeking to revive Doel.

Among the revival ideas that Lauwers has helped launch is Kunstdoel, or Art Doel, a group that has tried to convince the authorities to preserve the village as "a cultural and artistic enclave inside and in harmony with the port of Antwerp". A key motivation for the campaign was to try to present Doel in a positive light and counter the image propagated by television of a place full of "junkies, dangerous dogs and crazy people," says Lauwers.

The group invited international artists to come to Doel and create artworks inside some of the houses in an effort to prevent them being demolished. Another of its projects finds external walls and windows of empty houses covered with art. "Art is expected to replace the chill of vacancy with warmth and resuscitate the village," according to Kunstdoel's website.

Despite these efforts to breathe new life into the village, Lauwers isn't optimistic about the future. When I ask her what chance she thinks there is of the village surviving, her answer is simple. "None".

The village has been left to deteriorate too far, in her opinion. Only the official agency has been allowed to buy property there, and no new residents have been permitted to move in. Slowly the amenities that keep a village community alive have disappeared. The empty streets have become a place for car racing at night, buildings have been vandalised, and it is not unusual for the "copper cutters" to appear, forcing Telenet to return regularly to reinstall the villagers' television connections.

"We are a strange community," Lauwers acknowledges. But it's a community, she says, that wants to keep fighting for what it believes is justice. ♦



About 40 people, including homeowners and squatters, are living in Doel



"I'm very angry at what has happened here": Frie Lauwers will stay in Doel until the last

© Anna Jenkins

We Are All Going Crazy

Photography exhibition introduces the village of Doel

The Flemish village of Doel, disappearing due to an expansion of the Port of Antwerp, has attracted artists who've decorated its walls, and also photographers, who are now on show at the Botanique in Brussels. *We Are All Going Crazy* highlights the village's sense of loss, as pictures of dilapidated buildings and empty rooms hang next to others of forlorn individuals.

The collective project, which includes works by Belgium-based photographers Isabelle Pateer, Cindy Hannard, Frédéric Pauwels and Thomas Baltes, aims to highlight the "progressive destruction of this village" and the "strange fate of this lost corner between the docks and the Scheldt."

Each photographer takes a different approach to the portrayal of the village. Pauwels' work is in black and white and includes three sets of six photographs mounted together like windows. The net curtains and the old-fashioned flowery wallpaper suggest a place stuck in a time warp and the abandoned doll and just the top half of a child's face send out a message that this is no place for children. (See photo, page 1) There is no hope or joy to be found in these wonderfully composed images.

The titles of Pateer's photographs almost speak for themselves. One picture in tones of grey,

Until 12 December

Botanique
Koningstraat 236
Brussels

→ www.botanique.be

American College to close

After 150 years training priests to serve in North America, a Leuven institution is set to shut its doors

DENZIL WALTON

Due to a dwindling number of students, Leuven's American College of the Immaculate Conception will close in June 2011. "The seminary has served the church in the United States and other parts of the world faithfully, steadfastly and zealously throughout its 154-year existence, and so this is a sad moment for many of us," says Bishop David Ricken, chair of the board and bishop of the Diocese of Green Bay, Wisconsin, in the US.

Despite strong efforts, enrolment at the American College, part of the Catholic University of Leuven (KUL), has dropped to an unsustainable level, which has created severe financial challenges. Just four seminarians will be ordained during this academic year, and another 10 – eight from the US, one from England and one from China – will continue their studies elsewhere. At its peak, the American College had a capacity of 125 students.

In addition, the seminary has had difficulties in obtaining qualified priests for its faculty. However, the closure is not related to the discussions about the Catholic identity of KUL, nor to the crisis in the Belgian Catholic Church.

"We are grateful to the Archdiocese of Mechelen-Brussels, the theology and philosophy faculties of Leuven University and the people of Belgium for their support and collaboration with the Roman Catholic Church of the United States for these many years," added Bishop Ricken.

The American College of the Immaculate Conception was founded in 1857 by Martin J Spalding, bishop of Louisville, Kentucky, and Peter Paul Lefevere, bishop of Detroit, Michigan, with the encouragement and blessing of Pope Pius IX.

Its original dual purpose was to train young European men to serve as missionary priests in North America and to offer American seminarians the philosophical and theological riches available at Europe's oldest Catholic university.

In an 1857 letter, Bishop Spalding highlighted the advantages of the American College: "To afford a suitable opportunity for the pursuit of higher ecclesiastical studies to young men of talent and promise in the United States. The course of study adopted at Leuven is of the highest grade, and the professors are among the most learned and eminent ecclesiastics of Europe."

By its 50th anniversary in 1907, the American College had an exceptionally strong standing internationally. Throughout the First World War, it gained renown by fulfilling two roles: one public and the other clandestine. It served as an emergency hospital, ministering to as many as 1,500 people a day. At the same time, it secretly stored many of the treasures of the KUL, including *Sedes Sapientiae*, the medieval wooden statue of the Virgin Mary that was carved in 1442 by Nicolaas De Bruyne.

Similarly, during the Second World War, the American College came to the rescue, housing remnants of the university library,



© Rob Stevens, KULeuven

Ten students at the American College will continue their seminary studies elsewhere

which was destroyed by fire. Amazingly, the college remained standing despite the heavy bombardment of Leuven. Since then, the American College has contributed hundreds of priests to the pastoral and academic life of the church in the United States.

Belgium was chosen as the site for the first US seminary in Europe because the original plan for such a college in Rome could not be

carried out due to political upheaval in Italy in the mid-19th century. Ironically, the other US Catholic seminary in Europe, the Pontifical North American College in Rome, has just had its largest enrolment in recent history and now has 239 students. ♦

» www.acl.be

Generation scum

• An anti-networking networking group doesn't trust anyone over 30

COURTNEY DAVIS

Young football fans are a tough crowd to break into for advertisers. In the Netherlands, there are approximately 45,000 of these sports obsessed who view Nike as corporate and uncool. Yet the monolith of a corporation managed to not only tap into this market, but also to persuade 17,000 fans to prove their adoration of the brand in an inventive contest put together by Dutchman Polle de Maagt.

De Maagt came up with scavenger hunt type tests, with the most dedicated fan flown to Milan for a one-on-one training with a star player. This sort of off-the-grid, non-corporate marketing is what the 28-year-old specialises in.

A native of Tilburg, the Netherlands, De Maagt brought another of his unique concepts to Flanders when he moved here this year: an anti-networking networking event.

As the story goes, he and his mates were sitting around having an after-work drink and talking about the surplus of networking and conferences in the Netherlands, but their distinct lack of appeal for a certain subset – young people. "Forget the business cards, remove the official conferences, negate any corporate sponsorship and leave out the intimidating bosses," says

de Maagt, "Let's just get together and drink beer."

Called Jong Tuig, or Young Scum, this is yet another way that de Maagt has showcased his immense understanding of what drives certain markets. Not only a college dropout, he also dropped out of high school. But with multi-national corporate clients flying you around Europe to discover trends in the youth population, who needs a university degree?

"I had an opinion about communication, so I started blogging – about the internet, social media," he explains. "It turns out, people don't know all that much. I test things, starting on a super-small scale but eventually building my way up to huge social media projects, like with Nike. It is not an exact science; it's all about testing things. In the land of the blind, the one-eyed man is king. That's how I feel; I just know a little, let's see what I can do with it."

It is the refreshing honesty and heartfelt interest in making corporations more human that makes De Maagt's ideas work. People are drawn to what is real, which explains the name of the networking group. "We were four young Dutch guys, all 24 to 26; we were 'young scum'. The group isn't for

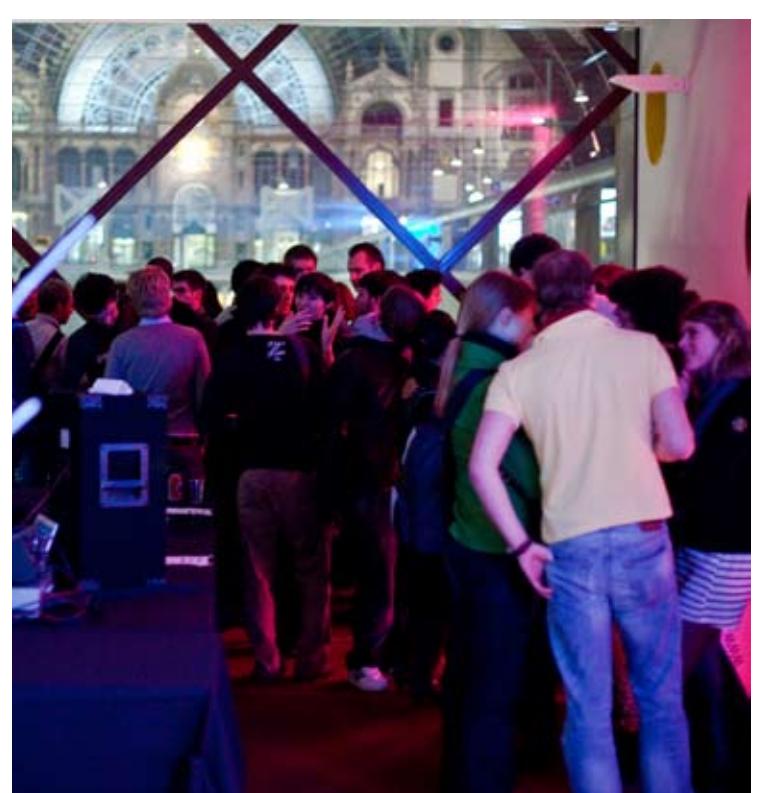
presentations or shaking hands, it's to make connections."

Young Scum is now a bit of trendsetting group. Meeting irregularly in the Netherlands, Flanders and London, the (generally) monthly events are not publicised and are often announced only a few days beforehand. This keeps interest high while fostering an underground vibe.

De Maagt now lives in Ghent, and Young Scum nights have been staged in both Ghent and Antwerp. Those in attendance range from fellow marketers and IT gurus to artists and college students. What they all have in common is a mix of ambition and creativity and a desire to thumb their noses at the way things are "supposed" to be done.

De Maagt says he invites people "cooler" than himself. "Smarter, super creative and more ambitious. People who are different from me, faster than me and outside my comfort zone."

Not only is he challenging himself and building the reputation of the group, he's bringing the right people together. "It's the best feeling," says, "gathering people, facilitating conversations, hearing stories of fashion design, business ventures and budding



If you party, they will come

romance. You see the connections on LinkedIn blow up the day after a party."

At this point, it's networking and a bit of a pick-up scene, which makes sense considering nearly everyone is in their 20s. De Maagt aims to keep it that way: "There is just a difference between

20-somethings and 30-somethings," he says. "The way a 21-year-old sees the world versus a 35-year-old is huge." ♦

» www.jongtuig.com

Brink's appeals bankruptcy ruling

Potential buyers for the troubled security company are down to two

ALAN HOPE

The board of troubled security company Brink's Belgium lodged an appeal last week against the refusal of the commercial tribunal in Brussels to accept its application for bankruptcy. At the same time, the administrators put in charge of finding a solution to the ongoing labour problems moved closer to finding a buyer for the company.

Brink's Belgium filed for bankruptcy following a protracted dispute that centred on the labour status of its 300 drivers of cash security transports. The work force at present has the Belgian status of "employee"; the company wanted to bring them down to "worker" status, in

line with other companies in the sector like market leader G4S. Brink's finally filed for bankruptcy, which would have meant the workers out on the street at the cost of the taxpayer. At the same time, a subsidiary obtained a licence to carry out cash and diamond transports, suggesting Brink's planned to start up again via a back door.

But a court refused to accept the bankruptcy and appointed two administrators, while the prosecutor started an investigation into possible fraudulent bankruptcy. Brink's has now chosen to fight that ruling. In the meantime, the four candidates for taking over the

company have narrowed to two: the Swedish company Loomis and Australian entrepreneur Ramy Baron. Loomis is known to have bid one symbolic euro for the company, arguing its own management board had said it was bankrupt. Administrator Alain Zenner, however, rejected the bid on the grounds that Brink's buildings alone are worth €2.5 million. Unions look favourably on a takeover by Loomis, a company with an international presence and deep pockets. They also favour some kind of working arrangement between Loomis and Baron, who sold his own Baron Security 10 years ago to G4S and knows the Belgian industry well.

The unions, meanwhile, have agreed to accept a sort of super-worker status, which allows them to keep their seniority benefits and permits a slightly longer than usual period of notice in the event of layoffs. They are also prepared to take a pay cut if a new employer is found. Zenner claims that he has traced a "comfort letter" that the company's financial advisor will not hand over. The letter allegedly states that Brink's American parent company is fully responsible for its Belgian subsidiary – a document that could see Brink's presented with a heavy bill if the worst should happen and layoffs occur. ♦

iPad tops marketers' short list

The iPad is the Product of 2010, according to Belgium's marketers, meeting last weekend at the Marketing Foundation Congress in Ghent. The marketing industry was drawing up a short list of five products to be voted on by readers of *De Standaard* website between now and January. In second place come the so-called "apps", extra functions that users of the iPad and iPhone can download to their devices. In third place comes the Flemish TV comedy *Benidorm Bastards*, whose format has been sold around the world. In fourth place, music phenomenon Lady Gaga, who recently played sell-out concerts in Antwerp. Finally, Julian Assange and his WikiLeaks website. ♦

Vote for your favourite at

→ www.standaard.biz/productvan2010



The iPad at its launch in Brussels in July

Jobs news

The level of unemployment in an area is directly linked to its **level of crime**, according to a study by the universities in Leuven and Ghent. The researchers investigated crime in relation to a variety of factors – including number of foreigners, age and gender – and found the strongest correlation between crime and unemployment. The study also showed that crime in Brussels is lower than it should be with an unemployment level of 20%.

The Brussels Region will next year spend €8.5 million – €1 million more than this year – on cost-savings language cheques to allow the **unemployed to take Dutch lessons** to improve their appeal to potential employers.

Unemployment in Flanders dropped below 200,000 in November to 195,770, continuing a fall in the numbers seen since August. The rate of unemployment is now 6.7%.

IT company **Oracle in Vilvoorde** has announced the loss of 48 jobs from a workforce of 450. According to the company, recent takeovers have led to duplication of jobs, while low profitability in the sector makes restructuring necessary.

Cement company **Atlas Beton**, based in Kemmel, West Flanders, has filed for bankruptcy with the loss of 150 jobs. The company blames falling orders, which last year saw turnover halved and losses doubled.

In an investigation of 780 Dutch-speaking **real estate agents** in Brussels and Flanders, 274 have had their licences withdrawn by industry institute BIV for not being professionally insured. Real estate agents are also obliged to post a financial bond. ♦



THE WEEK IN BUSINESS

Airlines • Abelag

Business airline Abelag, based at Brussels Airport, has acquired two Phenom 100 jets to meet growing demand. The company, which already operates 24 aircraft, is to acquire three additional business jets next year.

Autos • Ford

US car manufacturer Ford has confirmed plans to invest €700 million in its Genk assembling facility over the next four years to produce three models. The range includes a new hybrid Mondeo to be launched in 2013. The move, which guarantees production volumes of 225,000 vehicles annually for the next 10 years, follows extensive negotiations with the unions, which have accepted conditions designed to bring costs down by some 12%.

Autos • Sales

New car sales were again higher in November, up 15% compared to the same period in 2009. Total sales so far this year are 518,104 vehicles, on track for a record. Market leader for the year is Renault, up some 10%, followed by Volkswagen and Peugeot.

Banking • KBC

KBC, Flanders largest financial institution, has sold its UK-based Peel Hunt affiliate for €90 million. The move is part of the terms set by the European Commission for approving KBC's rescue package in early 2009.

Economy • Institutions

Brussels-based international institutions account for some 100,000 jobs and represent 2.5% of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), according to a recent study commissioned by business associations VOB, Voka, Beci and UWE.

Energy • Myrrha

The Mol-based Myrrha nuclear project has been selected by the ESFRI strategic research forum as one of 50 key European research programmes. The Myrrha programme includes the construction of a nuclear research reactor to seek solutions to the recycling of nuclear waste and to develop products used in medical applications and hybrid vehicles.

Food • Kraft

Food manufacturer Kraft has inaugurated a €6 million Prince biscuit production line in its Herentals plant, near Antwerp. The plant, which is the company's largest in Europe, operates 16 lines. In 2008, Kraft invested €11 million in its Cote d'Or chocolate unit in Halle and last year further developed its Mechelen-based Benelux headquarters.

Pharmaceuticals • Omega

Ghent-based Omega, which specialises in production and distribution of over-the-counter pharmaceuticals, has signed a letter of intent to take over the Barcelona Inibsa company. Inibsa, which operates in Spain and Portugal, produces a range of pharmaceutical products and food supplements.

Gift Guide 2010



It's time to buy the presents.
Check left side for a unique selection
check the corresponding number

20 THINGS TO BUY

1 BIRD FEEDER

But not just any bird feeder, oh no. This is a "Deluxe Chalet" bird feeder. Hung from a tree, mounted on a post or attached to a railing, it livenes up the garden or terrace – and makes your neighbourhood feathered friends happy. (€50)



2 HAPPY EARS

Baby, it's cold outside. This hand-made wool cap by Flemish designer Nicole Baert not only keeps ears and head toasty, it also fits in perfectly with her philosophy of hats as protective, as a house. (€250)



3 HAND-MADE CARDS

Instead of getting a manufactured pack of 20 boring holiday cards this year, spring for something a little more special. Soki's white paper with prints and cut outs are pretty enough to frame, making them a means of communication and a gift all in one. (€3-€10)

4 FOODFACE PLATES

Even the fussiest of eaters might be encouraged to chow down green bean eyebrows, mashed potato beards and spaghetti hair. Served this way, even vegetables just can't look bad. (€16)



5 LEATHER GLOVES

Believe it or not, people still love to receive gloves and scarves for holiday gifts, especially truly quality ones they won't buy for themselves. Mrs Sarteel will free up each glove finger with her wooden dowel before asking you to place your elbow on the counter so she can slide that Peccary leather glove with baby alpaca lining onto your hand. Never pull. Slide. (€45-€400)

6 GOOD GRIPS

Lifelong klutzies have long been taken by the Good Grips range from OXO, which have fat silicone grips that don't slip out of your hands, even when wet. The vegetable peeler is a joy to hold, and the herb-chopper both efficient and safe. (€7.99-99.99)



7 DOORMAT

For that impossible person who already has *everything*, look no further than Lotte Martens. A Flemish designer, she makes doormats (always useful in soggy Belgium) that feature such great colours and patterns, you'll want to put them both outside and in. (€39)

8 O-P-I NAIL VARNISH

The hottest – and hardest to find – brand of nail polish comes in a zillion colours and cheers up any outfit. If you can't choose a colour, go for a witty name, such as the red-orange "A good man-darin is hard to find" or the pink "I'm not really a waitress". (€13)



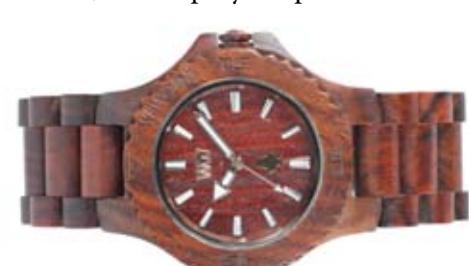
9 CHOCOLATE SHOOTER

Adding a whole new dimension to one's chocolate addiction, this gift allows the recipient to snort chocolate right up his or her nose. Comes with the apparatus necessary, two tins of flavoured chocolate powder (ginger and raspberry) and directions in several languages. (€45)



10 KETO METAL WORKS

Doorknobs, mirrors, shelves, clocks and coat hangers are all the glorious output of Rik Aper's metal product line. For 14 years, he has handcrafted creative iron pieces, the most popular of which is his crown mirror. (€15-€340)



12 AUDREY CHRISTMAS DRESS

You might want to give this one a little early to your favourite little girl. Flemish design house Little Miss Y's "Audrey" is an off white damask dress, complete with a red polka-dotted lining and skirt that goes up when she twirls. (sizes 2-8, €80-95)

13 DOOD VAN EEN NUN

Saved from obscurity by film historian Paul Geens, Made in Belgium label, *The Death of a Nun* (1975) is a tale of faith and repressed emotions from Flemish troublemakers Paul Collet and Pierre Drouot. Strange and startling, it will still be news to 99% of all film buffs. (€18)



14 GIFT BASKET

People like food, and gift baskets from cheese or wine shops present beautifully. But if you're a bit more ambitious, you can make up your own gift box from regional products in Flanders. Might we suggest the special Christmas beer from De Ryck Brewery in Herzele, holiday-shaped speculaas from Swinnen Bakery in Hoegaarden and Wostyn mustard from Torhout.



15 TINTIN MUG DUO

Cold days scream for hot drinks. Mugs with the national hero Tintin and his four-legged follower Snowy are a great gift for cartoon lovers – or anyone else. (€12)



16 BABY SLEEP SACK

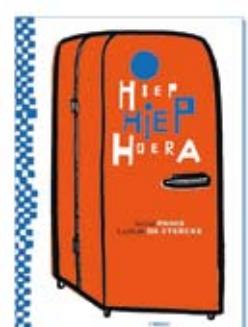
A good gift for baby or parents are these sleep sacks so stylish you'll wish they came in adult sizes. Made of soft organic cotton, this retro-patterned wearable blanket is good for infants up to nine months. (€55)

17 SIGIKID

It's difficult to resist the stuffed toys by Sigikid, especially the range called Beasts, full of personality. (€20-€89, www.sigikid-beasts.de)

18 SMARTWOOL SOCKS

It's the coldest first week of December since 1875. So when you buy these ultra warm and cosy socks for your loved ones, buy a pair for yourself, too. Specially formulated against the cold, they will get your toes through those Christmas markets. (€15-€23)



19 HIEP HIEP HOERA

This start-to-read book for kids is about a birthday party featuring roller skates, bunnies, cake, rockets, Godzilla, robots and flamingos. Three Flemish artists have put together a book with a retro feel to be adored by kids and appreciated by parents. (€15)

20 MOVIE TICKETS

If the thought of holiday shopping still chills up your spine, just order up some movie tickets. Everyone goes to the movies, and they are usually valid for up to a year.

ection of gifts;
ers on the right side for exactly where to find them

20 PLACES TO BUY THEM

1 THE CITY BARN

Fancy bird houses, crazy dog collars, dresses for Chihuahuas and designer fish tanks. Animals rule at The City Barn. (Rollebeekstraat 39, Brussels; www.pet-hunting.com)

2 NICOLE BAERT

Nicole Baert, mad hatter by nature, shares her shop with visual artist JP De Graaf. His inventive design furniture matches Baert's collection of colourful and imaginative hats. (Minderbroedersrei 52, Antwerp; www.nicolebaert.be)

3 POP-UP SHOP SOKI

Only from 10 Dec to New Year's Eve will you find this temporary shop featuring two local designers of paper products and jewellery. Formerly architecture students, their attention to detail and fresh perspectives are evident in their pure lines and simple prints. (Bagattenstraat 5, Ghent; www.soki.be)

4 INTERNATIONAL HOME OF COOKING

For those who like to cook or bake this is heaven on earth. This Brussels landmark stocks everything from a little coffee spoons to gigantic barbecues. Be warned: the offer of quirky kitchen tools is endless. (Léopoldstraat 3, Brussels; www.homeofcooking.com)

5 HUIS A BOON

Rows of little drawers line the Art Deco walls of this high-quality glove shop, which, since 1884, has been dedicated to serving demanding international customers, like Jean Paul Gauthier. You never knew there were so many styles of gloves. In so many colours. (Lombardenvest 2, Antwerp)

6 KOOKHUYSEN MAFRANS

No matter the skill level, nobody can resist a new kitchen gizmo. You'll find them all in the newly renovated Kookhuyzen Mafrans, from a fluo egg cup to a top-of-the-line stove. If you're not sure which pan is the most non-stick, you can try them out in the shop's kitchen. (Diestsestraat 32, Leuven)

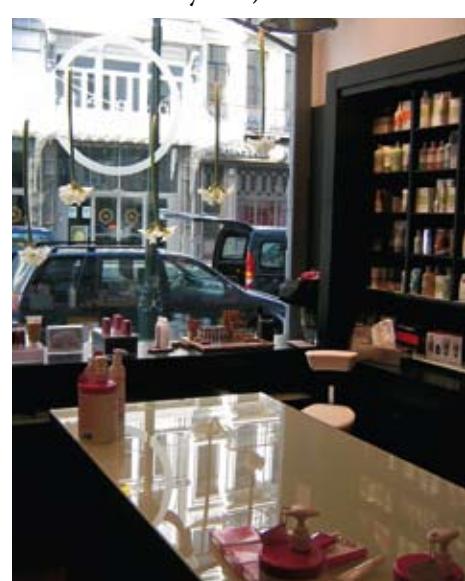


7 DEINVASIE.BE

You want exclusive crafts, locally made and the warm fuzzy goodness that comes from supporting starving artists? De Invasie (The Invasion) is the place for you. Chock-a-block with Flemish talent on one easy-to-use platform, orders of clothes, jewellery, furniture and more placed by 16 Dec will arrive in time for Christmas. (www.deinvasie.be)

8 COSMETICARY

Small but packed with the latest cosmetic brands from London, the US, France and Australia, this Brussels address is the best spot to find a special fragrance; a hair, face or body treatment; and make-up brands lavished over in glossy magazines. (Ortstraat 21, Brussels; www.cosmeticary.com)



9 THE CHOCOLATE LINE

"Chocolate is Rock 'n' Roll" reads the tattoo on the arm of Dominique Persoone, who famously taught the Rolling Stones to snort chocolate. Gourmets dote on this perfectionist's odd and wondrous creations, such as black olive pralines and tequila choc-tails, and visitors swoon at the sight of his new shop interior in Antwerp. Make sure to visit before Christmas: they're shut between 25 December and 1 January (Paleis op de Meir 50, Antwerp or Simon Stevinklein 19, Bruges; www.thechocolateline.be)



10 ACHTER DE MAAN

If kitsch is your thing, then Achter de Maan is your shop. Three locations in Flanders means that wherever you turn, you'll find brightly coloured cuckoo clocks, plastic bike bags in vibrant prints and cleaning products so cute, you might not hate doing the dishes anymore. (Ghent, Antwerp & Turnhout; www.achterdemaan.com)

11 BLENDER 01

The friendly owner of this great little shop browses the web to import only the coolest of items: clever gadgets big and small, unique jewellery, cutting-edge clothes and much more. (Kartuizerstraat 18, Brussels; www.facebook.com/Blender01)



12 SPOONFUL OF SUGAR

Tucked down a small, curving, cobblestone alley is this precious shop filled with small treasures for the tiniest of people and the most discerning of buyers. Hand-knit caps, tiny barrettes, fun printed tops and wall decor are just some of the delights hand made by the four owners. (Bennesteeq 1b, Ghent; www.spoonfulofsugar.be)



13 BOZAR SHOP

Five minutes browsing will convince you that Bozar has Brussels' best DVD section. Then you'll black out from the shock of all the money leaving your body. It's not cheap, but for hard-to-find imports, cult films and Belgian rarities it's hard to beat. (Ravensteinstraat 15, Brussels; www.bozarshop.be)

14 STREEKPRODUCT.BE

This handy website tells you all about food and drink in Flanders with a special regional product label, which means that it's made locally with centuries-old traditional methods, usually in a family owned business. (www.streekproduct.be)

15 BRÜSEL

This shop stocks a dazzling choice of comic books and gadgets, including figurines, magnets, key holders, mugs and posters. And a lot more. (Anspachlaan 100, Brussels; www.brusel.com)

16 MONSTERS WITH AN ATTITUDE

This bi-level baby store boasts hipster t-shirts for three month olds and retro-style toys. It's somewhat pricey, but will serve to make newly initiated parents far funkier. (Sluizeken 34, Ghent; www.monsterswithanattitude.be)

17 THE GRASSHOPPER

Bring a child to The Grasshopper, and you won't be sure of ever getting them out again: the shop goes on forever, with new treasures around every corner, from a whole wall of cuddly toys to chic schoolbags to a backroom full of tulle and froufrou. (Mechelsestraat 6-7, Leuven, and Grassmarkt 39-43, Brussels; www.thegrasshopper.be)

18 TIMBERLAND

Unlike many of the trendier sites in Antwerp's shopping streets, this place has what you need to keep warm. Experts in outdoor wear, they stock the wool socks, turtlenecks and long underwear so desperately needed for a snowball fight – or a good snuggle in front of the fire. (Huidevettersstraat 10, Antwerp)

19 *BOEK'S

This independent bookstore in the Leudeberg district of Ghent is specialised in literary entertainment for toddlers up to teens. Fifteen years of experience in helping kids get hooked on books, words and creativity. (Hoveniersstraat 96, Ghent; www.iboeks.be)

20 KINEPOLIS

You can order tickets to Kinepolis cinemas online, and they come in a cute little tins in the shape of a movie reel, and they are accepted at all their cinemas in Brussels and across Flanders. So, easy-peasy gifts.



Ho ho ho, and all that

It's icy cold, but you wouldn't know it from the events calendar this month. Put on that woollen cap with the bell on top and get thee to a feast



Rolling on the river

Tradition and innovation make up this year's holiday season in Antwerp

The Christmas holiday events and shopping Sundays in Antwerp always draw large crowds, but the fun for its inhabitants has already started. As tradition goes, a Scandinavian company has donated two humongous Christmas trees for the city centre, and, as tradition further goes, these poor trees were showered with local criticism. Too pale, too small, way too much acid rain up north.

This Saturday, however, the city festival **Feest in 't Stad** will lighten things up considerably when an impressive Lights Parade with floats and 200 artists will march along the Scheldt River. They'll end up at the Grote Markt where, under fireworks, a Mr Claus will declare the Christmas market officially open.

Red noses will weave their way along this stretch of more than 100 stalls all the way to the river-side Steenplein, while the neighbouring Groenplaats hosts the glass house of the **Music for Life** charity event.

Music for Life is a marathon radio broadcast by three Studio Brussel DJs locked in a glass house. You pay them, they play you a song, and donations go towards the Red Cross to be distributed to African children who've lost their parents to Aids.

The **Christmas Market**, meanwhile, features a nostalgic merry-go-round and a skating rink on the Grote Markt, surrounded by heated café terraces. Yet another **skating rink** is located on the Steenplein, where, in the shadow of the Steen castle, you can glide until late into the night. I've always wondered how cold

it was in those Breughel-like paintings, where you see people skating on the frozen river Scheldt itself. How I would love to look through its clear ice and see what's lying at the bottom. But for now, skating right next to the river has to be the best you can hope for.

While on Christmas Day, the market closes early and shops and museums will be closed, the **Antwerp Zoo** will remain open. Time to visit the family!

The broad stretch of icy black waters called the Scheldt will be illuminated colourfully with the popular **New Year's Eve fireworks**, set off from a river pontoon at 23.55 sharp.

Join the traditional free Mayor's New Year's Drink on 9 January and, finally, on 15 January, thousands of people will flock to Linkeroever, when piles of **Christmas trees go up in flames** accompanied by music and a fire show. *Monique Philips*

→ www.antwerpen.be

Antwerp

Feest in 't Stad, 11 Dec, 18.00
Music for Life, Groenplaats, 18-24 Dec
Christmas market and skating rinks, Grote Markt & Steenplein, 11 Dec - 2 Jan
Zoo open on 25/12
Fireworks on the Scheldt, 31 Dec, midnight
Mayor's New Year's Drink (free!), 9 Jan, 11.00-14.00
Christmas Tree Burning and Fire Show, 15 Jan, Linkeroever, from 17.00

Bigger is better

The largest ice rink, the tallest big wheel and a brand new festival can be found in Ghent

Ghent expands its **Christmas market** and fair this year in a major way, launching the festival **Winterdroom** (Winter Dream) in Sint-Pietersplein, the city's largest square. While the old-fashioned Christmas market remains in the centre of the city, Sint-Pietersplein – in the student district – hosts a much-expanded ice skating area, a funfair, an event tent with daily performances and a consumer-oriented winter village with themes changing weekly. Last weekend found residents checking out Austrian ski vacations, this week it moves into gastronomy from several European regions. The winter village also hosts food and drink stalls, naturally.

The funfair in Ghent boasts the **tallest big wheel** in the country at nearly 56 metres, just a few metres shy of the height of the city's famous book tower. Sint-Pietersplein is the highest spot in the city, so the view from the top of the wheel is magnificent.

The city's summer **Comedy Festival**, meanwhile, hosts a winter edition in the on-site event tent, where you'll also find family-friendly theatre and concerts. Later in the evening, DJs spin for a bit more grown-up fun.

Finally, Ghent welcomes 2011 with the annual **New Year's Drink** on 9 January, which, despite the always-freezing temperatures, brings thousands to Sint-Baafsplein. It could be a desperate need to wish each other a very happy new year, but we suspect it has something to do with all that free beer and glüwein. *LB*

→ www.winterdroom.be

Ghent

Christmas Market, 10-30 Dec, Sint-Baafsplein
Winterdroom Festival, until 16 Jan, Sint-Pietersplein
Nieuwjaarsdrink, 9 Jan, from 11.00, Sint-Baafsplein

Abundance of riches

There are markets scheduled in several communes of Brussels

Though Antwerp, as always, puts on the best winter schedule in the land, nobody beats Brussels in pure size of the **Christmas Market**. With 240 stalls across three major squares, connected by streets dazzling with lights, it's a winter wonderland if there ever was one.

To avoid the children and the carnival rides, stick to the Beurs area, where crafts and glüwein rein. To jump right in with your kids, go directly to Sint-Katelijn, where you can hardly miss the big wheel, skating rink and toboggan run at one end, funky merry-go-round at the other. (Hold out to get a seat in the rocket – it's worth it.)

If you are worried that the grand and glorious Grote Markt is getting left out, don't – the jaw-dropping nightly **lightshow** and giant Christmas tree are there throughout the month.

While Brussels' main Christmas Market is superb, many of the communes are throwing

their own holiday bashes. Particularly intriguing is Anderlecht's **KristMasMarKeT**, with handmade gifts by young designers. Elsene has an event on Flageyplein, Sint-Jans-Molenbeek on the grounds of **Karreveld Castle**, and Sint-Lambrechts-Woluwe hosts Father Christmas and live entertainment. *Lisa Bradshaw*

→ www.winterwonders.be

Brussels

City Centre Christmas market, until 2 Jan, Beurs, Sint-Katelijneplein, Vismarkt
KristMasMarKeT, until 19 Dec, Atelier à Partager, Anderlecht
Elsene Christmas Market, 10-12 Dec, Flageyplein
Sint-Lambrechts-Woluwe Christmas Village, 10-12 Dec, Sint-Lambertusplein
Sint-Jans-Molenbeek, 10-12 Dec, Karreveld castle

Out from in the cold

A dazzling ice sculpture festival is the highlight of winter in Bruges

We won't lie to you: it is *cold* in there. You might even feel the need to come outside to get warm. But Bruges' annual **Ice Sculpture Festival** is a wondrous display of artistry and the only place in the country you can get a whiskey served in a glass made of ice.

The theme this year is Around the World, with 74 monuments and cultural heritage from 30 countries. So carved from giant blocks of ice are Notre-Dame Cathedral, the Colosseum, bullfighting and plenty of local recognitions, such as Bruges' belfry, Antwerp guild houses and, of course, the manneken pis.

Towards the centre of Bruges lies the annual **Christmas market**, spread across three locations. And this year

continues the city's fantastic **Brr...ugge Winter Nights**, with multi-media performances of music, dance and fire spectacles in the mediaeval atmosphere in and around Arentshof. *LB*

→ www.winterinbrugge.be

Bruges

Brr...ugge Winter Nights, every Monday and Wednesday from 19.30, until 22 December, Arentshof
Christmas Markets, until 2 Jan, Markt, Simon Stevinklein & Walplein
Ice Sculpture Festival, until 16 Jan, train station
→ www.icesculpture.be

A tale of two veggie-friendly cities

Part 2: Antwerp

KARISHMA BHANSALI MEHTA

Last week, we looked at the quintessentially veggie city of Ghent, which has its own counter-culture inspired veggie scene. But while Ghent has some 13 exclusively vegetarian restaurants, most of them are only open for lunch.

It's Antwerp, it turns out, that is ideal by night.

A Flemish avant-garde fashion capital that is home to a melting pot of different communities, restaurants in Antwerp have incorporated veggie dishes into their usual menus and are comfortable adapting to the needs of their vegetarian clients. You'll even find several with separate wholly vegetarian menus.

What's more, because Antwerp is home to a large Indian community, some restaurants have become adept at preparing Jain-approved meals, catering to followers of Jainism, who are not only vegetarian but also refrain from eating root vegetables, like onions, potatoes and garlic.

An ideal place to celebrate any special occasion is French-Italian Restaurant **La Cigale d'Argent**, located in the heart of Antwerp's diamond district. This charming, elegant restaurant has a classic warm French touch and features a complete vegetarian menu (including Jain options) for both warm and cold starters, soups and pizzas and pastas. A testimony to monsieur Jean Jacque's hospitality, one of the dishes has been named after a regular who asked him to whip up a special risotto, which has now become part of the veggie menu.

The puff pastry with morel mushrooms is an excellent starter, as is the misto pasta comprising four veggie pastas if you feel like a bit of variety.

An eggless tiramisu is available for vegans craving dessert, and, when you finally call it a night, you'll have a complimentary Limoncello served with your bill. La Cigale also does large parties in its banquet hall upstairs that can cater to up to 100 guests.

For a cosy, chic atmosphere, try **Le John** in Antwerp's Zuid district. This romantic minimalist outfit is all about dim lighting and 1950s furniture. Inside a renovated house, the kitchen and dining area are downstairs, and the homey lounge bar is upstairs, as is a separate dining room, where up to 10 can have a party in complete privacy.

The menu at Le John is limited, but the few vegetarian options are exquisite, as is the eclectic wine list. An exceptionally friendly staff has always been extremely accommodating when it comes to preparing vegetarian food that is not on the menu.

The Jerusalem artichoke soup sprinkled with chanterelle mushrooms makes for a delicious starter. Once when I was craving some greens, I asked for a simple salad, and the chef tossed up the most divine warm concoction made with fresh seasonal vegetables topped with a distinctively piquant dressing. In the main course, the menu offers an asparagus risotto as well as pasta dishes. It's a bit on the expensive side, but Le John is the entire package.

A rather understated name for the amazing veggie world cuisine on its menu is **Faites Simple**, again located just a few minutes away from Antwerp's Central Station. Though the food is fantastic, many come for the restaurant's fantastical, almost haunted-like atmosphere of tall candelabras and strangely shaped lamps.

The restaurant has a wide array of veggie dishes, ranging



Faites Simple: go for the food, linger for the atmosphere

© Johannes Vande Voerde

from Thai curries to couscous and pasta, and their Japanese miso soups have a nice gastronomic twist to them. Ask for the tortilla wrap starter with tofu, goats cheese and sun-dried tomatoes or their steamed artichoke with melted cream cheese.

Faites Simple adheres to Donderdag Veggiedag (Thursday Veggie Day, which Ghent launched last year) and serves a veggie *dagschotel*, or daily special, for lunch on Thursdays. They also offer creative vegetarian cooking lessons.

Finding a Chinese restaurant where the "vegetarian" food and sauces don't smell fishy or are cooked in chicken stock is a notorious challenge for vegetarians. But you can put your concerns aside at **Ho Chan House**, which has one of the most extensive vegetarian menus in the city, including dim sum.

Ho Chan House has at least five kinds of vegetarian dim sum at any given time, as well as starters and soups. Here you don't just get the normal veggie spring rolls but selections like steamed rice rolls with veggies or a crispy tofu or onion pancakes and Chinese samosas.

The options for the main course are equally extensive, with the sizzling tofu in black bean sauce being one of my favourites. Don't be surprised if your server asks if you're Jain or non-Jain when you say that you're vegetarian.

Finally, you can go both kosher and veggie at the Moroccan-influenced **Lamalo**, located in the diamond district. This is one of Antwerp's few good restaurants open on Sunday. Lamalo has an extensive wine list and, while its menu offers different vegetarian falafels and grilled platters, the *mezze* of Mediterranean salads and sauces served with clay oven-cooked laffa bread is the highlight – appetising enough to make for an entire meal.

Finally, no Antwerp restaurant write-up would be complete without mentioning **Pazzo**, including, fortunately, a veggie one. In the trendy Eiland district, Pazzo is a must

visit for anyone looking for an excellent combination of atmosphere, food and wine. They specialise in Italian-Japanese fusion and has an exceptional truffle menu, all of which they adapt as vegetarian.

Highly recommended is their signature lasagne, a vegetarian fantasy with intricately set layers of wafer-thin herbed vegetables and cheese, sans any traditional lasagne sheets, topped by a tomato sauce with a strong hint of ginger. This three-story renovated granary also has a beautiful first floor wine bar featuring more than 170 varieties, making it the perfect place for relaxed night out.♦



Five kinds of vegetarian dim sum any day at Ho Chan House

Getting there

La Cigale d'Argent

Appelmanstraat 17
03.225.23.24, www.lacigaledargent.be

Le John (pictured left)

Kasteelpleinstraat 25
03.289.92.25, www.lejohn.be

Faites Simple

Quellinstraat 30
03.232.64.67, www.faitessimple.be

Ho Chan House

Breydelstraat 27
03.232.77.69, www.hochanhouse.com

Lamalo

Appelmanstraat 21
03.213.22.00, www.lamalo.com

Pazzo

Oudeleeuwerui 12
03.232.86.82, www.pazzo.be





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Lucas Cranach

ANNA JENKINSON

Lucas Cranach the Elder, one of the most popular artists of the Renaissance in northern Europe, is particularly known today for his sensual paintings of elongated female nudes. As an exhibition at the Bozar shows though, the German artist (1472-1553) made his name in many other ways, too.

The exhibition is the first ever devoted to Cranach in a Benelux country and brings together more than 100 of his paintings, drawings and prints, as well as about 50 works by his contemporaries such as Albrecht Dürer.

Taking a largely chronological approach, the show starts out with some of Cranach's earliest known works, dating from about 1500 when he was working in Vienna. It then moves on to the period from 1505 when he was appointed court artist in Wittenberg (Saxony), the residence city of Elector Frederick the Wise.

Cranach remained in the service of Frederick and his successors for almost 50 years and was granted a coat of arms in 1508 as

recognition. Featuring a winged serpent with a ring in its mouth, the coat of arms became Cranach's trademark and can be found on many of the paintings on display. His work as a court painter brought him into contact with some of the key figures of the time, such as Charles V, Margaret of Austria and Martin Luther. As the exhibition's curator Guido Messling says, politics is "very tangible" in Cranach's work. This is the Age of the Reformation, which started in 1517 when Luther published his theses against abuses in the Catholic Church. Cranach counted Luther among his friends in Wittenberg, and his portrait of the theologian is one of his best known. While on the one hand Cranach literally gave a face to the Protestant Reformation, he was also serving many Catholic patrons.

The businessman side of Cranach was also apparent in his workshop, completed in 1506, which enabled him to accept commissions "on a scale unique in the Europe of his time," according to Messling. This

extraordinary productivity was one factor contributing to his success.

The juxtaposition of Cranach's works with those of his contemporaries highlights the artist's encounter with the art of the Netherlands, which he visited in 1508, and Italy, with which he was familiar through imported works. One particular Italian influence on his portrait work was the Venetian painter Titian, who Cranach finally met in Augsburg in 1550.

As well as the chronological trip through the work of Cranach, there is, of course, a section dedicated to the female nudes that made him famous. ♦

Until 23 January

Bozar
Ravensteinstraat 23
Brussels

→ www.bozar.be



MORE EXHIBITIONS THIS WEEK

Public Private Paintings → Mu.ZEE, Ostend

Destination: Mars → Natural Sciences Museum, Brussels

Maarten Van Severen: History of an Icon → Design Museum, Ghent

DON'T MISS THIS WEEK



Antwerp

Arenbergschouwburg
Arenbergstraat 28; 070.222.192
www.arenbergschouwburg.be
DEC 10 20.30 Esmé Bos & Bart Voet

CC Deurne
Frans Messingstraat 36; 03.360.85.50
www.ccdeurne.be
DEC 11 18.00 Peter Holvoet Hanssen and Moving Emotions. 20.00 Paul Michiels

De Roma
Turnhoutsebaan 327; 03.292.97.40
www.deroma.be
DEC 8 20.30 Lady Angelina **DEC 9** 20.30 Sandrine, Brahim, Bruyneel & Cole, motown **DEC 10** 20.30 Tcha Limberger Kalotaszeg Trio **DEC 11** 20.30 Patrick Riguelle, John Terra & band

Sportpaleis
Schijnpoortweg 119; 070.345.345
www.sportpaleis.be
DEC 11 20.30 The Golden Years 2010: Steve Harley & Cockney Rebel + Smokie + Chicory Tip, more **DEC 12** 20.00 Shakira

Trix
Noordersingel 28; 03.670.09.00
www.trixonline.be
DEC 10 19.30 Roky Erickson + Creature With the Atom Brain
DEC 12 20.00 Rangda + Howlin Rain

Brussels

Ancienne Belgique
Anspachlaan 110; 02.548.24.24
www.abconcerts.be
Concerts at 20.00:
DEC 8 Ke\$ha **DEC 10** Tommigun + Mintzkov **DEC 11** The Van Jets
DEC 12 Taraf de Haïdouks + Kocani Orkestar. The Low Frequency in Stereo + The Megaphonic Thrift, more
DEC 14 James Vincent McMorrow + Fistful of Mercy with Ben Harper, Joseph Arthur, Dhani Harrison

De Kriekelaar
Gallastraat 86; 0473.95.03.63
www.myspace.com/adamleeaz
DEC 12 14.00 Adam Lee and the Dead Horse Sound Company

Koninklijk Circus
Onderrichtsstraat 81; 02.218.20.15
www.cirque-royal.org
DEC 11 20.00 The Rabeats

Le Botanique
Koningsstraat 236; 02.218.37.32
www.botanique.be
Concerts at 20.00:
DEC 11 Cinnamone + News from the Stars + Kiss & Drive, more **DEC 13** Penguin Prison + Matthew Dear, Gonjasufi **DEC 14** Delorean, Stromae
DEC 15 Cécile Hercule + Suarez, Lilly Wood & The Prick

Magasin 4
Havenlaan 51B; 02.223.34.74,
www.magasin4.be
DEC 9 20.00 Beehovener + Ulme + Sombra De Bestia **DEC 10** 20.00 W.A.N.E. + 15 Reasons + Unhealthy
DEC 11 20.00 Lofofora + Set the Tone + Age of Torment **DEC 15** 20.00 Le Singe Bblanc + Yikez!

Magic Mirrors
Sint-Katelijneplein; 02.217.29.20
www.magicmirrors.com
DEC 10 20.00 June & Lula
DEC 11 20.30 Pitcho, Senso, Sensey, more (www.heritageongo.be)

Recyclart
Ursulinenstraat 25; 02.502.57.34
www.recycleart.be
DEC 9 20.30 Sigrid Tanghe + Arne Deforce
DEC 11 21.00 Spandau + Triotonik + Blackie and the Oohoos

Vorst-Nationaal
Victor Roussealaan 208; 0900.00.991
www.forestnational.be
DEC 12-13 20.00 Christophe Maé

Band of Gypsies

12 December, 20.00
Ancienne Belgique, Brussels

While Ghent and Antwerp throw festivals celebrating the music and culture of Istanbul, Brussels' AB gets in on the act with this outstanding pairing of wild Balkan Gypsy band Taraf de Haïdouks and Macedonian brass band Kocani Orkestar, with music from all over the Balkans and Turkey. The bands in fact mingle for a stage packed full with Romanian folk and lautaresca, some of the oldest music in the world. Be there to forever enshrine your hoots in the live CD they'll be recording.



→ www.abconcerts.be

Ghent

Charlatan
Vlaamse Markt 6; 09.224.24.57
www.charlatan.be
DEC 8 20.00 Das Racist

Handelsbeurs
Kouter 29; 09.265.91.65
www.handelsbeurs.be
DEC 8 20.15 Lieven Tavernier & United Brass

Minus One
Opgeestelaan 455; 09.223.22.27
www.democrazy.be
DEC 9 20.00 Municipal Waste + Saviours + Ramming Speed + Burning Love

Vooruit
St Pietersnieuwstraat 23; 0900.26.060
www.vooruit.be
DEC 9 21.00 Isobel Campbell & Mark Lanegan **DEC 11** 19.30 The Next Big Thing Deluxe: School is Coo + Mayas Moving Castle + Absynth Minded, more **DEC 14** 22.00 Helmet + LaFaro **DEC 15** 19.30 Selah Sue + Yuko

Hasselt

Ethias Arena
Gouv. Verwilghenlaan 70; 0900.26.060
www.proximusgoformusic.be
DEC 11 20.00 Soulwaxmas: Soulwax, 2manydjs, more (www.soulwaxmas.com)

Muziekodroom
Bootstraat 9; 011.23.13.13
www.muziekodroom.be
DEC 11 20.00 The Ghost of a Saber Tooth Tiger with Sean Lennon
DEC 12 20.00 Flip Kowlier

Kortrijk

De Kreun
Conservatoriumplein 1; 056.37.06.44
www.dekreun.be
DEC 9 20.00 And So I Watch You From Afar **DEC 10** 20.30 My Cheap Little Dictaphone **DEC 11** 20.00 Rangda **DEC 12** 18.00 Helmet

Mechelen

Stadsfeestzaal
F. De Merodestraat 28; 015.29.40.00
www.cultuurcentrummechelen.be
DEC 11 20.30 Radio Modern party: The Swell Rhythm Combo + The Balcony Jumpers + Beauty Boudoir with De Modernettes, more

Agenda

FLANDERS TODAY
DECEMBER 8, 2010



Antwerp

Buster

Kaasrui 1; 03.232.51.53
www.busterpodium.be
DEC 10 22.00 Ruby
DEC 11 22.00 Maria-João Mendes Quintet
DEC 14 21.30 JazzNight

De Hopper

Leopold De Waelstraat 2; 03.248.49.33
www.cafehopper.be
DEC 12 16.00 Maria João Mendes Quartet **DEC 13** 21.00 Modern Bop Society **DEC 14** 21.00 Hopper Three-Oh **DEC 15** 21.00 Wout Gooris Trio

Brussels

Art Base
Zandstraat 29; 02.217.29.20
www.art-base.be
DEC 10 20.00 Manuel Hermia Trio

Jazz Station

Leuvensesteenweg 193; 02.733.13.78
www.jazzstation.be
DEC 8 20.30 Collapse **DEC 9** 20.00 The Bundle **DEC 11** 18.00 Stephane Mercier Quartet **DEC 15** 20.30 Fox

Sounds Jazz Club

Tulpenstraat 28; 02.512.92.50
www.soundsjazzclub.be
Concerts at 22.00:
DEC 8 Caribe con K **DEC 9** Franck Ansalem Trio **DEC 10** Line Up **DEC 11** Brussels Rhythm 'n Blues **DEC 13** Master Session **DEC 14** Raphael Debacker Trio

The Music Village

Steenstraat 50; 02.513.13.45
www.themusicvillage.com
Concerts at 21.00:
DEC 9 Pascal Mohny Trio **DEC 10** Dusko Gojkovic **DEC 11** The Swing Dealers **DEC 14** The Brussels Jazz Quintet **DEC 15** Luna

Théâtre Molière

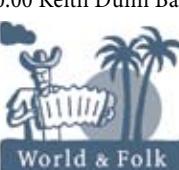
Bastionsquare 3; 02.217.26.00
www.muziekpublique.be
DEC 10 20.00 Muziek de Singe, manouche

Ghent

Vooruit
St Pietersnieuwstraat 23; 0900.26.060
www.vooruit.be
DEC 9 20.00 Aka Moon & Misirli Ahmet (part of Istanbul Ekspres)

Hasselt

Muziekodroom
Bootstraat 9; 011.23.13.13
www.muziekodroom.be
DEC 9 20.00 Keith Dunn Band



Antwerp

Zuiderpershuis
Waalse Kaai 14; 03.248.01.00
www.zuiderpershuis.be
DEC 8 20.30 Rocío Márquez
DEC 9 20.30 Mamane Barka + Solo



European Quarter

Until 31 December

Brussels-Luxembourg Station

This exhibition of the Belgian presidency of the European Union looks at the past present and future of architecture and urban planning of Brussels' European Quarter, with a particular eye on a multi-faceted urban life alongside administrative centres. The exhibition in the Brussels-

Belgium is supporting a host of events during its presidency of the European Union. Each week, we highlight one. For more, visit www.eutrio.be

Dja Kabako
DEC 10 20.30 Bonga

Brussels

Art Base
Zandstraat 29; 02.217.29.20
www.art-base.be
DEC 12 20.00 Vinylio, rebetiko (Greece)

De Pianofabriek

Fortstraat 35; 02.217.26.00 www.muziekpublique.be
DEC 12 14.30 Bal & Basta: Trio LAM + Snaarmaarwaar

Ghent

Vooruit

St Pietersnieuwstraat 23; 0900.26.060
www.vooruit.be
DEC 9 22.00 Baba Zula & Tuur Florizooone (part of Istanbul Ekspres)
DEC 10 20.00 Nil Karaibrahimgil (part of Istanbul Ekspres)

Leuven

Het Depot

Martelarenplein 12; 016.22.06.03
www.hetdepot.be
DEC 10 20.00 Balkan Beat Box



Antwerp

Amuz

Kammenstraat 81; 03.292.36.80
www.amuz.be

DEC 11 21.00 Goeyvaerts String Trio: music by Webern, Schoenberg, Schnittke; screening of Anton Webern, a short film by Thierry Knauff

deSingel

Desguinlei 25; 03.248.28.28
www.desingel.be

DEC 8 20.00 Het Collectief conducted by Robin Engelen, with Jacqueline Janssen, voice: Berg, Schoenberg, Webern **DEC 9** 20.00 The English Concert conducted by Harry Bicket: Vivaldi, Porpora, Pergolesi **DEC 10** 20.00 Remix Ensemble conducted by Reinbert de Leeuw: Kaija Saariaho, Jan van de Putte, Claude Vivier

DEC 14 20.00 Het Collectief conducted by Robin Engelen: Berg, Schoenberg, Webern 22.00 e-XXI Chamber Orchestra conducted by Robin Engelen: Mahler, Schoenberg, Webern

Queen Elisabeth Hall

Koningin Astridplein 26; 0900.26.060
www.elisabethzaal.be

DEC 11 20.00 DeFilharmonie conducted by Claus Peter Flor: Prokofiev, Mahler

Bruges

Concertgebouw

't Zand 34; 070.22.33.02
www.concertgebouw.be

DEC 15 20.00 Collegium Vocale, Concerto Köln conducted by Marcus Creed: Bach's Christmas Oratorio

Brussels

Bozar

Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00
www.bozar.be

DEC 8 12.40 William Young, piano; Nils Mönkemeyer, viola: Schumann, Mozart, Brahms. 20.00 Liège Philharmonic Orchestra

Brussels

De Munt

Muntplein; 070.23.39.39
www.demunt.be

DEC 10-31 times vary Puccini's La Bohème conducted by Carlo Rizzi/ José Miguel Esandi, staged by Andreas Homoki (in the original Italian with Dutch and French surtitles)

Koninklijk Circus

Onderrichtsstraat 81; 02.218.20.15
www.cirque-royal.org

DEC 12 15.00 Les Grands airs et ballets d'Opéra, opera extracts from Carmen, La Bohème, The Barber of Seville, more

Luxembourg train station, located under the European Parliament, shows the transition of the European Quarter in the last decade and also presents the area through the eyes of artists who have lived there, such as Rodin, Antoine Wiertz and James Ensor.

conducted by Pierre Bartholomée, Louis Langrée, Pascal Rophé: surprise concert to celebrate the orchestra's 50th anniversary **DEC 9** 20.00 Ensemble Artaserse: Purcell

DEC 10 & 12 20.00/15.00 Belgian National Orchestra conducted by Stefan Blunier: Nikolay Myaskovsky, Schnittke, Shostakovich **DEC 12** 11.00 Alexandra Soumm, violin; Aimo Pagin, piano: Grieg, Lutoslawski, more. 20.00 Brussels Philharmonic and Lemmensinstituut choir conducted by Richard Egarr: Mendelssohn's Elijah **DEC 13** 20.00 La Scintilla: Handel, Francesco Veracini, Nicola Porpora **DEC 15** 12.40 Werner Van Mechelen, baritone; Jozef De Beenhouwer, piano: Schubert's Die schöne Müllerin

Musical Instruments Museum
Hofberg 2; 02.545.01.30
www.mim.be
DEC 12 11.00 Jerrold Rubenstein, violin; Miha Haran, cello; Dalia Ouziel, piano: Schumann

Royal Music Conservatory

Regentschapsstraat 30; 02.213.41.37
www.kcb.be

DEC 11 20.00 Tokyo String Quartet: Schubert, Barber, Mozart

DEC 14-16 20.00 Artemis Quartett: Beethoven string quartets

Ghent

De Bijloke

Jozef Kluyskensstraat 2 09.233.68.78
www.debijloke.be

DEC 10 20.00 Ex Tempore, Mannheimer Hofkapelle conducted by Florian Heyerick: Christoph Graupner's Christmas Oratorio

DEC 11 20.00 Collegium Vocale, Concerto Köln conducted by Marcus Creed: Bach's Christmas Oratorio

DEC 12 11.00 Il Gardellino: chamber music by Graupner, Telemann, Vivaldi, 16.00 Geneviève Soly, harpsichord: Graupner. 20.00 Bach Concentus conducted by Ewald Demeyere with Barthold Kuijken, traverso: Bach, Graupner

Handelsbeurs

Kouter 29; 09.265.91.65
www.handelsbeurs.be

DEC 9 20.15 Quatuor Terpsy cordes with Jürg Dähler, viola: Mozart, Ligeti, Brahms

Keizersberg

Mechelsestraat; 016.23.84.27
www.30cc.be

DEC 12 15.00 Taverner Consorts & Players conducted by Andrew Parrott: Bach's Christmas Oratorio (cantatas 1, 2, 3). 17.00 The Bach Ensemble conducted by Joshua Rifkin: Bach's Christmas Oratorio (cantatas 4, 5, 6).

20.15 La Petite Bande conducted by Sigiswald Kuijken: Christmas cantatas



Antwerp

Vlaamse Opera

Frankrijklei 1; 070.22.02.02
www.vlaamseopera.be

DEC 12-26 15.00/18.30 Rossini's Semiramide conducted by Alberto Zedda, staged by Nigel Lowery (in the original Italian with Dutch surtitles)

Brussels

De Munt

Muntplein; 070.23.39.39
www.demunt.be

DEC 10-31 times vary Puccini's La Bohème conducted by Carlo Rizzi/ José Miguel Esandi, staged by Andreas Homoki (in the original Italian with Dutch and French surtitles)

Koninklijk Circus

Onderrichtsstraat 81; 02.218.20.15
www.cirque-royal.org

DEC 12 15.00 Les Grands airs et ballets d'Opéra, opera extracts from Carmen, La Bohème, The Barber of Seville, more

Luxembourg train station, located under the European Parliament, shows the transition of the European Quarter in the last decade and also presents the area through the eyes of artists who have lived there, such as Rodin, Antoine Wiertz and James Ensor.

Monty
Montignystraat 3-5; 03.238.91.81
www.monty.be
DEC 14 20.30 Human Works in Dry Act #1, written and staged by Adrián Minkowicz (in English)

Mortsel Mark Liebrecht Schouwburg
H. Kruisstraat 16; 03.449.83.02
www.streven.be
DEC 10-19 20.15 tg Streven in Het

DON'T MISS THIS WEEK

Into the Light

9-19 December

Across Antwerp South

A refreshing update on Christmas lighting, this festival of video and light installations comes courtesy of the nomadic contemporary art initiative Error One. Local and international artists stage their work in both public outdoor spaces and freely accessible museums and galleries across the southern part of Antwerp. Pick up a guide at either the Fine Arts Museum or Zuiderpershuis or happen upon works that ingeniously interact with the city itself.

→ www.errorone.be



Weekend by Michael Palin, directed by Marc Van Extergem (in Dutch)

Theater Zuidpool

Lange Noordstraat 11; 03.232.81.04
www.zuidpool.be

DEC 9-23 20.00 Jorgen Cassier, Sofie Decleir and Jan Decleir in Lucifer (in Dutch)

Ardoorie

Cultuurkapel De Schaduw

Wezestraat 32; 0479.80.94.82
www.deschaduw.net

www.beeldexpressie.be
Until JAN 30 Photo View 2010, works by several Flemish photographers

Extra City
Tulpstraat 79; 03.677.16.55
www.extracity.org
Until FEB 6 Drawing Documents, artistic projects by various artists that explore the medium of the drawing in its relation to memory and the representation of history
Until FEB 6 Emre Hüner: Adverse Stability, sculptural objects, drawings and the film Juggernaut by the Turkish artist

Plantin-Moretus Museum
Vrijdagmarkt 22; 03.221.14.50
www.museoplantinmoretus.be
Until JAN 16 Jan I Moretus, documents showing how the 16th-century Flemish printer built Plantin into one of the world's most significant publishing houses

Royal Museum of Fine Arts
Leopold De Waelplaats; 03.238.78.09
www.kmska.be
Until JAN 23 Anselm Kiefer, works by the contemporary German artist

Bruges
Bruggemuseum-Gruuthuse
Dijver 17; 050.44.87.11
www.museabrugge.be

Until JAN 9 The invention of Bruges: The City of Delacenserie, projects and restorations by 19th-century city architect Louis Delacenserie

Groeningemuseum
Dijver 12; 050.44.87.43
Until JAN 30 Van Eyck tot Dürer, paintings by Flemish Primitives paired with work by painters from Central Europe who were directly influenced by the Primitives (Part of Brugge Centraal)

Brussels
Bozar
Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00
www.bozar.be

Until JAN 23 Gilbert & George: Jack Freak Pictures, major exhibition of the Italian-British artist duo's stylised photographs with British flag iconography
Until JAN 23 The World of Lucas Cranach, work by the leading figure of the German Renaissance that places him in the artistic context of his time
Until FEB 13 Ensor: Composer and Writer, autographs, publications, documents and photographs by the Flemish Surrealist master James Ensor

ING Cultural Centre
Koningsplein 6; 02.507.82.00
www.bozar.be
Until FEB 13 Ensor Revealed, drawings and paintings illustrate the imaginary and artistic evolution of the Ostend artist on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of his birth

Museum van Elsene
Jean Van Volsemstraat 71; 02.515.64.22 www.museumvanelsene.be
Until JAN 16 Paul Delvaux: Starting Points, paintings by the Belgian surrealist shown alongside works by artists who influenced him
Until JAN 16 From Dürer to Jan Fabre: Masterpieces, paintings from the museum's collection including 19th- and 20th-century works by Ensor, Toulouse-Lautrec, Picasso, Miró, more

Natural Science Museum
Vautierstraat 29; 02.627.42.38
www.naturalsciences.be
Until DEC 31 Planet Observer: multimedia game exploring biodiversity
Until MAR 20 Destination Mars, interactive exhibition on the planet Mars

Royal Museum of the Armed Forces
Jubelpark 3; 02.737.78.33 www.legermuseum.be
Until JAN 31 Belgians Can Do Too! Het Belgisch-Luxemburgs bataljon in Korea, Belgian military operations in the Korean War

Royal Museum of Fine Arts
Regentschapsstraat 3; 02.508.32.11
www.fine-arts-museum.be
Until JAN 9 From Delacroix to Kandinsky, Orientalism in Europe, European Orientalist art during the 19th century with paintings, drawings and sculpture

Until FEB 6 Jules Schmalzigaug: A Futurist Belgian, retrospective of paintings by the only Belgian artist involved in the Italian futurist movement before the First World War
Until FEB 6 Reinoud, tribute to the Belgian sculptor and graphic artist, member of the CoBrA movement, who died in 2007

Tour & Taxis
Havenlaan 86C; 02.549.60.49
www.tour-taxis.com
Until MAY 9 America: It's Also Our History!, three centuries of cross-Atlantic relations with frescoes, charts, audiovisual material, installations, objects and artwork

WIELS
Van Volxemlaan 354; 02.340.00.50
www.wiels.org
Until JAN 30 Francis Alÿs: A Story of Deception, installations, paintings, drawings, and documents by the Mexico-based Flemish artist

Ghent
Design Museum
Jan Breydelstraat 5; 09.267.99.99
www.designmuseumgent.be
Until FEB 27 .03 Maarten Van Severen: The History of an Icon, models, prototypes, drawings and photographs of the development of the ".03" chair by the Flemish designer
Until FEB 27 Art Nouveau and Art Deco from the Netherlands, a selection of objects from the Drents Museum Assen collection

Dr Guislain Museum
Jozef Guislainstraat 43; 09.216.35.95
www.museumdrguislain.be
Until JAN 27 Bobby Baker Diary Drawings: Mental Illness and Me, more than 150 drawings by the British performance artist illustrate her 10-year journey through psychiatric institutions
Until MAY 8 The Weighty Body: Of Fat and Thin, Perfect or Deranged, a history of fasting for personal, esthetic, religious or economic reasons

Kunsthal Sint-Pietersabdij
Sint-Pietersplein 9; 09.243.97.30
www.gekleurverleden.be
Until APR 25 Gekleur verleden: Familie in orlog (Coloured Past: Family at War), stories of World War Two, told by everyday people

Museum of Contemporary Art (SMAK)
Citadelpark; 09.221.17.03
www.smak.be
Until JAN 30 Paul Hendrikse: A Vague Uneasiness, works by the Dutch artist
Until FEB 27 Hareng Saur: Ensor and Contemporary Art, spotlight on the continuing contemporary aspect of work by James Ensor, shown with work by international contemporary artists
Until MAR 27 Inside Installations, 10 installations from the museum's collection
Until MAR 27 Adrian Ghenie, paintings by the Romanian artist

Stadsmuseum Gent (STAM)
Bijloke - Godshuizenlaan 2; 09.269.87.90 www.stamgent.be
Until MAY 1 Enlightened City, an examination of how light affects a city through diaries, models, paintings, photographs and installations

Hasselt
Fashion Museum
Gasthuisstraat 11; 011.239.621
www.modemuseumhasselt.be
Until JAN 9 Devout/Divine: Fashion vs Religion, examples of religious symbolism in designs of the past decennia

Literary Museum
Bampsalaan 35; 011.26.17.87
www.literairmuseum.be
Until FEB 26 Niet van de poes! De kat in het kinderboek, a collection of children's books and stories featuring cats

z33
Zuivelmarkt 33; 011.29.59.60
www.z33.be
Until DEC 12 David Huycke: Re-thinking granulation, sculptures by the Flemish silver designer
Until DEC 12 Toegepast (Applied), works by students selected from Belgian and Dutch design academies
Until MAR 13 Alter Nature: We Can, works by international artists about humans' manipulation of nature

Kemzeke

Verbeke Foundation
Westakker; 03.789.22.07
www.verbekefoundation.com
Until JAN 30 The Cloudknitters: 100 Records, record sleeves decorated by visual artists
Until APR 10 Certified Copy, works by 20 international artists on the theme of reproduction and cloning
Until APR 10 Mark Verstockt: A Portrait, an overview of the Flemish artist's work in celebration of his 80th birthday
Until APR 10 Trou de Ville, group show featuring press releases, e-mails, videos and photographs on guerilla art

Knokke-Heist

Cultuurcentrum Scharpoord
Meerlaan 32; 050.630.430
www.congocollectie.be
Until JAN 16 Congo Collection, Congolese sculptures and masks

Kortrijk

Museum Kortrijk 1302
Houtmarkt-Begijnpark; 056.27.78.50,
www.kortrijk1302.be
Until JAN 9 OnGELOOFlijk: van hemel, hel en halleluja (UnBELIEVEable: From Heaven, Hell and Hallelujah), religious objects and symbols from the past 500 years

Leuven

Museum M
Leopold Vanderkelenstraat 28; 016.27.29.29 www.mleuven.be
Until DEC 16 Beatrijs Albers: Patrimonies, installations by the Flemish artist
Until JAN 9 Ozo: Joke Van Leeuwen, works by the Dutch author, poet, illustrator and performer
Until JAN 16 Robert Devriendt: Victimes de la Passion, paintings by the Flemish artist
Until JAN 23 Mayombe: Meesters van de magie (Master of Magic), sculptures and objects from the Congolese collection of the Catholic University of Leuven

Tervuren

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



Belgium's EU Presidency: Belgium takes the helm of the European Union Council for six months, with a cultural programme to mark its presidency
Until DEC 31 across the country www.brusselsinternational.be

Theatre at the Cinema: The National Theatre in London live via satellite in Kinepolis cinemas across. Next up: Hamlet, starring Rory Kinnear as Hamlet and Clare Higgins as Gertrude
DEC 9 19.30 in Kinepolis cinemas in Brussels, Bruges, Ghent, Hasselt, Kortrijk, Leuven, Ostend and Antwerp www.kinepolis.com

Antwerp

0090: Contemporary arts festival celebrating the art and culture of Istanbul
Until DEC 9 across Antwerp www.0090.be

Voedingssalon Antwerpen: Culinary fair with tastings, plus information on fashion, wellness and design
Until DEC 12 11.00-18.00 at Antwerp Expo, Jan Van Rijswijcklaan 191 03.260.81.20, www.voedingssalonantwerpen.be

Bruges

Brugge Centraal: Festival celebrating the art and culture of Central Europe, with dance, theatre, music, literature, film and major exhibitions
Until JAN 30 across Bruges www.bruggecentraal.be

December Dance: International dance festival with a focus on dancers and choreographers from Central Europe or with Central European roots
Until DEC 11 across Bruges www.decemberdance.be

Snow and Ice: Annual ice sculpture festival; this year's theme is Around the World, with magnificent ice sculptures of major world monuments and heritage
Until JAN 16 10.00-19.00 in front of the train station www.icesculpture.be

Brussels

European Cultural Citizenship: Discussion with Luuk van Middelaar, Paul Scheffer and Philippe van Parijs (in English and Dutch)
DEC 10 20.15 at Flagey, Heilig Kruisplein 02.641.10.20, www.flagey.be

Garage Sale: Twenty designers sell their own work
DEC 10-12 at The White Hotel, Louizalaan 212 www.thewhitehotel.be/garagesale

Lucas Cranach and the Northern Renaissance: Lecture on the German Renaissance painter delivered by Frank Woodgate of the Tate Modern and Tate Britain, coinciding with the Cranach exhibition at Bozar
DEC 8 20.00 at Gemeentehuis, Sint-Lambrechts-Woluwe, Paul Hymanslaan 2 02.782.16.12 www.bridfas.org

Museum Nocturnes: Brussels' museums stay open late, with guided tours and special events
Until DEC 16 on Thursdays, across the city <http://nocturnes.brusselsmuseums.be>

Norway Now: Festival of contemporary Norwegian culture with classical and pop music, literature, architecture, film and graphic design
Until MAY 24 across Brussels www.abconcerts.be

Science Bars Brussel: Monthly after-work science cafe. This month: On Science and Halal (in Dutch)
DEC 9 18.00 at Rits Café, A Dansaertstraat 70 www.debuten.eu

Scottish writer series: Alan Warner
DEC 10 13.00 at Scotland House, Schuman roundabout 6 brussellevents@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

SpokenWorld: International festival exploring the current state of the world as performers, writers and academics express their thoughts. This year's theme is Mobility and Identity
Until DEC 20 at Kaaistudio's www.kaaistudio.be/spokenworld

Ghent

Belgicat 2010: International cat show
DEC 12 at Flanders Expo, Maaltekouter 1 www.belgicat.be

Istanbul Ekspres: Cultural festival with a focus on world music, jazz, hip-hop and dance from Istanbul
Until DEC 10 in Vooruit and De Centrale www.vooruit.be

Leuven

International Short Film Festival: Short films from around the world, including a Flemish Competition and special screenings for kids
Until DEC 11 at STUK, Naamsestraat 96 www.kortfilmfestival.be

Mechelen

I Love the Sixties: Cover band dance party for 50-plussers
DEC 11 19.30 in the Spiegeltent on Grote Markt 070.222.800 www.uitinmechelen.be

PM DOUTRELIGNE

CAFE SPOTLIGHT

Let the train be late!



Let's be honest: we wouldn't set out to spend an evening in a café situated opposite a train station, would we? The "conveyor-belt" level of service, the louche individuals, the inflated prices, the overall grimness... Truth is, we would only go there if we were a) very early for a train or b) in need of a toilet.

And even in the latter situation, a fast-food outlet often seems more appealing. I mean, whoever goes for a drink in one of the sinister cafés opposite Brussels' South Station deserves a medal for bravery.

But, every now and then, along comes an exception that makes you wonder: "Why can't it always be like this?" Kosmopol lies on Leuven's Martelarenplein – directly outside the main train station and two doors down from Het Depot, the city's finest concert venue. Arriving way too early for a gig recently, our party (English-, French- and Dutch-speaking) was greeted, ordered and was served in all three languages. Service was friendly and efficient. (I know, it *should* be the norm, but I *despair* sometimes.) Furthermore, Kosmopol is a genuinely nice place, as in "nice to look at": The décor is stylish but sober, slightly arty but definitely refined.

You might say it sounds a bit over the top for a café, but there's a perfectly valid reason for this: Kosmopol doubles as a restaurant. Since I haven't eaten there (yet), and because I won't tread on my esteemed foodie colleague's toes, I will keep it short and say that €35 for a three-course menu featuring scallops, pheasant, Bailey's-flavoured crème brûlée, an aperitif, a glass of wine and a coffee reads like a misprint, but it isn't.

Finally, as if this wasn't enough, should

ROBYN BOYLE

bite



© VLAM

Snowballs

"Truffles for the poor" was the first marketing slogan for *sneeuwballen* (snowballs) when August Larmuseau introduced them at the 1913 World Fair in Ghent. The little sweets were an immediate success, winning Larmuseau the gold medal in the category "food" and are loved by *Gentenaars* to this day. (Above is a photo of the original factory, circa 1940s.) August's grandson, Johnny Larmuseau, makes them now, according to the original recipe. "Our family's been producing snowballs for almost 100 years now," he tells me. "They're made from a soft filling coated in dark chocolate, which we also make ourselves, and covered in powdered sugar."

The filling is margarine that's been whipped to a light and fluffy consistency. Snowballs are concocted using only vegetable products, and there are no artificial additives, flavours or preservatives. In other words, it's an all-natural product.

Encased in a paper-thin layer of chocolate and a dusting of powdered sugar, the snowball literally melts in your mouth. For this reason, the candy is sometimes referred to as *rotte patatten* (rotten potatoes) in local dialect. But this description couldn't be further from the truth, as snowballs are silky smooth, sweet and

an absolute pleasure to eat. This also explains why they're seasonal – they simply melt when exposed to temperatures over 18°C. Look for them between September and the end of March in smaller shops and confectioners. "Snowballs could be found at the check-out counter of the corner store in every village, long before the introduction of candy bars," says Johnny. "They were meant to be a last-minute purchase – something to buy with your spare change."

Even today, don't expect to see them in the big supermarket chains. You'll find the little blue packages at some bakeries and small grocers, especially in and around Ghent and across East Flanders. The most well-known place to get your winter snowballs is at the charmingly old-fashioned sweet shop Temmerman in Ghent's Kraanlei.

Last year the Flemish Centre for Agriculture and Fishery Marketing (VLAM) honoured the snowball with an official regional product label.

→ www.streekproduct.be

Contact *Bite* at flandersbite@gmail.com

TALKING DUTCH

ALISTAIR MACLEAN

• *sneeuwpret* •

Today has a morning-after feeling. The snow blanket has been mostly washed out by drizzle or, as the met office writes: *In Vlaanderen dooit het licht* – In Flanders there is a slight thaw. *Zondag valt er regen in het westen* – On Sunday rains falls in the west; *elders is dat winterse neerslag* – elsewhere is that wintery precipitation (snow, to you and me).

And the good news is that: *In de Ardennen is sneeuwpret alvast verzekerd tot en met volgend weekend* – In the Ardennes, snow fun is guaranteed until next weekend.

Snow brings disaster for some: *Onderkoelde vrouw op strand overleden* – Hypothermic woman dies on the beach. Sometimes it brings no news at all, as in: *Verkeershinder door sneeuw blijft uit* – Snow doesn't cause traffic delays ("Traffic delays by the snow stay away").

But mostly it's jolly news: *Verschillende skipistes geopend in oostkantons* – Several ski slopes opened in the east cantons, and *Grootste ijspiste van het land open in Gent* – Biggest ice rink in the country opens in Ghent. The real eye-catching item was this: *Bus glijdt tegen telefooncel* – Bus skids into phone box. What are the chances of that? When did you last see a phone box? Perhaps someone was crushed inside and passengers suffered serious injury. The drama unfolded at about noon just as the driver set off from the centre of Anzegem, West Flanders.

The bus company's aptly named spokesman Dirk Schockaert gave details: "Niemand raakte gewond – No one was injured, maar de telefooncel is wel gesneeuwd – but the phone box has perished (!) en de achterruit van de bus is verbijzeld – and the rear window of the bus is shattered."

But that's just the material damage; what about human damage? Well midday Saturday is obviously not the busiest time of the week in Anzegem: *Op de bus zat één passagier* – On the bus sat one passenger. And when a replacement bus arrived, *hij kon zijn reis voortzetten* – he could continue his journey. End of story.

Anzegem sounds like the place to go for peace and quiet. It's to be found between the rivers Scheldt and Leie near Kortrijk. The local council is doing its best to tackle the snow, but they do ask people to be understanding: *de strooidiensten kunnen niet overal tegelijk hun werkzaamheden uitvoeren* – the gritting services cannot do their work everywhere at the same time.

There's some logic in that, but let's hope they get round to the bus stop in the centre some time soon. The council also reminds residents of their duty *om het voetpad sneeuw- en ijsvrij te houden* – to keep the pavement free of snow and ice. I see the drizzle outside my window has turned to snow, so duty calls.

→ www.anzegem.be

THE LAST WORD . . .

Klaas act

"You don't play the Sint. You become him."

Marc Peeters, police inspector and part-time Sinterklaas in, appropriately, Sint-Niklaas

Prison fit for people

"Imprisonment must in the first place be reasonable. Prisoners are still human beings, after all. Providing new opportunities is what it's all about."

Guido Verschueren, director of Leuven Central prison, who won this year's Citizenship Prize from the P&V Foundation

Game over

"Next time, the Netherlands and Belgium can save themselves a lot of effort and just not bid. Hosting a World Cup has become an expensive, dirty business."

De Morgen sports columnist Simon Kuper

Who stole my sausage?

"They fried up some chips and curry sausages and ate them peacefully in the canteen. On top of that, they ate all of our pea soup."

Spokesman for a local football club in Muizen, following a second robbery