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© Ivan Put



Back to her roots

After years working with victims of human traffickers, Heidi De Pauw goes back to Child Focus

ALAN HOPE

This month marks the 15th anniversary of the arrest of Belgian serial killer Marc Dutroux, of the release of two of his surviving victims and of the discovery of four murdered girls. The devastating case and the dysfunctions of police and judicial services led to the White March of 1996, when 300,000 people took to the streets of Brussels. It also led to a reform of the police department and the creation of Child Focus. Child Focus was a response to the criticism from families of victims that their anxieties over their missing children had been brushed aside. Then prime minister Jean-Luc Dehaene promised to establish an organisation that would take their concerns seriously. Child Focus, modelled on the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children in the US, opened its doors in 1998.

Heidi De Pauw (pictured) was a case manager there for seven years and is now director of PAG-ASA, the Brussels region's centre for the victims of human trafficking. But in November, she's going back to Child Focus as its new director.

De Pauw, sitting in PAG-ASA's sprawling warren of corridors and offices, is 39 and wearing a shirt dress and heels; she looks more like a criminologist on an American TV series than one actually used to getting her hands dirty in the murky world of 21st-century slavery.

De Pauw graduated from Ghent University in 1994, then spent a year at the University of Patras in Greece, studying the social problem of street children. At Ghent, she had studied under Professor Eugeen Verhellen, she says, "one of the pioneers of children's rights". De Pauw's thesis was on victimhood among children, "and I wanted to study child slavery".

That was at the beginning of the 1990s "before the whole Dutroux affair," she says. "When that happened, I was working in the interior ministry on drugs prevention, and we had set up a group to study the problem of missing children. When Child Focus was founded, I knew I wanted to work there."

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"Blackest day in festival history" • Five die as storm hits Pukkelpop music festival in Limburg

ALAN HOPE

The Pukkelpop rock music festival in Kiewit, just outside Hasselt, got off to a sunny start, as internet headlines announced last Thursday, 18 August. Just a few hours later, at 18.15, a storm hit the festival site, with flash flooding and severe winds that knocked down massive tents and other structures, killing five people and wounding more than 100.

What happened? A band of severe weather crossed Belgium from the west, as forecast, bringing heavy rain, thunder and lightning. When the system reached Limburg, it created what meteorologists call a downburst, characterised by extremely strong winds. The damage was local: According to the Hasselt prosecutor, who flew over the area, the hardest hit area is a strip no more than 60 metres wide. "The whole field was under water within a few minutes. It was unreal," said Edwin Korver, one of the DJs playing at the festival. "People tried to get away, but stayed calm. Nobody panicked."

The storm lasted barely a quarter of an hour, though it took much longer to determine the extent of the damage. Marquees had blown away; stage rigging collapsed; GSM masts and trees were felled.

Five people died and 140 more were injured, some requiring hospitalisation. As *Flanders Today* went to press, three of the injured were still in critical condition.

"This is the blackest day in Belgian festival history and also the blackest day of my life," said Chokri Mahassine, organiser of the festival from its beginning in 1986. "When you organise a mass event like Pukkelpop, you have to take into account that something bad could happen. But a disaster on this scale I could never have imagined in my worst nightmare."

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FACE OF FLANDERS

ALAN HOPE



Chokri Mahassine

When you visit the website of Chokri Mahassine, a member of the Flemish parliament for the socialist party, your computer's cursor changes shape from the usual arrow to that two-finger hand gesture used by hard rockers. Mahassine's own logo is that gesture, clutching a red socialist rose. It doesn't get more right-on than that.

Mahassine is a serious contender for the coolest man in Flanders. Born in Casablanca in 1960 and brought here by his parents when he was small, he's not only a member of the Flemish parliament, but the creator and organiser of Pukkelpop, one of Flanders' favourite music festivals.

Mahassine started the rock and pop festival in 1986, on a small scale, together with some friends from the Humanistic Youth movement, a group to which he is devoted. There were seven acts on the programme, and the festival took place on the grounds of the Excelsior Heppen football club in Mahassine's home town of Leopoldsburg, Limburg province.

Since those modest beginnings, Pukkelpop has become a strong favourite of young people (a pukkel is a pimple), for whom the three-day event with acts on eight stages has become the crowning weekend of the bulging summer festival season. This year's programme included more than 150 acts and was sold out three weeks in advance.

Mahassine became a kind of

organisers' organiser: Other festival bosses have said that he's an example to the industry, and he's also admired by the musicians he books, for many of whom Pukkelpop was a major breakthrough. Mahassine could, it seemed, do no wrong.

Until last week, when disaster struck (see p1). What's been remarkable, in the aftermath of the tragedy, is the common front that's sprung up in both the mainstream media and the online world, determined to ensure that Mahassine doesn't shoulder the blame for what took place. Some examples: "I don't get it that there are still people who dare to suggest that Pukkelpop organisers could have avoided this drama," tweeted Flemish journalist Bart Van Belle.

Bart Caron, a parliament colleague of Mahassine on the culture committee (and a bass player), said: "My heart goes out to the families. The organisers did a good job, and they need our courage and support. That's my wish for Chokri."

Dominiek Leenknacht, a music-lover from West Flanders, tweeted: "To all journalists: I was there. The actions and the organisation after the storm were exceptionally well organised." His point of view was confirmed by marketing expert Fons Van Dyck: "The organisation was extremely humane, courageous and professional. That has to be said."

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FLANDERS TODAY

AUGUST 24, 2011

News in brief

A man who **brandished three guns on the street** in Antwerp last week was trying to get himself shot by police, the city prosecutor's office said. The 42-year-old man, who was shot in the leg by police, has been sent for psychiatric evaluation. His guns turned out to be replicas.

The church of **Sint-Katelijn in central Brussels** will not be converted into apartments, according to the authority in charge of the church fabric. The plan would have maintained only the façade of the church, built in the second half of the 19th century by the architect Joseph Poelaert. The city council is now in favour of a project to turn the listed building into a market hall for fruit and vegetables.

Antwerp is Europe's **largest consumer of cocaine**, according to research carried out on the city's waste water by the university's toxicological centre. Scientists examine waste water to track traces of numerous chemicals, including those excreted by people.

The exhibition *This is Belgium* in the Dukes' House on Brussels' Grote Markt has closed down following the **collapse of part of the roof** caused by a water leak. The exhibition was due to run until the end of the month. Organisers said people who had already bought tickets, including a special offer from Groupon, would be reimbursed.

OFFSIDE

Political situation worries *Pravda*

"Brussels may become another Sarajevo," cries the headline of an article on the website of *Pravda*, the Russian newspaper and former mouthpiece of the Soviet Union.

In the 400-odd days that Belgium has been without a federal government, many extreme positions have been taken in the papers and online, but none, to date, has gone quite as far as that.

Sarajevo is the capital of Bosnia-Herzegovina, a former province of the Yugoslav republic, which declared independence in 1992. That led to attacks by Serb forces, seizure of territory and ethnic cleansing across Bosnia. Sarajevo was besieged and much of its historical fabric destroyed, including the Oriental Institute manuscript collection and the National Library. More than 10,000 people were killed.

According to *Pravda*, similarities loom in Belgium. "Recently national scandals have been occurring nearly in every area of the social life of Belgium," the article continues. "The Flemings are unhappy that the Walloons are trying to patent the Ardennes ham. Or, for example, that Miss Belgium of 2009 speaks French but not Flemish. Over 10 years ago, many Flemings protested against the appointment

Hotel and catering schools in Flanders have been "overwhelmed" by requests for new admissions in the run-up to the next school year, thanks to the attention generated by VTM's reality series *De Nieuwe Garde* (The New Guard), which followed the students of hotel school Spermalie in Bruges for a year. Spermalie received its full complement of 225 new applicants in a single day and is now putting hopefuls on a waiting list. The effect has also been felt in schools in Hasselt and Turnhout, while hotel school Ter Duinen in Koksijde has operated a waiting list for years.

The sudden surge in interest is a good sign for the sector: Flanders has a chronic shortage of chefs and serving staff.

The Maria Siske tearoom in Knokke will employ security guards to tackle the problem of **aggressive customers**, following a dispute last week when a whole family took over a reserved table and refused to move. Unizo, the organisation for the self-employed, plans a new series of courses in the autumn to train food service personnel in dealing with aggression.

Municipal authorities in Knokke are facing **aggression from seagulls**, which have taken over apartment balconies to build nests. Other residents have complained of noise and droppings. The council will now look for ways of tackling the nesting problem, with consideration that the seagull is a protected species.

A Vilvoorde man who claimed in June to have been **mugged and thrown in the canal** by his attackers has admitted making up the whole story. The man said he was robbed, had builders' foam squirted in his mouth and was thrown into the canal. The man invented the crime, apparently inspired by an episode of the TV drama *CSI*, to avoid paying a large debt.

Quatch, a 21-year-old Cape buffalo living in Antwerp Zoo, **has been euthanized** after suffering for years from arthritis in her forelegs. The mother of several calves, Quatch was one of five Cape buffalo in the zoo. With about 900,000 surviving in the wild, the Cape buffalo is not considered an endangered species.

Antwerp created a new Belgian record last weekend for the **largest strawberry tart**, made as part of the Taste of Antwerp festival. The tart was 463 metres long and contained 750 kilograms of fresh strawberries. Also during the festivities, brewer De Konick served up 85,000 of their typical Antwerp bollettes, and 40,000 Antwerp *handjes*, a local delicacy, were handed out.

FLANDERS TODAY

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Sarajevo in peacetime

of a Walloon as the head coach of the soccer team.

The list of these examples is rather extensive."

Sarajevo's salvation ultimately rested in the hands of Nato, which intervened in 1995, ending the siege in February 1996. *Pravda* suggests that the EU may be forced to do something similar, though perhaps not *manu militari*:

"Brussels is considered their own by both Walloons and Flemings. Its separation would be the most difficult stage of negotiations between the two communities. In this case, the EU will unlikely be able to bury its head in the sand. The state border can be erected right in front of the windows of the headquarters of the European Commission."

Going commando

Animals rights group Gaia has called on all men to leave their underwear at home on 9 September in an action titled "Let Them Hang", in protest at the practice of castrating baby pigs without anaesthetic



Memorial this week for festival victims

→ continued from page 1

In the aftermath of the damage, GSM coverage of the site area was saturated, and friends trying to find each other couldn't make contact. Families at home also had trouble getting through on mobile phones. People began posting messages on Twitter offering lifts, food, showers, a place to sleep. Local companies opened up their offices for people to bed down. The Red Cross handed out blankets and food, and city authorities took in stranded festival-goers – mostly young people who camp on site at the three-day festival – at a community centre and Ethias arena.

Acting prime minister Yves Leterme and federal interior minister Annemie Turtelboom were on the spot by 23.00; later the king and queen, who came back from holiday, visited the festival site.

At one point it seemed as if the festival might continue on Friday, but Hasselt mayor Hilde Claes soon announced it was cancelled. "We deliberately opted for a two-phase plan: first announce that all performances on Thursday

evening were cancelled, and then only a few hours later announce that the whole festival was off," she explained. "So soon after the drama, there were just too many people on the grounds. The advice of the specialists was to communicate bit by bit. If we'd said right away that the festival was over it could have caused negative reactions and caused a threat to the security situation."

The decision to call a halt was widely welcomed. Johannes Genard, lead singer of Flemish band School is Cool: "We should have been performing in the Marquee on Friday afternoon, but we're behind the cancellation. You can't go on having a big party if people have died just the day before."

For the evacuation, De Lijn and the NMBS laid on extra buses and trains. Telenet opened up all broadband hotspots in railway stations across the country until 16.00 on Friday. By Friday afternoon, the site was virtually clear and the investigation of the causes under way.

Criticism of emergency plan

The city council of Hasselt is requesting that the federal government recognise the event as a natural disaster, thus liberating federal funds for compensation and clean-up. A memorial for the victims will take place this Thursday, 25 August, at 18.00 on Dusartplein in Hasselt.

Pukkelpop organisers, meanwhile, have been accused of three things: paying insufficient attention to the forecast of bad weather; using equipment that wasn't sufficiently resistant to the weather conditions; and failing to communicate properly after the disaster, both to the festival audience and to the outside.



Festival-goers run for cover when the storm hit Kiewit just after 18.00

"Everything was tested, measured, inspected and double-checked," said Mahassine. "This was *force majeure*, an act of God. A storm of that power was an extremely unlikely event. There's very little material that could have stood up to it."

Mayor Claes: "The scale of the damage illustrates that the storm that ravaged the festival was extremely exceptional."

Fellow festival organisers paid tribute to Pukkelpop's professionalism. According to Carlo Di Antonio of the Dour festival in Wallonia, the Pukkelpop organisers are "seriously professional people – an example for others in the sector.... If you had to stop everything every time there was the risk of a storm, you might as well give up entirely on open-air events in this country." Ivan Saerens, another local festival organiser, said: "Flanders is one of the few places in the world that can be said to have a real festival tourism industry. There are a lot of people involved who really know what they're doing. We can be proud of the expertise and professionalism there is in this country."

Proximus reported that mobile operators had installed four times more extra capacity than last year, but still the networks were overwhelmed. "It's a scandal," said Mayor Claes. "The operators make good money out of people, but they can't be bothered to do that bit extra during large-scale events". Interior minister Turtelboom is to meet with the operators to discuss the question of extra capacity and also look into the use of social networks like Twitter and Facebook as an alternative communications tool at times of crisis. ♦

Politicians React

Kris Peeters, Flemish minister-president: As it is every year, Pukkelpop should have been the perfect finish to a carefree summer. That the party has ended in tragedy is a shock for all of us. I wish all of those who have been affected strength.

Pascal Smet, Flemish youth minister: I can only imagine what the families of the victims are now going through. Respect also for the difficult but calm and courageous decision to bring the festival to an end.

Joke Schauvliege, Flemish culture minister: This edition of Pukkelpop turned into a nightmare before it even properly started. Nothing and no-one could stand up to this sudden violence of nature. What should have been a cultural high-point for music and music lovers has ended in drama. Courage to all those festival-goers affected and courage, too – and our thanks – to the emergency services.

© REUTERS



Flowers and other remembrances dot the Pukkelpop festival site for the five who didn't make it home

Hard rains cause chaos across Flanders

Although other effects of the storm last Thursday, 18 August, were dwarfed by the Pukkelpop tragedy, the storm caused damage, floods and interrupted services across the region.

In **Wemmel**, Flemish Brabant, potatoes were washed out of the ground by streaming rainwater, which also caused severe flooding in houses and underground garages. The storm affected electricity supplies

to the emergency department of the university hospital in **Brussels**, and the nearby Atomium was without power and had to close for a day. **Brussels** fire service took 10,000 calls between Thursday afternoon and Friday morning, including 700 in the first 90 minutes. Teams were deployed to 600 incidents.

In **Grimbergen**, Flemish Brabant, the local disaster plan was triggered because of flooding. Civil protection

units were called in to pump out cellars, hand out sandbags and replace missing sewer covers in **Liedekerke**, **Oud-Heverlee** and **Kraainem**. Rainfall was so heavy that the pluviograph used by the Mira Observatory in Grimbergen to register rainfall was unable to keep up. An estimated 68 litres of rain fell on Thursday evening – 10% of the average rainfall in the area for an entire year. ♦

FIFTH COLUMN

ANJA OTTE

De Wever's shadow

Elections are coming up! Not new federal elections (although with the negotiations dragging on, that remains a possibility), but local elections, in October of 2012. That may seem like a long way off, but the campaign is already on. If he didn't know it already, Antwerp mayor Patrick Janssens found that out this month, as violence broke out in the conflicted Seefhoek neighbourhood.

Only days before, Janssens, on holiday in the UK, had phoned his police chief to make sure that the riots in London had not affected Antwerp. The trouble that erupted in the Seefhoek, though, was of a very different kind: Local merchants, many of them of Moroccan descent, reacted against drug dealers, also mostly of Moroccan origin, cruising their streets.

Janssens did not come back from holidays after the day-long skirmish, leaving the matter in the hands of the deputy mayor and police, but he spoke out on the situation upon his return. In a number of interviews, Janssens, in his typical managerial style, avoided petty politics. But the shadow of 2012 hung over them all the same.

Local elections in Antwerp are always full of excitement. For years, the Vlaams Belang (formerly Vlaams Blok) dominated the vote, leaving the other parties at their wits' end. That ended in 2006, when Janssens, a socialist like the mayors before him but one with an entirely new approach, made his mark. In 2012, Janssens faces a formidable opponent: Bart De Wever, Flanders' most popular and most talked-about politician.

In Antwerp, De Wever's N-VA has just one seat in the city council, occupied by... De Wever. Being part of the majority, N-VA has found it hard to go against Janssens as a policymaker. The 2012 campaign stretches out to a different level, however. Some people suspect that the current federal crisis, leaving the country without a federal government for over a year, is just one long-drawn out foreplay to the 2012 local elections, with the sole aim of keeping De Wever on people's minds long enough for him to take over from Janssens.

Meanwhile, Janssens states that his forces do everything within their power to tackle the drug problem in the Seefhoek area, but their efforts are thwarted by a failing justice and immigration policy. Things only a new federal government can improve.

Which brings us back to De Wever: He may have been shunted off from the government negotiations, but his shadow still hangs over them.

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

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Back to her roots

“Child Focus came into being from an explosion of emotion”

» *continued from page 1*

The transition to PAG-ASA wasn't so huge then, since you're still dealing with victims, only this time they're adults?

The majority of people we deal with are victims of economic exploitation, who are exploited in a working situation – in the construction industry, in the food service industry or as domestic servants. There is also, of course, the problem of sexual exploitation, which is the classic idea people have of PAG-ASA, but it's mainly economic exploitation.

The law provides for them to be given support and protection. They're taken to a house we run at a secret address in the Brussels area. If they're here illegally, they receive temporary papers. And if their cooperation leads to the conviction of the traffickers, they can be regularised. It's a *quid pro quo* procedure.

Isn't it dangerous for the victims, to go up against organised crime networks?

It used to be very dangerous for, say, a girl coming out of prostitution. They were often threatened or injured, but over time the networks have learned that it's actually easier to bring in a new victim than to menace current victims. If there are threats, they're often aimed at the victim's family back in the homeland. The networks have learned from their mistakes, and they know that we and the justice system don't take it lightly when witnesses are threatened. It still happens, but less than before.

When we started, it was mainly forced prostitution with violence, the typical picture of the human trafficker. Today, most of these women come willingly to Belgium, knowing they can end up in the sex industry. I think it's one of the reasons why we come across fewer victims who are ready to cooperate. They're making money, and money is often the motivation, so not all girls are ready to give up prostitution. They choose to work even in bad circumstances for €150 a week, which is more than a month's salary back home.”

Now that you are leaving, do you feel you achieved your goals as the director of PAG-ASA?

When I started, I had a set of goals. Getting structural financing was one of them, which is the only goal I haven't met. That's something that weighs on my heart. [see sidebar] But look, as long as there's no government, that's not going to be possible.

“Children and young people today don't know about Dutroux”

What plans do you have going back to Child Focus, this time as the director?

I'm first going to spend two months working with the current director to see how things work. So for the time being, I don't have a plan. I'm convinced they have a team that works really well, so it's a question of taking the time to see how things are going and what needs attention.

It's been 15 years since the drama that caused Child Focus to be founded. Has it had to adapt to the times?

Child Focus came into being from an explosion of emotion. We'd just had the White March; the man in the street was indignant at the unbelievable injustice that had been done to children; every level of society was shocked. Something had gone terribly wrong.

The first few months [at Child Focus] were a struggle as a case manager. Police and justice had the feeling: What are these people here for? It was a question of building up credibility, and I think that it worked out. It's now a recognised partner on the ground, worthwhile and



EU Commissioner for the Digital Agenda, Neelie Kroes, meets local children during Safer Internet Day earlier this year at the Child Focus headquarters in Brussels. The day is recognised in 65 countries worldwide to raise awareness among children, teachers and parents about using the internet safely

well-functioning. I have every confidence that that sort of cooperation in the future will continue, and even improve.

In the past week, we've read about a girl who was found murdered, another who was found but appears to have been abducted and abused, and the news that 30 children run away from home somewhere in Belgium every day. The need for Child Focus is still there, but does the organisation still have a profile high enough to maintain public attention?

Children and young people today don't know about Dutroux. I have an 11-year-old daughter, for whom Dutroux is a story she's heard about, but she hasn't experienced the emotion and indignation that we have. One of the most important tasks in the coming years will be to reach them at their level, through social media, for example.

In the beginning, it still happened that a disappearance would be reported, and the police would say: 'Oh, she's certainly with a friend; wait for 24 hours and then come back.' I don't think that happens anymore.

There's an important job for the communications service, to get across the message of what we do. It's important to keep people's attention without at the same time overwhelming them. If there's a missing person bulletin every day, people won't even see them anymore. It's also vital to keep our name in front of our partner services to encourage them to keep working with us, because networking is crucial.

Has your working experience affected the way you bring up your own child?

I'm like any other parent, anxious that something might happen to my child. But I think I'm more afraid of traffic than of kidnapping. I find that children have the right, for example, to go by themselves by bike to the library. Of course with a few basic rules – like not going off with strangers. I'm no different than other parents. Maybe even

less strict, out of a concern not to be over-protective. There was at one point a real hysteria, and people were coming forward with the craziest ideas, like implanting chips under children's skin. We don't need to put any more limits on children's right to a bit of freedom. We have to be aware that there are dangers around, but for me it's far more important that my daughter knows she can always come to me if something happens – for example on the internet, chatting and so on. There's no reason to make children even more anxious. *

» www.childfocus.be

The costs of human trafficking

Last year, the Brussels human trafficking organisation Pag-Asa dealt with 164 cases. That may not sound like a lot, but those are only the victims who come forward, ready to cooperate. The gangs who deal in trafficking are everywhere: in Moroccan snack bars or Chinese restaurants, or even in the seemingly innocent world of Brazilian horse stables. And then there is the sex industry.

Funding for the organisation comes from various sources: the federal government via the National Lottery, the Flemish and French-speaking communities and the Brussels Region. The offices are paid for by private sponsors. But the organisation works on a year-to-year basis. According to director Heidi De Pauw, structural financing would bring more security and allow longer-term planning.

I spy with my little eye

Researchers are helping humans to see beyond what is visible

What if next to visible light we could also see UV and infrared light? In a way, we already can, by using hyperspectral cameras. These cameras capture the light emitted by an object and collect information on every band of wavelength, ranging from UV to visible to infrared. This results in a unique fingerprint of the object.

Today, it is used in satellites and specialised airplanes, for example, to map land use and to search for specific minerals and oil.

Today's cameras are big, expensive machines, which are complicated to calibrate and operate. But this may soon change, thanks to the work of researchers, several of whom are located in Flanders. Imec, VITO, KU Leuven, the University of Ghent and the University of Antwerp are working on camera technology, software and interpretation of hyperspectral images to make them useful for a broad range of applications.

At imec, researchers are developing a new camera concept that allows them to make small, fast and less expensive hyperspectral cameras. There are many applications that benefit from being able to distinguish objects and materials that look the same to the human eye.

Growing bacteria

For food safety research, bacteria cultures need to be grown, which takes a long time and trained staff to identify and count colonies. Hyperspectral cameras can be used to monitor the cultures instead and from an earlier stage.

Sweet, sour or bruised apples?

Today, fruit and vegetables are being sorted by cameras dedicated to one specific task. With hyperspectral cameras, however, you receive much more information, which allows you to be more flexible and accurate. One day you use them to sort carrots, the next day to sort apples. You would be able to sort apples based on sugar content or detect bruises and even fungal toxins.

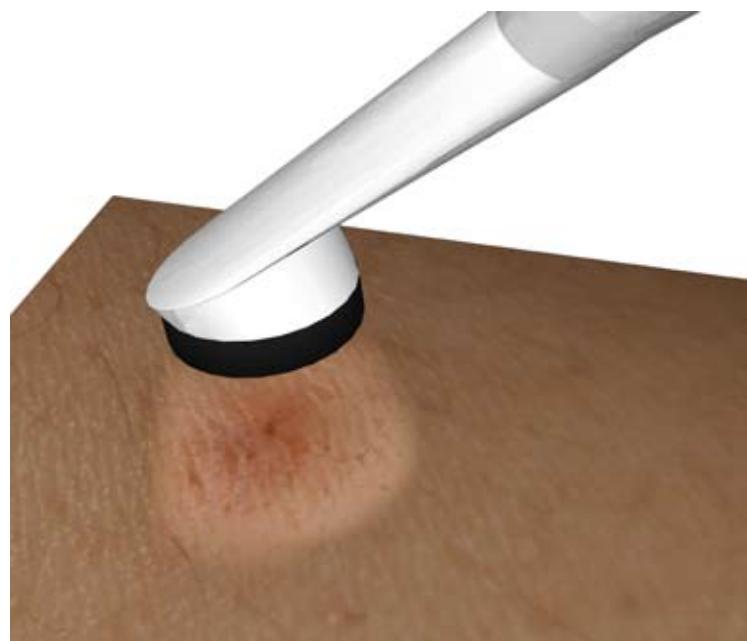
Fire fighters with remote-control helicopters

When a fire breaks out or an explosion takes place, it's important to know if there are any toxic gases in the air, where the seat of the fire is located and how it is spreading. This information can be collected with a hyperspectral camera attached to a remote-control helicopter. To be practical, however, cameras will have to become cheaper and smaller.

A pen for melanoma

A hyperspectral camera can detect skin cancer at a very early stage and check the healing of wounds very accurately. The dream of the researchers at imec is to build a miniature camera into a pen-like device, which every doctor would have in his or her office.

→ www.imec.be



Skin cancer can be detected at a very early stage with a hyperspectral camera



A hyperspectral camera attached to a remote-control helicopter can help fight fires

© Draganfly

Inspired by nature



The eyes of the **mantis shrimp** are considered to be the most complex in the animal kingdom: They can see visible, infrared and ultraviolet light. In this way, they can make a distinction between different kinds of coral; recognise their transparent or semi-transparent prey species; and identify predators, such as barracuda, which have shimmering scales.

© PhotoStock



Researchers recently discovered that **reindeer** can see UV light. To find out the benefits of this asset, researchers put on a special kind of UV glasses. It seemed that UV sight is especially useful during the dark winter months. Things such as lichens, the favourite dish of reindeer, and white wolves, which regard reindeer as their favourite dish, become visible as dark spots in the light snow landscape. The UV eyes are thus thought to be an adaptation to life in the North Pole area.

© PhotoStock



Do you know how a **mosquito** selects its prey (which is you)? First, it uses its sense of smell to locate the most desired blood source. It prefers a good portion of carbon dioxide gas (from your breath) and some sweat odours to go with it. When the mosquito gets closer to the source, it turns on its infrared sensors to detect body heat and the blood-rich parts of the body. So the next time a mosquito passes, hold your breath and stop sweating. Unfortunately, we can't circumvent the infrared vision of the mosquito.

© PhotoStock

After the storm

Festival organisers weigh the economic consequences of Pukkelpop

ALAN HOPE

The storm that hit the Pukkelpop music festival last week (see p1) has left a toll of dead and wounded and cast a shadow over what was one of the most cheerful events of the Flemish summer calendar. The economic implications, for the festival organisers and for other businesses, are still some way from being fully reckoned.

"After thorough discussion, we have decided, out of respect for the victims, to cancel the rest of the festival, whatever the concrete consequences might be," announced head organiser Chokri Mahassine last Friday, 19 August. "We are insured, and in the days to come, we will look over how things can go forward."

While the decision to cancel the sold-out festival was perfectly understandable – four people were killed and three more remain in critical condition – it does raise a number of questions on a basic economic level.

"We have informed all of the artists, and I can assure you that not one group has spoken about the financial consequences," said Mahassine. "Also, no decision has been taken regarding the reimbursement of tickets."

Injured festival-goers are covered by their own health insurance. Festival workers are covered by their employers' insurance against work-related injuries, according to Assuralia, the insurance industry federation.

Pukkelpop's own insurance will probably cover material damage to its equipment and equipment hired for the festival. The same is probably not the case for the property of festival-goers who lost tents and other belongings in the storm and its aftermath (pictured); the massive campsite has already been roamed by looters.

A combi-ticket to Pukkelpop cost €155 this year – a substantial sum for a young person to write off, especially since there may be other expenses involved, including loss of personal property. According to a spokesman for economy minister Vincent Van Quickenborne, a provision in civil law allows a concert organiser to escape obligation to provide the services advertised in cases of "extreme force majeure", the phrase Mahassine himself used to describe the storm.

Everything depends on the interpretation of that term in relation to this event. No-one would doubt that the storm itself was *force majeure*, but if the decision next day to stop the festival is interpreted as a "voluntary decision", then the escape clause may not apply.

Everything hangs on whether the decision was unavoidable. Mahassine, after inspecting the grounds to see whether the festival could go on, was quoted as saying: "It could have been done." AG Insurance, the festival's insurer, has said it considers a reimbursement excluded on grounds of Pukkelpop's lack of civil liability.



© Reuters

Federal disaster fund

Meanwhile, federal interior minister Annemie Turtelboom will propose to the government this week that the storm damage in Limburg and elsewhere be officially recognised as a natural disaster. That would trigger the possibility of some material damage being covered by the federal disaster fund.

"The disaster fund intervenes in a limited number of instances, such as large-scale events and risks, which are otherwise difficult to insure," Turtelboom said. "That means that for Pukkelpop, aid can be requested for damage to stages, tents and light installations."

The whole Hasselt area has asked for inclusion in the disaster consideration, mayor Hilde Claes said. For home and

business owners, property insurance should cover damages.

Finally, though the bands scheduled to play on Friday and Saturday may not yet have raised the question with Mahassine, it cannot be excluded that some of them will expect some form of cancellation fee.

The insurance sector does provide a policy to insure against cancellations, but Sfinx Festival organiser Patrick De Groote said those were unpopular. "They're far too expensive," he told the VRT.

Ticketholders can in the meantime can ask questions via the Pukkelpop website. The site also gives details about the recovery of lost property. ♦

→ www.pukkelpop.be

Lingerie fit for a queen

Lingerie manufacturer Van De Velde, based in Schellebelle, East Flanders, has announced the acquisition of a majority share of Rigby & Peller (R&P), the London-based company most famous for being providers of undergarments to Queen Elizabeth II. Van De Velde designs and manufactures lingerie for the Prima Donna and Marie Jo brands, which R&P carries in its upmarket London shops. It also supplies lingerie to more than 5,000 independent retail outlets.

R&P is famous for its "bra fitting" service, whereby customers are assured of a perfect fit. The company is currently concentrated in London, including the flagship store in Knightsbridge. Van De Velde has expressed the desire to expand the franchise to the rest of the UK, and later abroad. R&P also serves A-list clients like Scarlett Johansson and

Gwyneth Paltrow, not to mention Lady Gaga.

Van De Velde has taken 87% of the company, leaving 13% in the hands of current owner, June Kenton, who will continue to serve Her Majesty personally. "Royal Warrant holders in England have a personal relationship with the Palace, which is built up over a period of years," explained Ignace Van Doorslaere, CEO of Van De Velde. "June Kenton has done excellent work for the royal household. We won't be getting in the way of that."

Kenton herself declines to give away any secrets of the royal dressing-room, but she has made plain her views on the Wonderbra and its famous cleavage. "You were born with two," she told The Guardian. "And as far as Rigby & Peller are concerned, those two should be in the cups. They shouldn't meet in the middle." ♦



© R&P

Science & research: diabetes can harm foetus; Leuven wins competition

Women who suffer from stress, obesity or diabetes have more trouble becoming pregnant and may pass along **high-risk chemicals to embryos**, according to new research from the University of Antwerp's veterinary faculty. The research was carried out on dairy cows, but the results apparently have implications for humans. The three conditions lead to metabolic changes, which result in high levels of saturated fatty acids in the bloodstream. The researchers now plan to study the effects of the fatty acids on the development of human foetuses and newborns.

Researchers from the University of Ghent and the Flemish Institute for Biotechnology have discovered a genetic mutation that could be the trigger for the **onset of rheumatoid arthritis**, an auto-immune condition with no cure that affects about 100,000 people in Belgium. The experiment on mice could be particularly important for the 30% of sufferers for whom the most common anti-TNF treatment is ineffective.

A team of students from the Catholic University of Leuven has won fifth place in an international competition to **design, build and fly an unmanned aircraft**. The plane, christened Fiorelli after the bottle of champagne uncorked after the first successful flight, has a wingspan of 2.4m and weighs 1.75kg, but can carry a payload of 5.6kg. This year's AirCargo Challenge took place in Stuttgart and involved teams from 27 higher education institutions. ♦

THE WEEK IN BUSINESS

Banking • BNP Paribas

French bank BNP Paribas has sold its London-based Private Investment Management division, previously one of the UK affiliates of Fortis, to the British Evolution investment bank for some €5.7 million.

Banking • KBC

Flanders leading bank has sold its Taiwan-based KBC Concord Assets Management affiliate to the Hong Kong-based Value Partners company.

Computers • Hewlett Packard

US company Hewlett Packard is seeking an additional 150 employees for its Belgian affiliate. The move follows better than expected sales. The company employs some 2,600 people, many of them based at the Belgian headquarters in Diegem, near Brussels.

Heating • Declercq

The Izegem-based Chauffage Declercq, a leader in heating and climate management systems, has been sold to the French Spie group.

Metals • Nyrstar

Brussels headquartered non-ferrous metals group Nyrstar, one of the world leading producers of zinc, is believed to be preparing a bid on Lundin Mining, a Canadian group with activities in Portugal, Sweden, Spain and Ireland in partnership with BHP Billiton.

Property • The Capital

The landmark 45,000 square-metre Capital office building on Brussels Schuman square has finally found a tenant: The EU will rent the space to European Commission Vice President Catherine Ashton's foreign service department for 30 years.

Spirits • Smeets

Jenever brand Smeets had been taken over by the Ghent-based Bruggeman group to strengthen its position on the local market.

Steel wire • Bekaert

Bekaert, based in Zwevegem, West Flanders, has sold its Specialty Films division to the French Saint Gobain Performance Plastics company with a book profit of some €10 million.

Technology • Google

The federal prosecutor's office has demanded a payment from internet search giant Google in settlement of a claim that the company breached Belgian privacy law when it collected data from computers of members of the public while its Google Street View cars were travelling around the country collecting map data. If Google refuses to settle within three months, it could face a court case.

Sweet, sweet *Eid*

Antwerp's Muslims look forward to the end of Ramadan

NICHOLAS HIRST

Visitors to Antwerp's Seefhoek neighbourhood will have found its main drag eerily quiet these last couple of weeks. At mid-day the shops are still closed and circulation is light, with only the pitter-patter of rain echoing through the streets. An uninformed observer could be forgiven for assuming that residents had all left for summer holidays.

However, come late afternoon, and the streets are transformed. Deserted only hours ago, they now throng with people chatting, greeting one another or inspecting the colourful mountains of fruits and vegetables piled up in front of shops. Butchers and fishmongers do a brisk business as long queues snake out of the bakeries where great mounds of glazed sweets and delicacies are displayed in the windows.

The month of Ramadan, described by Turks as the Sultan of the 11 other months, has, since the start of August, imposed its rhythm on Antwerp's 70,000-strong Muslim community. But not for much longer: on 30 or 31 August, depending on the moon's cycle, Muslims celebrate *Eid ul-Fitr*, a three-day holiday known as the *Suikerfeest* (Sugar Feast) in Dutch, which marks the end of fasting.

"Ramadan teaches you to feel how others feel who are less fortunate," says Iqbal Ahmed Qureshi, president of the Pakistani Noor Ul Haram mosque in Antwerp. "Ramadan also makes you feel your real self: no smoking, drinking or eating but, instead, giving and praying."

One of Islam's five pillars, Ramadan is observed by all Muslims, whether Berber, Turkish, Arab, Pakistani, Albanian, African or East Asian. Believers fast between sun-up and nightfall. After the *iftar*, the evening meal, they visit the mosque for prayer, leaving little time for sleep before a pre-dawn breakfast and then work.

For Fauzaya Talhaoui, Antwerp councillor, legal academic and former SPA senator, solidarity is a key aspect of Ramadan. "If people are suffering in the world, year after year, why don't we for a month?" she says. "Contemplation and reflection, that's the point of Ramadan."

If you can't eat it, give it away

Consequently, emphasis is placed on acts of charity. Muslims are expected to give the food they forfeit to the poor. They should also donate money over and above the monthly *zakat*, the obligatory donation made to the needy under Islam and one of its five pillars.

Qureshi, a retired chemist with BASF in Antwerp 35 years after moving from Pakistan, recalls how last year the Pakistani and Turkish communities provided two containers of items to Pakistani flood victims, helping as many as 2,000. He draws a comparison with Flemish Catholic development



Iqbal Ahmed Qureshi, president of the Noor Ul Haram mosque in Antwerp, says that "Ramadan makes you feel more like yourself"

organisation Broederlijk Delen's annual lent campaign. Likewise, Ergün Top, a penal lawyer and Talhaoui's colleague in the Antwerp city council, has sponsored penniless students back in Turkey as well as widows and children who, for one reason or another, have no family to turn to in a country without much social security.

"Ramadan is much more difficult in August, though we've been lucky with the cold weather"

The charitable spirit is exemplified by the evening *iftar*. Muslim families will often invite guests to share the food while mosques are involved in organising meals for believers and, on occasions, non-believers from the local community. As for Top, he dreams of extending the practice to providing larger-scale dinners for both believers and non-believers and, in particular, for Antwerp's poor. *Eid* ends what may well have been an expensive month for many believers. The act of giving again features prominently,

this time to children who receive new clothes, sweets and money. When Ramadan falls within the school term time, children enjoy a legal day off from school. *Eid*, as Qureshi puts it, is Muslim children's Christmas.

Keeping your cool

Despite all the goodwill, Ramadan is a challenging month for believers and can be trying for local residents who must adapt to new patterns of behaviour in the neighbourhood. Traffic jams and long queues in the late afternoon test nerves that are already sensitive after a long day's fasting. In addition, some Antwerp residents in the past have complained about the noise made by Muslims who, when leaving mosques after evening prayers, fill the cafes and chat in the streets.

Indeed, frayed tempers brought on by Ramadan may lie in part behind the decision of shopkeepers earlier this month to take the law into their own hands and expel drug dealers and junkies from the Seefhoek neighbourhood (see *Flanders Today*, 17 August). "During Ramadan, when you're fed up, it easily comes out," observes Talhaoui. Wary of trouble, she says that mosques have been asking parents to keep an eye on their children.

Keeping calm on an empty stomach isn't any easier when Ramadan, as it does this year, falls in August. "It's much more difficult in August," laughs Top, "though we've been lucky with the cold weather. It's a real problem if it's 30 degrees, which is why many Turkish people have come back from holiday to Belgium for Ramadan."

Despite the long days and short nights, Top, who heads the city council's security commission, is adamant that "the problems that used to happen have now been solved".

If so, it is the result of a joint effort on behalf of the police and the community. While the police have established a diversity unit to monitor and liaise between communities and put two extra units on patrol during Ramadan, mosques have themselves become better organised. This year, they have taken on stewards to keep crowds and disturbances to a minimum and asked their attendees to arrive on foot or by bicycle.

At the same time, notes Top, who cites the recent tragedy in Norway, concerns exist for the safety of the Muslim community, who could easily be targeted by extremists when gathered for evening prayers. As a result, the police have heightened their surveillance.

In any case, the spokesperson for Antwerp's local police confirmed that there had "never been major problems" as a result of Ramadan.

If August remains calm and event-free, Muslims will justifiably have much to celebrate come *Eid*. An opportune moment to visit your local Muslim bakery. ♦



Bakeries pile up their sweets in anticipation of "the sugar feast"

Making the most of movies

A conference in Ostend looks at the benefits of luring movie-makers to Flanders

Lisa Bradshaw

In one of the funniest lines of the 2008 film *In Bruges*, an Irish crime boss (Ralph Fiennes) says that he is glad that the beautiful mediaeval city is in Belgium because "if it were somewhere good, there would be too many people coming to see it".

The line elicited good-natured laughter from Belgians and the rest of us who've made Belgium our home. A bit of a nudge-nudge to the fact that no matter how great a time we are having here, we realise that our multi-language, politically dysfunctional, terribly small country doesn't have much of an image abroad.

A conference at the Ostend Film Festival next month suggests that movies can change all that. Film&Tourism, which is open to the public but particularly interesting for the film and tourist industries, gathers international film location and production experts in one place to discuss the impact of film and TV productions on a region and how to lure those productions to Flanders.

"Fundamentally, it's about relationships and partnerships," says Sue Hayes, who is scheduled to speak at the conference. Hayes and her team at Film London are credited with turning around London's reputation as a difficult, bureaucratic city for film production. Over the last decade, they brought together partners from the British capital's agencies and services, such as police, transport and protected monuments. "People on the ground would help with productions," she explains, "but if one person at one agency objected to something, it could all go pear-shaped very quickly."

Film London created a charter and a code of practice – hammered out by both the local film industry and authorities – for film shooting within London. It applies to both local and international productions. They established a working network between all London's agencies, "with a designated person to deal with film" at every one of them. This kind of organisation didn't happen overnight, but it did happen. "There's no magic formula," she says, "but you do have to put the work in." Flanders has taken two big steps in the right direction in the last decade, with the establishment of both the Flemish Audio Visual Fund, which encourages and promotes

Flemish filmmaking and international co-productions, and Location Flanders, launched two years ago to showcase shooting locations across the region – from castles to harbours to cities and the sea. It includes a section on "what's shooting today", which Hayes sees as an extremely valuable way to illustrate to production companies what is already being done here. It's vital, she says, for a region to promote itself abroad through its local productions.

Several cases in point spring to mind. Denmark's TV series *The Killing* has been hugely popular across Europe and has spawned a US remake. "But the appetite for the original is much greater," claims Hayes. "There are people in the UK who are considering buying property in Copenhagen based on having watched *The Killing*."

The same is true for the Millennium trilogy, the group of recent Swedish films based on the best-selling books. An American remake (naturally) is in the works, and Stockholm has produced tourist maps based on the locations in the novels and films. Swedish media analyst Joakim Lind will also be at the conference to talk about the effect of those films and of the TV series *Wallander* on tourism, investment and international film production.

"That goes to show how these things resonate," notes Hayes. "But you've got to let people know it's there through product promotion."

Belgium has specific challenges based on its three regions – all of which have their own film production offices. Rather than making one call, international film producers might have to deal with two or even three different agencies depending on which regions they'd like to shoot. Flanders, Brussels and Wallonia film commissions will have to streamline their working relationship, says Hayes, in order to be seen as less bureaucratic.

Flanders, in any case, is working on strategies. Tourism Flanders, for instance, spent the last year working out an agreement with Indian producer Mukesh Bhatt to shoot his next Bollywood extravaganza in Antwerp. They planned to follow up its release with a promotion campaign in India to attract tourists to the port city and the rest of Flanders, but, just last week, the Indian production company pulled the plug on the project.



The British/Irish co-production *In Bruges* (top) introduced Flemish gothic architecture to a worldwide audience, while Flemish production *Smoorverliefd* (*Madly in Love*) made the most out of Antwerp's Fine Arts Museum

Still, it was an effort worth making, and Flanders isn't given up on the Indian film industry. Antwerp would like to back a film that will do for it what *In Bruges* did for the capital of West Flanders. Roger Ebert, one of America's most-read film critics, who loved the film *In Bruges*, said this in his review: "If the movie accomplished nothing else, it inspired in me an urgent desire to visit Bruges."♦

Film&Tourism
5 September, 13.00
Kinopolis Ostend
Koningin Astridlaan 12
→ www.filmfestivaloostende.be

FILM REVIEW ★★☆☆

IAN MUNDELL

Swooni

Swooni is the mispronounced name of a large Brussels hotel. It's here that a small African boy has been told to meet his father if they become separated on their clandestine journey to Belgium, but, when Joyeux (Vigny Tchakouani) arrives, no-one is there to meet him. Refusing to leave, the boy gets caught up in other dramas playing out at the hotel.

Anna (Sara Deroo) is staying there for her sister's wedding, although her instinct is to sabotage the union. She is fed up with her own husband, Hendrik (Geert Van Rampelberg), diffusing his hotel-induced friskiness by saying she has to study for a Greek exam. (Who hasn't used that one, eh?) But the situation starts to get out of hand when her lover Guillaume (Tibo Vandenborre) turns up with an ultimatum.

Meanwhile, on another floor, the brash Violette (Viviane De Muynck) has checked-in to be near Vicky (Natali Broods), who is in charge of housekeeping at the hotel. Vicky wants nothing to do with Violette and is about to

tell her where to get off when Joyeux arrives on the scene. They decide to help him, although their motives for doing so are hardly innocent.

Flemish director Kaat Beels has a thing for hotels. They feature in most of her short films, as well as dominating this first feature, developed in collaboration with novelist Annelies Verbeke. Beels' fascination is partly to do with the dramatic possibilities of the hotel as a meeting place, but also the chance it gives people to escape from the world.

This atmosphere of intimate secrecy comes over well in the film, as characters evade one another or hide from facts they would rather not acknowledge. What happens behind closed doors is sometimes funny, sometimes romantic, and once or twice distinctly sinister. These dark moments come out of left-field and could have lasted longer, but they are quickly hidden again to make way for *Swooni*'s upbeat ending. Together with some half-seen characters who look as



Viviane De Muynck and Vigny Tchakouani in Kaat Beels' feature debut *Swooni*

if they once had stories of their own, these dark flashes feel like glimpses of a larger, richer film. Beels' ambition to be Flanders' answer to Robert Altman seems to have been frustrated this time, but there is still a lot to like in *Swooni*, not least three fine actresses getting their teeth into substantial roles.

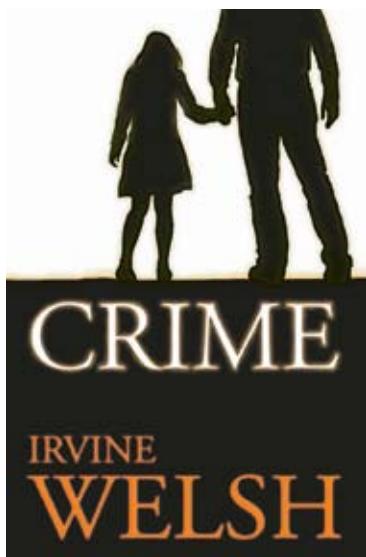
→ www.swooni.be

Crimespotting

Irvine Welsh brings his latest novel to Antwerp

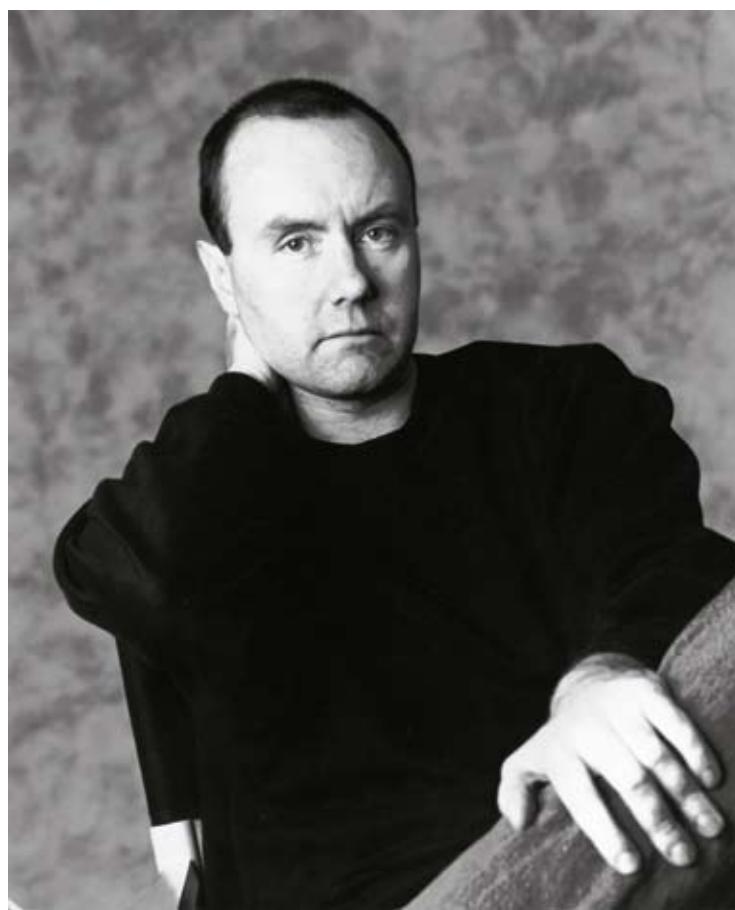
JORIS VERDONCK

The section headers of the notorious skaghead novel *Trainspotting* could have described the hit-and-miss career of many a so-called cult writer, but not that of Irvine Welsh, who has continued to kick against the prigs ever since his 1993 debut novel held a torch to the rusty spoon that is the Edinburgh drug scene. As an author and playwright, this working-class hero of Scottish letters has never minced his words. He has, though, done everything else – the bedrock of his reputation. Meshing the ridiculous and the sublime in the urban jungle he calls home, Welsh (*pictured*) has become synonymous with literary iconoclasm, a lewd Luddite dismantling our sense of modern times from within. Like Dickens on acid.



Welsh's idiosyncratic wit and often unabashed sensationalism are an acquired taste, and his brazen storytelling has revived the controversy of substance versus style. But Welsh has insights to spare, and his 2008 novel *Crime*, following in the footsteps of other such tersely titled works as *Glue*, *Porno*, and *Filth*, takes another step towards a more balanced form of literary maturity. *Crime* has just been translated into Dutch (*Misdaad*), and so Welsh will be in Antwerp next week as part of the Border Kitchen literature evenings to talk about the book, as well as his up-and-coming novel *Skagboys*. If you don't have a ticket, don't even try. They have all been snapped up.

Crime tells the story of Ray Lennox, a morally blighted Edinburgh copper (who made his debut in 1998's *Filth*). Eight years later, and Lennox is an exile in sunny Florida, where he hopes to digest his failure to capture a brutal child murderer. Before long, the distraught hero has alienated his prim fiancée and embarks on an epic bender, diving headfirst into the Miami underground. So far, so Welsh. But this time around, the protagonist has a more genuine shot at salvation. It comes in the form of a local teenager threatened by a paedophile ring. Growing up in Edinburgh, Lennox was himself the victim of a child molester, a trauma that has since stifled his efforts to get a grip. Switching back and forth between



© Tony Latham

Scotland and the States – and their respective vernaculars, the theme of abuse takes centre stage, with Lennox – and Welsh – trying their best to stay within the limits of reasonable doubt.

In the hands of a lesser cult writer, the subject of paedophilia might have been a problem, but Welsh handles it rather intelligently, offsetting his trademark garish absurdity with a seriousness that echoes through the seedy corridors he typically explores.

Crime strikes a workable compromise between contemplative drama and hipster farce. Its indiscretions are in check, but it's no less entertaining for it. ♦

1 September, 20.00
Theater Tutti Fratelli
Lange Gasthuisstraat 26
Antwerp

→ www.borderkitchen.be

CULTURE NEWS

Famous Flemish hat designer **Christophe Coppens**, an official supplier to the Belgian royal family, will be the first-ever guest editor of the Brussels Airlines in-flight magazine *b.there!*. In the September issue, Coppens will reveal his favourite places to visit in Brussels and Seville.

→ www.btheremag.com

Do you fancy yourself a quizmaster? Then give a call over to Flemish production house Koeken Troef!, which is seeking input from **amateur quizzers and quiz organisations** for a new series on TV channel Eén called *Quiz me quick*. The new fiction series is set in the world of television quizzes and begins filming in October in Limburg province. Visit the website for details.

→ www.quizmequick.be

This year will be the last one for **De Pfaffs**, the extremely popular reality show that follows the day-to-day life of the Flemish family of ex-footballer Jean-Marie Pfaff. The show began in 2002, racking up nearly one million viewers in its first 17-episode season. The closing series will air in the autumn.

→ www.jmpfaff.be

The new **visitor centre in the European Parliament** is set to open in October. Hoping to encourage more interest in European politics, the new, interactive centre will be located in the heart of the EU quarter. In the first-ever visitor centre in 23 languages, you'll learn about the history of the EU, find out how parliamentary decisions impact your everyday life, see simulations of the political process and can even leave behind opinions for your country's MEPs.

→ www.europarl.europa.eu

Leuven-based vocal group Capilla Flamenca has been **ominated for a Gramophone Award**, the most prestigious award in the world of classical music, chosen by critics, broadcasters and musicians associated with *Gramophone* magazine. The group, which specialises in the Franco-Flemish school – the intricate polyphony that flourished in the Low Countries in the 15th and 16th centuries and spread all over Europe – have been nominated in the Early Music category for their recording *Alexander Agocila: Missa in myne zyn* (Mass in My Mind, see *Flanders Today* 22 September, 2010). The awards are announced in a ceremony in London on 6 October.

→ www.capilla.be

Imperial treasures

Vienna collection of Flemish masters coming to Bruges

ALAN HOPE



Still life by Jan Bruegel the Elder, c 1608

The Art History Museum in Vienna has one of the finest collections of Old Master paintings in the world, and from 5 October, 54 of them will be on view in the Groeninge Museum in Bruges. The exhibition title *Vorstelijk Verzameld* (Imperial Treasures) is an allusion to Vienna's former status as the capital of a great empire that extended all the way from Ukraine to Belgium. The Habsburgs, the royal family of the empire, were great patrons of the arts and amassed a huge collection of work by the leading artists of the day, many of them from the Low Countries. Works from Flanders and the Netherlands that go back to the 15th century form one of the two main pillars of the museum's collection, together with the Italian Renaissance.

Among the works being brought to Bruges are paintings by Jan van Eyck, Hugo van der Goes, Hans Memling, Jan Gossaert, Joos van Cleve, Hieronymus Bosch and Pieter Bruegel the Elder.

→ www.tinyurl.com/vorstelijk

Film news

Bollywood pulls out, soundtrack nominations announced

Apparently citing too-high costs, **India's Vishesh Films** has cancelled its **agreement** with Flanders Tourism to shoot the big Bollywood production *Blood Money* in Flanders. The film was meant to start shooting next week in Antwerp and other local locations. Flanders had planned a tourist campaign in India following the release of the film but said in a statement that connections made "in the Bollywood industry have not been lost. Other producers are showing an interest in Flanders as a film location".

The film that made up part of Flemish choreographer Wim Vandekeybus' multi-media production *Monkey Sandwich* has been selected to **screen at the Venice Film Festival**. The film closes the Orizzonti programme, which showcases more experimental work. Flemish director Nicolas Provost takes two films to Venice this year: his new short *Moving Stories* (which is also on view to the public in Brussels Central Station) and his much-anticipated feature debut *The Invader*. The 11-day festival begins on 31 August.

Flemish film *Noordzee, Texas* (*North Sea, Texas*) made its international premiere to resounding applause at the Montreal World Film Festival last weekend. The first feature by Ostend-based director Bavo Defurne, about gay adolescent boys on the Flemish coast, has been picked up for international distribution by Britain's Wavelength Pictures.

The nominations for the **World Soundtrack Awards**, handed out during the Flanders International Film Festival in Ghent, have been announced. Leading the nominations in the three categories are French composer Alexandre Desplat, for his work on *The King's Speech*, *Tamara Drewe* and *The Tree of Life*, among others, and German Hans Zimmer for *Inception*, *Kung Fu Panda 2* and *Pirates of the Caribbean: On Stranger Tides*, among others. A Lifetime Achievement Award will be given to Italian composer Giorgio Moroder, responsible for seminal scores such as *Midnight Express* and *Flashdance*. The award ceremony is on 22 October and is open to the public.

→ www.filmfestival.be

Handmade music

Musician Gerry Vergult records a new sound every single day

CHRISTOPHE VERBIEST

Every day of 2011, Gerry Vergult – who goes by zool, the Dutch word for sole – puts sound on his website for you to listen to free. And from October, you can book him for a living room concert. You only have to pay his petrol.

This may sound outlandish, but Vergult is no novice who just wants to surprise or impress. At 54, he has been an important figure in the local music scene for nearly 30 years.

Together with Elvis Peeters, Vergult formed the creative axis of Aroma di Amore, an '80s band that sounded like none of their Flemish contemporaries, partly because they mixed – long before it became fashionable – guitars with electronics. Yet, as is often the fate of trailblazers, they never went beyond cult success. The group disbanded in '94 but reunited for a few concerts two years ago.

After the demise of Aroma di Amore, Vergult had some other musical projects, with Kolk, which went defunct much too early, being the acme. For almost 10 years now, he has been making music on his own, as zool: electronic laptop music, or as he calls it: handmade notebook music. Zool. (and don't forget the full stop) has released two recommendable albums: *Vadem* (2006) and *Camera* (2009). But this year he embarked on his biggest musical adventure: *365/2011*. Every

day of the year he puts a piece of sound – often, but not always, music – on his site. You can stream it, or you can download it.

Music for the busy

"Paradoxically, the idea is born out of a lack of time," Vergult says. He works part time as music librarian at VRT, the Flemish public radio. "Like loads of people I constantly have the impression that I don't have the time to do everything I'd like to, and certainly not enough time for my music. By now, I have figured out why: I tended to lose myself too much in details." But he found the cure: "Making things without mulling over it too much and, spontaneously, record the ideas that well up in me." The Antwerp-based musician often just uses his cell phone as a recording device. "I record sounds on the street, conversations I overhear, etcetera. But even when I'm working on an idea at home, I try not to kill it by sweating too much over it."

Unsurprisingly, the results are quite varied: from a little tantrum from his daughter Alma via the sound of a telex or a guide talking in a Valencia art centre, to some flat out compositions that could have been on his previous records.

"But the latter are the exceptions," Vergult stresses. "Most of the tracks that make up *365/2011* are sketches.

Though I'll use some of those in building new compositions for my next record. It's like having 365 different tubes of paint from which I can choose for my next painting. For the moment, though, I'm still filling the tubes."

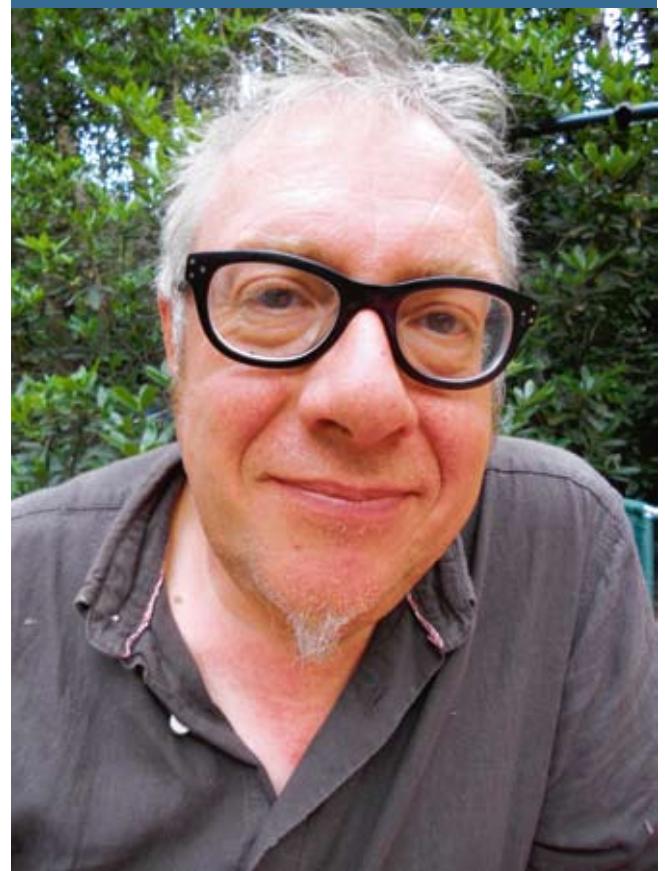
And giving them away – anyone can use anything he's recorded for their own purposes. "I'd like people to be creative with these little pieces of sound and music, without me being paid for it. I don't see myself as the owner of these recordings because the majority of them are not the result of a creative process, but things I found in the world around me."

Vergult will also come and play a house concert if you'd like to invite him – and, like, 20 other people.

"It's not philanthropy," the zool.-man emphasises. "It's difficult for me to get good gigs. This way of working gives me the chance to play live more often. I see it as a way of presenting my music to people who don't necessarily know me. Colleagues who have played living room concerts have told me it's very enjoyable to do. I'll sell my CDs and if people have enjoyed the gig and want to give a contribution, they will be more than welcome."

I find it difficult to imagine someone not enjoying zool., so you'd better keep a fiver at hand. ♦

→ www.zool.be



"It's like having 365 different tubes of paint from which I can choose for my next painting"

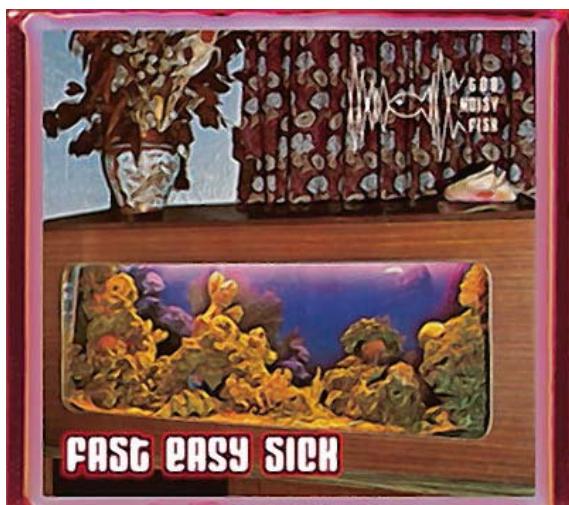
New music

Too Noisy Fish

Fast Easy Sick

Three musicians from the delightful big band Flat Earth Society form the intriguing new jazz combo Too Noisy Fish. Pianist Peter Vandenbergh, double bass player Kristof Roseeuw and drummer Teun Verbruggen each have an impressive resumé, and their musical versatility gets the free reins on their debut *Fast Easy Sick*. There's a little dose of smooth jazz, but mostly they opt for adventurous escapades full of capricious drum rhythms, insurgent bass lines and a piano that attractively hesitates between lunacy and sweetness. It's really no surprise that one of the tracks is called "Sick Jazz". Besides 10 Vandenbergh originals, Too Noisy Fish brings a great rendition of "The Sky Is Falling" by Queens of the Stone Age.

→ www.toonoislyphish.be



Kreng

Grimoire

The aptly titled *Grimoire* (a manual of black magic) won't be everyone's cup of tea, but if you're in for an unsettling trip to the unseen side of the moon, Kreng will be your guide. It's the alter ego of Pepijn Caudron, who achieved some level of fame playing the lead in the 2008 film *Los*, but is mostly onstage with adventurous theatre troupes like Abattoir Fermé. Partly sampled, partly played, the spooky, mostly ambient compositions on *Grimoire* combine classical music with drones. Understatement is clearly Caudron's middle name, yet close listening – with the headphones on in a darkened room – reveals there's a lot going on under the surface of the music. Weird but highly beguiling.

→ www.myspace.com/krengmusic

VENUE

Vk*

Schoolstraat 76

Brussels

For a year or so during the first half of the 1990s, the Vk* in Brussels (or Vaartkapoen, as it was still called then) was the most important rock venue of the capital. The AB had closed for an extended renovation, its temporary venue hadn't opened yet, and the Botanique was in those days mainly programming French music.

The Disposable Heroes of Hiphoprisy (with Michael Franti), Gang Starr or Rage Against the Machine: They all played for a more-than-sold-out house at the Vk*. But as soon as the AB team started organising concerts again, the Vk* encountered much more trouble in attracting those big names.

Yet, no one really cared, since the venue rediscovered its original aim: giving a stage to young and up-and-coming artists or cult heroes that never reached mainstream success. This autumn, for instance, Vk* presents the seminal Dutch underground band with punk roots The Ex as well as the new American electronic trio The Glitch Mob.

It tends to get quite hot in Vk*, and the visibility isn't always top notch, but, on the other hand, the rectangular room with its wooden panels has great acoustics, for which they are envied by some of the bigger and more famous venues.

→ www.vkconcerts.be



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A radical and pointless evening in Antwerp

OPEN AIR #5

TOM PEETERS

Earlier this year 't Eilandje, the trendy area between the city and the port of Antwerp, reached a cultural climax with the opening of the brand new MAS Museum. From the rooftop, you have an excellent view over the city: If you look north, maybe you can spot the former lock-keeper's house about a mile away near the Royers lock.

This is the home of AIR Antwerpen, which every year stages the Open Air Festival here to showcase the results of its residency programme for artists from abroad. Through the efforts of an external inter-disciplinary curator, the house becomes a free port for contemporary art.

With musical centipede Mauro Pawlowski, art critic Marc Ruyters and radio manager Chantal Pattyn as lock-keepers, Open Air has established a tradition of scheduling fairly daring performances.

Carte blanche this year has been given to OHNO Cooperation, a splinter group of the Brussels-based performance group Needcompany, made up of Needcompany's founder Jan Lauwers and its composer Maarten Seghers. OHNO is bringing in eight international artists, with the same pile of guts and doubt that's been incorporated in Needcompany's DNA for 25 years.

Though most visitors will not be familiar with the work of Michael Fliri (Italy), Pontogor (Brazil), Nicolas Field (Switzerland) and Idan Hayosh (Israel), among others, Lauwers and Seghers are sure the collision between these people will create artistic fireworks.

"All the artists have different cultural backgrounds," says Seghers. "They come to Antwerp to live together in the same house and to work on their own projects. They're not even working towards a result. But their mutual confrontation creates a certain energy that will rise to the occasion on August 27."

At first sight, the performance art of Pontogor, who lives on a hill in Rio de Janeiro, may differ from installations by Idan Hayosh, an Israeli installation artist who used to be a soldier in Lebanon. But confronted, it's obvious they come from the same planet. "It's really moving to see what happens when their worlds collide," says Lauwers. "We should bear in mind that what they are asked to do is pointless. Maybe their performance will only take a few seconds. Take the Italian artist Roberta Gigante. She will turn the Scheldt River red – but for only a fraction of time."

Lauwers, avant-garde to the core, is very fond of the concept of Open Air. "We told the artists to 'just be

here and play, and you even get paid a little bit.' And then the miracle happens. It's precisely that attitude we need in Europe nowadays. Look at what's happening in London and Norway, and what will happen in Brussels in two or three years' time....The heads of our governments are saying that our multi-cultural society has failed. One of the consequences seems to be the liquidation of art. But at a time when we have to rethink everything – our notion of democracy, our financial markets, even our art – it would be a far better idea to pay people to think pointlessly."

It all sounds a bit crazy until Lauwers reminds us of an obvious example: Google, which famously asks their employees to devote about 20% of their working hours to personal projects of their own choosing. It has been hugely successful in developing new applications. "That's exactly the reason why I believe in these kind of open art houses." ♦

27 August, 19.00

Air Antwerpen
Oosterweelsteenweg 3

→ www.needcompany.org



MORE PERFORMANCE THIS WEEK

Bruxellons 2011 → Karreveld Castle, Brussels →

Blue Remembered Hills → Laarbeek Forest, Jette

Kleinste Theater van 't stad → Café Kiebooms, Antwerp



Antwerp

Openluchttheater Rivierenhof

Turnhoutsebaan 232; 070.222.192

www.openluchttheater.be

AUG 26 14.00 Teenkids with Ketnet Band, 20.30 Teenkids with DJ Grazhoppa's big band



Antwerp

De Roma

Turnhoutsebaan 327; 03.292.97.40

www.deroma.be

Concerts at 20.30:

AUG 25 Bos, Voet & Cresens **AUG 26** Nathalie Meskens **AUG 27** Quilombo: Bailame **AUG 31** Buurman **SEP 1** Arifa

Brussels

The Music Village

Steenstraat 50; 02.513.13.45

www.themusicvillage.com

Until AUG 27 21.00 Brussels Village Festival, jazz & Latino concerts



Antwerp

Amuz

Kammenstraat 81

www.amuz.be

Until AUG 28 Laus Polyphoniae: Antwerp's edition of the Festival of Flanders, devoted this year to Portugal, with the Huelgas Ensemble, Jordi Savall and his Capella Reial de Catalunya, fado singers and special concerts for children

Brussels

Royal Music Conservatory

Regentschapsstraat 30

www.midis-minimes.be

Until AUG 31 Midis-Minimes: Lunchtime concerts covering a wide range of repertoires, from world music to Renaissance, Baroque, Classical, Romantic and contemporary

Leuven

Saint Peter's Church

Grote Markt

www.zomer-van-sint-pieter.be

Until AUG 26 Zomer van Sint-Pieter: Lunch-time concerts, a sister event to the Midis-Minimes festival in Brussels



Terhulpen

Kasteel Terhulpen

Brusselsesteenweg 111; 02.346.93.93

www.ideefixe.be/romeoetjuliette

AUG 31-SEP 3 Romeo et Juliette, outdoor opera conducted by Yannis Pouspourikas, staged by François de Carpentries



Mekanik Strip Gallery

St.-Jacobsmarkt 73

www.art-trek.be

Until SEP 17 Art Trek 8, eighth edition of the annual group show organised by and for young international graphic artists

Middelheim Museum

Middelheimlaan 6; 03.828.13.50

www.middelheimmuseum.be

Until SEP 25 Erwin Wurm: Wear Me Out, open-air display of performative and living sculptures by the Austrian artist

Museum aan de Stroom (MAS)
Hanzestedenplaats 1; 03.338.44.34
www.mas.be

Until DEC 31 Masterpieces in the MAS: Five Centuries of Images in Antwerp, the first temporary exhibition in the new museum shows how Antwerp and

DON'T MISS

Where is My Boy To-night?

26 August &
2-3 September, 19.30

Talbot House, Poperinge

Talbot House, a refuge of recreation and quiet in Poperinge for British soldiers during the First World War, is the perfect stage for this performance in narration and piano of the story of Edith Ainscow and Geoffrey Boothby, young lovers separated by war, whose story and letters are documented in the 2005 book *Thirty-Odd Feet Below Belgium*, written by Edith's son. The performance, which is in Dutch, falls between courses of a dinner menu, "from aperitif to dessert, served with love".



→ www.talbothouse.be



Antwerp

De Roma

Turnhoutsebaan 327; 03.292.97.40

www.deroma.be

AUG 24 20.30 Andrés Peña y Pilar Ogalla, flamenco



Antwerp

Contemporary Art Museum (M HKA)

Leuvenstraat 32; 03.238.59.60

www.muhka.be

Until SEP 18 Collection XVIII: If you shoot a bullet in a vacuum, will it keep travelling forever?, selected works and films by British artist Emily Wardill

Diamond Museum
Koningin Astridplein 13-23; 03.202.48.90
www.diamantmuseum.be

Until SEP 29 Pop Up, installations inspired by diamonds and pop art

Mekanik Strip Gallery

St.-Jacobsmarkt 73

www.art-trek.be

Until SEP 17 Art Trek 8, eighth edition of the annual group show organised by and for young international graphic artists

Middelheim Museum

Middelheimlaan 6; 03.828.13.50

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Until SEP 25 Erwin Wurm: Wear Me Out, open-air display of performative and living sculptures by the Austrian artist

Museum aan de Stroom (MAS)
Hanzestedenplaats 1; 03.338.44.34
www.mas.be

Until DEC 31 Masterpieces in the MAS: Five Centuries of Images in Antwerp, the first temporary exhibition in the new museum shows how Antwerp and

Agenda

Flanders significantly influenced 16th- and 17th-century Western European imagery

Onze-Lieve-Vrouwekathedraal
Handschoenmarkt; 03.213.99.51
www.dekathedraal.be

Until DEC 31 Reunion, major 16th- and 17th-century works from the Fine Arts Museum collection, including masterpieces by Van Quinten Metsijs and Peter Paul Rubens

Photo Museum
Waalse Kaaï 47; 03.242.93.00
www.fotomuseum.be
Until SEP 25 Insight, photos by Elke Andreas Boon, Elinor Carucci, Alexandra Cool and Jacques Sonck

Plantin-Moretus Museum
Vrijdagmarkt 22; 03.221.14.50
www.museumplantinmoretus.be
Until AUG 28 Inzichten en Vergezichten (Insights and Panoramic Views), designs by Anne-Mie Van Kerckhoven, designer of the light panels for the new MAS Museum

Blankenberge

Belle Epoque Centrum
Elisabethstraat 24; 050.42.87.41
www.belle.epoque.blankenberge.be
Until SEP 16 Hasseltse keramiek, Art Nouveau drip glaze pottery

Bruges

Site Oud Sint-Jan
Mariastraat 38; 050.47.61.00
www.expo-brugge.be
Permanent From Pablo Picasso to Joan Miró, permanent exhibition of more than 100 works by Picasso, plus works by Henri Matisse, Marc Chagall, Joan Miró, more

Brussels

Bozar
Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00
www.bozar.be
Until SEP 11 Jeff Wall: The Crooked Path, works by the Canadian photographer together with prose responding to the work
Until SEP 11 Young Belgian Painters Award 2011, works by the 10 finalists in the prestigious art competition
Until SEP 18 The Power of Fantasy:

Modern and Contemporary Art from Poland, works by more than 30 contemporary Polish artists in celebration of Poland's presidency of the EU
Until SEP 25 Beyond the Document, works by 14 contemporary Belgian photographers

Charliermuseum

Kunstlaan 16; 02.218.53.82
www.charliermuseum.be
Until SEP 30 A Hard Existence, paintings of farmers, fishermen, servants and other manual labourers by late 19th- and early 20th-century artists

City Hall

Grote Markt; 02.279.64.24
www.brupass.be
Until SEP 25 Barok onthuld (Baroque Unveiled), a new way of looking at sculpture in Brussels and Belgium

Costume and Lace Museum

Violettestraat 12; 02.213.44.50
Until SEP 25 Midsummer Night's Dreams, textile works by Diane Didier
Until DEC 31 Hand-made clothing and accessories from before the invention of the sewing machine, including patterns, hats by Brussels milliners, men's waistcoats and women's corsets

Jewish Museum of Belgium

Minimstraat 21; 02.512.19.63
www.mjbjmb.org
Until AUG 28 After Images, multidisciplinary show by contemporary American artists

Marc Sleen Museum

Zandstraat 33; 02.219.19.80
www.marc-sleen.be
Until SEP 25 Nero, Yuri Gagarin and Other Astronauts, space travel in comic strips

Museum van Elsene

Jean Van Volsemstraat 71; 02.515.64.22
www.museumvanelsene.be
Until SEP 4 Explosition: Graffiti art in Brussels, 25 years of urban art including works by both pioneers and contemporary artists

Royal Museum of the Armed Forces

Jubelpark 3; 02.737.78.33
www.legermuseum.be
Until SEP 4 1945-2002: Belgian soldiers in Germany, rare photographs documenting 60 years of diplomatic relations between the two countries
Until OCT 16 War&Game(s), photographs by Virginie Cornet and toys from the period of the First World War

Sint-Gorikshallen

Sint-Goriksplein 23; 02.502.44.24
www.sintgorikshallen.be
Until AUG 29 1,000 voetschrapers (1,000 Foot Scrapers), photos of old boot scrapers still outside some Brussels doors, by Christophe H with texts by Laurence Rosier

Ghent

Design Museum
Jan Breydelstraat 5; 09.267.99.99
www.designmuseumgent.be
Until OCT 16 Esprit Porcelaine, contemporary porcelain from Limoges
Until OCT 16 Die Essenz der Dinge (The Essence of Things): Design and the Art of Reduction
Until OCT 16 Johanna Dahm: Rings, ring designs by the Swiss artist

Kunsthal Sint-Pietersabdij

Sint-Pietersplein 9; 09.243.97.30
www.gent.be/spa
Until SEP 18 Ground: Palestine 2000-2010, photographs by Brussels photographer Bruno Stevens

Museum of Contemporary Art (SMAK)

Citadelpark; 09.221.17.03
www.smak.be
Until SEP 11 Carlos Rodríguez-Méndez: Agua Caliente (Hot Water), a giant minimalist sculpture by the Spanish artist
Until SEP 18 Jorge Macchi: Music Stands Still, paintings, sculpture, installations and video by the Argentinian artist

Hasselt

Het Stadsmuseum
Guido Gezellesstraat 2; 011.23.98.90

DON'T MISS

Het Theaterfestival

25 August - 3 September

Across Brussels



The *crème de la crème* of Dutch-language theatre is showcased every year in this festival, which takes place in Brussels and Antwerp on alternative years. This time it's Brussels' turn, and you'll find excellent choices spread out over the city's Flemish-oriented venues, including Kaaitheater and KVS. A jury chooses what they consider the best of Flemish and Dutch theatre of the last year, so you get the chance to see anything you've missed. Check out Flemish actor Jurgen Delnaet's monologue as the late Flemish author JHM Berckmans and Studio Orka's site-specific *Warmoes*, good for anyone seven and up. Don't wait to get tickets at the door; everything sells out.

→ www.theaterfestival.be

Roger Raveel from the Mu.ZEE collection in a dialogue with Constant Permeke's oeuvre

Kortrijk

Kortrijk centre
Grote Markt 45; 056.27.74.40
www.kortrijk.be/tentoonstellingen
Until AUG 28 Paradise Lost Paradise, contemporary art parcours throughout the city centre

Leuven

Museum M
Leopold Vanderkelenstraat 28; 016.27.29.29
www.mleuven.be
Until SEP 4 A Romantic View: The Rademakers Collection, 19th-century Dutch and Belgian paintings of the

WEEK IN FILM

LISA BRADSHAW

Ostend Film Festival

2-10 September

Across Ostend

This annual festival, now in its fifth year, has become something of a party for the local film industry, with its massive support of Flemish cinema. The Flemish Film Awards are presented at this festival, and this year finds no less than four Flemish movies (or movies by Flemish directors) in Belgian premiere. Two are heavily anticipated: *Hasta la Vista* is the latest from Geoffrey Enthoven (*Meisjes, Happy Together*) and follows a trio of physically handicapped young men on the journey of a lifetime – to a Spanish brothel. It's much less juvenile than it sounds and enjoyed a standing ovation last weekend at its world premiere at the Montreal World Film Festival. Documentary filmmaker Didier Volckaert, meanwhile, makes his feature film debut with *Quichotte's Island*, which finds a traumatised adolescent plunged into a fantasy world where Quichotte comes to his rescue in the form of a gnarly biker dude.

The Ostend Film Festival takes place mainly at Kinepolis, just outside the city centre, but also dotted around the city – most uniquely in *volkscafés*, where several recent Flemish films, such as *Adem*, *Rundskop* and *Turquaze*, will screen. If the folk don't come to the festival, the festival will come to the folk.

As for the host of this edition, that's writer/actor Peter Van Den Begin, and the best part about that is his Master Selection, which includes some fantastic cult films like *Capote*, *Dog Day Afternoon* and John Cassavetes' *Opening Night*.

As for the Flemish film prizes, *Adem* and *Rundskop*, not surprisingly, lead the nominations. Both are up for Best Film (with, very surprisingly, the broad comedy *Frits & Freddy*), Best Director and Best Actor. The jury appears to have shut out Gust Van Den Bergh's feature debut *Little Baby Jesus of Flandr* – a shame, considering its unique visual style and completely original concept.

→ www.filmfestivaloostende.be



Battlefields and beer with Flanders Today

Flanders Today and WM Tours invite you to join us for a tour of West Flanders' First World War sites with former soldier and battlefield historian Willie Mohan, plus a visit to the famous Poperinge Beer Festival

17 September
Depart from Brussels at 8.30
Arrive back in Brussels at 22.00

- **Tyne Cot cemetery, Passchendaele**
The largest Commonwealth war cemetery in the world
- **Talbot House, Poperinge**
Legendary sanctuary for British soldiers in Poperinge
- **Poperinge Beer Festival**
Belgium's most prestigious celebration of its kind
- **St George's Memorial Church, Ypres**
Built in 1927-1929 for grieving family and survivors
- **In Flanders Fields Museum, Ypres**
Visit the famous First World War museum before it closes for renovations
- **The Last Post**
The final salute that is still played every night at the Menin Gate Memorial

Tour is in English

Tour bus departs from Schuman area in Brussels
Cost: €55 - includes transport, guide, entry to Talbot House and lunch

Register by 7 September via email at editorial@flanderstoday.eu

You'll receive information about payment after you register

Romanic period from Jef Rademakers' collection
Until SEP 11 Gert Robijns, installations by the contemporary Flemish artist
Until SEP 25 Pieter-Jozef Verhagen: In het spoor van Rubens (In the Wake of Rubens), paintings by the 18th-century Flemish artist

Lier

Stedelijk Museum Wuyts-Van Campen
Florent Van Cauwenberghstraat 14
www.bruegelland.be
Until 2017 Bruegelland, paintings by Pieter Bruegel and artists influenced by him (on loan from the permanent collection of Antwerp's Museum of Fine Arts)

Machelen-Zulte

Het Roger Raveelmuseum
Gildestraat 2-8; 09.381.60.00
www.rogerraveelmuseum.be
Until OCT 30 Albisola, ceramic works by various artists inspired by the Italian town

Meise

National Botanic Garden of Belgium
Nieuwelaan 38; 02.260.09.20
www.plantentuinmeise.be
Until OCT 2 Groene Omzwervingen (Green Detours), works made of leaves and flowers by Sandrine de Borman following her year as artist-in-residence
Until NOV 6 Kriebelbeestjes van het bos (Crawling Bugs in the Woods), photographs of insects by Barbara Cook

Oostduinkerke

Nationaal Visserijmuseum
Pastoor Schmitzstraat 5; 058.51.24.68
www.visserijmuseum.be
Until DEC 31 Zeerotica: Over liefde en lust aan de kust (Searotica: On Love and Lust at the Coast), works on the theme of passion and the sea by Paul Delvaux, Leon Spilliaert, Alois Boudry and Edgard Tytgat, among others

Ostend

Oostende Oosteroever
Hendrik Baelskaai; 059.26.51.27
www.free-state.be
Until SEP 11 Freestate, works by Belgian artists under 35 years of age, spread out over unique locations in and around the harbour

Sint-Amands (Antwerp Province)

Provinciaal Museum Emile Verhaeren
Emile Verhaerenstraat 71; 052.33.08.05
www.emileverhaeren.be
Until AUG 31 Maeterlinck-Verhaeren & the Noble Prize 1911, original documents by the two Flemish candidates for the Noble Prize in Literature



Vlaanderen Zingt: Mass sing-alongs to popular Flemish music
Until SEP 10 across Flanders
www.vlaanderenzingt.be

Antwerp

Antwerp Skate Contest: Fifth annual international skateboarding competition, free to the public
Until AUG 25 at Theaterplein
www.antwerp skate contest.be

Bat Walk: Free guided tour through a nature reserve that is home to different types of bats, including information on the flying mammals
AUG 27 20.00-22.00 depart from Rivierenhof Castle, Parkweg
Registration required on 03.360.52.18

Open Air #5: Outdoor cultural festival with concerts and performances by national and international artists
AUG 27 19.00 at Air Antwerpen, Oosterweelsteenweg 3
www.airantwerpen.be

Park Happening Schoten: Free family event featuring trampolines, climbing wall, death ride, bouncy castles, face

painting, rides, concerts and more
AUG 27 11.00-14.00 at Schoten Park, Kasteeldreef 61
www.schoten.be

Zomer van Antwerpen: Annual summer festival including circus, theatre, film, concerts, beach bar and more
Until AUG 29 throughout the city
www.zva.be

Blankenberge

Sand Sculpture Festival: International sand sculpture festival with a Disneyland Paris theme
Until SEP 12 at Koning Albert I-Laan 116
www.zandsculptuur.be

Scavenger Hunt: A special walk to discover the seaside town, with prizes to be won
Until OCT 15, start at tourist office, Leopold III-plein 050.41.22.27, www.blankenberge.be

Brussels

Apéros Urbains: Weekly aperitif every Friday in different areas of the city with live music and after-parties at Fuse, K-Nal and Vaudeville
Until SEP 2 17.00-23.30 across Brussels
www.aperos.be

Bruxellons!: Performing arts festival with theatre, dance, comedy and cabaret
Until SEP 4 at Kasteel Karreveld, Jean de la Hoeselaan 3
02.762.95.02, www.bruxellons.net

Camera Belgica: Thursday evening entertainment including guided museum visits and outdoor film screenings
Until AUG 25 20.00 at Belvue Museum, Paleizenplein 7
www.belvue.be

PleinOPENair: Open-air cinema festival staged by Cinema Nova, featuring free screenings, walks, concerts, guided tours, and more
Until AUG 27 across Brussels
www.nova-cinema.org

Poland's EU Presidency: Poland takes the six-month helm of the European Union Council for the first time, featuring a

Cathedral Concerts: Organ concerts on Tuesday evenings
Until AUG 30 20.00 at St Michael and Gudula's Cathedral, Sinter-Goedeleplein
www.cathedralestmichel.be

Diep in het Bos (Deep in the Forest): Performing arts festival for children featuring outdoor plays and guided nature walks
AUG 24-28 at Laarbeekbos, Bosstraat 10 (Ganshoren)
www.diepinhetbos.be

Ecran Total: Summer-long film festival with classics, recent releases and never-released films
Until SEP 13 at Cinema Arenberg
www.arenberg.be

Filmotek: Annual garden screenings of shorts film, video art and works from Atelier 340's archives
Until SEP 9 22.00 at Atelier 340 Museum, Rivierendreef 340
www.atelier340muzeum.be

K-Nal (F)estival: First-ever K-Nal summer festival with music, photography and culinary adventures
Until AUG 27 at K-NAL, Havenlaan 1 0474.04.00.00, www.k-nal.be

Open-Air Cinema: Free outdoor film screenings
Until AUG 31 Wed 22.00 at Wolubilis, Paul-Henri Spaaklaan 1
www.wolubilis.be

PleinOPENair: Open-air cinema festival staged by Cinema Nova, featuring free screenings, walks, concerts, guided tours, and more
Until AUG 27 across Brussels
www.nova-cinema.org

Poland's EU Presidency: Poland takes the six-month helm of the European Union Council for the first time, featuring a

major programme of cultural events
Until DEC 31 across Belgium
www.culturepolonaise.eu

Royal Palace Visits: Annual opening to the public of the 18th-century Royal Palace
Until SEP 11 at Brederodestraat 16
www.monarchie.be

Deinze

Ooidonk Sneukelt: Bike tour with drink/food stops along the way, to benefit Kom Tegen Kanker cancer charity
AUG 27 12.00-19.00 at Ooidonk Castle, Advance registration required: www.oidonksneukelt.be

Ghent

Dok Beach: Beach on a harbour canal with free entertainment, picnic lunches and kids' activities
Until AUG 31 daily at Koopvaardijlaan 13
www.dokgent.be

Parkkaffee: Circus, tarot readings, campfires and other fun activities for the whole family
Until AUG 31 at Groenenstaakstraat 37 (Mariakerke)
www.parkkaffee.be

Viewmaster: Friday night movies at sunset, staged on the banks of the canal that runs from the harbour to the city, with bar, food and DJ ahead of all screenings
Until AUG 26 at Koopvaardijlaan 13
www.viewmaster011.be

Knokke-Heist

Cartoon Festival: 50th anniversary of the festival featuring more than 300 cartoons from all over the world
Until SEP 18 at the Casino beach pavilion
www.cartoonfestival.be

Fuerza Bruta: Mythical water world performance with multi-media special effects
Until AUG 28 at Natiënlaan 14 (next to train station)
www.fuerza-bruta.b

Mechelen

Jimmy's Drive-In Movies: An old-fashioned drive-in at the water sport park. Arrive in an old-timer car (25 years or older) to get in for free
Until AUG 27 at Sportpark De Nekker
www.utopolis.be/events/98

Poperinge

Biking Between the Hop and the Beer: Guided tour (30km) through the highlights of the region (World War One historical sites and military cemeteries, Saint-Bernardus brewery, Saint-Sixtus abbey)
AUG 24 & 31 departing from the Hop Museum, Gasthuisstraat 71
www.hopmuseum.be

Waregem

Waregem Koerse Feesten: Free celebrations surrounding the Waregem Koerse horse racing event, including live music, the Great Steeple Chase, stand-up comedy, fireworks and more
AUG 25-31 at Markt 1 and various locations across the city
www.waregem.be/koersefeesten

Watou

Kunstenfestival Watou: Third annual international art parcours, winding through the city's old buildings and countryside
Until SEP 11 at venues across Watou (West Flanders)
www.watou2011.be

Marktrock Poperinge: Outdoor music festival featuring Horse Antlers, Final Touch, New Romance, Ketnet Band, The Tubs, Peter Pan Speedrock, Daan, more
AUG 26-27 on the Grote Markt
www.marktrockpoperinge.be

Tessenderlo (Limburg)

Moulin Rock Festival: 10th anniversary of the rock festival featuring young bands and musicians, including Les Truttes, Exit April, CPEX, The Opposites, more
SEP 9-10 at Festivalterriën Moulin Rock, Molenstraat
www.moulinrock.be

SUMMER MUSIC FESTIVALS

Palm Parkies: Free outdoor concerts at parks, sponsored by Palm beer
Until AUG 31 in 15 cities across Flanders
www.parkies.net

Antwerp

Camping Louisa: Free open-air concerts and street theatre every Wednesday
Until AUG 24 19.30 at Sorgvliedt Park, Marneblaan 3, Hoboken 03.292.65.30, www.casalouisa.be

Brussels

Boterhammen in het Park: Free outdoor lunchtime festival of Flemish and Dutch rock and pop, including

Axl Peleman, Eva De Roovere, Johan Verminnen, Hans Mortelmans, more
Until AUG 26 12.00 at Warande Park 02.548.24.24, www.abconcerts.be

City Parade: Massive party with DJs and dancing
Until AUG 27 at Heizel (under the Atomium)
www.cityparade.be

Feeërieën 2011: Free outdoor festival with national and international rock, pop and experimental, including Murder, Timber Timbre, Awesome Tapes From Africa, Birds That Change Colour, more
Until AUG 26 19.00 at Warande Park
www.abconcerts.be

Ghent

Jazz in 't Park: Annual jazz festival featuring free concerts and jazz documentaries
AUG 27-SEP 4 at Zuidpark 09.210.10.10, www.gent.be/jazzintpark

Oostkamp (West Flanders)

Gipsy's in het Park: Concerts by Nomad Swing, Thierry Robin Trio, Mec Yek and Orchestre International du Vetex, plus film screenings and children's activities
AUG 27 17.00-00.00 at Beukenpark, Kapellestraat 19
www.gipsyinhetpark.be



also masters the Arab *oud* and the Greek *bouzouki*, both lute-type instruments, blends East and West into a heart-warming, highly textured mix that reveals his interest in flamenco, musette, Indian hymns and eastern European percussion. Accordion player Piet Maris, who lends his voice to the Brussels band *Jaune Toujours*, is also one of the trio Mec Yek, together with two Roma singers (*pictured*). Apparently, the pair once just jumped on stage at the end of a *Jaune Toujours* concert to sing with the band. And so Mec Yek was born, an electrifying band that, like all good Balkan ensembles, sounds happy and sad at once. Top of the bill of Gipsy's in het Park is the Orchestra National du Vetex. This highly festive

brass band mixes musicians from Flanders, Wallonia and the north of France to explore diverse musical traditions: Balkan swing, polka, Latino, klezmer, ska and, of course, gipsy music. Dancing isn't required, but it will be difficult to resist.

→ www.gipsyinhetpark.be

FESTIVAL SPOTLIGHT

CHRISTOPHE VERBIEST

Gipsy's in het Park

27 August, from 18.00

Beukenpark, Oostkamp

Recent incidents might have suggested that Flemish people don't like it when gipsies camp nearby, but they surely like gipsy music. Gipsy's in het Park is a small but charming (and free) gathering of one evening and four bands in Oostkamp, near Bruges. In the city park, to be precise. You'll find the stage to be out in the open, but in case rain tries to ruin the fun, the bands will play in a nearby tent.

Nomad Swing starts off the festivities. This Belgian quintet combines French chanson with early swing jazz and is sure to bring you back to the first half of the 20th century. Don't miss the next act, Thierry "Titi" Robin. This French guitar player, who

bite

ROBYN BOYLE

Pastagenoeg ★★★

Dilbeek, Flemish Brabant

Dilbeek, on the outskirts of Brussels, boasts one of Flanders' most stunning town halls. The Tudor-style Viron Castle was built on the ruins of a 14th-century fortification of which one mediaeval tower still remains. The Saint Alena tower stands obstinately on a small island within a pond surrounded by lush, sloping grounds. And, as I discovered, the best place to enjoy all this beauty is from the terrace of nearby restaurant Pastagenoeg. Eight years ago, three friends transformed an old pita place into this modern eatery with a view. It forms the perfect partnership with Het Groot Genoeg, the same owners' long-standing (and clearly popular) café next door.

The atmosphere is relaxed yet professional, with friendly, attentive servers hustling about. My dining companion and I are immediately welcomed with a bowl of marinated green olives, which we polish off before ordering a half-litre carafe of wine. Normally one wouldn't expect too much from a house wine, but this deep red Vilcun Merlot from Chile has a pleasantly soft, round and fruity character.

The wine inspires us to order a *bruschetta* starter. Three thick slices of toast arrive covered in a mixture of chopped tomato,

Contact *Bite* at flandersbite@gmail.com

green olive, fresh basil and olive oil, while balsamic syrup and shredded cheese add a tasty touch. Unfortunately, the whole construction is unstable and a roll of Ganda ham teetering on top makes it even more of a challenge to eat.

For a restaurant with a name meaning plenty of pasta, there's a surprising amount of variety to be had. Suggestions range from carrot-and-courgette-stuffed rabbit to sea bass in cauliflower cream sauce, while the fixed menu items include lamb brochette, sole fillet, *osso buco*, different kinds of steak (tuna, Argentinean beef, horse) and more.

But vegetarians need not stay away. There are also eight full meal salads, plus a number of meatless pasta dishes like penne with mozzarella, cherry tomatoes and fresh basil in a creamy tomato sauce, four-cheese penne or my companion's final choice: pasta pesto. Heaps of linguine, seductively laid out across the plate, are all dolled up with diced tomato and a couple of thinly sliced courgette roll-ups. The pasta, perfectly *al dente*, mingles with fresh, garlic-powered basil pesto, roasted pine nuts and paper-thin shavings of fresh parmesan. Next to this, an extra side of the bright green pesto offers flavour reinforcement.



On the other side of the table, meanwhile, I'm searching for my lasagne under loads of tomato sauce. Once found, the hearty chunk of pasta proves to be quite a treat with its alternating layers of juicy tomato, melted mozzarella and Ganda ham. The salty dry-cured ham nicely offsets the rich, sweetish (and overabundant) sauce. We both swear we couldn't eat another bite, but change our minds with one peek at the desserts. I have a weak spot for the duo of white and dark chocolate mousse and my companion for the *profiteroles*. So we compromise by sharing an order of homemade *speculoos* tiramisu. Again, the

proportion is generous and the presentation classy.

After settling the €60 bill, we toddle over to the adjoining café for a much-needed *digestif*.

→ www.pastagenoeg.com

📍 Gemeenteplein 12, Dilbeek
02.466.93.04

🕒 Tues-Fri 11.30-14.00 & 18.00-22.00;
Sat 18.00-22.00

💶 Mains: €10-€20

👉 Copious, Italian-inspired dishes at reasonable prices

TALKING SPORTS

Football's new financial watchdog

In 1994, when he was touted as a potential president of the European Commission, then-Belgian prime minister Jean-Luc Dehaene was demonised by some of the more rabid parts of the British press as a fearsome Euro-Beelzebub. Dehaene (pictured), who is now an MEP and chairman of Dexia bank, never clinched the commission job, but he could well return as a scourge of another British staple: football.

The 71-year-old, whose eight-year stint as Belgian PM ended in 1999, is now the chairman of the European football confederation UEFA's Club Financial Control Panel, a dull sounding entity that may turn out to have a profound effect on the game.

The UEFA group was set up in response to a growing sense of alarm about the influence on money on club football. In particular, the way that benefactors, oligarchs, sugar-daddies or whatever you might want to describe them have been buying up clubs and splashing out on players to win trophies. It sometimes works, but it distorts the game out of proportion when some money-addled billionaire decides that his team must buy up all the best players until he wins all the top prizes.

UEFA is now quietly enforcing its rules to prevent the twisting of the game by dubious outside sources. Its financial fair play rules deal with particular concerns about clubs making a loss year after year, with many accumulating large debts in the process. It is hoped that both transfer fees and wages, which have been spiralling ever-upwards, will now show some restraint and stability.

Last week, UEFA showed its teeth when Dehaene revealed that he has "some questions" about Manchester City's sponsorship deal with Etihad Airways, a 10-year deal reportedly worth around €450 million for the naming rights to the club's



stadium as well as shirt sponsorship and funding for the proposed new Etihad Campus. If found to breach the rules, City could find itself barred from the Champions League.

Dehaene is a keen football fan of perennial Belgian runners-up Club Brugge. And local players could be targeted by any actions he takes: *Brusselaar* Vincent Kompany plays for arguably the most blatant money-splashers, Abu Dhabi-owned Manchester City; while Antwerp-born Romelu Lukaku has just signed on at Chelsea, which is the play-thing of Russia's super-rich Roman Abramovich.

But certainly no Flemish clubs are likely to be affected by Dehaene's probe, simply because they are too small. Indeed, the main targets are expected to be English clubs because of how the league easily attracts outside investors. Ironically, they now face scrutiny from the Flemish politician who the English tabloids thought they had thwarted almost two decades ago.

→ www.uefa.com

LEO CENDROWICZ

THE LAST WORD . . .

Love is blind

"The burqa is not a symbol of oppression of women. Nonsense! I wouldn't let myself be oppressed. I've even got a boyfriend."

17-year-old Halima, one of the first people to be fined under the new burqa ban

Cook him, Danno

"The guy demanded the keys to my car. I gave him a few good whacks with the pepper-mill instead."

Vincent Soete of Rekkem, West Flanders, discovered a new way of tackling home-jackers

Rock it, man

"I started practising like a madman, six hours a day easily. I couldn't sleep because of it, sitting up all night in my boxer shorts, tinkling away."

David Van Der Jonckheyd learned to play piano in a month to imitate Elton John on the TV show *My Name Is...*

Game, set and match

"If your son of eight says, 'My Dad was pretty good at tennis' then you realise how relatively unimportant it all was."

Tennis legend Bjorn Borg, in Knokke last weekend for the Champions Tour and to announce his retirement

NEXT WEEK IN FLANDERS TODAY #195

Feature

Wijkcontracten, or Neighbourhood Contracts, is a Brussels programme that brings citizens together with administrations and contractors to make vastly-needed improvements to their neighbourhood streets and buildings. Reporter Nicholas Hirst tells us how it works

Business

Want to run a successful business? Just take a look at the strategies of Picasso or pop queen Madonna. An Antwerp professor has co-authored a book about how some of the greatest artists were also some of the greatest businesspeople

Arts

A Flemish glass artist falls in love with a monastery in the hills of central Italy. When he asks about their broken windows, he's told they can't afford new ones. We'll bet you can guess what happens next, but check next week's issue for the whole amazing story